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# The Fraternal

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## EDITORIAL

### THE WOOD AND THE TREES

THIS well-known saying has, we suggest, application to our ministers and churches at the present time. The Wood may represent the wider events in the religious world now taking place or due to do so in the near future.

There is the Billy Graham Mission crowding the great stadium in North London. Financed from America as to one half of the costs, £100,000, and organised with that thoroughness we associate with commercial concerns, it is drawing audiences on a scale not seen since the days of Moody and Sankey.

The Evanston Conference is more remarkable in that members of nearly every branch of the Christian Church—Rome excepted—will gather in unity of spirit prayerfully to consider the means by which the world-wide church may better set forth Jesus—the Hope of the World. Then the Baptist World Alliance plans a Jubilee Conference in London in the summer of 1955 which will be attended by thousands of Baptist folk from almost every land. What a Wood is this!

The Trees are the individual Baptist Churches everywhere. That society of believing people we joined by baptism and into which we were received at the Lord's Table. That Christian group gathered in the great city or the tiny village—Bethel, round which twine our holiest memories and which calls forth our deepest loyalty and affection. My Church! My Chapel! My Minister! what a lovely Tree is this!

There is a twin difficulty, we had almost said danger, arising. We may lose the sight of the Wood for the Trees. Our people may be so occupied with the problems and opportunities of the local cause—so immersed with its affairs and so limited in their vision, that they may have only the smallest concern with the wider horizon. Our Denominational principle of Independency may contribute to this and it is often almost impossible to encourage our people to look beyond their own church walls. There is an urgent call here that the individual church should widen its interests. Pray for Billy Graham and his tremendous work; encourage attendance at his meetings or others of a similar nature; arouse interest in the world-wide Christian society made up of churches differing in ecclesiastical polity or theological expression, yet all one in Christ Jesus, desiring only to glorify God in Him. Let us enthuse our people with the greatness of our Baptist World Alliance, constituting the largest Free Church section of the Holy Catholic Church. Let us organise visits to some of the London gatherings and arrange for the B.W.A., in small, to visit

our town or even our village. We plead that, in the midst of the Trees, our people should glory in the vision of the Wood.

On the other hand there is the opposite danger. "Ecumenical," like "Mesopotamia," is a blessed word and so is the idea it describes; but there is the possibility so to be taken up with the dream or the fact, that our own church or association may be forgotten, with its needs, demands and loyalties. We may minimise the distinct and vital principle implicit in Believers' Baptism. We may undervalue the important witness committed to our Denomination. So to do is to suffer loss indeed.

There is, however, a happy alternative to both these possibilities; namely, to instruct the minds of our members in the ideal of the Church Universal and at the same time build them up in ever deepening loyalty to the Church of their fathers, and to call forth their love for the habitation of God's House and the place where His honour dwelleth.

"Like priest, like people," still applies, and the end for which we plead is essentially the work of each Baptist minister. We pray that the task may be accomplished so that the Wood may blossom and flourish by the individual contribution of the Trees which the Lord hath planted in our midst, and to care for which we have been called into the ministry of the Baptist Church.

### THE APRIL FRATERNAL

The Ter-Jubilee celebrations of the British and Foreign Bible Society pursue the even tenor of their way—perhaps too even! Our B.M.F. joins in thanksgiving and good wishes and exhorts all members to continue active support of this great Society. It hopes that the tempo of the Campaign may be accelerated. The present issue of the *Fraternal* includes a Bible Study, articles and reviews, which have been compiled with the Ter-Jubilee in mind.

We trust that through our mutual ministry the Campaign Caption may prove increasingly true that—"The Bible Speaks To-day!"

### THE JULY FRATERNAL

The July *Fraternal* will be concerned with the training of the Ministry—a matter of great importance. The issue will be edited by H. Ingli James and will contain the following articles: The Training of the Ministry in Theological Studies by A. Dakin; The Training of the Ministry in Teaching and Pastoral Work by J. Ithel Jones; The Training of the Ministry in the Missionary Enterprise by Victor Hayward; The Training of Non-Collegiate Candidates by Seymour J. Price; The Training of the Ministry in this Age by H. Ingli James.

## THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

NO part of the Christian Faith has been more influenced by changes in modern life than that which concerns the attitude of people generally to the Bible. Within living memory it was usually decisive, in any disputed question of faith or conduct, to be able to quote the Bible in one's support. If you could say "the Bible says so," that was generally enough. To-day almost the exact opposite is the case. To appeal to the Bible now means for many little else than plunging the matter into further uncertainty. Not that they do not respect the Bible in some sense. But they have lost the old unhesitating assumption that the Bible always means what it says, and that what it says is easily ascertainable and authoritative.

I need hardly say that this means that the chief authority in matters affecting our higher life has largely lost its power to influence judgment and conduct. We may hope that the loss is only temporary. But that for the time being, this particular sanction has lost its power for many people is a matter of common observation.

The question now is not, Can we somehow go back to the old position, but, Is it possible to re-state the truth of the authority of the Bible in such a way as to conserve what was permanently valuable in the older view while recognising the truth of the fresh insights which have been given to us of recent years.

In trying to answer that question I would suggest first of all that both the strength and the weakness of the older view lay in the fact that it looked upon the Bible as a divine authority of an *external* kind. That was a good thing in so far as it emphasised the *objectivity* of Biblical truth. It is God Who speaks, and man must listen and obey. But it was not so good when it tended—as it not infrequently did—to slur over the fact that the whole issue of authority turns upon the question, *How* does God speak? and, *How* do men *recognise* His voice?

Thus, in the 17th century Baptist Confessions, it would appear that those who framed them regarded all the statements in the Bible, whether in the O.T. or the N.T. as equally authoritative. They were simply there in God's word to be accepted as divine truth. All that the theologian had to do was to gather together the passages which illustrated the truths he wished to express, and arrange them in a suitable order. This procedure certainly lent an air of impressive stability to the final structure, for it seemed to prove that every statement had the backing of the word of God—as in some sense, no doubt, it had. But the question is: In what sense? A thoughtful person reading these Confessions to-day would not derive from them the same degree of satisfaction on this point that their framers did.

We are as much the children of our age as our forefathers of the 16th and 17th century were children of theirs. And one of the great differences between our age and theirs lies in our respective attitudes to authority. We ask questions where they did not, and we do so because, in matters that concern human thought and behaviour, we cannot regard authority any longer in a purely external way. That is to say, we cannot acknowledge as authoritative in the deepest sense something which is entirely outside ourselves, even if it is demonstrably higher than ourselves. That is why Protestants always attach so much importance to what is commonly called "the right of private judgment," or, better, "the right of personal conviction." I must see the truth for myself if it is to be true for me. Of course, as our Roman Catholic brethren point out, that position raises all kinds of problems and it opens the door to all kinds of eccentricities. But Protestants have usually believed that these dangers are less serious in the long run than those involved in making the Church into an infallible external authority. And the same applies in principle to the Bible. If authority is to have weight with us it must not only be outside and above us, but it must also present itself to us in such a way that we are able to see and respond to its truth for ourselves by an act of interior recognition.

