

The Fraternal

SEPTEMBER, 1945

No. 58

EDITORIAL

THEY'RE COMING HOME.

HUNDREDS of thousands of men and women, having served in the Forces, are coming home and, grateful for what they have done, our Churches will welcome them. Among these is one class in whom our Fellowship is particularly interested—the Chaplains. We here and now record our appreciation of what they have done for the men on the field of battle, for men and women at the bases, on the high seas or in the homeland. They have shared the dangers and privations of those to whom they were sent to minister and have won esteem and gratitude, acknowledged or unexpressed.

We write, however, not only to welcome them but to express a concern. Of the 120 Chaplains, some will be required for further service in the Forces, some will return to Churches which gave them leave of absence, but many have no immediate prospect of ministerial settlement. They will return with a couple of months' pay guaranteed—but what then? At the Church House, Mr. Aubrey and his colleagues, together with the Superintendents, have this matter very much at heart. In the present emergency, however, it may well be within the power of our Fellowship to render help. Our brethren worthily represented us and, incidentally, have increased their own ministerial efficiency and they surely can count upon our goodwill and co-operation.

The housing situation accentuates the difficulty of ministerial settlement and Churches would be well advised to purchase a Manse, even if the present level of prices involves subsequent financial loss. Here, the B.B.F. may render valuable help by granting free-of-interest loans.

A vitally important factor, even from the ministerial point of view, is the B.U. Reconstruction Appeal. Scores of Churches around the coast and in our blitzed towns simply cannot afford to invite a minister and yet they most urgently need such help if their work is to be rehabilitated, and it is in these ways that the Fund can be usefully invested. Here, then, is a call to every minister to do his utmost to ensure the success of the Denominational appeal. Such is the general situation, and we call on all our members to make our Fellowship a reality.

Remember our Chaplains—they're coming home.

THE FREE CHURCHES AND OURSELVES.

OWING to my long absences from home during the early months of the year I asked Rev. Graham W. Hughes, B.A., B.D., of Liverpool, to edit this copy of "The Fraternal." He has done it so effectively that I wish to express my warmest thanks to him for relieving me of much time and correspondence; also my gratitude to the old students who have so readily contributed to the present issue.

I

I am often asked about the condition of the Free Churches and the future of the Free Church Federal Council. I should say the condition of the local churches is a fairly reliable index to the national situation;

which is an admission that the church-going people are relatively few compared with the population. I think the most barren spiritual patches are in the North of England, but such bleakness is no reason for despair. In our northern churches there are loyal and generous people; they do their own thinking, though their thinking often needs wiser direction. All over the country I have met ministers who convey the impression of being theologically and intellectually beaten men. But I cannot pay adequate tribute to the large majority of Free Church ministers whom I have met, or to the wives in the manse. By fortitude and consecration they have maintained the dignity of public worship and pastoral work, comforting the broken-hearted and keeping contact with men and women in the Forces. The spirit of the age has long been indifferent to our message and our existence as churches. This is the result of the realism-of-doing-what-the-devil-you-like preached for a generation by the Shaws, the Wells, the Huxleys and the Joads, and has disintegrated the sanctities of love, marriage and home and left a legacy of truculent moral atheism which either denies or sneers at the Word of God and the Christian Ethic.

II

I will suggest factors in the situation which are relevant to our ministerial work.

1. The Radio and the Press have developed a technique of propaganda which often smites us preachers with a sense of futility. We have not yet devised the kind of publicity answer to the Radio and Press stunts. I am not saying the B.B.C. religious broadcasts are stunts, but I believe many of them are so "safe" as to be ineffective. The lugubrious clerical mind and manner which assume that the Christian apologetic is being put across to the man at the fireside or when he lies in bed on Sunday morning is not bridging the gap between the churches and the masses. And every faithful minister yearns to bridge that gap in his own sphere of labour. What methods will help us?

2. The young people who have been to secondary and public schools, unless home influence has kept them loyal to the church, are often lost to us. For twenty years they have been educated on the basis of sound scientific principles and methods. There has been much criticism of the absence of any religious education, or its desultory and occasional part, in the school syllabus. Every subject except religion has been taught according to scientific principles. The result is that many of these young people, if they consider Christianity at all, conclude that it cannot stand up to the scientific tests they have been taught to apply to other subjects. I hope the statutory Biblical teaching under the new Education Act will help to bridge the gulf between the Bible and these young people, that a thoroughly sound historical method of dealing with the Scriptures will convince youth that the Bible and the Christian religion can stand up to any modern methods of criticism.

No exhaustive analysis of the elusive modern mind is here attempted. I have focussed two problems which are relevant to the content of our preaching and teaching and the methods we should consider adaptable to our local conditions. For the battle is going to be lost or won in the local churches. Let us reject the idea that a few supermen are able to transform the religious situation. Dr. Temple's brilliant leadership, his flair for seizing the subject in which people were interested and relating it to Christian truth, his speeches on banking or economics have not numerically affected attendance at Anglican or Free Churches.

III

The Free Church Federal Council has not yet its own Publicity organisation. This aspect of Free Church witness is something to which great attention must be given in the future. The Free Churches need a master-mind, a genius for putting across through Radio and Press the great principles for which we stand. Our witness is vital to the religious, moral, political and economic reconstruction of our world. For our principles are so frequently self-evident when they are stated. We need a panel of Free Church experts, trusted by the official denominations, accessible for quick decision and publicity statement. Declarations of Anglican leaders are regularly sent to the Press before meetings are held. The Roman Catholics are using radio, films and blackmailing the Press to hit the popular mind. Until the official denominations have more confidence in the Federal Council and give it more financial support our principles will often go by default. For more money is essential.

In our message we need more theology; not the theology of the textbooks, which are written to be our guide, not our cul-de-sac. Biblical and Historical theology are the finest background for our message, especially the former. It is an inexhaustible source of great preaching. It is tragic when men have worked through a course in Biblical History, Introduction and Theology and then neglect the subject when they enter the ministry. The pace of examination work does not always convince a student of the wealth and preaching resources of his subject. The Biblical and devotional atmosphere of preaching never fails with a congregation if we can put our message across to the people. Let us submit to the control of the Biblical spirit by really working at the historical method of Scripture study. More detailed systematic work than is possible in College, patient research by which a man can grasp the divine motive revealed through human experience will yield in a few years a rich harvest. Are we so busy? Then let us cut some things out to do the great things.

The decadence of much religious life in these days is due to our neglect of the doctrine of the Church as a Divine Society. Free Churchmen all over the country have confessed to me their grief at the absence of a deep church-consciousness. It is the truth to say that many of our members have no idea of the dignity and majesty of the Church of God. Until we recover this consciousness I see little prospect of the kind of religious revival Britain and Europe need.

IV

A situation has developed in the Federal Council which is of particular interest to Baptists. I can only briefly indicate what it is. The present Federal Council is but five years old. I moved the resolution to set up a joint committee of the National Free Church Council and the previous Federal Council in order to explore the possibilities of one Free Church body, and for over twelve months we sought the unity we now have. After the patient conferences and goodwill which brought the present Federation to birth it was disappointing to hear a few men arguing that Federation was useless. Yet this criticism was made at one of the earliest meetings of the Council. Further a resolution was moved at that early meeting to appoint a Commission to explore the possibility and conditions of a United Free Church. An amendment to substitute "co-operation" for "unity" was carried. I remember Dr. Cadoux of Mansfield College saying in that debate that other Free Churchmen could not expect "our Baptist brethren to surrender the practice of Believer's Baptism." A few speakers declared that their ultimate goal was union with the Anglicans.

