

The Fraternal.

New Series.

JANUARY, 1936.

No. 21

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT.

IN this opening number of another year let me express to all our members heartiest greetings for the future. We all, I am certain, desire more than anything else the spiritual prosperity of our churches, and I earnestly pray that God will fulfil every holy aspiration of ours in the coming days.

We all know how difficult they are. True, the days for the Church have always been difficult, but never have they been more so, and there is constant need for every one of us to avoid lamenting continually the fate which has put our destiny as ministers in such perplexing times. The juniper tree was never more attractive. But we as apostles of Christ must seek to avoid it at all costs. Not only because it can never help us to solve our problems; not only because it argues a lack of faith in the over-ruling purpose of God: but also because it prevents us from being to our people in difficult days what as ministers of Christ we ought to be. For we must never let ourselves lose sight of this fact, that, if our spiritual stress is great, theirs is very much greater. They look to us Sunday by Sunday, and all the days of the week in-between, for the cheer and support that they need for the spiritual drain of these days. It is not merely that our sermons must be helpful—more helpful than perhaps they ever needed to be. But our whole bearing, our poise of spirit, our confidence in the inexhaustible resources of God must be such that our people can find in us always what Jeremiah was made by God long ago—"a defenced city and an iron pillar and brasen walls." More and more the

spiritual stamina of our people is bound up with the spiritual stamina of their ministers, and we must ever pray that God will keep us faithful.

Perhaps our greatest weakness in our Baptist ministry lies in our forgetting our Priestly vocation. We have again and again waxed so eloquent about the manifest evils of sacerdotalism that we have obscured to ourselves the fact that we are truly "priests unto God," for, if our Glorified Master exercises a priestly office continually on our behalf, ought we not as the stewards of His grace to do something of the same kind more seriously than we do? We spend hours on our sermons. And in our priestly ministry we spend ——? God forgive us all. This I am certain is our greatest failure to-day.

That is why the Prayer Union side of our Fraternal is so vital a part of our activity. It is a useful reminder that we can exercise a really brotherly ministry on behalf of each other, and the regular practice of praying for our fellow-ministers on Sunday mornings (which I hope we never forget to do) is a pointer in the direction which we ought more frequently and continuously to take. If we could all give a bigger place to the devotional in our reading and make our studies more like oratories where we commune with God on behalf of our people, how much more efficient in the highest sense our work would be, and how much more truly our Sunday and weekday work would have about it that "atmosphere" which in the things of God is more important than anything else.

My warmest good wishes to everyone.

HENRY COOK.

THE ORIGINS OF THE PASTORAL SESSION.

ON Monday evening, April 22nd, 1918, at the time of the Baptist Union Assembly, a few ministers met in the vestry of Bloomsbury Chapel. Most of us were younger men, though a few must have been in their fifties. There were probably fifteen of us, and Thomas Phillips was our host and chairman. Before the conversation had proceeded far, several men left us. I can visualise now one who had been a hero to me in my student days, walking out and shaking the dust of the vestry from his feet. As the atmosphere became more electric, and

the storm became more threatening, a few advised caution. The conversation came mainly from revolutionaries or "wreckers" as some of us were later described. We met because we were convinced that a spiritual crisis was upon us and, at the time, we saw no other way than working through the ministers of the Denomination. Concerning the nature of the crisis we will write presently. We considered various methods of making known our fears and aspirations to the Denomination. It was finally decided that the most effective step was to summon a meeting of all the ministers of the Assembly on April 24th, when the session of the Union was over.

In response to the announcement, about three hundred ministers met in the schoolroom at Bloomsbury. We had asked Thomas Phillips to take the chair and to introduce the subjects discussed in the vestry meeting. In a few minutes the flame was kindled. Other speakers added fuel to the fire. Some protested with vehemence and indignation at the trend of denominational affairs. Others had suggestions of a plan of campaign in the country. Again, others had no heart for conflict and left the meeting. There can never be any doubt of the rebellious attitude of the majority of the ministers who were present. As usual, criticism was easier than construction or reconstruction. Something needed to be done. How could it be done? It was agreed to request the Baptist Union Council to grant facilities for a Pastoral Session of all ministers at the Assembly in 1919. Three ministers were appointed to present the request to the Secretary of the Union, to negotiate with the Baptist Union Council, and to prepare for the First Pastoral Session in April, 1919: they were Herbert Morgan, then at Bristol, T. N. Tattersall, then at Kettering, and the present writer, then at Huddersfield.

The following day the three of us met the Secretary of the Union, Dr. J. H. Shakespeare, and he arranged for us to attend the meeting of the Council the same day and present the request for a Pastoral Session. As we had found no opportunity to draw up a scheme, or suggest any organisation, it was resolved to postpone the matter until we had definite proposals to submit. In July, 1918, we were invited to meet the Council. The previous evening the three of us met Thomas Phillips in his vestry at Bloomsbury and drew up a scheme, which was

until recently, with slight modifications, the scheme known to all of us in the Pastoral Session. The writer was asked to outline the scheme to the Council and state the reasons which made it desirable to speak of the unrest and discontent of the ministry and of many in the churches: Herbert Morgan and T. N. Tattersall were to stress the points set forth. We were frank and we were not bitter. We withheld no criticism of the official policy of the Union which we were under an obligation to our ministry to make. The ordeal was not easy for us. We were told bluntly that all the wisdom in the Denomination was not possessed by men in their thirties—with which we heartily agreed. I always remembered Dr. Clifford's attitude in the debate. He took me aside and said, "Hold on, you could have gone further as far as I am concerned." It is impossible even now to tell the whole story. But that night I returned to Huddersfield knowing what it cost to represent the Baptist ministry. For the only time in my life I travailed for days whether I should leave our ministry. Herbert Morgan would have understood such a step. We learned that day something of the ways of "ecclesiastical statesmanship" as it was then called. The Pastoral Session, however, was organised and it became part of the programme of the 1919 Assembly.