The conclusion to which this leads is that if we are to recover the authority of Scripture we shall not do it by simply trying to set the Bible before men, saying, "There is the Word of God and you must obey it." That would be to provoke its rejection. Surely if the Bible really is the Word of God, the right way of demonstrating its authority is to give it a chance to speak for itself, and, experience will prove that the authority which at the outset we have refrained from claiming for it will at length be freely conceded to it.

What does this mean when translated into practical terms. How are we to read the Bible to-day so that we may find and respond to God's authority in it? My answer can perhaps best be expressed by four adverbs which I will try briefly to expound.

We must read the Bible receptively—that is, in approaching it, we must lay ourselves frankly and fully open to its message, trying to rid our minds of bias and to study it with a humble desire to discover the truth. The Bible has played a prodigious part in human history. It has been the cherished companion of some of the greatest minds and noblest spirits which the world has known. People of every age and race for thousands of years have read the Bible with the greatest avidity, and they are doing so the world over to-day. Can any one of us seriously contend that he can afford not to read and ponder a book which is commended by such a massive weight of testimony as is the Bible? If the scientific conscience insists upon one's facing facts and allowing oneself to be taught by them, then nothing could be more scientific than to lay oneself conscientiously open to the impact of the facts that are embodied in Scripture.

We must study it Christologically or, if you like, with Jesus Christ as our guide. The Bible is not one book but scores of books. It is a library in itself, containing history, letters, songs, biography, fiction—what you will. With such a wealth of material one can hardly open the Bible anywhere without coming upon something that is interesting or perplexing or challenging or even revolting. Human life in all its light and shade is poignantly represented. But to profit by this abundance the reader must have a guide; and the true guide to it is Jesus Christ the Son of God. He is the clue to its final meaning. I do not mean that the Person and Work of Christ in the New Testament provide a sort of finished pattern, of which we can discover fragmentary anticipations in the Old. The search for Christian evidences of that kind in the O.T. often seems to me rather like trying to complete a jig-saw puzzle by piecing together its separate parts. In contrast to that method, which is essentially static, I think we must employ one which is dynamic. What is needed is such complete conviction of the character and purpose of God as revealed in Jesus Christ as assures us that the general drift of the Bible, if I may so put it, is always Christ-wards. It moves to Him as its fruit because ultimately it springs from Him as its root. The development is neither uniform nor inevitable, but it is there all the same. For the message of the Bible from beginning to end concerns God and man and their mutual relation. The Old Testament describes a people selected by God to play a particular rôle in the development of the human race, and the climax was to be reached at the birth of a great Figure Who would assume the government of the nation, and enable it to fulfil its destiny. Such is the burden of the Old Testament, and the New Testament is its complement. That speaks of the coming and the ministry of the promised Leader in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, it speaks too of His rejection and death at the hands of the nation's rulers. The story reaches its climax in the mysterious vindication of His life's work afforded by His resurrection by the power of God, and the expansion of His ministry through the church to embrace the life of mankind. The Bible is, in fact, as has been said, "a chapter in the life of God." It shows God at work in history from the birth of time, preparing the conditions for the appearance of His Son, and after the close of His brief earthly ministry, elevating Him to a position of transcendent authority, and carrying His message and imparting His Spirit through the Church to all the world.

Further, to read the Bible Christologically means recognising that, in the process, our own lives also are brought under judgment. This action of God in Christ concerns us to-day no less vitally than it did the men and women of long ago. For the Christ of the Gospel stands at the door of every life to challenge its self-love, and to claim its allegiance for the kingdom of God. It is ultimately His authority which breathes through the Biblical record and makes of it the Word of God to human hearts and consciences. Through

His Spirit He Himself must become its Interpreter to us if we are to read the story in all its sweep and profundity, and to see how every part of our life—its badness as well as its goodness, its failures as well as its successes, can, if we are ready, be used and transfused by God's redemptive purpose so that it reveals His love, and serves His holy will.

Thirdly, we must read the Bible critically. That is not the same thing as analysing it. Without doubt, analysis will always be a part of biblical criticism, a subordinate part, requiring not only analytical power but also the rare and more costly gifts of insight and creative imagination. I have referred to the wealth of material which is in the Bible. As it stands, a man might well be staggered by the immensity of it. What can one make of such a vast body of literature—so many strange stories, such mysterious teaching and perplexing paradoxes? The answer is, one can make little or much according to how one approaches it. If you are simply seeking something which will comfort or strengthen you in some personal need, then such is the wealth of the Bible that almost any page will bring you what you require. It will speak to your condition. But if the Bible is to become again an authority for life on the grand scale, to give meaning and worth to families, to nations and churches, then to achieve such an aim involves getting to grips with its structure and its plan. It means taking the Bible patiently book by book, trying to put each in its proper setting, examining its origins and its purpose, studying its language and ideas, comparing and contrasting the message of different authors, or of the same author in different contexts. In short, it means taking seriously the idea that God's purpose for the world is worked out in and through the choices and actions of men, as well as, sometimes, in spite of them and against them; and if we are to apprehend His purpose for our times through the study of His word, we must ever be penetrating through the written record to the life that lies behind it. In that way alone may we hope to achieve the double aim of interpreting life by the Bible, and interpreting the Bible from life.

Finally, we must read the Bible, if I may so put it, ecumenically. I mean, we must read it as members of one great family, the family of God's people in Christ—a family which includes the Past as well as the Present, and in which others besides ourselves have their recognised place. It has been said rather grimly that the Bible is a book "in which everyone seeks, and likewise everyone finds his own dogmas." Put bluntly, that means that the Roman Catholic appeals to the Bible to justify an infallible papacy, while the Orthodox and the Protestant claim Scriptural authority for repudiating the Pope altogether: the Baptist rejects infant baptism because he thinks it has no basis in the Bible, but the Methodist and Anglican practise it because they believe that it has. When put like that, the picture is rather terrifying, for it seems as if we may all of us be merely using the Word of God to justify our own preferences, and that is the road to ruin. The true remedy, as I



see it, is that, as Christians, we should more and more study the Bible in fellowship, so that Roman Catholics and Protestants, Baptists and Anglicans bring their minds together to its light. The real reason why conscientious Christians draw apparently contradictory conclusions from the Bible is not usually that one group is entirely right, and all the rest are wrong, or self-deceived. It is that the truth embodied in the Bible like the truth embodied in life, transcends the grasp of us all. We need to share with one another the insights which God gives to us.

Admittedly, the authority which emerges from such a study will be of a different kind from that of former days, but it will be more deeply rooted in reality. It will be less dogmatic in its claims, less confident in its assertions. Its edges will not be so sharp and clear-cut. But I believe it will be more healthy and enduring, in so far as it represents the conventions of minds freely responding to the Spirit Who has been promised to us to lead us into all truth. It will be the treasured possession of hearts drawn nearer to one another and to God by a realisation of our common need of Him, and our dependence upon the One Who is alone the Way, the Truth and the Life.