The Commission has now reported and the crucial recommendations

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concern Free Church Union. It has made valuable suggestions of the ways in which the Federal Council can function more effectively. Those of us who have given time and thought to improve administration and the scope of the Federation's work greatly appreciate much in the report. I quote, however, the clauses which concern Baptists and are likely to be controversial:

"In order to exhibit the essential unity of the Free Church Denominations, we consider it desirable, so far as possible, and in harmony with the principles of the constituent Churches, there should be

- "(a) a complete and mutual recognition of one another's churchmanship;
- "(b) freedom of transfer of all in full membership from one church to another;
- "(c) common access of all members to the Lord's Table;
- "(d) mutual recognition of the fully-accredited ministers of each Denomination as ministers of the Word and Sacraments."

When the present Free Church Council was constituted, with the consent of the Conferences and Assemblies of the Denominations concerned, the object was stated in the following terms:—

"To secure their federation on the basis of their common Evangelical faith, each denomination retaining liberty to fulfil its own distinctive witness and mission."

The Doctrinal statement of the basis of the Federating Denominations is definite:—

"It is an essential element in the proposals for federation that each of the federating Churches should preserve its own autonomy as regards faith and practice; this Statement, therefore, is not to be imposed as a disciplinary standard on any of these Churches, nor, on the other hand, does it supersede or in any way alter the place of whatever doctrinal standards any of these Churches may maintain in their constitution."

We do acknowledge one another's churchmanship as members of the Federal Council of Free Churches. Clauses (b) and (c), however, affect us as Baptists in a peculiar way. There are Free Church scholars, to say nothing of members of other Free Churches, who fail to understand the implications of *Believer's* Baptism. In a recent discussion it was necessary to correct a scholarly Professor that our emphasis was on "Believers" and not on "Adults." The Federal Council will be compelled to set up a Theological Commission: a Free Church statement on Baptism and the Lord's Supper would be most useful. I have heard it suggested that Baptists may be driven to withdraw from the Federal Council. I could never consent to such action.

For several years a Commission of the Baptist Union explored the question of union between Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians, and its Report was adopted at the Assembly in Manchester, 1937. The document is worthy of study. Paragraph xviii is one relevant conclusion:—

"We are all agreed that, if this question of union with Congregationalists and Presbyterians were forced to an issue in England now, it would split our denomination. We are agreed that the majority of our people would probably decline to have anything to do with it and, if a scheme of union were attempted, would not come into it, but would retain a separate existence apart from it. We recognise that we ought honestly to face the question whether organic union

with other Christian Churches is or is not desirable or necessary, but at the same time we are bound to have regard to the certainty of creating thereby a division amongst our own people, just as the Anglican representatives at the Lambeth Conference in 1923 felt bound to insist on episcopal ordination for this (amongst other) reasons that, if they did not, there was a danger (to quote their own words) 'of creating pain and disturbance, or even the possibility of schism, within our own communion.' "

Who would gain by splitting the Baptist Union or the Federal Council? Personally I will be a party to nothing of the kind. Wisdom, patience and a deepening experience of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace can contribute to the effective witness of the Federal Council. Britain needs the Council. Let no one who seeks the Kingdom of God injure it.

HENRY TOWNSEND.

BAPTIST WITNESS AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT.

IT was my privilege to have a close and inspiring contact with the late Rev. F. C. Spurr during the last few years of his life. Contrary to the belief of many he never ceased to be a convinced and unashamed Baptist. He often said to me words similar to these: 'I believe that we Baptists should enter into the fullest possible co-operation and fellowship with all Christians, but we should always maintain our distinctive Baptist witness, "for," he said, "the truth of believers' baptism has been committed to us not merely for ourselves but for the whole catholic Church.' "

I believe these words should be taken to heart. While we take our full part in the growing ecumenical movement we should not forget that we are in it not only to co-operate but to witness to the truth as we see it.

Our first field of witness should be the realm of theology, for this realm decides so many other issues. Theology to-day is again in the melting-pot, and just as in the past theological thought has determined the main lines of Church development so it will be in the new ecumenical movement. Our Baptist forefathers were theologians. It was their theology that made them Baptists. We need a Baptist theology now which is capable of presenting the issue of believers' baptism as something demanding the serious consideration of the world Church. In spite of the fact that Baptist theology in recent times has been too prone to follow after other theologies, merely commenting and criticising, and spending too much time on the controversy between modernist and fundamentalist, the life of the Baptist Churches in this country, so a well-known preacher of another denomination assured me recently, remains more soundly evangelical than in many others. When I asked him to explain this he said that he could only attribute it to the place we give to believers' baptism. For the sake of our own denomination as well as of world Christian development we need to make believers' baptism the centre of our thought and from this point of view give a distinctive theology to our own people and to our fellow Christians.

But have we a right to do any such thing? Are we justified in making baptism central and developing a theology around it? In this connection Kipling's lines have more than once been quoted:

" There are nine-and-sixty ways
Of composing tribal lays,
And every single one of them is right." ¹

Christian theology is like a jig-saw puzzle. One should be able to start with any part and around it build the whole picture. If this cannot be done a part foreign to the whole has crept in. This part cannot be built around or fitted into the picture. This is what theologians always find when they come to deal with infant baptism. You cannot build a Biblical theology around it nor can you fit it into such a scheme. Even Dr. J. S. Whale, in his book *Christian Doctrine*, when he comes to discuss baptism does so very cleverly, but he ceases to be Biblical. Dr. Emil Brunner admits this position courageously and honestly. "In Catholic doctrine and practice this sacrament (baptism) became entirely separated from its original Biblical meaning."² He adds that "the contemporary practice of infant baptism can hardly be regarded as anything short of scandalous."³ He sees clearly that infant baptism cannot be fitted into a scheme of Christian theology. It is to be presumed also that Dr. Brunner feels the need of a doctrine and practice of baptism which does fit into Biblical theology.

The defenders of infant baptism often maintain that baptism is a side issue which does not deeply affect the life of the Church. This would never be said of the Lord's Supper and we should always protest when it is said about baptism, which must be of equal importance as an ordinance instituted by Christ Himself. We should go further and insist, as I have suggested, that we are justified in making baptism central, although it is not the only starting-point for a Christian theology. We can show that Biblical baptism can be central for a comprehensive and Biblical theology consistent with intellectual integrity. This will be our best contribution to the thought of the growing ecumenical movement. Let us see briefly how a correct understanding of Christian baptism affects the main issues of Church life to-day.

