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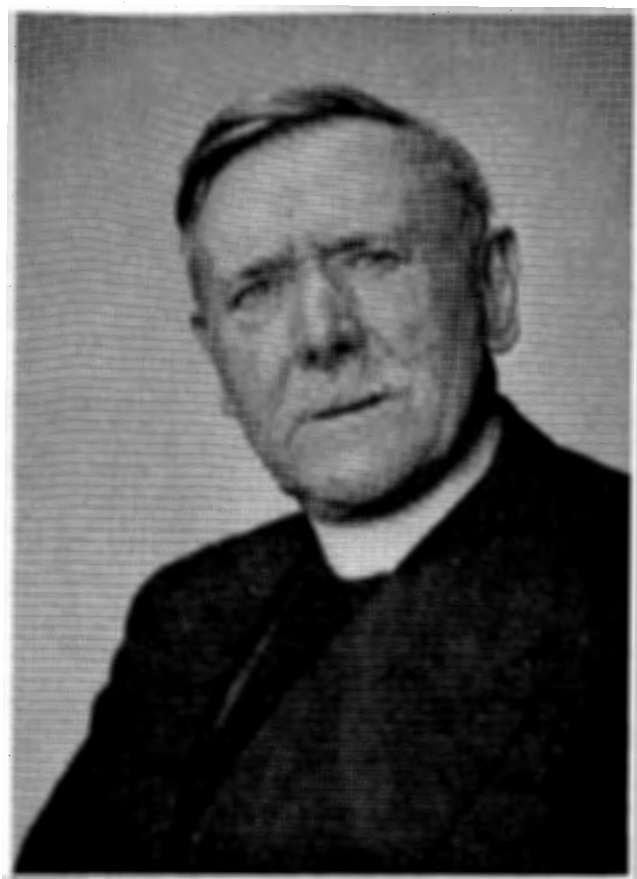
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# The Fraternal

JULY, 1963

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SYDNEY GELSON MORRIS

## SYDNEY MORRIS—A PORTRAIT

TO serve Christ and His Church through service to the Denomination he loved was the guiding principle of the life of Sydney Morris. Born in Portsmouth to parents who were keen Baptists, brought up in a Baptist Church there, and trained for the ministry at Rawdon College, he became in 1901 assistant to J. R. Wood, at Upper Holloway. There he stayed, as sole minister after 1912, for thirty years—his one and only church. It was a remarkable ministry, a combination of drawing men in, and then, by teaching, building them up in the faith; and it was conspicuously successful. After 1931, as General Superintendent first of the Southern, then of the Metropolitan Area, his work for the Kingdom continued, pastoral gifts which had contributed so much to the ministry of a church now used for the benefit of fellow-ministers. Retirement in 1939 was no occasion to slacken in the service. There was another sphere in which to labour. The love and concern for his fellow-ministers, which was always a dominant theme in his life, found its expression through the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship. So it came about that he was one of those few men who achieved important new work after his official retirement.

He soon threw himself, with all his customary vigour and enthusiasm, into the service of the Fellowship. It then had a few hundred members. It proved the perfect sphere for his characteristic gifts. He was a prodigious correspondent, spending three hours of most days right up to the time of his illness in letter-writing. As minister of Upper Holloway he had written every Christmas to each of the members of his Church, and at one time they numbered 900. Now he wrote thousands of letters to ministers: sometimes of sympathy, always of encouragement. His passionate concern for their welfare was evident to them all. Somehow they might have sensed, though no one ever told them, that he would lie awake at night thinking of men living on the standard stipend, and of what could be done to help them.

As the years passed the B.M.F. underwent a transformation. Scattered and isolated Baptist ministers in the countries of Europe, serving small churches in lonely places, were drawn into the wider fellowship and offered the inspiration it could give. Then in the Commonwealth the membership began to grow—in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and in South Africa and the United States. Letters to and from ministers in all these widely scattered places poured into and out of S.G.M.'s home. One rather different letter deserves a special mention. At the age of 80 he began to write a fortnightly "London Letter" for the *Australian Baptist*. It told of public events and church affairs here in England and bore on it always the marks of his vigorous and refreshing outlook. This great network of correspondence, now so extended that other men were helping at the "Fellowship end", bore fruit: by April, 1961, 3,400 copies of the *Fraternal* were being circulated. This was the

time of S.G.M.'s Ministerial Diamond Jubilee. To celebrate it 900 ministers spontaneously contributed to a gift and thus expressed the feeling that was more than once put into words; that it was given to "the best-loved Baptist minister in England".

His lively mind was always awake to contemporary happenings, and he read widely, especially biography. It was typical that on the eve of his 84th birthday he bought the new Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. His last public appearance was at the London Baptist Missionary Union Jubilee at Bloomsbury on 18th February, and there he preached, in his ninetieth year, on the "Message in the Modern World". His thoughts were characteristically up to date—no nostalgic harking back to the good old days. In essence the message never changes. "We take the Gospel of a Christ-like God whose heart, mind and will are our only hope." What of the messengers? They need an educated mind, a lowly spirit (especially for the missionary who works amongst people who no longer accept him as a national leader) and an unshakeable faith—something, indeed, akin to his own spirit.

No portrait of Sydney Morris could leave out his home, always a place of the most generous hospitality. Guests ranged from the Rawdon students of many years ago up in London to take university examinations to more recent visitors from many parts of the world—Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, India. There they all found an atmosphere of warm human kindness combined with a completely natural piety. To the young, especially, it was irresistibly attractive: the gap between the generations vanished as if by magic.

For the greater part of his life he suffered from asthma, but it was never allowed to interfere with the work or damp his spirits. Instead it became an enrichment which deepened his sympathy for others. To the Fellowship he gave himself without stint in the last quarter of his life, helped in every way by his wife's devoted and tireless co-operation. In its present strength it is a memorial to him of the kind he would most have desired.

JOHN O. BARRETT.

### A NEW LOOK AT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

**I**N his widely publicised paperback, "Honest to God", S.C.M., 5s., the Bishop of Woolwich, Dr. J. A. T. Robinson, has set himself the task of presenting the Christian faith in a new light. From time to time some situation arises that seems to call for a new view of the themes of Christian belief in the setting of the thought and outlook of the day, and someone is bold enough to come out into the open and challenge traditional standpoints. If such attempts are made by honest and responsible thinkers, they are to be welcomed, whatever their ultimate value may prove to be, for they are evidence of a lively concern to make the Gospel meaningful to men and women, in the situation of their time. Dr. Robinson stands in a worthy succession and deserves to be commended for his

courageous enterprise. He has succeeded, at any rate, in stimulating many people in the Church, and outside it, to fresh thinking about religion. It cannot be helped if some are offended and others are too ready to receive the new teaching as though it were a revelation from heaven. Disturbances are bound to happen wherever there is a stirring of life.

