

# The Fraternal

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JANUARY, 1961

No. 119

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## A NEW YEAR GREETING

**M**AY I, through the columns of the *Fraternal*, send greetings to all my brethren in the Ministry. I greatly appreciate the privilege of serving the Fellowship by occupying the Chair for the next year or two and sincerely trust the Fellowship will grow in usefulness and in blessing to us all. We think prayerfully of those who are experiencing difficulty, or who have known sorrow and loss. We likewise rejoice with those who know the happiness of success. But we are all bound together in our common faith and devotion to Christ and the Church and in His Name greet one another. My prayer is that we may all experience throughout the year the consciousness of His abiding presence and the assurance of our Lord's love and grace.

H. L. WATSON.

## ARE WE BEING SIDETRACKED?

**T**HREE years ago I went to Rüschlikon for the Executive of the Baptist World Alliance. At the opening meeting all had to introduce themselves by name and country, stating their responsibilities in Baptist leadership. I found it moving to listen to the many men who were bearing heavy loads. Like Paul, they were conscious of "that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches".

I have often reflected on those words of Paul. There is in them a note of pride, proper to a man with a great task. There is also a touch of self-pity, natural enough in one whose advancing years were laden with increasing burdens. There is even a hint of pain, excusable in any man living under the daily pressures of administration. Paul was always busy. His eager spirit made work. His great ability invited work. Wherever he was, whether in prison or at large, he served on numerous Commissions on Christian Doctrine, Christian Ethics, the Christian Church, the Christian Ministry, Christian Baptism; and so on. He was the chairman, secretary and sole member of them all! In addition, there came upon him daily "the care of all the churches".

Yet, in spite of everything, Paul never lost his early passion: "the care of souls". Paul the Aged remained Paul the Evangelist. In his farewell letter to Timothy, he speaks of his "purpose". It was my privilege to address the Pastoral Session at the Baptist Union Assembly in 1947, and I analysed Paul's purpose. Since it is too much to hope that anyone still remembers what I said thirteen years ago, let me repeat myself here. Paul's purpose was to "persuade" men for Christ. The relevant passages can be read in Acts xiii, 43; xix, 8; xix, 26; xxvi, 28; xxviii, 23. These vivid references reveal him as a man whose ministry was dominated by the desire to persuade others to accept his Lord. The signature tune of Paul's life is to be heard in his own words in 2 Corinthians v, 11: "Knowing

therefore the terror of the Lord we *persuade* men". He allowed nothing to exempt him from the obligation to seek and to save the lost.

So Paul's final call to Timothy rings like the echo of his own hammer on the anvil of the Christian ministry. Timothy is to study, to teach, to train leaders, to stir up the gift that is in him, to face hardships (including that of a feeble stomach). But, first and always, Timothy is to do "the work of an evangelist".

Are we as sure of that priority nowadays? Has our emphasis subtly altered? Sometimes I have a feeling that use is being made in un-Pauline fashion of Paul's references to the varied gifts of the Spirit. One man claims to be essentially a teacher and forsakes the pulpit for the blackboard, the gathered community for the assembled class. Another regards himself as a prophet, and may develop nuclear obsessions, and even drift into what is for a Christian the odd company of the Bertrand Russellites. Someone else, capable in administration, finds a ready welcome in organisations where managerial ability is of extra value if coupled with the gift of public speech. A potential healer may explore the valley of psychiatry, though how green is that valley is anybody's guess. Other humble souls may disclaim the gift of the preacher, and prefer to regard themselves only as pastors. They may be tempted to spend their lives in deeds of kindness, as benevolent accessories of the welfare state, rather than ambassadors of the Kingdom of God. Still others come to think of themselves as priests, leaning towards liturgies, and at length transferring to a church where grace through sacraments tends to take the place of power through the proclamation of the gospel.

God forbid that I should seem to criticise other men. I myself could be sharply reminded that on 1st January, 1946, I became a so-called "denominational official", though of this more anon. To our own Master we stand or fall. I acknowledge that there is profound importance in the distinction which Paul draws between the various gifts, and in his insistence that all gifts have a part to play in the total ministry of the Holy Spirit to the church. But the point I am trying to make is that the possession of a particular gift ought never to be allowed to divert or detach a man from the task which is fundamental to all ministers; that is, the work of the evangelist. The quest for souls is the central business of every minister, his daily business, his lifelong business. All else is marginal, supplemental. This is elemental. To that end Christ counted us faithful, putting us into the ministry. His purpose for us should be our purpose for Him. Whatever else we do, we must do the work of an evangelist.

