

The Fraternal

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EDITORIAL THE PASTORATE

WE greet our brethren in the Pastorate as another year dawns. We lift the latch and steal in to the Manse—thirteen hundred and more—and knowing somewhat of the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, we bring to each an assurance of individual interest and concern. For many, the financial burden is very real and, while the Baptist Union and many churches bear this in practical remembrance, yet others, apparently, overlook the fact that the ever-increasing cost of living affects the minister, sometimes to his real embarrassment. Then, while Christian work is never easy, it may truly be said that the combination of circumstances constituting the present situation makes the task of our ministers exceptionally difficult, and many acutely feel the strain.

There is need for a Mission of Encouragement. Could the B.U. send out some teams? Cheering signs are not far to seek. In all our churches there are bands of loyal and devoted people who support their minister, who love their church and who labour for the Kingdom. The gatherings held at the suggestion of the Spiritual Welfare Committee have revealed unexpected tendencies of spiritual life, and conversions are by no means absent. In the woodland the violets and snowdrops are already peeping through the grass, and similar signs of springtide resurrection are to be found in the spiritual sphere. We might all preach from the Psalmist's words—"I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"—yes, in the living world all around us.

There are others to whom we send our New Year greetings—those who have exchanged the pastorate for other forms of Christian service—a rather considerable number. During the last five or six years vacancies in the Superintendent's Board and in the Headquarters of the B.U. and B.M.S., together with certain increases, have had to be filled. Twelve men have been called from the pastorate for these purposes. We rejoice that our ministers and churches will share their inspiration and help. On the other hand the loss to our churches is seen in the fact that in several instances, apparently, it is difficult to fill pulpit vacancies. Tutorial positions

in our Colleges, at home and overseas, have taken from the pastorate thirteen others. All blessing be theirs in the important work of training men for future service. Various religious or semi-religious societies have called for additional help, and perhaps it may be taken as a compliment that the Baptist ministry has provided fourteen men for this purpose. During these years the needs of the educational world, from University to Day School, have appealed to nine of our men: we wish them God-speed in their new vocation. Less satisfactory is the number of men, amounting to twenty-nine, who have transferred their loyalty to other denominations: we wish them well. Doubtless they are actuated by conscientious reasons and we trust they are equally conscientious in remembering that in the aggregate many thousands of pounds have been expended in training them for the Baptist ministry. Many others, for various reasons, have left our ministry, and while we regret their leaving and their reasons for doing so, we would not forget them in our prayers.

To return to the note with which we began. All honour to the men who thus serve in other spheres, but let it never be forgotten that the firm foundation of our Baptist Church, we had almost said of the Kingdom itself, lies deep in the regular pastorate. Difficulties notwithstanding, let us enter the New Year strong of heart and firm of faith, drawing upon the inexhaustible resources of Him Who called us to the work of the Baptist ministry. Let us gain afresh the Vision which beckoned us at the beginning—a Vision of the dignity, the opportunity and the eternal rewards of our High Calling in Christ Jesus. To be the minister of a Baptist Church, the shepherd of a flock, to guide the young, to counsel the wanderer, to comfort the sorrowful and to win men and women to lives of usefulness for Christ and the church—all this, and much more, is by God's grace possible to the humblest pastor. There is no office like it on God's earth. Let us add that the longer men are able usefully and happily to remain in one pastorate, the greater is the service rendered.

O, honour higher, truer far
 Than earthly fame could bring,
 Thus to be used, in work like this
 So long, by such a King!

As we lift the latch to leave the Manse, we linger awhile at the threshold, and with all affection commend our brethren, and those who share their lives, to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who may have for us all, amazing blessings as we tread the pathway of another year.

THE BIRMINGHAM ISSUE

FOREWORD

BY courtesy of the Editorial Board, this edition of the *Fraternal* comes as the work of a group of Birmingham ministers. It is not an attempt at a comprehensive report endorsed by the Birmingham Fraternal as a whole. On the contrary, each article expresses the personal opinions of the contributor. While we all write with a measure of common background—that of the ministry in this large industrial city—each writer has drawn on the full width of his experience and has enjoyed full scope for his individuality. At the same time we have worked as a team and have endeavoured to cover the many aspects of our ministry in these days in this city.

N. S. MOON

We are happy to present the "Birmingham" issue, and congratulate the local Fraternal on the result of their corporate study. In particular we are grateful to N. S. Moon for his scrupulous care in editing. Thank you all, Birmingham.

THE SPIRITUAL CLIMATE OF BIRMINGHAM

AM I to write on the spiritual atmosphere of Birmingham, or of Birmingham churches, or of its Baptist churches in particular? If of Birmingham, can it be better described than in the poem by "Woodbine Willie," which declares that if Christ came to Birmingham He would not be crucified, He would be passed by, ignored? If of its churches, of which I have known something for nearly fifty years, I report a climate in which the depression of March is beginning to give way to the varying promises of April.

In 1900 many of our churches, large and small, were full. Few were not well attended. Sunday schools were crowded, and the societies connected with them, cultural and social, were numerous and vigorous. To-day large congregations are few, Sunday schools are small, few prayer meetings survive. On the other hand congregations are more eager, more generous, more friendly, and readier for experiments.

Two movements that were strong half a century ago are very weak now. Evangelism, such as reached its culmination in the

Torrey and Alexander Mission, has ceased to appeal. Then, too, the annual "Keswick Convention" at the Town Hall was an inspiration to thousands. Its messages were the strength and joy of some of the best of our people. To-day its annual meetings do not fill a small hall. Yet never were Christian people more ready for men and messages that make religion real, that search the conscience and challenge the will.

Congregations differ in other ways, too. Family pews were out of date before families were, and even our smaller families do not attend church AS families, for parents have to mind babies where maids used to do so, adolescents sit with friends or go out hiking. Motor cars tempt older people and the cinemas draw away the young from worship. Thus the ministerial task is harder to-day than it was fifty years ago. There are encouraging signs, nevertheless. Modern congregations, though smaller, do not assemble because it is "the thing," but because they are seeking "The Thing," a message that gives life a meaning. They are unmoved by rhetoric and sentiment, but listen gladly to a man who has found his way through philosophical theories and scientific discoveries that suggest that nothing is settled, and that even moral laws are relative, to a conviction that is very sure of God and of personal responsibility to Him. They like to feel that, when a minister repudiates teachings that explain away a sense of guilt as a complex that a psychiatrist can resolve, he is not ignorant of the facts that underlie such sophistries, but understands and recognises what is their true meaning, and knows the plague of his own heart so well that he can be both stern and tender with the hearts of his hearers.

