

# The Fraternal

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## EDITORIAL

### MINISTERIAL SETTLEMENT

THE Superintendents, who have kindly undertaken the present issue, have, as their main work, the matter of Ministerial Settlement. The term suggests its opposite—Ministerial Unsettlement. Both conditions have their disadvantages. Hensley Henson writes searchingly concerning clerics who, taking advantage of the Parson's Freehold, render the least possible service and settle down in ease—a temptation not confined to any particular branch of the Church. That type of Ministerial Settlement is deplorable.

There are others who, either by temperament or selfish dissatisfaction, never settle down, as, when attending the Recognition Meeting, the Superintendent was given to understand that the minister did not intend to stay at his church longer than was absolutely necessary; a type of Ministerial Unsettlement equally to be deplored.

Belonging to neither class, are the 90 per cent. of ministers who, settling to their duty by God and man, are nevertheless greatly affected by the condition of these unsettling days. Such conditions may be personal—unsuitable accommodation, illness in the home, disappointment at some sequence of events. The cause may lie in the church itself, a perverse minority making successful work almost impossible. More likely it is due to the vastly changed conditions of our day, when the tide seems all against us. In any of these circumstances a measure of Ministerial Unsettlement is understandable and excusable, though to what extent it is really prevalent, we hesitate to affirm.

What can be said to further Ministerial Settlement in unsettling days? One commonplace hint is to suggest that in the new unspecified sphere, conditions may be equally unsettling. Cold comfort, but true. Again, we may remind ourselves that as we look back upon life we discover surprising traces of lasting good accomplished by God's grace in spite of adverse circumstances. The value of our present work in our present circumstances, only the Day will reveal. A third hint is that a man may rise above distracting influences, may become master of himself, and allow his soul so to prevail that he may understand somewhat of the meaning of the Apostle when he wrote about spiritual contentment whatever the outward conditions.

The most settling of all convictions lies in the assurance that a man is, where he is, generally speaking, because he has obeyed God's Call—an assurance often given at Recognition Meetings though, perhaps, at times, somewhat glibly spoken. Whatever the events that led up to his being minister of that particular church and, by whomsoever arranged, it was all in accord with that Providence that has guided and guarded all through life. This is the root conviction that should steady a man and help him to remain at his post.

There awaits us all the final Unsettlement, when Ministerial Removal leads to that higher sphere where, in fairer, brighter state we shall indeed solve the problem of Ministerial Settlement. It will be good then to feel that when the burden was heavy upon us we were not unduly restive. In that Heaven we shall indeed be Settled—but shall we? For some reasons, we hope not.

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### SECRETARIAL NOTES

The correspondents of fraternal have been advised of the arrangements for the two B.M.F. summer schools. That at St. John's College, Oxford, will be from 26th-30th July, with Dr. Dakin and Rev. G. T. Bellhouse, of Eastbourne, as lecturers. The Registrar is Rev. R. C. Rowsell, Carey Manse, Park Avenue, Kettering. The North Wales school will be from 28th July—4th August. The lecturers will be Rev. William Robinson (Birmingham) and Dr. John MacBeath, and the Registrar is Rev. H. L. Watson, 62, Darley Drive, Liverpool, 12. Ministers who are not able to be linked with a fraternal and who would like to attend one of these schools should get into touch at once with the appropriate Registrar. The charge is £2 5s. 0d. Travelling expenses will be paid. Priority will of course be given to those who have not previously attended a B.M.F. summer school.

Dr. H. H. Farmer, of Westminster College, Cambridge, will speak at the annual meeting on Wednesday, 28th April, at Bloomsbury on "Preaching and Worship."

Any additional nomination for the General Committee should be sent to me immediately at 72, Broadway, Kettering. I shall also appreciate hearing from any minister who will be at the Oxford summer school who can play a two-manual electrically powered organ.

J.O.B.

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### THE LIBRARY

The address of the Librarian is now 6, Kingsley Road, Kingsbridge, Devon. The boxes in circulation have all been renewed and a most readable selection is now available. Improvements are constantly being made and will be made. We are now in a position to offer boxes to other fraternal if application is made to A. J. Westlake.

## THE SUPERINTENDENTS' ISSUE

## FOREWORD

THE versatility of our General Superintendents is a source of wonder, but this is the first time they have set out as a team to produce a magazine. If it contains as much powder and shot as some of their sermons, to say nothing of their letters to the General Secretary, something ought to happen. At times I detect traces of high explosive, so readers had better beware.

And why not high explosive? May Heaven defend us from a merely meek and mild leadership and give us men who are daring in utterance and bold in action. The Superintendents carry a heavy responsibility, and know it. They are meant to be more than genial helpers and advisers for our ministers and churches, kindly "fathers-in-God" for those who come to them with their problems, able and dignified representatives on many occasions of the Denomination, gracious and loyal colleagues as I know they are. They have been called to their high office not merely because those who chose them believed they would be conscientious and painstaking administrators, but because, in their previous ministries, they had revealed spiritual gifts which it was thought should find wider spheres in the work of the churches. The very name of superintendent is only a Latin rendering of the Greek *episkopos*, or bishop, or the Anglo-Saxon overseer, as the Quakers named their leaders. The New Testament church had its bishops and without them it is difficult to see how any church can claim to match the New Testament model. We may reject all purely sacerdotal interpretations and believe that, in the past, the office has been abused and exploited for wrong ends. Yet the abuse of a good thing does not make it bad in itself, and if we have a good bench of bishops or superintendents, we should thank God. Their authority is derived not from any theory of mere historic succession, but from God's call to them to give themselves to this service, authenticated by the act of the denomination in setting them apart for it, and they have been chosen because they were deemed fit and worthy by His grace to lead our people to a larger vision of His purpose for them, and to a ready, brave response.

Gradually they have lived down some early prejudices, and are building up a tradition which every man who joins them is quick to feel. Questions may arise as to their functions, the best use of their time and endowments, the tasks on which in their crowded lives they should concentrate their energies. But it is the rarest thing nowadays to hear any suggestion that the Baptist Union could serve the churches as well without them. The various Commissions that have examined their work since first we began

to appoint them, have all paid a high tribute to it, and stressed the demand that men of the finest intellectual and spiritual calibre should be invited to undertake it. None is so conscious of their inadequacy as are the Superintendents themselves, but I can bear witness to their ceaseless striving to be, with God's help, the men we want them to be.

Their task is hard and often discouraging, especially in days like these when all the churches in this land are conscious that we are pulling against the stream. Brighter days will surely come and then the fruits of their work will appear. They have done far more than most of our people realise to make an effective unity of our churches. They have helped to create a richer, life-giving fellowship between strong churches and weak. Small and harassed churches feel they have counsellors to whom they have a right to go for help and advice based on the experience of the Superintendency gathered through a whole generation. It is my privilege to sit with them in their meetings and to listen to their discussions of the problems that beset our ministers and churches. I only wish it were possible for far more of us to be there and to sense the sympathy and insight that are brought to bear not only on more general questions but on individual cases of ministers and little congregations facing hardship and strain. They serve us well.

Every one of them, it seems to me, has the heart of an evangelist. If they complain at all it is because their many-sided task gives them fewer opportunities than they would like to have to stimulate the evangelistic work of the churches. A Baptist church must be not only evangelical. If it is to live triumphantly it must be in the deepest sense evangelistic, bringing home to the people around it the message of the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Superintendents are not easily depressed. On the contrary they are resilient, happy and confident in the long view, so that it is a tonic to be with them. But it grieves them to have to report that conversions and baptisms are rare in many of our churches, and that sometimes the people do not seem to care. That, thank God, is not the whole story, for they write to tell me of places where the lamps are burning brightly, of men and women and young people led by their own ministry, or that of some faithful pastor, to commit themselves to following and serving Christ.

