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A table of contents for *The Fraternal / Baptist Ministers Journal* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bmj-06.php

CONTENTS

OUR ABIDING MINISTRY

By F. G. HASTINGS, B.A., Minister of Adelaide Place, Glasgow.

AUTHORITY IN PREACHING

By DAVID S. RUSSELL, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Minister, Church Road, Acton.

DOING OF GOD'S WILL AND PREACHING

By CYRIL SMITH, M.A., Minister, Adnitt Road, Northampton.

THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH TO THE DESIGN OF GOD

By GWILYM O. GRIFFITH, Minister, Old Meeting Free Church, Birmingham.

A MINISTER'S LIFE PURPOSE

By G. M. HARDIE, M.A., B.D., Secretary-Elect, B.U. of Scotland.

VAGARIES OF VALUE

By W. E. WHILDING, Minister, West Bridgford, Nottingham.

TENSION IN UTOPIA

By T. TUDOR RHYS, B.A., B.D., Minister, Hinckley.

ART AND MORALS

By MARGARET McLAREN COOK. Research Student in English, Oxford University.

TAO FONG SHAN

By KENNETH E. HYDE, B.D., Minister, Launceston.

EDUCATION

By H. G. LONG, Baptist Minister (Retired), Gosport. Member of Gosport Educational Executive.

OF INTEREST TO YOU

THE WIDER CIRCLE

BOOK REVIEWS

COLLEGE NOTES

The Fraternal

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EDITORIAL

WHO is to be the new Secretary of the Baptist Union? A committee, which includes the officers of the Union (apart from Mr. Aubrey), representatives of the General Purposes and Finance Committee, and of all the Areas, has been set up to present, in due course, a recommendation to the Baptist Union Council.

There is a good deal of eager discussion and speculation in the country on this theme. Those who are in touch with younger ministers and laymen know that there is among them a quite painful suspense as they await the news as to who is to lead the denomination in the critical years ahead.

It is a truism to say that the appointment is vital, but there is, perhaps, value in making the point. Our denominational life was never less static than to-day. We are moving from Independency, interpreted as isolation, into an era of increasing solidarity among the churches. There are important new factors in the religious situation in Britain, notably in the coming into being of the British Council of Churches and the World Council. These matters call for Christian statesmanship of the highest order. The shape of things to come in the economic sphere is hidden from us, but we cannot lightly dismiss the possibility that the next few years may bring to our ecclesiastical statesmen weighty problems connected with the deployment and maintenance of the ministry.

The new Secretary may well have to grapple with problems of unusual complexity, but he will also enter into a situation of great promise. There is immense vitality in our denomination. Folk do not, for example, wipe out a missionary deficit of £16,000 in a few weeks and then go on to respond eagerly to fresh missionary calls upon their pockets without having a deep concern for the Kingdom of God. We are told that the calibre of the men preparing in our theological colleges is extremely good. Behind them is an army of young men and women in our churches who will respond to inspired leadership. Where is the man who will be able to lead us with vision and power in these great years that stretch out before us?

It is not enough to discuss this or that name. We shall not thus deserve great leadership. The matter must be lifted to a higher level, that of intercession. We, therefore, appeal to our ministers, who occupy a key position in this matter, to give a lead to their people, so that the committee, which has to make the vital recommendation, may be upheld by the prayers of the whole denomination in its quest for a leader.

THE ABIDINGNESS OF THE MINISTRY

“THE ministry goes on.” Such was a simple phrase I heard in a speech paying tribute to the ministry. It is an abiding factor in the Church. For the Roman Catholic that is not surprising, for the church without the priest just could not be. But to Baptists it is different. We have no institutional succession, and no radical doctrine of the ministry. The priesthood of all believers knows no distinction of persons. And there are churches whose tradition is to have no minister. But even those churches sometimes send men into the ministry! Our people are still calling and appointing, and there is no want of those seeking entrance. Although the Baptists are not a priestly Church and although the economic promise is very modest, the ministry still lives on.

Why? There is, of course, a ready answer—“Because it is ordained of God.” But what do we Baptists mean by that? In the common pathway of a minister there are two predominating factors. One is God, Who speaks to him through his private reflections, in study of the Word and in prayer. The other is people, in whose fellowship the purpose is generated and commended, and who finally call him to his task. That is a simplification, but it throws into relief those *objective factors in its creation* that make the ministry an abiding thing. So long as there are communities that accept the Gospel, and follow the New Testament, it is likely that there will arise a ministry, and that God Himself, through His faithful people, will call forth men to leadership.

Turn now to see the impact of all this *within the minister's own mind*. What is the general process that goes on in a minister's mind in his pathway to the ministry? First is the conversion experience, which he shares in common with every genuine Church member, which means that to him life's two greatest constraints are God and his neighbour. But as his purpose for the ministry crystallises, his somewhat normal Christian experience receives a plus. That plus is not vitally different in kind, but it has within it clarification and urgency. And it takes two markedly defined expressions, the prophetic, by which he is urged to speak forth the Word of God, and the pastoral, in which is a tender care for the souls of men.

If he has submitted himself unreservedly to it, it is a profoundly satisfying experience. Not only has his inner questing been resolved by a decision, but the relevance of that decision is to the deepest things his soul can know. The secret of this contentment is the impact upon him of the love of God in Christ—“the Son of God Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” We don't explain the Cross by merely circumstantial factors. Its secret lies in the mind of the Master Himself. It came by the constraint upon Him of the holy love of God for sinful men. Around the table His disciples heard Him say, “As My Father hath loved Me, even so

have I loved you," and it was just to the degree in which those men could enter into the travailing mind behind those words that there laid hold of him the true impulse to be a minister. And it was for that disciple, if I may so term it, an ultimate experience. His soul was at one with reality. Heart, mind and will were united by God's constraint upon him to be the instrument of the great redemptive purpose. I know he was human still, he might fall short, he might let it down, he might even give it up and go back to his secular job. But he would never erase that impress. Peter defaulted gravely, but at the Master's third probing dropped his defences—"Lord, You know everything. It is shamefully unworthy. But despite it all, You know that I love You."

And now to follow the minister to his next stage, *the practice of the ministry*. With the constraint of his inner call, he goes out at the behest of a people's confirming judgment, and witnesses his experience before men. Obviously there must be confirmatory tokens in the responses of people. What are they? I think they are two. First, that through him God manifestly changes and operates in their lives. That implies conversion. If his own experience be true, the minister will be unsatisfied if conversions do not turn the whole person that God Himself has made. Emotion is central and fundamental, because God Himself is love. Ecstatic states are no compensation, and they can be counterfeits. The responding love is "with all the heart," but emotion does not run riot. Truth is there, and moral purpose—"and with all the mind and all the strength." Remember the Cross. Love was there, but it was love that had not flinched to speak the truth, and obey the Will. It is a grand liberation to be freed from sin, but it is not redeeming love unless it begets an honest mind and a holy purpose. Such conversions the minister may only know in modest numbers. But they are fruits whose lasting worth speaks its "Amen" to that inner experience which brought him to his ministry.

And the other response of people is fellowship. A pastor is no pastor whose influence does not bind his folk in love of Christ. Be he only powerful in utterance, he is but a preacher, not a minister. The most responsible part of any man's ministry is the point at which he touches people. "If a man lose his life," said Jesus. This is where the minister loses his life for Christ's sake, in love of his people. And blessed is he that in so doing finds his life. There are tasks in many walks of life that gain their lavish rewards. But most of them are fleeting. It is no cant to say that the minister gets a sure, lasting reward. I should be lacking in insight if I were blind to the discourtesies and unkindnesses that bring travail to a minister's life. They are there, and we all meet them. We may sometimes wish we were not so sensitive. But that minister is poor stuff who is not sensitive, for it is by that that he feels and ministers to the cares and wounds of others. But it is just back to that Cross again. To me the sight of a painted heart upon a crucifix is not only tawdry, but superficial. As if His

heart were some fleshly thing broken by a spear's thrust! His heart was broken because He met sinister folk like ourselves. Only He met more, and deeper in guile. For the hurts of the ministry He bore our Cross. It is no limp faith that can work its way through, but the minister that can see the Master's Cross through his own has his reward, and imperishable it is.

What more? Only to glimpse this conception of the ministry in the minister's two most familiar wider settings.

First, in the life of his denomination. Whenever a community grows it must organise. Organisation implies administration, which demands official capacity. Administrative work is a necessity, and blessed is that community whose officials do their job conscientiously. If you compare the Temple régime with the organised life of the New Testament Church—one is complex, the other is simple; one is weighted with regulations, the other has a marked freedom; one is ruled from without, by the ecclesiastic, the other from within, by the spirit. The important person in the Temple was the priest, whose influence was a cramping restraint; the important person in the Church was the Apostle, whose authority was, first, because he had seen his Lord; second, because of his powers of prophetic inspiration—and his gifts of administration were a most valuable third. So, at any rate, would I think of Paul, to whom the experience of the Damascus Road completely revolutionised his conception of authority. Paul the Pharisee, wielded the outward authority of the institution; Paul, the apostle, the inward authority of influence. "I might constrain, but I would rather beseech."

Leadership, in our Baptist conception of the Church, stands in the New Testament tradition. We are denominationally healthy when authority is the authority of influence, when we have the true sense of God directing our affairs, and a fine spirit of Christian fellowship amongst us. The minister may readily turn scribe or administrator, but let him search himself for the sense of power which is its tempting accompaniment. The light of this conflicting interpretation has been focussed for years on the office of General Superintendent. We have heard its advocacy in the terms of power, complete administrative charge and more and more authority. That may be sound for big business, and the work of God must have its honoured place for business. But we have not so conceived the Church. Our business is primarily with God, and with the lives of men. The Church's need is a prophetic voice; the ministers', a father in God; and the humble folk the understanding care that can weave them into a fellowship. Happily, that is the general mind of our denomination.

