

# The Fraternal

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No. 100

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## EDITORIAL

### RECOLLECTIONS OF F. B. MEYER

GILBERT LAWS, D.D., Ex-President B.U. of Gt. Britain and Ireland.

### A LANDMARK—No. 100 OF *THE FRATERNAL*

W. HAROLD TEBBIT, Chairman, Spurgeon's College Council.

### MINISTERIAL PRIORITIES

SYDNEY F. CLARK, B.D., Baptist Minister, Sheffield.

### SOME ASPECTS OF PASTORAL WORK

A. W. FRANCIS, B.A., B.D., Baptist Minister, Glasgow.

### EVANGELISM—AN EXPERIENCE AND A QUESTION

H. W. JANISCH, M.A., Baptist Minister, Worthing

### ARE WE TOO SUBURBAN?

A. T. PECK, B.Sc., Baptist Minister, Leeds.

### AGAPE IS THERAPY

A. G. HILL, B.A., B.D., Baptist Minister, Hutton.

### PUBLIC WORSHIP—A REPLY

G. DENIS LANT, LL.B., Baptist Minister, Edinburgh.

### TRANSLATING THE GOSPELS

E. V. RIEU, C.B.E., Litt.D., Editor, Penguin Classics.

### ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

### OF INTEREST TO YOU

### THE WIDER CIRCLE

### BOOK REVIEWS

## EDITORIAL

**T**HIS is the one-hundredth number of *The Fraternal*. Elsewhere in this issue W. H. Tebbit gives his impressions after browsing through the ninety and nine previous numbers and Gilbert Laws reminds us of F. B. Meyer, one of the prime-movers in the formation of the Ministers' Fellowship. This is the place to record our pleasure that our magazine, produced by ministers for ministers, has continued through the years until today its circulation (2,800) is greater and wider than ever before.

This has been possible only because of the devoted services, given freely, of a succession of editors, individual contributors and members of committees. To them our thanks are sincere and warm. If asked why they have done it, their answer would simply be, for love of the brethren.

With them we should thank those responsible for addressing envelopes and despatching the magazines each quarter. Nor should we forget our regular advertisers, whose support pays for one out of every four numbers, and our printers, Battley Bros. Limited, who have contrived without fail to secure the paper and keep the costs so low that it is doubtful whether such a magazine could be found anywhere else at less than five shillings a year.

*The Fraternal* serves a double purpose. It provides a free forum in which ministers can express their views and "think aloud", as it were, without interference or fear of heresy hunting. While we do not always agree with all the views or conclusions of every article, we know each other as brethren, united in honestly seeking after the truth, and we stand together for freedom of expression within our own circle.

Besides providing an open forum *The Fraternal* is a medium for encouraging one another in the study of doctrine, of Biblical interpretation and of practical aspects of the work of the ministry at home and overseas. The aim has always been to stimulate the ordinary minister in his reading, his thinking and his work. In addition it has provided opportunity for exchanging news of Baptist ministers all over the world and so helping to forge the links of friendship, interest and love between Baptists of many nationalities and of differing shades of opinion.

As we begin the second hundred we send, without fear of being thought sentimental, loving greetings to our Baptist ministers and missionaries everywhere, and especially to those who work in lonely places, or who may be going through times of hardship, illness or disappointment. Those fortunate enough to do so meet and encourage one another at monthly or quarterly "fraternals". But to all of us *The Fraternal* comes promptly every three months,

reminding us that we are not forgotten. Our brethren have been thinking of us, preparing and writing for us, praying for us. The old name of the magazine—*The Remembrancer*—has long since been discarded as too cumbersome. But the spirit and purpose of the name remain. We are remembered; and when the magazine comes to us in this way we in turn remember. We remember our high calling in Christ. We remember our comradeship as ambassadors for Him. We remember with thanksgiving that we have been called to this ministry—and there is no grander work than this. In our hearts and before the throne of grace we remember one another.

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Summer School, Regent's Park College, 9th—12th July, 1956. It is suggested that local Fraternalists send one of their number as a representative and meet the cost entailed. Particulars from Rev. R. C. Rowsell, 335, Dogsthorpe Road, Peterborough.

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Annual Meeting—Bloomsbury, Wednesday, 2nd May, at 2.15. Speaker: Rev. F. P. Copland Simmons, Moderator Free Church Federal Council.

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So as not to incur the cost of increased postal rates now obtaining in Great Britain, it has been necessary to reduce the size of pages and cover of the Magazine.

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Readers are again reminded of the Oxford Summer School speakers: Rev. Principal Russell, Rawdon; Rev. J. N. Schofield, Cambridge; Dr. John Pitts, U.S.A., formerly Salters Hall, London.

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The Liberation of the Church of England from State control by Disestablishment is not, at the moment, a live issue. Nevertheless, the Liberation Society renders valuable help where clergymen seek to impose unlawful restrictions on Free Churchmen. Up to the time of his death Henry Townsend was President of the Society. W. T. Williams, M.P., has succeeded to that Office. The Secretary, F. C. White, B.D., 4, Norman Avenue, Epsom, is always ready to supply information or render help.

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A Contemporary. In expressing the hope that the *B.U. Bulletin* will be short-lived, we shall not be misunderstood. Dr. Payne deserves thanks for this four-page leaflet giving Baptist news which, in present circumstances, cannot otherwise be supplied. Under the heading "Good News" it is recorded that Baptist membership in the British Isles, which in 1954 was 325,896, in 1955 rose to 326,663, and that Baptisms number 9,973, an increase of over 2,000.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF F. B. MEYER

I HAVE been asked to write about my recollections of F. B. Meyer. There must be others, whose ministry has been in London, who would probably know more of the Founder of the Baptist Ministers' Prayer Union than I do. But it is a pleasure to recall what I remember of him. When I went to College in 1897 Dr. Meyer was at Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road. Occasionally I heard him in his own pulpit, but before that I had heard him at Conventions.

To the Christian public Meyer was best known as a Convention speaker. Year after year he took part in the Keswick gatherings, and no one was more hearkened to as an exponent of the higher Christian life (as the phrase went in those days). It was personal experience that impelled Meyer to devote himself so largely to the Keswick movement. For when he began his ministry in Liverpool, as assistant to C. M. Birrell (father of Augustine Birrell), he had far other ideas. He aimed to imitate the resounding periods of his senior colleague, whose style was Johnsonian, and whose doctrine was not very close to experience—literary-centred rather than life-centred.

There came a moment of struggle to crucify this dangerous ambition, of which he would sometimes speak when in intimate conference with his brother ministers. Definite convictions about what the Christian message essentially was came slowly to maturity. This will be the best point at which to try to describe what those convictions were.

He felt that Christianity was beset by three currents that threatened to drift it from its true course as presented in the New Testament. One was *materialism*, which defies or ignores the supernatural, and concentrates on ameliorating the outward conditions of human life, and is more or less content with that result. Another was *criticism*, which is devoted to analysis and dissection. This he acknowledged to be a necessary and laudable work in its place, but it had got out of place and was displacing major issues. Criticism was not only laying no foundations for the building up of a spiritual life, it was positively destroying those on which alone it could stand. Moreover, what could never build up an individual soul could equally never recruit a spiritually powerful church.

The third current was represented in his own old enemy, which we may call *aestheticism*; that is, a fine literary taste which leads men to judge of power by mere force of words or delicacy of expression, regardless of spiritual insight or moral energy. He felt the danger of being led aside by a false idol, and therefore of seeking the praise of men instead of the good of souls and the glory of God. Meyer had it in him to have excelled in writing, for he had a bright pen and great power of illustration, but he laid it all on the altar

which sanctifies the gift. Thereafter he made edification the supreme law.