Many of our congregations do not enjoy the expository preaching that was the delight of people who knew their Bibles so well that they picked up every reference to a Biblical character, story, or even phrase, and found a thrill in every simile that renewed the charm of what had been familiar since childhood. We can take nothing for granted. "*Our* problem is the evangelisation of our own native race in our High Schools and Universities." But that race responds to preachers whom they know to have been

"Seekers of the best,
Who come back laden from their quest
And shew that all the sages said
Is in the Book their mothers read."

They are glad when they find that Book the mirror in which they see themselves, even their sub-conscious selves.

Happy auspices are in the success of many churches in new districts. In smaller buildings than we used to erect, a sense of fellowship is easier to develop, and pastoral oversight easier to practise. There is, too, a readiness of churches to be united in fellowships, new with old, big with small. A man beginning a work on a new estate can be a very lonely man, however much a man of God he may be. And for such new work he must be that; approaching as nearly as he can to what Rutherford's people said of him, that he was always in his books, always on his knees, and always in the homes of his people. That many long for such closer walk with God and with one another is seen in the demand for "retreats," though I doubt whether we have developed the technique for them. But the demand is a good sign, for our numerous church activities absorb so much of the minister's time and energy.

Twenty-five years ago it was a shock to the writer to see a telephone on an American minister's desk. He little dreamed that twenty-five years later there would be a telephone in his own English study. But he has learned the dangers to the minister's heart of which that instrument is symbolic. Symbolic also is the tendency to call the study an office, when it should rather be an oratory. In an office is not begotten the passion for souls that expresses itself in the pulpit in the wooing note, and in the note of urgency that calls for repentance, decision to surrender. These are "born of meditation, leisure, and a certain loneliness."

Most of our morning congregations are small. Roman Catholics have much to teach Protestants in the importance of giving the early hours of Sunday to worship. But I think that ministers and people alike begin to feel that two exactly similar services are not the ideal Sunday programme, especially where one congregation is just a fragment of the other. One minister made his morning service one of instruction for children. Before long the attendance of adults was multiplied. Some think the morning service should be a celebration of the Lord's Supper, a service purely of adoration and praise. Such changes would not demand less intellectual effort for the minister but would call for an intenser cultivation of soul. As these words are being penned I hear of the formation of an Evangelistic Commando band of young ministers, who are "ready for anything" in order to reach the multitude with a Gospel that can save from the uttermost to the uttermost.

THE MINISTER AND HIMSELF

IN Pauline language we must present ourselves a living sacrifice. That is the ideal reaction of the minister to every situation. We are to be men of God working for God in a world God has made, but man has sadly mishandled. We are here as ambassadors of the unseen to present in word and deed the claim of God in Christ upon every human life. What manner of men should we be who are called to exercise this ministry in the kind of atmosphere modern Birmingham provides?

The secularisation of life which has been a feature of the twentieth century western civilization is peculiarly evident in a large industrial area such as ours. Upon the minister it exerts pointed pressure. He notes the invasion of the church by the world. He is made sharply aware that puritan ideals no longer register reality. Devotional words and phrases may be retained but the savour has gone out of them. In the realm of thought science has replaced theology. In that of action business enterprise offers much more attractive possibilities than the perseverance of the saints. The two cardinal sins of our "brave new world" are dullness and being old-fashioned. The average church commits them both, while the average dance hall and cinema are without sin in this matter. Standards of success equally with standards of life have depreciated. So the minister is told that the successful church must achieve a high entertainment value, it must employ up-to-date methods, it must provide an abundance of social facilities for its young people; in a word, it must sit rather lightly to what may be called "religion" in the strict sense, and be much more concerned to offer a life pleasing and delightful rather than exacting and challenging. It is as a counter-attraction that the church should function. Such is the specious philosophy of the situation that the minister frequently has to face.

How is he to deal with this situation? What kind of man must he be? Clearly, he must refuse to accept the rôle that all too often, perhaps unwittingly, is thrust upon him. He is not there as chief publicity agent for the Kingdom to think up ingenious devices for raising money. Nor is he there as master of ceremonies for a group of young folk eager for entertainment. Nor, again, is he there as the leader of a band of "happy engineers," to quote Gossip, concerned with keeping the machinery of organisations running smoothly. In the main, two temptations beset him. They pull in opposite directions. In one direction he is tempted to present

himself to his world as a normal good fellow, a good mixer, "hail fellow well met." He may wear or not wear the collar, but always he will be at pains to declare himself an ordinary man amongst men. Nothing distinctive or exclusive must be emphasised. So he is tempted to think he will best appeal to his world. The second temptation comes as he revolts from the world about him. In violent reaction he is tempted to oppose and challenge the situation at every turn. So he presents himself as an uncompromising puritan, fierce in his resentment of worldly ways and severe in his expression of personal piety.

I suggest that any minister going in either of these directions will be going the wrong way. Going along the first way he will be lost in the crowd and will never be recognised for what he really should be, while going the other way he will miss the crowd altogether which is a failure equally deplorable. What has to be achieved, of course, is the ideal expressed by the contrasted prepositions, being "in" but not "of" the world. There is a fine suggestiveness about Moffatt's rendering of I Cor. 7, 31, "Let those who mix in the world live as if they were not engrossed in it." In this matter the minister must emulate Goldsmith's village preacher who "allured to brighter worlds and led the way." The eternal and the new have to be brought together, and the minister must reveal how in his own life. "Truth and timeliness together," writes Phillips Brooks, "make the full preacher." Our world has lost the sense of the relevancy of the gospel, and news cannot be good if it is not relevant.

We must, therefore, present ourselves as a living sacrifice. Neither our "livingness" nor our sacrifice must ever be in doubt. Adams Brown has a story of Woodrow Wilson that on one occasion Wilson was asked whether he thought a minister should wear clerical dress. To which he replied, "It makes no difference. But one thing matters supremely. He should never be in any company of men without making them realise that they are in the company of a minister of religion." This modern world, blatant, secular and mechanized, is a pathetic spectacle. Farmer's summary of its deep needs is just. It needs to realise the significance of the individual, the certainty of security, the sure hope of defeating evil, that life has a purpose and that there is a supreme Personality with the right to command absolute loyalty. Who alone can satisfy these needs.