Whenever the minister touches the points of wider leadership let him be mindful of that which made him a minister. For, mistake it not, the values of the ministry are primarily, not of office or position, but of "the authority of influence." Take the minister out of the fabric of our Baptist community and, in theory, the

Baptist Church can live. But we may say humbly before God, high place or low in our communion's ordered life, it is still God's charge upon him—be a minister.

And now the other wider setting, the world in which the minister is placed. And what a world! Grim, stark, pagan. Even the great ones seem important, so what can "you in your small corner and I in mine" do about it? It may sound unpardonable presumption, but in our modern world the good and conscientious Baptist minister is a very important person. What are the outstanding things that the thinking, anxious citizen asks of the United Nations? They are two: freedom and decency to your neighbours. I cannot think of any folks' job in the world whose whole function is more radically centralised on that than the Baptist minister. The two typically outstanding names of our story are Helwys and Carey; one, the first martyr for individual liberty, and the other the first venturer in our modern era to declare Christ's world-embracing Gospel. And they were just Baptist ministers. It is their spiritual blood that flows in our veins. They had behind them one supreme sanction—God. To Helwys, freedom was begotten of a great surrender, and a man discovered his spiritual dignity as he knew by faith that for him Christ died. Carey took that liberating truth to darkest outcasting and proved again, as in the New Testament Church, that the kinship of the nations comes most deeply by the redeeming love of Christ.

Christian ministers of every kind are committed to the Gospel, but individual freedom and world salvation are in the central stream of our Baptist history. For these things mankind is not only impotent, but is beginning to see and feel its impotence. Men are not clamouring for us, but deep at the heart of the world's dilemma they are desperately needing us, and the events of the hour are proving that the ministry has no transient place, but one that is fundamental and abiding.

This Baptist ministry, then, is a high calling. How it stands in relation to the historic orders of the Church, and its true place in Christ's own conception of His body, must ever be a matter of keen discussion. Meanwhile, I know only that this high responsibility is of God; that the Gospel is God's redeeming word for a sinful world; and that the pressure of events seems to say that we are sent for such a time as this. He who fulfils his ministry best is he who sees the abiding from the transient, who lives for the great and not the small, whose dignity itself befits the freedom that he preaches, and who, in love of Christ, has a yearning and a kindly care for his fellows. And if in God's good time the great emergence shall come, and men shall discover liberty and love, "the peace that the world cannot give" and "the joy that no man can take away" will be the crowning experience of him who faithfully fulfils his ministry.

F. G. HASTINGS.

THE PREACHER'S MESSAGE—ITS BASIS AND AUTHORITY

“WE speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen” (John iii, 11). If we cannot say that, we dare not attempt to preach the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the result of a divine encounter with my own soul; it is the expression of a living experience which is so vital that it must be proclaimed. But it is equally true that if we declare our own word only, then our preaching is in vain. It is mockery of the Gospel. This word which we preach must, we believe, have some authority which is greater than ourselves and even than our personal experience of the risen Christ of God. But what is it?

The suggestion made in this article is that it is threefold. The authority for the preacher's message (and indeed the norm of all Christian truth) is to be found in Holy Scripture, studied under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, together with the testimony of Christian experience within the Church. It may be very satisfying to be able to find one's absolute authority within the two covers of a book or within the confines of an individual experience of the Spirit, or within the four walls of a church. But to separate any one of these and to accept it as *the* absolute authority in isolation from the others involves considerable dangers. To take them together as the basis and authority of our preached message is to exalt and enhance the value of each.

We Baptists lay great stress upon the authority of *the Bible*, which we claim to be the very Word of God. And how right we are. But how are we to interpret this authority, and in what context?

There are two extreme views which, I would suggest, must be discounted if we are to arrive at a true estimate of the authority of Holy Scripture as the basis of Christian preaching. The first is the ultra-conservative approach which involves a mechanical theory of inspiration, both verbal and plenary, and which is usually coupled with the acceptance of the inerrancy of Scripture. The second is the ultra-liberal view which tends to leave out the divine element altogether from the writing of the Bible and to regard it as a book to be judged and valued by the same tests as any other book. We must conclude that ultra-liberalism, so far as it tends to deny the divine element in the Scriptures, is no less dangerous than ultra-conservatism which ignores the human.

Rather, we must say that the Bible is authoritative because as a unity it is the record of God's great revelation of redemption through His chosen people, Israel, culminating in Jesus Christ, His Son. It is a record which, during its course, uncovers many imperfections of faith, but which, under the guidance of God, leads at last to His supreme revelation of Himself in our Blessed Lord. The preacher bases his message on Scripture and finds here inexhaustible stores of divine truth because it is the unique record

of the redeeming love of God in which God is seen drawing near to men in Jesus Christ, and declaring to us in Him His will for our salvation. It is the entire Bible, taken as a unity, that is the record of this revelation, and it is in virtue of this that it is inspired and must be held to be authoritative as the Word of God.

But how is this authority to be interpreted? We do well to remind ourselves here of the words in 2 Peter i, 20, "No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation," where the word "private" signifies "out of one's own head" and is the opposite of "authoritative" or "inspired." (Cf. Moffatt's commentary *in loc.*) The writer is here warning his readers against the dangers of unauthorised interpretation of the Old Testament, and makes reference (in iii, 16) to those who are in the habit of twisting Scripture to suit themselves. The Scripture, he says, cannot be interpreted or understood apart from the Spirit, the implication being that the Spirit belongs to the Church with its apostolic witness. The Bible—the Spirit—the Church.

In my seeking the message of God for the people, I must seek it not by human means only, but under the guidance of *the Holy Spirit*, and in my preaching that message I must declare it with the authority of the Holy Spirit. It must not be my individual interpretation of Scripture—"out of my own head"—it must be one which is given by divine inspiration. It is the spirit that "takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us." "The Bible," says Dr. Wheeler Robinson, "is written in invisible ink until its hidden characters are brought out by the warmth of personal experience." (R.I.O.T., p. 232.) And that personal experience is possible only as we submit ourselves to the leading of the Spirit. In all true preaching, then, we speak not only with the unction but with the authority of the Spirit of God.

But by this is meant not that the authority of our preaching is simply that of the *individual* under the direction of the Spirit of God. For if it is so regarded, then grave dangers may well emerge. An illustration may help to bring out this point. I remember speaking to a saintly soul who combined in a curious way a real spiritual experience with a strangely psychic temperament. Two things she said about her relationship with her Lord are of interest here. First, the Master, in private conversation with her, said many things which were contrary to the New Testament; she was bidden to accept His spoken word in preference to the word of Scripture. Second, she could not worship in church because her conception of God and of Jesus Christ there presented did not correspond to her own interpretation or experience of them. She accepted her personal experience before the Scriptures and the Church. Its authority for her was absolute and final. Here is an example of individualism run riot in the name of personal direction by the Holy Spirit of God. And yet there is something akin to this attitude in the minds of not a few Christian people to-day.

The authority by which we preach is the Holy Scripture enlightened by the Holy Spirit. But it is more. We must add: "Together with the testimony of Christian experience within *the Church.*" There is a spiritual individualism which borders dangerously on spiritual isolationism and which is contrary to our New Testament commission. According to the New Testament the sphere of the Spirit's operation is the Church, and where the Spirit is given to individuals it is by virtue of their association with the Church. In the New Testament there is a high conception of the Church because there is a high conception of the function of the Holy Spirit. Our preaching of the Scripture must be as members of the Church and as ministers of the Church and with the authority of the Church if it is to carry with it the authority of the Spirit.

For the Roman Catholic the authority of the Church is to be found in the dogma of Church Canon, which takes a place of equal authority alongside Jesus Christ and the Bible, as a means of divine revelation. For the Protestant, the authority of any creed or dogma is more limited, and is definitely subordinate to that of Holy Scripture; and yet we must maintain that it is within the setting of the Church that we are to find and interpret the preached message which we base upon Holy Scripture, for it is within this holy community that the Bible has arisen and been preserved, and as part of the Church's heritage that its message has been declared. The Bible is the Word of God because it is the Book of the Church, and the preaching of the Bible must be part of the living witness of the Church: i.e., it must carry with it, if it is to be true Biblical preaching, the authority of the Church. Preaching must be personal, but it can never be individual in the sense that it is the preacher's own word only. It is the voice of God speaking through his voice as a mouthpiece of the holy Church.

This question of the authority of the Church in preaching raises the complementary question of the necessity of the preaching ministry to the existence of a true Christian Church and, vice versa, the necessity of the Church to express itself through such a ministry of the word. We recall here such a statement as that made by an earlier Baptist, Hercules Collins (1792), that "There is a necessity for a Gospel-Ministry." May it not be that we modern Baptists have lost something of great worth in having neglected this conception of "high Churchmanship," so evident among the Baptists of, say, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? We may find reason to criticise the "orders" of ministry in the Anglican Church or the Roman Church, or the "licensing" of men to preach in the Presbyterian Church, but may it not be that we ourselves are too haphazard in this respect? Is it not time that we took more seriously, as a denomination, the status and function of our preaching ministry, and saw in it more clearly not just the call of a man to a local Church and by a local Church, but the commissioning of a man by and for the wider fellowship of the Churches of our faith and order? The presence at an

ordination or recognition service of representatives of this wider fellowship, and the fact that when a man is ordained in a local Baptist Church that ordination is held to be valid for all other Baptist Churches, are pointers in the right direction; but perhaps their significance is not sufficiently realised. Our preaching ministry, because it is a ministry of the Holy Spirit, is a ministry of the Church.

As Baptists we are proud of the place which we have always given to the authority of the Bible as the revealed Word of God. But surely it is a strengthening, and not a weakening, of our position to realise that this same Bible is self-authenticating only for faith (*viz.*, the faith bequeathed by God to the Church) through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Bible—the Spirit—the Church. As the basis and authority of our message these are, ultimately, not three, but one.