What were the urgent questions which stirred our ministers in the spring of 1918? It is well nigh impossible to convey any impression of those days to the younger ministers in our ranks. We need to recall the events of March, 1918, and the gloom which settled upon the country. The Germans were making their last and most desperate effort to smash the Allied lines. They broke the Fifth Army and were marching westwards. Haig had issued his order "We have our backs to the wall." Nerves were on edge. The hysterical Press demanded the "conscription of the parsons." Several religious weeklies joined in the chorus and the "Baptist Times" was involved. Another source of dissatisfaction was the use of the "Baptist Times" as an instrument of Mr. Lloyd George's policy. Many resented this use of the spiritual organ of the Denomination. Others objected to the knock-out blow and the fight-to-a-finish policy in the war. Others were distressed at the official attitude to reunion. This controversy had been raised in an acute form by the book "The Churches at the Cross-Roads." These were the major issues which stirred the

ministers who met in the schoolroom at Bloomsbury on April 24th, 1918. When we add the problem of the official leadership of the Denomination, the growing concern of the "whither" of our churches, the struggle to keep our soul alive, and our deferred hopes of any spiritual revival, the men who have entered our ministry during the last fifteen years will understand our unrest and our aims in 1918. Many of us were not afraid of being conscripted, but we were alarmed at the attitude of official Christianity in the land, reaching such a climax as it did in the spring of 1918.

In the light of what has been written, it will be clear that the Pastoral Session was intended to function for the spiritual progress of our churches. It was conceived as a conference through which our ministers might learn the secret of spiritual leadership which the Denomination needed. The Session met opposition from the outset. It is to be regretted that some of our ministers neglected it from its inception. Others are never present anywhere if there is any possibility of controversy. Some have sought to use the Pastoral Session as an organisation for insisting on the "rights" of the ministers, making it, as several laymen say, a "Trade Union of ministers." Surely a one-sided view, for the churches have "rights," and whatever we say about it, the churches will continue to insist on their "right" to vote regarding the men who are to serve them as ministers.

For some years the writer has been unable to attend the Session. Whenever I have been at the Assembly I have been present at the Session; but we all know, and I hope we all regret, that it has failed to function as it was intended. It becomes every Baptist minister to see that it does function in a dignified and worthy way. If a conference of ministers cannot function without cynicism or irreverence, then it is serious for our own spiritual leadership. Moreover, at the present time, there is the friendliest official attitude toward the Session.

We hope the new constitution of the Pastoral Session will be accepted next April. May I plead with my brethren, as I am entitled to plead, considering my share in creating this opportunity for our fellowship, that we use the Session as an occasion to stimulate each other in the leadership of the churches? And if there must be criticism, and I would not have it stifled, let it be constructive in character.

HENRY TONWSEND.

CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS HEALING.

MANY pastors are thinking seriously about the increasing emphasis which is being placed, in these days, on the healing ministry of the Church. It may be helpful, therefore, to think about the therapeutic practices of bygone days.

Details concerning the Babylonio-Sumerian and the Assyrian healing may be culled from the 660 cuneiform tablets dug up from the mounds and from Assurbanipal's library, which are in the British Museum collection. These have been translated and interpreted by Dr. Campbell Thompson. With regard to the state of Egyptian healing, the medical papyri, the hieroglyphic inscription on temples, tombs and statues, and the references in Greek and Roman writers furnish invaluable data. The Persian reactions to pathological conditions may be inferred from statements in the *Vendidad*.

The evidence from all the above sources is, in large outline, identical. Healing was practised in close connection with religion. Its methods were religious, and, to a great extent, the physicians were also priests. There were, also, lay-doctors, but they relied, very often, on mystical methods.

For centuries, healing, on the spiritual side, was represented by prayer and sacrifice in which the god-ward reference was unmistakable; on the mental side, by the use of charms, talismans, incantations and spells which set the same healing mechanism at work which is characteristic of modern psychotherapy, and, on the physical plane, by the use of drugs and herbal remedies in order to bring health by the avenue of the body.

These three aspects, whilst distinguishable by us, were not recognised by them. They simply treated the patient by the method which, on the basis of their past experience, seemed most likely to be effective. Only at a later day was the differentiation made, and almost the entire emphasis of healing was placed on physical methods through the avenue of the body, to the exclusion of mental and spiritual restoration to health.

The Greeks continued the sacerdotal healing tradition, especially in their incubation temples. But they were deeply interested in knowledge for its own sake, and, with them, the scientific idea was definitely born. With the aid of the investigations of the various philosophical schools, the sciences of anatomy, embryology, physiology and therapeutics came into being. Dissection, too, was practised. Invaluable work was

done by Hippocrates. He taught that health depended on the harmonious combination of four elements or cardinal juices, viz., blood, mucous (phlegm), black bile and yellow bile. There must be neither excess nor defect of any one. Health resulted when harmony was maintained, and sickness came with disharmony. Yet, whenever he could not explain any symptoms of a disease, he referred them to some sort of divine interference.

His aetiology of disease was epoch-making. Many medical historians do not seem to have fully appreciated his work. Previously to his day, sickness was explained by a demon *from without* entering the body and causing the trouble. The cure depended on expelling the spiritual being. Further, he conceived of sickness as merely a physical disorder. Yet, there were mysterious symptoms which he referred to divine interference. His physical philosophy was, therefore, found wanting. Psychological science was beyond him, so he had to fall back on supernatural assumptions. He admitted the value of charms and talismans in curing sicknesses, but could not explain why they had a beneficent effect. He believed, then, that there were other ways of producing internal harmony as well as by the avenue of the body. These avenues are known to-day to be mental and spiritual. It was due to his insight that physical healing was put on a more scientific foundation.