By far the greatest problem facing the modern Church is the proclamation of the Gospel. Baptists hold that baptism is a Gospel sacrament proclaiming the saving message of Christ. "What then are Baptism and the Lord's Supper?" asks Principal William Robinson, "I answer that they are the Crucifixion, or Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ, repeating themselves in the life and profession of the disciples, and proclaiming to the ages that He that was to come is come."⁴ We claim that baptism "being a sign, must answer the things signified."⁵ It is a serious matter to tamper with the symbolism of an ordinance which claims to show forth the Gospel. Believers' baptism does proclaim the Gospel. That is why it offends the natural man. That is exactly what the Cross of Christ should do. I still remember the shock of seeing a particularly realistic life-size crucifix in a church in South Germany. It was gruesome and horrible. I was revolted by its presence in the small but beautiful church but, on reflection, I realised that if there are to be crucifixes they should be of that kind. The Church has often hid the Gospel by trying to transform the Cross into an aesthetically pleasing object, so taking away its offence and making it unreal. "Just as the concept of 'faith' is a highly characteristic note of Christianity," writes Kierkegaard, "so also is 'offence' a highly characteristic note of Christianity and stands in close relation to faith. From the possibility of the offence a man turns either to offence or to faith."⁶ Believers' baptism confronts men with the offence which is a necessary prelude to faith. Dr. Forsyth says of New Testament baptism, "Its first value as a sacrament is not for the individual but for the Church and its Gospel."⁷

Believers' baptism safeguards the true meaning of salvation. It witnesses to the great Pauline and Reformation truth that "by grace are ye saved through faith."⁸ This is well put by Dr. Brunner, who writes: "In baptism it is God, first and sovereign, who acts, who forgives sin, who

cleanses man and regenerates him. But man too acts in baptism: He allows this cleansing of himself to take place, he lets himself be drawn into the death of Christ, he confesses his faith and his attachment to Christ. Baptism is not only a gift to man but also an active receiving and confession on the part of man." Brunner also admits that the practice of infant baptism makes nonsense of the word faith, "For what does faith mean if we attribute knowledge, assent and trust to an infant who otherwise is incapable of understanding or consent?"¹⁰

Believers' baptism, then, confronts men with the true nature of salvation—the grace of God working in human lives through faith. "We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life."¹¹ The believer reckons himself "to be dead unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."¹² The moral and spiritual qualities of the new life are Christ-given and Christ-like. We should not hesitate to claim that the baptism of the whole Church should conform to this witness.

From the nature of salvation we come to the nature of the Church. Here is another grave problem facing the universal Church. Brunner, again, is well aware of this. He says: "This question of baptism of children is not a single question in the large complex of Church problems, but rather is decisive for the entire Churchly practice since baptism is the basis for Church membership."¹³ He sees that the Church as it is cannot be called "a community of believers," and he is therefore driven to distinguish between "the comparatively little group of believers" and "the mass of millions of baptised unbelievers or those disinterested in the Church."¹⁴ Infant baptism, false to the Gospel and false to the true meaning of salvation, has destroyed for many the New Testament doctrine of the Church as a community of believers and has brought utter confusion into her life and witness. Believers' baptism witnesses to the New Testament conception of the Church as "a company of visible saints called and separated by the Word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the Gospel; being baptised into that faith."¹⁵ In spite of the fact that all Baptist churches do not now insist on the absolute necessity for baptism in all cases of those joining the Church, we have always looked for a real understanding and experience of the Christian faith. Believers' baptism has never allowed us to forget that church membership is based upon an experience of Christ of which baptism is the symbol. Of this we are called to be witnesses in the ecumenical movement.

This leads us to the burning topic of authority which urgently needs re-statement. When we are challenged on our mode of baptism we are driven to reveal our final authority—"the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice as revealed in the Holy Scriptures."¹⁶ We know and admit that the Scriptures must be interpreted by the Believing Church and through the individual experience of the Holy Spirit, but we stand by the final appeal to the Word of God given through the Scriptures. The practice of infant baptism has one of two effects. It leads the Church to assert its own authority as superior to the Word of God, or it leads to intellectual and doctrinal confusion. Believers' baptism proclaims the true seat of authority in the Christian faith. The Church will not commend itself to the world by a denial of its obedience to Christ and the Scriptures. The way forward for the Church is through enabling the Bible to come to life again with authority for all the affairs of men. The acceptance of believers' baptism indicates a serious acceptance in its own realm of the authority of the Word which is binding for

all Christians and to which the Church in every generation must submit itself for judgement.

"The battle of the sacraments," writes Dr. Forsyth, "can be settled neither by exegesis nor by the historico-critical method of investigation. A decision can be attained only in the higher regions of theology."¹⁷ Have we given sufficient heed to these words? Should we not be more known in these "higher regions" by our own distinctive theology based on believers' baptism and at the same time consistent with the faith and authority of the New Testament?

B. C. SHILDRICK.

REFERENCES:

¹*In the Neolithic Age.* ²*The Divine-Human Encounter*, p. 128 ³*The Divine-Human Encounter*, p. 132. ⁴*A Companion to the Communion Service*, p. 26. ⁵Baptist Confessions, 1646 (XL). ⁶*Training in Christianity*, p. 83. ⁷*The Church and the Sacraments*, 1917, p. 195. ⁸Eph. ii, 8. ⁹*The Divine-Human Encounter*, p. 128. ¹⁰*The Divine-Human Encounter*, p. 129. ¹¹Rom. vi, 3. ¹²Rom. vi, 11. ¹³*The Divine-Human Encounter*, p. 132. ¹⁴*The Divine-Human Encounter*, p. 133. ¹⁵Baptist Confession, 1646 (xxxiii). ¹⁶Declaration of Principle in the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. ¹⁷*The Church and the Sacraments*, p. 159.

TO A YOUNG MINISTER.

MY dear Robert,

I read your letter with great pleasure. I congratulate you on the "call" and am uplifted that you should write to your old Minister and ask him for any advice he can give you as you face your new life. It is refreshing to find a young man who is not confident of omniscience but is conscious of his need of another's help. That is a promising disposition to start with, and that you should turn to me bows my head and lifts my heart. In responding I would ask you to keep this letter by you "to be taken as required." Much in it will seem unnecessary now, but as the days go by, I believe you will find something here prescribed which will help you. I say nothing to you which I have not said and find I still need to say to myself after over 30 years in the Ministry.

I start on the ground floor by advising you to take reasonable care of your health. Discipline yourself to proper sleep and to proper getting up, and take regular physical exercise. Men have broken down physically just when they should have been at their best for lack of ordinary common sense in this. Then take reasonable thought for your appearance. The Merchant wrote to his son in those famous letters that if he looked as though he slept in his clothes he would never get to know men well enough to explain that his head was so full of noble thoughts that he hadn't time to think about the dandruff on his shoulders.

When you settle in the Ministry your people will open for you a large account in the Bank of Goodwill. They will be so yielding, so ready to help and full of amiability. I have known men presume on that, taking it as a recognition of their superiority and drawing on it until it is exhausted, to their own distress.

A threat that dogs us all is that of being conventional. It comes in two ways. That of being the proper person with mincing speech, which is pathetic, and its opposite, the care-free, unconventional person, out to show he has no silly scruples about him. That is the more common sort

of convention, for it is a convention only too often. Being emancipated is a good thing, but it shows itself by ease and quietness. Those who cry aloud their emancipation are only anxious for it to be known, that is, they are slaves to opinion. Don't be parsonic, but watch that opposite pose when people might suspect that you are not a Christian, not a gentleman and really somewhat ashamed of your calling as a Minister of Christ and a servant of men.

All forms of life have their attendant diseases, and cynicism is the disease that constantly threatens the idealist. "How many men," says Mazzini, "have I not seen at the commencement of their career, glowing with enthusiasm, full of the poetry of great enterprises, whom I see to-day precocious old men, with the wrinkles of cold calculation on their brow, calling themselves free from illusion, when they are only disheartened." When the idealist begins to think of himself and his ideals, how noble they are and he for holding them, how little people care about his ideals and him for holding them, how he is wasting himself on people who are so blind and dense, thinking of himself, his ideals and deserts, instead of thinking of people, people, people all the time: then the attendant disease of cynicism has found favourable soil and will destroy him.

