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## Baptist Ministers' Fellowship

(PASTORAL SESSION)

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Annual Meeting

Bloomsbury Chapel

Wednesday, 1st May, 1957

2.15—3.50 p.m.

Speaker: Rev. John Huxtable, M.A.

Principal, New College, London

## EDITORIAL THAT LETTER

**I**T is probably true to say that the "Open Letter to British Baptists" concerning their responsibility to the World's Undeveloped Areas is among the most important documents ever issued by the B.U. and B.M.S. In these Eastern lands there are 1,750 million people hungry and starving, an astounding figure, while we live in light and luxury. The Letter gives information concerning the distribution of monetary aid, either through our denomination or other societies. Attention is directed to the fact that beyond these temporary measures to relieve present urgent suffering, there is a call for evangelists, doctors, nurses, engineers and agriculturalists, who, in the spirit of Christ, will minister to mind, body and soul, and show not only the way to Heaven but also how to win from the bounteous bosom of Mother Earth those benefits for lack of which the present terrible suffering exists.

In a word, the call comes for Christ's Messengers, at the cost of personal sacrifice, to take the whole Gospel for the whole man to the whole world. Though not designed to do so, yet the true orthodoxy of the B.U. and the B.M.S. shines out through every page of this Open Letter.

What will be our re-action, as ministers? We may lightly put the letter aside and on 1st January wave an empty hand to these suffering millions and wish them a happy New Year. We may, and we surely shall do all in our power to implement the suggestions stated. We can read the Letter to the Deacons' Court. We can bring it to the Church Meeting. We can inform our congregations of its content. We can lead our young people in a prayerful, serious study of its facts and implications.

In these and in other ways the labour involved will be worth while even if it tends only a little to bring to perishing multitudes the knowledge of the glorious Gospel of the Fatherhood of God, the Saviourhood of Christ and the Brotherhood of all men, whatever their colour or race.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

**T**HE scope of this paper is defined by the title. We shall not consider the authenticity of the eschatological teaching in the Gospels, nor attempt to relate the parousia to its kindred themes, nor even try to define what is meant by the Second Coming in the light of the nature of eschatological symbolism. However we conceive the Second Coming of Christ, what is its significance to Christian thought?

For purposes of clarification I would concentrate attention on three assertions. The Second Coming of Christ means:—

1. **THE END IS GOD.** It could not be otherwise. The Lord of Creation presumably had a clear idea of His aim when He formed it: it was to embody His glory. The glory, alas, is smothered. The Bible's chief concern is to tell how the aboriginal divine purpose is fulfilled, or rather, to enable us to find our part in the fulfilment. Since this End is dependent on God's initiative, the Bible records God's comings for the salvation of men. "To Biblical writers, the living God is always a holy Presence", said Minear. "This Presence makes himself known, not so much as a constant spiritual stratosphere, but as an awesome, invasive power." Faith postulates that what God has begun He will surely complete. And so the Book of Revelation tells of the hour when the cry, "It is done", sounds forth in the new creation, when God is all in all (Rev. xxi, 6).

This is easy enough when one reads the Bible; it is another matter when one reads the daily paper. If in the last century the Kingdom of God seemed to be in sight, today an atomising hell seems closer at hand. We are very conscious of our adversaries. True, there are still some stalwarts who believe we can deal with them all and "bring in the day of brotherhood and end the night of wrong".

Church history, however, tells a different story, and has some significant comments on, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood . . ." We should by this time know our limitations.

The serious factor is not that missionaries have been thrown out of China, that relations are difficult in India and in Africa, but that the old-fashioned phenomena of sin are still with us; that there's not a human heart in which a "No" does not ascend to Almighty God a good many times a day, and the majority spend their lives in the wrong Kingdom all their days. We are so used to this situation, its gravity to a theistic view is realised only with effort. Anselm contended that wherever sin rears its head, the Godhead of God is

called in question. A power has appeared which limits God. As Heim points out, the size of the revolt is irrelevant, for it has the same importance as the greatest cosmic revolution which tears the planetary system out of its path. But realise the actual extent of sin and you see the enormity of the situation. Sin is destructive of the universe and an assault on the majesty of God. Faith is reasonable only if it can be believed that He will put an end to the position. A God powerless to deal with it would be no more God but a demon. Forsyth had the same idea when he urged that we could not worship a God Who was simply our faithful comrade, sharing a fate which bound us both. "He would not be a holy God. And we can worship no less." But we are not called on to worship a comrade. We are summoned by the Creator Who is Lord of history and of creation. He is to make *both* the scene of His glory. Such is our assurance in view of His coming.

2. THE END IS GOD IN CHRIST. God deals with His creatures through the mediation of His Son. As it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be—world with or without end. The Second Coming proclaims the faith that the God Who made this universe through His Son and redeemed it by his blood will transfigure it by his grace. As Cullmann puts it: "The hope of the New Testament can only be hope in the return of the Lord, if, as we have tried to show, the entire message of the New Testament culminates in Christ, Saviour of men and of the cosmos, beginning, middle and conclusion of the whole history of salvation from the first to the new creation. Christ, in being mediator in the past and present, must be that also in the future. To hope, according to the New Testament, can then only be to hope in his return." Indeed, on no other basis is it conceivable, at least in Christian theology, that this world will reach its appointed goal. The apostolic Church looked for a reunited universe only because it saw it summed up *in Christ* (Eph. i, 10), i.e., by the effective exercise of his grace and power. Such is also the faith of the Gospels. In them the Kingdom of God is fundamentally a dynamic concept—God sovereignly acting; but its presence is seen in the operation of that sovereignty in the Person and deeds of Christ. Its redemptive powers reached out to the world through the death and resurrection of that same Redeemer and the sending of His Spirit. Its universal sway must likewise come through Him. "If Christ is trustworthy, the only question worth asking is how far into the future his influence stretches", wrote Mackintosh. "It stretches out into the utmost reaches of eternity" is the only Christian answer. In Christian faith, eschatology is Christology; or there's no such thing as a Christian eschatology.

3. THE END IS GOD IN CHRIST ACTING IN ALMIGHTY POWER. So far we have traversed common ground. Little that has been said would arouse dissent. The difficulty for the modern mind begins when the implications of the Advent are faced, without recourse to a mythical

interpretation that dissolves its content. For does not the Coming imply that what God in Christ did not succeed in doing by the love of the Cross He will get done by the exercise of brute force? And is that not unthinkable? The writer of the "Epistle to Diognetus" asked: "Was he sent, think you, as any man might suppose, to establish a sovereignty, to inspire fear and terror? Not so. But in gentleness and meekness has He sent him, as a king might send his son who is a king. He sent him . . . as Saviour, using persuasion, not force; for *force is no attribute of God*". That sentiment has more than once been invoked to deny the possibility of the Advent. C. J. Cadoux, for example, believed that the Second Coming contradicted the Sermon on the Mount, the ministry of Jesus and His death on Golgotha. It reminds T. F. Glasson of a frustrated chess player who cannot win the game and so scatters the pieces on the floor.

Despite the plausibility of these contentions, I am convinced that they issue from a misunderstanding of our Lord's teaching. If one wanted a phrase with which to sum up the ministry of Jesus it would not be greatly amiss to describe it as a manifestation of *love with power*. It is a mistake to exaggerate either feature, but I must here call attention to the latter. Apart from the very ungentle behaviour of Jesus at the cleansing of the Temple, which, incidentally, with the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem formed his only public messianic self-declaration, what do we make of his urging the necessity of binding the Strong Man before his goods be plundered—a crucial parable for the messianic consciousness of Jesus (Mark iii, 27)? What of his casting out of demons by the finger of God, whereby men may know the presence of the Kingdom (Luke xi, 20)? What of his miracles—*dunamis!*—that revealed his exercise of the Kingdom of God (Matthew xi, 5)? What of his being marked out as Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead (Rom. i, 4)? The proof of the kingdom in him was his unparalleled exercise of the power of God, and he rebuked his contemporaries for not realising it. Has Paul's word to the Corinthians ever been given due recognition? "The Kingdom of God is . . . in power" (1 Cor. iv, 20). Singularly enough, the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost is described as of a wind, rushing and violent—*biaios*, the word the writer to Diognetus said could not be associated with God! As to Glasson's illustration of the chess player, it surely moves in the wrong sphere of reference. The Temptation in the desert, Gethsemane, Golgotha and the Empty Tomb were not moves in a game politely played between the Almighty and the devil, but are more fitly likened to a battle. If you must use the image of a game of chess, it isn't that the board and chessmen are overturned at the end, but the other player was slung out of the room long ago for playing a dirty game! (See Rev. xii, 1-9.)

This raises, however, a question. If the battle was won, or the game concluded, at the cross and resurrection, what need is

there of a second Advent? Not uncommonly it has been answered: "None". At most the Advent serves to reveal the decisiveness of the victory won at the Cross. It throws light on a stage that earlier was too dimly lighted for the actors to be properly seen. Such seems to be the import of a typical statement of C. H. Dodd's, made some time ago: "Eschatology is not itself the substance of the Gospel, but a form under which the absolute value of the Gospel facts is asserted". And again: "Whatever may be said of the second advent of the Lord, the sense of the preparatory, the provisional, the incomplete, which is an inseparable element in all Old Testament prophecy, has no place in the New Testament. The Lord has come." Here is the characteristic exaggeration of the (undoubtedly valuable) concept of realised eschatology, indelibly associated with Professor Dodd. Certainly it is true that the redemptive obedience of Jesus on the Cross and his introduction of the new order by his resurrection partook of the finality of eternity; it is nevertheless true that what Heim called the *Machtfrage*, the question of power, was not settled by either of those twin-events. Sin is still very much in the world and death claims all. The Kingdom of God is everywhere limited in this universe. In this sense the work of Christ is just as certainly incomplete as it is valid for eternity; for by no mutation can the change from a universe of sin and death to the new creation of resurrection life be evolved, even under the direction of the Spirit; only the re-creative work of the Almighty Christ can bring about that. And that is what we await at the Second Coming. Happily, Professor Dodd appears to admit this now, from his more recent definition of the Advent as "the final disclosure of the power and righteousness of God and the end of history as we know it".