The minister who is alive to this profound aspect of the present situation in Birmingham will not stand aloof from his

world, but he will go into it not to accept its superficial vision, but to revive its dying hope of a grander life. Coming back to this city after an absence of more than 20 years, I am still convinced that Birmingham people will accord the hospitality of their hearts and minds to any minister who is prepared to live in their world, at their side, working as hard as they, meeting their problems, offering his own time and thought and labour for them in order to lead them to the source of all real life and power in Christ. They may not agree with all he says, but they will accord him a hearing as they learn to respect his sincerity, sympathy and sacrifice. If he abides firm by his innermost convictions even those who may first oppose him will be constrained to pay tribute. After all, sacrifice is not unknown to this modern world, and the sacrifice of the minister's own life may well be the bridge across the gulf that separates the world from Christ.

MORLEY B. SIMMONS

THE PASTOR AND HIS FLOCK

THIS may not be the more common title by which we are known to-day, but it is a figure which remains to express many of the deepest and richest things of our calling. While to-day it may sometimes appear that the ministry is not regarded as once it was, either by our own people or by the outsider, when some of its "prestige" appears to have vanished largely through the changed conditions of our times, we do well to remind ourselves that the commission is unchanged and that many of the joys of ministry which thrilled the hearts of worthy pastors before us, may yet be ours if we will win them.

Think of the singular privilege we continue to possess in the open access to the homes of our people, shared probably by none save the family doctor! How jealously we should guard and use that priceless opportunity. What a chance it offers to us. As we cross the threshold, whatever we may find the other side, we can at least enter there as the Pastor of the Flock. During these war-time and post-war days, as we have shared the anxieties of separated families, or entered into the joys of completed homes again, an opportunity unprecedented has come our way, by which our visit to the home has become a spiritual ministry which at one time seemed impossible. Our privileged entry to hospitals outside the normal visiting hours enables us to bring to the sufferers not merely an extra visitor between the visiting days, but the added ministry

of a spiritual nature. In how many cases the simple prayer quietly offered has renewed courage and faith, or been the means of expressing the unutterable gratitude of the heart? But such contact with our people brings its own rich reward to ourselves. A visitor asked to see Wordsworth's study, and the servant opening a door said, "This is his library, but the study is outside." For us the same may be true, who, seeking to speak home to the needs of men, to bring them into touch with the living God, must also live in vital touch with men. Out there beyond our books are resources rich and full, while the daily contact with living life keeps language fresh and understanding keen and true. How many of our greatest preachers kept that vital link which in itself contributed much to their greatness in pulpit and out of it.

As Pastors we are bidden to "feed the flock of God." If this is to mean instructing and building up our people in faith and spiritual experience, it certainly presents one of the bewildering tasks to-day. So often it would seem there is no appetite for the meat we have to offer. In an industrial area like this we find the social gathering will draw the people, while the invitation to gather for the "deeper" things is met with excuse for absence or just ignored. Meanwhile the "Brother" and the "Christadelphian" apparently know their Bible inside out while our folk are woefully ignorant in many instances, and content to remain so. The utmost should be made then, it seems, of the only speaking opportunities left to the Pastor, namely Sunday preaching, when a return to Bible preaching, presented in a living and relevant manner surely will not fail ultimately to arouse anew the desire to break the bread of life together more often. Again, it may be true that we have not set our people big enough tasks. Let us make fresh calls on their own witness to the gospel, let us match them in a new way with the tragic hour of this world. Face to face with God's great challenges men have realised their inadequacy again and again, and fled to Him for strength and power to carry out His will.

It is the big tasks which drive us to our knees, send us back to God for strength and to the Bible for direction. Along this line there may yet be an answer to the apathy of some of our people.

A word might be relevant to-day on keeping the balance in our ministry. The emphasis on the needs of youth has focussed our attention almost completely there. This emphasis has been needed, of course, and some of us have found our biggest encouragement in the youth work of our churches. It is not hard to get youth to-day to gather round the Bible for study and to adventure forth

in witness. Their zeal often stands in contrast with that of the older folk. But let us not overlook the middle years and beyond, where often the battles for faith against cynicism and bitterness are as keen as any youth has known. The sweetening, understanding friendship of a Pastor there may mean more than tongue can tell. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." It is a sublime and comprehensive picture of our task. Finally, this inward ministry to our people is not merely an end in itself. The true shepherd not only exercises that personal and intimate ministry to the flock, he also "leadeth them out." The experience of Christ needs to find its expression in active witness, the vision is for a task, the saving for service. The ultimate task of Pastor and people is to bring men and women into a personal encounter with Christ, sometimes called "evangelism." What we need to help people to see is that this is not the side-line we engage in from time to time, nor the occupation of a church which happens to be evangelical (so called). It is not the sudden brainwave we indulge in to revive a dead church. It is the natural outcome and activity of any man or church which has experienced the redeeming love of God in Christ. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." Let us make it clear in this day when so often the gulf between the church and the world is the cause of complaint, that, in fact, that gulf does not exist. We have a bridgehead already in the men and women of our churches who, though in a minority, toil in our offices and industry and homes. Let us not ask how to get in. Let us recognise that we are in already. Let the links become alive with the power and the spirit of God. Let the Life tell! There is a thrill of adventure and achievement unknown to the majority of our people because for them this is not yet true. We must lead them out!

In all this we come back to the overwhelming realisation of our own place and life as the Pastor. We see how ruthless in self-examination we must be. The need of our people is never greater than our own on whom they so depend. Their faith is lit at our flame, their savour kept strong by the reality of our own. "A growing man in the pew", says James Black, "needs a growing man in the pulpit." "Do you prepare your prayers?" Campbell Morgan was asked. His cryptic reply is searching too. "I try to prepare myself." "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us, and we will hear it, and do it." Here, surely, is the root of the matter!

S. G. H. NASH

DRAMA IN THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH

“WE shall see youth queueing up for our services instead of for the cinema.” This was the comment of one young woman as she was helping others make preparations for the following Sunday’s Youth Service. A group of youth together with the Sunday School superintendent and minister were busily installing a microphone and loud speakers round the church. The microphone was fixed on a landing on the stairs to the gallery, the “Control Room” was operated from the gallery and signal lights were worked from the pulpit to the “Control Room” and from there to the microphone. It was all to be part of a series entitled “The Voice of Britain.” The first two services were devoted to the Voice of the Past. The voices of men and women from the past were brought to the congregation over the microphone—the voices of men and women who had made Britain great, and who had built up her Christian heritage were heard repeating the actual words they had spoken in their life-time. Then there were two services devoted to the Voice of the Present, with the voices of men and women to-day. The great and mighty, and the ordinary man, statesmen, the Forces, teachers, students and housewives, were all represented in the cavalcade. Then finally, there was the Voice of the Future. This was done rather differently, with music and poetry and choric speech, with a careful choice of hymns and readings. In all these music, gramophone records, hidden choruses and solos and the organ were used as background and interpretation. At the transition between the past and present, the organist worked hard to convey the real appeal. The Voice of the Past ended with a call to youth to-day, and a gramophone record played “Youth Awake.” As the chorus was played on the record over the microphone, the organist took up the tune very quietly with a gradual crescendo while the microphone gradually faded out. Then a soloist sang the song from the choir and finally all the youth in the church sang the chorus:—

“Youth Awake! Christ calls to conquest
Makers of the world to be—
God inspired and undivided,
Rise to your destiny . . .”