R. L. CHILD.

### THE MINISTER AND HIS BIBLE

A PROTESTANT minister is pre-eminently a minister of the Word. He is a man with a Book. From that Book he derives his message and authority. Through it he learns of his Lord. It is his constant companion. It is also, if he will admit it, a source of no little anxiety to him.

W. N. Clarke wrote: "I tell no secret when I say that to the average minister to-day the Bible that lies on his pulpit is more or less an unsolved problem. He is loyal to it. Yet he is not entirely free to use it throughout as God's very word to men now living; he retains the feeling that he ought, but he cannot. So he leaves some parts unused, and he is not quite sure how much of the remainder he may freely wield as the sword of the Spirit."<sup>\*</sup>

There can be little doubt that Clarke's observation is still valid. The writer of these lines has experienced no little perplexity of the kind referred to. The following broad principles seem to him to be relevant to the issues involved.

#### 1. THE BIBLE AND REVELATION.

Most will agree that the Bible is not to be equated with Revelation but is the record of Revelation. The moot point is: What is revelation?

Nygren distinguishes two views, the Biblical and the intellectualist. The latter affirms: "We have received new

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<sup>\*</sup>"The Use of the Scriptures in Theology," pp. 161-2.

truths which we did not know before." The former speaks in terms like those of Isaiah, "The Lord hath made bare (revealed) His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations." That is, Revelation is fundamentally the act of God for man's redemption and finds its culmination in Christ.

Yet an act of God which conveyed no "truth" to those on whose behalf it was done would have misfired, for they would have misunderstood it. We accordingly distinguish the following elements in the process of revelation: (i) An event of salvation or of judgment; (ii) An interpretation of the significance of the event; (iii) A demand for a response from man; (iv) A declaration (as provided in the Bible) of this complex of event-interpretation-demand, which sets following generations in the position of the original recipients and so continues the revelation with its corresponding demand.

In this chain of revelation undoubtedly (i) and (ii) are crucial, but they are unthinkable without (iii) and they would be meaningless, as revelation, for all subsequent ages without (iv). We may illustrate the process in relation to the cardinal moments of revelation.

The supreme crisis of revelation in the Old Testament is undoubtedly the Exodus. God laid bare His holy arm to deliver the Jewish tribes, and deliver them He did. But the action was not unannounced. A prophet, Moses, was present to interpret the event to the people. The climax of the event came at Sinai, when the nation accepted the covenant of God and pledged their obedience. In that moment they became, in truth, the people of God. To every succeeding generation the story was related and from it response was demanded.

Failure to make the appropriate response led to the next greatest revelatory event of Old Testament times, viz., the Exile. God declared He would judge His people. Once more His arm was laid bare, this time to scatter and not to save. The judgment was as truly revelatory as the redemption—compare the refrain of Ezekiel, as he pitilessly and even exultingly describes its coming: "Then shall ye know that I am the Lord." God in His might and holiness was revealed, and His prophets interpreted the act. The purpose, however, was still to elicit a response from the objects of revelation. God's people must repent. There was to be another Exodus, a regathering of the scattered tribes, a renewal of primeval devotion in the desert, and by the power of God the awaited kingdom was to come. The Old Testament closes with the hope of coming redemption and ensures a people prepared for it.

Christ's coming fulfils this hope so completely that He may be said to be the revelation of God. Notice, however, that the New Testament emphasis lies not on His teaching, nor on the beauty of His character, but on His deeds. God's revelation in Christ is one of judgment and salvation through the cross and resurrection. It brought about a new covenant and a new people. The continuity of the action of God and the people for whom He acts constitutes

the unity of the Bible; the continuing power of redemption and the continuous existence of the people of God bear witness to the perpetuity of revelation in the Church, as generation after generation listens and responds. It is one unending process, looking not alone to the past but to the future, when the final revelation of God in Christ will occur at the *parousia* and His people shall make their perfect response in a perfect adoration.

For a minister to be clear about this is to take his biggest step towards clarifying his attitude to the Bible he preaches.

## 2. THE BIBLE AND CRITICISM.

If it is right and natural for us to investigate the origins of the documents of the Bible; to distinguish between life-setting and content; revelation and record; then Biblical criticism is unavoidable. The burners of the Revised Standard Version engage in it as truly as the Revisers whom they cheerfully consign to hell. They merely disagree in their respective conclusions. To assign the Pentateuch to Moses is as truly a critical affirmation as to assign it to a line of redactors, for the Pentateuch is anonymous. The sooner we recognise this state of affairs the better it will be for us all. Biblical criticism is inescapable.

Much unnecessary heartburning has been caused by failure to distinguish between criticism and theology, yet their aims are different and they function on different levels. To make a pronouncement as to the authorship of a book is a non-theological statement, though many speak as though the Faith stands or falls according as we can or cannot connect certain names to certain books of the Bible. That unreasoning attitude to critical problems is all too common, as though the Holy Ghost were totally unversatile, and helpless beyond the Twelve and a few more. Critical questions are matters of fact, to be investigated in a spirit of adventure not of fear. We need the guidance of the Spirit, not bludgeons to defend Him.

It is true that theology comes into play in regard to the question whether revelation is manifest equally in all parts of the Bible, and as to the standard of judgment to be employed. This, however, is less the task of criticism than of exegesis and theology. Here we should not overlook that sayings like Mark vii, 15, and Romans x, 4, involve far-reaching judgments on the part of our Lord and Paul in respect of the Law, the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament. Jesus was regarded as a heretic by the Pharisees for His utterance, and Paul was denied by many to be an apostle or even a Christian for his views. Yet it is an example of what Forsyth termed "Highest Criticism," the judgment of the Scriptures in the light of reconciling grace. "The final criticism" of the Bible, he affirmed, "is neither literary, nor scientific, but evangelical." This is an application of the Lutheran dictum, "What has to do with Christ is apostolic." Consciously or unconsciously the principle is carried out by every preacher who stresses those parts of the Bible which

make the Gospel plain. The systematising of this procedure is a task of Biblical theology; since it is so practical, it ought to be a matter for every minister's consideration.

The Lutheran dictum has bearing on some thorny questions of authorship. In Luther's view any teaching which fails to proclaim Christ is not apostolic, though Peter or Paul were its author, while whatever preaches Christ is apostolic, though its author were Judas or Annas or Pilate or Herod. This latter aspect is interesting. Who wrote 2 Peter? When the critical view was first advanced, that the letter is an expansion of Jude, it was indignantly asserted that if that be so, such an impersonation is nothing less than a work of the devil. Plummer commented that on such a hypothesis Satan has cast out Satan with a vengeance, for 2 Peter is in content also "apostolic"! A little patient investigation into the practice of pseudonymity, and an ability to grasp that the Holy Spirit could yet be behind a man who employed literary conventions of his age, would enable questions of this kind to be discussed on their right level. In any case, investigation of the Scriptures which by hook or by crook reaches predetermined conclusions is a denial of the Spirit of truth who is behind them and does no honour to our Lord or His Gospel. The minister who is afraid of truth contradicts alike his calling and credentials.