That is, after all, our main business, for every minister, as well as for the superintendents and for the Baptist Union. If I ask that those whom we have called to lead should have our full support it does not mean that Association and Area committees should be well attended, collections and contributions organised, forms filled up and returned promptly, though all these are important. It means that, in these needy times, when civilisation is passing through the shadows and men are missing the power of

Almighty God, we should all do our best to encourage and gladden them by responding to their call for a ceaseless, whole-hearted, sacrificial effort to proclaim the everlasting Gospel, not with "enticing words of man's wisdom," but in action, in faithful, humdrum, every-day pastoral and personal work, and in fearless pulpit witness to the adequacy of Christ to meet every soul of man and to save to the uttermost all who will give themselves to Him.

Let the Superintendents take the lead in Israel and the people give themselves willingly.

M. E. AUBREY.

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## THE SUPERINTENDENCY IN BAPTIST HISTORY

IT is hardly necessary to say that this short article represents no original research, but depends gratefully upon the work of Dr. W. T. Whitley and Dr. A. C. Underwood, as recorded in "A History of British Baptists" (1923) and "A History of the English Baptists" (1947) respectively.

The office of Superintendent developed in General Baptist circles under the title of "Messenger" and, like other of their practices, under Mennonite influence, in the middle of the seventeenth century. Among the Particular Baptists at this time it appeared exceptionally only in the case of Thomas Collier, their leader in the West of England, who, in 1665, was "appointed and ordained" as "General Superintendent and Messenger of all the associated churches."

Precisely when Messengers were first appointed we do not know, but by 1654 they were evidently well established, since the "Humble Representation and Vindication" was put out in that year by "many Messengers, Elders and Brethren of the Baptized Churches . . . met together in the City of London." Two years later one of their practices was brought under scrutiny when it was laid down that "Messengers may not choose Messengers 'without the common consent of the churches.'" That the Messengers gained in power and influence with the passing of the years, and that this was not universally approved, is evident from the fact that Thomas Grantham (1634-1692), a Lincolnshire man who afterwards did a great work in Norwich and district, published in 1674 a defence of the office, in a small book entitled "The Successors of the Apostles." In it, says Dr. Underwood, "he claimed that it (the office of Messenger) was a divine institution, but was careful to say that the Messengers were in no sense the successors of the twelve Apostles. Nevertheless, God has given to His Church a ministry of Messengers which, though inferior to that of the Apostles, is in succession to theirs, 'in such

things as were ordinary and affixed to that office.' (The real analogy here is with Timothy and Titus.) He stresses the point that the main function of the Messengers was 'to preach the Gospel where it is not known; to plant churches where there is none; to ordain Elders in churches which are remote, and to assist in dispensing the holy Mysteries.'" Grantham's exposition and defence appears to have put to rest any doubts about the scripturalness of the office.

Other points made by Dr. Underwood are that they were chosen, usually, from among the Elders; that there was a tendency for Messengers to ordain Ministers; that, while they, like all other General Baptist ministers, worked for their own living, their travelling expenses were met by the churches; and that, as the evangelical fervour of the General Baptists declined, it became more and more difficult to secure men for the work. Finally the office passed out of use, since the New Connexion declined to recognise it as of divine institution. With the resurgence of life in the Particular Baptist wing of the Denomination at the end of the eighteenth century the term "Messenger" was used to denote what we should call the "delegates" from the churches to Association Assemblies.

We pass now to the time when John Howard Shakespeare "brought to the scattered ranks of the Baptists a generalship that turned a crowd into an army," as the late Dr. J. C. Carlile well said. In 1914 the Sustentation Fund of £250,000, "for augmenting the stipends of the worst paid ministers" was brought to a successful conclusion. With it came regulations for the increased efficiency of the ministry and more adequate arrangements for changes of pastorate. "England and Wales were divided into ten districts, each in charge of a General Superintendent, whose business it was to watch the interests of the denomination throughout his area." Thus was revived among us a title which had first been used two hundred and fifty years before by Particular Baptists of the West, but it is hardly likely that Dr. Shakespeare had in mind the case of Thomas Collier in his choice of the term. In a private communication which he allows me to quote, Dr. Underwood writes: "My own view is that Shakespeare took the Lutheran Superintendents as the model for his new officials. Superintendents were introduced into Germany in Luther's time, and into Scotland during the lifetime of John Knox. They had a short life in Scotland, where it was felt that their appointment was inconsistent with the Presbyterian doctrine of the parity of ministers. Their status and functions among Lutherans have undergone many changes, but they remain to this day. There are Superintendents and General Superintendents. Their story is told and their functions enumerated in the article, 'Superintendent,' in the 'New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.'"

Writing of the Superintendents in 1927, the late Dr. Wheeler Robinson said: "The name must not be taken to imply more than moral and persuasive authority. It would quite misrepresent their position and work to regard them as 'bishops'; but they are more than travelling secretaries. They are encouragers and advisers, and are at the service of the churches and ministers for all spiritual purposes." Actually the Superintendents are concerned to see that Baptist Union regulations are observed in all churches, while their relation to all churches, aided and unaided, is strictly that of adviser. It is obvious from the foregoing, as well as from certain references in R. C. Walton's "The Gathered Community," that some aspects of the function of the office have either not been clarified or are not completely understood.

The Scheme of Ministerial Sustentation and Settlement laid it down, among other things, that "the General Superintendent's first concern shall be the spiritual life of the churches and the exercise of a spiritual ministry, especially by encouraging ministers to deeper study and more constant prayer, and the churches to more steady evangelisation by Sunday School work and all other means of winning the world for Christ." This aspect of the Superintendency received special consideration by a Committee on Baptist Polity which presented its report to the Baptist Union Council in 1942. The Committee commented: "We have no hesitation in saying that they have abundantly justified the institution of their office." The report goes on: "We believe that the time has come to give our General Superintendents larger opportunities of exercising such a ministry."

Suggestions for implementing this conviction followed. The cost of the Superintendency should be transferred from the Sustentation Fund to the General Funds of the Baptist Union. Adequate clerical assistance should be available so as to relieve Superintendents of much routine work. The separation of the office from that of Association Secretary, in cases where it was combined, was regarded as desirable to this end. The third desideratum was deleted from the report in its final form (1943), largely because of diverse opinion among the Superintendents themselves. Those who held the dual office favoured it. The first proposal was effected almost immediately. The second has been slower of accomplishment, and is still in some cases inadequate. There remains, therefore, a good deal to be done in order more fully to achieve the essential purpose of the Superintendency. Other suggestions could be added to the foregoing, but this would be to pass beyond the bounds of the present paper. Still, one may venture to quote once more, this time in regard to the Superintendency, the conviction that "the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His Word."

A. J. KLAIBER.

## THE FIRST BAPTIST UNION SUPERINTENDENTS

THE Superintendency originated in the fertile brain of Dr. J. H. Shakespeare as part of a comprehensive Scheme of Settlement and Sustentation. The name was not new in Baptist history, but the conception of the office was novel enough to stagger the Denomination. Dr. Shakespeare had a clear idea of the men required for the task, the functions they should perform and even how they should be dressed. For good or ill, he was compelled to compromise, because those Associations which had whole-time secretaries insisted upon the right of nomination and, ultimately, upon the appointment of their own executive officers. The result was an initial Board on which administrative capacity and inspirational ability were well balanced. It was composed of five erstwhile secretaries, four ministers called from pastorates and one who had served as Continental Commissioner of the Baptist World Alliance. Space forbids even a thumb-nail sketch of these pioneers, but they have an abiding place in our annals. The first appointments, made in 1915, were as follows:—

Hector V. Thomas, retired 1924	J. Gyles Williams, retired 1922
C. G. Croome, died 1923	R. M. Julian, died 1924
Frank Durbin, retired 1928	N. H. Patrick, retired 1924
C. T. Byford, retired 1920	T. Woodhouse, retired 1930
J. W. Ewing, retired 1934	J. Meredith Jones, died 1934

These brethren, together with their Chairman, Dr. G. P. Gould, formed a great eleven and soon blended into an effective team. Happily, three are still with us—J. W. Ewing, whom age has not withered; T. Woodhouse, the embodiment of fidelity; and C. T. Byford, still active in good works notwithstanding physical disabilities.