This is the key to his writing, no less than his preaching. He wrote his Scripture biographies and expositions in order to bring Bible truth to bear on consecration and sacrificial service. Sixty years ago, when there were not the helps for Sunday-school teachers which are so happy a feature of our time, Meyer's books were the standby of teachers and lay preachers. And it is a remarkable fact that in my time I have seen these volumes reprinted time and again, originally at 2s. 6d., reprinted at 1s., and now being reset and issued in a new form at 8s. 6d. Enterprising publishers know that in this country and abroad there is still a good market for Meyer's works. I have sometimes thought that a narrow-minded pedantry (in some who should have known better) is a little unworthy. It is a poor judgment that cannot see merit except through its own spectacles, and that puts on a superior and patronising air. If the aim of a writer is to be widely read and spiritually useful, Meyer had no reason to fear. There must be merit in what lasts so long, and is so acceptable to even a third generation. Content to leave pure scholarship to others, he had nothing to say against research. I never heard him, by so much as one syllable, decry or disparage those from whose line of work differed from his own. He was no "fighting fundamentalist", whatever that may mean.

Meyer was much besides a spiritual teacher and author. I remember well his fight for purity and decency in Lambeth. He preached against the glaring evils in the district round his church. Publicans, and those guilty of offences against morality, threatened him in vain. The vested interests shouted: "You stick to your preaching and leave the Borough Council alone". But he persuaded Christian laymen of their duty to get on the Council in order to ventilate scandals and combat the agents and purveyors of shame. He lived to see closed the houses of ill-fame that made streets I could name impossible to decent people. These streets I will not name, since now they are places where decent working men live and bring up their families without fear. I once heard him, when under threats from the ungodly, conclude a "social sermon" with the words: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord".

Furthermore, Meyer was not satisfied to protest. He secured suitable care and help for the poor unfortunate victims of men's lusts, and (so I was told) used the profits on his books to defray the expenses of that Christ-inspired service. Akin to this, though later in date, was the lending of his name and active help in founding the home for unwanted babies and their mothers. And this in a day when many avoided the subject and took no part in such efforts.

His becoming Secretary of the National Free Church Council marked another stage in his life and work. The Council had come into deep waters and was drifting on the rocks. The reasons for this unhappy episode will be remembered by some, but are best forgotten now. The Council needed a name that would enable it to appear in a new light, more like itself in fact, and expressive of its true nature and function. Many had been offended by the Council's too close association with a political party. They did not like what was commonly said, that the Council's policy and programme were drawn up in the National Liberal Club. Meyer gave a new life to the Council. He paid, however, for this rescue, by losing favour with some who had fully appreciated the spiritual work he shared with them, but who were nervously afraid of his latest move. Enough said!

It might be thought that a man who lived in such a high spiritual temperature would have little fun in him, and less sense of humour. It was not so. I have seen great meetings rock with laughter at his sallies. To recount many of these would make this article too long. Let one suffice. At a great meeting in Birmingham Town Hall, I remember his address to young people. "Young men and women, you must embrace——" Then an artful pause. The meeting roared: "Hear! Hear!" When the laughter subsided he began again: "Young men and women, you must embrace *great principles*". The laughter broke out again and lasted long.

What I liked best about Dr. Meyer was his attitude to young ministers. I am sure he over-rated some. There was some magnification in his sympathetic eye. His own large charity led him to impute what he hoped for in men with whom he came in contact. In some cases it led to a resolution to try to live up to his estimates. In others it may have led to disappointment. Some of his recommendations brought a return of criticism and blame from societies and churches. His too highly-coloured testimonials were founded on faith rather than on fact!

I liked him best when he came to anniversaries in the country. The announcement of his coming would bring to one of our churches many who wanted to hear him. For it was Meyer more than the local church that was the attraction. Evangelical Christians of all denominations and of none were attracted. If the services were in summer-time he would gather the ministers present round him, and with a man on each arm would go along the lanes, and perhaps sit under a tree in a meadow, and pour out his experience and wisdom. He would listen with interest to questions and give answers which would be quoted for long as "what Meyer said".

If I were asked about his theology I would say that it was Christ-centred. He dwelt upon the acknowledged truths of Christianity. He had no theory of the Atonement. To him the dying of Jesus was not a puzzle to be solved, but a fact to be pro-

claimed in the belief that it would do its own work in the sincere soul. His special emphasis was on the Holy Spirit. He held that we are living in a distinct age or era in the purpose of God, an age which commenced on the day of Pentecost and will close with the Second Advent of our Lord. The Holy Spirit was in the world before Pentecost, but at Pentecost a body was created for His indwelling. He is now tenanting that body, which is composed of all believers in every age and clime. This body is the Church of God—the total Church as known to God. It becomes visible wherever believers come together in fellowship and worship. Thus the total Church is manifested in the local church.

From his own experience he believed that many Christians needed to face the question of full surrender to the control of the Spirit, to exercise a receiving faith in the Third Person of the Trinity for sanctification, comparable to that act of faith in Christ which brings justification before God. In short, his appeal was that expressed in the words of Paul to the Thessalonians: “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

GILBERT LAWS.

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#### A LANDMARK—No. 100 OF *THE FRATERNAL*

WHEN B.M.F. members find this issue on their breakfast table will the significance of “No. 100” come home easily to them? We are inclined to take its appearance for granted. Four times a year it is delivered regularly, but behind lies a whole array of facts and nearly seventy years of history. A brief review seems called for, that we may be faced with what we owe to the careful, voluntary labour of various editors and writers. What scholarship, information, inspiration, comfort and encouragement have been made available to a multitude of readers!

Such facts point back until we arrive at 10th December, 1887, when No. 1 appeared. It was called a “Fly Sheet” and was issued by the “Baptist Ministers and Missionaries’ Prayer Union”. This Union, formed largely owing to Dr. F. B. Meyer, was amalgamated with the “Baptist Ministers’ Fraternal Union” in 1908. During the early part of this period the Prayer Union issued at first a series of “Occasional Fly Sheets” giving for the most part reports of various days of prayer and conventions organised among its members. For example, No. 1 was a closely printed paper of four octavo pages, with an address, printed extenso, on “Signs of His Coming”, by William Williams, of Upton. Information is not complete, but later these “Fly Sheets” gave way to an organ called *The Remembrancer, the Monthly Paper of the Prayer Union*. Next to F. B. Meyer, one

of the outstanding figures in the organisation was J. E. Martin, of Erith, for many years its Secretary.

"The Baptist Ministers' Fraternal Union" was founded in 1904, and in 1908 the other "Prayer Union" merged with it. It was agreed that the two were really one in object and that the "Prayer Union" was the "devotional wing" of the "B.M.F.U.", *The Fraternal* being the organ of the united organisation.

The next step was the emergence of the "Pastoral Session", which had a somewhat chequered and stormy beginning. It was conceived at the worst period of the First World War, becoming part of the programme of the Baptist Union Assembly in 1919. The session continued not without controversy until it emerged with a new constitution in 1939 and the two bodies were linked in the *Baptist Ministers' Fraternal*. So far this is the final step. The magazine as we now know it, and the friendly inspirational Annual Meeting of the B.M.F., deal with most matters which were formerly discussed in the Pastoral Session.

Glancing through various numbers of *Fraternal* it is clear that in many respects our problems were here before we were. It is also certain that our Denomination is integrated and united in ways scarcely visualised when the old and valuable Prayer Union was functioning. We have entered a period in which problems leading to the establishment of the Pastoral Session have largely been faced and partly dealt with. Problems there are, as *The Fraternal* reveals, but the skies are clearer than formerly.

Studying the issues of our paper one begins to realise the tremendous amount of gratuitous labour that goes continually into its production. Some of the ablest men in our Denomination throughout the world have given freely of their stores of knowledge for the benefit of the rank and file. Think, for example, of John Pitts, F. C. Spurr and J. H. Rushbrooke, who, in spite of heavy commitments, served for long as Editors. At the end of the First World War, membership of the "Fraternal Union" was about 500. It has advanced and now forms a link binding together many men in many lands, until today the membership is about 2,700. It is not only that special articles are of special value, there is also the personal touch so that men feel that they are part of a great family, remembered, prayed for and loved.