### 3. THE BIBLE AND EXEGESIS

The unrealistic use of the Bible often revealed in preaching indicates a lack of concern as to its real meaning. Allegorism is still rife, and the Bible is then made to yield precisely what is wanted from it. The only remedy for this is a rigorous study of the Bible with the aid of scientific commentaries. Every minister ought to have the aim of purchasing the best single commentary on each book of the Bible and of reading them all carefully over a period of years. That is not so unreasonable as may appear if the entire span of our ministerial life is taken into account. I doubt if any man will preach quite the same on the Gospel of John after reading Hoskyn's commentary as before; the same applies to Sanday and Headlam on Romans, Armitage Robinson on Ephesians, Charles on Revelation (however much one differs from him); while we all know what a new world has been opened up by the great works on the Old Testament prophets. These books were written for ministers; there is no excuse for bungling exegesis now that they are written.

Perhaps the outstanding problem of exegesis is how to relate the two Testaments to each other; to what extent are we at liberty to read the New into the Old, and how do we use the Old for the interpreting of the New? Traditionally the Church has followed the clue given in the New Testament and read the Old Testament in the light of its later fulfilment. This method has often led men astray, for the New Testament writers had a far better grasp of the Old Testament than was current in the later Church, and

they knew Christ better too.\* Modern Old Testament Scholars have striven to extract from the Old Testament text the meaning that the original authors intended to convey. The discipline is necessary, but we may well ask: Should Christians be content with understanding the Old Testament as though Christ had not come and the New Testament had never been written? That is unthinkable. Now that we have had the fruits of painstaking labour on the Old Testament in its environment, we have the task of relating it to a Christological interpretation which will do justice to that labour and to the existence of the Church of Immanuel.

What of the New Testament itself? The New Testament cannot be understood in isolation. The W.C.C. conference on the Bible which met at Bossey, laid down the following plan for Bible study: Begin with the New Testament message of Christ, investigate the Old Testament from this perspective, then turn back to the New Testament in a sort of circular motion; by this method the whole Biblical message will be brought into play. It was admitted that to carry through this programme is one of the greatest tasks of present day theology. The wise minister will not wait for the theologians to finish their job but will see what he can do about it himself.†

#### 4. THE BIBLE AND PREACHING.

The minister's habit of taking a text has the best of reasons: it implies that what he says is not so much his own view as the Word of God in Christ. Yet it can hardly be contested that the habit has often become conventional. Frequently the Bible is closed while the minister preaches, or the text is but a peg for a topical dissertation that stands in no genuine relation to it. There is a need for more Biblical preaching and a desire for it in our congregations. How is it to be done? We suggest:

(i) *Preach on the big texts.* A big text in its context gives one something to talk about, qualitatively and quantitatively! Cf. Matt. xvi, 18f.; 2 Cor. v, 21; 1 Tim. iii, 16; Rev. xxii, 17. In preaching on texts like these I do not believe in preparing the sermon first and consulting the commentaries afterwards; Spurgeon's secretary used to arrange for him around his room every commentary and reference work dealing with his text, and the great preacher would read them all before even considering his outline. The example is worth following.

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\* See Prof. Dodd's "According to the Scriptures." Note how modern typologists, in the name of the Epistle to the Hebrews, have related the entire tabernacle cultus to Christ, oblivious apparently that in Hebrews, Christ fulfils the priesthood foreshadowed by Melchizedek and by-passes the Aaronic.

† For an interesting example of what is involved, see Brunner's *Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, in which he turns to John i for the doctrine of Creation before he treats of Genesis i, and to the New Testament teaching on sin before he goes to Genesis iii. The method needs care in use but something like it seems demanded if we really believe that theology should be consistently *Christocentric*.

(ii) *Preach on big themes that demand Biblical treatment.* Consider the kind of series suggested by the British Council of Churches for the Bible Weeks, e.g., "God has spoken and is still speaking to the Individual"; "God has spoken and is still speaking to the Family"—"to the Neighbourhood"—"to the Nation"—"to the World"—"to the Churches." Themes like this give an opportunity to declare the will of God for life and to illustrate it from all parts of Scripture.

(iii) *Preach on extended sections of the Bible.* The parables of Jesus spring to mind, but there is also a multitude of them in the Old Testament. The Servant Songs of Isaiah, the Prayers of the Bible, the Sermon on the Mount, or even the favourite chapters of your people, could all be treated with profit in the pulpit.

(iv) *Venture to take a series of studies on an entire book of the Bible.* This can be done either in detail, in the case of shorter writings, or by taking broad surveys of larger works. In the case of the longer books of the Bible the latter method would seem to be necessary, yet how profitable it would be to give your people studies in Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, in Matthew or Acts! There is great advantage in such a procedure, for :

(a) It provides the minister with a plan of campaign for a considerable period and relieves him of anxiety as to subjects for preaching. It also gives the congregation the satisfaction of feeling that they are getting somewhere in their understanding of the Bible.

(b) It enables the preacher to avoid the inevitable temptation of concentrating unduly on matters that appeal to him.

(c) It provides opportunity for dealing with the whole gamut of human experience, its joys, trials, victories and failings. This last is of importance: a congregation cannot charge its minister with preaching at them if very pertinent passages occur in a book being studied!

(d) It gives the minister peculiar authority in his preaching, first because he is making himself the mouth-piece of the Word of God, secondly because he is dealing with that in which he is the best informed of men. In other subjects, he is liable to be caught out, for at best he is an amateur student in them; in this field he is, or should be, an expert and has been trained for this above all else.

In a day of calamitous ignorance of the Bible, and when it is urgently needed, the minister has an opportunity of speaking the Word with the authority of the Spirit. It will make greater demands upon him than more conventional methods, but if he does it reasonably well he will have grateful congregations. Whatever method he employs, let him not neglect to declare the Word which is able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

## NATURE AND MAN IN BIBLICAL THOUGHT

LUTTERWORTH LIBRARY, Volume XL

by E. C. RUST, M.A., B.D., M.SC., A.R.C.S., D.I.C.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, U.S.A.  
(Lutterworth Press, 31s. 6d.)

THIS book by Eric Rust is a valuable study in Biblical Theology, obviously based on original and careful research of the Bible, the thoroughness of which is demonstrated in the index of Scripture passages cited. At the same time the author approaches his theme with strong theological presuppositions of Divine Transcendence. For the writer, Biblical history is unique, and is the key to all history. "This record of the saving activity of God as disclosed to faith unlocks the meaning of all history" (page 3).