What a commission was theirs! These men were given onerous responsibility with no authority save that which resulted from personal influence and character; burdened with administration, they were required to exercise a spiritual ministry throughout extensive areas. When asked whether he would be willing to preach for the Sustentation Fund, Dr. Ewing quietly replied: "I will gladly speak on this subject on suitable occasions, but shall wish generally to preach the Gospel." The Executive heartily approved the answer and this perspective has been consistently maintained.

The original Superintendents were handicapped in three ways. First, they were appointed in a period of depression, when Dr. Shakespeare averred that the Denomination was slowly bleeding to death. Associations were discussing "Our Arrested Progress"; ministers and churches were dispirited, war clouds had broken, and the world was in the melting pot. In advocating the adoption of the Settlement Scheme, the Secretary declared that more than



one-third of our ministers were seeking new spheres, a large number of churches desired a change of minister, one hundred and sixty accredited ministers were out of pastoral office and had no regular means of subsistence, while stipends were scandalously inadequate. At the first meeting of the Superintendents Dr. Shakespeare placed a mass of correspondence upon the table, saying, "These letters come from ministers who desire a change of sphere; henceforth they are your responsibility." They proved to be from men who were not prepared to resign under the Scheme until a settlement was assured. To assist them, the Confidential List was compiled, which resulted in an average of fifty settlements per year. This Confidential List has no place in the Settlement Scheme and is one of many "extras" which the first Superintendents cheerfully undertook. It was against this dark background that the Scheme was launched. A second hindrance arose from the inherent conservatism which contributes so much to our strength and weakness as Baptists. These pathfinders were not given a very cordial welcome by the Denomination and were allowed to drift into their position without any adequate Induction Service. Honoured as individuals, their office was suspect. Influential ministers and laymen had opposed the Scheme as a violation of congregational principles and even as tending "towards the development of sacerdotalism and ecclesiasticism." These unfounded assertions were subsequently echoed by feebler voices and created suspicion. Churches just above the aided line were needlessly jealous of their independence; while some below that line gloried in the fact that they did not apply for a grant, and fed a dubious vanity by depriving ill-paid ministers of a much needed increment. A number of ministers feared that the highest ideals of their calling would be in jeopardy if settlements were left to a few men, however sincere; and some felt justified in advising churches to boycott the Superintendents. Thus, cross recommendations added to the general confusion. A third handicap was the inevitable consequence of sailing into an uncharted sea. Those appointed later, inherited the systems devised by their predecessors, and could consult with colleagues when new problems arose. The first holders of the office, however, had perforce to make precedents, improvise methods and face novel situations. Moreover, they were confronted by an avalanche of problems. Ministers out of a pastorate, and those who had outstayed their usefulness, wanted assistance forthwith; while many tangled skeins were thrust simultaneously into the hands of the Superintendents for immediate unravelling. In these circumstances, delay in finding a solution was apt to be proclaimed as failure by those already exasperated by bitter experience.

The first Superintendents faced these difficulties with patient courage, and, gradually, won the confidence of the Denomination. They made mistakes, of course, but their counsel was increasingly

valued by ministers and churches. Curiously, critics became more vocal as they decreased in number. Complaints were made regarding the cost of the Superintendency, and demands arose for a Commission of Inquiry into the administration of the Scheme. After full investigation, the Commission reported, in 1925, that the success of the scheme as a whole was beyond doubt or question, adding that the Superintendents had rendered invaluable services and were deserving of the confidence and support of the entire Denomination. In spite of this testimony, the baiting continued until 1926, when Mr. Aubrey, in the *Baptist Times*, made a striking call for fair play. This plea, strongly reinforced by Dr. Charles Brown, Mr. T. S. Penny and Dr. T. R. Glover, proved effective; and thereafter the Superintendency had an assured position. Those who succeeded to the office are grateful to God for their intrepid predecessors who blazed the trail. Hats off to the pioneers!

H. BONSER.

### THE SUPERINTENDENCY IN SCOTLAND

THE office of Superintendent in Scotland is no sinecure, for combined with it is the Secretaryship of the Baptist Union of Scotland, the work of which frequently overshadows the particular function of the Superintendent. It might be said that the official of the Baptist Union of Scotland is a Secretary throughout the week, and a Superintendent at the week-ends, since it is at the week-ends he preaches in vacant churches, conducts anniversary services, and inducts ministers to their charges; though occasionally he meets a vacancy committee on a week-day evening.

The number of churches under his care in Scotland is smaller than the number for which several of the English Superintendents are responsible, but the area is much more extensive, and many of the churches are situated in remote parts of the land, the visitation of which involves long and tedious journeys. To reach some in the Western Isles occupies a day in each direction: and if the anniversary or induction is followed by a social function on the Monday, as it usually is, the Superintendent cannot return home until Tuesday evening, his secretarial work having accumulated meantime. A visit to Orkney and Shetland takes much longer, a few weeks, perhaps, when all the churches in the area can be visited.

Visitation has many compensations. The pleasure of a journey through some of the most beautiful parts of the country is worth noting, especially if the journey be undertaken in the season when nature is at its best. I recall a journey to Caithness, a distance of about 340 miles from Glasgow, to induct two young ministers to their charges, and to preside over the meetings of welcome. As the train rolled on past mountain, moor and loch, one remembered the words of the Hebridean song:—

“By Tummel and Loch Rannoch  
And Lochaber I will go.”

The colours of the landscape were constantly changing. For a time it was wholly green, then stretches of dark brown, then green of a deeper shade, followed by a mixture of moorland colours difficult to describe. Everything was richly clad with verdure, from the gentle curves of the rising ground, to the innumerable surrounding trees. Beautiful as it was, I was thankful when I reached my destination, and found myself ensconced amid the warmth and comfort of a hospitable home.

I must not omit the welcome received from our Baptist folk in these lonely outposts, and to note their devotion. Certain services had to be held at times other than normal, to suit the Superintendent, and many of those who attended had travelled for miles so that he might have a good congregation. It was refreshing to find our Baptist witness being so loyally maintained in the remote parts of our land. Our ministers also, in those parts, are men of whom we can well be proud, isolated as they are from their relations, without the privilege of ministerial fellowship, their membership scattered over a radius of several miles, surrounded for the most part by moorland, with only one or two signs of human habitation visible from the manse windows, the life of these men is lonely enough, yet there is no loneliness of spirit. I found them applying themselves to thorough preparation, reading for the Baptist Union examinations, travelling to distant hamlets to preach the Gospel, and finding real gladness in their work. To receive the welcome of these rural churches, and to find such devotion and loyalty on the part of both ministers and members, is worth the fatigue and time involved in a journey to see them, and is a pleasant change from dictating letters, attending committee meetings, and recording minutes.

The loyalty of city and provincial churches is not a whit behind the devotion of our brethren in remote parts, but the Superintendent is able to see them more often, and because of this frequency his visit is not such an outstanding event as is a trip to the North or the Western Isles. I have been greatly heartened by the work of our ministers and churches in central areas, and rejoice with them in the blessing attending their labours.

As in all branches of human activity, problems arise from time to time. But for the solving of these I have the co-operation of the efficient and sympathetic Sustentation Committee, which is an integral part of the Baptist Union of Scotland.

Since the cessation of hostilities over two years ago, the churches have restored activities which the war had interrupted. There is a quickening of spiritual life, increased attendances at services, and greater effort to reach the outsider.