This series was one of several experiments at monthly Youth Services. The minister, together with a small and carefully selected committee of youth, plans these services. The aim has been to present the Gospel in the language and form which youth to-day can understand on the one hand, and on the other hand to help

youth articulate the Christian philosophy themselves. The use of dramatic presentation and pageantry has been freely included with striking effect. Other experiments have been on special occasions such as Empire Youth Sunday, St. George's Day and the Christian Festivals. On one, St. George's Day, a large figure of St. George was erected by the pulpit, and after demonstrating with coloured figures of rats, the kind of things that eat into the nation's life, such as hate, greed, fear, graft and jealousy, the chords holding them were cut when "Get" was turned into "Give" and St. George became brilliantly lit up with a spot-light while a solo was sung.

The Christmas Youth Service is always one rich in colour and dramatic presentation. It has usually begun with a record of bells pealing out relayed on loud speakers round the church, giving a realistic effect of bells pealing from the steeple. Then all the lights are put out and all the youth sing "The First Nowell," in the front porch. At the second verse the door is opened and slowly down the centre aisle the youth come with coloured lanterns singing the rest of the carol and form up round the chancel steps, and at the last verse the lights go up and the whole congregation join in, "And let us all with one accord . . ." One year the service concluded with an exquisitely beautiful and moving tableau. The lights were all put out and, unannounced, the tableau was presented, the interpretation being done with coloured lights—spot-lights, foot-lights and arc lamps, and followed by the benediction. Another year a Christmas sketch was given after the service in the Lecture Hall.

These are a few examples of experiments to articulate Christian experience in a dramatic form. It must be pointed out that in all cases it is the dramatising of Christian experience by those taking part. The Christmas sketch, for example, was built up by pooling together just what Christmas does mean. It is found that the funniest things are often those which come from taking an honest look at ourselves. Humour, personal witness, and creative genius have all been mobilised to carry the Gospel. Much prayer and fellowship and teamwork have been behind each such service. There has been a real sense that they have been given by God and not just come as a bright idea.

Of course, there have been some who have not altogether agreed with this kind of approach. Some of the older people, only a few, have said that they preferred the usual form of service. But it has not been difficult to help them see that even if they do not like everything about these services, this can be their part of evangelisation, and part of the cost they can play to bring the Gospel to others, and almost completely they have been taken along with

those who have planned the services. It has also been revealed that a number of elderly people are still young in heart and greatly appreciate such an approach where they do not know what is going to happen next! We must remember that all movements that have shaken the world have appealed to the imagination as a key to the will. We all became familiar with the pageantry of the Nazi Youth and the dramatic appeal of the great demonstrations and parades. The pomp and ceremonial of military parades and massed bands and tattoos have released springs which have led men and women to far-reaching decisions. The whole impetus of a faith and passion can be harnessed and directed in dramatic presentation. And the church must make use of this mighty weapon to stir the imagination and capture the will of men and women to-day. Its value is quickly seen and used for all kinds of propaganda. Why not for the best news we have to publish? Why not pioneer in a modern renaissance with all the creative powers we have to articulate and present the Gospel in a healthy and robust way in which the ordinary man to-day can understand and follow? Is this not in line with the dramatic presentation of the prophets, the vividness of the Parables and the Miracle Plays and Nativity Plays of the church? Preaching itself has made full use of dramatic presentation, and the modern preacher may yet find a fuller use of all the resources available to-day.

B. G. BAXTER

YOUTH CLUBS AS A GATEWAY FOR THE CHURCH

AS a comparatively recent arrival in Birmingham I am not attempting to describe any local examples of what I have in mind, for it appears to me that the most valuable special contribution made by Birmingham Baptists to youth work has been through the uniformed organisations, notably the Boys' Brigade and the Girls' Life Brigade, but rather to make a plea for the seizure of a new opportunity presented to the churches of carrying the Christian Gospel into an almost entirely pagan constituency at our very feet.

By Youth Clubs I do NOT mean those adaptations of existing work within our churches which are commonly being made for various reasons and then termed youth clubs. I mean the clubs that sprang up during the course of the late war for the thousands of British youth who were quite untouched by voluntary organisations, and who were often in grave danger from lack of the right kind of activities for their leisure hours. Sponsored by the Coalition Government, whose purpose was defined in the White Paper, "The Service of Youth," they were intended to become a permanent

feature of our community life and, unless educational policy alters fundamentally, will do so. Inasmuch, therefore, as they gather together masses of young people who are almost entirely untouched by the churches, they open to us a door for Christian penetration, if we are alert and adaptable enough to squeeze ourselves through. Indeed, in those cases where we had for a time in our Sunday schools—and lost them—children who are now young people, we are, it seems to me, given a second chance to win them for Christ.

Work among this section of youth has, I feel, great advantages over some other approaches to the "outsider," which are necessarily brief and sporadic, although more spectacular. Compared, for instance, with factory evangelism these advantages are clear. In this kind of youth club all the members are young, not a mixture of age-groups, and youth is still the hope of the future. They are at leisure when we make our contacts, not under the restrictions that belong to working hours. They can be approached from many angles and in new ways with the message of the Gospel, through the varied activities carried on in the clubs, and as a properly run club of this kind is open six or seven nights in the week there can be continuity of contact and influence, the cumulative effect of which is invaluable. Moreover, the Government is prepared to give financial aid for the opening and running of these clubs, which makes possible developments of their work which could not be achieved on a purely voluntary subscription basis. Its requirements are, unless they have altered greatly in the last eighteen months, quite simple, and acceptable to most Christian people. There must be a committee of management. Audited accounts must be rendered periodically to the Ministry of Education. The club must be open to all young people within the prescribed age limits, without sectarian or political conditions; and its activities must cover the physical, mental and moral needs of youth. Where a church has premises adequate for so comprehensive a programme, and sufficient workers of the right kind to sustain the heavy demands that such a club makes upon them, it is a fine thing to run one as part of its evangelistic witness, but few of our churches are in this enviable position. The alternative to running a club of one's own is to send as many of our Christian people as possible to work in already established clubs; but they must be the right kind of people.