Alike in his attitude to the culture of the world in which Biblical thought arose, and that of the modern scientific era, the writer is at pains to demonstrate that Biblical thought transcends the wisdom of this world. "There are truths and categories which modern science cannot and has no right to challenge" (page 18). It is not that faith contradicts the discoveries of man, so much that it gives *insight* into the meaning of the facts. If there is any clash between science and religion it is not with science, *qua* science, but with certain scientific philosophies which are mechanistic, materialistic and naturalistic. While, for example, the Genesis story of Creation may need some correction in the light of modern scientific evidence, this evidence must be interpreted in the light of *imago dei*.

The author sets out the pagan myths beside the Genesis stories, and in his thorough examination of these documents he notes the contrasts as more significant than the similarities in the Bible. "We have no pagan naturalistic monism but a majestic Theism in which Yahweh has created the natural order and all thoughts wait upon Him" (page 43).

In the closing chapter, it is noted that modern scientists have turned from deism to some conceptions more compatible with the theistic belief in God's continuous activity in creation. This is the Old Testament view. God is continuously working in His world, and He will not permit His Creation to dissolve in a chaos of judgment and leave it there. Eschatology has its roots in God's dealing with His people in history.

There is a valuable discussion on Biblical miracles. In so far that modern science is discarding the notion that the laws of nature are fixed and unalterable for the more tentative view of them as no more than observed regularities or statistical averages, we are coming nearer to Hebrew thought. For there is no deistic delegation of Divine powers to secondary causes in the Bible, no

distinction between the natural and the supernatural: everything is miracle (God's activity) or nothing is miracle (abnormal) according to our definition of terms. "Once the divine grace has opened our eyes as the eyes of the Apostles were opened, we shall not be able to deny that our Lord wrought Messianic signs, although, on the level of criticism, we may differ as to exactly what was the original contents of the events recorded in the Gospels" (page 186).

The author's indebtedness to Dr. Wheeler Robinson is manifest, and his collation of familiar material is valuable. It is surprising that he passes over the Old Testament development from corporate solidarity to individualism in a page, whereas both the Hebrew and the Greek terms for the constituent elements of personality are most carefully analysed.

Similarly in New Testament material, the book brings together ideas familiar to us. Christ demonstrates the power of the Kingdom alike by His miracles and by His preaching. His mighty works are not attempts to impress the curious, but the expression of His Person and His ministry to those who have faith. The Incarnation is a unique event. Parallels to New Testament thought in the Wisdom literature, Philo, the Hermetica, and in Stoic writings are noted, but there are differences. "Whilst St. Paul makes use of a common atmosphere of thought we must not regard this as the source of his conceptions, but rather as a convenient mode of expressing a conviction borne in upon him by his experience of the Risen Lord" (page 207). This chapter on "the Old and the New Creation" takes within its comprehensive scope man's relation to his natural order, an analysis of the New Testament conceptions of personality, man's corruption, Christ's redemption of man and of the cosmic order, and the gift of healing.

A few pages (too few, alas) are given to relating the theme of the book to modern science. I hope this rapid survey will be elaborated in a later book. The breakdown of mechanistic causation, new scientific theories of emergent evolution, Whitehead's suggestion that creativity is the common stuff out of which both the world and God emerge, and Thornton's attempt to "give Whitehead's humanistic and pantheistic tendencies a theistic transformation" (page 271) are shown to indicate significant trends. Yet while scientists are confronted with flux in the hinterland of the microcosm, the Christian penetrates in faith to the final causes which science cannot uncover. "The only alternative to a doctrine of materialism and blind chance is some form of *creatio continua*" (page 272).

Here we have an outstanding combination of analysis and synthesis, almost bewildering in its range of topics, yet with a clear and strong faith in the creative purposes of God which gives unity and theme to Mr. Rust's book.

N. S. MOON.



## THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE

by H. H. ROWLEY.

(The Carey Kingsgate Press, 201 pp. 15s. net)

THIS is the kind of book for which many have been looking for a long time. It more than fulfils all expectations. We have had far too few books by first-rate Baptist scholars published by our own denominational Press. Here is one which in subject matter, content, form and printing is excellent. Both Dr. Rowley and the Carey Kingsgate Press deserve congratulation on the achievement.

The book contains the W. T. Whitley lectures delivered at Regent's Park College, Oxford, Rawdon College, and the Julius Brown Gay Lectures delivered at Louisville, Kentucky. The lectures deal with The Bible—its Unity in Diversity, The Law and the Prophets, God and Man, The Fulfilment of Promise, The Cross, and The Christian Sacraments.

The unity of the Bible Dr. Rowley describes as a dynamic unity, not static. This dynamic unity does not regard the whole of the Bible on a flat level of inspiration and authority or give equal value to each part. There is development of its continuing thread which is both the divine revelation and also the divine redemption.

In the opening chapter he traces some of the strands of this developing revelation in Monotheism, Ethical Religion, Election, Redemption and the Covenant. Frequently Dr. Rowley appeals to the argument of history as the fulfilment of prophecy and promise which cannot be explained away either by coincidence or by saying that the recorded prophecies reflect the later fulfilment. Only when both promises and fulfilment are seen as the activity of God have we a sufficient, satisfying and scientific explanation.

The chapter on the Law and the Prophets is of special importance because it corrects the exaggerated antithesis which former scholars had seen between the Law and the Priests and the Prophets. It may be that Dr. Rowley tones down too much the tension between priest and prophet, a tension which is not confined to Judaism, for in all religion the priestly element tends to run in the direction of formalism, magic and ritual, from which it is recalled only by a sharp prophetic and ethical reaction.

The bond between the Testaments Dr. Rowley shows is paradoxically that which distinguishes between them. The New Testament is not simply a flat development of the Old. It is development with a difference, marking a new start which would nevertheless have been impossible without the Old. The fundamental characteristic is the same but is expressed in a new revelation. It is in a Person.

Readers will find the chapter on the Cross full of inspiration both for mind and spirit. It will make them want to preach the

Cross again with renewed certainty both in its meaning and its power. Dr. Rowley does not attempt to give a full interpretation of the Cross but he does "open up the Scriptures" and show how Christ must be delivered up and die and what His death achieved. In the Old Testament teaching about sacrifice as seen at its highest in the Suffering Servant, Dr. Rowley finds a corrective to the modern emphasis on the Abelardian interpretations of the Cross.

Baptists will look with special interest on the chapter on the Christian Sacraments. Dr. Rowley reviews extensively what writers of other communions have been saying about Baptism and gives answers to many of them. His most cogent weapon, however, is his theme of the whole book, for in it he shows the relevance of redemption and revelation, of man's necessary response in faith, and of the personal and ethical nature of religion to the sacraments of believers' baptism, and the covenant service of Communion.

The footnotes and bibliography by themselves make the book worth the money. They provide an extensive list of works by biblical scholars, British, European and American, over the past years. It is a tribute to the scholarship of the author that he is able to give such a list of books and such extensive and relevant quotations. The late Dr. Wheeler Robinson once remarked to the reviewer that the reading of William James's "Varieties of Religious Experience" set him reading at least thirty other books. It will be surprising if Dr. Rowley's book does not do the same for his readers.