In conclusion, it should be apparent from the above that the significant element in the coming of Christ is not alone the unveiling of his Presence, though that in itself is enough to shake the universe; rather, that unveiling is to witness His final works of judgment and deliverance, his consummation of the Kingdom that shall know no end. How He is to accomplish this nor tongue nor pen can show. But the concluding words of the message from the Evanston assembly express our sentiment: "We do not know what is coming to us. But we know Who is coming. It is He Who meets us every day and Who will meet us at the end—Jesus Christ our Lord." And that is all that matters.

G. R. BEASLEY-MURRAY.

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## INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE

**T**HERE is a new emphasis today upon the content of Scripture. This emphasis is apparent both in Biblical scholarship and in the task of communicating the Gospel. The fresh appreciation of the content of Scripture within the Church is matched by the

widespread ignorance of the Scripture outside the Church. Both aspects of the situation in which we live challenge the preacher: he has a new opportunity of interpreting the Scripture.

It is my judgment that this is a time for Biblical preaching and I would make a plea for a serious consideration of the issues involved in such preaching. If this judgment is sound, fresh attention should be given to the principles which guide a sound interpretation of Scripture. Consider some approaches to Scripture and their value in elucidating the principles of interpretation.

In his essay on the necessity of demythologising the New Testament, R. Bultman has said that the "*kerygma* is incredible to modern man" because modern man is convinced that the entire framework of the *kerygma* is obsolete; hence the preacher faces the task of freeing the essential proclamation from its non-essential framework. I have had just this problem presented to me by thoughtful Christian people who wanted to know how to interpret a Gospel given within the agricultural setting of first century Palestine in terms of twentieth century industrialist society. Biblical preaching cannot ignore the problem even though Bultman's conclusions are rejected.

Bultman's work arises from and is partly a reaction to the historical approach to the Bible of the Liberal school. The quest of the historical Jesus may not have achieved all that those engaged in it hoped for, but it has placed us all in their debt. A Gospel based on incarnation cannot ignore history. The Liberal school calls us to take history seriously and this call should be heeded. A sound interpretation of Scripture cannot dispense with the historical perspective. Accurate knowledge of the events, customs, people of ancient times, as well as of their languages, will illuminate many a passage of Scripture and give a fresh meaning. The preacher should always be a careful student of the background of the Bible. This does not mean reading the Bible merely as ancient history. It means a proper appreciation of the continuity of the Divine purpose through time, a continuity to which every man belongs so that all men are in fact involved in the events of the Incarnation. Every man may be, as Kierkegaard said, contemporary with Christ.

This sense of being involved in the revelation to which Scripture bears witness is the driving force of the Barthian reaction to the Liberal approach. Barth will go beyond a sense of history which deals with what he calls the "words" of Scripture; he asserts that "the Word must be exposed in the words". That is true enough! The historical process is a means whereby God addresses His Word to mankind. Any genuine interpretation of Scripture must let that Word speak, placing the hearer in a situation of decision.

Yet what is this Word that must speak? Barth's approach has sometimes led to a strengthening of the attitude which finds



the Bible a source-book of authority for certain dogmas. The Word is too easily equated with doctrines and the doctrines are then invested with infallible authority. This attitude has a long history. In common with much scholastic teaching Aquinas held that there are certain truths accessible to man's natural reason, but there are other truths which can be known only through revelation. The Reformers did not seriously alter this view of the Scripture as the source of revealed doctrines. In his "Institutes" Calvin states his conviction that "It is impossible for any man to obtain even the minutest portion of right and sound doctrine without being a disciple of Scripture". This attitude led in Calvinism, as it has in our own day, to a dogmatic form of Christianity which fails to combine strength of doctrine with graciousness of spirit or tolerance of judgment, and so ultimately silences by its wordy disputes and arguments that Divine Word to which it calls men to listen. Yet doctrine is indispensable and the Scripture does contain "all things necessary to salvation". A sound interpretation of Scripture must present, with clear and integrated comprehension, those abiding themes and doctrines which belong to the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

The serious attempt to listen to the Divine Word in Scripture is also strengthening the attitude which regards Scripture as expressing its truth in myths, types and symbols. Long ago Origen asserted that there is one meaning of Scripture for the simple believer and a profounder meaning for the mature believer. This profound meaning could be set forth only by the allegorical method. So in our own day Austin Farrer has said: "The promise of God's grace can be set before us in nothing but images". The excessive use of typology and allegory may make Bible study a fascinating exercise for certain minds, but it also makes the Bible unintelligible to thousands of humble believers. Yet it is equally true that what is unseen and eternal can be expressed only in symbols and images, and that growth in grace is growth in insight.

These brief references to modes of interpreting Scripture suggest that sound principles of interpretation must include a proper respect for the historical, must lead to the formulation of integrated doctrines, must allow for the imaginative use of symbols; and must do all this in such a way that the Eternal Word is uttered. A synthesis of these principles derives, in my judgment, from a proper understanding of the concept of revelation.

In his book "I and Thou", Martin Buber has said that "all revelation is summons and sending". This is an expression of his awareness of the fundamentally personal nature of life; he says that "in the beginning was relation". On the basis of this interpretation of life, Brunner's assertion, worked out in "Revelation and Reason", that what God reveals is Himself is immediately intelligible. "The real content of revelation in the Bible is not 'something' but God Himself." Revelation is not

then of doctrines, creeds, words; revelation is of God Himself in His saving relationship with sinful man. His self-revealing is in a Person—Jesus Christ. Hence Christ is the light shining through all the true media of revelation. In an essay on "The Task of Exegesis", E. C. Blackman has said "The whole Bible, Old Testament as well as New Testament, is witness to Christ. . . . The Word of God in the primary sense is Christ, the Bible is the Word of God in a secondary sense, in so far as it testifies to Him and mediates Him. . . . Christ is the spiritual sense of Scripture. This provides us with both a course of interpretation and a principle of Unity".

If it be accepted that what God reveals is Himself and that this revelation occurs in the Divine-human encounter, it naturally follows that the communication of the revelation will imply the use of modes of thought and speech by personal witnesses, though these are not themselves the revelation. They are the means whereby others may come to the place of encounter and know for themselves the God Who makes Himself known.

This concept of revelation seems to me to provide the basis for the principles of interpretation already enunciated. It is clear that if the personal testimony is to remain through time it must receive permanent expression and this happens in the two forms of the Book and the Community. Both have continuity of life and witness, though the Community is more subject to change than the Book. Hence neither the Book nor the Community is the revelation, but both may be the place of the encounter.

The preacher stands as personal witness within the witness of the Community. The witness of both is that of Scripture. If this witness is to fulfil its real function and mediate the wholeness of the Word made flesh it must include accurate historical knowledge, sound doctrinal integration, imaginative use of symbol and image, together with a compassionate understanding of the people to whom the witness is borne. Then indeed Scripture becomes afresh an open door through which God in His saving grace may meet again sinful man and the returning son experience once more the Father's welcome.

L. G. CHAMPION.

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The article by the Rev. E. H. Robertson is the first of a series on the Use of the Bible. It is largely illustrated by his experiences as Secretary, United Bible Societies, Geneva.

The following article is taken from a paper read before a gathering of Clergy in the Diocese of Durham by the Rev. R. T. Brooks, Religious Broadcasting Assistant, North Region.

The Editorial Board expresses sincere thanks to both these writers for ready willingness to allow publication.

## A FREE CHURCH VIEW OF PREACHING

IN speaking of Nonconformist preaching I am not speaking of anything which the Church of England need regard as a strange, exotic development flowering only in the chapels. The important thing about a sermon is what it says, and in that we are rarely divided.

All the same, it is possible to see in the characteristic Free Church Minister's sermon certain ideas about the preacher's method and intention which are distinctive. Exceptions are abundant, but tendencies are nevertheless discernible.

In trying to analyse the idea behind some characteristic Nonconformist sermons I have isolated six elements.

The first of the six is the idea that preaching is sacramental—in a strict sense, not just in the way in which all life is sacramental. We believe in the Real Presence of Christ in His Word. We believe that sermons become preaching only when the Holy Ghost is given. To hear the Word is not just to hear about God but to meet Him. The preacher does not give you merely something to take home and think about and turn to good account in your life and in your prayers during the week. What he speaks about is actualized there and then by a miracle. The congregation is in the communion of the Holy Spirit or there has been no preaching. That is the theory of it, and it is a theory which has had and still does have a real effect in practice.

Of course, we have heard and answered the call for teaching sermons. There is nothing in what I have said to prevent sermons from teaching congregations about Christian faith and practice. But no Free Church minister would feel he had done his job in the pulpit if he had taken a Christian doctrine and explained it lucidly and interestingly to his congregation. They have come to him not merely to learn about the grace of God but actually to taste and see how gracious the Lord is. That is why he goes on from teaching to "offer Christ". Others may feel he is ranting, but he cannot content himself with a piece of dispassionate instruction. He must hold up Christ in the same way and for the same reason that the Host is elevated in the eucharist.