By that I mean that they must be prepared to give themselves to it as a full-time, or full leisure-time job, or as nearly so as circumstances permit. They must love the young people for their own sakes, and not simply for the purpose of making them members, eventually, of their own church. They must be real Christians,

strong in principle, and lacking in prejudices, patient with the vagaries of youth, and always sympathetic. They must be good listeners, as well as persuasive evangelists when the opportunity occurs. They must enter into all the club activities so far as they can, bringing their Christian influence to bear in every direction, keeping in mind Browning's words, "Who keeps one end in view makes all things serve." They must be good disciplinarians in the best sense. Youth does not respect "weak" people. Finally, they must be patient in waiting for results. The good seed often takes a long time to bear fruit, and the best fruit ripens slowly, a fact many Christians do not realise.

Two things need to be done in our churches in this connection. One is to stimulate the conviction that this kind of youth work is Christian evangelism. A friend of mine, who has worked for some years in a successful club, was asked to talk to representatives of a number of churches on youth club work. When he finished speaking he was asked, "Now will you tell us of some *Christian* work you are doing?" The other need is to persuade more of our own younger people who are equipped by temperament, and are also, or may be, equipped by training, to take up this work as a vocation as important as other forms of service that rank at the moment higher in the Christian imagination.

Results are difficult to tabulate, but they come. "What's all this Jesus business?" said a lad of fifteen solemnly to a worker in a club where I was taking the epilogue. The chance of telling him was not missed! A brilliant, insolent lad in the same club, blatantly Communist and anti-God, is now expressing as his own ideas thoughts at which he scoffed three years ago. It sounds like the beginnings of what the New Testament calls conversion! I recall a long, heart to heart talk with three lads about the Presence of Jesus. One of them had been a source of trouble until he transferred his energies to the Army. There he had been confirmed as a member of the Church of England, and was trying to understand the Gospels better. Last time he wrote me, his favourite parable, he told me, was that in which the Master said, "Friend, come up higher." I think he had done that.

A. J. KLAIBER

FACTORIES AS A FIELD FOR THE CHURCH

TWENTY-SEVEN years ago a youngster of twenty emerged from the Army discharge depôt with a stammering tongue and a boyhood's faith in a Divine plan for his life, badly battered by the shocks of war and a doctor's terse report. C. T. Studd, in the

heart of Africa, lost one of his recruits as a consequence. One thing remained unshaken, a firm belief in men and a desperate longing to turn the comradeship born in the mud of Flanders into a bit of the Highway of Peace upon which Prince Emmanuel might go in quest of a new generation of youth.

Disappointments that followed were many. Excursions into politics, adventures in strike debate, street-corner advocacy of Geneva's dreams—they offered a poor return. At least, the urge to serve his generation ended the tyranny of the stammering tongue.

A call to a tin tabernacle began the fulfilment of a dream. Later came Munich and its inevitable aftermath. As prison visitor to the men of the Forces in East Anglia he found many opportunities for getting slippery feet out of the Slough of Despond and on to the King's Highway. Then came the first opportunity for his excursion into industrial evangelism.

The moral situation in a certain city under war conditions, caused concern in the hearts of some Christian ladies. Would two of us, local ministers, gain entry to the factory bench and canteen? We agreed, providing that both master and man were pleased to invite us. We knew that to secure the friendly guidance of the men's leaders was to be assured of a square deal in all subsequent plans.

The next problem was the "how" of the task. Sermonettes would gain us an early exit. The average English crowd loves to hear itself sing, in spite of its inherent self-consciousness. It needs a song leader. An old piano-accordion had served me well in the open-air ring. This might bridge the gulf. A "Dorcas" (full of good works) came to be known to three thousand factory workers over three years of hallowed association. Classical tunes set to well-known words of hymns served at first, but the demand was expressed for "the old 'uns, padre," and Sandon, Rockingham, Hyfrydol, became firm favourites, with Crimond claiming pride of place.

A ten-minute mid-morning break seems common to many of our large factories and every second of it could be used to good purpose for the Kingdom. So came the beginning of our ministry.

Picture, will you, six-feet-four-inches of genial, friendly, Lancashire Methodism, climbing the bare stairs of a semi-blitzed boot factory, arm-in-arm with a Baptist preacher, their knees playing bone duets—climbing to fulfil the dream of Flanders!

Within two minutes the canteen was crowded. The hastily-strapped "Dorcas:" the tune, "Drink to Me Only" linked with a duet accompaniment, in two parts, of "I heard the voice of Jesus

say." The Baptist half of the partnership begins to ask questions of his friend—"If God . . . why???" He had often asked those questions "out there." The replies merited and received further questions and, as the two experimented, the technique caught on, to be employed by these two in a score of different towns and cities up and down the country: in cinemas, in theatre, in church, in open-air ring, in public-house, in dance-hall. Canteens, barred by rule to "the cloth," invited them to "try it out." Questions were invited, to be sent to the management: these would be answered on the next weekly visit. They were always addressed by the Baptist half of the padreship ("Mr. Everyman," the press dubbed him). Never were the questions frivolous, always relevant and sincere. The Bishop of the diocese, who often paused to enquire of his Free Church friends concerning their success, declared it to be a "teaching ministry." Hearts were opened; many an enquirer sacrificed an hour's pay to remain and deliberate with the padres concerning his own material and moral problems. Homes were opened: domestic issues guided.

Sometimes a definite call for immediate decision for Christ was made as the two stood on factory bench or before the "mike" on the canteen stage. Cases could be cited of a harlot here, a gambler there, not to speak of one-time Sunday school scholars and church workers, who stood before their comrades in a crowded room to signify their acceptance of Christian discipleship or of their return to active church fellowship. The Theatre Royal was crowded with two-thousand of our factory friends who had demanded their own Good Friday evening service. On one occasion a director of an engineering firm walked the length of the 200-foot canteen to publicly acknowledge his desire to lead his staff and workers to the hill called Calvary.

Subsequently, the two partners in this Evangelistic enterprise were co-opted to become the spearhead of several Christian Com-mando Campaigns in the Midlands. Everywhere, the same question-answer technique was adopted. Always leading up to a word of personal faith and testimony. Communists and Catholics alike have crossed the canteen or climbed the stage to express their sense of appreciation.