The Romans did not make much progress in the treatment of pathological conditions for reasons which need not detain us here. The Jewish contribution to the medical art lay in the emphasis which they put on the moral and spiritual condition of the sick person. He needed careful consideration from this point of view. The Jews tended to think that all sickness was penal, that when sin was repented of the physical pains would disappear and perfect bodily health could be expected as a gift from Yahweh. This over-emphasis led to the belief that to consult a physician was an impiety—an opinion corrected in time. This God-ward reference was, fortunately, never lost in Jewish thought, and was a contribution of no mean value to the science of healing. God gave the physicians their knowledge, the drugs their potency and the sick the capacity to respond to the treatment. His gift of restoration to health was not thought of as the capricious interference of power. Yahweh had not to be cajoled, forced or persuaded to heal, as was the case with pagan deities, and so His actions were on quite a different plane from the healing deities who were forced

by magic, or persuaded by sacrifice to send a cure. But the Jews never thought out the spiritual approach to health very carefully.

The Greeks, on the other hand, seem to have exaggerated the bodily aspect of healing. Their outlook was rather materialistic, and owing to them, healing has manifested this bias into modern times. Fortunately, psychotherapists are striving to place the mental approach on a scientific basis. The same service needs to be done for spiritual healing, if it is to be rescued from the ignorance and empiricism which are likely to bring it into disrepute, and have already caused suffering to many sick people. Many faith healers cure diseases, but they have little knowledge of the spiritual laws which govern their cures; whilst their many failures are a menace to society.

Two views of the aetiology of disease have been now unfolded. (1) It was traced to the activities of external agencies who took possession of the sufferer, and was regarded as an invasion of the personality from without by a disease demon. This was believed by the Jews of our Lord's time. But whereas other peoples believed that sickness was sent by offended deities, whose actions were oftentimes inexplicable and capricious, the Jews insisted on its moral and spiritual roots. (2) Hippocrates introduced another conception, namely, that it was due to internal disharmony. He believed that this maladjustment was physical. Jesus' teaching was similar to the Hippocratic view, but transcended it. He took into His survey the entire personality, in its bodily, mental and spiritual aspects. Disharmony in any one of these produced disease, and the most fundamental level was the spiritual.

Sickness in His view was a degradation and disarrangement of the personal entity. He was deeply conscious of man's estrangement from the love of God, and his one desire was to bring human frailty and need into intimate contact with the Divine sufficiency. His great task was the bringing of the crippled and cramped in body and mind into an ever-growing fellowship with God, whether it was by curing their broken bodies or by preaching the Gospel of repentance. For this reason, He declined to be known as a wonder-worker. Healing was never a mere adjunct to His mission, but was a constituent part of His redemptive activity. His mission was to save. To save the soul, He healed the body if it stood in the way. But such healing was subservient to the soul's salvation. Hence,

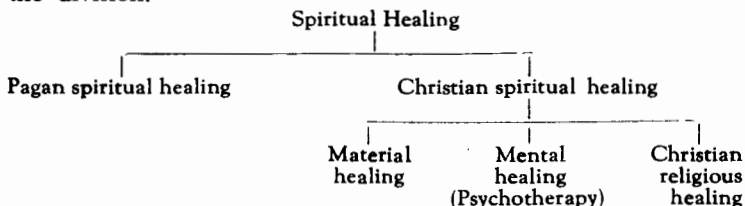
He was so earnest in His injunctions that His cures should not be spoken of and bandied about from mouth to mouth. They would only be misunderstood in a wonder-loving age. The majority of the people had not the spiritual insight to see the inner meaning of His miracles of healing. He would remain for them a mere wonder-worker and not a Saviour. His work was concerned with the eternal moral and spiritual welfare of men. The real wonder is not the healing of the body but the saving of the soul. But both may be inextricably connected in the work of personal salvation.

From His day, both in medical and in ecclesiastical circles, material and magical healing were practised. The latter cures were always something of an enigma to scientific minds, and some people have refused to acknowledge their authenticity. The many wonderful cures in the *Acta Sanctorum* have been discredited by physicians. They ought to have accepted the facts, and refused the supernatural explanation of them as violations of law. Similar cures are wrought to-day by psychotherapists and faith healers.

Physical and psychotherapeutic healing need not detain us. Our interest is in spiritual, religious or faith healing—phrases used more or less synonymously. Yet, there is need to differentiate between them. Faith, for example, is operative in material and mental as well as in spiritual healing. It may help or hinder the efficacy of drugs. The faith which a patient has in his psychotherapist is of essential value in bringing a cure. In both instances, it is directed to objects on the mundane plane. The faith, which is operative in spiritual treatment, is an attitude of the heart, mind and will directed towards supra-mundane beings—gods and goddesses in paganism, and the Triune God amongst Christians.

By spiritual healing, then, we mean all those methods which make a direct appeal to supernatural beings. It has two branches: (1) Pagan spiritual healing, which may call to its aid material remedies and also work by mental laws. It also covers cases of healing which have come directly from a dream-vision of some celestial being, as in incubation. Frequently, these beings have suggested prescriptions, the materials of which have no therapeutic value. (2) Christian spiritual healing. This covers all healing where God's aid and blessing are definitely sought, e.g. (i) Material remedies, drugs, diet, surgery, etc., (ii) Psychotherapy, (iii) Christian Religious Healing which uses

no material methods, but appeals directly to God, the Lord and Giver of Life and health. The following diagram illustrates the division.