D. S. RUSSELL.

THE DOING OF GOD'S WILL AND PREACHING

IF it is true, as the now Bishop of Southwell maintains and this essay assumes, that "it is the most important of questions for those who would walk in the way of discipleship to discover what the Father's Will is" (F. R. Berry, "The Relevance of Christianity," page 157), one can also conceive the most effective evangelism of the Church to-day to consist in Christian men seeking to do God's will in their daily lives and so bearing witness to the reality of the faith. The Gospels reveal Jesus as One Who lived under the compelling direction of the will of God with which He willingly co-operated. His life was "a life of daily and hourly waiting upon the Father in order to find and to do the Father's will in the circumstances of life as they came to him" (Hodgson, "Doctrine of the Trinity," page 42), and Professor Hodgson goes on to show that this was also the ambition of Jesus for His followers, that they, too, should seek to know and do the will of the Father in the guidance and power of the Spirit, while He taught His disciples to pray that God's will might be done on earth, and "the primary reference must be to the life of him who prays, if the prayer is to be at all sincere" (Manson, "The Teaching of Jesus," page 280). But not only is this obligation laid upon those who would follow Jesus, the witness of Christian men and women doing God's will, "even that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans xii, 2), in their private ambitions and disappointments and sorrows, in their homes where the conflict between loyalty to God and that to husband or wife, parents or children, can be very real, and the stuff of tragedy, and in their places of work and business, both in their relationship with their fellows and in the quality of their workmanship, such witness is at once a

challenge to the present moral decline and the most effective evangelism open to the Christian Church.

This is one of the practical implementations of the Protestant Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, with its concomitant idea of the denial of a false distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the priest in holy orders and the layman engaged in the business of the world. Indeed, and it belongs essentially to our Baptist tradition: there should be no such person as the layman, we have all been made "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. i, 6). Paul was very concerned to stress that he was called to be an apostle by the will of God, but a man must be certain that he is called of God to be a minister of the Church, and that it is not rather God's will that he should continue in his present calling, which is also of God, where God has a purpose and a work for him to do and a witness to make. The will of God must not be conceived solely in terms of "religious" observances and devotional exercises. "The world requires all sorts of people for the development of the coherent good life, and it is a narrow point of view which would ignore the necessity of having good doctors and good poets and even good engineers . . . What the saint actually does may belong to himself alone, but the spirit in which he does it should be manifested in a different way in all the various avocations and pursuits of men." (Paton, "The Good Will," pages 434, 435.) The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, together with this conception of the sacred nature of all life, carries with it the obligation for all believers to do the will of God, and is a challenge to the secular materialism of the age, and a source of evangelical Christianity.

The will of God, as the New Testament makes abundantly clear, has an ethical and moral content. It is that which is "good and acceptable and perfect," and all three terms have a moral reference. *To agathon* is used of "that which, in itself good, is also at once for the good and advantage of him who comes in contact with it" (Cremer, quoted Abbott-Smith, "Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament"), and in Paul it is qualified by *to sumphoron*, that which is advantageous to the community as well as to the individual. As to *to eaureston*, both in Jesus and in Paul we find the idea of not pleasing ourselves. The Christian seeks above all else to please God and to subordinate his own private interests to the well-being of the community he is seeking to serve. The kingdom of God is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans xiv, 17), and he who in this serves Christ and obeys Him is acceptable to God, that is, he who is righteous and conciliatory and charitable towards others, not harshly emphasising his Christian freedom, while "to be eager to satisfy Christ is at once the condition of true penitence and of the only kind of conscience which is no longer at the mercy of what other men think right and good" (Strachan, 2 Corinthians, page 104). The third term, *to teleion*, that which is perfect, is

not the mystical perfection of the initiate in the mystery religions, but a moral perfection which will be revealed in a man's relationship with his fellow men. In Paul, the *tebeios* is the mature Christian who will do the "perfect" thing, the Ideal, and it was Paul's aim to raise all Christians to this normal and ideal standard (Colossians i, 28). Equally there is laid upon us as ministers the obligation of inculcating this necessity of men doing the will of God.

This does not mean, however, that our preaching will be simply moral exhortation and ethical teaching, though there is need of that. There is even a greater necessity that our preaching shall be theological and evangelical. Paul cites several catalogues of actions and states of mind which are right or wrong, and those that are morally wrong cannot be God's will for any man, but he himself confesses that while he knew what was good and right, and that he hated the wrong, yet he was powerless to perform the good and do the right thing until God in Christ gave him the victory. The Christian life does not consist in obedience to a code of laws, it is life lived in the Spirit. Each man must seek and find and do the Father's will in the guidance and power of the Spirit. This does not mean unbridled individualism, for the Christian man lives not only *kata Christon* but also *en Christow*. It is "in Christ," in the Christian Fellowship where Christ's Spirit is the source of inspiration and power that the Christian man learns what is required of him in moral behaviour. And within the framework of Christian worship the preaching has its appointed place. But if we are to lead men and women to make the doing of God's will the supreme thing in their lives, it will be not by telling them the details of God's will for them, an impossible task, but by making them more aware of God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They must be brought to an awareness of God the Father and Creator, Whose world it is in which we live, Whose purpose is over everything, Who, in Professor Farmer's phrase, is Absolute Demand. They must be led into the experience of the love of God in Christ, Who is not only our Example but more so our Lord and Saviour, the Final Succour of our lives. They must be made aware of the reality and power of the Holy Spirit Who is the revealer of God's will, Who empowers men to do that will. Dr. Wheeler Robinson has told how, in a serious illness, the truths of evangelical Christianity failed to bring him personal strength. "The figure that presented itself at the time was that of a great balloon, with ample lifting power—if only one had the strength to grasp the rope that trailed down from it." ("The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit," page 4.) He found the lacuna in his conception of evangelical truth in a relative neglect of the New Testament conceptions of the Holy Spirit. How many people must confess that they have "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost"? The doing of God's will follows from a trinitarian faith, and this requires of the minister the preaching of the doctrine of the Trinity, which, as Canon Hodgson is at pains

to insist, is no mere academic interest of the theologian nor a metaphysical doctrine that has no relevance to the lives of men and women, but has important practical consequences for the prayers and conduct of the believer. There must be the apprehension of God the Father and Creator, the work of Christ preceding the works of man, the possession of the Holy Spirit to guide and empower a man's life, before a man can know and do the will of God in his daily life. The supreme task of the Christian preacher, then, must be evangelical and theological preaching, evangelical because theological.

CYRIL SMITH.

THE CHURCH'S WITNESS TO THE DESIGN OF GOD

IT seems that if we have no theology we must have some mythology or ideology to take its place, and this alternative is being forced upon us to-day.

War propaganda is always mythopoeic, and it is so in the present "cold" war between the two power-groups of the East and the West. As Berdyaëv used to complain, the opposition between the two *blocs* is presented, in the propaganda of both sides, as the inexorable conflict between Light and Darkness, Heaven and Hell. Communism and Capitalism are thus identified, like Ormuzd and Ahriman, with the absolutes of good and evil, and our moral frontiers are marked by reckonings of latitude and longitude.

This is the myth, and it means that in the truceless struggle between impeccable righteousness and immitigable iniquity, victory must lie with one or other of the rival *blocs*, and that world salvation and world unity can come only through cataclysm and domination. Such a theory is the spawn of war.

It must be confessed that if our Churches themselves do not accept this myth it will not be the fault of Moscow. A century ago Mr. Gladstone denounced the infamous Neapolitan régime of that time as "The negation of God erected into a system of government"; to-day, the Kremlin junta seems eager to qualify for that description. In any case, the Christian Faith can make no terms with doctrinaire materialism, nor with a solidarist "democracy" whose maxim is, "No opposition outside the Party, and no opposition inside the Party." A "democracy" that recognises only the mass mind, mass movements and mass obedience is incompatible with the personal values and large tolerance of the New Testament.

All the same, our Churches cannot surrender to the propagandist myth in either of its versions. Our theology will not allow us to believe that evil is merely geographical or confined to a particular territorial zone, nor will it allow us to suppose that the sinfulness of sin can be contained within any one political or

economic system. Evil is harmonic and can use opposite means for its own evil ends.

No human system has ever existed that was sin-proof or that could put righteousness into mass production. The supreme tragedy of all history was perpetrated in the name of a system that claimed to be established through the mediation of angels. Some institutions are more compatible with justice, freedom and humanity than others, but that is the most that can be claimed for them. Human greed and power-lust, given the opportunity, will pervert any system for their own exploitive and oppressive purposes, as Moses and Solon must have discovered.

Nothing could be more naïve than the simple faith of Marx and Engels that they had forged a system by which human society could be delivered "once for all from all exploitation, oppression and class distinction"—unless it the faith that competitive Capitalism points the way to the Kingdom of God, and that "liberty," conceived as an end in itself, is the *summum bonum*. The Church has a very different witness to bear, and, if she is faithful to it, she may yet recall a world doddered by mad mythologies to moral reality.

For the Church is not the chartered soothsayer of any ideology and she derives her authority neither from Wall Street nor from the Kremlin. She dare not confuse the spirit of the age or the greed of this world with the Holy Ghost, and she can no more identify Capitalism with the Design of God than she can consecrate materialistic Communism. Therefore, she cannot accept the "Either-Or" of present-day propaganda. She witnesses to world-unity, but to unity through reconciliation and not through domination. Again, to borrow a figure of Berdyaëv's, the Church can be accused of "falling between two stools" only if the assumption is correct that there are no more than two—that is, only if the Church has to choose between the two ideologies because a third choice is ruled out.

What is the New Testament idea for the Church? According to the New Testament, Creation and Redemption are co-extensive, for in "the dispensation of the fullness of times" all things are to be reconciled and "gathered together in one in Christ." The Church is set in the midst of the nations to witness to this creative-redemptive design. Set in a world torn by racial schism and every sort of conflicting interest, she exists as the international society of redeemed humanity, witnessing to a unity and fellowship established not by force but by grace. Without the armoury of temporal power, and recognising no distinctions of race or caste or class, she exhibits her freedom in fellowship and her fellowship in freedom. In this way she witnesses to the all-reconciling design of God as a working reality, and anticipates the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus also she demonstrates to the world that this community-life can exist without the rigours and rigidities

of an imposed uniformity, and that, while the corporate life of the whole society is sacred, the value and dignity of each component group and individual member are likewise sacred.