To answer the queries of a score of Fraternal and Free Church Councils, let it be declared with emphasis—the partnership was born of a friendship that had been the most real thing in twenty years ministry. The two churches backed up their leaders to a man—indeed, office bearers who were directors in business sought

the co-operation of their men's leaders in opening doors for the two visitors. In this connection the revered name of Jewson will always remain a grateful memory. Further, "Mr. Everyman" determined always to be utterly fair to sceptic and cynic, as he represented them to the padre, indeed, some critics resisted the suggestion that he could be a Baptist minister. One dear old lady protested to her vicar, during a Commando Campaign, that "a big bullying blatant agnostic" had spoiled a certain factory worker's meeting for her because he had persisted in addressing himself to the platform from the front of the gallery.

The experiment has revealed that the working man is religiously fair if aggressively forthright. More than once we thought we heard the rustling garments of the Master of the Upper Room, as we talked over the common canteen meal concerning vicarious suffering.

In a public-house lounge in Sheffield the writer joined a table of four. The dance-band had given us the platform for fifteen minutes and we accepted the invitation to a grape fruit squash. A 21-year-old harlot, whose husband was overseas, had returned to claim her second "catch" of the evening. He sat on my left—a typical American G.I.—on my right sat my colleague. We talked about the Symbolic Cross that was pinned to my coat's lapel, and of the Magdalene who was transformed by His touch. The painted passion-flower from the nearby factory had never heard of redemptive love—she had been nurtured on Hollywood not Galilee. We saw her last as we faced a crowded church in that city. The rouge and the paint were off: the fingers that gripped her hymnary lacked their customary red tints. We sang a new song as our eyes met—

My gracious Lord I own Thy right
To every service I can pay.

Yes, maybe the factory is a field white unto the harvest.

STANLEY A. BAKER

NEW PROBLEMS OF CHURCH EXTENSION

THE title of this article must not lead the reader to think that the Baptist Church in Birmingham is expanding at a phenomenal rate. It is the city which promises to do so in the near future, and in a manner which presents Baptists and Congregationalists with a situation such as they have never had to face before. The system of Independency, the distinctiveness of our denominational witness,

the relationships which we sustain with other Free Churches and with the Church of England—these are the issues which are arriving at an hour of critical significance for the future of Baptist life in this and other great centres of population. Perhaps the time has come when the whole Denomination from the B.U. Council to the local churches themselves must face a new situation and come to clear decisions if a great opportunity for Christian advance is not to be lost.

The method of Baptist church extension in the past has been along the lines of personal initiative. A group of people have had it laid upon their hearts to make a new venture. They have met together in fellowship and prayer, begun a small work, presently secured a site, erected a hall, and gradually built up a Baptist Church. Or a local church has begun Sunday school work upon a new estate nearby, and fostered an enterprise which developed into a self-supporting community in due time. Most of our churches, large and small, have had their origins in some such way. It was a manner of growth entirely congruous with our order of Independency.—

But now, in this city at any rate, the procedure is quite different. When a new estate is projected the city surveyor offers one site for a Free Church to the Secretary of the Free Church Sites Committee on which the leading denominations are represented. That committee considers all the factors involved and recommends that one or other of the denominations should be responsible for that estate. If unsuccessful in persuading, say, the Baptists to undertake the work the committee thinks again, and offers it, perhaps, to the Methodists. The whole point of the situation is that no other site within the estate is available. Furthermore, whoever undertakes the work is solely responsible for the Free Church witness in that neighbourhood. The other denominations naturally feel a grievance if the work is not adequately and expeditiously carried through. Again, the city authorities will not allow *any* kind of building to be put up. They offer good central (and expensive!) sites, and the building to be erected must conform to certain standards of architectural adequacy. Ministerial oversight is a first necessity. The Home Work Fund will have to be asked to support initial pastorates from the very beginning of such enterprises.

It will be clear that hitherto the Free Church Sites Committee has worked along the lines of "spheres of influence." One district

shall be Baptist, another Congregational, and so on. There is a growing feeling that this does not really solve the problem. Methodists do not very readily turn Baptist, nor Baptists Presbyterian. If you seek to solve this problem by arranging that the denominations shall be "well mixed" over the various areas of the city, there is the further difficulty for the Independent Churches that they cannot easily staff a new work unless a fairly strong cause be near at hand. But if there is a strong Baptist Church a mile away, the Methodists may rightly feel that they should be represented on the new estate rather than that a second Baptist Church should be built.

The other solution of the whole question would be to build United Evangelical Free Churches. An experimental scheme is now under discussion for a church which should be in full membership with the four principal denominational bodies, having an alternating ministry, and a new type of constitution which should place it beneath the fostering care of the Birmingham Free Church Council. Provision would be made for an open baptistry (and a font!). At the suggestion of the Anglicans it would adjoin the Church of England on a commanding site, and there would be a Christian Community Centre jointly controlled and used by the Anglican and Free Churches.

In the light of such proposals we Baptists have to consider afresh whether our Baptist witness in the future will best be made by maintaining separate churches on the issue of Baptism, or whether we ought not to enter into much closer relationships with our Free Church brethren and make our witness amongst and in Christian fellowship with them. Whenever we discuss re-union we talk about the contribution *we* shall make to that united Body of Christ for which we pray. Presumably we allow the right of others to think in similar terms. But do we mean it? May it not be that we must now begin (under the pressure of events) to give reality and substance to our dreams by making our contribution within the life of united churches? Why should we deprive our fellow Christians of the thrilling values of Believers' Baptism by continuing to practise the rite within the comparatively private seclusion of our own denominational life? Would not our observance of Baptism make its strong appeal to others? To such questions we should be addressing ourselves.

Then there is the different problem of the "blitzed" central areas of our city. The authorities are planning to re-build such areas as "neighbourhoods." Each neighbourhood will be a new

creation. Houses, flats, factories, shops, open spaces, community halls—yes, and churches. In most of these areas the existing churches are more or less damaged. Some will, in any case, lose their sites through the re-planning. The question of priorities for Church Building (probably on newly created sites) has to be decided by a joint Committee of the Anglicans and Free Churches. The Free Church Council is engaged in surveying the Free Church position in each of the proposed new neighbourhoods. Once again it is a question of deciding which Denomination shall have priority. Building licences will not be given for more than one Free Church in each neighbourhood. In this case there is the added complication that established churches are already in being. The Methodists can decide from headquarters which churches shall be re-built, and which moved out to the new estates. Imagine the difficulties of a Baptist representative in trying to declare what the Baptist policy shall be! And yet, upon his decision that of other Denominations often depends. "Brethren, pray for us" is the heartfelt cry of those who struggle to adapt the tradition of Independency to such a world of city planning as now confronts us. Yet we Baptists must take our place in the future Christian witness of the city. It will demand an effort such as we have never known before. The fundamental question arises—can we voluntarily divest ourselves of our independent rights in the interests of Christian co-operation and for the sake of the Kingdom of God? Some of us are driven to feel that if we can not, then we shall fail to take our rightful share in the future work and witness of the Church of Christ.