Failure to understand this accounts, I think, for a great deal of misunderstanding of the shape of Nonconformist services—and chapels. These high central pulpits were not built to provide a mere dramatic rostrum for the Rev. Mr. Somebody to declaim from. It may have been used for that, but it was built as a fitting throne for the Word and to bring the preached word of the sermon into a proper relation to the acted word of the Lord's table. In the same way, Nonconformist services were not designed to give prominence to preaching at the expense of worship, because the exhibition of the Word is worship for both speaker and hearer. I cannot pretend that this miracle is performed twice a Sunday in every Nonconformist chapel. Perhaps most Nonconformists go to Church hoping merely to hear something helpful to think about, but the fact remains that

the form of the service and of the sermon is determined by an historic sense of the sacrament of the Word.

That is a factor which has been present since the beginning of English nonconformity.

The second of my six, though akin to the first, shows itself most clearly only after the revival movement led by the Wesleys. It is the characteristic demand in Nonconformist preaching for an immediate response on the part of the individual hearer. This is connected with the sense of the sacramental presence of Christ in His Word, but it is not the same thing. Here it is the individual heart which is under observation, and the demand is that it should leap up to embrace salvation while the preacher preaches, to embrace it wholly and to embrace it now. John Wesley had a way of reminding his hearers that they could lay hold of life, of pardon, of peace, of everything the Gospel had to offer "this day, before that sun goes down". And here is a characteristic peroration from C. H. Spurgeon. "I would do as the Roman ambassadors did to the eastern king, when they made a ring in the sand, and said, 'Pass that ring, and you proclaim war or you make peace. You must stand and decide within that circle.' I draw such a circle around you tonight, and say, 'Do not stir from that pew till Christ or sin, heaven or hell, faith or unbelief, is chosen by you.'"

Modern styles are less dramatic, but the Free Church preacher still feels that he must preach for a verdict. Perhaps he asks too often for that final verdict upon which salvation depends, but at least he has an instinct that some real decision should be called for. Perhaps that also makes him sound like a ranter in other ears, but he has been taught by his tradition that all heaven comes down with the preaching of the Word and the congregation has only to open its heart to receive the blessing here and now.

The third factor, if it represents a real difference between Free Churchmen and others, is a difference only of degree. It concerns the place of the Bible in preaching. Free Church preaching is traditionally Biblical preaching. Originally it was almost painfully so. The quoting of texts in Puritan sermons went to such lengths that it must sometimes have obscured the preacher's point, but these texts represented the only authority to which the preacher would appeal. He did not ask to be heard on the ground that he was validly ordained, or highly educated, or religiously inspired, or movingly eloquent. He asked to be heard because he was opening God's Word, and for no other reason.

During the years of uncertainty about the trustworthiness of the Bible, Free Church preaching was all at sea. I do not think the Free Churches were more shaken in their essential orthodoxy than the Church of England was, but it showed more. The Anglican, in doubt about the interpretation of the Bible, still had his prayer book, and in any case he could fall back on the authority of his Church and of tradition if the Bible threatened to let him down.

The Free Churches had no such refuge, and their preaching felt the full force of the blast. A minority pressed on regardless. They adopted what was really a new conception of verbal inspiration and preached as before. The majority tried to rest their message on some alternative authority in case the Bible should fail. They appealed to religious experience, to reason, to morality, to psychology. They tried to present Christianity in harmony with modern knowledge and modern styles of thought. It was a tremendous undertaking, tackled with great boldness and imagination.

Now, of course, the storm is over, and scholarship has made a return to Biblical preaching possible. The trouble is that at first glance it appears to have made it easy. I do not think that we have yet begun to gather into preaching the fruits of the critical period. We have gone back to the Bible as if nothing had happened, as if there had been no fresh insight into its nature. But of course there has, and preaching should be richer than ever it was as a result. It should be taking congregations through the record to the event and through the event to the revelation, bringing them closer to the acts of God than it has ever done. Unfortunately, there is little sign of it. The Bible is much quoted in sermons today, but if you examine nine out of ten of the paragraphs in which Scripture is quoted and commented upon you will find nothing added to the thoughts of a hundred years ago. I think I am still right to list reliance on the Bible among the characteristics of Free Church preaching, but I am not claiming that we show any sign of knowing how to do it.

#### EXCURSUS ON THE EFFECT OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

Any Nonconformist asked to list the characteristics of Free Church preaching would include the ones I have mentioned so far. The remaining three I am less sure about. I think there is some ground for including them, but I cannot claim that they are generally recognised. In fact, this next one is a characteristic which I feel ought to be present according to our liturgical principles, rather than one which I would say *is* present. The principle I have in mind is that of free prayer. It is not a subject one hears so much about these days, but historically it has been an important principle that however carefully prepared a service may be the Minister must be free to express on behalf of the congregation the prayers which demand to be offered in the actual context of the service as it happens. He may read some prayers. He may premeditate all of them. But there must be room for the offering of worship to be moulded and to grow as a living experience animated by the Spirit and disciplined by the Word.

Now I think the same principle applies to preaching, though we have been reluctant to make the application. Nonconformists who refused to take written prayers into the pulpit might take sermons all carefully written out and ready for publication after delivery. I hope they were prepared to handle their manuscripts very freely

once they were launched, but I do not know that they did. Free Church preaching should be free preaching, and the final shape and language of the sermon should be determined in the living relationship between the preacher and his congregation. If that makes subsequent publication impossible, so much the better. Preaching is a living relationship. The printed sermon is its enemy and not its friend.

Of course, I am not asking that preachers should go into the pulpit unprepared. That was not the idea of free prayer, either. Here is some advice about it from Isaac Watts who wrote at a time when free prayer was a dearly cherished principle.

“An extreme to be avoided by all that would obtain the gift of prayer is a neglect of preparation for prayer and an entire dependence on sudden motions and suggestions, as though we were to expect the perpetual impression of the Holy Spirit upon our minds . . . both in the matter and manner and words of prayer without any forethought or care or premeditation of our own. It is true, indeed, that when a man hath premeditated the matter of his prayer and the method of it never so exactly, he ought not so to confine himself as to neglect or check any warm and pious desires that may arise in his heart in the midst of the duty. But this doth not hinder but that it is lawful and proper by all useful means to endeavour in general to learn the holy skill of praying and to prepare also by meditation or reading or holy conversation for the particular exercise of this gift and the performance of this duty.”

Now that is how I feel the Free Churchman should handle his sermon—to prepare it, but allow it to come alive and grow in its encounter with the congregation. In fact there is a lot of Watts’ advice on prayer which might well be applied to preaching. This, for instance. I have altered the word “pray” to “preach”.

“Do not affect to preach long, for the sake of length, or to stretch out your matter by labour and toil of thought beyond the furniture of your own spirit.”

As one who sits in pews, amen to that.

And that quaint phrase about the furniture of your own spirit makes a good introduction to my next point. I think it is characteristic of our idea of preaching that it should be furnished by a man’s own spirit. I have already said that the ultimate authority in Non-conformist preaching is the Bible, but there is also in it an element of the appeal to experience and every sermon is in some degree a personal testimony. The preacher must be prepared to say that what he preaches he has himself found to be true. He must authenticate his sermon with his signature. It must have his own personal mark on it.

Only one more point. It concerns the role in which the preacher speaks, and therefore the relationship between him and his congregation. Of course, he speaks as a pastor and much of what he says will be determined by his pastoral knowledge of his people, and yet

I do not think our preachers speak chiefly as pastors or priests or prophets. Their relationship to the congregation is not quite that. Perhaps their language and their style and their intention is best understood as those of a lover. They are in the deepest sense making love to the congregation on God's behalf. Unless the love of Christ constrains them, they are not preaching. Unless the divine love reaches out to the congregation through them, they have failed.

That accounts, I think, for both the best and the worst in Free Church preaching. At its worst it can become rank sentimentality, a flowery prettiness which is nauseous to a degree. At its best it is the love which is the revelation far more than the words. The poets have shown us how ordinary human love can have the force of a revelation. Here is a verse from Kathleen Raine:—

“When your hand touches mine, it is the earth  
That takes me—the deep grass,  
And rocks and rivers; the green graves,  
And children still unborn, and ancestors,  
In love passed down from hand to hand from God.  
Your love comes from the creation of the world,  
From these paternal fingers, streaming through the clouds,  
That break with light the surface of the sea.”

If love can be spoken of in that way, then it is not improper to think of the preacher as a lover. I sit under him not just to be instructed, but to be loved. I want the love of God to shine upon me there. I want to be spoken to not as it were from the top of Sinai but from the mount of transfiguration. I want to see a flash of glory, a glimpse of life transfigured by the touch of heaven. My own response should involve my head as well as my heart, but ultimately what the preacher appeals for is the love of his congregation and the only thing he has with which to win it is the love of God.

R. T. BROOKS.

## THE USE OF THE BIBLE

### 1. FAMILY WORSHIP

**I**N the nineteenth century family worship was a regular practice in Britain and most Protestant communities of Europe. Everywhere it has declined. In Scotland this decline has been noted and serious efforts made to develop a modern form of family worship that can be used in the structure of present-day life without being remote or embarrassing. In Holland and Germany it has also declined, but has been replaced in most Christian homes by a short form of worship at table.

In Germany in particular, the “*Losungen*” compiled by the Moravians is widely used. That collection gives a carefully selected daily group of Bible texts and the verse of a hymn, taking about three minutes. Throughout Europe this is often done at breakfast

time, but in Scotland and in European countries the family is less often together at breakfast. This has led to placing family table worship at the evening meal and it usually takes the form of a three-minute Bible reading and a prayer. An increasing number of families are developing this simple form of reading the Bible and praying with the family. Modern translations, or even books which retell the Bible stories, are sometimes used for the sake of children; but in most cases the Authorised Version is still employed so that its majestic echoes might become familiar to children.