It is when we turn from this New Testament ideal to our actual ecclesiastical situation that we recognise our tragic need of a re-formation. The pre-condition for a convicted and believing world is the witness of a United Church: "that they all may be one . . . that the world may believe." Nor can we console ourselves as the manner of some is, with the reflection that if only we possess the spiritual unity of the Church Mystical we need not trouble about the visible outward form.

Neglect of the outward and visible body is not Christian but Manichæan and belongs to a spurious spirituality. God has set His Church in a world in which, by His own ordinance, spirit needs the medium of outward form for its self-expression and activity. So long as the Church, as, properly, the united international society of the redeemed, is itself broken up into unreconciled divisions, its witness against world-disunion and dissension is belied and powerless.

Let us confess that it is a tragically complicated problem, and that, for all our Churches, a long and difficult repentance lies ahead; but we need not make it more difficult or more prolonged. And true union, when it comes, will not mean the subordination of many sections to one, but the subordination of all to Christ. We have all heard of the remark of the good priest to the Baptist minister: "You serve God in your way and I in His." The remark would have been no more edifying if the parties to the colloquy had changed places.

Not even Conscience is lord of the Church, as St. Paul was at pains to make plain to us; for conscience, when it assumes supreme prerogatives, becomes divisive. Even the Churches' religious conscience must subordinate its subjective authority to the One Lord and be baptised into Christ, otherwise we only perpetuate the contradictory witness of conscientious factions.

"Divide and rule" was the maxim of the old empires; "Unite and rule" may be the maxim of the new hegemonies; but the motto for our Churches is, "Unite and persuade." For not even a united Church can impose the redemptive order upon the world; it can witness to it and exemplify it in its own united fellowship. A united fellowship produces, in the midst of the secular world, its own Christian culture, and Christian culture, permeating civilisation, may reproduce in it something of the pattern of the Design of God.

The living witness of a united Church to the all-reconciling Word and Work of God is the answer to the divisive ideologies of our day.

GWILYM O. GRIFFITH.

A MINISTER'S LIFE PURPOSE

A FINE aphorism is "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever," and one such aphorism, the creation of a politician once famous, lingers with me in the treasury of the mind. Its words are simple and crisp in character, while the truth it declares is both noble and profound. "A man's life purpose," the expression runs, "should be sought out, thought out and wrought out."

In every life a dominating ideal is as essential as it is desirable; the life without the inspiring dynamic of some definite purpose, and especially some elevated purpose, labours under a crippling handicap, not only in its initial stages, but throughout its whole course. With its eyes on the ends of the earth, and its energies as widely diffused, the contribution it makes to the common good is bound to be nebulous and what it accomplishes of merely transient worth. "He who would shoot effectively must aim at a target," said a shrewd writer once, and the observation has a timeless application. The builder must have his plan, the painter his "dream" picture and the statesman his policy—otherwise the success of the enterprise he contemplates is seriously prejudiced. And the Christian minister is no exception; he, too, if he is to exercise a worthy ministry, must have his vision, the ideal which will capture his imagination and shape the course of his steps.

For the man already in the ministry, of course, the position is rather more advanced. He knows, or ought to know, where he is going. In his case, the period of search, a period marked, perhaps, by agonising struggle, is over, and he has emerged from the conflict with a heart at peace. While the ultimate meaning of things may still be hidden from him, he has found the purpose destined for him from all eternity, and he has found it in the purpose of God in Christ. Responding, therefore, to the call which has come to his soul, and abandoning the prospects and rewards of other vocations, he has taken his place in the ranks of the Lord's anointed, and committed himself irrevocably to the vast enterprises of the Kingdom of God. With the great apostle he has come to say, "To me to live is Christ," and has turned his steps to well-trodden paths, there, with Christ and in Christ and for Christ, to serve his fellow-men.

To be conscious of a life purpose, however, is one thing—to understand it is another, and even for a minister. What does the purpose signify? Does it have particular implications? Where and how, by what means, and in what capacity, can it be accomplished most effectively? These are vital questions which are not lacking in urgency. Hence, the minister's life purpose, like that of any other, requires some thinking out.

What is the life purpose of the man who is set apart to the work of the Christian ministry, the one task which, above everything else, he must fulfil? To this question, Christ Himself has provided

the answer. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The Master's primary purpose, that is, was redemption, and that being so, the servant's can scarcely be less. With religion the highly organised thing that it is to-day, it is true, of course, that the ministry has other activities, activities, indeed, which extend into well-nigh every sphere of modern life, and whose legitimacy is not in question. But the minister who retains his sense of vocation will never confuse the non-essential with the essential. In a deeply significant sense, he is more than "a good man skilled in speaking"; he is Christ's man, and he will do Christ's work, which is the *raison d'être* of his very existence. It is for this purpose he is called, and it is to this end he is sent. The minister's supreme purpose, then, may be defined as a work of meditation, and if he fails in this, he fails in all. To a world which worships at the shrines of materialism, he is commissioned to declare the counsels of the Eternal God, while to sinful and burdened men, he has to proclaim the Gospel of redeeming grace, and commending it with wistful longing, labour in every possible way to defeat the power of sin, and

"Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous
Stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart."

So profound a purpose, of necessity, must be a matter for constant thought; in no other way can its vitality be maintained and its end achieved. In this connection, it is Christ Himself Who speaks the final word. How wonderful was His ministry! So brief in its duration! So amazing in its results! What was it, however, that dictated its methods and course, and, in the end, led to the sacrifice which we love so well? The teaching to the disciples; the friendly and intimate talks; the endless journeyings; the resolve to go up to Jerusalem; and, finally, the acceptance of the cross! Were these nothing more than expedients, dictated by the stress of a passing hour? Were they not, rather, courses chosen deliberately, whose springs lay deep in thought? We sometimes speak of the "years of obscurity," but is it too fanciful to imagine that even in those years, and again and again afterwards, in the cool of the evening, when the work of the day was done, that Christ thought on these things, and pondered them in His heart? Surely not! In any case, the fact that the Saviour's course, once chosen, was followed unswervingly, has its own suggestiveness. It suggests that Christ's life purpose was never absent from His mind, and that early in His ministry, and possibly earlier than we have dared to think, the goal was clear to His eager eye, and the way as clear as the goal. And in these matters "the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." The minister's life purpose must be thought out indeed, both in order that his keenness and conscience may never be lost, and that the purpose itself may attain its finest fulfilment.

But that is to anticipate. The noblest life purpose is quite useless until, as the aphorism puts it, it is worked out. And it is here, perhaps, that the sequence of failures is greatest. All too frequently, visions are fair and ideals high, but the industrious spirit, the activity which alone can give them embodiment, is somehow lacking. How different it was with Christ! With what unflagging energy He laboured, and with what selfless devotion He graced His work? Said Alexander Whyte: "I would have laziness held to be the one unpardonable sin . . . in all our ministers," and with the observation, who will disagree? Laziness and slackness are alike fatal to a successful ministry. A great purpose demands as its accompaniment a great effort; and for the minister of the Gospel, the call is for well-doing without weariness, and for sacrificial service without reserve or stint.

Sought out; thought out; wrought out! But who is sufficient for these things? As the minister pursues his purpose, suppose faith falters and fulfilment tarries? What then? Is a life-time of ministry, for that reason, to be written off as a failure? Happily, it is not so. The minister's sufficiency is of God, and grace and need will always correspond. And, in any case, those who labour in the Gospel are not called to succeed, but to be faithful. Then, with the strength and courage of faithful hearts, let us follow the leading of the Spirit and, at long last, when the toils and trials of the day are over, not only shall we not fail, but we shall stand triumphantly in the presence of the Master, Whose cause we have served with clear eye and faces unashamed.

G. M. HARDIE.

THE VAGARIES OF VALUE

FEW of us now feel that we are getting value for money. Even those whose clear memories go no further back than the years between the wars pathetically long for the days when a more than respectable suit could be bought for £5 and even a fur coat was not entirely outside the reach of working class pockets. But when "fond memory" strays to the remoter past and recalls the time when coal was hardly £1 a ton, and a pennyworth of sweets untold wealth to a lad, then the aged can be forgiven if they declare that we have fallen on evil times.

"Times are not what they were," says Granddad, and, strangely enough for one so old, he is right. Values are not what they were, and may never be again.

We can hardly escape the uncomfortable feeling that we are daily being diddled. Yet the fact is that in the world of industry and trade there are no stable values. Values may change even from day to day; certainly from epoch to epoch. Arbitrarily we may take the prices of a certain year as a standard, against which to compare values of preceding or following years; but that is purely

a convenience. There is no fixed, timeless criterion by which we may judge our material values, not even gold.

Value, in this sense, depends largely upon the amount of goods available, upon the quantity of purchasing power and its distribution and, given these conditions, upon the choices or tastes of the consumers. Even if governments fix certain prices we may still say that economic values are man-made.

Ought this to be said of moral values? Are these relative? Or are there absolute standards by which we may estimate the worth or poverty of man's character?

The relativity of economic values probably has no connection with the fact that the modern mind is so often accepting the relativity of moral values. Yet once it was common to talk about a "just price." That was in despised medieval times when practice rarely equalled precept. But despite all the inconsistencies of that age, in theory, at any rate, economic values, as well as moral values, were at least related to some fixed conception of what was right and just, especially in the sight of God.

The theory of "just price" was discarded in the interests of a quickly growing economy. It could hardly have been otherwise. Who was to judge whether or not a price was "just"? What is more significant is that bit by bit the conviction that there are unchanging moral laws which man ought to obey has weakened, so much so that twentieth century man is unsure about his principles. The absolutists, those who are bold or arrogant enough to say, "Thus saith the Lord," are held to be unscientific and biased in their creed. Well-meaning people they may be, but a hindrance to the moral liberty of their fellows.