You will always feel the contrast between the ideal and the actual. When I went into the Ministry I anticipated I should work chiefly with Deacons who were delivered from all the stains of earthiness and in wisdom and devotion would do anything for the Church and the Kingdom of Christ. Some were indeed the salt of the earth, but some I found were contrary, trifling, conservative, lacking both in wisdom and devotion. The romantic mind, and you should keep that, bumps up against hard facts and is in danger of retiring in disgust. You will have need of patience as your Lord had.

I wonder if you realise that being a preacher is perilous to your soul? Carlyle prodded me wide awake one day when I read these words of his: "It is a sad but sure truth that every time you speak of a fine purpose, especially with eloquence and to the admiration of by-standers, there is less chance of your ever making a fact of it in your own poor life." That is a glaring peril about which to be forewarned. We must never forget that while we are called of God to seek with Him the salvation of the world, we are part of that world and need that same grace. In a terrible sense Paul's fear should be ours, lest having preached to others we become castaways. WE as well as others have to work out our own salvation with God within us.

Let me come down again to the ground floor. We Ministers have to beware of idleness. We are largely masters of our own time and few people know how we spend it. We must be aware not to take advantage of that and must rigorously discipline ourselves. Dr. Whyte once said: "I would have all lazy Ministers drummed out of the Assembly." Idleness never attacks us openly. No man ever says: "Go to, I will be an idler." At least, not many, though I have met the man who thought he did not need to work but things would come without it. The temptation to idleness does not come in its own form. George Eliot indicates its approach in *Middlemarch* when she says: "It was said of Lydgate that he could do anything he liked, but he had not liked to do anything remarkable as yet." And E. V. Lucas has the same idea: "At the back of most young men's minds is the thought, not expressed perhaps but present, 'When I really begin . . .'" Begin each day in good time no matter what time it ends. Never be unwashed, unshaven and undressed after 8.30 a.m. Put your shoes on and get your slippers off. They spread

their slackness through the whole frame and the mind itself. If you can have your study at the Church I think it is good, but you must go to it as a man goes to his office. People who go out to work soon come to know that their Minister is going to his, and it does them and you good. Be businesslike, attending particularly to correspondence on the day it is received. If you cannot, acknowledge the letter by a postcard and promise to attend to it. People will forgive you much if you are a worker, and they will soon find out whether you are or not.

Take care not to regard your Ministry as a profession. If you do, you will find yourself comparing your position with that of men in other professions such as Law, Medicine and Education, instead of with most Christian people, in your remuneration, holidays, etc. There is some suspicion abroad that the Ministry to us is just a job and that we are in it for what we can get out of it. There are things we can say about this, I know, but they are not to be found on the line of regarding the Ministry as a profession whose conditions are to be determined in comparison with other professions. Think and talk like that and you should not be surprised if ordinary people come to regard the Ministry as a profession, which you and I must never do.

Keep within yourself the spirit of hope, and never despair. Men using their hearts and brains are very liable to it; their efforts come so far short of their will. Meredith told Barrie that he used to run round Hyde Park trying to escape from his misery, and Barrie said he had seen the gate on which Hardy sat wishing he had never been born. You will have good times as you feel, and bad ones in the pulpit. Congregations will sometimes ebb and flow without apparent reason. The world at times will seem to you to have gone mad and lost its hope. But don't you lose yours. You are to be the salt of the earth. It was a man in a position of great responsibility who said: "I start every morning with new hope and every night my hopes are shattered. But I begin again next day with fresh hope."

Struggle within yourself to keep a great idea of the Church, for it will need an effort. You will get impatient with mean and petty people and wonder how these can form the Body of Christ and you will be inclined to revolt from the idea. If you are so tempted, turn up the list of people with whom Paul had to work and in whom, nevertheless, he saw that Body. To belittle the Church to yourself will spoil you. If it be imperfect, that is not a provocation to our temper but an appeal to our compassion, our idealism, our zeal. It is one of our tasks to fashion the Church, not to despise it. You will never make anything of that which you despise. Love your own Church. Cultivate catholicity but dare to have your own convictions. Entertain guests, but love your own home. The man who lives only in his own house, receives no guests and pays no calls is a bigot. But the man who lives in the open and has no house is a tramp. True catholicity is having your own house and entertaining guests, having charity *and* convictions.

Let me close by saying this: the Ministry is the noblest and most awful task in the world. The man who would fulfil it must be sure of his Lord above everything else. Even with the very presence of Christ, it makes brain and heart ache very often, but without that it is impossible. Keep yourself in the love of God, my dear Robert, for that is our refuge and strength. Believe me as always, not now your father only but also,

Your Brother in Christ and the Gospel,

HERBERT MOTLEY.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE COMMUNITY.

ONE of the needs of the members of our Churches is to have a fuller understanding of the wide, universal range of the activities of the Holy Spirit. Too often the Spirit is merely associated with certain ecstatic experiences which our people neither understand nor wish to share. Even more discerning men who know the Spirit's guidance and power for their personal lives sometimes fail to appreciate the relevance of the Spirit to the complex situations of the world in which they live.

B. H. Streeter might have been writing yesterday when, at the close of the last war, he ended his essay on "The Spirit" with these words: "To-day everyone is crying out for reconstruction: some in hope, others in despair; all are crying out for the creative spirit. And this, if only we will see it, is the spirit manifested in the life of Christ."

There is no need to capitulate to pantheism, which is always wrecked on its failure to recognise moral distinctions, when we insist that Nature and History can be interpreted only in the light of the Spirit's activity. John Oman rightly maintained that, "Even the development of the senses is not a mere physical process, but is an advance to meaning and value because there is a spirit seeking them from within and a Spirit seeking them from without." Again, in those human relationships which we wrongly call "secular," and in lives far removed from our "religious" circles, the words of Harriet Auber are true and relevant:

And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone.

If there are some who seek to canalise the Spirit's activities within certain ecclesiastical systems, there are others who, with equal fertility, would restrict the operations of the Spirit to the life of the "redeemed," and not to all their relationships at that! But God will not be excluded from any part of the world He has created for, in Pringle-Pattison's phrase, it is His "medium for the shaping of souls."

Our understanding of the Spirit will be all the truer for acknowledging His work within the realms of music and art, literature and science, and the complex relationships and aspirations of men. Godness, Beauty and Truth are Ultimate Values only because they have their source and sustenance in the creative Spirit of God; but it is important to remind ourselves that they have their origin in His Spirit wherever they are found, even though it be in lives ignorant of, or seemingly hostile to, all our theological systems.

It remains true, however, that the Christian Church, "His Body," is the chief organ of the Spirit. The distinctive expression of the Holy Spirit active within the early Church was Fellowship, not any order of ecclesiastical life. It was fellowship at a level of personality deeper than could be touched by any other relationship, for it was grounded in the love of God made known in Christ and sustained by the indwelling of His Spirit. Jesus illumined the character of the Spirit as He did the nature of the Father. So that the ethical implications of fellowship in the Spirit, which had been splendidly but not ideally expressed through the Hebrew prophets, found increasingly more adequate expression in the community life of the Church. Primitive "communism" or community cannot be explained as a mere excrescence of belief in the near end of the contemporary world order. It was an expression of fellowship based on the life and teaching of Jesus and on what were felt to be the ethical demands of the Pentecostal experience in an intimate sharing of things

both spiritual and material. Those who have communion in spiritual things must also have communion in material things. The eschatological viewpoint had its influence because it had the unfortunate effect of not replenishing the capital fund. The world did not come to an end, but the capital did.