There are no sub-divisions under pagan spiritual healing because the methods of scientific healing by material and mental treatment had not been separated in early civilisations. The germs, however, were present. Side by side with the treatment given by witch-doctors and priest-physicians, folk remedies were in use in the home; whilst lay-physicians gathered together some knowledge of scientific procedure.

Spiritual healing survived the Reformation, and has continued unceasingly from primitive days to the present. Such healings are not supernatural in the sense of their being violations of law. They obey the laws of the mental and spiritual aspects of our nature.

The conclusion seems irresistible that spiritual healing of the kind associated with incubation churches, Lourdes, and many healers, both past and present, including the late Mr. Hickson, Pastor Jeffreys and the Rev. John Maillard cannot be proved to be violations of law. It is explicable on the basis of law, physical, mental and spiritual. Until the entire domain of law has been surveyed and mapped out, it cannot be said what may, or may not, be explained on that basis. God as the Source of all goodness, is the Source of all healing. But this does not negative healing in accordance with the laws which He Himself has made, in His wisdom, to govern this realm.

Mental healing may take place through treatment given by men who are more or less untrained, and with some success, because they can manage to get health-giving suggestions into the sub-conscious mind. Some even have psychic healing-powers; whether these may be explained as due to animal magnetism, or are concerned with a peculiar property of the personality or will, matters not. These powers may produce physical fitness in the sick. Paul recognised these gifts. But he did not rank them as the highest endowments bestowed on

man by the Holy Spirit. In any case, successes come, more or less, by chance. The psychotherapist, by reason of his learning and training, is on a higher plane than these practitioners. Similarly, spiritual healing may come about by arousing the religious emotions and linking on healing suggestions with the belief in spiritual beings of no very high moral or spiritual level. But neither in the case of the healer nor of the healed need high spiritual qualities be essential. The former may work for personal gain, and the latter may simply desire physical health. Christian Religious Healing demands holiness of life in the healer, and the patient must be in vital touch with God. Moreover, bodily healing is definitely recognised as secondary. Spiritual perfection must be the goal aimed at, through a life consecrated to God, and patterned on that of Jesus. Its chief characteristic is love. Christian Religious Healing, then, has nothing less in view than our Lord Himself had in mind when He healed the sick, namely, the full salvation of the entire man—*body-mind-spirit*, through the reintegration of a life founded on a new relationship to God as our Loving and Heavenly Father.

One practical matter concerns the duty of the busy pastor to his sick parishioners. Does this need radical alteration? For the most part, this duty must remain spiritual and pastoral. The average pastor has not the time nor the opportunity to study the therapic aspects of psychology and religion, and thereby to obtain the practical experience and technical ability which are required to treat the sick as a Christian Religious Healer. It may be that specialists for this work will have to be trained, and may become an established ministerial order in the Church of Christ.

In the meantime, our work will be prophylactic, and its importance, as such, cannot well be over-estimated. Many will find this a comforting fact. Diseases are often due to phobias, and these, in turn, result from the failure of man's personal religion. The Church's ministries are, thus, preventive. From birth to death she cares for her children's welfare. If Christians would but take more advantage of their privileges, sickness would tend to decrease in extent. It is, then, our bounden duty to bring men and women to a personal knowledge of the Saviour, for, in so doing, we are not only edifying them spiritually, but are making an important contribution to the maintenance of a healthy mind in a healthy body.

G. G. DAWSON (Oak Hill College, Barnet).

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE
INDIVIDUAL.

(Notes of an Address, given at the Meetings of the Lancs. and Cheshire Association.)

WE begin with the individual, as we know him to-day, a being, fully equipped with the most modern education, possessing highly developed powers of criticism, often sceptical and unbelieving, and sometimes very confident in his ability to shape his own destiny; a being, independent in his thinking, with his own views of life and religion, apparently feeling no compulsion to accept what his religious teachers offer him. He is sinful and sorrowful, often peculiar and angular. But whatever his virtues or vices, he is the best thing we have got and is worth capturing and keeping. Dr. Glover quotes from a letter of an ancient Bishop of Synesius to a new Governor of Tripoli, early in the 5th century, who was exploiting the people, in which the Bishop says, "You treat men as if they were cheap. Man is not a cheap thing but a precious thing, for whom Christ died." That is worth our remembering.

The individual may be very dangerous to the community, and society, often, needs protection against him. Hitler and Mussolini are illustrations. But an even greater truth is, that the individual, in this age, needs protection against society. In an increasing degree, he is becoming the victim of combines and trusts of all kinds, from Trades Unions to Ecclesiastical organisations. As he faces society to-day, the individual is finding his position increasingly difficult.

This is obvious, when we look at the individual in his setting, in the world in which he has to live his life. It is a world of mystery, pain, sin, injustice, calamity. It baffles his comprehension and sometimes breaks his heart. In many parts of the world, individual liberty is being denied and it will need eternal vigilance to save it from being denied here in England. Ever present is the danger of the individual becoming an absolute slave to the State. The philosophy of the totalitarian State, whether of German, Italian, or any other brand, demands, on the part of the individual, a blind obedience to the State. Once the demand is allowed, it will not be long before there follows spiritual and mental stagnation. To deny the risk and responsibility of personal liberty, in any State, is unhealthy. And to-day, the individual is living in a world

where personal liberty, that which contributes most to making him an individual, is in grave danger. It is, too, a most highly-organised world. Organisation and machinery are crushing out human individuality. Human values are being squeezed out by mass pressure. In industry, astronomy, Statecraft, in almost every realm of thought and activity, there is a tendency to create in the mind of the individual a sense of insignificance, futility, frustration, a sort of despair. Perhaps this sense is taking the place of the sense of sin.