JAMES SCOTT.

## THE SUPERINTENDENCY IN WALES

THE Baptist Union of Wales and Monmouthshire consists of 743 churches, 539 Welsh and 204 English. Its headquarters are in Swansea.

The Union is divided into ten Associations. Until 1921 each of these had its own "Home Mission Fund." In that year the New Sustentation Fund, with a capital of £50,000, was completed. The new scheme aimed at providing a minimum stipend of £140 per year for ministers. This, though very inadequate, was a distinct advance on anything which had hitherto been achieved. In 1944 the minimum was raised to £182. A new plan, however, is to be submitted to the Sustentation Committee, which aims at raising the minimum to £250. This will be possible where churches are willing to be grouped together. At the moment, the Union is engaged in collecting a Reconstruction Fund of £100,000, the greater part of this for the provision of a more effective ministry for all the aided churches. Up to date about £55,000 has been subscribed: it is hoped to complete this effort by December, 1948.

Our present Sustentation Fund is that alone, and there is not connected with it any Ministerial Settlement Scheme, nor is the Superintendency organised as in England. Our organisation is as follows:—

There is a Sustentation Committee in each Association, which makes recommendations to the Council of the Union; also to ministers who are on the accredited list, and also makes grants to churches who are unable to maintain a minister.

These grants are paid from the interest on invested capital, and from the annual collection made by the churches. The appeal is for a minimum subscription of 1s. per member.

Since my appointment as General Superintendent in 1944, I have visited every part of the principality to meet Association representatives. Our main problem, however, in Wales at the present time, is that of man power. We need 100 more ministers. It is a difficult task to convince small churches of their duty to form groups, but even where this difficulty is overcome and groups are formed, we have not the men to fill the vacancies. This, in part, is due to the war.

In a few cases we are trying a new experiment of grouping a little church with a large one, the larger church, through its minister, exercising pastoral oversight over its "little sister." Where this can be done, it is undoubtedly a good plan. It is, however, not possible in sparsely populated areas.

I have been thrilled again and again in visiting the "Few" in the little Bethels among the hills of Wales, and finding in these small communities the will to live, and to witness for God. They need financial aid, but their deeper need is to be convinced that

they belong to a big family, and that the big family really cares for them, and will aid them without a suggestion of patronage, but as co-partners in the concerns of the Kingdom of God.

As in the world of to-day, so in the Church, the problems are spiritual problems. They can be solved only through spiritual power. We need above all else the Baptism of the Great Spirit that can make all things new. "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few." Our plans and organisation are necessary and desirable, but our Great Master made no specific mention of them. We are free to organise to meet the demands of a new day, but He did say, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest."

E. T. SAMUEL.

## ON BECOMING A SUPERINTENDENT

PAUL apparently shuddered at the thought of ghosts. He dreaded disembodiment. He faced death bravely but only, as he says, "If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked." To be a spirit stripped of its body was a fate too terrible to contemplate.

Commentators who write on that passage should be newly appointed Superintendents. A new Superintendent is a pastor who has died out of the pastorate. He has become a ministerial ghost stripped of the warm, congregational body which all his working life has wrapped him round, protecting him from "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," and turned adrift to wander in the vasty deep that is called an Area.

Our Lord, speaking of the tribulations that were to overtake His followers, bade them pray that their flight be not in the winter. Unfortunately that is the season when new superintendents take their flight: and to be naked is bad enough, but to be naked in winter, and in such a winter as we had last year, does not bear speaking about.

When College Road, Harrow, gets a new minister, which I pray may be soon, I shall rejoice to know that my beloved Church has found someone to take my place, but I think I shall steal back, like Enoch Arden, and look through the window hungrily, and go away again. Superintendents, at least new ones, are not without their sorrows. But God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. There are joys as well as sorrows: gains as well as losses: compensating adventures and experiences.

One of the other papers in this series describes the Superintendents' Board at work. I shall never forget the first time I saw

it. Ten men, with a chairman of beloved memory now gone from us, and with Mr. Aubrey and Mr. Ball coming in occasionally, sitting round the big table in the Committee Room at the Baptist Church House, the map of the whole Denomination spread out before their mind's eye, discussing the fortunes and misfortunes of churches all over the land, and moving ministers in thought from one place to another according as their gifts and experience seemed to match the needs and opportunities of one sphere or another. It reminded me of the pictures we used to see of what went on in a Fighter Command, when the defending squadrons were moved from place to place on the map to meet the danger of a constantly changing attack.

And all this with a wealth of knowledge that, to a newcomer, was simply astonishing. They seemed to know all the churches and all the ministers and they had all these complicated rules and regulations at their finger ends. It was a fascinating and, at the same time, a humbling experience. Why hadn't I paid more attention to those many Council documents and debates on Sustentation and Settlement? Why was I so shaky on the Polity Commission Report? Was it credible that I remembered so little of these all-important Assembly resolutions? My sins had found me out. I could only humbly take my place at the foot of the class and resolve to learn. I have yet a long way to go.

There are few joys in life like preaching to a great congregation: but the joy of preaching to twenty people in a little country church on a winter's night runs it pretty close. And to go from church to church, like the New Testament apostles and prophets and evangelists (not bishops—they stayed put in the local church)—there is a joyous something about that which makes light of its vicissitudes.

You can't go that road without thinking often and hard about the doctrine of the Church and wondering if even now we have got it right. Nor can you do it without realising that it is a job that somebody has to do. I often think of the island in "Mary Rose" that liked to be visited. How these little churches like to be visited! I think, too, of another island, famous in another drama—Malta. Unvisited it would have perished, and if it had gone down it would have taken a lot with it. Amongst our churches all over the country there is many a gallant little Malta, and to visit them and help them keep the flag flying is a very great privilege.

And, added to the joy of the work is the delight of the countryside. It is worth while being a vagabond to look on the wide horizons of Lincoln; to see the great Cathedral, with the red roofs clustered about its feet; to see the hills of Derbyshire, the sweeping curves of the Trent, the lanes, the woods, the villages

as mellow as old masters. It isn't altogether true that there is no place like home.

Let the blow fall soon or late.

Let what will be o'er me :

Give the face of the earth around,

And the road before me.

And mine is an area where beauty walks hand in hand with history: but there is no space here to speak about that.

Some of these new duties I shall never like : the office-work—the keeping of records, the filing, the forms and all the rest of it, especially when one has no office, and the interminable correspondence that makes the corner of a railway carriage the only place where one can read a book. But after all, what has liking to do with it ? This other Battle of Britain will not be won by men who are on the hunt for cushy jobs. And what I am most of all thankful for, after these ten months of it, is the growing conviction that I can help here as well as I could anywhere else.

J. C. RENDALL.

## THE SUPERINTENDENTS' BOARD AT WORK

**I**N describing the above it may be necessary to say this is only one aspect of the work of the Superintendents. They meet at the Church House, roughly once a month throughout the year, and spend some hours together. Their Chairman commences with a period of devotion; a passage of Scripture, and a prayer offered either by himself or, at his request, by one of the Board. They then proceed to their work.

Before them are three lists : the Removal List, the Confidential List, the Students' List, and they attend to each in turn.

During the war and post-war period there was a discharged Chaplains' List, in addition, which had a special claim for attention.

The Removal List, containing an average of sixty names, consists of those ministers, notice of whose termination of pastorate has been given in December, to take effect not later than the end of the September following, according to the present rule of the B.U. Settlement Scheme. They are considered carefully, and individually, all the Superintendents assuming a measure of responsibility for each one.

Three times a year each Superintendent submits a list of churches seeking ministers, and thus the Board has a fair idea of the openings, not only in his own area, but over the whole country. If, before September ends, no settlement is effected, an endeavour is made to extend the pastorate and, failing this, the minister is entitled to apply for a special grant from the Sustentation Fund until he is settled, but not for longer than three years.