A considerable change took place about sixteen years ago when it was agreed to appoint an Editorial Board which has fully justified itself. An interesting development has been the appearance of issues written by men of one country, or area, or of one College. Another issue deals almost entirely with one subject. In such ways an increasing area of thought has been covered. All kinds of subjects have been handled. Of course, Biblical Doctrine generally has been dealt with from time to time and Baptism has naturally often received attention. Other subjects included: Ministers and the Microphone, the Religion of Keir Hardie, Mental Healing,



Discipleship Campaign, Gambling, Levelling of Stipends, Oxford Group, and Pacifism. These are enough to show how widely the net is cast. There is a reprint of an address by Ivory Cripps on Pacifism given at the Manchester Assembly of which one of our leaders said it was the best summary of the case he has ever heard. It ended in true Baptist fashion. "That is all I want to say. I understand that Baptists respect the man who speaks his mind. Well, I have spoken mine!"

Perhaps an outstanding issue was the "Carey Number" in 1942, which won appreciation from many, including the Celebrations Committee of the B.M.S. Incidentally, this issue resulted in 50 new members for the B.M.F.

A characteristic article on Church Unions, entitled "The Free Churches and Ourselves", written by Dr. Henry Townsend, urged us to avoid any new splits in healing old ones. Distinguished laymen have contributed on occasion, as, for example, in 1940 when Mr. Seymour Price wrote on "A Business Man Talks to Ministers". Not often has the Editor or the Board allowed poetry to appear, but a long poem slipped in when, in July, 1941, E. W. Bacon wrote on "Bethel". Have we no poets now like, shall we say, F. A. Jackson?

*The Fraternal* was almost a Second World War casualty. What a mercy it was spared. Rising costs for paper, printing and postage again becloud its sky. We must keep it going even if subscriptions have to be raised. We say "Well done" and "*Bon voyage*". May the second hundred show that entry into many rich harbours has been secured to the spiritual benefit of 3,000 hard-pressed servants of God. Let *The Fraternal* greatly assist also in revealing the shape of things to come.

W. H. TEBBIT.

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### MINISTERIAL PRIORITIES

"I AM doing a great work, so that I cannot come down", answers Nehemiah to those who would interrupt the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The calling of the separated ministry has its endorsement in the New Testament and has been approved of God throughout the ages.

To secure the prize of this high calling in Christ men have sacrificed and laboured, scorned delights, existed in penury, and in some cases have forgone the fulfilment of marriage and home for what they believed the greater fulfilment of the Christian ministry.

That men might be more worthily fitted for this great calling, places of learning and training have been endowed and supported through the years. To secure entrance has itself been deemed a sign of God's approval. To enter upon the advantages to be found within their walls men have left promising business, commercial and academic positions.

They are right. It is all worth it. Our forefathers built, and the present generation supports, these colleges, because of conviction about this high calling. The ministry in the modern world takes all—and more—that is of a man.

This is strongly held among us. "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables." Wheeler Robinson once said, speaking of the kind of activities that should occupy the minister's trained gifts: "Remember, on the aerodrome the pilot does not do the mechanic's job".

The selection of interests and activities that should engage him is of prime importance, and the minister has opportunity in a way few others have in the modern world to make this selection. In this sense he is officially recognised as a "self-employed person"—that is, one with a wide discretion in the use of his time.

He will be a wise man if he interprets this official ruling as meaning to him a "Christ-employed person".

We all know what comes first. What comes second? Can there be any third? Strange that in these days when in other branches of human activity the demand is for increased specialisation, that the ministry should seem to be spreading itself so widely—and may we suggest, somewhat thinly?

Yes, it is true of course, Baptist ministers, especially at the beginning, engaged in other work from economic necessity. But how does this square with our view of the separated ministry, above all the overwhelming need of the work and influence of the Christian minister in the modern world? There are, of course, those who consider that that influence can best be exerted by one who spends five days in a shop, school or office. But that hardly seems to fit in with our view. There have been some experiments along those lines. Not all of them have been successful. And there still are some differences between Baptists and Plymouth Brethren, or for that matter, Churches of Christ.

Economic necessity is doubtless the force that makes this question loom so large today. More's the pity. Efforts are being made—and valiantly by the Home Work Fund—to make this factor less obtrusive. But there is an immeasurable distance to go. Because, in this case, the hare of rising costs is still running fast ahead. Perhaps the question should be made more pertinent in the Church's responsibility for the men they expect to exercise the whole-time ministry of the Word. Even in some Churches not on the Home Work Fund, members whose own income is almost automatically linked with the cost of living forget that their initiative is needed to ensure a similar happy position for their ministers.

Ministers have done much for the Kingdom by preaching and visitation. Souls have been brought to Christ and great Churches builded up. But all this demands not only trained gifts, but time. Especially the great opportunities of visitation in our new areas. What if the time is being seriously reduced because men have to

spend it in other ways? That is a question for all concerned about the ministry and the future of our Churches.

Chaplaincies are perhaps a legitimate extension of the local ministry. But what about other activities? This, of course, is not only a problem of the Baptist ministry. At the Convocation of Canterbury this question was raised concerning C. of E. clergymen. The Bishop of Bath and Wells said he knew of a clergyman who was working as a dispensing chemist for five days a week. He said: "How he does it I don't know. Something has to be neglected, and I have a suspicion that some of his pastoral work suffers".

How long can the idea of the separated ministry be sustained if much time is spent for other reasons? Or even, how can the continued existence of a number of separate colleges to train men for this ministry be justified if the ministry be not fully exercised? But above all, and of pre-eminent importance, how is the great work of the ministry to be done if the minister has little time left for it?

This is written with a sense of urgency and a deep understanding and sympathy with men whose great gifts do not find fulfilment in the calling to which they once gave their lives, because of the pressure of other things. May our beloved Church give the consideration it merits to the whole question of the ministry—its call, training, exercise and care—on the deepest basis and from the highest standpoint. If our age has answered the call: "Let the Church be the Church", that Church must now ask: "Let the Ministry be the Ministry".

Meanwhile, brethren, if we be called to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, let us study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed.

SYDNEY F. CLARK.

### SOME ASPECTS OF PASTORAL WORK

AS the years go by one becomes increasingly conscious of the over-ruling of God in a man's ministry as He transforms and uses the human inadequacy and failure which is so frequently revealed. What follows is therefore no claim to be better than other men. It is merely reflection on the lessons learned—sometimes with bitterness—during sixteen years in the Baptist ministry. What is said concerns pastoral work in its wider sense and which is relevant as far as a man's standing and influence are concerned.

1. *The Prerequisites of a Good Pastor.* We may assume a man has received and responded to the call of God to enter the ministry and that he is a man of Prayer. The personal relationship of the minister with God will affect all he does. The quality and reality of our communion with God counts tremendously when we are

dealing with other human souls. But we all know this to be true and any one of us can prove from experience what happens when a man loses touch with God.

Closely related, however, is the importance of a man's own example in conduct. His personal *Purity of life* will reveal him as a genuinely Christian man, who believes from his heart what he preaches, who knows the Saviour he commends, and who himself is ever using those sources of spiritual power and cleansing which he advocates. It is one of the amazing things that though some of us are as foolish as the sheep who wander and stray, God continues to use us as shepherds. But sad indeed is the case of the pastor who, by some constant moral failing, does damage to his own spiritual life and to the lives of those he is supposed to care for, as well as to the cause of Christ everywhere. Those who have served on Ministerial Recognition Committees know the appalling tragedy of seeing such a man, good in every other way, destroying his influence and life's work. True, we can but say: "There, but for the Grace of God, go I", but it is for us to hold on to that Divine Grace which can save us. Infrequent as such tragedies are, the purity of our own life and example must be guarded diligently lest in seeking to save others we ourselves become castaways.