Such is the setting of the individual and he inevitably reacts to it. And his reaction is one of doubt, not only of such aspects of the Godhead as Sovereignty but doubt of God Himself. The reconciliation of such a world as this with the idea of a Wise, Sovereign, Loving Heavenly Father, is a baffling problem to countless individuals and until this poisonous doubt is rooted out from his heart, the individual will never find the rest for which he was made. There must be a conviction that God is and that he counts in the sight of God. How to get this conviction is our problem. Will economic justice secure it for him? Or perfectly adjusted social relationships? Or the abolition of war? These things, of course, are long overdue. But there are fundamental needs these things do not touch. "Rachael weeps for her children because they are not," just as much in a modern palace as in ancient Bethlehem. You cannot buy off despair by modern millions any more than by ancient pence. Many a man is crying out of his abundance, just as poignantly as Job cried out of his poverty, "Oh that I knew where I might find him." Which means to say that there are some needs in individual experience which no material progress can supply.

Though the individual is doubting God, yet in his heart of hearts he knows that his doubt is not true. There is something within each of us which simply rebels at the idea of human values being uncared for by the power that created them. The restlessness of man's heart is symptomatic of the truth expressed by George Macdonald, when he said, "No man is at rest until he knows that He who is at the heart of things is friendly towards him."

But how is man to be sure of it? Well, I could argue the moral constitution of the world. I could point out how beneficent are the results of well doing and how tragic the

issues of evil. I could further argue that you will never get an ideal world, so long as you allow man to be the sole instrument in bringing it about. For great as he is, the greatest thing we have, he is not yet to be fully trusted in a matter like that. For he has not yet learnt the art of self government. He does not yet know how to control his own passions. And I think I should be sound in my argument. But I am not sure that satisfaction would come that way.

The only satisfying way of assurance lies by way of the revealing Jesus, as He shows to us that aspect of the Sovereignty of God we call Fatherly Care. He clearly teaches the attitude of God to individuals, in such parables as the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Son. And in His life, He revealed the character of God as Sovereign Goodness and Love. Jesus makes the Sovereign Fatherhood of God a living thing for all time and all men.

How does He do it? He sits down with me at home and says to me, "If you know how to give good gifts to that child of yours, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good gifts to them that ask Him." That is reasonable. It is common sense to believe that if parenthood in me, imperfect a parent as I am, involves solicitude for my offspring, it must at least involve that in Him, who is all perfect. It is inconceivable that there should be fine feelings in man and none in God.

But Jesus not only reasons with me, He reveals to me, in His own life, the Sovereign Goodness and Love of God towards me. He claims to know the Father, and what He knows He reveals in His own life.

What do I see when I look at this revealing Jesus? I see an individual, full of tenderness and moved to great pity, with something about Him we can only call by the word "Grace." Something which recognised no limits of service or sacrifice. An outflow towards individual man of a full nature, eager only to find recipients for His love. And I see an individual, pure, without sin, inflexibly stern against evil. And if I go on looking at Jesus I see other great qualities of His life; disinterestedness, endurance, patience, indeed all the great qualities of which human nature is capable raised to their highest power and wonderfully combined in a single individual, rooted in the conviction that He is the Son of God, the revelation of His

Father and ours. When I thus see the glory of Jesus, full of grace and truth, I see something of the Sovereignty of God in action on my behalf. For what I have found through my knowledge of Jesus is that the Sovereignty of God is the Sovereignty of Goodness. I am sure that the completion of my own individuality and the ultimate triumph of personality lie not with force nor changing circumstance, but with Goodness, even though that victory lies along the road which leads to Calvary.

Standing amidst a thousand mysteries, baffled by events which seem to be inexplicable, living in a world which seems to contradict the very idea of the goodness of God, I go, for my only refuge to Jesus Christ. In Him I know that God is good. He who spared not His own Son must love me. And in this tossing world, it is in the Sovereignty of that Love and Goodness that the individual must find his sheet anchor.

H. KAY,
(Church, Lancs).

KEEP UP-TO-DATE IN

SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK

The Sunday School is the most promising part of the Church Organisation, and Ministers as well as Teachers and Officers should do everything possible to make their work for the children effective.

One of the best ways of doing this is to read "The New Chronicle of Christian Education," the only weekly journal devoted to Sunday School work. It is indispensable to the progressive worker. Send a list of the names and addresses of your staff to the Editor at 57 & 59, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4, and free specimen copies will be sent to each of them.

**THE NEW CHRONICLE
OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Edited by SYDNEY C. LUCKER

THE RELEVANCE OF THE MINISTRY.

(Reprinted, with kind permission, from the "Baptist Quarterly"—a useful magazine which should be read by every Baptist Minister—2s. 6d.)

OF all callings the Christian ministry is perhaps the most paradoxical, for it requires the possession of qualities which are commonly regarded as opposites. The effective minister must learn to employ all his personality, and yet understand self-suppression; he must be introspective to an unusual degree, exploring his own soul that he may learn the approach to the inner life of other men, yet he must never cease to be completely healthy-minded. His people expect him to be both a mystic and a jolly good fellow.

In view of the importance, difficulty and strangeness of our task it is no wonder that a vast literature has grown up about it, and it is significant that in almost every book on Pastoral Theology there is an emphatic assertion of the necessity and worth of the preacher's office. At least one section will be found in these books discussing the question whether the ministry has any right to exist in this utilitarian age. Is there any parallel with that in the technical literature of other professions? I once studied certain legal textbooks, but cannot recollect any hint in them of a timid misgiving about the usefulness of the legal profession. The late Lord Birkenhead never seems to have been visited with any modest diffidence as to whether lawyers are really indispensable. Similarly, when doctors write about their work they never raise a doubt as to its importance; no one seems to have suggested to them that they are an unnecessary survival from the past. The validity, worth and relevance of these callings is universally admitted; why should the ministry be perplexed by the problem of its relevance to the modern world?