A further, and much longer, list, called the Confidential List, consists of ministers who have privately intimated to the Superintendent their desire for a change of sphere, but have not actually resigned. This list is strictly confidential. Names are not discussed at the Area Committee, as are those on the Removal List, but only at meetings of the Board. These names, too, receive careful consideration, and extra time is devoted to urgent cases.

Each year the College Principals supply a list of men due to leave College, the Students' List; and this, too, receives attention. It will thus be realised that this part of their work alone constitutes a formidable budget for the Superintendents' agenda.

Difficulties abound : they arise chiefly from the very constitution of the Denomination. The Superintendents are not an authoritative, but a co-operating and advisory body. No church is therefore obliged to accept the nomination a Superintendent may make, nor is the minister; nor is he bound to accept the pastorate should an invitation result. It thus comes about that, not infrequently, careful and long-considered plans and efforts may come to nothing.

More difficult is the frustration that arises from the quite well-meaning efforts of ministers and others who make nominations independently and, sometimes, without the knowledge of the Superintendents. In these instances, a Superintendent, writing to a diaconate, or attending its meeting, is confronted by other names thus mentioned, and finds his own efforts likely to be nullified. Much discouragement results, to both the Superintendent and the minister, who loyally tries to work with the scheme, and entrusts his career to the care of the Superintendent. The members of the Board neither claim nor desire monopoly, which would be dangerous, but at least they feel that they should be acquainted with suggested names, so that they may shape their own action accordingly. If the Superintendents were consulted before such nominations were made, they would co-operate, so that no harm were done, for their desire is only for the best interest of minister and church.

Notwithstanding these difficulties much is accomplished, and the fact that in 1946 some eighty settlements were effected, and over 800 nominations were made, amply justifies their efforts.

The foregoing is the main work of the Superintendents' Board, but at nearly every meeting there are matters of importance affecting the Denomination and the ministry generally, which have either been referred to the Board for consideration, or upon which it is necessary to take counsel together.

In addition, the General Secretary of the Union is always present for some time, to bring up special cases of which he has knowledge, or to enquire about situations which have been brought to his notice. Cases of special hardship or difficulty are thus



carefully considered, and means devised to meet them whenever possible. These cases are so intricate, varied and continuous, that they alone would justify the Board's existence. Since they are nearly always confidential and personal problems, we do not and cannot make them public.

In an ideal church I can conceive that the deacons or some specially selected people would be appointed to receive from church members any requests for help or advice of which they stood in need. In a large and active church such could be so numerous that a monthly meeting would be necessary. Each request would be considered sympathetically and prayerfully, and assistance rendered to the best of their power. Such a company would be serving each member of the church, and the whole community, bringing the loving service of the church to each member, weaving the separate threads into a fair fabric, binding the individual units into a family. Such, or something like it, is what the Board is and what it tries to do.

It is not a collection of cold officials going perfunctorily through a routine task. It is a group of Christian men and ministers of Christ, chosen by their brethren to hear the requests of the churches and ministers for help and advice, as occasions arise, and prayerfully, and in the sight of God, seeking to give it, and to retain the confidence of those they rejoice to serve.

HERBERT MOTLEY.

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## DAY BY DAY IN A SUPERINTENDENT'S LIFE

**I**T is easy to deceive oneself, nevertheless I think I am a busy man. Rushing about must not be confused with vital service, yet certainly Superintendents are very active. We are sometimes asked, "But what precisely occupies a Superintendent's time?" The question is legitimate, for here are ten men set apart by the Baptist Union from ministerial duties for tasks not specified precisely, covering various activities and spread over a wide area. What follows shows the truth of the saying, "A man is never too busy to talk about how busy he is."

Even after spending fourteen years in the Eastern Area, it is not easy to write about a typical week. The weeks vary greatly. In one, study and office make the biggest claim: writing scores of letters, introducing ministers to pastorless churches, arranging settlements, planning, preparing, reading. No monotony there! In another, home is little seen. Sleep may be found in five or six different (how different!) beds. Many days each year are spent at committee work in the Church House. Having four County Associations fully organised, I attend over fifty general and sub-committee meetings annually.

At other definite periods I am at Association Assemblies, Ministers' Fraternal and Conferences, or I am concerned with Sustentation Schedules and the appeal for the Home Work Fund. In addition there is much preaching and speaking at recognitions, farewells, anniversaries, and other special events in great variety. Seldom indeed do I get a Sunday off duty. In some of the war years I preached on every Sunday of the fifty-two.

The Eastern Area is approximately 130 miles long by about 100 broad. In the four counties of Cambridge, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk we have nearly 200 churches and about 50 missions. Travelling among these runs to over 15,000 miles annually. Calls are so numerous that to answer all would mean being away seven days a week, which would be obviously impossible.

Administration of the Ministerial Settlement and Sustentation Scheme is of vital importance. Interviews sometimes mean more to those concerned than public duties. Much of our work cannot be tabulated. It is done behind the scenes, involving advice, encouragement, possibly admonition, unknown to any save the folk immediately interested. Confidential talks are sacred. Men and churches must know that secrets are honoured.

My weekly duties generally begin on Saturday, when car, bus or train takes me to my week-end preaching engagement. The church to be served may be near enough for me to reach it on Sunday morning. If so, I often have a Saturday afternoon or evening booking, for nowadays, unfortunately, Saturdays are frequently chosen for special events, to the detriment, as I believe, of Sunday worship.

The hospitality of our Baptist homes even in days of austerity is wonderful. I would pay a warm tribute to many friends, tested and true, who keep open house for the Superintendent.

Sunday in a pastorless church often includes not only the usual services, but a deacons' meeting or a church meeting, or both. Afternoon services also mark special occasions. In pastorless churches visitation of sick folk or the aged must often be undertaken.

On arriving home on Monday, perhaps at noon, numerous letters and telephone calls must be given attention. I dislike an accumulation of correspondence, and as I do not usually employ a typist, most of the replies must be typed by myself. Some Superintendents are County Secretaries, and have an office, which alters the position considerably.

Many letters are of such a nature that they cannot be answered easily or briefly. Twenty will sometimes arrive by the same delivery. What are they about? Church problems? Often. Troubles? Sometimes. Nearly every day communications about the ministry, the introduction of suitable ministers, questions affecting the commencement or conclusion of pastorates, in what

way difficult matters of church business may best be handled—all must have careful thought. The selection of sites for new buildings and the disposal of properties come before me, as also loans on existing buildings, the intricacies of trust deed interpretation and the appointment of new trustees. The implications of B.U. rules and regulations, grants from our funds, and the relationship of the Denomination to County Associations, represent a multitude of matters which require much time and thought.

Special attention is always given to the introduction of ministers to pastorless churches. This delicate service calls for prayer, care and wisdom.

Most mornings, when spent at home, are taken up with such deep concerns, but, on many days, travelling to distant places will be followed by preaching, services or addresses at evening meetings. When away at churches, committees or association gatherings, many ministers and church officials will want "just a word" about various things.

Reading, preparation for the pulpit or platform, and work on various documents have to be done whenever time can be found in train or study. There is the difficulty. Time must be set aside for interviews, for working out plans for groups and fellowships, for assisting ministers, churches and associations on questions of many kinds. Such service is quite rightly the first charge upon a Superintendent's time. He must gladly serve, not counting the cost.

It follows that there is little or no leisure, or opportunity, for the regular playing of games, and I imagine that my colleagues are in much the same position.

My week will compare favourably with that of most business men. Demands are many and varied, and a Superintendent must ever work as in the great Taskmaster's eye. Happy is he if, amid all the serious concerns of his life, he can smile at difficulties, and, on occasion, see the funny side of a situation. Moffatt's translation of Romans xii, 8, is "The superintendent must be in earnest"—an excellent motto for a man holding the privileged office, and having the large responsibility, of a Baptist Union Area Superintendent.