It should go without saying that the bishop's motives are wholly creditable to him. It is clear that he has a deep pastoral concern for those outside the Church, and longs to win them to the Christian obedience, especially those intelligent young people who find it difficult to accept the faith as commonly presented. He is an able scholar (a specialist in New Testament studies and not primarily a theologian) who wishes to make available to a larger constituency, what the outstanding theologians of our time are saying in their efforts to interpret Christian belief against the background of contemporary thought. His aim is not to proclaim a new gospel but to set forth the old in a form likely to prove intelligible to the men and women of today, more especially those of the rising generation. Whatever we may think of his new look, we must give him credit for an honest purpose and a courageous spirit.

If Christianity needs to be presented in a new shape, what is the new situation that demands it? Dr. Robinson has taken over from Bonhoeffer the belief that man has now come of age. "Man", he quotes, "has learned to cope with all questions of importance without recourse to God as a working hypothesis." This has come to be accepted "in questions concerning science, art and even ethics". "But for the last hundred years or so it has been increasingly true of religious questions also." This may well seem a startling pronouncement when read for the first time, but it must be said at once that it does not mean that we can dispense with God now that we have come to adulthood. What is meant is that we look at God in a new way, and as having a new significance for our lives when we realise that He is no longer to be used as a working hypothesis. What this new understanding of God entails, Bonhoeffer expresses somewhat paradoxically in the aphorism, "Before God and with Him we live without God". Bonhoeffer was denied the opportunity of developing fully these seminal ideas but there is an excellent explication of them in Prof. R. Gregor Smith's stimulating book, "The New Man: Christianity and Man's Coming of Age (1956)".

In his new approach for a new time, Dr. Robinson is offering us nothing original, as his book makes clear. He is heavily in debt to three notable Continental theologians of our time: Dietrich Bonhoeffer (executed by the Nazis), Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich (now domiciled in America). Most of what the bishop has to say can be expressed by reference to certain leading ideas derived from these outstandingly original thinkers. These ideas have been for long familiar to theologians, and the bishop has told them nothing they did not already know. What he has done has been

to make known to the public at large what has been for many years under close discussion in theological circles.

Dr. Robinson thinks we can improve our traditional ideas of God, and here he presses Tillich into service. Once upon a time it was natural to think of God as a Being "up there", dwelling above the world. No doubt there are many who still retain this image, but it was really outmoded when we ceased to believe in the three-storied universe. If this image was discarded, it seemed possible to substitute for it that of a Being "out there", somewhere beyond outer space. But with the Copernican revolution this has come to be seen as no more than a sophisticated version of a Being "up there". We may ask whether it matters very much if for some people such images continue to be meaningful. Not really, the bishop would say, and still less in the case of those who take the language to be metaphorical. He is not concerned about those for whom such symbolism presents little or no difficulty but about those for whom it is a positive hindrance to any intelligible comprehension of the meaning of God. For these he would recommend Tillich's image of "depth". "When Tillich speaks of God in 'depth', he is not speaking of another Being *at all*. He is speaking of 'the infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being', of our ultimate concern, of what we take seriously without reservation". If we should wonder whether we can any longer, on this view, believe in God as a personal Being, we are told that "for this way of thinking, to say that 'God is personal' is to say that 'reality at its very deepest level is personal', that personality is of *ultimate* significance to the constitution of the universe, that in personal relationships we touch the final meaning of existence as nowhere else". If we speak of the ultimacy of personal relationships, we are really saying "that *God*, the final truth and reality 'deep down things', *is love*."

The bishop invites his readers to consider whether all this spells the end of theism. Theism may change its shape without losing its identity, and it may be doubted whether theism today is really out of line with what he is commending. No theist nowadays would represent God anthropomorphically as "the Old Man in the sky", or anything like it. He is wont to affirm the immanence of God, therefore he would not be averse to the idea of God "in depth" and would appreciate the claim that many find this image illuminating. But he might think it worth while to retain the idea of transcendence as a metaphorical concept on the ground that without it immanence tends to run into pantheism. It may be doubted whether any one single image is adequate of itself to suggest the fullness of the truth about God.

Something needs to be done too, Dr. Robinson thinks, about the traditional presentation of the Gospel, which adheres closely to the mythical setting of the New Testament. This was appropriate to the first century but is no longer meaningful to our own time. Following Bultmann he would demythologise the New Testament

picture of Christ, without going all the way with him, especially in his extreme historical scepticism. He pays particular attention to the idea of incarnation in its popular presentation, which he regards as in some respects a distortion of what the New Testament says. Jesus was truly human and not God appearing in human form. "Jesus", he says, "never claims to be God personally; yet he always claims to bring God completely." The saying, "I and the Father are one", is an affirmation of the fact that Jesus gave himself so completely to God that He was in perfect union with the Ground of his being. Thus Jesus can reveal God uniquely and manifest the activity of God uniquely in his Person and Work. Because he is "the man for God" he is also "the man for others" making manifest to the world that God is love. The Cross is the focal point of the revelation, where Christ helps us by his weakness and suffering. Dr. Robinson is here speaking in the accents of Bonhoeffer who, in saying that God allows himself to be edged out of the world adds, "God is weak and powerless in the world, and that is exactly the way, the only way, in which he can be with us and help us". So if God leaves us to manage our own world and never allows us to use Him as a *deus ex machina*, He is yet with us in the Person of the Crucified, whose strength is in his weakness. Accordingly, as Bonhoeffer puts it, "Man is challenged to participate in the sufferings of God at the hands of a godless world". Many will no doubt consider this a "reduced" Christology, but it may nevertheless be regarded as representing an approach which will prove helpful to those who find themselves at odds with traditional presentations.

The third important theme which Dr. Robinson urges upon the attention of his readers, is what he calls "worldly holiness". The main influence here is Bonhoeffer, who set the fashion of a new line of contemporary thinking with his notion of "religionless Christianity". The bishop is concerned about those who think that religion means withdrawal from the world from time to time in order to find refreshment for life in the world through worship and prayer, and therefore find it unattractive. He protests that though this may be the common understanding of religion it does not properly present what Christianity really is. If God is "the infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being" and not a Being "up there" or "out there", and if He is not to be found "in the gaps", we are more likely to discover Him in the world than in the religious intervals between our worldly activities. We should realise this if we had a proper understanding of the central rite of the Church's worship. "*Holy Communion* is communion, community-life, *in sacris*, in depth, at the level at which we are not merely in human fellowship but 'in Christ', not merely in love but in Love, united with the ground and restorer of our whole being." Too often, "it ceases to be the holy meal, and becomes a religious service in which we turn our backs on the common and the community, and in individualistic devotion go to 'make our communion'



with 'the God out there'". The bishop's discussion of prayer is important because he there makes it clear that he has no intention of disparaging the value of withdrawal for the sake of worship and prayer. What he wants to say is that whilst this may be profitable for some, it is not the appropriate way for everybody. There are others for whom God and prayer only become real in situations where there is a deep awareness of human need. It is well that we should be reminded that withdrawal tends to foster otherworldliness, and that religious activities may become a means of escaping from involvement in the sufferings and sorrows of men. Is not our conception of the meaning of religion too narrow? Dr. Robinson makes an apposite quotation from Tillich: "Religion is not a special function of man's spiritual life, but it is the dimension of depth in all of its functions". The whole subject of "religionless Christianity" calls for further consideration, and it is fortunate that we have a good guide for this in Daniel Jenkins' little book recently published, "Beyond Religion".