If anyone is inclined to question the existence of such a perplexity, I can only refer to personal experience. I used to feel that there was an actuality in other callings, which was absent from my own. The physician deals with the unchallengeable reality of pain, but the maladies with which we deal are less obvious. The lawyer is concerned with tangible property, with undeniable rights and duties; the preacher has to do with possessions and duties in the realm of the invisible. Moreover, the results of these other callings can be immediately assessed and accurately gauged. There is an answer to all this,

but until the minister finds it his work is far less effective than it might be. I am not thinking of cases where this doubt arises from uncertainty as to the gospel message; where that is the explanation, the only thing is to pray, "Lord, increase our faith." I have rather in mind the situation where the minister is sure of his faith, but cannot relate its great matters to the trivial details and routine duties of each day.

Even if this disastrous feeling of irrelevance never disturbs our own minds, the outer world thus views us. It is easy to say we should pay no attention to its verdict, but as long as men deem our witness superfluous we work to no purpose. We are regarded as men who advocate inappropriate remedies for imaginary dangers. Dr. Johnson said of someone, "He would cry, Fire! Fire! in Noah's flood." Caustic critics sometimes depict the ministry as if it were equally ineffective and out of touch with reality. "The world needs economic guidance," they say, "and you talk about sin." Of course, we have our answer, but are they convinced?

In so far as this is the objection of unbelieving people, we must reckon with the fact that our work will always appear to them unreal and futile. When they do praise the ministry, they commonly do so on wrong grounds, and we appeal from their verdict to a higher tribunal. Paul has repeated references to the difficulty of making his message appear reasonable to prejudice and disbelief; compare such utterances as 1 Cor. i 18, 21-25; ii 14-16. It is as if, with a kind of despair, he says, "I can't make them understand, do what I will." Are we prepared for this kind of misunderstanding, to be regarded as queer problems, "fools for Christ's sake"? The ancient prestige of the ministerial office has largely gone; since it was to some extent based on wrong reasons, it is perhaps well it should go—but we are left to face an uncomprehending world with an apparently irrelevant message. What shall we do?

To begin with, we must deal with ourselves, and seek the continual deepening of our faith. Is our Gospel relevant to our own needs? If so, it cannot be entirely without reference to another man's problem. Insist upon it to your own soul that you are commanded and commissioned for your task, and win the strength that comes from the conception of your work as duty. Above all things, do not seek a spurious relevance by turning aside to discuss "the book of the month" or current topics of interest. Of course, if there is anything which you

are convinced is unrelated to human need, it must be scrapped, but we shall need to be sure about it, and it will be well to remember that the Church needs to conserve the wisdom of all the ages.

That word "Church" leads me to say that the only true view of the ministry is gained when it is seen in relation to the Church, and that much of the seeming unreality of our task arises from the fact that we do not set it against this, its only appropriate background. Viewed in reference to the gathering and retaining of an audience, our methods stand condemned as utterly impracticable; neither the things we do nor the things we say are impressively sensible—if our aim is merely to attract listeners. And in relation to the acquisitive, competitive society which surrounds us, the ministry cannot be rightly judged; it is out of focus; it is in a wrong context, and those who apply the standards of such a society will always deem us unbusiness-like. We gain the right viewpoint when we regard the ministry in relation to the Church, calling in the new and real world to redress the balance of the old.

Is not this a day when we ought to think more, and more deeply, about the Church and its fellowship? I am not speaking now of controversies about Church order and government. In those contentings Canon Streeter holds that "everybody has won and all shall have prizes." Perhaps so, but what sort of prizes do we want? Victory in a disputation, or the growth of real Churches? Conformity to the New Testament pattern, or possession of the New Testament spirit? Churches are made Churches, not by the correctness of their constitution and government, but by their having the marks of love for Christ and godly concord with one another. The minister's task is not only to attract an audience, nor merely to instruct a company of disciples; he is appointed by Christ to gather, guard and develop a fellowship. Christ creates that fellowship, but under Christ the minister is the formative influence. This is not to deprecate preaching in any sense; it will never cease to be important, supremely important, but preaching itself is largely conditioned by the state of Church fellowship.

All this is relevant to present-day problems. It is a commonplace to speak of Europe's inability to transcend the boundaries of race and self-interest. The Church ought to be a continual, victorious example of that. Coleridge said, "The Church is, in idea, the only pure democracy." Many experi-

ments in the refashioning of the State are suggested to-day. Why should not Christian Churches give the required lesson? One expositor, commenting on Eph. iii 10, wrote, "The Church is to be the lesson-book of angels." Why should not the Church even now be the lesson-book of statesmen?

Long ago Archbishop Magee contrasted Roman Catholicism and Dissent by describing the first as "A Church without a Religion," and the latter as "A Religion without a Church." The love of antithesis is a root of many evils, and the contrast is grossly unfair. Yet if a Church without a religion is dead, a religion without a Church is incomplete, and it is perhaps true to say that we of the Free Churches understand the Christian religion better than we realise the Christian Church—not that the reproach would be at all confined to the Free Churches! I am thinking now of the separate local Churches, not as federated, but as individual communities. Who can deny our need for a better Church-consciousness? The huge aggregations of population can only be impressed by the impact of a whole community. The dominating pulpit personalities of the last century are gone, and it seems as if Mrs. Browning's prayer had been heard:—"O God, make no more giants, but elevate the race." But the race (in this case, the Church) needs to be unified as well as elevated. Given a Church "taught of God to love one another," "standing fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel," what ministry can seem futile and irrelevant?