W. H. TEBBIT.

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## THE SUPERINTENDENT AS PASTOR

"I WISH I had someone to do for me what that man does for you." So said a woman in a hospital bed to her Baptist neighbour when, for the tenth time in a month of serious illness, the Baptist pastor had paid his visit and gone. A pastor brings the love of many to the lot of one, the prayers of a whole fellowship to the cares of an individual, the gathered experience of a Christian community to the perplexity of a single, struggling family. He

makes real the presence of a Heavenly Father Who knows and loves, thinks and plans, guides and sustains. Through him comes reinforcement of personality. With reverent thankfulness many can say of him :—

“ We have a Pastor; and the heart  
Of many a private man,  
Has drunk in valour from his eyes,  
Since first the fight began.”

As oxygen to a flame, so is a true pastor to the spirit of man, which is the candle of the Lord.

When a man moves from the pastorate to the superintendency he finds himself a pastor still. The care of all the churches involves him in the care of many people. Like Paul he makes friendships in every Christian company, among deacons, youth leaders, hosts and hostesses, boys and girls and little children, all of whom come to have a place in his heart and a share in his fountain pen. But, above all, he becomes pastor to ministers themselves. Ministers need care. Busy in pastoral service, they often long for someone to serve them as they serve others. Much of the stress and burden of their ministry cannot be acknowledged to those for whom they labour. Christ said that it was enough for a disciple to be as his Lord. It is indeed true. There are times when even the hardest and most independent minister cries out for another to watch with him. The Superintendent is meant to be that other.

The pastoral service of a Superintendent is of endless variety. Where austerity of circumstance in a manse is a little too severe, he can invent ingenious ways of being kind. Money and food and garments still come on the winds of love from many quarters and can be made to fall like manna on someone's wilderness. At times a minister's problem is not material but physical. A child is ill; his wife's health flags in a damp district; a flaw appears in his own body which has for years endured the unwise rule, “ six days shalt thou labour and the seventh twice as hard ”; or his nerves exhaust themselves and he needs a tonic and some copies of *Punch*. For another man, more ominously, hammer strokes of pain chime the evening hour of his active ministry. It makes all the difference then if he can find in his Superintendent a “ brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”

At other seasons a minister's anxieties are neither material nor physical, but spiritual. Christ knows one man's work and labour, but has somewhat against him the fact that he has left his first love and lost the early glow. Another man's deacons and church members are slack about the church's prayer and have failed to nourish and sustain his soul. The opposition of unreasonable men has fixed a thorn in another man's brain,

and that can be even more a messenger of Satan than a thorn in the flesh. In youthful impetuosity another has, with the sword of his tongue, injured someone's ear and the damage must be repaired. Perhaps another has been a bit of a Diotrephes and found a Baptist deacons' meeting a stony path on which to strut! Or, in the full and splendid maturity of his gifts, still another is forced to realise that he is classed as "over-fifty" and an inferiority complex clamps down upon his preaching spirit. Another man must carry patiently on when he feels he ought to move; or move when he himself sees no reason why he should not carry on.

Then there are difficulties which are neither physical nor spiritual, but technical. A man is fishing on the wrong side of the ship and needs guidance how and where to cast his net. Administrative matters, formidable to inexperience, require the light of a more mature judgment. The will to act is not always wedded to the way to do, any more than open doors of opportunity are always taken by adventurous hearts. Youth work can present its problems, old and new. Most years in a man's ministry produce a conundrum which two minds can better solve than one.

Even to the retired ministers living in his Area a Superintendent can be something of a pastor; by his interest and care helping some to realise the answer to every veteran preacher's prayer: "Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed Thy strength unto this generation." These great souls, rather on the circumference of things, must ever be made to feel that they still have a place at the heart. All this, and much more, lies within the pastoral commission of the man called to be pastor among pastors. What is his technique? I hate the word. There are no conjuring tricks in this lovely service. The sandals of love and the crook of commonsense are still the chief equipment of a human shepherd. To show interest; to ripen acquaintance; to cultivate friendship; to give time to listen; seldom to be impatient; to pray for men in secret; to transmute pen and ink and paper into living messages for individual hearts; to praise the manse cooking and play with the manse children; to walk and talk on country roads and in suburban parks; to sit in silent sympathy when all has been said and nothing more can be said; to laugh with them that laugh and weep with them that weep; to strengthen a man's heart in peace for the battle that is against him; to prove that no precipice is too steep for two; to keep men's spirits bent up to their full height as lovers of Christ and servants of the Church; such is the task of the Superintendent as pastor.

And those of us who undertake it, and know how imperfectly we fulfil it, count it all joy if, even in the slightest measure, we make real to our brother ministers the One Who promised, "Lo, I am with you always."

W. D. JACKSON.

## THE SUPERINTENDENT AS SPIRITUAL LEADER

IT is a sad but none the less actual fact that so many people think of the Superintendency as an administrative office. I remember that when I accepted my present appointment one religious paper announced that I was leaving my pulpit at Ferme Park for a desk, and Dr. Brown wrote me to express his astonishment and grief at my action. "Why," he asked, quoting Acts vi, should I "forsake the Word of God to serve tables?" The answer to that was easy. I did not think of my change of sphere in these terms. And if I had ever in my wildest folly imagined that I was doing what was suggested, experience would speedily have shown me that, so far from forsaking the pulpit, I was to use it a great deal more often; while my service of "tables," meaning by that my administrative work, was destined to open doors of spiritual opportunity that I should never otherwise have had. I imagine that every Superintendent's experience is the same as mine; the idea that is sometimes held with regard to the office is, therefore, quite mistaken.

In recent times more has been said about the spiritual side of the Superintendency, but it was in the Sustentation Scheme from the very beginning, and the charter states about "the duties of the General Superintendent," that "(a) his first concern shall be the spiritual life of the churches and the exercise of a spiritual ministry, especially by encouraging ministers to deeper study and more constant prayer, and the churches to more steady evangelisation by Sunday School work and all other means of winning souls for Christ." There are five of these "duties" altogether, but the spiritual emphasis is put first and is rightly regarded as of highest importance.

No doubt, as in the general ministry, men vary in the stress they give to one aspect of their work more than another. There are diversities of gifts and also of temperaments. And not all have the same opportunities. As it happens I have been for several years chairman of our L.B.A. evangelistic committee, convener of the Baptist Union Spiritual Welfare Group, and am now, in addition, chairman of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Evangelism. But that does not mean that my brethren in the superintendency are less keen than I am on this primary task. On the contrary we are all deeply concerned for the spiritual life of the churches; we are no less ministers than we were when we had churches of our own, and we honestly try to "give heed to the ministry we have received in the Lord."

As in churches, spiritual leadership may be exerted in different forms. There is the ministry of the pulpit going on all the time, weekdays as well as on Sundays, and it is rather worth noting that Induction Services of recent years, largely under the influence of Superintendents, have become much more serious in tone and

quality, more like services and less like meetings. Then there are definite campaigns of various kinds, fostered and often suggested by Superintendents, mainly in the form of ministerial conferences, sometimes of Areas, and sometimes of local Fraternal, when questions affecting the life of the Church are discussed and men are encouraged to talk frankly about their work. These are the more tangible and obvious things. But spiritual leadership, let us not forget, is a thing of personal spirit, and we must beware of confounding it with spectacular gifts. Evangelism means much more than evangelistic meetings: the cure of souls is chiefly pastoral and personal. In one of our London churches recently, the minister discovered that most of his additions of late—and there have been a good many—were traceable to the quiet, keen work of two young people who made no fuss, but set themselves to button-hole their friends for Christ and the Church. And it is in such ways that the Superintendent does perhaps his finest work. He is always in contact with ministers and deacons in his area, discussing innumerable questions, some of which foolish people think are rather remote from "spiritual things." But these conversations are his pastoral opportunity, and a wise word here or there, a caution or an encouragement, an appeal for patience and forbearance and the Christian spirit, or a cheery letter and a word of friendly counsel to some rather anxious minister or church secretary, or a night's hospitality and a chat about things round the supper-table or the fireside—these are simply the doors that are opened to the Superintendent by his Master, and his spiritual leadership is shown in the way he uses his opportunities. No man can be an effective Superintendent who lacks the pastoral quality, and as in the local church, so it is in the wider area—no man gets bigger opportunities or richer rewards than the man who seeks to sanctify all his casual contacts for Christ, and by means of them endeavours to further the cause we have most at heart.