"Honest to God" is too short a book for its ideas to be adequately explicated, and there is much in it that requires further examination. For all that, it suggests new approaches that should prove helpful to many. It is intended to be a missionary tract, and if it persuades some unbelievers to take another look at what they have come to regard as outmoded and irrelevant it will do good service. The bishop has made a bridge, if only a temporary one, and let us hope and pray that it may make fruitful dialogue possible with those on the other side.

W. E. HOUGH.

**R**ARELY can so much have been written in so short a time about so short a book. By now the number of words written and spoken about *Honest to God* must far outnumber those in the book itself.

It is, of course, not an easy book and was probably never intended for the general reader. But its phenomenal sales make it clear that it has found its way into very many homes—largely, one suspects, Christian homes. This means that we shall all have to read it in order to answer questions upon it as well as to stimulate our own thinking. For myself this has meant reading it three times to try to recognise both the Bishop's purpose in writing it and what he seeks to say through it. The purpose would appear to be an attempt to translate the Christian Faith into language which many outside the Faith can understand. The Bishop would maintain, I imagine, that at root his book is a beginning to a translation of the Faith into other categories and language, which does not involve any fundamental alteration to the Faith itself. Whether the result towards which he strives is still the apostolic and historic Christian Faith is the focal point of all discussion on the book. About this we must all make up our own minds.

For myself I feel that the Bishop should be understood as thinking aloud, and recognised as opening a discussion rather than concluding one. Most of us will have been aware of the writings of Tillich, Bultmann and Bonhoeffer. Now we have them all together in one small book. The mixture was bound to be explosive. Each of these writers is difficult to follow and each of them is a great thinker. But of them only Tillich is a systematic theologian who has thought his thoughts through to definite and systematised conclusions. This is part of the difficulty in that the Bishop thinks aloud about theologians who also tend to think aloud. I am aware that this is a generalisation which in particulars could be challenged, but I mention it to establish the point clearly that this book is really not the last word about anything at all. It is no good saying that it is a pity that the discussion was ever opened. Sooner or later, with the influence of Tillich and Bonhoeffer growing steadily in England, it was bound to be. So what is it all about?

It is about God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, who, says the Bishop, might equally well (or even better?) be described as the God at depth, the Ground of our Being. It is about the Father's only begotten Son, the Word made flesh, who might equally well (or even better?) be described as the Man for others. The question is whether such descriptions as the Bishop suggests are in line with the truth of God's revelation. The Bishop says "Yes". Others say "No". So the discussion continues. I would very much like to hear another theologian—say Brunner or Cullmann—in discussion with the Bishop, or better still with Tillich (*pace* Bishop!) on this matter. Cullmann especially might have a lot of questions to ask about the Christ event, the breaking in of God into history, which is surely so much part of the Christian Faith and not confined to Biblical "myth".

All true theology leads to prayer and action. So quite naturally the Bishop traces the outcome of his thought through into prayer life and Christian ethics. Again, speaking personally, I found in these two chapters something of what I had myself been thinking and even saying. I imagine this means that Bonhoeffer especially has influenced me. But it raised the question as to whether I could hold to even some of the views on prayer and ethics whilst still holding to the "untranslated" categories of God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth and of Jesus Christ His only begotten Son. Rightly or wrongly I found I could. On trying to think it out I discovered that part at least of the reason for this was that I have—that which is not apparently evident in the Bishop's book—an experiential understanding of the Holy Spirit. I felt that the problem of the God out there became much less when one re-read the first chapter of Dr. Wheeler-Robinson's *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit, Emmanuel, is God at depth, the constant Director of actions in Prayer and in Love. The Bishop translates the traditional Father and Son thinking of the Christian.

One would like to hear his thought worked out in this context on his understanding of the Holy Spirit. There is a hint on page 59, but not much more. Can it be that the Bishop, with his well-known emphasis on the Body of Christ, about which he wrote a thought-provoking book, is in danger of doing less than justice to the personal experience of the Holy Spirit? One suspects that this matter has a relation to the infant baptism versus believers' baptism discussion. But that is another story!

Amongst other points about which one would want to question the Bishop I mention only two. I am not convinced that in the book sin is taken quite seriously enough, which means that redemption may not be either. Sin may be a technical word and we may call it union in "estrangement", but whatever we call it no one functioning as a pastor can be in any doubt about its potency. It is a devastating reality. Paul may be speaking in "mythological" language when he cries out: "Miserable creature that I am, who is there to rescue me out of this body doomed to death", but there is surely no minister who has not heard that cry at one time or another in the language of the twentieth century. The question is whether the Man for Others who dies to show the measure of love's sacrifice is really the one who can and does actually perform the rescue.

Then again it is not clear, at least not to me, how far the Bishop follows Bultmann in challenging the historical facts of the life of Jesus. Certainly he says that Bultmann goes too far. But for me (and I believe also for the disciples and Paul) the Faith in history hinges on the Resurrection. How does this event come into the pattern of the "translated" Jesus?

But granted that this book is written, published and noised abroad, I am convinced that now I must do two things. First and foremost make sure that the book does not cause any of my people to stumble. Secondly go on thinking, being honest with myself, as the Bishop has been honest in his writing, and so be honest to God.

W. M. S. WEST.

#### MEN TO REMEMBER

IT may seem strange to this generation but my most vivid memories are of sermons. I sat on the gallery steps in the Wesleyan Chapel in Town Hall Square, Leicester, when Joseph Parker preached to a great congregation. The preacher's lion head drew all eyes and his voice, now a whisper and now like thunder, made all ears attend. As he was reading the lesson he stopped, looked round and said, "It would have been a mercy if all the windows in this place had been broken this morning." A little later the Chapel-keeper came pushing his way through the crowd to open the windows. The great man paused again, and waving his hand to the gallery, said, "There goes the wise man, late as usual". Though a born actor, Parker was also a born preacher and many through him heard God speak. It was not surprising to read, years later, that his last words when dying were, "My love to my Jesus all the time".

I learned much in the five years spent at Rawdon College, nestling in the beauty of the Airedale woods. The Principal was Vincent Tymms, who, though not conspicuous for scholarship, was a vigorous and independent thinker and a man of distinguished appearance. Reserved and sensitive, we seldom got near to him, but he showed us that a Baptist minister could be a great gentleman. He ruled the House by sheer force of personality, and the rudest student quailed before his glance. His talks on Pastoral Theology, based on experience in his long pastorate at Clapton Downs, have been helpful to me through all the years, and again and again his words come back, pointed and true, "At the beginning of the day collect your mind . . . Think of each day as one of three score years and ten, and oh, how few they are!" "Never do anything yourself which you can get done well by someone else." "The besetting sin of ministers is slothfulness. Beware of a fussy, flurried idleness." At the Lord's Supper, "let prayers be brief, and richer in thanks than pleading". At funerals, "If you cannot give thanks for the life, be intercessory for the mourners. If a notorious sinner, magnify the grace of God." With intense earnestness Tymms expounded John x as a call to under shepherds to follow Him who cares for the sheep, knows their names, calls them, goes before, defends and gives His life for the sheep. The most appalling chapter in the Bible, he said, is Ezekiel xxxiii, where the blood of the wicked man, who dies unwarned, is required at the watchman's hand. "Shall the faces of the lost rise against us in another world? Let your preaching bring before men the solemn issues of life."