A man's *Personality* will obviously play a large part in his work. He will have some social gifts and will be courteous and kindly. He must inspire confidence and affection as well as respect. He must be a good talker, but a better listener. He will need something of the saving sense of humour which often transforms an awkward situation. Many men who have had trouble with their Churches have foundered on this rock of personality. Had they been easier to approach they might have overcome some of their problems, or at least have avoided the unhappy break in fellowship with their Churches. Personality can cover a multitude of ministerial faults! When a man has left a Church he may be remembered gratefully for himself, even though his preaching, or leadership, or some other aspect of his work, left much to be desired. It may be said that personality is God's gift, which is partly true. But the Holy Spirit can transform and remove some of the "awkward corners" if a man will submit to such Divine treatment, as the writer can personally testify.

A pastor's ability to lead his people is related to personality. It is important that a minister should be able to enlist others to carry out plans which he believes are in the interests of the Kingdom. He must be a hard worker in his own sphere, but he may be judged also by his success in getting his members to work. His personality will play a large part in all this.

How a minister represents his Church and his Lord can bring honour or disgrace to his high calling. The punctual fulfilment of engagements, adequate preparation for any duty he has to perform, and reasonable appropriateness and tidiness in appearance and

dress, may surely be expected of him. To some extent his personality will be revealed on such occasions.

A knowledge of *Psychology* helps the pastor, to whom every man is a living problem. The pastor must learn to adapt himself to different personalities and varying needs, and this means expenditure of nervous and spiritual energy. Yet, much of what is called psychology is just common sense, and this increases with the years of experience in the pastorate. With ordinary judgment and a knowledge of men the pastor can relieve or adjust many of the psychic, moral and spiritual distresses that afflict his people. At times cases are met which require a more expert approach on the lines of scientific psychology. Sin is caused by many hidden and unconscious factors in human life and is not always to be equated with a deliberate love of evil. Any knowledge the pastor has of these psychological issues behind the complexity of personal problems will be to his advantage. But "a little learning is a dangerous thing", and it is for that quick and penetrating understanding of a man's real problem that the pastor, expert psychologist or not, should pray. "Any minister worth his salt", wrote Dr. Albert Peel, "has to help troubled souls, and he can do it, though he never talks of repressions, conflicts, complexes and the like".

2. *The Problem of the Pastor's Diary.* With so many varied calls upon us this is a growing problem today. Unless we deal with it courageously we shall risk our health and our spiritual life as well. Married men may run the risk of becoming separated from their families and thus put their *Domestic life* in peril. The pastor has responsibilities at home like any other man. Yet our wives and children often suffer spiritually because we are too busy in the Lord's work. We have no time to play with the children or to hear their nightly prayers. We never get opportunity of discussing with our wives, in an unhurried and untired atmosphere, problems of a spiritual kind which deeply concern them. Clearly each man must deal with the problem in his own way. It is suggested we should "make a date" with our family regularly each week and keep it, apart from real emergency, however pressing the invitations to speak at meetings or attend Committees. In some way we must discipline ourselves in the use of our time.

There is the matter of *Door-knocking* in the course of visitation. To preach effectively we should know our people and their home life. Yet around our churches there may be countless homes where no minister ever goes. Ought we not to go there? Even if we canvass through our members we shall still be left with great responsibility in follow-up work. It can be an exhilarating and fruitful work—if we can find time to do it! Some of the most satisfying work the writer has done was in visiting homes affected by the All Scotland Crusade and, more recently, by an area canvass under the Tell Scotland Movement.

We cannot neglect old folk, sick people, the bereaved and others in circumstances needing pastoral comfort and care. Some of us may have had the experience of being too late with a visit to a dying man—we should not wish it again! But allowing for such priorities, do we not feel at times that we are at the wrong doors when we visit those we see week by week in our churches? The problem is not easily solved.

Another question of time involves *Denominational life*. The writer has regarded the acceptance of denominational responsibility, within the limits of one's ability, as an important part of a minister's work. If a man refrains from associating with his brethren in Fraternals, or cuts himself off from wider fellowship in Association or Union, he loses much. His life is enriched by such contacts and his Church benefits accordingly. Some men send apologies for absence with monotonous regularity, excusing themselves because of the pressure of pastoral work. One can appreciate that attitude—but the man loses more than he gains and his work suffers thereby.

3. *Particular Responsibilities of the Pastor*. Space allows but a glance at several important matters. The ministry brings, unfortunately, unpleasant situations that must be dealt with—domestic disharmony, sexual problems, mental illnesses that take great toll of one's own mental and physical strength, and cases where some kind of discipline has to be exercised on members of the Church. Each case must be dealt with on its merits. There are no hard-and-fast rules for the pastor to follow. But as a young and inexperienced minister the writer has never dealt with such matters without taking into his confidence, at the beginning, someone else. That has been done for his own protection or in order to use the wider experience of an older man. Frequently advice has been sought from a senior minister, and when the advice has been given it has been followed. A divorce case involving a Church member showed signs of causing untold trouble if not handled properly from the start. Gratitude still remains to the older pastor who was consulted at that time.

We cannot be too careful when dealing with matters involving personalities and about which others may whisper and talk regardless of facts. In cases of domestic disharmony especially the pastor should tread warily. Some men have made the situation worse by well-meaning efforts to intervene and bring reconciliation. It is advisable to get consent from both parties before venturing into such intricate paths.

In all special matters like this one thing is common. The pastor is the receiver of confidences from burdened souls and those confidences he must hold sacred. If he fails, those thus burdened will feel unable to speak openly and unreservedly, and he will not help them as much as he could. Finally, let us not forget the apostolic injunction: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted".

The pastoral office is manifold with opportunities and none of us can hope to exhaust its possibilities. We may come to the end of our strength, but never to the end of our work. We must do what we can in the consciousness that there is available only one source of fresh strength—that which is found in the fellowship and co-operation of the Pastor Pastorum. Let us keep in mind His own personal ministry recorded for us in the Gospels. Let us note how valuable every single soul was in His eyes, and how its recovery amply repaid for Him the utmost pain or sacrifice involved. The more we study the Master at work, the more we shall realise that, great as the burden of the pastor may be, there is no other part of our work which so unceasingly and so intimately associates us with Christ.

A. W. FRANCIS.

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### EVANGELISM—AN EXPERIENCE AND A QUESTION

**I**N consenting to contribute an article on the monthly evangelistic service Worthing Baptist Church has held for nearly ten years, I asked that I might use some of the allotted space to pose the question: "What should be the function of a headquarters evangelism committee?"

First, then, an interesting experience in evangelistic enterprise. It happens that Worthing Baptist Church is quite near the Town Hall, which is central, seats 1,150, and whose acoustics and appointments are excellent. It has no organ, but for hearty singing perhaps the grand piano is to be preferred. The large platform, occupied by our own choir, is lined with bunches of flowers, which are both sent and given away at the close to sick folk.

When I came to Worthing the hall was used for Sunday evening concerts, and I took first refusal on its use when it should become free, and thus we held our first service on 28th July, 1946. It may be asked why, when we had a commodious church only half a minute away, we should take this hall. The answer defines our objective. We went out into an attractive but un-churchy hall in order to reach those for whom religion had withered years ago. We wanted to build a bridge, offering a way of return. As the service was not an end in itself, but a means to an end, we decided to hold it only once a month, and we avoided confusion as to which Sunday by coining the slogan—invariably printed in our advertisements: "Always the last Sunday of the month". The hall was packed out the first night, and still after nearly ten years any good night will find a thousand people present.

The service starts with an easy-going half-hour of hymn singing, interspersed by two solos from the best soloist we can find. The repertoire of evangelistic music for solo singing is shockingly poor, and the number of those who can sing the Gospel with voice and heart embarrassingly small. Soloists' music varies between the

half-dozen more tuneys airs from the oratorios, and Sankey and Moody plus chorus. The fact is that Gospel music is very thin, and often the most effective solo is a straightforward hymn whose greatness has long been established—simply and beautifully sung. We always have a printed Service Order, which enables us to select hymns from whatever book we choose. The best singing comes from some of the great Sankey and Moody, such as "O safe to the Rock", and otherwise for the hundred or so hymns that are to be found in every hymn-book.