The main thing—and this is true of us all, whatever our charge—is that we should put first things first—and keep them first. Superintendents are human like all the rest, and they have the same frailties as their brethren in localised churches. It is easy to become absorbed in routine and to think that if we keep the machine going—the area, or church, or whatever it is, with its committees, correspondence, regular services and all the other duties that come in the course of our normal work—it is easy to argue that having done the expected things we have met our obligation. Whereas what matters is how we do it, and the sense we have all the time that we are, in our routine, only going down avenues which, if we use them aright, will give us a chance of serving Christ better and so of extending His kingdom. Any religious work can become routine, and, on the other hand, any routine work can become religious. Everything turns on the

spirit that is in us, which spirit must be fed continually by our communion with Christ. "Maintain the spiritual glow," said Paul. It is a counsel we must all of us heed, and heed the more earnestly when we get so busy. What is our primary task? And do we set the Lord always before our face in everything we do? Given that we can answer these questions aright, we can, all of us, whatever our sphere, prove ourselves worthy ministers of Him Who called us and appointed for us our spheres.

HENRY COOK.

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## THE MINISTERS OUR CHURCHES ARE SEEKING

I SHALL try to confine myself strictly to the subject which has been allotted to me in this series—the ministers our churches are seeking. I have not, fortunately, to discuss the kind of men they ought to be seeking, but rather to say, from my ten years' experience, the kind of men they are seeking.

Perhaps I should begin by saying that the ministers some of our churches are seeking have not yet been invented. Shortly after I became a Superintendent I was asked to go down to preach at a church which was without a minister and to "meet the deacons." After the evening service I met them. I was new to the job and did not know quite how to begin. So I suggested that they should, one after the other, tell me what they wanted in their minister. They readily did so; and after they had finished I felt constrained to tell them that we had no man in our Denomination quite as good as that, but if we had, he certainly would not look at a church like theirs. Since that time I have developed a technique which works fairly well. We first of all tell each other all that we should like. Then we agree that we are not likely to get it, and after that we proceed to do the best we can, within the limits of our fallible humanity and the exigencies of our Denominational system. I can only say that after a time the vacant pastorates do get filled.

On the whole, I have found our churches as reasonable on the subject of the kind of ministers they are seeking as are the ministers on the kind of churches they are seeking. The cases where it is laid down at the start that the minister must be a British Israelite under thirty who does not smoke, are happily rare; and in the main the churches are pretty right in what they are seeking from their ministers.

They are seeking ministers whom they can hear. This is surely not unreasonable. I have been surprised at the number of times people have said to me, "We couldn't hear him." Making all allowances for people being deaf and sitting in the back pews, it ought to be possible for a man who has something to say to say it in such a way that people can hear him. The quiet, conversational style is all very well; the voice dropped for



dramatic effect is not so good; and nobody wants to be bellowed at; but the churches have Scripture warrant for saying to the ministers who come to preach to them, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, . . . lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid."

The churches are seeking ministers who are not only in deadly earnest about what they have to preach, but who also convey the impression that they are. Again, it is no question of noisy vehemence, but congregations do like to feel that the preacher strongly believes what he is preaching, and wants them to believe it too; that he is preaching what he "smartingly doth feel." They will be drawn to him, even if they do not agree with him; and even if they do not give him a call, they will feel uncomfortably that some good church somewhere ought to do so.

Our churches are seeking to hear the authentic note of the Gospel in the preaching. Here and there it may be true that people do not recognise the Gospel when they hear it, unless it comes to them in the old, time-worn phrases, but in the main this is not so. Congregations know when a man has something that he can really preach; something to do with Jesus Christ, and the assurance that in Him we are in touch with God; that there can come from God to us, through Jesus Christ, a power that will enable us to live and to do the things we know we ought to do. They want more than good advice, and they neither want nor need to be scolded. If a man will assure them that the grace and the power of God are available for their daily lives they will always say afterwards with evident appreciation, "He gave us something to think about."

So much for the worship and the preaching at the Sunday services. Outside the pulpit the churches are seeking for ministers of unaffected friendliness; men who do not have to make a manifest and pathetic effort to be friendly with people; men who are neither gushing nor so very reserved that ordinary people do not know what to say to them. I know all about the difficulty of the man who is preaching at a church during a vacancy, but if he will be his own natural self he will not go far wrong. The churches want pastors; and this means something much more than men with a card-index of their members, and a visiting book which registers so many hundreds of visits paid during the year. It means men who can get on with their congregations, who will take the people to their hearts, who are prepared to like them and to put up with their funny little ways, remembering that they, too, have funny little ways. Good temper and a sense of humour are invaluable aids to a successful pastorate.

Volumes might be written on this subject, but there is space for only one more thing. I do not think the churches are seeking quite as frantically as they were some years ago for young ministers,

but it is still difficult in some quarters to get churches to realise that there is much to be said for being over fifty. I believe it is a fallacy to assume that if a minister is to be "good with the young people" he must be about the same age as they are. It is not so much a question of when he was born, as of the kind of man he still is. I have known some very happy cases of churches which began by saying, "We must have a young man here for the sake of the young people," who have found after all that the minister they were seeking was not much younger than the church secretary.

A. J. NIXON.

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## TO A PROBATIONER ON ENTERING A PASTORATE

**I**N the Baptist Handbook for 1947 there are no less than 118 men on the list of Probationer Ministers, all of whom are men in the early stages of their ministry. They have come in by way of College, or of the Baptist Union examination. They are making their first ventures in the leadership of a church. They are finding out how much they have still to learn. They are enjoying their first successes, and experiencing their first rebuffs. They have yet to reveal the hidden potentialities that are within them for the service of God and man.

It is the privilege of the General Superintendent to meet these men, usually at their Ordination and Recognition services. Under a new rule the Superintendent is asked to enlist the help of some senior minister to act as counsellor and friend to probationers; but, until now, the Superintendent has tried to act in that capacity and, no doubt, will still continue to share in the work. We recall the thrill of our own first pastorate: the sense of wonder that a church had called us to be its minister: that we had a pulpit and a congregation of our own: and we feel deeply for the young man who is now in that stage. We would wish to share with him the constant prayer that that first thrill may never be quite lost, come what may: that the vision may abide.

The first thing to be said to a man at such a time, is that he should take his period of probation seriously. We all know that once his name is on the list, it would be removed only for some grave fault; but no man should presume upon that, but give himself, with all diligence, to his new life and work. In contact with our officers, our people, our brother-ministers, the world around us, there is so much to learn. The non-collegiate man will give himself to his studies, that he may grow in habits of reading and thinking. The collegiate man will make full use of the course prescribed for him by his principal. Above all, to be on our trial is our great opportunity to learn the way of self-discipline, self-examination, and self-discovery.