What sort of minister will create such a Church? One with plenty of faith and idealism—not illusion, but that idealism which believes that "the Ideal is Truth seen at a distance." We must believe in our Churches, sometimes against appearances, but the sordid aspect of our people is not the deepest or truest. We should appeal to and trust the highest in them, just as Paul in writing to the shabby, mean, divided Corinthian community, employs the lovely metaphors of the garden and the temple.

Then there is need for patience. We must plan for long years ahead. With sufficient eloquence and billposting a congregation of appreciative listeners may perhaps be quickly gathered, but a union of fellow-believers, where there is real mutual thought, and mutual oversight, can only be built up with the work of years. The long pastorate, continued through periods of discouragement, is demanded here. Francis Bacon said, "In the royal ordering of gardens there ought to be

gardens for all the months of the year." It would be delightful to have flowers in every one of the twelve months, but Christ, in His royal ordering of the garden of the Church has not provided for that, and we must have patience to wait through the barren periods.

The minister whose aim it is to build a Church must himself be a linking personality. Phillips Brooks defined the perfection of Christ's human greatness as His "transmissiveness," and it is a great ministerial asset. We must strive to be comprehensive and catholic in our temper, great-hearted and magnanimous. I heard it said once of a minister who had become reticent and self-absorbed, that his study door might well bear the legend, "A garden enclosed is my brother, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." But such gardens, fountains or springs are useless.

The teaching aspect of the ministry has its special opportunity in a true Church; consecutive and constructive preaching will have its due place, and our people will develop an appreciation for this. Especially there should be teaching about the Holy Spirit—on other days than Whit-Sunday—and the two Ordinances should be given the place to which they are entitled. They are particularly matters requiring Churches for their understanding. Viewed as acts of individuals only, they are strange and incomprehensible, irrelevant to our day, but they have a wonderful power to create and foster the Church-consciousness. "Our Lord Jesus Christ hath knit together a company of new people with sacraments, most few in number, most easy to be kept, most excellent in significance."

Here is the vision of a Church "where a man can let himself go without letting himself down," where people are released from inhibitions and free to express the best that is in them. In such a community what new enterprise might be born, what new but hitherto hidden gifts discovered, what new light and truth break forth from God's holy word! How different preaching would be if the preacher knew that he had with him an assenting, consenting, corroborating company of believers! Our calling is paradoxical, baffling, yet fascinating, but if, as the result of our labour, the multitude of them that believe are of one heart and soul, maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, we shall be helping to build up the Body of Christ, and we can be certain that our work is relevant to man's need and Christ's purpose; it will be worth while in the Lord.

P. W. EVANS.

THE MINISTER'S BOOKSHELF.

THE first place must be given to an outstanding book by a distinguished member of the "Fraternal Union." I refer to Dr. J. C. Carlile's most entrancing autobiography *My Life's Little Day* (Blackie, 6s.). The book came to hand at the beginning of a busy morning, and I thought that I might just glance through it before starting work. That was my undoing. I was so captivated by Dr. Carlile's adventurous story that before I knew where I was the call to lunch had come and I then realised that I had been reading all the morning. Dr. Carlile is a born writer and knows how to tell a story; and when, as in this case, it is the story of his own career then we may expect the best. He writes with a wise restraint, and yet also with an engaging frankness, that compel the attention of the reader. Moreover, the story of his own adventurous life is set against the background of the social and religious movements and conditions of the last half-century; and it is this fact that gives the book an enduring value as a contribution to the social and religious history of our times. Some of us learn more about the work of the ministry from the record of outstanding ministries than from any other source, and we may learn much from Dr. Carlile's latest book. In the seventeen chapters there is not a dull page.

Another member of our brotherhood has issued a book which deserves a generous reception—this time a biography instead of an autobiography. *Christmas Evans*, by E. Ebrard Rees (Kingsgate Press, 3s. 6d.), is the story of one of the greatest of Welsh preachers and the most remarkable of Welsh characters. It is nearly one hundred years since Christmas Evans died and Mr. Rees anticipates the great preacher's passing by nearly three years. He was the instrument of a great national revival and it may be that the story of his amazing career, told so well and so wisely by Mr. Rees, will serve as an inspiration to all of us as we face up to the demands and opportunities of the Discipleship Campaign. Mr. Ebrard Rees is to be congratulated upon an excellent book which should be read by every Baptist minister.

The reference to Baptist authors is a reminder that one of the most prominent of London Baptist laymen, Mr. Seymour

J. Price, has just published through Carey Press *Upton—the Story of 150 years*. The price is 2s. 6d., but there are presentation copies to be had for 5s. each. Mr. Price is a keen student of Baptist history, and in this book he tells the story of what was once one of the most influential of London churches. There is no need to say that he tells the story well, and that he has produced a book which deserves to circulate throughout the whole denomination.

One more Baptist book must be referred to. It is called *The Anabaptists*, by R. J. Smithson, B.Th., Ph.D. (James Clark, 5s.). Dr. Smithson is the minister of Kirkcaldy Baptist Church, and was trained for the Baptist ministry at MacMaster University, Canada. All Baptists, and especially those of us who are Baptist ministers, should be familiar with the story of our Anabaptist ancestors and should appreciate their vigorous contribution to our Protestant heritage. And it is just here that Dr. Smithson helps us. For years he has been engaged in patient research work on a section of Church history that has been surrounded with prejudice, fiction, legend, and misrepresentation (so much so that some modern Baptists deny all connection with the Continental "Re-Baptisers"), and he has given us an authoritative and illuminating study that well deserves the Doctorate in Philosophy which Glasgow University conferred upon its author. No Baptist minister should fail to read this book; and it would not be amiss if it were prescribed for Baptist Union examinations.