For ministers this book is a necessity. Furthermore, it is packed with homiletical material. Sermons stand out not ready-made, but in essence; not on pretty themes of moral uplift but on the great themes of our faith—God and man, grace and sin and redemption. Anyone who will work through this book will find himself enriched in his understanding of the faith, and with a new glow and desire to preach the whole Word of God both in the Old Testament and the New. It is the kind of book to spend your book tokens on. It is a book to sell your shirt for.

W. W. BOTTOMS.

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## THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

### *Destination and date.*

Much dispute, but wide agreement, that it was not sent to the old kingdom of Galatia but to the Roman Province of that name. This included Galatia and the parts of Lycaonia, Pisidia and Phrygia, which Paul traversed on his first and second missionary journeys (Acts xiii-xvi). Suggested dates vary from A.D. 48 to 57.

### *Purpose.*

To combat the work of the Judaizers, Christian Jews who (1) questioned Paul's apostleship and (2) insisted that Gentile converts

must be circumcised and keep the Jewish Law. They would make Christianity a sect within the framework of Judaism. (Cp. Acts xi, 1-3; xv, 1-5; Gal. ii, 11-12.) By his insight into the nature of the Gospel Paul liberated the infant Church from strangling, legalistic, bonds.

*Theme.*

We are justified (i.e., accepted by God as His children) by faith in Christ and His work, not by any efforts of our own. Salvation is wholly of God. The redeeming death of Christ has rendered the Law obsolete, irrelevant. The Church of God (i, 13; vi, 16) is a new creation (vi, 15), entirely free from Jewish ordinances. Its one law is the law of love; its one guide the Holy Spirit.

“This remarkable letter constitutes one of the most important documents of early Christianity, and one of the noblest pleas ever written for Christian liberty and spiritual religion.”

E. D. BURTON, I.C.C., on Galatians.

#### i, 1-12: PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP AND GOSPEL

He, like the Twelve, was appointed and commissioned not by men but by Christ Himself (i, 1; i, 15-16; Acts ix, 1-18). The basic truth of the Gospel he preached (4) was the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. (Cp. ii, 20; iii, 1, 13; vi, 14.) We are delivered by what He did, not by what we do. The severest condemnation is merited by those who alter or supplement the Gospel (6-9) because this changes its fundamental nature. Paul's concern is not to get men to agree with him but to win God's approval (10). Preaching the truth more important than winning adherents. His Gospel, like his apostleship, not learnt from men but received from Christ (11, 12).

#### i, 13; ii, 10: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Revealing the Divine initiative in his life, his independence of the influence of the other apostles, together with their approval of his Gospel and his ministry to the Gentiles.

Through Christ God called him, the ardent Jew, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (13-16). The mother church at Jerusalem recognised his call (ii, 7), approved his Gospel (ii, 2), making no addition to it (ii, 6), and welcomed him and Barnabas as fellow-workers (ii, 9).

#### ii, 11-21: THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

Jews forbidden to eat with Gentiles. But if Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles could not eat together, in homes or love feasts or at the Lord's Supper, the body of Christ was divided (Cp. position of inter-communion to-day). The Judaizers would solve the problem by making the Gentile Christians become Jews.

To Paul this demand was not "according to the truth of the Gospel" (14). He reminds Peter of their own experience. They themselves had been justified by faith in Christ, not by works of the law (15-16). The rest of the epistle is commentary on this. (Cp. Romans iii, 5.)

Argument forgotten as he thinks of his own experience. The law no longer existed for him because he was freed by Christ to live in direct relation with God (19). He is identified with Christ, sharing His crucifixion and His life. He lives in Christ and Christ in him (20). If the Law could achieve acceptance with God, Christ's death unnecessary (21).

For the believer's oneness with Christ cp. 1 Cor. xv, 22; Romans v, 12-21; xii, 5; also Romans vi, 3-9; viii, 17; 2 Cor. v, 14-17; Phil. iii, 10; Col. iii, 1-3.

### iii, 1-9: TRUTH OF HIS GOSPEL ATTESTED BY EXPERIENCE AND SCRIPTURE

By faith in Christ crucified the Galatians themselves had received the Spirit, the evidence of their acceptance by God (1, 2), and known His power (5).

This faith relationship is as old as Abraham, who was accepted because of his faith (6; Heb. xi, 8-19). The true children of Abraham are those who share his faith (7). The true heir of the promises is Christ (16) and all who are "in Christ" (not "through Christ" as A.V. verse 14) share in the blessings (9, 29).

### iii, 10-29: THE MANIFOLD WEAKNESSES OF THE LAW

Some of the Rabbinical arguments which follow may not appear to us to be convincing, but it is Paul's conclusions which are important.

The Law brings curse, not blessing, because none can keep the Law (10). Christ, as representative man (Cp. iv, 4), bearing the curse of the Law (13), has made the Law of no significance, and opened the way of faith to Gentile as to Jew (14).

The covenant of promise preceded the covenant of law, and if a covenant made by man cannot be one-sidedly altered or annulled (15) how much more sure is a covenant of promise made by God (17).

The Law was temporary and not the full, final expression of God's will. It was an interpolation to make clear what sin is (19).

The Law did not bring men into the immediate presence of God (19b), and thus could not give life (21; Cp. his own experience, Romans vii, 21-25) though it could awaken to the need of life.

The Law provided a protective discipline (a schoolmaster) which was no longer necessary (24, 25).

The Law was for the Jew only, but in Christ all believers had equal standing (26-28; 1 Cor. x, 17; xii, 12, 13; Romans xii, 4, 5; Col. iii, 15).

## iv, 1-11: GOD'S SONS ARE FREE

Before Christ came men were in bondage "under the elements of this world" (iii, 9; Col. ii, 8, 20). Pagans worshipped angelic or demonic powers thought to control the forces of nature. Much of Jewish ritual linked with nature (e.g., 10), having in this respect affinities with pagan worship. Paul regards their acceptance of Jewish ritual as equivalent to a return to paganism.

His redeeming work has brought us the freedom of sonship (5). By the gift of the Spirit we share God's life and realise His Fatherhood (6) and our freedom as sons and heirs (7). Paul amazed that they think of returning to bondage after such an experience (9).

## iv, 12-20: AN INTERLUDE

He recalls their warm welcome and generosity (13-15), warns them against blandishments (they make much of you, 17), and expresses his own loving concern.

## iv, 21-31: FREEDOM HAS ALWAYS BEEN GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS CHILDREN

He continues the argument with a remarkable example of the contemporary allegorical method of interpreting Scripture. Hagar, the slave-girl, corresponds to the existing Jerusalem. Its children, like her child, are in bondage (24, 25). Sarah corresponds to the heavenly Jerusalem (Phil iii, 20; Heb. xii, 22; Rev. iii, 12; xxi, 2), which is the mother of believers (26, omit "all"). Her sons, like Sarah's child of promise, are free.