In every age there has been the man who would make expediency the test. The sceptic of Ecclesiastes was something of an opportunist, and the doctrine of natural law conceived in ancient Greece was not unanimously approved. Not all agreed with the lines Sophocles gave to Antigone:—

"The immutable unwritten laws of Heaven.
They were not born to-day nor yesterday;
They die not; and none knoweth whence they sprang."

What is new in our situation is not that the fixity of moral values is challenged, but that doubts are so widespread. No longer are they only the subject for academic debate or for an intellectual elite. Many of the people of the "highways and hedges" have abandoned the moral faith of their fathers.

The sociologists, in particular, have made clear the different moral codes and conventions of various peoples at various times; and the lesson we are expected to learn is that it is unwise to talk about right and wrong as absolutes. Who is right? Who is wrong? Are these not relative conceptions, relative to the age, to the state of civilisation, to East or West? What other conclusion

can be reached except that moral laws change and that the fitting code in any particular situation is one which is socially convenient.

Those of us who hold to the Faith are quite aware that moral codes develop. Once unlimited revenge was sanctioned in Israel of old, but a later generation was instructed to take only "an eye for an eye." What seems to be a pressing need is that a clear distinction should be made between moral laws and social conventions. Social habits and customs change from age to age, but can we discern no lasting foundation upon which man has built his moral life? Behind the changing scene of human relationships and the laws by which they are governed are there no indications of some fundamental principles by which man is being gradually inspired?

It is not part of our present purpose to examine these fundamentals, although it seems that such an examination is once again called for in order to meet the questionings of the time. But, to keep within the limits of our theme, to say that man has progressed (and sometimes slipped back) in his moral understanding is not to say that moral laws have no absolute value. It is to admit what is obvious, that human beings have had to discover (as Christians we believe by the grace of God) the laws that make for their own moral well-being. But that does not mean that they have been chasing shadows. Often man has felt himself to be in darkness, but there have been times when he has been sure that he has caught hold of real and lasting substance.

Gold is no longer the almost deified measure of value that once it was, but man at his best knows that the Golden Rule will remain to the end.

But should it once be commonly admitted that our moral judgments have no permanent yardstick by which to be measured; once it is agreed that in the moral realm a yard may be thirty-six inches to-day and forty to-morrow; once man finally abandons his belief in a Divine Law-giver "with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," then is the way prepared for mob rule, for the preposterous claim that "might is right," for the twisting of truth and the advantage of dishonesty, for the concentration camp and gas-chamber, for the violation of all that has seemed sacred and of dignity in the nature of man and woman. And, though this may seem of lesser evil consequence, who could say that the prevailing habit of doing as little as you can for as much as you can is wrong? This may be the proper standard for this age!

In another and less obvious direction uncertainty is leading even Christian people. This is well illustrated by Professor Herbert Butterfield in the first of his recent broadcast lectures. He spoke of the tendency of modern historians merely to record "the observed phenomena, and leaving it for people of all beliefs to make their varied commentaries." Later he said, "And some people have complained that by such a policy they have found themselves doomed to a perpetual relativism, as though between

Christianity and Islam it were a matter of indifference—they have been trapped into a habit of mind which sees no values as absolute in themselves."

Professor Butterfield was not speaking particularly of Christians, but his words are applicable to many in our churches who feel that perhaps after all one religion is as good as another. They have heard that every religion has some fine moral teaching. And they say, "Is it right to attempt to change the ideas of these people?" "If their religion suits them isn't that good enough?" As a university student said to the writer a little while ago, "If some peoples practise polygamy perhaps that is best for them."

Does this explain why the heart of so many churchgoers is not really in missionary work? Many who are persuaded to give their subscription seem to be unconvinced that the "Good News" is for all mankind. Perhaps it is tolerance which encourages such an attitude. Or are we to infer that they are not very sure of the foundations of their own faith?

There we must leave it, with words but lately uttered by Mr. Churchill lingering in our minds. To an assembly in Boston, U.S.A., he said, "However much the conditions change, the supreme question is how we live and grow and bloom and die and how far each human life conforms to standards which are not wholly related to space or time."

To the preacher there is the call to interpret to our age "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

W. E. WHILDING.

TENSION IN UTOPIA

IN a tour of the Utopias one cannot fail to be impressed by the extent to which the ideal has been achieved at the expense of the individual. One sees this if one takes a peep into the Sparta of Lycurgus. (Plutarch's "Life of Lycurgus.") Whenever a baby is born in this Spartan Utopia the fact has to be notified at once. An inspector calls and has the child examined. If the baby does not reach the required standard it is taken away and dropped into one of the gorges of the river Taygetus. If the child is normal the mother may keep it until it is seven years old when it passes into the care of the State. Boys live in companies; they sleep in dormitories and eat at a common table. They are sometimes flogged; many die.

The Sparta of Lycurgus was one of the most perfect organisations the world has ever known; individuals were simply cogs in the machine. The strange thing is that while Athens, the democratic state, became "the mother and nurse" of poets and philosophers, Sparta did not breed an historian to write her history. Sparta is a good example of the saying of Dr. Gilbert

Norwood: "If anything in human affairs is to live, it must be organised; yet organisation kills it."

Lycurgus was one of the originators of our Civic Restaurants. He passed a law forbidding people to eat at home. Anyone coming to the common meal without an appetite would at once be singled out as "an intemperate and effeminate person that was sick of the common diet."

We see the same tension between the good of the individual and the good of the community when we peep into the greatest of all Utopias, Plato's "Republic." One way of classifying the Utopias would be to range them under their authors' answer to the question, "What's wrong with the world?" Plato's answer would be that everywhere things are out of proportion. Everywhere men are putting the emphasis on the wrong things. When he was planning his ideal commonwealth he asked himself the question, "How are separate individuals, who have rights and interests of their own, to be fitted into their proper places for their own good as well as for that of the community? And that, especially in view of the fact that what happens in this world is only a preparation for the eternal world." The result is that in Plato's paradise there is a ruthless cutting down of the individual's private interests. Children, as in Sparta, but for a different reason, are separated from their mothers and placed under the care of the State. "That city is best conducted in which the largest proportion of citizens apply the words 'Mine' and 'Not mine' similarly to the same objects." The guardians and auxiliaries are not allowed to have any private property, only expenses and rations. "No one should have a dwelling or store-house into which all who please may not enter." They must dine in a common mess, and must have no private domestic life. And if any complain that that is a homeless and penniless existence, the answer is: "The welfare of the State as a whole, not of any one class, is the goal to be kept in view."

In More's "Utopia" there is the same tension. The individual has hardly any private life. "All men live in full view." And the tension runs through the whole of history, between self and society, between the individual and the community. Sometimes the emphasis is on the one, sometimes on the other. Herbert Spencer used to say that throughout the ages there has been an evolution from the "belief that the individual exists for the benefit of the state to the belief that the state exists for the benefit of the individual." But that was fifty years ago. How are things now?

At present, here in Western Europe, it seems as though we were having to remind the individual of his duty to the State, whereas in Eastern Europe, the time seems to be coming when the State will have to be reminded that, after all is said and done, there exists such a thing as an individual. The difference comes out in judicial practice. Here, in Western Europe, the view is that it is better that nine guilty men should go free rather than that

one innocent man should suffer. Under the Soviet system the assumption is that nine innocent men should be sacrificed rather than that one enemy of the people should be left at large. There is the same tension in the realm of Christian morality. Two apparently contradictory principles are laid down by Christ. On the one hand, every individual is infinitely precious in the sight of God. Man is never to be regarded as a mere means but always as an end. On the other hand, the individual does not begin to blossom in God's sight until he is willing to sacrifice himself for the good of his fellows. Then there are the two moralities, that of the Decalogue and that of the Sermon on the Mount. They seem to belong to two worlds. In the world of the Decalogue we ask: "How should we behave so that we can all live together in concord and avoid the collapse of the social structure?" In the world of the Sermon on the Mount, such questions do not arise. Here it is the individual who is face to face with God and with the claims of the eternal world. Which, then, is the ultimate, the individual or the community? Is there an individual so that there may be a society? Or is there a society so that there may be an individual?

Perhaps the question should not be put in that form. Perhaps, in that sense, there is no such thing as an "Individual." Man is a system of inter-relationships. Take the Christian virtues. There is not one of them that we do not, as Catherine of Siena reminds us, "exercise by means of our neighbours." Try this experiment: Take a knife and cut away all those delicate fibres or tendrils that attach you to other people until you reach the very core of your being. What is left? The answer is classic: "There ain't going to be no core." One man alone is no man at all. "The mutual dependence of man is so great in all societies (says David Hume) that scarce any human action is entirely complete in itself, or is performed without some reference to the actions of others."

Let us look at the matter from another point of view. If one asks the question, "Does the community exist for the benefit of the individual?" one is faced with the discouraging fact of the moral inferiority of all human societies. The moral level of any human group is always lower than that of the individuals within it, so that, although the individual finds his fulfilment in society, he finds his frustration in society, too. Groups do not readily welcome the individual who rises above the average level of moral attainment. There is one thing that can never happen again, "Christ dieth no more," yet, crucifixions are still fairly common. There is this, too. It is dangerous to try artificially to raise the moral level of any human community. To do so is to encourage lawlessness and crime. One effect of prohibition in the United States was bootlegging and racketeering. And one has only to look "under the counter" to find one effect of rationing in our own country. Many have spoken of the flattening rather than of the uplifting effect of communities upon the individual character.