William Medley has become a legend, but it was indeed a privilege to know him as teacher and friend. He has been called sage, recluse, visionary, mystic and saint, but none of these terms quite fit. His face was rather expressionless, except when, as often, a gentle smile rippled over it. His dominating conception was the unity of all truth, traced through logic, metaphysics, ethics, science and art, to the consummation in a Person, Christ Himself. The lectures on the New Testament as a living organism were the crown of his teaching, and deeply influenced all who came under their spell. He loved all the sights and sounds of nature and always lectured with a flower on his desk. "Fellowship with God and with one another" was to him the meaning of life, and he had the gift of imparting to willing souls not only his thoughts and feelings but something of his very self. The hatred of a Johannine man for all that was selfish, artificial and insincere often blazed out of him. "The divine holiness enters into the world with the cutting edge of the righteousness which is a consuming fire. How good it is that all in us, as well as in the world, that is burnable will be burned." "It is the want of fixed observation that makes the world, and religion too, so commonplace instead of so marvellous." "If you let your cross slip, you will not find it again, either in this world or in any other." "No man is happy who has not a beyond."

His last letter to me was written in 1908, a few weeks before he died. "This small sheet may be enough for a touch and a greeting such as keeps warm and close and vital the tie between our two lives—mine in the quiet ebb of the tide, full of memories, almost too full for one's faculty of retrospect, and yet with a steadier gaze, full of wonder and awe, towards the approaching apocalypse of reality eluding all imaginative conception, yet holding and captivating the soul. Surely it will be a new birth and the dawn of a new day, more glorious than any of all the many glorious days I have known here."

The model for young preachers in my day was J. H. Jowett of Carr's Lane, Birmingham, a manly and attractive figure. He was an artist in words but with a deepening experience of spiritual things. I heard him speak once of the way in which people in country places used to go home after a service along byways "that the hush of the Almighty might remain upon their awed and prostrate souls". He created something of that atmosphere himself. Of the two sermons he preached before the Baptist Union one was at Plymouth in 1897 on "Christ died for the ungodly". "The sinless Saviour is out in the night in the abandonment which is the wages of sin." "If my life be a deliberate affront to the Deathless One even now I am dead, and the Judgment Day will be for me the unveiling of my homelessness and desolation." Few who heard that sermon ever forgot it. The other was in the Colston Hall, Bristol, in 1904, when he spoke of the Holy Spirit. He described a day-dream in his study "I was somewhat sadly contemplating the weakness of my ministry when I became aware of a Presence before Whom my spirit bowed in trembling awe. He lifted my garments, and I saw that they were badly stained. Again he lifted my robes, and began to remove the stains, and I saw He was using the ministry of blood. Then He touched my lips, and they became pure, and then He anointed my eyes, and I knew He was giving sight to the blind. Then He breathed upon my brow, and my depression passed away as a morning cloud. Then He took a pen, and putting it into my hand, He said, 'Write! For I will take of the things of Christ and show them unto thee!' And I turned to my desk and I wrote in the communion of the Holy Ghost."

One of the great privileges of my life was my four years' association with Richard Glover at Tyndale, Bristol. He was a great man in every way, but in nothing greater than in his sympathy and tenderness. I preached first at Tyndale on the last Sunday of my College course. He said to me in the vestry, "Remember that they are a company of sinners and they need the Gospel". When I looked down on the highly respectable congregation I did not doubt that they were sinners but I did doubt very much if they thought they were. Dr. Glover had strong convictions and could be stubborn in debate (D. J. Hiley said that the first thing he would do in heaven would be to move an amendment), but his heart was as large as the sea. The first

time he took me visiting, as we turned in to the door of a member who had disgraced himself, he said, "He is a better man than some of the things he has done". He treated me with great consideration as indeed he did every one. He had a keen and inquiring mind and a deep and reverent faith. C. H. Spurgeon said that he would sooner hear Richard Glover pray than anybody else preach. I can never forget how he pronounced the word "Saviour". But with all his optimism what Robertson Nicoll wrote in the Memorial article in the *British Weekly* was true, "Sometimes it seemed as if he were looking to the darkness towards which the Saviour's eyes were also set".

The mention of Robertson Nicoll reminds one of the tremendous influence exerted by that remarkable editor. He was a strange looking man, with a straggling moustache, shirtcuffs down over his hands, and a high-pitched quavering voice. He could hit hard, and J. H. Shakespeare never quite recovered from the criticism of his book "The Churches at the Cross Roads". Dr. Shakespeare was prepared to accept Episcopacy and much else, for the sake of visible unity and Nicoll wrote, "The confessors and martyrs of Christian liberty purchased our freedom for us; we do not propose to spit on their graves".

I can still hear Nicoll's appealing voice in the sermon he preached before the Free Church Council in Bradford in 1902 on "The Message at Midnight". "The time is midnight and the speaker is my friend." Of the midnight of death he said, "The Christian thought is that death brings us and our God together. In St. Paul's triumphant dying the rose of evening melts suddenly and silently into the rose of dawn." As memorable as the sermon that night was the prayer offered by Rendel Harris, the Quaker scholar and saint. He knelt down at the Communion rail and amid the vast crowd spoke to God as if he and his Heavenly Father were alone in a room together.

In 1907 Nicoll addressed the students at Rawdon on "The Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon". "Spurgeon obeyed the word 'Let us throw our hearts into eternity'. Such as he was in the passion of his youth he was till he completed his work and sacrifice—till the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, his lifelong burden and his lifelong joy was fulfilled at last." From perhaps the most powerful of all his sermons on "Am I clean of His blood?" Nicoll read a terrible passage "Oh! there is one sinner who can look upon this in a solemn light! You man yonder—who is it that died but a few days ago? The woman that loved you, who idolised you. Shall I say it before God and to your face?—you ruined her, and threw her into the kennel with a broken heart. You are glad she has gone, for you will hear no more of her now, you say. Sir, you *shall* hear of it; you *shall* hear of it. As long as you live her spirit shall haunt you; and on your death-bed she shall be there to twist her fingers in your hair, to tear your soul out of your body, and drag

it down to the hell appointed for such fiends as you; for you spilt her blood, the blood of her that trusted you—a fair frail thing.” So Spurgeon preached to the strings of conscience and on the terrors of the Lord. So was it all his business to cry, “Behold the Lamb!” “Gentlemen, the value of Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons for you is mainly in their intense zeal for souls. Your words, blessed by the Holy Ghost, may every time you speak raise the dead to life. You cannot hope to keep faith unless you live in the world of actual and continuous miracle, in the world of conversion and answered prayer.”