## v, 1-12: OUR FREEDOM MUST NOT BE THROWN AWAY

His teaching on freedom is based on his doctrine of redemption. It is Christ Who has made us free (1). To submit to circumcision as essential to full salvation is to deny the efficacy of Christ's redeeming work and to move out of the sphere of divine grace (2-4).

We receive the fullness of righteousness for which we hope, by faith, not by works (5). It is faith which avails, faith "set in motion by love" (6). Probably God's love to man referred to here, not man's love to his neighbour (ii, 20; Rom. iii, 21-26; v, 1-11).

## v, 13-15: OUR FREEDOM EXPRESSED IN LOVING SERVICE, NOT IN SELF-INDULGENCE

The flesh naturally selfish, but "love seeketh not her own" (13). Love fulfills the whole Law (14; Mark xii, 29-31).

But how can the Gentiles live rightly without a law to guide them? [N.B. Paul's amazing confidence that the Spirit is all-sufficient.]

## v, 16-26: THE WORKS OF THE FLESH AND THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

In us there is a conflict between the Spirit and the desires of the flesh. The Spirit, when continually welcomed [N.B. Walk in (16), led of (18), live in (25)] overcomes evil (16b, 17c). A life ruled by the flesh has renounced divine sonship and inheritance (21). A life filled with the Spirit becomes Christ-like in character (22, 23), and, unlike the deeds of the flesh, needs no law to control it (23b). Such a life has its beginning in the believer's incorporation at his baptism in the death of Christ (24; ii, 20; iii, 27; Rom. vi, 6. The tense of "have crucified" denotes one initial act).

## vi, 1-10: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN SOCIAL LIFE

It is the duty of those who accept the Spirit's guidance (i.e., ye which are spiritual) to restore the backslider, with meekness (1), [Is this our normal attitude to lapsed members?] to share the burdens of others (2), to shun spiritual pride (3), to rejoice in good work they themselves have done and not in the superiority of their efforts compared with others (4), to bear their own individual responsibility (5), and to share their material blessings with their spiritual teachers (6; 1 Cor. ix, 11).

Freedom from the Jewish Law does not mean freedom from the moral and spiritual laws of God (7-9).

## vi, 11-18: CONCLUSION

The Judaizers glory in adherents won to Israel (13). Paul glories only in the crucified Lord (14). He is crucified with Christ (ii, 20) and all things in the world which appeal to the natural man are dead things to him, and he is dead to them (14). Not the outward mark of circumcision, but inward regeneration matters (15; 2 Cor. v, 17).

The "stigmata" of the Lord Jesus (17). Used of the owner's brandmarks on his slave. Probably refers to the scars received in the Lord's service (e.g., Acts xiv, 19).

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The relevance of this epistle to many modern issues is obvious, e.g., to Roman claims, to episcopacy, to the nature of the church, to the nature of authority, etc. There are dangers inherent in ecclesiasticism. The Church will always need this epistle, and Luther's, to proclaim its message.

F. BUFFARD.

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

My dear Friends,

ON HEADACHES

At a recent Baptist Union Committee, a member remarked of a particular report "That will give us a headache!"

We, in the denomination's Insurance Company, occasionally get "headaches." They usually arise out of claims—or attempted claims—under boiler and heating policies. I think there is no class of church insurance more misunderstood, and it may be helpful if I set out some of the guiding principles and conditions.

In the event of an explosion of a boiler, the Board of Trade can hold an enquiry, and, if negligence be proved, the costs of the enquiry and the reinstatement of the third party damage would fall on the owners. Should fatal injury follow an explosion and negligence be proved, those responsible for the boiler could be charged with manslaughter. **Failure to have the plant regularly examined by a competent engineer might be held to be negligence.** That is why the first and primary cover of a boiler policy provides for regular inspection by Engineers holding First Class Board of Trade Certificates. The second cover is indemnity for the consequences of **explosion**, and this cover includes repair or replacement of the boiler, compensation for damage to the property of the Church, and all liability to third parties for personal injuries or damage to their property.

Many churches limit their boiler insurance to the foregoing which is obtainable at the minimum premium. It is here that our "headaches" originate, because, in due time, a boiler will suffer from old age and the wearing out of parts, and cracking and fracturing, the result of ordinary wear and tear, are not an "explosion." It is impossible to insure for the replacement of worn-out parts or the purchase of a new boiler, but it is possible to insure against cracking and fracturing and other risks. That is why when consulted we tell church officers they can have a policy covering the following alternatives:

- (a) Inspection and explosion.
- (b) As in "a," and cracking and fracturing.
- (c) As in "b," and replacement of defective boiler nipples.
- (d) As in "c," and explosion, cracking and fracturing of connected pipes and radiators.

Church officers usually select "a," as the premium is minimum. "Headaches" begin when a section wears thin and a crack develops, or when a connected pipe cracks. Officers forget the selection made by them or their predecessors, and are disappointed to find their policy is limited to "a."

Boiler claims paid by us to Baptist Churches in the last few months for sections and nipples, include £138; £54 6s. 4d.; £57 18s. 6d.; £35; £20 9s. 0d.; £30 11s. 0d.; £116 0s. 10d.; £100 1s. 5d.; £61 0s. 9d.

It might be well for your deacons to consult us as to the Boiler Insurance of your church.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

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## DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

IT is becoming increasingly evident to-day that our present condition as a Baptist Church is due largely to the fact that either we have not possessed a Doctrine of the Church, or possessing one we have failed to proclaim it.

In his still readable "Lectures on Preaching," John Hutton thanks God for Robert Browning and regrets that for the men to whom he is speaking there is no such correspondingly inspirational source as the background of their work. To-day, however, we can thank God for Biblical Theology, and with its emergence the daily inspiration of a growing, developing, and heartening Doctrine of the Church.

The crux of the modern situation is the question of Authority . . . a question which is bound up with the nature of the Church and with the Ministry as *part* of the Church. Now this is a consideration to which we must attach great importance. As Baptists we regard the Ministry as part of the Church, and not as set over against the Church as do our High Anglican brethren. Readers of "The Apostolic Ministry," the volume of Essays edited by Dr. Kirk, will have noticed that with no single exception each contributor to that volume regards the Ministry as set over against the Church, and it would even appear that the Church was brought into being for the sake of the Ministry rather than the Ministry for the service of the Church. We must see the problem of authority within the setting of the Church and not as something which can be discussed, let alone settled, apart from the general body of believing men and women.

It is a fact to be noted that all the available evidence from the pre-Nicæan period testifies to the choice of the congregation as being of first importance in the appointment of a Bishop and that the Bishop so appointed is the leader of one congregation of Christ's people. In this respect our Baptist practice is in almost complete harmony with the oft-quoted evidence from Hippolytus . . . and thus we have the somewhat amusing spectacle of Dom Gregory Dix citing Hippolytus in support of High Anglican pretensions and succeeding in furnishing Baptists with added strength to their position. Even so, we must here make a necessary reservation, however difficult such a reservation may be: the Baptist Minister is called of one congregation but surely he does not cease to be a Minister of the Word and Sacraments when he moves about in the Denomination. His call is a call to exercise a ministry in one particular place, but unless he possessed a ministry to exercise, even that one particular place could not make him a minister.