The abiding fact, however, was the re-orientation of the whole of life around the fact of Christ and the transforming influence of the Spirit. Enriched personality was expressing itself in terms of obedience to new moral imperatives in personal and social relationships. It was found that, if to live in the Spirit means freedom and spontaneity, it also means more exacting ethical life than does adherence to any external code of law. "It means," says Prof. C. H. Dodd, "that every Christian is a centre of fermentation where the morally revolutionary Spirit of Christ attacks the dead mass of the world. Ethical originality is the prerogative of the Christian whose conscience is the seat of Christ's indwelling; and such originality is imperative for a world that needs progress."

Medieval Catholicism substituted falsely constituted authority for the freedom of the Spirit, with the result that unity in the Spirit as understood in the New Testament was submerged beneath conformity to an ecclesiastical system. Progress was impossible along that cul-de-sac and all branches of intellectual enquiry and all the varied relationships of men had to claim their independence of false theological presuppositions. Modern secularism is, in part, the measure of man's revolt against the imposition of an external ecclesiastical authority, and a truer teaching on the work and meaning of the Holy Spirit would have saved the world much blood and tears.

Masaryk claimed that: "Man has lost his balance because he has lost his religious centre. He has lost the one religion which unifies life." Secularism is essentially the divorce of men's interests and activities from that control by the Spirit of God which alone can give them constructive spiritual unity and meaning. One of the inherent weaknesses of secularism is that it leaves the complex relationships of life at the mercy of political, economic and moral expediency, for where there is no acknowledgment of the relevance of the Holy Spirit there can be no reference to ultimate spiritual standards. Even in religion itself the insistence on "personal" salvation becomes a bulwark of secularism unless it is recognised that a person is such in any real sense only within the context of community relationships and that his salvation has relevance to them.

This does not imply dictation to departmental specialists by the saints, but it does mean an insistence by them on the spiritual nature of human personality which ought never to be treated as a means, but always as a fact of ultimate value in the sight and purpose of God. The final question to be asked by the Christian of any policy or mode of relationship is not whether this will contribute to material profit or status, but will it minister to the recognition of man as a responsible spiritual being and enhance his ability to be a vehicle of the Holy Spirit of God?

The Christian can never be satisfied until art, politics, economics and every other activity is brought under the criticism and enriching impact of the Holy Spirit and thereby enabled to contribute to that quality of life which God has purposed for His children. So long as some relationships of life are regarded as secular, limits are being set to the relevance and activities of the Holy Spirit. God can no more be localised within a part of human relationships than He can be localised within set times or places.

Just as it will take a Universal Church to embody in any degree of fullness the Spirit of our Lord, so it will take a world of varied relationships, subjected to the impact of the Holy Spirit, to be an adequate field for the interests and concerns of that Church.

W. GRAHAM HILTON.

THE CORRECTIVE.

THE corrective to deep perplexities is often found in returning to early simplicities. My first opportunity to preach the Gospel was in a chapel which stands on the shoulder of a hill in the Pennines at the head of a lovely wooded valley, on a kind of promontory jutting out from the wild stretches of the moor. To reach the chapel I had to walk six miles. In high summer they were miles of delight; in bleak winter miles of hard walking through snow or rain. Snow was my Baptism. Through ten inches of it I toiled up the valley, coming out at the end to the edge of the moor, where it stretched like a shroud over the contours of the earth. Away in the distance, seen through the bare branches of the trees which sheltered it, was the chapel. I could see black figures against the snow moving like creatures on a white uneven sheet making for some hole where they could go underground. Each figure moved to the rendezvous. Strange rendezvous, a chapel where you went downstairs into the gallery and upstairs into the auditorium!

When we were all gathered our number was nine. In the centre of the floor was a slow-combustion stove which was raked before the sermon by a heavy-handed saint who also played the harmonium. I asked myself, "Why do these people travel all this way from the scattered farms of the moor?" Certainly not to hear a preacher, for heaven knows there was no preacher there that day. A dozen reasons sprang to mind, but the main one was that they loved Jesus and had given their lives to Him. The second reason was that this love was focussed without deliberation on this little moorland spot where they met their kindred in Christ. They came together not merely because the life of the church depended on it. They knew that the life of their church depended on their fellowship with one another in Christ. It was indeed a gathered church! They came together also because their effectiveness as Christians depended on it. Each member of that company was an individualist. Life forced this on them. Each wrestled with the earth in order that he and his family could live. They dealt with God at first hand. They were never dependent on the preacher of the Gospel, though they recognised that the Gospel had to be preached and honoured those who did it with consecrated zeal.

This little company was one of the churches which confirmed my desire to give my life to the work of the Baptist ministry. They represented the Baptist conviction that where Christ is, there is the Church, and reflected simply the quality and temper of Northern Baptists. How I should love to analyse them further, but there is no space to do so. I write of them now to indicate the direct living faith of some Northern Christians. It is true that in urban districts their distinct individuality is softened in a descending ratio, but something of their character remains. At least, this is what I have found and I have never worked further south than Manchester. From this inadequate picture I want to draw conclusions.

Whenever I am faced with questions concerning either the doctrine or the polity of our Baptist churches I turn back to this little community with all its Christian loyalties and simplicities for corrective. This remote two or three, independent yet sharing the life of a larger fellowship, were bound together in the simple ties of loyalty to Christ and His Word

as they knew it in the New Testament. As Dr. Manson would say, thought not quite with the same content, "Jesus was the Kingdom for them." Their personal relationship with Christ was the beginning and the ending of their fellowship with one another. The Church's task was no more than the magnification of the Christian's task. Circumstances never drove them to give the Church a quality other than it had in Him. They were never tempted to set the Church in rivalry with Him. Whatever purpose it had, it had it because He gave it. Theirs was the faith once delivered to the saints and made their own. If their church failed they did not say: "We have a wrong conception of the Church." What they said was: "We have a wrong attitude to Christ. We are not doing what He asks." The Church for them was the fighting missionary force of the Kingdom. The one thing about which they were sure was the Master. They knew that He would do for them what they could not do for themselves and that they must do for Him what He could not do for Himself. Their experience had verified the ability of Jesus to deal with that part of life which was beyond their power. He had dealt with their sins and their life. Therefore they must do for Him what He could no longer do. Human things became their responsibility. The Master had thrown off "the mortal coil" and in so doing could no longer do mortal things. The human word had to be spoken; they must say it. Human sacrifices were required; they must make them. They were the body of Christ. In Professor Dodd's words: "The personality of Christ received so to speak an extension in the life of His body on the earth. Those saving facts, the death and resurrection, are not merely peculiar facts of history, however decisive in their effects, they are enacted again in the experience of those who make up the Church."