The last time I saw Nicoll was when he visited Bristol in 1910 and spoke to the students of the College on Hall and Foster. He described John Foster as along with Coleridge the most powerful Christian force in the first half of the nineteenth century. “To me,” he said, “the true shrine of this city is the Chapel-yard of Downend Baptist Church, and the humble grave where John Foster was buried by starlight. It was a fit burial, for his life was starlit, not sunlit. He lived in starlight, he died in starlight, he was buried by starlight, but living and dying he had light enough to get home.” The inscription on Foster’s tablet in the Chapel was written by Richard Glover and its closing words would apply to most of those whose names we have here recalled. “His creed, reached after laborious questioning, was an adoring conviction of God’s Redeeming Love”.

H. W. BURDETT.

### JACOB’S STRUGGLE AT PENUEL

#### THE STORY

**J**ACOB with his wives, Leah and Rachel, and their maids, Zilpah and Bilhah, and their families are on their way from Syria to Canaan. They have journeyed down into Transjordan and come to the Jabbok ford. This river is probably the modern Nahr-*ez-Zerka* which flows into the Jordan some 25 miles north of the Dead Sea. They are travelling, as caravans often do, by night, and reaching the river Jacob puts his entire company across, though this was the side nearer to the oncoming and threatening Esau. Jacob, still behind on the northern side of the river and concerned about Esau’s movements and intentions, is suddenly attacked by a man. Jacob successfully defends himself, until the assailant fouls him by spraining his thigh; but there was nobody to blow the whistle. One wonders if Jacob suffered a slipped disc and felt the pain in the sciatic nerve, or whether his thigh socket was put out of joint.

The struggle still continues, but the dawn approaches and the assailant seeks release. Jacob now passes from the defensive to the offensive, and perceiving that the assailant is no mortal seeks a blessing. Jacob reveals his own name, and then receives from the assailant the desired blessing in the form of a new name. Henceforth he is to be called Israel. The new name describes the outcome

of the fight in which Jacob has really been victorious. The story has three sequels. Jacob names the place Penuel (site unknown) because he has seen there the face of God (Penuel means Face of God), and is henceforth lame as a memorial of the fight. The Israelites do not eat the sciatic muscle of animals which passes along the thigh, because it was rendered sacred by God's touch.

#### THE UNITY OF THE STORY

There is little doubt but that the story as told in Genesis xxxii, is a literary unit and that it belongs to the oldest source of the Pentateuch, the J. source. It must be confessed that the omission of the last seven words of verse 22 (R.V.), and the first four words of verse 23 makes the narrative easier. Otherwise they all crossed the river (verse 22), and then Jacob sent them all back (verse 23), and himself remained alone on the south side. If the above words are omitted then Jacob remains on the north side, and his company is on the south bank, the side from which Esau is approaching. The variants that remain are not really important enough to justify a division into two sources (e.g., J. 26b, 28, 29, 32. E. 26a, 27, 30, 31) as some of the older scholars thought.

#### THE LAYERS OF THE STORY

There is little doubt that it is possible to detect layers or strata in the story. Thus the foundation is presumably Jacob's story of his wrestling with a man, who turns out to be not a mortal, but who might be a river spirit who objects to having his river crossed, a spirit whose power is mightiest in the dark, and whose power wanes with the dawn. It is this spirit which virtually admits its defeat, because it is driven to the extremity of "fouling" Jacob. Because of the super-human touch, Jacob realises his assailant is more than mortal, and hangs on all the more resolutely. The thought that Jacob wrestled with this spirit and was defeating him, indicates a very ancient level of narrative.

The upper layer of the narrative consists of a different level of facts. Jacob wrestles with God. Jacob's assailant is no longer malevolent, but somebody from whom advantage may be secured. Jacob is no longer on the defensive; he is on the offensive. He strives for a blessing. The blessing is given in one of two ways: in the bestowal of a new name upon Jacob, or else as in verse 30, "and he blessed him there", without further definition.

In this upper strata of the story a higher interpretation is possible. It is the raw material of successful prayer. It is the picture of Israel's ancestor successful in prayer with God—a prototype and example for his descendants. Indeed, Hosea xii, 3-4 elicits this higher view from this very narrative.

#### THE CONTEXT OF THE STORY

Jacob is on his way home. He has been away ever since the quarrel with Esau, and he has been lodging with a branch of his mother's



family in the land of Syria. There he has married and raised two families, so a number of years have gone by. He is now about to resume his life in the land of Palestine. After visits to Shechem, Bethel and near Bethlehem where Rachel died and Benjamin was born, he settles for many years at Mamre near Hebron.

The incident at Penuel occurs before Jacob reaches the land of Canaan, and during the struggle at Penuel Jacob is re-named Israel. There is a parallel account to this in Genesis xxxv, where it appears that Jacob was re-named Israel at Bethel, i.e., after reaching the land of Canaan and within its borders. (On the other hand, xxxv, 9-10 may be a tradition of Jacob's change of name which is an independent fragment and without reference to any place.) The comparison of xxxii, 28 with xxxv, 9-10 shows that on the return journey home, either before reaching the land or after, Jacob received his new name.

The story is thus counterpart to the story of Jacob's ladder which occurred at Bethel, when Jacob was on the forward journey from Canaan to Syria.

*Forward Journey:*

Genesis xxviii, 10-22.

Jacob's Ladder.

Founding of the Sanctuary at Bethel.

Jacob's vow and bargain with God.

*Return Journey:*

Either:

(a) Genesis xxxii, 24-32.

Penuel (before entry).

The Wrestling Match.

New Name.

Or:

(b) Genesis xxxv, 6-15.

Bethel (after entry).

Change of name.

Just as the Ladder story controls Jacob's life and adventures until his return to Palestine, so the Penuel (or Bethel) story controls his life thereafter.

#### JACOB'S NEW NAME AND NEW LIFE

At Penuel then probably (rather than Bethel) Jacob receives a new name and this new name is expressed in the fruits of a new character.

First Jacob is reconciled to his brother Esau (Genesis xxxiii). Jacob is obsequious but Esau is magnanimous. The reconciliation is sealed with a gift. When Jacob left he robbed Esau of his birth-right-blessing. In the reconciliation Jacob gives gifts (blessing) to Esau, Jacob has enough for two, Esau and himself. Compare "my blessing" in xxxiii, 11, where "blessing" means "gift".

Secondly, Jacob begins a real worship of the God of Israel (xxxiii, 20), and later instructs his family to put away their idols (xxxv, 2). Jacob is showing new interest in real worship and loyalty to the one God.

Thirdly, Jacob is depicted as a venerable and godly man for the rest of his life. His change of name expressed itself in the manifestation of a new character and a new piety, concern for his children

and the exhibition of compassion in his declining years. The new name then was the prelude to the new life in Canaan and to the new character. The astute and cunning shepherd has become a patriarch.