But our Baptist approach to a Doctrine of the Church must not only be critical of the theories of High Anglican scholars; it must also seek to repair the weaknesses in our own system, and in regard to this it must be stated emphatically that by over-stressing the so-called democratic character of the Church and Ministry we



succeed only in robbing the Ministry of any effective authority and deliver it bound hand and foot to the financial considerations of our brilliant laymen. That the members of any fellowship should imagine that having called a minister they have made a minister and therefore can also unmake a minister is surely false to the Biblical evidence for the nature and purpose of the Church.

Bernard Manning, speaking at an Ordination Service in a Congregational Church, said: "The things that make a good minister of Jesus Christ come from God most high: you can neither bestow nor take them away. The weakness or the strength, the coldness or the devotion of the Church that ordains, affects not in the least the validity or the fulness of the august commission that a minister receives. At your hands indeed he receives the commission; but it is Christ's commission, not yours; and it comes from Christ, not you. When your minister speaks, mark whose word it is that he speaks. You do not hear an echo of your own voice. It is the Word of God that he proclaims. The minister is not the creation of the Church. The Church is sometimes his creation."

Our Baptist Ministry is sufficiently democratic. Our weakness does not lie in that direction. Our weakness lies rather in the fact that we have failed to stress the Divine character of the Church, and in consequence have tended to regard the Church as a human, man-made institution. This serious defect is seen especially and most significantly in our Baptist and Congregational polity as reflected in the behaviour of certain members of the Church. They regard the Church, consciously or unconsciously, as a field for the exploitation of their personal talents and they can on occasion withhold their service as a mark of their personal displeasure. They can attend the worship of the Church or they can abstain, according to their prevailing mood, thus revealing that they possess little or no conception of the importance and the eternal purpose of the Church. As Baptists we lay great stress on the Revelation of the Will of God as contained in Scripture, and we profess to accept the guidance of that revealed will of God not only in personal experience as believers, but also in the corporate life of the Church. This ought to mean not that we regard the New Testament as a Divine blue-print of ecclesiastical polity. No sure Doctrine of the Church can be arrived at by those who so regard Scripture. With this most necessary reservation we shall do well as Baptists to give full weight to the Pauline conception of the Church as the Body of Christ, and ever to remember that for Paul the fundamental idea is that of Covenant. If we do so, I personally cannot see how we can avoid the conclusion, shunned by so many, that the Church, as the Body of Christ, is the continuation of the Incarnation. In the realm of practical politics this means that we regard the service of the Church as service rendered to the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ our Lord. To serve the Church is to serve Christ and to fail the Church is to fail, not the local minister, but Christ Himself.

Recently there have been issued translations in English of Kittle's great "Bible Key Word" Series. In the small but important book on the word "Church" by Karl Ludwig Schmidt that scholar makes this statement: "The true meaning of the gathering of God in Christ can never be understood from the standpoint of social science. The one essential is communion with Christ." Perhaps our first task as ministers is, somehow, some way, to get across to our members this fundamental truth regarding the Church.

In the New Testament, the Apostles exercised authority in the Church, and with the consent of the Church. They were not a class apart, a kind of College of Cardinals; they were a vital part of the Church fellowship and their authority came from the Head of the Church, and this authority was confirmed in the experience of the Church. In a similar way the Baptist Minister receives his authority from the Head of the Church, and this authority is confirmed and should be accepted by the body of believers. It is an authority to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments and to exercise, in the name of Christ, pastoral oversight in the Church, and all this in virtue of three necessities:

The Call of Christ ; Adequate Preparation ; The willing consent of the members.

Omit any of these three necessities, stress one at the expense of the others, and the result is a defective Doctrine of the Church and Ministry. In regard to the first we accept the evidence of the man himself; in regard to the second we are increasingly aware of the necessity of adequate theological training, even and maybe most especially for those men who, through no fault of their own, have been denied the stimulus of such a place as this. The third we have still to educate. It is not enough that members vote at a Church Meeting; that is democracy at its lowest. They must vote with understanding, with insight, and with humility. They must believe in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, even in Church Meetings.

When our High Anglican brethren tell us that our ministries are irregular then we must reply that in all charity, so, too, are theirs. That is, they, too, are irregular when judged by standards which they themselves have set up. On any rigid theory of Apostolic Succession their orders are as invalid as ours. Nor can we see what lasting good could be secured by our accepting into our poor system that measure of Episcopacy which they demand, especially when episcopacy can be so variously defined, if defined at all. The only worthy Apostolic Succession is that long line of believing men and women who have accepted Christ as their Saviour, who are loyal to what the Apostles taught regarding Him, and who are willing to be led of the Spirit into an even fuller truth than the Apostles themselves knew.

The concept of the Church as the Body of Christ, founded on a Covenant basis, must eventually lead us to out-grow our ideas of independence, and each congregation of Christ's people would

come to regard itself not in splendid spiritual isolation, but as part of the Body of Christ from which whole it would derive greater strength and a more sure and adequate witness. We should, in time, drop the plural "Churches," which step Paul took, and speak of the Church. Nor should we need to fear any harmful consequences which sometimes follow from a stressing of unity which involves a strengthening of the Baptist Union as an organisational necessity. For the necessary machinery of the B.U. would operate as part of the Body of Christ and would itself be subject to the critical apperception of the members of the Body. One thing is very certain: in this modern world the early nineteenth century ideas of independency are not only inadequate to meet the new situation but they are also inconsistent with the Biblical Doctrine of the Church. It is surely a vain thing to talk about the guidance of the Spirit which comes from a scholarly devotion to Scripture, and then fail to carry out the implications of the truth thus revealed unto us.

The authority of the Minister is the authority which comes from Christ Himself, and he exercises that authority, in humility and in love, by the consent of the members of the Body of Christ, who are in Christ covenanted together to work through the Church for the reign of God the Father, in the hearts and minds of men and women. Thank God that, in our day, we are being given light whereby to serve the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him Who is Lord over all life.

L. G. CHAMPION.

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*Jesus and the Future.* G. R. Beasley-Murray. MacMillan. 25s.

We congratulate G. R. Beasley-Murray on this further contribution to current theological studies. A review will appear in our July issue.

*What Baptists Stand For.* Henry Cook. 228pp. Carey Kingsgate Press. 8s. 6d. net.

That a second edition of this book has been called for so soon is a testimony to its worth. It deals with the Supremacy of Scripture, the Nature of the Church, the Place of Baptism and the Principle of Liberty. Ministers will find it useful not only for their own reading and in preparation for addresses and sermons, but as the kind of book to lend to enquiring members of their congregations, especially more intelligent young people.