I can remember only one instance where Christ was severe upon a living individual—"Go and tell this fox"—but I can recall many instances of His severity upon groups and classes: the Pharisees, the Scribes, the Rich. Then there are the foolish virgins, the ungrateful guests and the unfaithful servants. How gentle He was with the little miser Zaccheus and the prostitute! Now, if the effect of communities upon the individual is so harmful, what of the larger community, the Church, and the super-community, the Kingdom of God? Even William James said, "The bigger the (social) unit you deal with the hollower, the more mendacious is the life displayed." Take the Church. The Church is very much of a human community. "Where the Church is there is also a bit of the world," said Harnack. The Church, too, is an organised body, or it could not hold together, much less work together. The Church, too, is a corporation, owning and maintaining property, a business concern, employing labour. The Church is very much of a human society. Is the Church, then, tainted with the virus of all human communities, and will the Church, therefore, go the way of the twenty-six human civilisations which, according to Dr. Arnold Toynbee, have either died or are in process of dying? What is the differentia of the Christian Church? Is it not this: that in the Church the living Christ is spiritually present—the Church is sacramental; above the Church the eternal God is objectively real—the Church is supernatural; for the Church each member is individually indispensable—the Church is personal?

And the Kingdom of God? The head of the community we call the Kingdom of God is the Triune God, and the doctrine of the Trinity stands for the infinite resourcefulness of God, especially in dealing with individuals. For the Triune God there can be no such thing as "an individual," there can be only "this" individual. In other words, God respects, not so much the equalities that make a class as the inequalities that make a person. Pardon a personal illustration. And this is a parable. One night I had a dream. I dreamed that I was dead. I had arrived at the gate of Heaven and was standing in my place in the queue. At last I reached the door. The official gave me a glance and began to read out of a book: "This is the Midland Home Service, and this is the Reverend T. Tudor Rhys, B.A., Wales, B.D., London, Honorary Chaplain, His Majesty's Forces." I could hear the words reverberating through the corridors of Heaven, and when the echo had died down there was a dead silence. Then, from very far off there came an answering voice: "We regret there is no record." I thought that was strange, because I had recognised the grey volume out of which the announcer had been reading. It was the "Baptist Handbook." Evidently the "Accredited List of Baptist Ministers," over which, I had always understood, so much care and thought had been expended, was not held in due regard in the Heavenly places. I remember noting at the time

that I would write up about it when I awoke. When I was trying to puzzle out all these things I became conscious that the Owner of the distant voice had Himself drawn near and that He was looking at me fixedly. Suddenly He gave me a glad smile of recognition and said to me, in a well-loved and well-remembered voice, "Why, Tudor, it's you! Come in, my boy! Come on in!"

T. TUDOR RHYS.

ART AND MORALS

THE relation of art and morals has always been a matter of controversy; but now that the number of those influenced by art through one medium or another is equal to the number of the population itself, the question is of the greatest importance. There are no doubt fewer to-day than twenty years ago who would uphold the self-sufficiency and prime efficacy of art, but it must be realised that, while this may be in one sense a confession of man's inadequacy, from a practical point of view it only accentuates the problem. To hold the doctrine that art and morals are totally unrelated may seem deplorable; but it does mean that a person holding such a view will approach art believing strenuously that what he sees or hears has no bearing on his conduct. He will, therefore, be to some extent disinfected. Such doctrine may well result in the most "immoral" literature but it will probably do little serious or widespread harm—except to art—for it will be largely confined to a circle that approaches art from a detached and technical standpoint.

Like all heresies, moreover, this theory is an exaggeration of a truth. Art is in itself moral or immoral only in its effects. To apply the terms of morality to a work of art itself is an unallowable transference of terms from one field to another. At the same time art does react very powerfully on morals. This distinction appears to me to be important for just and cool-headed treatment of the matter.

Now an artist is not, as an artist, concerned directly with morals. His one purpose is good art—to express skilfully and faithfully an idea or an attitude or an atmosphere. His integrity lies in this. We may criticise his subject but only on artistic grounds. We may say that it is trivial or unnecessarily sordid because that is an artistic judgment, not because it is a moral one. But since the world was created wholly good it seems impossible to believe that art at its highest point can ever be opposed to another kind of good, that is, ethical good. For this reason it is absurd to say, as I have heard it said, "We are interested in moral standards, not in artistic ones." The only standard by which art may be judged is an artistic one; but because the world is a created harmony the artistic judgment will indicate the moral effect.

This is very clearly shown by one of the most notorious of modern books, James Joyce's "Ulysses." In this novel Joyce tries to show the flow of impressions and associations across the minds of certain characters, and the influence of these impressions on their lives and behaviour. When the ban on the book was lifted in 1933, the U.S. Judge said, "If Joyce did not attempt to be honest in developing the technique which he has adopted in 'Ulysses' the result would be psychologically misleading and thus unfaithful to his chosen technique. Such an attitude would be artistically inexcusable." What is also true is that our opinion of the moral effect of "Ulysses" depends wholly on our opinion of its literary merit. If it appears merely formless and obscure, the obscenity will make the only clear impression. But if you find in it an even partially successful experiment carried out with immense skill and power over language, you will also find, I believe, that the effect of the indecency is purgative, and that the whole is caught up into an impression of pity and terror. Moral balance is incidentally achieved in the pursuit of artistic truth. In the same way "Madame Bovary," which is in a sense a sympathetic portrait of corruption, is also the most terrifying indictment of it. This is not only empirically so but also appears reasonable if one holds a Christian philosophy.

The difficulty is that art is dependent not only on its creator but also on the reader or spectator. In the admission that only an artistic judgment is valid, a demand is exerted for artistic discernment. What is to happen to those who lack that particular kind of skill and detachment? They need not, of course, read books of this kind, and many do not. And what of those who do? Is an artist, or is anyone, responsible for the mind that finds means of corruption in good art? Milton, in the "Areopagitica," scornfully rejects this duty; but charity is not perhaps one of Milton's more outstanding characteristics. Even Jeremy Taylor, however, gravely says, "There are some spirits so atheistical and some so wholly possessed with a spirit of uncleanness that they turn the most prudent and chaste discourses into dirt and filthy apprehensions." We must, I think, allow that while we may do our best to increase the moral invulnerability of the public, we must, as Protestants, attack the problem from that end and not by limiting the freedom and responsibility of the individual. "For books are as meats and viands are," says Milton, "some of good, some of evil substance; and yet God, in that unapocryphal vision, said without exception, 'Rise, Peter. Kill and eat, leaving the choice to each man's discretion.'"

So far we have spoken only of high art. Perhaps the most pressing problem, however, and the one most difficult of solution is the enormous output of third rate art whose basic and unquestioned assumptions are wrong. The question of jazz and a certain type of film has been discussed often enough; but the degradingly sentimental view that is prevalent can strike even deeper.

What are we to say of a film such as "The Bishop's Wife," in which angelic virtue, created for the eternal adoration of God, is made to say that he is not allowed to stay any longer in case his affections become unduly engaged—in this case with a married woman. This, mark you, is not a comedy or a satire. It is a film which the audience leaves with the comfortable feeling that it has been imbibing high spiritual truth and what may be vulgarly described as "moral uplift." Here the very basis of morality is affected. That man is frail is obvious, but the complacency that calls the frailty perfection makes growth impossible. I do not wish to break a butterfly on a wheel, but a film such as this suggests that what is lacking is effective propagation of the Christian doctrine of God. But even here it is worth noting how closely moral and artistic failure are linked. The traffic between worlds is ill expressed in "The Bishop's Wife" because an inadequate moral conception is inevitably realised in adequate symbols. The process may also work the other way, as in Bunyan's "Holy War," where the Holy Ghost is symbolised by the Lord Secretary. This is simply bad art; but it also degrades, as far as such a thing is possible, the conception behind the allegory.

There is no short answer, then, to this vexed and difficult question. The most dangerous art is that which tacitly assumes false standards. But it is precisely this kind which is most closely the echo of society. It is impossible, therefore, to deal with the situation purely on the level of art. Only by improving the moral standards of society on the one hand, and by encouraging the production and intelligent appreciation of art on the other, can a secure and healthy harmony of the two be achieved.

M. McLAREN COOK.

TAO FONG SHAN

DURING my service as an R.A.F. Chaplain it was my good fortune to spend a year in Hong Kong, arriving there with the first British forces to return to the Colony after the Japanese surrender. Hong Kong is, at any time, both beautiful and fascinating; in those early days when it began to return to its former way of life after the hardships of war, its colour seemed to be all the brighter, and its interest enhanced. I soon discovered the thrill that any Christian minister feels when he first encounters missionary activity in the field. The staff of the London Missionary Society gave me a welcome and generous hospitality, and it was due to their kindly help that I was able to learn something of the Christian forces at work there. In addition to their own activity, Anglicans and Methodists are at work; there is an indigenous Baptist Church and also a number of independent missions, so that there is a picture of denominational activity curiously like that here at home. While, however, much of this work follows the

usual pattern of missionary service, with churches, schools, hospitals and literary production, one piece of enterprise is carried on which must be unique. This is an attempt to evangelise Buddhist monks and pilgrims, undertaken at Tao Fong Shan, under the auspices of the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

The work owes its origin to the genius of Dr. K. L. Reichelt, who is one of the greatest living European authorities on Buddhism. He came to China many years ago as an evangelist, but in his early days was disturbed that Buddhist pilgrims and monks were neglected by Christian missionaries. To an extent this seemed inevitable, for such people would not be likely to listen to ordinary Christian preaching. Accordingly, Dr. Reichelt began to seek contacts with the monks and pilgrims in their own monasteries; he found that many of them were profoundly interested in Jesus Christ. At the same time he began an extensive study of Buddhist faith and practices, always looking for points of contact with his own Christian position. There are two great divisions of Buddhism, wider apart even than Catholic and Protestant Christianity. Southern Buddhism, which is represented in our own B.M.S. fields in Ceylon, is almost atheistic in its denials. With this branch of Buddhist faith there is little effective contact. But Northern Buddhism is far more tolerant, and holds to a belief in God, the Soul and Immortality, and it is chiefly to the Buddhists of this vast area that Tao Fong Shan has made its appeal.