The difficulties of conducting family worship have been recognised by all those societies who compile books and helps to reading the Bible. They have in many different ways issued special forms for use either for all the family or with those who are naturally together at one time. For example, the Drummond Tract Depot publishes a British edition of "The Upper Room", an American series of Bible notes, accurately described as "Daily Devotions for Family and Individual Use". Each day has a Bible reading, never more than about seven verses, a single text, a short story of modern life and followed by a prayer about the length of a collect. Then there is a thought for the day, usually of the moral uplift kind.

The notes are written by some well-known person whose name is attached. The form remains the same, but the writer, writing within a given form, is always different. They are all lay men and as the Editor puts it: "61 lay men representing many walks of life will witness to millions of people who need spiritual refreshment, people who will be helped by their lay witness". It is the kind of form used by the B.B.C. in its programme called "Five to Ten", when in the space of five minutes a story, a hymn and a prayer are broadcast. This is at 9.55 a.m., and used by a number of housewives for a short act of devotion. "The Upper Room", however, is intended either for family worship or for individual use, and there is evidence that it is being increasingly used by husband and wife together. It makes the beginning of a habit of family worship and has the advantage of being simple and related to everyday life.

A different form is that produced by the I.B.R.A., called "My Small Corner". Intended for children who either do not read or read only with difficulty, the book is read by the parent. While the approach is suitable to the young child, many a parent using this will be both teaching him and herself to worship together. The form is usually that of retelling a Bible story, reading a few verses, and then a short, simple prayer. All the experience of Sunday School work among young children has gone into the preparation of these notes, and it is made attractive for the child.

There are other such notes and these two are given as examples from the English-speaking world. These attempts to repair family worship are made not simply with the idea of getting back to the old days, when the family and the servants gathered together to hear the father—who was something like a high priest—read a long



Bible passage, expound it, and pray at length. Not many people want to get back to that kind of family worship, though this is not to deny its very real character and strength in thousands of homes, but life has changed and there is resistance to an outward form that has no longer retained the inward spirit. The attempt at a shorter form of worship, sometimes with only a few of the family together, is more realistic and can be made a vital part of daily life. When the best form of worship has been worked out, or a selection to suit different countries and occasions, the problem is, how to educate people into using them, and how to help them continue in the practice. In Scotland some ministers have talked with couples about to be married and explained that if they are to seek a Christian marriage in the Church, they must promise to read the Bible and pray together every day. There is no doubt that if this is done from the beginning it becomes easier. It also unites the two people at a profound level. Other ministers do much the same when a child is brought for Baptism. Indeed, some have refused to baptise the child unless the parent will give a promise to bring it up in an atmosphere where prayer is offered every day. It is, however, found that simply to present a Bible on these occasions is only to present a problem. The Bible is a difficult book and no longer used easily in family worship. Such guides as have already been listed must be given to the parents if they are daily to continue for any length of time. The Scottish Bible Society has tried to help parents by showing a film "The Bible on the table", a short film intended to encourage family worship by showing how it can be conducted simply and naturally. Many parents are not so much reluctant to conduct worship as completely mystified as to how to do it, and it is one of the continuing pastoral duties of the minister to help develop family worship until it gets beyond the childish stage and becomes increasingly part of the family life.

One thing to be studied if we are to understand how family worship can develop naturally in our homes, is the reason for its decline. No one doubts the fact, and most people give as the reason, that it is no longer practicable. In most homes there is scarcely any period of the day when all the family are together. In Scotland, tea is always at six and the whole family is expected to be together, and many European families have a more regular time-table than is customary in England.

A compromise has been made in some homes where it is difficult for the whole family to meet together. It is to have daily or weekly family prayers until the eldest child becomes eight years old. This is an attempt to be practical and realistic, but an obvious admission that family prayer as a unified act is not natural to our modern life. There is a feeling in England that family prayers declined because of their own inherent weakness as an act of worship: they laid too much stress on the importance of the head of the family who conducted them. They made insufficient allowance for differences of temperament in the family and they too easily became a formality

which quickly lost its spontaneity. These are, of course, criticisms of the way in which they were conducted, and not of the idea of the family praying together. The decline is undoubtedly connected with the lowered spiritual temperament of our day—or at least, as one group has said, “the less conventional adherence to religious observance”.

Moreover, there is a rapidly growing specialisation in modern life which has found its counterpart in the Church. Despite vigorous lay movements there is the argument that the minister is the specialist for worship and that worship can be left to him. The children are sent to school to be educated, to Sunday School to learn religion, and the people go to Church—if they go at all—to be led in worship.

All this leads to the taking away from family life of one more of its functions. We have this century undergone, in Western Europe, a revolution of considerable dimensions, and its influence on the family unit has been perhaps the greatest. Work is no longer related to family life except as a means of income. Leisure and entertainment are not organised within the family unit but are supplied from outside. Other elements in this revolution must be discussed later, but the tendency to leave religion to Sunday School and Church is one symptom of this taking away from the family its function as a worshipping community. This raises the basic question, which is, not how we may restore family worship and train parents to conduct it, or what kind of literature is needed; but what is the relation of any family worship to the rest of life? At the centre of family worship, when it is effective, is always a Bible reading, and unless that can be shown to be related to what is done during the rest of the day, in work or leisure, then such worship is doomed to be remote. It is certainly asking too much that every Bible passage should immediately become relevant as soon as we step into the office or workshop. But as a family reads the Bible together it should expect that what is said there has something to do with the life they are going to live, or have lived so far, that day. The language of the Authorised Version is not the only thing that makes the Bible appear to belong to an earlier generation. There are good modern translations, and still many people regard the Bible as remote. We have to ask, not what has happened to the Bible but what has happened to our relation to it that it should so seldom speak to the world in which we live?

In trying to deal with this problem, the German experience during the Nazi period should help us greatly. The Germans have learnt to read their Bibles and study them until the passage really says something that matters for that day. This is not possible in the short period of family worship, which cannot possibly last the length of time that a German Bible Study does. But unless the Church as a whole has learnt to expect the Bible to speak and is prepared to wrestle with it until it does, then we are delivering into the hands of parents a weapon which we ourselves have not yet learnt to use.

E. H. ROBERTSON.

## CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

**P**AUL, writing to the Galatians on a controversy somewhat foreign to our ways of thinking, utters the tremendous words: "For freedom, Christ has made us free". They ring like a clarion call across the centuries, and, to vary the metaphor, bring a clean wind blowing into our restricted lives. But the saying is not a truism. It is a deep paradox. For the Christian, pledged to a standard of morality which he confesses unattainable, committed to a centuries-old conception of the truth, obedient to an ethic dubbed slave by Nietzsche and Bernard Shaw, does not always appear to be the world's freest citizen.

In this realm the Baptists have a proud record. It was the pioneer Baptist, Thomas Helwys, who in 1612 made his "Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity" the first demand in England for universal religious liberty or freedom of conscience. In it he advanced the revolutionary proposition: "Our lord the king is but an earthly king and he hath no authority as a king but in earthly causes, and if the king's people be obedient and true subjects obeying all human laws made by the king, our lord and king can require no more; for men's religion to God is betwixt God and themselves; the king shall not answer for it, neither may the king judge between God and man. Let them be heretics, Turks, Jews or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure." In the Commonwealth period it was the army composed largely of Congregationalists and Baptists who demanded from Parliament freedom of Worship. It was the Baptist, Roger Williams, who founded in Rhode Island a new state dedicated to the ideals of religious liberty. It was the Baptist, William Knibb, who, by his revelations of the condition of slaves in Jamaica, gave powerful support to the Act for the emancipation of slaves in 1833. It was the Dissenters in the nineteenth century who moved inexorably and progressively forward to Manhood Suffrage in 1918. The nonconformist chapels trained many of the Labour leaders who emancipated the workers from the economic bondage of low wages and insecurity.

But what of Freedom today? We live in an age of complete democracy and the welfare state. Have we abolished the foes of political freedom or do dangers still lurk?

The first danger is the tendency of democratic majorities not to respect the rights of minorities. It was democratic Athens which voted the death of all male members of revolting Mitylene. It was democratic U.S.A. which as almost the first act of its emancipated career expelled the loyalists from the U.S.A. And when today we hear a noted politician refer to another section of the community as vermin, we see the same tendency at work. As Christians we base our conception of freedom on the eternal value of each human being. Every man has the right of liberty to whatever party he may belong.

The second threat is from bureaucracy. To the bureaucrat the individual is but an integer in his statistics, and he often seems unaware that he has rights. The Crichton Downs case is but Naboth's vineyard up to date, substituting Bureaucracy for King Ahab and inadequate compensation for a death by stoning.

The third danger to freedom is the doctrine of guilt by association. It has found expression lately even in America, where anyone who has associated with Communists is regarded as a Communist. The New Testament doctrine is that each man shall be responsible for the deeds done in his own body, not anyone else's. The doctrine of guilt by association was preferred against Jesus by the Pharisees when they called Him the friend of publicans and sinners, and it is regrettable that an exploded fallacy should be thus revived.

But the political and economic aspects of Christian freedom are not the main aspects. In a review of Dr. Niebuhr's "Christian Realism and Political Problems", the writer says: "when the book is closed and the reader has been made aware of the necessity that the Church should free itself from its commitments with the world, he is bound to feel that the discussion has ranged only over the collective aspect of life. Certainly that side needs careful thought, and he will agree that the Church needs to be careful lest in the emotion of a political crisis it finds itself blessing something that history will reveal in very tarnished splendour. It must, of course, speak of the righteousness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the redemptive power of grace, and of the kingdom that does not derive from this world. But the reader is also likely to want to remind Professor Niebuhr that the Christian is caught in this terrifying dance of death as an individual, and has judgements to give, decisions to make, actions to put in hand. The deepest implications of Christian freedom are not collective, but individual, and have to do with the soul of the individual."

In the clearest statement of His mission, made in St. Mark x, 45, Jesus said: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many". And a ransom is a price paid to set free. One might render it: "For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life to liberate many".