Here was the soul and motive of all private and public behaviour; the focus of all Christian witness and church polity. They did not see the need to separate one from the other. We departmentalise and provide different motives for our activities inside and outside the Church. They saw one reason for individual Christian action and concerted Christian action. With this simple understanding of the task of the church they sought to fulfil their obligations to Christ and the world. The world had to be brought into the Kingdom. The necessity of their fellowship was no more than the extension of their Christian discipleship, and to this simple touchstone all Christian individual and Church life was reduced. It may be that to some such simple end we must turn for the solution of the modern dilemma of our polity. The beginnings of our Baptist polity were found not in some all-embracing view of the Church but rather in the specific nature of the experience of the individuals who made up the Church. We so often look for the way out in a flight from the individual, whereas the only simplification of Church polity is to be found in individual life and experience. Coming back here we find one common motive and that is the missionary or evangelical obligation of all Christians or bodies of Christians. Church polity through the years has been determined, sometimes soundly, on New Testament lines, but too often as an expedient to serve some incidental end, such as preserving the dignity of the clergy, assuring the security of the ministry or providing the means of temporal power. New Testament Church polity had always one motive and that was the furtherance of the Gospel. Its purpose was always missionary. Polity is expedience, but it should be expedience determined in the purpose of Christ, conserving the dignity of those for whom Christ died. The Church has the right to do anything if it retains this motive and serves ends which are implicit in the ethics of Christ.

Under such terms we do not have to ask every time some change is made concerning the method of payment of the ministry or the introduc-

tion of new forms of sustentation or methods of financing new causes, whether it is in line with Baptist tradition. We ask, rather: "Will it further Christ's Kingdom without denying the dignity of men and women and the ethical standards of Jesus? Will it make for greater effectiveness in the purpose which He has given to the Church? These details of polity become incidental to the primary and simple purpose laid on all Christian hearts. The fear of change which usually is born in secondary considerations would pass as the morning dew if our minds were held in the focussed beam of the Christian's central purpose.

JOHN W. TOWNSEND.

DOCTRINE AND PREACHING.

THERE are some who regard the history of Christian Doctrine as a dry business and a none too profitable study. It can certainly be dry, and those who have written on the subject are not always as lucid as they might be. But it can never be an unprofitable study. A good case could be made out for its necessity. It is, to quote Bethune-Baker, "an attempt to describe the person and life of Jesus in relation to Man and the World and God; an attempt to interpret that person and life and make it intelligible to the heart and mind of men." If such an attempt results in books which do not read easily or sermons which achieve no decision, the fault lies not with the Doctrine but with the scholar and the preacher.

It is often said that what we need to-day is a re-statement of the Faith. It would be more accurate to say that we need a statement of it, since so many in our congregations are not sure about the things which they think they believe. As in the second century so in the twentieth the preacher is called to be the apologist. Christianity is above all else historical. The Word became flesh, and therefore the truths of Christianity are to be apprehended within the historical process. Doctrine must be the outcome of experience; related to life. The History of Doctrine is just the record of the Church's attempt to understand the fulness of Christ. The preacher who knows something about the History of Doctrine knows the road which led out from the earliest Christian preaching recorded in the *Acts* to the latest attempt to state the faith once for all delivered to the saints. He knows that down several by-paths the notice-board has been affixed, "No further progress here," and that notice-board he can read. He is also savingly aware that the latest heresy may not be so new. It is amazing how very little in our modern situation is really new. Yet upon each generation lies the responsibility for interpreting the fact of Christ, and in attempting that task in and for our day we cannot, without great impoverishment, neglect the findings of the past.

Dr. C. H. Dodd has made us all his debtors by pointing out the distinction discernible in the New Testament between "Preaching" and "Teaching," between *kerugma* and *didache*. *Kerugma* is the good news and *Didache* is largely ethical instruction, occasionally containing apologetic. But that distinction must not be pressed too far. In fact it could be shown from the New Testament and especially from Paul's experience that the two are closely bound up together. The very proclamation of the good news involved its interpretation and that interpretation was ever increasing in depth and grandeur. A comparison of Paul's earlier with his later epistles reveals that in his presentation of the Christian message, both by speech and pen, the Apostle developed that which he had received when he first became "in Christ." Some have tried to argue that Paul was influenced unduly by the concepts of Greek thought and he has even been charged with imitating the Greek Mystery religions. Such a charge could be made only by those who fail to see that the task of the Apostle was to commend his gospel to a pagan world, and in

that task he does not hesitate to use pagan terms, but he never fails to baptise those terms into the spirit of his Master. The point is that Paul's developing thought is no evidence for an attempt on his part to conform to current thought but to answer current thought. Paul faced the problems of his own day as he saw them in the light of the Gospel. Thus his cosmological speculations in *Colossians* are a studied attempt to show those who were inclined to a pagan nature-worship that Christ was 'the Lord of all life, the Lord of creation. Christ was in the beginning with God. The Logos doctrine of the Fourth Gospel was a natural development of Paul's contribution. Prof. E. F. Scott has pointed out that: "In the body of the Gospel John makes no further mention of the specific theory of the Logos, and appears to concern himself entirely with the historical Person of Christ." May it be that John used that term and applied it to Christ in order to capture the attention of readers to whom the term was familiar, and that having captured their interest he then places before them the message which his gospel has to reveal? If there is any truth in this suggestion, and I believe there is, the reflection is forced upon us that we need interpreters of the Word who will perform a similar function for our own day. There is therefore apostolic precedent for overcoming our critics on their own ground by using their own terms.

It was thus that the Apologists of the early Church conceived their task. Foremost among these was Justin Martyr. This philosopher turned Christian conceived his task to be the commendation of the Gospel to the educated pagans of his day. His guarded admissions regarding the Spermatic Logos is a case in point. The Logos which dwelt supremely in Christ existed as a seed of reason in every man so that Socrates, Heraclitus and Abraham were Christians before Christ (before in point of time). Even so, Justin makes it clear that salvation in its fulness is to be found only in Christ. The Apologists were well equipped for their task. The universal scope of their faith fitted them to be ambassadors for Christ to an age which, like our own, prided itself in its philosophic knowledge. They would have made short work of some sessions of the B.B.C. Brains Trust. In his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Justin is strangely modern in his anticipation of objections to the historicity of the Gospel. In Justin doctrine and preaching are bound up together, as they must be if preaching is to achieve its full purpose. Under the questionable influence of Tertullian doctrine hardened into dogma. Christianity was quickly becoming the Creed, the Canons and the constitution of the Church. Reverent speculation was imprisoned in the precisions of the Latin tongue. In consequence preaching became mere reiteration and the way was paved for the ascendancy of such men as Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, with his love of tidiness and precision. As Dr. C. E. Raven says: "Untroubled by any sense of the largeness of truth, he is happy if he can find a plausible formula and illustrate it with a collection of platitudes." On one occasion he cries out, "Therefore will we argue against this theory because of our desire not to stir away from our own manner of life." Against the anathematising of heretics—a logical consequence of this hardening of doctrine into dogma—the great Chrysostom makes a noble protest: "If he is alive, you act impiously, for he may yet be changed; if dead, much more so, for to God he stands or falls, and has passed out of the power of men." The Church which fears the search for truth and its presentation in public worship, that is, in preaching, has lost its soul and no longer enjoys that freedom with which Christ has set us free. Space forbids the following out of this tendency through the struggle between the Schools of Alexandria and Antioch which culminated in the victory of Alexandria gained by the unholy St. Cyril. The condemnation of the Antiochenes may well be the blackest day in the history of the early Church.