One book came to hand so impressed me that I requested the author to contribute an article to this issue. It is entitled *Healing: Pagan and Christian* (S.P.C.K., 9s.), and is by the principal of an Anglican Theological College, Rev. G. G. Dawson, M.A., B.D. We must also add Ph.D., since it has just been announced that the book has won its author that distinction from London University. Dr. Dawson deals with a most important question. Indeed, in my view, the question of healing will more and more come to the front in the near future, and the Church—as well as the medical profession—will have to make up its mind about Mental Healing, Faith Healing cults, and other unorthodox methods of curing disease. Towards a sane view of the whole problem, in all its aspects, Dr. Dawson's splendid volume will help considerably, and it will remain the

standard work on the subject for many years to come. In view of the article in this issue there is no need to say any more about the book, save this: No one who spends nine shillings on the book will regret the expenditure.

Another book of real value by an Anglican clergyman is *The Psychology of Conversion* (Allenson, 5s.) by W. Bryn Thomas, B.A. I had the pleasure of seeing the work in type-script (as indeed I did that of Dr. Dawson) and I was glad to know that Mr. Thomas had decided to publish it. As Christian ministers we are all interested in Conversion; as Baptist ministers we are interested above the ordinary, since the experience of Conversion is central to our evangelising work just as a sane and Scriptural view of Conversion is central to our presentation of the Gospel. Mr. Bryn Thomas's book will prove invaluable to us both in practice and in theory. He is chiefly concerned with Conversion as a Psychological Problem (with special reference to the life and experience of Augustine) and reviews and criticises the various theories put forth by the psychologists. But he never forgets that Conversion is an Evangelical Mystery that can be accounted for only by reference to the Grace of God. Mr. Bryn Thomas's book is a truly valuable contribution to a subject of perpetual interest.

Is Mr. Leslie Weatherhead "over-writing" himself? During the past five years he has written a number of books; and as soon as one is on the market another seems to be in preparation. But the amazing thing is that he has always something of value to say, and knows how to say it in a way that captures the popular interest; and while this remains true he will never wear out his welcome. His latest volume is a good example. It is called *Why Do Men Suffer?* (Student Christian Movement Press, 5s.) and is an attempt to answer the question of the ages. In twelve chapters Mr. Weatherhead deals wisely and sympathetically with the various aspects of the problem of "The Woes of the World versus a Good God" and has many useful things to say to lighten the burden. It is a good book to read ourselves, and to lend, or to recommend, to others who may be "passing through deep waters."

The publishers of that very useful and influential book *Christianity and the Crisis* have just issued another important

book entitled *Christianity and the Social Revolution* (Gollancz, 6s.). It is edited by John Lewis, of Cambridge, with the aid of Dr. Joseph Needham, the scientist, Dr. Charles E. Raven, the theologian, and Prof. John MacMurray, the philosopher, and it consists of nineteen essays written, some by Churchmen who are social rebels, and some by avowed Communists who have little use or respect for organised religion. The essays are, for the most part, heavily weighted in favour of the Communistic interpretation of life, and constitute a most provoking volume, which will in many minds stimulate the most violent reactions. There is no hiding of the truth because it may prove unpalatable, and the Communist writers in particular indulge in a good deal of hard-hitting. But the book must be read by all those who want to understand the present situation. After all, not only does the "Red Flag" wave over one-sixth of the world to-day, but Communists themselves declare that in time their faith will oust every form of religion—Christianity included—from the affections of the world's nineteen hundred millions. The times therefore call for a thorough understanding of what is really the most serious challenge to its supremacy organised Christianity has ever had to answer. This book will help us to understand what Communism really is, wherein it constitutes a challenge and menace to the things we hold dear, and how far defects in the Church's witness to the world is responsible for the present widespread revolt against the social order.

From America has come a book of unusual merit in its own particular line. It is an attempt to interpret the Teaching of Christ in the light of modern psychology, and is called *The Psychology of Christian Personality*, by Prof. Ernest M. Ligon, of Union College, New York (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.). There has been a spate of books on psychology during the past ten years, and some of them have deservedly fallen stillborn from the press. But Dr. Ligon's volume is off the beaten track and is planned on original lines. It is really based on St. Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount, and is both expository and psychological in its treatment of Christ's leading ideas. Some of the chapter-headings will give an indication of the line pursued: "The Integration of Character," "Sources of Power," "Creative Thinking," "The Chaos of Fear," "The Role of Inferiority in Human Behaviour" and "The Christian Per-

sonality." Prof. Ligon is a competent psychologist who is also a competent New Testament scholar—two qualifications that do not often exist together. His style is strong and clear, and his matter of the highest order. The minister who is on the lookout for a new way to deal with old material will find what he needs in this helpful book. In fact, a month's hard study under Dr. Ligon's wise and stimulating guidance will be productive of not a few first-class sermons.

Among the many recent publications dealing with economic problems (which none of us can escape) I can recommend *Prosperity*, by Samuel Greenwood (3s. 6d. from the author, Law Court Chambers, Blackburn, Lancs). This book, written with enthusiasm and understanding, with its wealth of fact and illustration, shows clearly what is wrong with our economic order, wherein we find an industrial system capable of supplying every legitimate want and at the same time a monetary system which forces upon us scarcity and anxiety. Mr. Greenwood gives us an understanding account of the ætiology of unemployment, war, crime, etc., and he shows that

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the means at present adopted of generating a sense of prosperity are only increasing our already intolerable burden. On the constructive side the author leaves a good deal unsaid, which is inevitable in a slender volume—nevertheless his book will prove an “eye-opener” to many. It can be confidently commended as the work of an economist who is not blinded by gold-dust, nor deceived by the so-called economic laws, which are merely “shorthand” descriptions of the way in which selfishness has expressed itself in our economic life.

JOHN PITTS.