#### STRUGGLE AND PRAYER

Even now the story of Jacob's struggle at Penuel has not yielded all its riches. In its highest levels the story reaches still greater heights. The soul of man is competent in the presence of God without any human mediation. But in the presence of God there are occasions when fellowship becomes petition and still rarer occasions when petition becomes agonising struggle. This is the life and death struggle of the soul in the presence of God, for its faith and salvation and life itself. Moses knew that struggle; so did David; so did Jeremiah; and so did our Lord in the Garden and on the Cross.

Thus the final comment on the story must be Wesley's hymn:

"Come, O thou Traveller, unknown."

G. HENTON DAVIES.

#### EUROPEAN CHURCHES: A COMMON INHERITANCE

WHEN my friend, J. O. Barrett, asked me to contribute to this magazine I was rather at a loss to know what to write about, until I came to Geneva in February for a meeting of the Presidents and Executive Committee of the *Conference of European Churches*, of which Dr. Glen Garfield Williams, well-known to many members of the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship, is the lively secretary. What better than to write about that, especially as a little illness has detained me in Geneva and provided enforced leisure.

Five or six years ago, a group of churchmen in Holland and Germany felt that the time had come to try and make more contacts between Christians on both sides of "the Iron Curtain". They also felt that the experience of fellowship which the V.I.P.s of the Churches had through the World Council, should be extended to "the minority churches" in some European countries, East and West. This led to a tentative little gathering at Liselund in Denmark. When Bishop Dibelius, the President of the Synod of German Evangelical Churches, heard of this he thought that it would be good to make the project more widely representative and that the British Churches should be brought in. So he invited three of us to come to Berlin in the spring of 1958 to discuss it with him and those who first thought of the idea. This resulted in a larger conference being held the following year at Nyborg Strand in Denmark, to which a number of churchmen from the East were able to come and to meet a fairly representative company from the West. Merely as a Conference it was not of great moment, although it was much stimulated by a challenging and characteristic discourse by Bishop Ted Wickham, my colleague of the Sheffield Industrial Mission.

What was most valuable was the fellowship and inspiration which it brought to many lonely ministers in central and eastern Europe.

Without intending to create a new ecumenical organisation in Europe, it was decided to hold another gathering in the same place, with a little more preparation and to make it still more representative. Without the World Council being in any way responsible, one of its staff was its organising secretary, and other members of its staff and of its Central Committee took part. At the conclusion of this second Nyborg Conference in the autumn of 1960, it was decided to continue the good work and to appoint five presidents and a representative executive committee to prepare for another conference in 1962 and to raise the necessary funds. Dr. Garfield Williams took over the secretaryship.

The five Presidents were Archbishop Wendland, of the Russian Orthodox Church in East Berlin; Archbishop Kiiivit, of the Lutheran Church in Talinn; Bishop Hanns Lilji of Germany; Dr. Emmen, the General Secretary of the Reformed Church in Holland and myself. The British Churches are represented through the British Council of Churches, and appropriately its secretary, Kenneth Slack, is one of the executive committee.

Why at Nyborg, which is a long and expensive journey for most people? Chiefly because it is easier for those from Eastern Europe to get an exit visa for Denmark than it would be for Germany, France or even Switzerland. Moreover, when you get there, the Conference House-Hotel, under the auspices of the Danish Church, affords ample and comfortable accommodation for a conference of 200-250 persons. It overlooks the waters of the Great Belt, and in the autumn when the water has become too cold for bathing there is nothing to distract attention away from the Conference.

The general theme of the Conference last year was *the Christian Faith and European Humanism*. A good deal of typescript was circulated before it met, reflecting the views of individuals and groups in several countries on the themes of the Conference. The Presidents and the Executive Committee gave a lot of thought to the programme and planning of the Conference, so as to make good use of the three and a half days. Interpreters, skilled in simultaneous interpretations, were employed, and those to be invited were carefully chosen. Although once again too much time was taken up by the reading of long papers which were available in typescript, it was technically much more efficient than the previous meetings, and the atmosphere was friendly, relaxed and happy. And this we owed much to Dr. Williams and his staff. Once again the great majority who came were clergy and ministers. We of the small British group were rather proud that a third of our number were laymen, and also that the closing sessions, in which the Conference reached a common mind in regard to its future, owed a good deal to the Rev. K. Slack

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To the Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal.

Dear Friends,

**Pumblechooks and Hubbles**

The First Test at Old Trafford begins as I write these lines and the summer lies before us. But, before *me*, are still the dark days of winter in the shape of storm, burst pipes and boiler claims at churches and houses with which we have been inundated. Builders' accounts are now coming in for claims notified during the frost and before long we shall be able to tot up the cost of the winter to us.

Of course, we make no complaint; it is a pleasure to settle claims where deacons have prudently insured and that is our job. What does concern me is the cost to churches of damage to premises where the deacons or others have not insured storm, tempest, burst pipes and other perils. But why this absence of insurance for these perils?

Do you remember in *Great Expectations* the gathering after the funeral of Mrs. Joe Gargery? "Mr. Pumblechook and Mr. Hubble talked as if they were of quite another race from the deceased and notoriously immortal." There may be Pumblechooks and Hubbles on diaconates who have said "It can't happen to us". Our experience proves that it can and does even where standards of care and maintenance are high.

Please ask your deacons to write me about insuring these perils.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN,  
*General Manager.*

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and Mr. Peter Kirk, M.P., as "raporteurs" (as well as to contributions on the working committee from Dr. Visser t'Hooft, the Secretary of the World Council).

It became clear that there were issues and problems common to the European Churches, east and west, resulting from our common cultural and religious inheritance going back many centuries. We also had responsibilities towards one another, and towards the rest of the world. So it was decided to go forward to another Conference and that at it more time should be allowed for discussion.

At the meeting of the Presidium and the Executive here in Geneva, earlier this month, it was decided to set up four small inter-church and inter-national discussion groups on the following themes, which had emerged at the last Conference:—

- i. The responsibility of Europe towards other continents.
- ii. Church and State in Europe today.
- iii. Common tasks for the Churches arising from the development of a common Europe.
- iv. Responsible co-operation between different generations.

They will work largely by correspondence and no doubt some individual members will gather men and women in their own country to discuss these subjects. The agenda of the next Conference will be the reports and findings of these four working parties.

We are so snug in Great Britain in spite of our ecclesiastical divisions, and so deeply rooted in our historical inheritance, that it is difficult for us to imagine how lonely and uprooted many Christians and Christian groups are, not only in the East of Europe but also in the West. We also have a long tradition of frank discussion and of friendly tolerance towards those whose opinions may differ from our own which is all too rare on the continent.

In spite of the English Channel and the North Sea, however, we share in a distinctive European inheritance, and having been involved in two world wars, disastrous to humanity in their consequences, we owe it alike to the God of love and to the undeveloped countries, to be by His over-ruling grace, artisans of peace between churches and races, and to use the resources of science and technology to rid society of the disparity between affluence and want, which has bedevilled the life of man upon earth until now. LESLIE S. HUNTER.