This thesis could be illustrated from the preaching of the first four centuries, but enough has been said to indicate that in the course of the history of the Church the early distinction between Kerugma and Didaskain became merged into one function, the presentation of the truth of the Christian Revelation. It may be objected that there must have been many in the early Church to whom the work and witness of theologians was beyond their comprehension, but the fact remains that Christianity triumphed by out-thinking the pagan. That is our task to-day, and our present need is for preaching to take on a more teaching ministry. Our task is not to fight for fundamentalism or modernism but, ignoring these unhappy labels, to concentrate on the presentation of the truth of Christ and His Gospel. We need the fervour of the evangelist wedded to the humility of the scholar. I came across a remarkable example of this when Dr. Raven was speaking at a series of meetings in our town and I took the occasion to have a discussion with him on his book *Apollinarianism*. At the conclusion of our conversation he advised me to read *Two Ancient Christologies* by R. V. Sellers, and even offered to lend me the book if it was beyond my pocket. That book is in some respects a criticism of his own position. Could charity be more Christian? Surely that is a far better way than the affixing of theological labels by inexperienced fingers. Our whole Christian position is being challenged to-day as it was in those early centuries and the urgent need is for preachers, who know the History of Doctrine, to meet that challenge and in the name of Christ win another victory for truth. We are all well aware that Christianity is very much more than an intellectual assent to certain propositions. We have no use for knowledge for its own sake, even if that knowledge be of the things which belong to Christ. Knowledge is for salvation. But we neglect the modern challenge at our peril. Above all we need a Baptist doctrine of the Church, the Ministry and the Sacraments, and for the formulation of that doctrine we surely require an insight into those historic movements and some knowledge of the historic creeds. As Baptists we do not accept those Creeds as the necessities of Church membership. To us they are historical documents of immense value, but not binding on modern Christians. But this does not excuse us from knowing them, and that knowledge comes via the History of Christian Doctrine. The function of the preacher is to proclaim, but his proclamation is bound to be more effective if it be informed. The preacher and the scholar are in reality one.

Doctrine and preaching are thus closely interrelated and the one needs the support of the other. And when we have studied hard, and are busy presenting the case for Christ, we need that saving grace which Augustine occasionally exhibited, as when he writes at the end of his thesis on the Trinity, "O Lord, the One God, God the Trinity, whatsoever I have said in these books that is of Thee, may they acknowledge who are Thine; if anything of my own, may it be pardoned both by Thee and by those who are Thine, Amen."

H. CLARKSON.

ORIGINAL SIN.

TO what extent has the theological revival of the last decade or two affected us Baptists? One would have thought that we should be in the forefront of a movement whose watchword is "God's Word and not man's word." Yet if the outward and visible sign be the amount of theological writing, then other denominations are leaving us far behind. Only one Baptist name appears among the supporters of that comparatively recent journal of Confessional Theology, *The Presbyterian*, while its more imposing American counterpart, *Theology To-day*, draws its strength from Presbyterian scholarship. Many of us have looked enviously at the

Forward Books issued by the Congregationalists and wished that we were doing something to make our people acquainted with theological trends of the past twenty years.

Yet it may be that the Confessional Theology has not caused as great a flutter among us because we had not gone so far to the other extreme. Throughout the long barren years when Liberal Theology held sway in most communions and failed to find the Word of God in the Bible, Baptists were kept near to the heart of the Gospel by an instinct which makes them exceedingly suspicious of any doctrine which cannot appeal to Scripture as its authority, by the intense evangelistic passion which flowed through Spurgeon and, most important of all, by the fact that the very centre of all our hope, Christ's death, burial and resurrection, have been vividly portrayed as if in a drama in Believers' Baptism. But it would be idle to suppose that everything in our theological garden is lovely. We, too, stand in need of not a little Reformation according to the Word of God.

One of the chief defects of Liberal Theology was its failure to take sin seriously. "Have you not yet considered what a heavy weight sin is?" asked Anselm of Boso. When that question is put to the Liberal school the answer is in the negative. So it is not surprising that in these early years of the Confessional Theology we are hearing a lot about Sin and Original Sin. The taunt that Neo-Orthodoxy confronts us with "the good news of original sin" does not disturb us when we recall that the word of God's Grace is appreciated only by those whose eyes are open to the awfulness of sin.

I.

As popularly conceived it is only right that Original Sin should be attacked. To many it means Birth Sin, and the irony of it is that this way of regarding it was foisted on the Church by one who in many respects had a much firmer grasp of the evangelical faith than anybody else from the close of the Apostolic Age to the Reformation. By a mistranslation of *Romans* v, 12, Augustine read "for all that sinned" as "in whom—in Adam—all sinned," the result being that Augustine taught that all the sons of Adam sinned when Adam sinned. Original Sin then became Original Guilt. At birth every child inherited guilt for Adam's sin, and unless the child were regenerated by baptism he was doomed everlastingly. Every individual is guilty of sinning a sin (Adam's sin) which he never sinned and of forfeiting a righteousness (Adam's Original Righteousness) which he never had.

If this be the only sense in which Original Sin can be spoken of, the sooner it is dead and buried the better, and those who played any part in its resurrection would be guilty of an outrage against the character of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Further, if Augustine were right the most vital aspect of sin would disappear. If it did not spring from free personal choice sin would not be nearly so serious a thing. As Coleridge put it, "A state or an act that has not its origin in the will may be a calamity, deformity, disease, or mischief; but a sin it cannot be." This needs to be remembered when the Psycho-Analysts are called in to vindicate the doctrine of Original Sin. Jung's theory of the Collective Unconscious, for instance, may seem to have something in common with the traditional Christian teaching, and Freud's tracing of all evil to the sex impulse may appear to be Augustinianism up to date. But the Psycho-Analysts are all determinists, which means they can speak of moral disease but not of sin.

What is the core of the doctrine of Original Sin? Our answer would be in Jeremiah's words: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it

is desperately sick." There is in every man a root principle of sin and from this root all kinds of sin arise. Original Sin is the corruption of the tree which accounts for the evil fruit of every sort. How that corruption got there is in the final resort a mystery. That it is there is the reason why the Son of God came into this world and why the Gospel must be preached to the end of time.

II.

We may instance two enigmas unintelligible to us without some kind of doctrine of Original Sin. The first is the fact of disintegration in society. Empires rise and fall; civilisations come and go, even those which have large elements of good in them. Nor do they by any means always give place to better orders. In his *Study of History* Prof. Arnold Toynbee finds evidence of twenty-one distinct civilisations having existed. Of these, thirteen are dead, seven are rapidly dying and the other one—our Western Civilisation—he considers to be past its zenith. Everything passes, but the question is: why does it pass?

In analysing the cause of the breakdown of civilisations Prof. Toynbee singles out such factors as loss of self-determination, resting on one's oars and the idolisation of an ephemeral technique. In other words it is from within, from within the heart of man, that breakdowns of the organised life of society come. A root principle of sin at work? Without a doubt, for Dr. Toynbee himself says that the source of the trouble is man's failure to respond creatively and imaginatively to the challenges which history forces upon him. In the pride of his achievement man regards himself as a super-man. He laughs at the creaturely limits of his existence and tries to be as God. Sloth and greed have much to do with the disintegration of society, but they are begotten from the one root—pride, *superbia, hubris*.

To this fundamental fact of human nature Liberal Theology, with its dreams of mankind going up and up under its own momentum, was blissfully blind. Confessional Theology may be pardoned if in its earliest years it is so appalled by the profundity of human sin that it tends to lose sight of what mankind may become *as it responds to the Grace of God*. We may hope soon to see the balance restored, but what concerns us as Baptists at the moment is that we have far too many good folk among us who, while clinging tenaciously to the evangelical faith for the individual and doing full justice to the sombre picture given in Scripture of the effects of sin in the individual heart, when they turn to politics and economics and the problems of society fall back on a thorough-going liberal outlook which imagines that once a few wires are pulled the post-war world can become a paradise. Utopias can never come while men remain sinners. Marxists are not the only people whose bluff has to be called in this matter.