That this liberation is the main purpose of Christ's coming is borne out by Dr. Dodd's translation of redemption as "emancipation". Dodd says in "The Meaning of Paul for Today" that what God gives man through Christ is emancipation—deliverance from the yoke of an external moral standard and from the tyranny of evil habit. The justified man is like a slave freed from his master's power, or the heir who, attaining his majority, becomes master in his own house. It is no mere change of status of which Paul speaks. It is a real deliverance from something which denies free play to the human will to do good.

Much of St. Paul's writing deals with emancipation from the law. "For ye were also made dead to the law through the body of Jesus Christ." Dr. Dodd suggests that the law was almost an obsession with St. Paul. But when he tried to fulfil its command he found that he was unable to do so. The law revealed to him that he was carnal, sold under sin. But as he progressed in Christian experience he came to a realisation of Christian emancipation. The law for Paul was the law of Moses, and we sometimes talk as if that controversy was therefore entirely out of date. But is it? What is law for us? Is it not an external moral standard? There are moral codes or standards sanctioned by a society or class which act for us as the law of Moses to Paul and tend to reduce us to bondage. Gore says this is especially true of Church circles, where each group has a common public opinion which acts as an external moral standard to which all have to conform in order to be accepted within that circle. In certain Church circles, for example, one must accept the verbal inspiration of the Scripture to be *persona grata*, in others, equally, one must reject it. But each group has its own standard of truth and duty to be accepted, lest one fall into the category of a heathen man and a publican. But Paul declares the Christian is delivered from all such external standards. For him, good conduct is not obedience to a list of commandments, but the fruits of the Spirit. Paul himself acknowledged the right of no external authority to direct him in spiritual matters, though he gave due place to the powers that be in other things. The price of freedom is not only eternal vigilance, but also eternal re-definition. An American defined freedom as the ability of any man to obtain what he liked provided he could pay for it. The economic *laissez-faire* of the nineteenth century tended to become the freedom of those with wealth to exploit those without wealth. Modern freedom tends to become the freedom to exist providing one does not question the existing régime. But true freedom is to be free to be what one was meant to be. That freedom only Christ who rose triumphant over sin and death can give us. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

J. P. HICKERTON.

#### CHURCH UNION IN CEYLON A BETRAYAL OF BAPTIST PRINCIPLES

THE recent article in the *Fraternal* and other such articles on this subject have caused deep heartsearching and alarm among a very large section of British Baptists. Here is no superficial issue, to be glossed over and lightly accepted. The proposals now finalised and unalterable are before the Ceylon Baptist Churches for consideration. If accepted and the merger takes place it will mean the disappearance of our distinctive Baptist witness in Ceylon within

twenty years. Let us be realistic and honest in facing up to the facts of the case. No amount of clever work-spinning can obscure the main issues.

Much has been made of so-called Anglican "concessions". A careful examination of the scheme will disclose that these are more apparent than real. In point of fact, *no fundamental principle of the Anglican Church has been either weakened or conceded*. This is an Anglican scheme in every basic particular, with a few verbal emendations here and there to soothe and conciliate the other denominations concerned. Yet in exchange for the "privilege" of participation, Baptists are asked to give up those great and precious truths which are dearer to us than life. In Christian love we advise our Baptist brethren in Ceylon to think most carefully before taking that irrevocable step which will sever them from their Baptist friends all over the world and make them an insignificant section of a United Church predominantly Anglican. It is nonsense to suggest that Baptists who join a United Church which recognises Infant Baptism as valid can remain in real fellowship with Baptist Churches which regard Infant Baptism as completely unscriptural. Ceylon Baptists who join the United Church will cease to be Baptists in the strict sense of the term. Compared with the principles they are asked to give up, the "concessions" are indeed trifling.

Basic objections to the Scheme can be briefly stated thus:—

1. INFANT BAPTISM. By entering this Union, Baptists are obliged to admit that the Baptism of Infants is a valid form of Christian Baptism. The very truth for which Baptists have stood for hundreds of years, namely that Baptism is only for believers, is thus thrown on the scrap-heap. Surely Believers' Baptism is the *raison d'être* of our Baptist existence, plus the denial of Infant Baptism, with its accompanying heresy of Baptismal Regeneration. There are not two kinds of Baptism in the New Testament. It is futile to deny that the Anglicans in Ceylon, mostly of the High Church variety, believe that the infant baptised receives regenerating grace and thus enters the Church. How can Baptists worthy of the name link up with them? Can we here in Britain approve such an idea? Surely that would be unthinkable. We dare not deny our own fundamental convictions. Shall we cease to print Wheeler Robinson's book "Baptist Principles"? Shall we ask Henry Cook to revise his book "What Baptists stand for"? Shall we dissociate ourselves, at this late hour, from all that our great forefathers in the faith believed and taught?

To suggest that Baptists, by entering the Union will "make a greater witness to Baptist principles than by staying outside" is a typical example of the muddled thinking and special pleading which is going on at the present time. You do not make a witness to any principle by admitting that the other side was right after all! If Infant Baptism is right, go ahead. If Infant Baptism is wrong, then have nothing to do with the Union.

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

My dear friends,

The financial year of the Baptist Insurance Co. Ltd. ended on the 18th November and I am glad to report that the Company has experienced a good year. It has made its usual handsome donation to the Home Work Fund, thus materially assisting the Baptist Union in the maintenance and increase of the standard stipend.

I have spent some time examining the trends of business over a number of years and the incidence of claims. Various things stand out clearly:—

1. The number and amount of the claims arising from storms and tempests, and from frost damage.
2. The excessive compensation claimed by Third Parties for minor injuries.
3. The regularity with which a really serious fire takes place every few years.
4. The value of the Voluntary Worker's Policy, and the importance of our Theft Policy, which, unlike many others, is not limited to Burglary and Housebreaking.
5. The necessity for regular examination by the Treasurer of his Church's insurances.

As I have perused the many expressions of appreciation we have received from Churches in all parts of the country, I have thought the Company must remember the Gospel words "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you". Nevertheless such letters gladden our hearts and urge us to strive to do better still. So we enter 1957 desiring to serve to the utmost, and sending our good wishes to ministers, deacons, church members, and, indeed, to all our policyholders.

May God's rich grace bless you all throughout this New Year.

Your fellow servant,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

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2. THE DENIAL OF FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE. It is clearly stated in the Scheme that those who have received Infant Baptism and later desire to be baptised as believers, following conversion, *will not be allowed so to do*. Consider the implications. As Baptists we have always stood for the principle of liberty of conscience. A man's conscience is his own and he must be free to do the will of God as he sees it. Do we still believe that, or don't we? Thomas Helwys died in prison, and many Baptists suffered martyrdom, for this principle. And now the Baptists in Ceylon are being asked to give up this fundamental principle for all time. The uniting Churches must not engage in any propaganda for their own distinctive views. So Baptists are to be fettered and confined. And if Believers' Baptism is asked for by a convert who was sprinkled in infancy, it is not to be permitted. This is a most serious matter. Have we lived to see the day when Baptists would give up their freedom in the interests of expediency, and surrender soul liberty for the doubtful benefits of a Union Church? No amount of subtle reasoning can explain away the tragic fact that Freedom of Conscience will be denied in the United Church, not merely with regard to Believers' Baptism, but in many other matters. We ask Ceylon Baptists to think well before committing themselves to such an outrageous proposal, worthy of Archbishop Laud himself.

3. EPISCOPACY REGARDED AS FUNDAMENTAL. Anglicans forming the overwhelming majority in Ceylon, it is not surprising that the proposed Union is solidly based upon Episcopacy in Church government. There are face-saving side references to Presbyterian and Congregational principles of Church polity, *but the Bishop (once appointed) is supreme*. We have the old heresy, "No Bishop, no Church". Here is the complete Anglican set-up, Bishop, Presbyter (or Priest), and Deacon. It is only too obvious that the real power is in the Bishop's hands. He alone can dictate policy, ordain ministers, and conduct confirmation services. Do we believe that a Bishop can confer the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands? Lay celebration of the Lord's Supper is not allowed. What becomes of our Baptist doctrine of the "Priesthood of all Believers"? Do we not stand for the "gathered Church", a spiritual democracy under the guidance of the Holy Spirit? We do not believe that Episcopal ordination is essential to a valid ministry. Yet this is to become the norm in the United Church. In fact, a thinly-disguised "Re-ordination Service" for all Ministers is to mark the inauguration of the new Church. Baptists cannot regard the Creeds of the Church as binding upon the consciences of believers. Yet these same Creeds are regarded as essential in the United Church in Ceylon. Surely to accept the whole Episcopal system, with all its unscriptural implications, is a complete denial of our Baptist principles. And this is what our Ceylon friends are being asked to do.

As Baptists we have always repudiated the sacerdotal claims of an Episcopally-ordained ministry, the assumption that those "in



holy orders " are a class apart from ordinary believers. " We hold firmly the priesthood of all believers and therefore we have no separated order of priests." So reads the Baptist Union reply to Lambeth. But there can be no question that this sacerdotal view of the ministry underlies the whole Union Scheme in Ceylon, despite some lip-service to the Baptist viewpoint. The whole conception of an order of priests is entirely foreign to the New Testament. Nowhere did the apostles claim that the Church's authority was vested in themselves, or to be transmitted to those whom they appointed. It is frankly admitted that " there is a marked tendency towards High Church practices " in the Anglican Churches of Ceylon, with the implication that salvation depends on the mediation of a priest. And this is the Church with which Baptists are being invited to unite.