At 7 p.m. we turn to the Service proper, and this is always introduced by a "Moment of Quiet", in which, reminded that God is in the midst, the people sit in silence until led by the choir in an Introit familiar to all. Then with hymns, the congregation now standing, and a prayer and Scripture, we come through to the "Address". This is a straightforward Gospel sermon, with no attempt to gain interest by dealing with spicy subjects or controversial issues. I always come through to the point where I directly appeal for decision, but only twice in the years have I asked people to come forward or put their hands up. I heard Billy Graham tell ministers that it was not an evangelistic service unless the appeal was pressed right home, but if the appeal had been so pressed the services would have been characterised as a certain type of evangelistic effort, and the very people we wanted to reach would have been suspicious and would not have come. As it is there has been a small but steady stream of people into our church and other churches.

The front page of the Service Order is always carefully worked out with a word of challenge or comfort or inspiration, and they are afterwards sent all over the place.

It may be said that the Service tends to draw people who should be in their own churches. There are some like that, but any brother minister standing by me saying "Good night" (and that is where the response is so often registered) would recognise that an encouraging proportion were non-churchgoers. Furthermore, it has done our own members good, because they are regularly given a practical opportunity by invitation and prayer to do their bit for the spread of the Gospel.

We have taken only a retiring offering, as our Church was determined not to gain financially; and in fact it has cost us a considerable sum over the years.

I have given some details in case my brethren were interested, but I do not think that this should be attempted unless similar circumstances exist, and them, if the lapsed churchgoer is reached, and souls are saved, the effort will be blessed, as ours has been.

Now as to the question: "What should be the function of a headquarters evangelism committee?"

When I was called to the chair of the B.U. Evangelism Committee I put this question to our Area Superintendents. Here is a summary of their views, which show a striking unanimity:—



All paid tribute to the work done in their areas, of which nothing was known to the Denomination as a whole. All agree that it is not desirable that the Baptist Union should lead a mass evangelistic mission, though there was great value in the missions which Henry Cook led from headquarters. All felt the need for a headquarters committee to co-ordinate efforts, to supply information, to provide stocks of suitable literature, to offer advice for specific missions, and finally to be a clearing-house of ideas and a central office for evangelistic enterprise. They maintained that the County Associations are the natural sphere of evangelism, and that the essential unit is the local church led by its minister.

The more lasting results of Billy Graham's visits should be integrated into the normal work of the Church. In particular, those who had been trained and used as Counsellors should continue to find a sphere of activity in our Churches. All felt the great importance of winning and retaining young people for Christ. Our percentage loss between the Primary and middle teen-age is lamentable.

In order to maintain weekly contact and encouragement, it is desired to have a column in *The Baptist Times* annexed to the weekly report of baptisms. This should be a series of "news flashes" from the "front line". Furthermore, regular and co-ordinated articles on evangelistic topics should appear in *The Baptist Times*, and already we have arranged for the Rev. John O. Barrett to supervise these, under, of course, the Editor.

The difficulty in defining the function of our evangelistic committee occurs, however, at the point when we begin to consider what relation evangelism should have to church extension, initial pastoral grants, and raising ministerial stipends. I personally feel that to build churches in new areas, to provide ministers and deaconesses for new work, and to hold our brethren in the ministry at a level of existence which is not down on the poverty line, are essential matters of evangelism. At present we face the critical dilemma of having to choose between church extension and the proper maintenance of the ministry.

All this leads on to that which has lain most heavily on our hearts—evangelism in its planning, no less than in its execution, calls for prayer and more prayer. As a consequence our whole denomination, the Baptist Union and Baptist Missionary Society, believing passionately in Christ as Saviour, and in our Baptist Church both at home and overseas as an agent of His saving grace, calls for earnest and constant prayer. We ministers believe this. Let us pray, and get our Churches to pray, in this spirit.

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## ARE WE TOO SUBURBAN?

WE have all been greatly encouraged by recent signs of a spiritual quickening within our Churches, and a greater willingness on the part of many people to respond to the Gospel. We thank God for every token of his power and blessing in these days. But to what extent is this access of fresh vitality mainly confined to Churches in the so-called "middle-class" suburban areas of our cities and towns? My impression, which is shared by some other brethren, is that evangelical Christianity seems to be flourishing today mostly in these areas, and is scarcely touching the population of our great working-class industrial districts. Maybe there is a difference between North and South in this respect, but in general I think it is a fact, and one we tend conveniently to ignore. Admittedly the problem is not new, although there are some factors in the situation today which make it more acute. In any case, it presents a serious challenge to all the Churches.

If we cast our minds around the flourishing Churches, even within our own denomination, I think we shall find that they are mostly at the seaside or in suburbia. It is not simply that there has been a move of population into suburban areas. Some of the great working-class districts of our large cities are far more densely populated, in spite of the movement outwards. In one of the great steel-working areas of Sheffield it is stated that only about 1 per cent of the people living there have any kind of Church connection. And even in new working-class estates on the outskirts of our towns and cities we tend to find the same kind of thing. For some reason or another it is the Roman Catholic Church which often seems to make most headway in these districts.

Perhaps, too, the Billy Graham campaigns are a pointer in the same direction. Without in the least minimising the tremendous things which have been accomplished through these campaigns, I would hazard a guess that their main impact has been felt within our middle-class suburban churches, which were the main supporters of the meetings. Most of the strong and vital evangelical movements among young people are centred in these areas. The vitality of Christian student societies today in universities and schools is one of the most encouraging and promising signs of our generation, but there is nothing comparable to them among the lads and girls who leave the Secondary Modern Schools and go out into industry. My own experience in speaking to Christian Unions in factories is that their membership is largely drawn from the technical staff. Crusaders, Summer Schools, Hildenborough Hall and the rest seem to point the same way.

In this connection, too, the situation in America is of some interest. The claim is often made that there is a great deal more vitality in the American Churches at the present time than we have over here. We know the percentages usually quoted for Church

attendance—and there seems no reason to dispute them. But it is worth remembering that the whole industrial set-up over there is vastly different from ours in Britain. There is nothing quite comparable to our working-class population, and that fact may not be without some significance.

Now, I have said nothing new in all this. It is a problem which has been niggling at the back of our minds for years. Yet I doubt whether in any of the Churches we are seriously taking this situation to heart, or facing the possible implications. Does it mean that evangelical Christianity can only flourish today in certain contexts—that is, is somehow associated with security, comfort, and a certain intellectual climate? That might be an indictment of our whole presentation of the Gospel. Or can it mean that in concentrating most of our effort in winning the young people of suburbia for Christ we have conveniently ignored the harder task among the mass of people in our industrial areas?

No one doubts that it is a much harder task. But it is not easy to put one's finger on the basic causes of failure. They are no doubt partly sociological. Ferdynand Zweig (*The British Worker*, chapter 24) maintains that the felt need for religion is nowhere greater than in the worker's life, but that the repelling forces which drive him away from organised religion are also very strong, perhaps stronger than in any other sections of society. Their first and capital grievance, he says, is that "the Churches sided against them in their struggle against their industrial masters". That is an old argument, but it is still at the back of people's minds in some industrial districts. It may be, too, that the development of the Welfare State has tended to widen the distance between the Christian Churches and the working-class population. It has brought with it a great deal that is good, and in some respects represents the fulfilment of Christian social ideals. On the other hand—and we are simply faced with this fact—it has meant the closing of a number of channels for practical Christian service. As Zweig reminds us: "The worker has a great contempt for words; he wants to see action", and in spite of a good deal of the "patronising" element it was perhaps more possible "to make Jesus Christ credible" in practical ways of service a few years ago than it is today.