ERIC F. KNIGHT

A GAP THAT NEEDS TO BE BRIDGED

AS we contributors considered together our series of articles we became aware of a serious gap in our ministry in this city. What is our impact, as churches, on social and civic life? Answer: "Very little."

In marked contrast to the days of Dale, Vince and Mursell, the days of militant liberalism (which was cradled in Birmingham) we have to admit that as Christians we are making little impact on the collective life of our city. In this magazine we do not pass over this—it represents a weak spot in our Christian witness.

In a large city democracy is face to face with the hugeness of the situation. The vast population moves about the city and little community sense develops in the various districts; the city as a

whole is too large to function as a really live civic unit. The local Church is but a small unit in a population of over a million, and our churches have lost touch with the forces of administration in our city. There is an urgent need for us to recover a vigorous expression of Christian citizenship. The churches tend to go their own ways, wrapped up in their own internal affairs, and the number of Christian leaders in local politics is lamentably small.

Of course, we have our Christian Social Council which does valuable work. But inside our churches there is little vital concern capable of producing and sending out men and women of sterling Christian character to the important field of Christian service within local government, backed up with the prayers and intelligent interest of their fellow church members. Christian citizenship becomes the concern of a tiny minority who seem almost as distant in their pronouncements as the civic and national authorities themselves. There is need for a quickening of the Christian conscience not merely on negative issues such as the defence of Sunday and the restriction of the gambling and drink traffic, but also for the positive promotion of Christian ideals in industry, in education, in public health, and town planning, and the active co-operation of Christians qua church members in the work of the Probation Officers, etc. An attempt to create such a concern is being made by the Birmingham Free Church Federal Council. Its success will depend not so much upon the thoughtful action of a small group of leaders meeting in committee, as upon the vital movement of ideas both upwards from socially conscious Christians through the church meeting to the civic authorities, and downwards again in reverse. The sturdy individualism of which Birmingham is so proud needs to be harnessed to a social consciousness in which we see the relevance of our Christian gospel to the collective, no less than to the individual sins that beset us. Only so can we avoid the perils of a soulless bureaucracy.

The trouble is that most ministers and most church members are too preoccupied with internal affairs to have time and thought for these wider concerns. The wider concern for overseas missionary work is usually created and sustained in our churches by a missionary council which, if it has enterprise and initiative, can fertilise the imagination of the church members and so enlist active support. Perhaps a similar method might be employed by our churches to fertilise our imagination and stir us to specific action in what is becoming an increasingly pagan field—civic, national and international politics.

NORMAN S. MOON

THE PROPHETIC EMPHASIS IN THE PRESENT
SITUATION

THE present situation involves, for the Christian Church, two main factors: the Eternal Gospel, and the contemporary conditions under which men are living. The former is unchangeable, and any attempt to modify it, minimise its supreme significance, or neglect any part of it, is fraught with the gravest peril for all concerned, declarers and hearers. But, as Dr. Farmer has said in *The Servant of the Word*, "there must be some translation of it into the present tense," if it is to be manifested as having relevancy to the life of our day. That, equally with the proclamation of the Eternal Gospel, is the responsibility of the church, and any attempt to ignore or evade that responsibility, is to bring ourselves under the condemnation of those who use "vain repetitions." We do well to recognise that, tragic and disquieting though it may be, many of the great and classical phrases of Christian piety and evangelism have no more meaning for those who do not attend our services than a Creed or prayer spoken in Latin. A great affirmation like "ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," which once filled men with great awe and exultation means practically nothing to the great majority who stand aloof from the Church. This is, of course, simply an illustration of the fact that a faithful minister of the Word must always be an interpreter. As an ambassador, he must mediate the mind and authority of God to those who do not know Him. At all costs, men must know in their own language the mighty works of God.

It may well be that we are living in one of God's turning points in history. It is certain that most of the old accepted standards of life, moral, social, and political, have disappeared. The foundations have been subjected to criticism, both practical and theoretical, and no longer appear solid. There is a widespread feeling of insecurity and uncertainty, together with a tiredness of spirit and feeling of disillusionment in the lives of many and a sense of fearfulness about the future for which there is indeed much justification. This is precisely the kind of situation which the prophets of the Old Testament were called to meet. With an intense love and sympathy for their fellows and an utter devotion to God they spoke "the Word of the Lord." This fact alone might well compel the church to a humble and patient study of the Prophets and their message. For the church is the inheritor of the prophetic tradition and experience. She, too, is in the world yet not enslaved by the world-spirit. She, too, has received and must utter the Word of God,

doing so with an utter devotion to God and love for mankind. She has received the Holy Spirit, and in the power and authority of the Spirit must declare the Will of God. The situation in which we find ourselves is compelling us to apprehend with a new eagerness the Christian revelation of God and of His holy purpose and power for man; of One Who is adequate to the present need of men as He has been in every generation; of the Divine claim upon every man's life and all the activities of life; of One Who can, in the midst of evil and defeat, create those energies which will triumph and give eternal purpose and holiness to human experience, individual and social. Moreover, that apprehension will come to us only as we seek to share it with those who have not yet been brought into the Christian experience. In all this, we are involved in, as well as addressing ourselves to, a "new situation." But that is what the church has had to do constantly throughout her history; indeed the Acts of the Apostles owes no small part of its fascination to the fact that it shows the astonishing capacity of the church to meet successfully a series of unprecedented situations. Substantially, no doubt, the needs of men are the same in our day as they have always been; yet they are manifested in ways that were unknown before. The church, in presenting her message, must at all costs be relevant.

In seeking to meet this new situation, we are faced by a two-fold temptation. We may bemoan the difficulties, blame the hard-heartedness and indifference of our contemporaries, sigh for the "good old days," and cling to a technique that once effected great things. That is simply to run away from the present challenge. A technique, however sanctified by tradition, must not be identified with the Gospel. We do well to remember that such men as Wesley, Carey, and Spurgeon, were criticised for the novelty of their methods. They were, in fact, presenting the Word of God as good *news* in the language and forms of their generation. Alternatively, we may be tempted to modify the uncompromising nature of the Word of God unto salvation, the tragic condition of man, and the absolute claim of God upon man, in order to make the Gospel more agreeable to the present-day temper. The Scriptures and the long history of the church, however, make it plain that that would not be *good news*; it would be a betrayal of man and disloyalty to God. We may recall that, however much the presentation of their message was new and alive, the prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostles of the New, supremely our Lord Himself, were constantly insisting that only as men came to know for themselves the unchangeable promise and purpose of God in Righteousness and

Grace, could they be saved. In other words, there is no new Gospel, but the Gospel is good news.