The present type of work began in earnest in 1922, when Dr. Reichelt was joined by his colleague, Pastor Thelle. The work was then centred near Hankow. In 1930, however, in the Communist civil war, these buildings were entirely destroyed, and since there seemed little prospect of security, the work was transferred to Hong Kong, where, until the Japanese attack, peace was assured under the British Protectorate.

From its inception, Buddhists have been both welcomed and sought. Dr. Reichelt made extensive tours, travelling as a pilgrim from monastery to monastery, and as he travelled he taught, lingering for a time in those monasteries where he was welcomed, but always inviting and urging the monks he met to undertake a pilgrimage to Tao Fong Shan. The response has been remarkable, and now he tells stories of some who have come thousands of miles on foot in order to visit the Christian Monastery.

A visit to Tao Fong Shan is an unforgettable experience. Tao is the Chinese word for the principle of wisdom, a concept similar to the Greek "Logos," and Tao Fong Shan was translated for me as "The Hill where the Logos-wind is blowing"—a beautiful name for a beautifully situated mission.

The road climbs the ridge of hills behind Kowloon and then descends into the fertile Shatin valley, the rice of which was once reserved for the table of the Emperor. The road is tortuous, but of astonishing scenic beauty, for the long valley is surrounded by jagged, bare hills, all deeply eroded, whose colours are in strong contrast

to the lush green of the paddy fields and the intense blue of an inlet of the sea beyond. Eight miles along this road, a rough track zig-zags back up the hillside for another mile or more, climbing steeply to where, on a spur of the hills, the monastery stands. A natural peace pervades the place. Behind are ridges of hills, still higher, before, the great inlet of the sea, with more hills beyond, rising steeply from the distant shore, while at your very feet, it seems, the Shatin valley nestles contentedly. On the hottest day a gentle breeze plays through the trees, and in the shade of their branches all seems tranquil.

Standing a little apart from the main buildings are the homes of the staff, surrounded with wide lawns and flower borders, their rooms cool in the shade of the verandas. Beyond these, lies the monastery proper, set out as a quadrangle with one end open. One long building contains accommodation for pilgrims, and at the end of the block, a room for quiet and study, furnished with many Chinese volumes, including the scriptures of both Buddhist and Christian faiths. Here hospitality is given to any who will come, and for as long as he will stay. He learns the truths of the Christian faith not only from the staff, but from the lips of converts of his own order; in the quiet of Tao Fong Shan he can learn and meditate and worship. Many have come, some soon to travel onwards, others to remain for a time, not a few to discover a Christian experience.

Amongst the converts thus made are a number who wish to train for definite Christian service, and special provision is made for these. Another long building houses on two storeys sixteen rooms for regular students, and under the same roof, a roomy class-room. Here theological instruction is given for as long as four years, and from this preparation many who once were Buddhists have gone to serve China, and beyond, in the name of Christ. Some return to their former pilgrim life, but carrying with them the imperishable message of the Gospel.

The Church is at the centre of work and buildings alike. Again, it is built in traditional Chinese style, with the bright colours the Chinese love—a blue tiled roof, white walls and crimson pillars. Octagonal in shape, it is a smaller replica of the Temple of Heaven at Pekin. Outside hangs a temple bell, with sweet and mellow tone, specially cast for this church, with a Christian text inscribed on it. Inside, there is seating for about sixty, and large scrolls of texts hang on the walls. The worship of the church is according to the Lutheran order, and knowing the Buddhist love of symbolism, Dr. Reichelt has gathered in the building almost every known Christian symbol. Three steps rise to the altar, which is carved in the traditional style of a Chinese temple altar, save that such symbols as the Fish are included in its carvings. On the altar stand two seven-branched candle-sticks, and in the centre a crucifix. Behind the altar hangs an embroidered tapestry into which are woven yet more symbolic figures. There is one

symbol which has been devised here, and is almost the hall-mark of Tao Fong Shan. The Buddhist loves the lotus lily—the pure white flower whose root reaches upward from the mud. At Tao Fong Shan one sees often the lotus bloom, with the cross rising from it. The church building is prominent, for it stands on the edge of the hillside which falls steeply away. Underneath the the church is a small crypt illuminated by a solitary slit window shaped like a cross. The crypt remains cool on the hottest day; it is big enough for a dozen to use for prayer, but its intimacy makes it ideal for the personal conversations on the greatest spiritual issues which have led to so many conversions. Here, in this crypt, many a Buddhist has found his faith to be but an imperfect prolegomena to the Christian faith; here, many an ascetic, still burdened with a sense of sin and guilt, has discovered the peace which passes understanding.

Some have criticised the work as being syncretistic, and think that Tao Fong Shan goes too far to meet the Buddhist. Few, I think, would maintain that point of view after they had met and talked a while with Dr. Reichelt himself. His sturdy figure, the square shoulders and the expression of his face are arresting. Through a kindly smile, which often breaks into a laugh, for his humour is spontaneous, one feels at once that here is a true mystic and saint. Growing intimacy with the man confirms the first belief; his heart is on fire to win his brothers for Christ, with an evangelical fervour as profound as that which inspired the prologue to the fourth Gospel.

The recent years have not been easy. The Japanese occupation brought the work to a standstill: the staff were not interned; being Norwegian, they were treated as enemy aliens. The soaring cost of even basic foodstuffs cut life to a bare subsistence level. The Kowloon market, where supplies were purchased, is eight miles away—a formidable journey with the nature of the hills, especially in the high temperatures and humidity of the summer months. (The car had been confiscated.) But partly through the kindness of Chinese neighbours, both Dr. Reichelt and his wife, and Pastor Thelle, not only survived, but avoided serious damage to their health.

Such is Tao Fong Shan. My own interest in it is the more because its first specific Christian work, following the liberation, was to welcome a Moral Leadership Course for twenty-six men serving in the Royal Air Force in Hong Kong. Here, for a memorable week at the beginning of March, 1946, we lived and studied and prayed together. No one then present is likely ever to forget Tao Fong Shan, or the kindness of Dr. Reichelt and Pastor Thelle and their families. Long may the heavenly breezes blow upon them; many be the pilgrims who here shall end their pilgrimage.

K. E. HYDE.

EDUCATION

MY only qualification for writing this article is that for twelve years I have been entrusted by our Free Church Federal Council to keep a watchful eye upon the Free Church interests in our Day Schools, first as a member of the Local Education Authority, then with the passing of the Butler Act a Governor of our Secondary and Manager of our Primary Schools, and rather more than a year ago I was elected by the Borough of Gosport to serve on the Divisional Executive.

We will consider the subject of Education from three angles—the Teaching, the Teacher and the Taught.

Teaching

From the teacher's point of view the Butler Act is indeed a leap forward in our educational policy. At long last we are realising that our teachers are not mere teachers of subjects but *specialists in children*, and they are now free to train them according to their *age, ability and aptitude*. Once it was assumed that all children could be taught the same subjects by the same methods and at the same rate. We are wiser now and our teachers are adepts in discovering special gifts in their pupils and in developing those gifts to their fullest capacity. Not all children can assimilate or profit by a classical education in a grammar school. The gifts of some lie in other directions, and a modern or technical school is their proper sphere. We have seen handicraft, metal and woodwork carried out most efficiently by pupils who failed altogether in classical subjects, and now if it is discovered that a child is in the wrong type of school, such can be transferred to another. There is a book, written by A. H. T. Glover, entitled "The New Teaching for the New Age," published by Nelsons at 15s. but obtainable from any county library, which we can heartily commend. It lucidly and clearly expounds the new Act. Under that Act our teachers have far more freedom than ever before. Indeed the whole teaching profession is challenged by it.

Teachers

Our teachers have a tremendous influence over the children committed to their care. To the child its teacher is the final authority and now that so many take their mid-day meal at school the children are under their care for most of their waking life. The children are singularly susceptible to the teacher's personality and we do want our teachers to be of the highest mental, moral and spiritual character. Great as is the *privilege* of the teachers, their *responsibilities* are greater. It is a welcome decision under the Butler Act that every school session shall be opened by a religious service. One weakness is that some teachers—few, we believe—are guilty of sowing the seeds of doubt in the infant mind, and it is of the utmost importance that our teachers should be men

and women of real spirituality. Then in these days when many Sunday Schools are depleted it is all the more imperative that the teachers shall conduct religious worship and impart religious knowledge with the utmost reverence.

One headmaster, an agnostic, came to me with certain religious problems and we were able to help him. Many who are of a scientific turn of mind want a God Whom they can fully comprehend, forgetting that a God Who is no bigger than our mental grasp would be too small for our spiritual necessities. We have circulated a number of booklets, one entitled "Teaching Religion in Schools," and the other, by Professor Ellis Taverner, of Southampton, entitled, "Is it Reasonable for a Teacher to believe the Bible?" So much for the teaching and the teachers. Now, what of

The Taught?

We know that the schools exist for the children and not simply for the teachers. In past years there has been a woeful wastage of undiscovered abilities, but now a promising child can secure higher education and go to the University, and lack of finance need not stand in the way. The poorest, showing real ability, can now be helped, even to the extent of assisted maintenance. In other directions there has also been a waste of talents and abilities, but now we are discovering that a child may be hopeless so far as certain studies are concerned but who may be brilliant in other directions. The children are the real wealth of the country and the England of to-morrow is in our class rooms to-day. An old philosopher has said that the race advances on the feet of little children, and that is true. Some who have been apparently dull at school have yet achieved great heights after school days are over. Sir Walter Scott, Dr. Adam Clarke, Gladstone and Winston Churchill were all regarded as dullards at school. In their school days their gifts were unrecognised, but in these days it is now the province of the teacher to discover and to develop unsuspected because undiscovered talents. Some shallow-minded people resent the cost of higher education, in particular, to the country, but let all such think again. Some years ago the foundations of St. Paul's Cathedral were threatening to give way, and underpinning at great cost became imperative, but it was this underpinning which gave the noble structure the strength to endure the severe tests of the war years, which things are a parable. *And what can we do in the matter?* In a recent number of *The Fraternal* a well-known schoolmaster, Mr. C. G. Carpenter, said: "Christian men and women must be found to serve on our local councils and governing bodies which control our schools. The situation is one of the utmost urgency, and Baptists ought to be planning to get more and more men and women of the right type into our schools and into positions where they can influence our educational policy." Another, in the same number of *The Fraternal*, said: "Efforts should be made to elect public-spirited members of our

Churches to serve as governors and school managers, whose powers are still very considerable." My position on our Divisional Executive gives me the privilege of visiting our schools, and we always receive a cordial welcome from the teachers, who appreciate the visits of those who are keenly interested in the work they are doing. And, perhaps more important still, we can induce young people of Christian principle and right ability to view the teaching profession favourably, and as a golden opportunity for the kingdom. We are becoming more and more a pagan nation, civic, national and international. Family pews were out of date before families were, and our depleted Sunday Schools make the matter all the more urgent and imperative. The New Teaching for the New Age is welcome and encouraging and we must all do what we can for Young England, which, as we have seen, is in our class rooms to-day. . . .