#### RUSCHLIKON "CHURCH AND STATE" CONFERENCE

THE first conference on "Church and State" of the European Baptist Federation was held at Ruschlikon and attended by members of the staff and trustees of the seminary, members of the B.W.A. commission on religious liberty and human rights, and other Baptist representatives, making a total of fifty-eight persons from eighteen countries. Under the joint chairmanship of Dr. J. D. Hughey and Dr. Joel Sorensen ten papers were given on Church and State in relation to problems of religious liberty in Roman Catholic, Communist and Western democratic countries.

There is room here for only brief impressions. One recalls with gratitude the careful scholastic approach of John Watts, Walter Fullbrandt and K. C. Dykes to the Biblical material; the massive historical competence of Professor Westin; the penetrating papers on religious liberty by men such as Paul Abrecht, Erik Ruden and Don Carillos de Albornoz who are daily involved in the problem; the contribution of the American Barry Garrett, proud of his membership of the White House press corps and his full-time job of keeping American Baptists informed on Church and State matters; and the splendid fellowship (to which the seminary students made considerable contribution), which made one aware of the variety and vitality of the members of the Baptist family.

It was encouraging to hear that in countries where there is limited religious freedom Baptists are able, through the B.W.A., to engage in discussions with government representatives; and that such representations have had their effect. The point was made that protest is unsatisfactory unless it takes into account the good that has been accomplished by the authority, be it Roman Catholic or Communist; and the fact that some of those who are concerned with a liberal attitude have only a political interest and no concern for religious liberty as such. It was also obvious that in countries where there is a measure of recognition, the church had to express its attitude in the life of the community and at the same time to see to it that State help, either direct or indirect, did not compromise its position. The Welfare State might be seen not so much as a sign of the failure of Christian witness as of its success, but it requires for its very continuance a steady stream of Christians in government. It is to be hoped that further conferences might be arranged on topics raised by this theme, and that they might include laymen with knowledge of political theory or experience of government.

A Baptist Declaration on Church and State was presented by Arthur Kirkby. This outlines the distinction between church membership and membership of the State, and asserts that "Christians are under an obligation to pay taxes and otherwise perform their duties to the State, and to abide by the laws of their country so long as these do not demand disobedience to God", that "The State should guarantee the right of men to believe . . . and to serve their God as their consciences dictate", that "Force should not be used by Church or State to regulate man's relationship to God", and that "Church and State should have separate sources of income . . . Careful consideration should be given to the question whether State support of churches tends to weaken the sense of responsibility and participation of church members. If churches accept public subsidies for projects in which the State is also interested, they should be aware of possible limitation of their authority."

One "participant" found this conference to be one of the most stimulating experiences of his student and ministerial life, and is grateful to the Ruschlikon Seminary for providing an opportunity

which he hopes other British ministers will enjoy, so that there may be a development of American and European co-operation for the good of the whole church.

G. D. SAVAGE.

### LAYMEN LOOK AT THE MINISTRY

**G**ENERALISATIONS are unavoidable in an article of this nature and we hope that this weakness will be recognised in most of what we have to say. We have great respect for Ministers of the Word and we will support any man who, having heard the call of God, is willing to accept that challenge and go forth in faith. We realise that for many such men of varied and multiple gifts this may mean considerable sacrifice. The best men do not talk of this—they are dedicated to their high calling.

As business men we admire the minister who rises early and whose daily living is marked by care in the stewardship of time. It must be dangerously easy, especially when the study is in the manse, to become slack. Some men, concerned to play a part in the life of the community or in the wider affairs of the churches at local or Association level, find themselves faced with the need to be continually vigilant about the division and balance of each day. We should like to think that every minister exercised a strong personal discipline here, not forgetting the need to safeguard his own leisure.

We honour the minister who is humble-minded and honest. We feel that he should know what he wants to do but he should be willing to ask for and weigh the advice of others. We like a minister to say what he believes and thinks, even when this does not please some of his people. We will go far to follow and support such a man although we may not agree with all his proposals and plans. We are ready to follow the man with clear objectives, who not only expects his congregation to work to these ends but is also willing to "take off his coat" and lead in the endeavour. We believe that a minister should put as much energy, enthusiasm and concentration into making his church a successful cause, as a businessman puts into his affairs.

We like him also to be honest in such matters as his desire to leave a church and his consideration of the call to another. We have heard too many pious assurances in such matters.

Of course we enjoy hearing a good preacher but we are more concerned about having a good pastor. A wise minister visits systematically all his people and their contacts. This is a major, long-term operation, often calling for assistance from deacons and others. But let the minister be the "hub" of this work and let him ensure that proper and adequate records are kept. We are not happy when a minister who has a flair for academic or administrative work excuses himself on these grounds from a full exercise of the pastoral ministry.

We think a minister makes a great mistake if, having been to a theological college for three or four years, he reckons himself to be equipped thereby as a theologian, an evangelist, a teacher, a pastor, a youth leader, an administrator and much more. He may indeed have to tackle many tasks for which he is not particularly well fitted, and we admire the man who recognises that even the best college (his own, of course!) has its limitations. We have felt at times that our ministers should be prepared, even while at college, to be more at home with people than with books, more concerned with the practical than the theoretical, good listeners as well as good talkers. We like the man who sees the local church as a partnership within which he seeks to develop the latent talent in his people, being watchful especially for potential leadership and for preaching and pastoral gifts among his young people.

In passing, we should like to express the hope that the day may come when the resources of the denomination are such that the young minister from college enjoys not only the counsel and support of a senior friend and the local fraternal but, for his first two or three years, finds himself in a ministerial team as the junior member with his own specific responsibilities.

We regret the tendency, especially among some younger ministers, to regard the difference between the minister and the layman as one of "status" rather than of "function". We also dislike the rubber stamping of decisions already made in ministers' fraternals, and we will vigorously oppose any attempt by ministers to prevent accredited laymen from conducting Communion or Baptismal Services. We appreciate the minister who quietly and reverently leads his people in worship into the Holy Place, having first been there himself in preparation of spirit. He will not permit himself to be distracted before a service by lesser matters which can await a more convenient season. We have said earlier that we like to hear a good preacher, but whether eloquent or not let his preaching be with conviction and related to real life.

We acknowledge gratefully our debt to our ministerial brethren. We thank God for their integrity (and how few there are who fall!), their zeal and courage, their compassion and intercession, the stimulus of their wit and good conversation, their brotherly love and ministry of encouragement. We know them to be men who stand in need of love and prayer as we do. May God forgive us if by our thoughtlessness or prejudice or suspicion or sheer lack of honesty we have made their way harder than it need have been.

And last, but not least, we thank God also for the ministry of the manse in which so often the minister's wife fulfils with grace and self-denial the office of helpmeet to which she too has been called.