Some other things need to be clearly stated. The entry of a small group of Baptists into an immensely larger group mainly of Anglicans can have only one result, the speedy liquidation of distinctive Baptist principles and practice. Consider the facts. There are 1,800 Baptists in Ceylon, as against 48,000 Anglicans. The overwhelming pressure of Anglican opinion in the United Church will gradually squeeze out the Baptist viewpoint. There will be a levelling-down process. Baptisms (that is, of believers) will dwindle and in a measurable period, say twenty years, they will cease altogether. It is an historical fact that, in the Early Church, Believers' Baptism was driven out by Infant Baptism. History will repeat itself, and Believers' Baptism will be driven out of the United Church in Ceylon by Infant Baptism. Those with strong Baptist convictions will join the Pentecostal groups or Brethren Assemblies in Ceylon. And those who are denied Baptism in the United Church because they had been sprinkled as infants will likewise join these other bodies.

The Ceylon Church Union Scheme must be resisted because it will set the pattern for other similar Unions elsewhere. The Plan for Church Union in North India is modelled on the Ceylon Scheme. Later we shall have similar proposals for Congo and other lands. And finally an attempt will be made to promote a United Church here in Britain on similar lines. It will be argued that " Baptists in Ceylon could unite on these conditions, why not Baptists here? " The Ceylon Scheme is the thin end of the wedge. If we do not take a firm stand now we shall find that our cherished Baptist principles will disappear. What must our Baptist brethren in America and elsewhere think of the Ceylon Scheme? And what will they think of us if we condone and encourage it? Are we being loyal to the Baptist World Alliance? These are very relevant questions.

ANGUS McMILLAN.

## EXPERIMENTS IN EVANGELISM

**E**VANGELISTIC efforts are now the order of the day. Many churches, it is true, are still pushing bills through people's doors proclaiming in ugly black print that a week's mission will be held to which all are welcome. But many are feeling their way towards a more effective evangelism. Here are a few experiments. We have all much to learn from each other.

## IN A DEVELOPMENT TOWN

Stuart Thomson is at Hemel Hempstead, until recently a quiet country town with an old and somewhat complacent Baptist Church. The increase of population from London and elsewhere has meant a great upheaval. The newcomers have no roots and the few with Church attachments find it difficult to settle in a new Church. The old residents, both in town and Church, do not feel pleased about the disturbance caused.

A Baptist Church built in one part of the new area is progressing well. For the part nearest his Church Mr. Thomson has attempted direct evangelism. Few people were enthusiastic, but he has wisely gone ahead with those who are. He reports that the best results have come from two by two visitation with literature, and that invitations to the special festivals of the Church year have brought a good response. The most difficult task has been to awaken the Church to a concern for the newcomers and to be prepared to welcome them.

## IN A NEW ESTATE

Kenneth Parkinson at Welwyn Garden City has been concerned in two new estate projects:

(a) In 1951 a new estate was built near the Church. A map was placed in the Church lobby and each house marked upon it as soon as building commenced. The Corporation gave information of new occupants and Church folk visited them upon their arrival and talked about local matters, and of the Church and its activities. Results were good. Two deacons, the Sunday School Superintendent and others, first came to the Church in this way.

Twice the whole congregation on a Sunday evening have taken the service out in the open air on the estate.

(b) Another new estate was distant from existing Churches. Here the local Churches joined with the Corporation in planning a centre of community life to cover many interests and activities, including religious ones. A special stress was put upon whole families.

Each new resident received a letter and a visit shortly after arrival. At a welcome meeting they met headmasters, welfare folk, ministers, and others, and had the idea of the centre explained.

Church services were held in a hall with a chancel area which was partitioned off when the hall was in general use. A Church Council

was elected and the Church of England seconded Rev. M. Daniels as leader. A family service on Sunday afternoons began well but ended with few adults, and a Sunday School is now formed. The evening service was taken by the various ministers in turn. Separate communion services were held for the Church of England and Free Church folk.

The main attendance was Church of England. Baptists were in the majority among Free Church people. They joined Mr. Parkinson's church and most attend regularly despite the distance. Otherwise the scheme has not been successful.

#### RETREATS

In this busy, harassed world one way to get folk to hear the voice of God is to take them away for a time with Christian people in a relaxed and happy Christian atmosphere.

Edward Smalley of Hitchin did some excellent work when Youth Secretary for Northants, in arranging Youth Retreats from Saturday to Monday of Whit week-end for folk aged between 15 and 30. There was a guest speaker, studies and group discussions, morning and evening prayers as well as free time and a Saturday night social. The response and the help received were great.

Mr. Smalley stresses that it is important to get the right place (he used a local authority Youth Conference Centre), not to cramp the programme and to have a definite serious aim.

#### THE WHOLE FAMILY FOR CHRIST

Bernard Green at Yardley, Birmingham, has laid stress on winning the family unit for Christ. All new families in the area are visited. Every opportunity is taken to get the parents of Sunday School scholars to Church. Suitable literature is used. Members are encouraged to use their homes for Christ by friendship, hospitality, prayer groups and service to their neighbourhood. One is a Sunday School on a prefab. estate. Numerous pastoral opportunities have come to the Minister in this way.

Monthly family services are held on Sunday mornings. Members of families take part and the Church is packed. A crèche is provided.

Careful instruction precedes marriage and dedication services. The need for the Church itself to be a family is emphasised, also for members to spend time in their own homes and not always to be on Church premises.

This is a right emphasis and results are excellent.

#### HOUSE MEETINGS

Many Churches are now using house meetings effectively. They vary a good deal. Some are for Church folk, for fellowship or prayer with perhaps the Minister coming in for a chat or question time. Such groups are good if they do not create cliques in the Church.

## **Baptist Union**

### **Schools and Fellowship Tours, 1957**

*Young people may enjoy a holiday with a purpose if they take part in the following schools and tours :—*

#### **Whitsuntide School**

June 7th—10th

A school for Sunday School teachers and leaders and others concerned with Christian education

“ Wayfarer’s Lodge ”, Ambleside, Westmorland  
August 3rd—10th

Leiston Abbey, Suffolk  
August 10th—17th

“ Hazeldene ”, Salcombe, South Devon  
August 10th—24th

St. Augustine’s College, Canterbury  
August 24th—31st  
A school for day and Sunday School teachers

#### **Fellowship Tours**

Switzerland and Italy  
July 26th—August 10th

Austria  
August 17th—31st

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*Full particulars of the above programme may be obtained from :—*

THE YOUNG PEOPLE’S DEPARTMENT  
BAPTIST CHURCH HOUSE  
4 SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1

Others are using house meetings for evangelism. The house Squash can be effective and the same idea used more broadly. Where a Church has won the good-will of a neighbourhood a friendly Christian family can invite interested neighbours for an evening "to meet our Minister" (you see where the good-will comes in!). After the first shyness has worn off questions usually come thick and fast and are very enlightening. Folk are shockingly ignorant of spiritual things, but they are curious.

#### THE CHURCH AND THE CHILD

H. D. Metherell, minister at Kings Langley for 18 years, has made ordinary Church life an effective instrument for evangelism. One of his fruitful ideas is for children who make a sincere decision for Christ but are yet too young to be made responsible Church members. After a simple service in the Sunday School these are given a certificate and their names placed on a Junior Church Membership Roll, displayed in the Church. They sign a card saying they have accepted Christ as Saviour, Lord and King and promising to form the habit of private Bible reading and prayer. They become Church members at the age of 16. Until then each has a sponsor appointed by the Minister. The sponsor represents the Church and becomes the child's friend and helper in the Christian life.

Classes are held in both junior and senior schools by a specially selected teacher for enrolled junior members and for enquirers. The Minister holds classes for those considering baptism and full Church membership.

\* \* \*

#### THE WORKS OF LOVE

There is no true evangelism without love and there is no true love that does not inevitably seek to express itself. Evangelism and service always go together.

Despite the Welfare State many folk are still in need of that which can be met only by the Church of Christ. Cards offering help freely (and not as the thinly-disguised bait for the hook) can bring a surprising response.

Lonely old folk desperately need to belong somewhere and matter to somebody. We have sought out a large number of these people and get them visited by Church members weekly. A small cause near us has started something even better. A group of friends prepare a picnic tea, visit an old person who cannot get out, have a short service, tea and a chat. The used crockery is then put back in the basket and returned.

#### OPEN-AIR MEETINGS

Reserve your very best for the open air. All must be crisp and interesting and the speakers brief and good—very good. Plan everything thoroughly beforehand, including the hymn tunes and checking that they are in the book the organist is using! I speak with feeling—I recently attended a service held by several Baptist Churches

and the only consoling factor I could find was that the outsider was not there to witness it!

#### CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

One more criticism I must make before my soul can rest in peace. It seems to me that our Churches are heavily overloaded with organisations which are obstacles rather than aids. I sometimes feel I would like to sweep out all except the prayer meetings and give our members time to get down to the real business of evangelisation and the works of love in the area round about.

At least let us make sure every organisation has a spiritual goal as its primary and controlling aim. "It keeps them off the streets" or "We shall lose them if we don't" is not a spiritual goal.

#### NOT FORGETTING THE ORDINARY

Finally I would say that we have fine instruments for evangelism already in our hands in our ordinary Church set-up if we will make them channels of the unsearchable riches of Christ. It is easy to seek the spectacular and forget that other ideas will aid and enhance the ordinary but will never replace it. Three great means of evangelism are in our hands as Ministers—the Church at worship, the preaching of the Gospel and the faithful pastoral care and visitation of the people of our area.

L. R. MISSELBROOK.

### EVANGELISM IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

**A**LPERTON BAPTIST CHURCH lies to the south of Wembley and with Sudbury Church a mile to the north-west forms the Baptist witness for Wembley and parts of Greenford and Ealing, totalling in all a population of 180,000 people.