H. G. LONG.

BOOK REVIEWS

GEORGE GRENFELL

The centenary of the birth of George Grenfell, B.M.S. pioneer in the Congo, which falls on Sunday, 21st August, should not pass unnoticed by us. Special gatherings will take place at Sancreed, the Cornish hamlet where he was born, on 20th August, and in our Cornish churches the following day. Birmingham, where he was brought up, London and other places will also mark the occasion.

Most of us will be on holiday in August, but many will be preaching in other pulpits, and we can use to our own profit and that of our congregations, the thrilling story of this pioneer whose explorations gained him the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society and decorations from the King of the Belgians, and whose missionary labours make a great story.

In any case, we can buy a copy of H. L. Hemmens's "George Grenfell, Master Builder of Foundations," written for the occasion and just published by the Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd., at 1s. 6d. (postage 1d.), and read for ourselves the story of the man and his achievements.

The Prospect for Christianity. By Dr. K. S. Latourette.
(Eyre and Spottiswoode ; 222 pp.; 6s. net.)

This book represents the author's judgment on the present position of Christianity as a world faith and its likely prospects for the future, so far as can be humanly judged. Much of the material has been given in the form of lectures on both sides of the Atlantic, and it was after the delivery of this series of lectures at Regent's Park College that the author received the Degree of D.D. from the University of Oxford.

Dr. Latourette shows that the main impetus of the expansion of Christianity in the past 150 years has come from the Protestant Churches, and especially from the Free Churches, which, being less bound by tradition, and more adaptable and evangelical, are better able to present the unchanging Gospel in a rapidly changing world. The book is a welcome breeze in a world depressed by human frustration and the Barthian attitude that man never has done any good and never will. Dr. Latourette is no humanist, however, and in no way does he regard the future advance of Christianity as automatic. Indeed, he points realistically to many periods of setback and retrogression, and even the extinction of Christianity in some areas. He believes firmly, however, in God's purpose, and in the power of the Gospel. At times his judgments seem superficial, and almost facile, until the reader remembers that behind this book are years of research and study which have been set out in the author's volumes on "The Expansion of Christianity."

Perhaps it is because Dr. Latourette sees a diminishing influence for Catholicism, and a growing importance for the part that the Free Churches will take in the future, that the writers of the introduction to his book seem to be somewhat cool in their commendation, as if the conclusions were too true to be good.

The Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century and their influence in the modern world. By E. A. Payne. (Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd.; 23 pp.; 1s. net.)

This Dr. Williams's Lecture, which was delivered at the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, has all the scholarship, sound judgment and careful preparation which we have learned to expect from E. A. Payne. Though small, the book is a valuable contribution to the history of the Baptist forerunners. A list of references and authorities on the subject adds greatly to its value.

Talking Drums of Africa. By John F. Carrington, B.Sc., Ph.D. Illustrated. (Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd.; 96 pp. 5s. net.)

This is the most recent authoritative work on a mysterious subject that has baffled experts and travellers for many years. Dr. Carrington, who is one of our B.M.S. staff at Yakusu, gained his Doctorate at London University for a thesis on the subject. He has unravelled the mystery. In a fascinating way he describes the drum language methods of transmission and gives types and examples of messages sent. The book, which has a very full bibliography, has been produced in a way that is a great credit to the Press. A most enjoyable and informative book, which, incidentally, will provide material for children's talks and sermon illustrations for a month of Sundays!

The Secret Society of the Samaritans. By R. S. Eldridge. Illustrated. (Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd.; 126 pp.; 5s. net.)

Records the activities of a group of children who have exciting experiences in doing good turns. The excellent illustrations by Roger Middlebrook, however, should have been set in the chapters they illustrate. A good book for a children's prize. It is in use as a basis for children's addresses in two of our largest churches.

Sunshine and Shadows. A Century of Baptist Witness in Hounslow. By John Willmott. (Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd.; 52 pp.; 2s. 6d. net.)

A story worth telling. An effective answer to *The Tabernacle*.

Caught Out. By A. Russell Tomlin. Fifty-two talks to boys and girls. (Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd.; 126 pp.; 3s. net.)

Authority and the Individual. By Bertrand Russell.

Some listeners, of whom the writer was one, were a little disturbed by the announcement that the first lecturer on the new foundation instituted by the B.B.C. in memory of that great Christian, Lord Reith, was to be a distinguished Rationalist, Mr. Bertrand Russell. Later, listening to the lectures, they must have felt that their fears were unworthy and unjust; an impression that will be considerably deepened as they read them. The lectures have now been published in a book, of which, incidentally, the form is as pleasant as its content is admirable. Mr. Russell is concerned with the two major problems of our time:—

1. There is the problem of achieving the security that is essential to the survival of civilisation, without frustrating our natural instinct for conflict, creative endeavour and adventurousness. Security, within limits, is desirable; but carried beyond a certain point it is a hindrance to the development of personality and the attainment of a healthy and satisfying life. We cannot live fully and healthily when the aim that we are pursuing is negative. Life demands that we should be inspired, occasionally, perhaps, by fear, but commonly by aspiration and hope. It demands an opportunity to pit our powers against difficulty and the satisfaction of looking back on danger successfully overcome. In short, without the element of effort and risk mankind must deteriorate.

2. There is the problem of achieving the social cohesion that is essential to the general good, without destroying personal independence and initiative. As matters stand, social planning is clearly necessary, but social planning means that the interests of society must be preferred to my personal wishes, even, on occasions, to my personal welfare. Yet personal effort and experimentation, the liberty individuals claim to be themselves is the very condition of social health and social progress. If that be denied, not only must individuality decay, but society must stagnate. As Mr. Russell remarks, the ant is the perfect co-operator, but he has never produced a great work of art, nor offered any direct contribution to science.

These problems are, of course, aspects of a single problem—that of keeping the human soul alive in an age dominated by the big machine. Mr. Russell does not claim to have solved this problem, but he offers certain suggestions to those who are troubled by it.

Remote and centralised control of human activity is an evil, he contends, and should be avoided wherever possible. Both democracy and individuality flourish most easily within groups whose members are in personal contact, and that, for that reason, cannot be very large. The local group, no larger at the most than the Greek City State, is the best soil for the development of human

excellence. We should aim, therefore, at much more devotion, both on the social and on the industrial plane.

We must distinguish, Mr. Russell suggests, between the activities in which governments may properly engage, and those that lie beyond their province. The line is not easy to draw, but in general he holds that a government should aim at the provision of security, at the conservation of the soil and of natural wealth, and at the attainment of justice. Beyond this, its function is to foster individual talent and effort, and to provide opportunities for their exercise. Obviously this raises difficult questions, particularly in relation to education, but the main point Mr. Russell wishes to emphasise is clear enough.

Finally, Mr. Russell insists not only that the individual has rights over society, but that his duty cannot be adequately interpreted in terms of his relation to society. It is his duty to develop his own powers, to reflect, to think, to learn, to enjoy what is inherently enjoyable. The artist or the prophet must be a good citizen; but he must also be a true artist, loyal to his own vision, a faithful prophet proclaiming the word he has received; and if the prevailing conception of good citizenship should conflict with that primary obligation he must follow the prompting of his conscience. In this connection Mr. Russell remarks that the Gospels enjoin the love of God as emphatically as the love of our neighbour. He adds, however, that the principle is not dependent on theological belief, a comment that Christians cannot but regard as an indication of the blind spot in an otherwise brilliant mind.

This is an extraordinarily stimulating book. It contains many sentences that will delight the reader, some sentences with which he will disagree, but hardly a sentence that will not quicken his own intelligence.

In a review intended for preachers, a word may be added about style. The book is marked by the lucidity we connect with the author, laced with the wit which is part of his nature. It contains very few three-syllabled words, and scarcely one ending in "ological" or "istential." It is a model of profound thought expressed in the simplest language. Would that theologians could learn how it is done!

H. INGLI JAMES.

The Eternal Purpose. By D. Tait Patterson. 381 pp. (Carey Kingsgate Press. 15s. net.)

This is a devotional book of a new kind. It is arranged with readings, prayers and meditations for every day of the year. It is Biblical throughout. One's first impression is that it would have been better had it included some of the great prayers of the Church, or longer prayers of the compiler's own making. But there its genius lies. The meditations and prayers are very brief and again are Biblical. Such an arrangement allows the mind really

to meditate on thoughts suggested by the Scripture readings, some of which are so well arranged as to set up many trains of thought and suggestion.

Here and there one would like to question the particular choice of readings but these are minor details. The use of the book over a period will soon convince the user that here is a mine of spiritual treasure in which much pure gold has already been collected and sifted. It should prove to be a most helpful book for ministers and laymen alike.

And They Began to Build. By Sydney C. Crowe. (12 pp. Illustrated. 1s. 3d. net. Obtainable from the Author.)

The story of the first decade in the history of one of our newest and most successful forward movement ventures—the John Bunyan Church, Cowley, Oxford. It is a good thing to see a church taking its history seriously and not letting the years go by without proper record. A most encouraging story.

W.W.B.