C. R. BATTEN  
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## ARRANGEMENTS FOR NATIONAL ASSISTANCE

*Ministers dealing with appeals for help may be glad to see this circular issued by the Churches Main Committee. Further copies can be obtained from the Secretary, 2, Great Peter Street, S.W.1.*

1. Ministers of Religion have always been looked upon as sources of material, as well as spiritual, help and from time to time they receive pleas for help in cash or kind from persons quite unknown to them. The Churches Main Committee have felt that denominations ought to have a conspectus of the machinery existing today for relief and they have therefore asked the National Assistance Board to help them by providing information on this point. The following notes are circulated for the help of ministers and others concerned.

2. The National Assistance Board have over 400 full-time local (or area) offices throughout the country, and in the smaller towns where there is no local office of the Board there are frequently arrangements for enquiries to be made about national assistance at the local offices of either the Ministry of Labour or the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance. There is at least one area office of the Board in every important town and in the larger provincial cities there may be two or three. It is only in the more rural parts of the country that an area office of the Board cannot be reached within an hour or so, except at weekends or outside office hours. Offices are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on week-days and in most cases from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturday mornings. If, therefore, ministers receive a call from someone who claims to be destitute, the first question to put is whether the caller has been to the National Assistance Board and, if the answer is "no", to advise him to do so straightaway and to give him such guidance as is necessary to enable him to get there. The addresses of the Board's area offices are, of course, in the local Telephone Directory and a telephone call to the Manager before the caller leaves may be helpful. If the caller arrives outside the Board's office hours or he would not be able to get to the nearest office before closing time, probably the best course would be to put him in touch with the police who will have the telephone number of the Board's officer who deals with applications outside office hours.

3. If in response to questions the caller says that he has been refused help by the Board, it would be as well to have a word with the Manager of the local office on the telephone. It is sometimes stated that persons have been refused assistance on the ground that they were unable to give the Board an address. In fact it is *not* the Board's policy to refuse assistance to a person because he has not got an address and therefore it is as well that any statement of this kind should be taken up.

Ministers may already know the manager of the Board's local office; but if not he will always be pleased to hear from them and to give any information about the local arrangements for dealing with people who claim to be in immediate need.

4. While there is no longer a chain of casual wards throughout the country providing overnight accommodation for the vagrant type of man or woman, in or near most of the larger cities there is the modern equivalent, known as a reception centre, where, contrary to the practice in Poor Law times, persons are encouraged to remain and given whatever help is practicable to assist them in settling down. Ministers will probably know already whether or not there is a reception centre within reasonable travelling distance of the Church, but if not the local officer of the National Assistance Board will be able to say.

People who are homeless as a result of eviction or similar unforeseen circumstances are the responsibility of the Local Authority (either the County Council or the County Borough Council).

### THE LIBRARY

On a number of occasions requests have been made for a list of the books in the Fellowship Library. This list has now been prepared and Fraternal Librarians or individual borrowers may receive a copy on application to the Librarian.

It is hoped that the publication of this list will make the Library increasingly useful to members. A real advantage of the Library is that important, but expensive, books are available for careful study without the fear of fines or the worry of renewal. Although there is no time limit members and fraternalists are asked to return books as soon as possible so that others may benefit by their circulation. (Fraternalists who have held boxes over twelve months please note!)

B. W. O. AMEY.

### OF INTEREST TO YOU

*Who can describe Sydney Morris* or tell what Baptist ministers owe to him? He was a prodigious letter-writer, and had personal contacts with men the world over. The *Fraternal* is largely his creation. He took it up when it was a small and rather discredited leaflet and made it what it is today, with a circulation of over 3,000. Whoever might be chairman or special speaker at the annual meeting at Bloomsbury, he was the man we looked for on the platform, his was the guiding hand. He never failed with apt quip for every situation. Who, that was present, for example, will ever forget the occasion when, on his ministerial Diamond Jubilee, we gave him a cheque as love token. For a moment or two there was silence as he twiddled the gift in his hand. "I was just making sure it was signed", he said at last, and our emotions found outlet in a roar of affectionate applause. We have no one who can fill his place. He was active to the last. But those of us who worked with him will do our best to carry on.

*We shall miss* from our ranks other brethren who have passed on: J. I. Carlyle Litt, brother-in-law of our chairman, who rendered

outstanding service in establishing a strong cause at Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, and passed away at Lyme Regis; A. G. Edwards, after a notable ministry of 21 years at Tabernacle, Penarth, and long illness; J. Rigden Green, for twenty two years pastor at Sandy, Beds., with two sons and two daughters in the work of the Church at home and abroad, who died in his sleep; the veterans C. P. Sawday with but three pastorates in his 42 years' ministry, who passed on at the age of 94, and H. T. Chilvers of Bethesda, Ipswich, Spurgeon's Tabernacle and Holland Road, Hove—all notable pastorates—at the age of 90; H. E. R. Wassell, for 33 years at Bedford; R. H. Russell of Broughton and Stockbridge, after much suffering; D. Kinvig, a faithful country pastor in Beds. and Bucks.; Henry Turner, formerly of John Knox Street, Glasgow; F. C. M. Perkins of Henley-on-Thames; E. A. Rhaid-Jones, formerly of West Green, Tottenham; C. S. Rudge of Old King Street, Bristol and Herne Bay; G. L. Whittaker, formerly of Parkstone, at the age of 85, and G. H. Relfe, who was killed in a road accident near his home at Cotton End, on returning from the Assembly in London. To the wives and dear ones of these brethren our hearts go out; as they do also to three brethren who have been bereaved of their wives, Victor Whittle, V. F. Smeed and F. R. Sage; and to Kenneth Claxton on the passing of his father, a pillar and sometime acting-pastor of the church at Sheringham. We also pay our tribute to the memory of H. G. Wood, whose work at Woodbrooke and whose writings have placed many of us in his debt. He was a son of J. R. Wood of Upper Holloway and was a brilliant young Cambridge graduate when S.G.M. settled there.

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” Comfort and peace be theirs who mourn.

*Our best wishes* to brethren who have retired, may they find congenial occupation and opportunities of service within their strength: to J. O. Hagger, after 52 years in the ministry including 17 years each in Tredegarville, Cardiff and Chorley Wood; D. R. Oliver, retiring early for reasons of health from Broadstairs; W. Vellam Pitts after fifteen years at Zion, Cambridge, and pastorates in Scarborough and Wallingford; C. A. Missen from Ibstock; L. J. Howells from Pembury; and Clement Davies after forty years at Newcastle Emlyn, well-known to generations of summer schoolers at Cilgwyn. The ministerial Jubilee of J. H. Brooks has been celebrated with a service at Carey, Reading, the scene of his last and longest pastorate; and that of H. Spelman of Reading is to be celebrated in September. We salute them both. J. E. Ennals, aged 94, is back from the nursing home we are glad to say; but our sympathy goes out to Gordon Brown in the serious illness of his wife, who has recently undergone a spinal operation. To keep her company on the operating table he has himself had his appendix out. We hope by the time these words are read that both will be well on road to recovery. We also hope that R. J. Stevens of Maidenhead,