There are cultural and educational factors today which have a lot to do with the situation. In recent years a new cultural context for many lives has been created by the cinema and by television. It is a "laid-on" culture, and its tone is predominantly materialistic. It is easily absorbed and calls for no disciplines. It is far less trouble than reading a book or listening to an address. That is true for all strata of our society, but is it possible that the materialism of this new "culture" is being much more easily and uncritically assimilated by the working-class population than by others? A few months ago the leader page of one of our national papers carried a most interesting article written by a working-man, who through

illness had acquired a taste for reading and thinking. The title was: "We working people have got to grow up".

"We must switch off the television sometimes and read a good middle-class newspaper instead. Above all, we must overcome our dislike of things 'serious'—especially 'serious' books. We must read if we are to understand the society we live in, and the values it is founded on. We must acquire middle-class habits of thinking as well as living."

The more unthinking and uncritical people are, the more likely they are to take for granted false ideas about the Church, and the Bible and the Christian faith, which were prevalent a generation or two ago, but have long since been exploded.

Lastly, how much of the blame lies at our own door? Is our presentations of the Gospel, and our whole approach to them, far too "Third programme"? Most of us ministers find it easier to talk to Grammar School and University youngsters than to the lads and girls from the factory. Our temptation is to spend more time with them, and to be concerned with their problems and interests—which are often our own too—than to take the trouble to get alongside the youngsters from industry. I don't think we do it intentionally, but that is the way it often works. How far also is it true that often the whole tone of our Church life is alien to the average working-man? Tom Allan has a great deal to say about this in his book, *The Face of My Parish*. He found that his biggest problem was not to bring people to decision for Christ, but to assimilate them into the fellowship of the Church. He found that one of two things happened:

"Either they remained on the circumference of the congregation's life; or by their very membership in the Church they became separated from their social group . . . separated from them, not by their Christian profession, but by their assimilation of a superimposed middle-class culture." (P. 39.)

It would be wrong to generalise. But are we not too concerned about respectability? We would very much like to bring in "that nice Mrs. So-and-So", but we don't give quite the same warm welcome in our Churches to some of the families from the nearby council estate. Are we, in effect, "selecting" the people we want to see redeemed and brought into the fellowship of our Churches?

I have asked many questions and provided no real answers. But I am sure that the failure of our evangelical Churches to make any real headway in our great working-class industrial areas is something we need to take to heart very much more than we have done. During His earthly ministry our Lord Jesus Christ was moved with compassion towards men and women in all strata of human society, and not least towards the common people who heard Him gladly.

ALFRED T. PECK.

## AGAPE IS THERAPY

THESE is, today, a widespread resurgence of interest in the subject of spiritual healing. This is doubtless due, in part at least, to the light thrown by psychology on the nexus which so often seems unquestionably to exist between mental disturbance and bodily disease. Modern psychological doctrine emphasises the body-mind unity of human personality. There are insights, here, which have always had a place in the Bible. It is the view of the Bible throughout that physical disease is symptomatic of a disturbance which goes deeper than the body. The presupposition of a spiritual connection underlies the Biblical use of leprosy as a symbol of the guilt of sin. And the body-mind unity of human personality is integral to the Biblical doctrine of the nature of man. A recognition of the intimate relationship between the "cure" of souls and the cure of bodies—between the forgiveness of sins and physical health—is implicit in Christ's two-fold commission to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick. It is made explicit in many of His works of healing.

In any attempt to restate Christ's two-fold commission to His Church, to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick, and to invest it with contemporary relevance, it is of the greatest importance, I believe, that the corporate rôle of the Christian community should seriously be considered, and that careful thought should be given to the bearing of the quality of relationships within the Church on the concept of "wholeness". Some indication as to the direction which our thinking might fruitfully take comes to us from the side of secular science. This is particularly true of the development, in recent psychiatric practice, of the method of "group-analysis" in the treatment of psycho-neurotic conditions. In non-technical language, the effective principle of this method would seem to be the creation of personal relationships between members of a group in which the truth about the "self"—especially the truth about its "badness"—can be brought into the open uninhibited by the fear of condemnation, and the "badness" got rid of, with a consequent re-direction of energy towards "wholeness", by being faced and understood within the context of a "loving" community, and through being borne by that loving community. It is a picture which at once recalls the idea of the nature and quality of fellowship within the Christian Church suggested by St. James's words: "Confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed".

In the days of His flesh Jesus brought salvation, *salus*, health—often with dramatic physical benefits—to sinful and sinning men and women: to men and women who were sick in mind, sick in soul. His healing of sinful and sinning men and women was a demonstration of the power of love. He accepted men and women where He found them, as they were. He gave to sinners the reality of under-

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

My dear Friends,

The January *Fraternal* was numbered 99, so that the present must be the Centenary issue. On behalf of the directors of the Baptist Insurance Company I would offer the heartiest possible congratulations to the Editorial Board and all concerned in its production. I doubt if the ministry of any other denomination, in this country or overseas, is served so effectively by a ministerial magazine of its own. For twenty-five years the *Fraternal* has fostered the spirit of brotherhood, so that even a layman is aware of the greater loyalty towards brother ministers that exists today compared with twenty-five years ago.

The *Fraternal* has served the ministry with challenging, thought-provoking, spiritually-uplifting, articles. They have been provided by ministers in this country and the colonies, and have shown how worldwide has spread the faith held by Baptists, and how diverse can be its expression and interpretation. For their catholicity and courage in the printing of articles representing different schools of thought the Editorial Board are entitled to warm appreciation.

We, in the Baptist Insurance Company, are glad to think that, by paying fairly handsomely for this centre page advertisement in the recent difficult years, we have helped to ensure the continued publication of the *Fraternal*. These letters appear to have won for us the confidence of the ministry in a remarkable way, and we are grateful for the "word in season" which so many have spoken and written. It has been good for business. Should the cost of production and distribution rise still further, we shall not object to an increase in the advertisement rate.

This letter is written from a sick room where I have been for some days and am likely to be kept for a time, but it carries with it the best of hopes for your own Churches and for the next hundred issues of the *Fraternal*.

Your sincere well-wisher,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

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standing friendship. For Him, their unloveliness was never unlovableness. He took their "badness" into Himself: He bore it on His own heart. The meaning of His Cross is there. The saving power of His Cross is also there.

It was by the power of the love that was in Him, of the love that He was, that Jesus brought "wholeness" to men and women whose lives were crippled by "badness". And the Church is the Body of Christ. It can mean nothing other, and nothing less, than that the self-same love which was incarnate in Christ ought also to be incarnate in the Church. The secret of the therapeutic quality of Christian fellowship is there, in the love of God shed abroad, and made active, in the lives of men and women and in their relations with one another. The source of healing, and the power to heal, is love, the real thing, the love of God—not eros, but agape; not the love that wants, and desires only to possess and use the other, but the love that gives, and desires only to enrich the other. "Badness" in human life, sickness of soul, cannot be cured by suppression. It must be brought into the open. It must be accepted. It must be borne. But how, or where, except under the conditions and within the context of a "loving" community? Within the context of a "loving" community, where there is no fear because there is no threat, sinful and sinning men and women can be delivered from the devitalising anxiety which pretence and self-deception impose: and, in the experience of being accepted, in love, just as they are, can find strength in which to begin to build life afresh. This is life becoming a new thing. It is the power of love. It is the power of God.

It has to be admitted, I think, that the New Testament ideal of the Church as a "loving community" has very little obvious connection with the quality of life and fellowship actually encountered in the local Christian communities in which the Church has its visible and concrete manifestations in this world. The concept of righteousness, rather than the concept of love, seems to govern the attitude of the Church in the interpretation of the Gospel, and in the determination of fitness for membership of the Church. The method of dealing with human "badness", with human sin, actually practised by the typical Church community, more often than not takes the form, at least by implication, of judging and condemning it, that is, by suppressing it. It seems to have become customary to present Christianity as obedience to a way of life, rather than as the acceptance of an offer of salvation; and to interpret response to the Gospel in terms of a standard to be conformed to, rather than in terms of a dynamic to be experienced. "The Church is for the good people", says the man-in-the-street. It looks like that to him, and not without reason, for the general trend of the conventionalised Christian teaching of our time substitutes ethics for the Gospel, law for love, respectability for redemption, self-righteousness for honest self-appraisal. It means

that human "badness", human sin, instead of being brought to light—to the light of Christ, to the light of His truth and love—where it can be squarely faced and frankly dealt with, is driven underground. With this strange result, that the very community which exists, in the purpose of God, to mediate "wholeness" actually produces sickness, because of the pretence and self-deception, and because of the secret sense of guilt and shame, which are the inevitable consequences of trying outwardly to conform to the conventional idea of what the Church expects and requires without that inner release which only love can give.