The note of relevance and urgency in the Christian witness is reflected most clearly in a great deal of present-day Biblical and theological study. There is a note of compulsion in theological writing, a new sense of the realism and livingness of the Bible in the manner in which our greatest Old and New Testament scholars present the message of the Scriptures. Our generation, and the people of God first of all, must come to terms with the Word of God, which reveals Him as always meeting men in the actual circumstances of history and life. The Gospel is not a lesson to be memorised and repeated, parrot-fashion. It is rather a declaration that we stand in fact, in the presence of the Holy, Living God, Judge and Saviour. As servants of God we are to mediate to real men in real need the Power of God unto Salvation. A. S. HERBERT

BAPTIST MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP

GENERAL COMMITTEE.

AREA REPRESENTATION

Below are given the names of the present representatives of the Areas. Any new nomination from fraternal or individual members in districts where there is no fraternal should be sent to J. O. Barrett, 72 Broadway, Kettering, not later than March 31st.

North Western: H. L. Watson (Liverpool), J. W. Townsend (Manchester) *Central*: C. Morgan (Slough), R. C. Rowsell (Kettering).

North Eastern: R. W. A. Mitchell (resigning), D. Gordon Wylie (Leeds) *Southern*: A. M. Ritchie (Canterbury), J. Tweedley (Winchester).

East Midland: P. Austin (Coalville), R. W. Thomson (Burton-on-Trent) *Metropolitan*: J. M. Dunning (Eltham Park), L. J. Howells (North London).

West Midland: E. F. H. Knight (Birmingham), A. S. Langley (Birmingham) (F. J. Hearn was co-opted to include another part of the Area) *Wales* (English and Welsh speaking): G. Sorton Davies (Barry), E. W. Price Evans (Pontypool), B. L. James (Wrexham), J. Lewis (Wrexham), I. Vaughan-Morris (Old Colwyn), H. Nicholas (Newport), W. R. Watkin (Llanelly).

Western: In consequence of pastoral change there are two vacancies.

Eastern: E. H. Newton (Louth), T. W. Shepherd (Southchurch).

Scotland (two places): J. D. Jamieson (Glasgow).

**A MESSAGE FROM MR. SEYMOUR J. PRICE
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BAPTIST MINISTERS'
FRATERNAL**

My dear Friends,

How often is it declared that these are days of many difficulties and the problems of finance stand high in the long list. It was to assist in coping with the financial problems of our denomination that the Baptist Insurance Company Ltd., was founded in 1905. Since that year, the Company has gone from strength to strength and has made grants to Baptist Union funds, which up to date total no less than £45,000. This magnificent total, of such importance to our Baptist work in the Homeland, has been derived from profits which, were it not for the existence of the denominational Company, would have been enjoyed by outside commercial ventures.

Even now, after forty-one years, a few churches are not insured with their own Company and many Baptists, including some Ministers, still effect their fire, life, motor and other insurances outside the denominational Office. Large sums are thus lost yearly to Baptist work.

Readers of the *Fraternal* could help the denomination very materially by influencing church officers, church members, and friends, to insure with the "Baptist".

We are assisting the funds of your Fraternal Union by taking this page and a similar page throughout 1947. I am sure you will reciprocate by placing your own insurances with the Company and using your influence with church officers and members.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

Baptist Church House,
4 Southampton Row,
London, W.C.1.

THE LIBRARY

Only a few Fraternalists acknowledged the receipt of boxes in July last. The Librarian had to assume that the circulation was in progress as arranged. It is important, for comfort and efficiency, that when boxes arrive the Librarian should be notified. Unless direction is given to the contrary, all boxes should be posted to A. J. Weslake, East Kirkby, Nottingham, in the first half of January, so that they can be inspected, renewed and passed on for additional useful service. The requests for books which have reached us during the last quarter have all been attended to, and it is clear that there is an increasing interest in this side of our work. Read, and go on reading, and don't forget to tell us of any worth-while discovery in good books.

A. J. WESTLAKE

The Managers of Dr. Williams's Trust have once again made us a generous grant for our Library. We are very grateful.

NOTES FROM SCOTLAND

The Scottish Assembly held at Edinburgh at the end of October, moved constructively. The heartening exposition of "Fellowship" by the President, Dr. Smithson, the warm and understanding messages of the Rev. M. E. Aubrey, the Conference themes on Christian Responsibility in Modern Society, confirmed for many the sense of Christian vocation. The Ministers' Fellowship was deeply touched by an address given to them by Rev. R. Guy Ramsay in which he declared that valid spiritual experience was the historic bond holding us together, not credal tests nor ecclesiastical machinery. He spoke to our situation and opened a door.

Eleven of our men have been released from Chaplaincy duty and returned to the pastorate, six to Scotland, four to England, and one to India.

There are fifteen students on the roll of the Scottish College. There are marked indications that the convictions born in, and surviving the rigorous tests of war service, will enrich the life of our churches in the immediately coming years. A few of the younger men have resigned from the denomination, some repelled by controversy, and others because they are doubtful of our polity.

Rev. F. N. Carpenter, after exceptional service as a Chaplain in the Middle East, has left for missionary work in India. His first period will be spent as minister of the Free Church in New Delhi where members of the Government are wont to worship. The

Rev. James Turnbull, M.A., Gilcomston, Aberdeen, has received the degree of Ed.B., with first class honours.

For nearly three years the denomination has been indebted to Alexander Clark, who is in his sixth thriving pastorate, and upon whose shoulders was placed the main responsibility for raising the Thirty Thousand Guinea Fund for the increasing of the minimum stipend. By moving urgency, effective advocacy, and meticulous organisation he has wrought among our churches to this end. It is hoped the Fund will be completed by 31st January. No one has more thoroughly deserved the gratitude of his brethren.

Dr. R. J. McCracken, a former distinguished student and tutor of the Scottish Baptist College, and Scottish minister, until recently Professor at McMaster, has now succeeded Dr. Fosdick at Riverside, New York, sent appreciative acknowledgments of the greetings and congratulations expressed by his Scottish friends, and writes "Do keep a place for me in your prayers."

J. D. JAMIESON

The Scottish Ministers' Fellowship sent from its Annual Meeting a message of warm good wishes to our own B.M.F. The message is sincerely appreciated and we heartily reciprocate.

J. O. B.