Concentrated work over so vast an area is impossible for any one Church, consequently we decided to confine our evangelistic activities to the areas immediately surrounding the Church. There are three districts, separated from each other by main roads, railways, and a canal, and our Church is in the junction of these areas, so our field of activity was clearly apparent. The number of houses in these districts is approximately 10,000.

Our membership of 250 includes the elderly and housebound, and those grown weary in well doing; the active membership therefore is probably nearer 150. The members are scattered and many meet only on Sunday evenings. The greatest concentration of membership is still in the vicinity of the Church, and there is a reasonable proportion in each of the areas.

The problems to be faced from the point of view of active evangelism were many and varied:—

(1) Although there were those who were prayer-conscious the majority did not gather together for prayer. The problem, then, was how to make the whole Church prayer-conscious.

(2) How to bring this scattered congregation into closer fellowship and unity of purpose.

(3) How to use every member of the fellowship so that all available resources might be utilised, thereby making it less burdensome for the few willing workers.

(4) How to make the non-churchgoer aware of the Church and how to encourage him to come and share in the fellowship of worship.

(5) How to get to know the stranger when he entered the Church and make him feel welcome to the family fellowship.

An Evangelistic Committee meets fortnightly and having considered the agenda spends half an hour in silent prayer. Only unanimous decisions are submitted to the deacons, as we believe that the Holy Spirit will speak with one voice to all of us, and anything that is not in His will should not be touched.

The following suggestions have been acted upon during the past nine months:—

### (1) PRAYER LIFE OF THE CHURCH

(a) Prayer cards were designed to remind people of their responsibility towards their Church in prayer. If a person took a card it constituted a promise to remember the work of the Church twice every day. We suggested "Breaktime" and "Bedtime" so that there would be the realisation that many were uniting in prayer at the same time.

(b) Home prayer groups were formed in eleven areas and supplied with a list of all members and friends living in the section.

These groups meet every four to six weeks, for discussion and fellowship as well as prayer. They are of great help to many shy of prayer meetings in the Church, and the power is being felt in all the activities of the Church.

### (2) FELLOWSHIP

At the Communion Service "News of the family" is given. Men on leave and friends returned after illness are welcomed by name from the pulpit.

At the mid-week service special cases are mentioned—lapsed members, broken homes, serious illness, and then in silent prayer are brought before the Throne of Grace.

Volunteers have undertaken to visit elderly folk connected with the Church and those not connected with any other Church.

### (3) USING EVERYONE IN SERVICE

In order to utilise all resources a circular was sent to members suggesting ways in which they could serve, and asking their willingness to undertake these activities. Even folk who are housebound are now doing useful service by addressing envelopes, and they feel part of the active Church, as indeed they are.

## (4) CONTACTING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

At Christmas 4,000 personally addressed cards were delivered in our area, followed later by a printed invitation to a "People's Service". In March a personally addressed letter was delivered to 10,000 homes explaining the meaning of Easter and giving an invitation to the Easter Services; and printed invitation cards were delivered for the April "People's Service".

## (5) WELCOMING THE STRANGER

Friends are welcomed by one of the deacons at the door and the secretary repeats this welcome at every service immediately preceding the notices.

While all are encouraged to extend a greeting to visitors some selected friends are strategically placed in the Church to welcome any new friend who sits in their vicinity.

The "People's Service" commences with community hymn singing and is followed by a social hour in the church hall.

Prior to the notices I ask everyone to fill in a name-and-address-card which is in the pew. After the Service these are sorted out and strangers are written to on the Monday expressing our pleasure in sharing fellowship with them. Those returning after absence also receive a letter.

The names of new residents in our area are handed to those responsible for follow-up visitation and are visited if possible before the next "People's Service", and whenever possible I pay a personal visit.

During the summer months, there being no "People's Service" and no invitation cards sent out, all who have shown interest will receive a letter from me, to show them that we have not lost interest in them.

## (6) FUTURE PLANS

Plans have been made for a continual campaign to begin in the autumn with a Church Retreat.

The first year will be used for training members and friends, and it is planned to run a "School of Evangelism" on alternate Wednesday evenings.

Letters, personally addressed, will be delivered to the homes in the largest area once a month, while the other areas will continue to receive the printed invitation cards to the "People's Services".

In the following year the largest area will be visited while the next one receives the letters.

We hope in this way to cover each area once every three years.

The basis of all our work is the commandment of Jesus to "Love one another", and to "Love thy neighbour". Any lesser motive would mean that we should fail to be the type of instruments that Christ could use, and the cross which He commanded us to carry daily would not be His Cross of Love.

H. S. TYMMS.



# B. M. S.

The Officers of the Society and the members of the Mission House Staff (always at your service) offer their good wishes for the New Year to all readers of *The Fraternal*.

1957 will bring many problems and difficulties at home and overseas, and many opportunities too.

Your continued support in interest, effort, and prayer will be highly valued, especially by your brethren serving in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, the West Indies, Africa, South America, Hong Kong and Malaya.

Information about the Society and suggestions for increasing missionary support and interest in the home churches can be obtained from

*The General Home Secretary*

**BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

**93 GLOUCESTER PLACE**

**LONDON, W.1**

EVANGELISM IN A VILLAGE AND ITS STRATEGY  
ON A NEW ESTATE

RECENTLY I moved from a village in Northamptonshire to begin work on a new estate in South Wales and I am still trying to adjust myself to the change! My purpose is to say something about village evangelism in retrospect and the prospect of evangelism on a new estate.

## THE VILLAGE

To what extent Bugbrooke, six miles from Northampton, can be called a typical village I do not know. About 1,000 people live there, including more than 300 children. Because the farming is mechanised and the town so accessible, far more work in industry than on the land. Something like half the population lives in council houses which present a veritable forest of television masts. So far it sounds like no more than an extension of the town, yet the characteristics of the village are not far to seek.

I have read articles on village evangelism about "living close to the land" and of the villager being therefore more aware of his dependence upon God, but, quite frankly, I found a superficiality and materialism there no less marked than in the factory where I once worked. For our purpose the main difference between work in a village and work in a town is that a village is a small community. Everybody knows everybody else and everything about them. Nothing done or said can be kept secret; it is of public interest. Rumour travels with the speed of sound. Again, the village has a remarkably long memory. Incidents which I thought had taken place just before I arrived, turned out later to have been ancient history. And since the village is a small community, though the stranger may be respected and even liked, he can live there for years and still feel he does not really "belong".

All this has an inescapable bearing on the practice of evangelism. The village knows the details of the life of each member, and the minister is told such things as, "I wish you could hear some of your precious members in the shop", or, "You can't expect me to come to your Church when you've got people like . . . there!" The walls of the Church Meeting—and even of the deacons' meeting—have ears and what happens there is soon common knowledge, though usually in a damagingly twisted version. So the life of the Church is lived out in the clear view of the village and the grudge against the Church can be fastened on to a particular person or incident which, because of the long memory, may have taken place a long time ago. The long memory hinders the effectiveness of the Church's witness. Further, what Tom Allan calls the "problem of assimilation" is more acute in the village. Complete strangers attending a service are few and far between; but the villager who might come in is received only with mild surprise, or even resentment.

“ Fancy so-and-so coming! He hasn't been since . . . ” and the date can be named. It is true that everyone in the village is known as either “ Church ” or “ Chapel ”, but that has little to do with attendance and more to do with a vague family allegiance.

I have given so much space to this aspect of rural evangelism because I fancy it has not received the recognition it demands. There are other problems, but most people who read this will be familiar enough with them already.

There are two churches in Bugbrooke, the Parish Church and the Baptist Church, and between them they have some sort of regular contact with about 200 adults and 200 children. This means that before any evangelism is attempted the Churches are far more “ successful ”, in proportion, than the average town church. On the other hand the parish has clear limits. We could not say, “ This 1,000 is hopeless, let's find another lot ”, because there are no more.

There is no space to offer more than a bare summary of those four and-a-half years. After an inner mission and attempts to train the Church for its evangelistic responsibility we experimented by holding short extra services at odd times, like 5 o'clock (designed for parents—after tea and before putting the baby to bed), and 7.45 (after the Sunday village cricket match!), but the attendance was poor. A series of six leaflets with such titles as “ I'm as good as those who go ” were delivered weekly to every home with no noticeable response from the village but considerable resentment from our own members. The most significant venture, however, was “ Combined Operations ”, launched just after Evanston in September, 1954. Under this title the Parish Church and Baptist Church embarked on a continuous mission which is still proceeding. By far the most popular thing so far has been the distribution of 76 Christmas parcels, each worth 12s., to the home of every old-age pensioner, but the range of “ Combined Operations ” has been wider than this. Among other things the “ operations ” included simultaneous guest services held on two occasions and preceded by a combined house-to-house visitation, a joint letter from the Rector and Minister distributed at Christmas and Easter, united Good Friday services and open-air services on Rogation Sunday, a ten-day mission designed to focus the attention on the whole continuous mission, followed by a series of classes called “ Christians Believe . . . ” held in the day school and a “ Combined Operations ” News-Letter.

What did we learn? Many things, and among them these: that even in the close confines of a village there are those who will play an active part in witnessing to Jesus Christ among those they know, and who know *them* well; that in a small community visitation evangelism soon reaches saturation point but none the less any effective evangelism is costly and must be both continuous and patient; most of all, perhaps, that if any of the evangelistic techniques are going to bear fruit, it is never more true to say that a Church

should be a colony of heaven on earth, than it is of the village Church. This led us clearly to the conclusion that, if only as a condition of effective evangelism in a village, "edification" within the Church must share priority with evangelising without.

#### THE NEW HOUSING ESTATE

I am stealing a little space to air a theory I hold on the general strategy of our approach to new estates. Along with many other ideas it owes its origin to something my wife said over supper one night when we were discussing the plans for a new Church. "They should start by building a manse with a large room." It struck me then that she was right and I still think so. For one thing it would be cheaper; but more important than this it would characterise a different attitude to this important work.