We say, sometimes, that God loves the sinner and hates the sin. We like to think that our attitude, as members of the Church, expresses that maxim. It may be a subtle rationalisation of our prejudices and resentments. The fact is that we are on dangerous ground if we think that we can separate the sinner from his sin. In actual practice, we too easily transfer our hatred of sin to the sinner. It is better to say that God loves the sinner and, in the greatness of His love, takes the sin upon Himself. The Church has been described as the fellowship of those who know themselves to be forgiven. Forgiveness is the experience, on the sinner's side, of being accepted by God—accepted as a sinner by God—in Christ, in love. That is redemption. That is release. That is healing.

It belongs to the divine intention that the Church should mediate that love, through the quality of its fellowship, to those who need it for their healing. It is not a question of the condonation of sin. It is a question of the bearing of the sin, of accepting the pain of it without blame or censure, so that love—God's love—may have room and opportunity to reveal its amazing therapeutic power. It is a hard thing to do. It is the costly reality of fellowship with Christ in His sufferings.

If the Church is to move towards the recovery of any real competency to fulfil the commission of Christ to heal the sick, there must be a profounder Christian understanding of "wholeness", and a deeper insight into the therapeutic qualities of Church fellowship in terms of the New Testament ideal of a "loving" community.

A. G. HILL.

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### PUBLIC WORSHIP—A REPLY

I OWE W. J. Grant a debt, for he once risked his neck by driving like Jehu the son of Nimshi in an effort to get me on to a train. But I am puzzled by his article written in answer to mine.

Grant accuses me of "baldly" saying that the Lord's Supper is the central act of Christian worship. The phrase is a quotation from the E.R.E., which states (Art.: "Eucharist: Reformation and post-Reformation Period") that "The Reformed Church has been



and is practically unanimous in making the following assertions (*inter alia*): (1) that the Eucharist—whatever name for it may be in common use—is a sacrament instituted by Christ; (2) that it is the central act of Christian worship”. It is often argued from the last verses of Acts ii that the Supper was celebrated daily in Apostolic times. Certainly from Acts xx (7) and the sub-Apostolic writers it seems to have been celebrated at least on every Lord’s Day.

As Baptists we try to model our practice on the New Testament, and it seems, therefore, that we should logically be striving to put the Communion back into the primary place which it undoubtedly held then. This was what the Reformers were trying to do on the Continent and Knox here in Scotland. I agree that “For Calvin the primary thing in Christianity is to adore God rightly”, but it cannot be denied that Calvin wished to worship God rightly through the Communion as the principal service of the Lord’s Day.

I am told that Communion every Sunday was not so general among our Baptists forebears as I had believed, but the fact that some of them at least reverted to this practice seems to suggest a desire to return to the primitive use. I favour such a return, but in my article I was asking what was our best medium of response *in the absence of the Communion*. Grant says that it is in the hymns, and here he will find that I agree with him. What makes him think that I regret the lack of printed liturgies and responses? I was merely pointing out that they are a way of securing a response, but one which is not open to us. I have neither used, desired nor advocated a liturgy for our ordinary Sunday services.

G. DENIS LANT.

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## TRANSLATING THE GOSPELS

**T**HIS paper arises from my work as a translator of the Gospels and, farther back, as a translator of Homer. In the course of these tasks I had not only to examine the principles and aims adopted by earlier translators, but to hammer out new principles of my own.

Of all literary arts, translation has been the most neglected in the long history of criticism. Yet it has been widely practised ever since the catastrophe at Babel produced a market for its products, and with so many good and bad examples at our disposal it should not prove impossible to establish it on a sound theoretical basis. Matthew Arnold’s *On Translating Homer* stands out as one of the few noteworthy essays on the subject. I make this my starting-point, if only to emphasise the change of outlook that has occurred since he wrote.

Shortly before Arnold’s book appeared, F. W. Newman, the Cardinal’s brother, had declared that “the translator should retain

every peculiarity of the original, so far as he is able, with the greater care the more foreign it may be". This sounds well enough in theory—fidelity to the original should be every translator's aim. But fidelity is an ambiguous term, and this principle, if conscientiously adhered to, might well give us translations of French novels in which the hero called his beloved "my cabbage"! Arnold is surely right when he castigates Newman for his pronouncement.

Newman considered, only to reject, the theory that a translation "should affect our countrymen as the original may be conceived to have affected its natural hearers"—a fundamentally sound idea. But Arnold will have none of this either; and after thus, in my opinion, rejecting salvation, he proceeds to argue for a third position. He maintains that it is the translator's duty "to satisfy scholars".

It is the second principle which seems to me most significant. It is the loadstar of the translator. I call it the principle of equivalent effect and regard it as signifying that that translation is the best which comes nearest to creating in its audience the same impression as was made by the original on its contemporaries. Higher than this I hold that no translator can aim.

Two important corollaries follow from the principle. (1) Presuming that the original was intelligible to its first audience, the translator's first aim should be intelligibility, and that, not to scholars only. (2) Except in cases where the original author writes with deliberate archaism, this aim can be achieved only by using contemporary diction.

With such ideas in mind, let us now consider the Authorised Version, with particular reference to the Gospels. In spite of all that is said to the contrary, no sensible critic could deny to this Version a high degree of beauty, and it would be equally absurd to minimise its influence as a religious document. But it is still open to us to judge it purely as a piece of translation, and here are my own findings.

First, it is too literal a version to produce equivalent effect. Its authors, impressed like their predecessors by the sacrosanctity of the originals, mistook fidelity to the idiom and diction of those originals for fidelity to their meaning, with a resulting loss of intelligibility. Who, for instance, can immediately arrive at the meaning of Luke xxi, 13, which the Authorised translators, adhering closely to the Greek, render: "And it shall turn to you for a testimony"?

Secondly, it is not firmly based on the normal speech of its own period. I quote again from St. Luke, who in xvii, 8, reports Jesus as imagining a scene in which a master says to his slave, "Get something ready for my supper". The Greek is colloquial, simple and abrupt: a man is talking to his *slave*. Yet the Authorised translators put into his mouth the words: "Make ready wherewith I may sup". I submit that no Englishman alive in 1611 would have used such an expression; that it does not represent the spirit

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Contributions by: Michael Franklin, Victor Hayward, John E. T. Hough, Edwin Robertson, Howard Williams.

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of the original; and that the point of the parable is blunted by its use.

Modern scholarship has also detected in the A.V. a number of inaccuracies, which are not *all* due to the inability of the translators to avail themselves of the earlier and better manuscripts on which we now rely. But these inaccuracies, when all is said and done, do not amount to very much, and they were, moreover, for the most part removed in the R.V. (1881-85). With reference then to my own principles, the main contention I make against the A.V., particularly of the New Testament, is that its beauty and its spirit are not quite the same as that of the original, and that it does not in all respects have the same effect on its hearers as the original must have had on its first audiences. And I maintain that this was as true in 1611 as it is today. It constitutes the chief justification for those attempts at fresh interpretation which the twentieth century has witnessed.

The modernisation of the Bible presents the translator with an exceptionally difficult task. It is hard enough for him to decide the kind of audience to which he ought to address his work; it is even harder for him to arrive at a correct estimate of the nature of what he is translating; and having solved both these problems and set himself an aim, it is hardest of all for him to find a style which consistently achieves it.