III.

A second enigma which remains unintelligible to us without some kind of doctrine of Original Sin arises from the life of the individual. Why is it that men resist God? Why is it that when the Gospel is preached and God is portrayed in all the winsomeness and attractiveness of Jesus Christ men still refuse to give Him their trust and loyalty? We have been not a little embarrassed in talking about sin to young people brought up in Christian homes. What can these "sky-blue souls" know about sin? The answer is: everything. Sin is resistance to God. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Of course we have muddled our thinking by stressing the moral element in sin to the exclusion of the religious. Sin may or may not manifest itself in immoral action, but sin is a religious concept before it is a moral one. It is saying to God, "I will not have Thee to reign over me. I am the master of my fate, the captain of my soul." One

may be morally upright, one may have lived a very sheltered life and yet still be in revolt against God. Emil Brunner gives a clever turn to the name Original Sin by saying that it means sin or revolt against one's Origin, which is God. Sin is resistance to Him who lays His hand upon every living soul saying: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, thou art Mine." A theology which regarded sin as ignorance and the Gospel as enlightenment had not begun to grapple with this terrifying question: Why do we resist God? The root principle of sin—pride, superbia, *hubris*—is the only answer. All that can be said about it is said in *John* xvi, 9. Sin is refusing to believe in Christ, and a conscience smarting under this conviction is the first sign of the Holy Ghost at work.

That all of us resist God, till Grace subdues our stubborn hearts, that all of us are responsible for this resistance to God and yet, paradoxical as it is, that this is an inevitable fact of our human nature—these three marks, universality, responsibility and yet inevitability—appear to be the essence of the profound mystery of Original Sin. KENNETH C. DYKES.

THE PART-TIME MINISTRY.

THE following was sent as a private letter to the Editors from our fellow-member, W. J. Back, Minister of Drummond Road, Bermondsey. In view of its importance, we sought and received permission for publication.—ED. BOARD.

"I have had no experience on working in a 'Fellowship' in a country district, but what I have learned in Bermondsey satisfies me that grouping is not the method for the City. Nothing but the personal influence of the man on the spot, 'their pastor,' whom in dark days they wanted to support, would have held our people together. Drummond Road could not support a whole-time pastor and indeed does not need it. A part-time ministry, therefore, seems to be the more likely solution of the difficulty than a grouping scheme; but the Baptist Union has set its face against part-time ministries ...

"This raises another question. Dr. Dakin would agree that we part-time men are Baptist ministers and the question is, ought not the Union to offer such men some form of recognition? Some twenty years ago I was called upon to resign from the official list because I did not feel led to become a full-time man and the reason given was that, to remain on the list would cause complications and bring claims on the Superannuation and Sustentation Funds. I am sure you will agree that the Baptist Ministry ought not to be put upon a cash basis. As you know I am an Accountant and a partner in a City firm, and, among other things, have a seat on the Examining Board which confers our qualifications. I do not think I have been hampered in any way by lack of the Union's recognition, nor do I feel that recognition would now make any difference to me personally. It is this which makes it possible for me to write freely.

"Having regard to the post-war needs of our churches, should not the whole situation be reviewed in the interests of the churches and of those who will come after us? Would it not be statesmanlike—(a) to recognise part-time ministries, like that of Carey, and enter the names in the official list on due satisfaction of call, capacity and service? (b) To explore the possibility of providing facilities for training such men, probably by correspondence, conducted by some of the College Tutors, such as is done in other professions like that of Accountancy? (c) To lift the ban on the 'over 40's' in the case of such honorary, or part-time men? Such names could be denoted in the lists by asterisks, indicating that they had no claims on the Funds of the Union.

"There would probably never be a great number, though at this time there are three in Bermondsey, two being Accountants in practice, and one a Company Secretary, all Baptists, though only myself ministering in a Baptist church. I wonder how many there are in other parts of the country?"

"I do not write for publication; I have no complaint of being 'cold shouldered,' on the contrary I have always received the heartiest fellowship and co-operation from the 'full-timers.' I am quite content to continue myself without any recognition; though I am not sure that the Union should be content—but I think that the matter is of importance for the future of our work and for younger men who may succeed us in this kind of ministry."

A PASTORAL PROBLEM.

(A Reply).

My dear Brother,

I have read with interest and sympathy, your outburst in the *Fraternal* regarding pastoral visitation. I know exactly how you feel and venture a reply, based on thirty years experience. I feel I must do so, because in my opinion visitation, whilst it can be tedious and laborious, is in the long run the most rewarding part of our work. I beg you not to grow weary too soon.

It must be said at once that to discuss the subject is useless if there is not in our hearts a genuine love of humanity, a conviction that there is nothing more interesting than people, whether in the church or out of it. An afternoon in the garden or with one's books, is not to be compared for interest with an afternoon with people, even the very ordinary people with whom we have to do in a Baptist church. I am surprised you talk about "duty" visits. What is all our ministerial work but duty? There will come times when you feel strongly that your people have a duty to you, but you have a duty to them, and that is to know them thoroughly, which is possible only as you visit them. Visitation is rather like sermon-making. It is of no use sitting down and waiting for the inspiration to come, you must get on with it, reading, writing, thinking—dull, dutiful work, but in the end there comes the lighting up of the mind, the warming of the heart, and you have your sermon. So in visitation, if you wait for people to send for you, or until some peculiarly interesting case comes your way, you may have to wait a long time. Do not worry because they do not send for you. When they asked you to be their minister they invited you to their homes and hearts, therefore visit them.

Further, do not despise the social call. Your Lord did not. To establish a social contact is often the necessary step to a spiritual contact.

I gather you are attracted to the work of the psychiatrist, as many of us have been in our time. In the end however, the approach of the Christian minister is not, and ought not to be, the same as that of the psychiatrist. He can offer a diagnosis of what is wrong, but when it comes to putting it right he is in difficulty. As ministers we know of a cure for the soul's complaints, but only by prayerfully surrendering ourselves to the guidance of God can we know how and when to apply it. Pastoral visitation needs such spiritual preparation.

May I also remind you that your visitation makes your pulpit ministry more effective. When people know you in the home, they listen the more intently to your words from the pulpit. We are very

shy about our souls and it often happens that the word we cannot say in the home, can be spoken in the pulpit, and it will find its mark.

I am not quite sure what you mean by "technique," although it sounds impressive. I can only suppose it covers what I mean by a courteous, tactful, human approach to the individual. If it implies some mysterious man-handling of a soul in the name of psychology, I do not like it. In the end we either enjoy visitation or we do not. If we do not, frankly, I wonder whether we should be in the ministry. But, if a man believes, as I do, that there is nothing more interesting in the universe than people, unless it be God Himself, then visitation will soon be realised as a high privilege and will be enjoyed. The minister will need to be in the homes of his people increasingly in days to come and there is no better way of arresting the cleavage between Church and people than pastoral visitation.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

A BROTHER MINISTER.

SUBSCRIPTIONS PLEASE.

A reminder that some 400 half-crowns are jingling in members' pockets when they ought to be in the Treasurer's hands, and a request for immediate transfer so as to obviate cost of a postal appeal. W.C.J.