The second thing to be said is this : be human and kind in all your dealings with your people. We have to deal with that most sensitive and incalculable material we call human nature. Your studies in psychology will have taught you something about this; but your first years in the ministry will teach you much more. Against the vision you have of the Church, there will begin to arise a group of people. Try to see them in the light of that vision. Yet there is our problem, for the vision is the ideal, and our people are not ideal. Neither are we. May God help us to remember, therefore, that patience is essential. Some one person will tend to loom up in front of others. It may be for our encouragement, or the reverse. Guard against giving too much importance to any one individual, even when friendly; and still more so, when he is not. Keep the balance fairly between all. Our partialities and prejudices must be kept under control. It is not our oratory or our philanthropy which will build up the Church, but the quality of the love in our hearts towards the people who make up the Church (see 1 Corinthians xiii).

Next to the management of our human relationships is the management of our time. Ministers of the Gospel are highly privileged. In no other profession is such freedom accorded. We are, indeed, on probation here. It is true that the Church asks of us not a part, but the whole, of our life. Everything we have and are must be dedicated. Not for us are stated hours of labour—periods when on duty and when off. Our ministry must be our life; but, although the Church asks so much, it trusts us entirely as to how we shall discharge our office. Such freedom involves great responsibility. We are on our honour as Christian men. We shall be scrupulously careful in the ordering of our days. A time-table is inevitable, but always remember that a time-table can be a good servant but a bad master. A time for private devotion, we must have; for how can we help to save the souls of others, if our own is neglected? Much of the best of the day must be given to solid reading. The big books are most rewarding for the stretching of our minds. The biggest Book of all you ought to wish to know more about than anyone else in your Church. There must also be time for pastoral work; exploring the congregation; getting to know them; and, what is equally important, letting them get to know you. Behind the prosaic appearance of people are physical, mental, and spiritual needs, which only the Gospel can meet. Time should be made for building up close friendship with one's deacons and officers; for they are the inner circle of the Church, who should share most fully our aims and hopes for the Church. There is one other point, but by no means the least : the minister is usually married. From the beginning, make time for your own home; and remember the prophetic word, "Hide not thyself from thine own flesh."

Finally, from the beginning let us practise what we preach—fellowship. We belong to a great brotherhood. We may be lonely—perhaps the only minister in the village or small town—but the most isolated can, if they will, make time for meeting their brethren. It is unfortunate when a man is so busy that he has no time to fraternise with his brother ministers. How much time a man should give to causes beyond his own Church, each must decide; but it is good to have some contact with others who are not of our Church, and not to live always in the one atmosphere. He should take an interest in the County Association, for that is becoming more and more the strategic unit of the Denomination. He will have a thought, also, for the Baptist Union, and the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom; and to the gathering of all the resources of the Denomination in the pursuit of that aim. Our Denomination is far from perfect; and none knows that better than the Superintendents; but none knows better, also, how much good life and sincerity of purpose and devotion there are in our churches and at Headquarters. After all, it is you who are on probation: not the churches or the Union. It is for you to make full proof of your ministry. May God help you so to do!

W. R. MILLER.

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### THE DENOMINATION—WHITHER?

**I**T is a tempting subject—and a tantalising, seeing that the writer is limited to a thousand words. Clearly many matters of the greatest interest—our theological outlook, our relation to the Reunion Movement—must be put aside. A Superintendent is expected to deal with polity, and this brief sketch must be confined to that aspect of the theme. Even within these limits prophecy is precarious, but one is permitted to hope. Whither are we moving—towards Connexionalism, or back to the strict Independency that popular tradition has associated with us? One trusts that we may avoid both roads, keeping to the middle way which is the path of safety, if only we will walk together in it. Within our own borders we are facing the big central problem of our time, that of reconciling community with liberty. Our Denomination is better fitted to deal with this problem than any other organised body of Christian people. Churches in general tend to be conservative, slow to change. But among Baptists form is always subservient to faith, and for that reason we should surely have little difficulty in modifying our organisation when faith demands it. The freedom of which we occasionally boast ought to mean flexibility, readiness to respond swiftly and easily to changing situations as they arise. The freedom to which we are entitled is freedom "in the Spirit," and the Spirit cannot be bound even by the decisions to which He led our fathers in the conditions

prevailing in an earlier time. It is freedom not necessarily to cling to the forms they approved, but to adopt any forms calculated to turn human hearts to God in the situation in which we have now to work.

It should never be forgotten, moreover, that the Spirit by which we claim to be guided is the Spirit of *Christ*. No Church was ever led of that Spirit to disregard the need of the weaker brethren or the bitter cry of a lost world.

There are certain questions that in the present situation clamour for attention from us.

(a) There is the question of the struggling Church depleted in numbers to such an extent as to render its task hopeless. It may be in the country, maintained by a few elderly folk with no other Church and no minister within reach; we have increasing difficulty in finding ministers for that sort of sphere. It may be in the town, surrounded by a big population, but not by the kind of population that founded and has sustained it over the years. It is dying for lack of leadership—such leadership as the Cliffords brought to West Ham—but this Church has no leader, no minister, and, as matters stand, no chance.

(b) There is the question of the need of specialised ministries equipped to deal with the peculiar problems of our own age. It is clear that if Britain is ever to be evangelised we have to seek to bring the people to Church, but equally to bring the Gospel to the people. In many industrial towns chaplains, bearing their testimony in the canteen, the factory and the club, are already rendering excellent service. The Student Christian Movement has set apart one of our own ministers to carry the Gospel to senior scholars in secondary schools, a group that cannot but play a leading part in the shaping of the future. We need many more of such specialists selected and trained for tasks of this kind. It is for the Denomination to choose and to commission them.

(c) There is the question of the newly developed districts offering a magnificent opportunity for evangelical enterprise. In many such districts great work is already being accomplished by a daring minister or a consecrated deaconess. It is important in these budding towns, these new suburbs, that we should be in at the start, and often we cannot rely on a local church to do what needs to be done. It is the responsibility of the Denomination to put down ministers and deaconesses where they are most needed and to stand behind them.

(d) There is the question of ministerial settlement and change. Many pastorates are too short. It is true that circumstances occasionally justify a change after a very brief pastorate. Such cases, however, are exceptional, and we have to face the fact

that a succession of short pastorates weakens the Church and brings the ministry into disrepute. Many pastorates, however, are too long. In the past the minister has done good work. He could still render splendid service in another sphere. Where he is, he is in danger of losing his effectiveness. What is he to do? The difficulty is, in part, economic. There are churches that would be glad of the leadership he could offer, but that could not afford from their own resources to pay him a living wage. Our traditional methods of effecting ministerial change are casual, haphazard, undignified and unrealistic. The marvel is that by such methods satisfactory settlements are ever effected. In fact many are, but many errors are made which foresight would have avoided, and not infrequently there is tragedy and failure.

Can we deal with these problems without a more radical alteration in our polity than we are prepared to contemplate? We can, provided our folk will trust the machinery already devised for their assistance. The Superintendents would not dream of asking that ministerial settlements should be left entirely to them. What they have the right to ask is that they should be consulted by every vacant church, and that those who recommend ministers to churches should inform them that they are doing so. For the rest, the Baptist Home Work Fund and the Long Term Polity, of which it is a part, represents the road of advance. It is an attempt to bring our folk together for common action whilst preserving those elements in our traditional polity that are of permanent value. What is most needed just now is careful study of the scheme by ministers and by churches throughout the land. Adequately supported this scheme would provide an object lesson in the reconciliation of community and liberty, and fit our Denomination to play its proper part in evangelising the vast mission field at our own door. The question is, Do we care? Do we care enough?

H. INGLI JAMES.

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## THE FRATERNAL

We are indebted to A. J. Klaiber for the trouble taken, in conjunction with Henry Bonser, in organising the Superintendents' number of *The Fraternal*. This comprehensive review of the many-sided activities of the Board is probably the first of its kind to be published and will, we are sure, be received with general interest. Thanks to our Superintendents for the help they so willingly render, at all times, to our Fellowship.

The July number will be arranged by Henton Davies and will consist of articles bearing upon O.T. study by our leading scholars, a talented team of which the Denomination may be proud.