With regard to my own work as a translator, you will already have gathered something of my principles. But I did not address myself to the task with a hard-and-fast set of rules. Since I had not read the Gospels in Greek for some forty-five years, it was the easiest and wisest course to approach them with a mind aware of the difficulties, but not biased in favour of any particular solution. The first thing I found was that pronouncements such as that of Dr. C. S. Lewis that "the New Testament in the original Greek is not a work of literary art", were most fallacious guides for a would-be translator. The Gospels, at all events, impressed me as works of consummate art.

It is true that the writers did not feel it their duty, like a modern biographer, to present a balanced view of a whole life, nor to relate everything in the order of its occurrence—indeed, I do not think they always knew it. But there were other difficulties. They had to arrange their material in suitable sections for liturgical purposes, and at the same time to create the impression of rapid and relentless forward movement from the divine beginnings to the predestined end. They had, like the Greek tragic dramatists, to write for an audience conscious of that end before the first words of the first line were spoken. That they succeeded as they did constitutes a miracle which is unique in the history of literature and the annals of religion. We can account for it only by remembering that they were inspired by a unique personality. Just as Jesus lived in the oral tradition that preceded the Gospels, so He inspired and unified the writings that eventually summed it up. One might almost say that Jesus wrote the Gospels.

That was my inspiration as I worked. I felt that I had the great honour of translating *Him*. And in doing so it was my aim to capture the spirit I found in the Greek originals and to create in my audience the same effect as those originals created in their first hearers.

This brings me back to the problems involved in the translation of these vivid, powerful and lovely books. I said that the main difficulties were three—that of estimating the nature of the originals and of their audience; that of deciding what kind of audience one should now aim at; and that of finding a suitable style. The first two solve themselves together. If the originals, as is now supposed, were prepared with loving care for liturgical purposes, it is clear enough that our prospective hearer or reader must not be the man in the street, but the man in the congregation; that is to say, the kind of person who will not thank one for writing down to him, but is capable of appreciating that synthesis of spiritual and artistic truth which the Evangelists themselves achieved, and at which King James's translators assuredly aimed.

The narrative portions of the Gospels are couched in contemporary Greek which is tolerably good and clear, but often reminiscent of the Septuagint, and not always strictly grammatical. What is a translator to do with these aberrations from normality? I myself have been slightly inconsistent. I have not thought it incumbent throughout the narrative portions to reproduce Semitic echoes from the Septuagint; nor, for the sake of a principle, have I deliberately used bad grammar—no one would thank a translator if he did. But bad grammar is a different thing from foreign syntax, which is not necessarily bad merely because it is strange to us; and I should be more inclined to apologise, had I reproduced the syntax of the original, than for having transmuted it into natural English. For instance, Luke (xi) represents Jesus as saying to his disciples (and please note the syntax carefully): "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee". Now, only familiarity and hallowed associations could induce anyone to say that the curious future tense, and the awkward change from question to statement, are English. They are not: they are Greek. Moreover, our Lord is not really asking his disciples for information: he is putting a supposition before them. And I suggest that this is how he might have done it, had he spoken English: "Suppose you have a friend and in the middle of the night you go to him and say, 'My friend, let me have three loaves. A friend of mine who is travelling through, has called on me and I have nothing to offer him.' And suppose he answers from indoors, 'Don't put me to the trouble. I locked up long ago—my children are in bed and so am I. I can't get up to give it you.'"

That then is one thing we can do—we can translate the syntax, making our English natural and intelligible. But I hope you will not think me presumptuous when I claim that we can do a good deal more and actually improve on the logic of the A.V. I select two examples from Luke's 12th chapter. The parable of the so-called Rich Fool opens as follows in the A.V.: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying 'What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?' And he said, 'This will I do. I will pull down my barns and build greater.'" Has it ever occurred to you that this is slightly illogical? It is a question of tenses. We are surely right in treating "brought forth plentifully" as an imperfect. But if this man's land did well habitually (and we are *told* that he was prosperous), how is it that he suddenly finds himself short of barns for his produce? The explanation is this. The Greek word for "brought forth plentifully" is in the aorist tense; and an aorist implies a single past occurrence. In other words, the man's crops were on one occasion particularly good, and we must translate the aorist tense as well as the word itself. And so we arrive at the rendering: "There was a rich man whose land one year produced abundantly. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no room for my crops'"—and so on.

In the next instance I give my own rendering first: "Can any one of you by fretting add a moment to his years? Then since you cannot alter the least little thing, why fret about the rest?" This seems to me to make sense. People do desire to prolong their lives, though to add only a single moment to their years, if it were possible, would be no very memorable achievement. Here the A.V. has: "And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" But surely people do not give serious thought to the problem of adding an inch, far less a cubit, to their height. And if they could increase it by a cubit, would it be fair to describe their success as doing that which is least? However, I claim no credit for this clarification of an illogical passage. The credit is due to the more comprehensive knowledge of Greek diction which modern scholarship has given us.

I have been trying to show that a translator is far more likely to capture the style and spirit of his original if he devotes himself with meticulous care to its meaning than if he labours to reproduce idiosyncrasies of diction, idiom and syntax, as Newman advised. But in the case of the Gospels he could render the meaning with considerable success and yet fail in his over-all effect, if he neglected one quality which they possess in a superlative degree, and that is rhythm. It was Mark, I think, who set the pattern and the pace; Luke and Matthew follow in his steps, and so on the whole does John, though for his own dramatic purposes he gives us several variations. I will not attempt the difficult task of analysing that

element in composition which so shapes each sentence, paragraph and section of a book as to impose on the whole work its proper sense of rhythmical progression. But I soon became aware that the Greek Gospels are imbued with this peculiar, this almost musical effect; so much so that I now like to think of them as the four movements or variations of a symphonic poem. Whether I have succeeded in capturing this music I must leave to your judgment.

In these remarks on the Gospels and their translation I have confined myself almost entirely to literary considerations. It seemed to me a truth which needed to be driven home, that the Gospels are spiritually supreme partly *because* they are great literature; the two values interlock. But lest you should be left with the impression that I, or anyone, could spend three years in studying the Greek texts without a sense, indeed a new and lasting sense, of their spiritual values, I conclude by quoting to you from the final paragraph of my Introduction :—

“Of what I have learnt from these documents in the course of my long task, I will say nothing now. Only this, that they bear the seal of the Son of Man and God, they are the Magna Charta of the human spirit. Were we to devote to their comprehension a little of the selfless enthusiasm that is now expended on the riddle of our physical surroundings, we should cease to say that Christianity is coming to an end—we might even feel that it had only just begun.”

E. V. RIEU.

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#### LATE NOTES

*Personal.* Further ministerial changes include: H. Lloyd, Blafield, Norwich; Ian Prentis, Stockport; N. M. Patterson of Wick has resigned from our ministry. Griffith J. Harris of Cardiff returns for the time being to his old Area as General Superintendent, serving until the vacancy caused by the lamented death of H. Ingham is filled. W. H. Hercock, Chester; W. B. Fletcher, Rochdale; G. L. Morris (Spurgeon's), Kings Stanley; F. Wiltshire, Astwood Bank; A. E. Selwood, New Milton; J. L. Nainby, Rickmansworth; G. M. Wylie, Birmingham; A. G. Allcock, Blackpool; R. P. Taylor, Newport, Mon.; I. E. Thomas, Cardiff; Oscar Smart, Crayford. F. Everett Thomas after 35 years' fruitful service is retiring from the pastorate.

Our Fellowship has lost one of its oldest members in the death of G. C. Leader. A corresponding secretary of the Fraternal Union, his letters brought courage and comfort to many hearts. Together with the churches he served, we thank God for the memory of a good and gracious servant of Jesus Christ.

Spurgeon's reports the following settlements: J. D. Lambert, Portsmouth; C. Marchant, Birmingham; R. Price, Canada; C. Grant, Ceylon; T. Rogers, Congo. Congratulations to the College in having won, for the fourth time in five years, the football shield of the London Theological Colleges Athletic Union.