Paul was expert at opening up new areas. He had no buildings and though he was not averse from using a local hall or synagogue the Churches he founded were centred on homes. And such evidence as we have does not indicate that he gave priority to children's work. But what is our normal procedure? Usually it is to wait too long before doing anything, then start a Sunday School, then put up a building, and then (perhaps) call a minister who won't be able to get a house on the estate while the Church cannot afford to build him one on the site. I would like to suggest that perhaps our normal procedure is backwards. For a long time we have bewitched ourselves with the catchwords "The Sunday School of today is the Church of tomorrow" and "Get the children and you'll get the parents"—but where is the evidence of their truth? I am now facing two years on a new housing estate with no buildings and considerable interest. Instead of the above catchwords the guiding lines will be "A minister is more important than a building", "Adults, at this stage, are more important than children" and "Get the parents and you might keep the children".

This, of course, is as old as the New Testament and has been the normal method of missionary work through the years. But generally speaking we have been trying to do things the other way around on that great new battlefield, the new housing estates. At this point I dare do no more than say that I consider the "old" strategy to be the right one—and I am happy to record that I recently found it being used elsewhere with notable success.

R. P. TAYLOR.

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#### REFLECTIONS ON THE LEAVESDEN ROAD MISSION

**T**HE plan of the Leavesden Road Mission was published in the January *Fraternal*. Here are the present facts and figures:—

When we began the Mission the Sunday evening congregation was about 250. It is now coming up to 500. The weekly offering was £18 a week. It is now £32. The greatest increase came during

the time of the monthly letters to the area. Visitation is still in progress but the half-way check showed: Visits made, 808; Interested, 560; No interest, 232; Hostile, 16; Subsequently at Church at least once, 108; Now coming regularly, 28; Old folk needing further care, 76.

#### REFLECTIONS

(1) Many new scholars were won for the Sunday School. Gaining the attendance of the parents almost inevitably wins the children and with more likelihood of holding them.

(2) The monthly letters proved an excellent preparation for the visitors and seemed an introduction and a welcome. Patience and thorough preparation pays.

(3) Most folk look upon our Mission as a success but the truth is that we have as yet touched only the fringe of the real task of evangelism. We have gained the attendance of an extra 250 people in an area of 10,000. Supposing 12½ per cent already attended a Church when we began (a generous estimate) then 85 per cent of the folk are still untouched. That leaves no room for self-congratulation. Rather it stresses the fact that we are in a mission field and a patient and steady missionary strategy must be employed to win the people for Christ.

(4) While the winning of individuals must always go on, our main objective should be a change in the outlook of the whole community. The reason was stated by Trevor Ling in the July *Fraternal*: "The structure of individual personality reflects to a considerable extent the structure of the surrounding society; not of the whole of human society, but of that area of society in which it is set and with which it has immediate contact." This has become a clear fact here. Its practical significance, surely, is that we must work with the natural groupings of folk in mind, the family, the new road, the new estate and especially with a rightly defined "parish".

We have so far created a great amount of good-will, and that is a beginning. If we can witness and serve in the Name and Spirit of Christ for another 25 years we shall make a considerable impact on the whole area, and may change its attitude toward churchgoing and win large numbers for Christ. Whether we will be willing to pay the heavy cost of self-giving continually over the years I do not know, but I pray God for it.

(5) The approach to people must be personal. This may seem to contradict the last point but is in fact complementary to it. If we are out to win a whole area for Christ we must get to know and be willing to serve and give time to every person in it. Our Minister's monthly letters created a general effect, but every one was in a personally addressed envelope and it was this that caused most interest.

The personal approach is costly. It means an identification with people, being involved in their wants and hopes and feelings, and in their troubles. It means a deliberate mixing with the very

people our respectable Church folk have avoided for so long. It means trying to feel with them, to see things as they see them, to stand with them beneath their burdens, and to feel the bite of their sin as they cannot feel it because they do not yet know Christ.

God is teaching us how to love and we are painfully out of practice. It is dreadfully hard to love without sham or reserve when faced with people so unappealing. Somehow we are very close to the wonder of the Incarnation and the dark light of Calvary here; would that one could feel that it was not too vast for our poor hearts to bear.

L. R. MISSELBROOK.

## THE WIDER CIRCLE

### U.S.A.

Thanks be to Dr. Carney Hargroves of Philadelphia for his references to the *Fraternal* when enclosing his contribution towards our dollar deficit. We shake hands also with our well-beloved W. O. Lewis who, having completed his researches at Zurich, now resides in Washington. We miss him from his room at the Church House.

### CANADA

It was good to renew acquaintance with Paul Clifford during his summer vacation. He now resumes his duties at McMaster and to him and his colleague, Russell Aldwinckle, we send assurance of continued remembrance. Ivor Powell having conducted successful Missions in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, is now engaged on an extended visit to Canada—may every blessing rest upon his work there, also. The salutations of the Saints in Britain go to our fellow-member C. Howard Bentall as he enters upon his year of office as President Canadian B.U.

### SOUTH AFRICA

The excellent service rendered for several years by A. B. Jack will be continued by J. N. Jonsson of Durban—lately of Spurgeon's College. Helped by Jack's commendable persistence, B.M.F. membership has increased. We trust that health may be fully restored and we venture to send him the "humble duty" of his son-in-law, Fred Bacon, now of North London. Jonsson sends an interesting account of the East London Assembly attended by 185 delegates from the Cape and Rhodesia. A Church Extension Scheme with an initial target of £20,000 was adopted. At the closing Communion Service students who had completed their College course, were ordained. Principal Stern reported on the College where twenty-three men are in residence. Of world-wide importance was the Assembly resolution expressing "grave concern" at the hardship inflicted on the non-European population by recent Government legislation, and urging charity and patience in its application. We await the next issue of the *S.A. Baptist* wherein Editor Parnell will doubtless include a full Assembly report.

We note, with interest, that Graham Swift, lately of Gateshead, has entered upon the Wale Street, Cape Town, pastorate, and that M. Kromberg and C. Winter from Spurgeon's have settled at Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth respectively. Thanks to Jonsson for an excellent beginning as B.M.F. Correspondent.

## AUSTRALIA

*Tasmania.* At the Triennial All-Australian Assembly, Oscar Johnson concluded his prolonged visit in which he has greatly heartened our churches. A. C. Prior was appointed full-time Editor of the *Australian Baptist* and H. E. Evans, our valued Correspondent, becomes secretary of the Home Work Board, the work of which is becoming increasingly important. The delegates returned grateful for the bounteous hospitality of the Hobart churches and inspired with the experiences of a notable Assembly.

*Queensland.* B. Hohnke, one of our earliest members, was elected State President. Alas, his joy was touched with pain in that his sister, returning from Assembly, was fatally injured. We enter into our brother's sadly divided feelings. The Missionary Society reported extended service in Dutch New Guinea, where two new stations are being established. F. C. Stone succeeds the late R. Sayce as General Secretary. We thank E. Edwards for a fine list of B.M.F. members.

*South Australia.* J. B. Williams, who was elected State President, tells of inspiring Annual Meetings. These were largely attended and "a breath of new life is stirring in the denomination". Principal Burleigh reported the opening of the new College premises and of financial support. More ministers are needed, and he made a suggestion that suitable young men from Britain would be received in the College on favourable terms. F. C. Morton has fuller details. Our veteran member, E. H. Hall, 88 years, sends a warm greeting which we reciprocate, together with our deep sympathy in his sore bereavement consequent upon the death of Mrs. Hall.

*Victoria.* Among many helpers in Australia is T. F. Keyte from whom we have received a list of forty-seven members with subscriptions paid in advance! Editor Blackburn, whose visit to the Jubilee Congress is remembered by many, may well be encouraged at the success of *The Victorian Baptist*, a monthly journal of considerable influence in the State.

## NEW ZEALAND

N. R. Wood was elected President of the Union. He has had a notable ministry covering thirty years. He is a member\* of the College Board and Editor of *The New Zealand Baptist*. We send all good wishes from his many friends in Britain. At the same Assembly Mrs. Wood demitted office as President N.Z. Women's Association. Generous giving was featured in the Treasurer's report. The Tithing and Self-Denial Schemes produced £40,500. Missionary work in East Pakistan, hitherto the responsibility of the N.Z. and Australian

## THE BAPTIST HOME WORK FUND



*Ministers are asked to pray  
that the Home Work Fund  
may achieve what it sets out  
to do*



The General Secretary,  
The Baptist Union, 4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1

## THE BAPTIST UNION WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT

### Four Questions

- ARE the women in your Church receiving the inspiration and practical help offered by the BAPTIST WOMEN'S LEAGUE? Programme suggestions, visual aids, correspondence Courses available on application.
- DO you know that business girls and students coming to work in London can be accommodated at moderate cost at "St. Andrews", the attractive and comfortable HOSTEL run by the B.W.L.?
- HAVE you heard that there is at THE HAVEN a home where many young unmarried mothers are skilfully cared for physically, lovingly taught about the saving grace of God in Christ and helped to make a fresh start in life?
- WILL you suggest to Baptist folk wishing to adopt a baby that they may apply to the BAPTIST UNION ADOPTION SOCIETY?

*Full information may be obtained from the Organising and Deputation Secretary, Miss Lois Chapple,  
4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1*



B.M.S., is in future to be continued by the East Pakistan B.M.S. with the aid of the same staff: another instance of the younger churches in the East assuming responsibility for missionary activity. A resounding victory has been achieved in the defeat of the endeavour of the Roman hierarchy in N.Z. to burden the rates with the cost of the upkeep of their schools. British Baptists join with other Protestants in congratulating New Zealand friends.

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