The denomination expects that of its General Superintendents. "There shall be for each area a superintendent whose first concern shall be the spiritual life of the churches and the exercise of a spiritual ministry, especially by encouraging ministers to deeper study and

more constant prayer, and the churches to more continuous and aggressive evangelisation". So runs paragraph 6 of Part II of the Home Work Fund Scheme. The churches, as I know them after 15 years as a superintendent, cherish the same sort of expectation about the ministry. They covet to have men with as many gifts as an archangel, but certainly with the passion for souls. And in that denominational and local expectation all of us are involved; the General Secretary and his colleagues; the Superintendents and the Association Secretaries who work alongside them; the College Principals and their staffs; together with that far more numerous company of faithful ministers for whom, and for whose welfare, the others of us live and move and have our being. We all have to ask ourselves, "Are we somehow being sidetracked?" For there is a popular and widespread notion that the evangelist is a specialist, whereas the work of an evangelist is basic to every minister.

Paul hit the nail on the head when he emphasised the word *work*. The work of an evangelist *is* work, hard and exhausting work. I heard Angus McMillan recently at an Induction. He spoke to the young minister about Christ's ploughman. I will not give the sermon away here. Ask its author to preach it in your circle! It was instinct with reality. You could feel the wind and the rain, the stubborn and stony earth, the toil and sweat, all endured by the man who looked in faith for a coming harvest for his Lord. It is that way with the work of the evangelist, which is really a threefold work.

#### THERE IS THE WORK OF PREPARATION

Teaching is involved, often over many years. So is the patient cultivation of friendships. Diligent pastoral care establishes vital links with folk on the margin of the church. One of the most successful pastoral evangelists I ever knew drew up, at the beginning of each year, a list of those who ought to be ripe for decision for Christ. Most of them for years before had been on his secret lists of those under preparation. When Edgar Keeble, of gracious memory, died suddenly one Sunday morning in a Southampton hospital, the nurse who ran to him found between his fingers and the coverlet, his prayer list of those whose hearts were being quietly tuned to hear the decisive call of Christ. To him preparation for conversion was as vital as preparation for church membership, and he gloried in the painstaking work involved.

#### THERE IS THE WORK OF PERSUASION

Perhaps I may be allowed to quote again from the Pastoral Session Address of 1947, on Paul's purpose:

"A man's doctrine may be orthodox and his manner of life impeccable, and yet for all his good habits and sound theology he may be no more than a man to be counted on. If, however, he has a purpose to persuade men for Christ, he becomes that much rarer person, a man to be reckoned with. He persuades by preaching,

by personal contact and argument, by the public and private impact of his life on others. He pricks consciences, opens minds, removes prejudices, corrects misunderstandings, quickens hearts, sets souls dreaming, sounds the high call of God in Christ, and at last brings human wills into and through the crisis of surrender to the Saviour. He is grateful to many helpers—apologists, historians, teachers, writers, broadcasters—but he recognises that the work of persuasion is finally the work of the man in the local ministry, the man who makes Christ real to individuals and claims their verdict for his Lord."

Jowett said that the missing note in preaching was the wooing note. Grey Griffith once said it was the trumpet note. Williams Hughes claimed that it was the urgent note. Actually we need all three notes blended together in the *persuading* note, if we are to do the work of an evangelist.

#### THERE IS THE WORK OF PRESENTATION

A few lines must serve to hint at a phase of the ministry which deserves a book. It is our task to *present* every man perfect in Christ. My own memories of pastoral life suggest that this may be the most exacting work of all. One of the promising aspects of our Ter-Jubilee time is that we are re-thinking the work of Christian Education in our churches. We are beginning to learn from our American brethren the value of a church geared for constant and consecutive Bible teaching. At present the set-up of many of our churches makes no time allowance for this vital thing. Equally the marginal and secondary commitments of some of us in the ministry absorb the hours and strength which ought to be utilised in helping those "newly come to the faith" to "hold fast the beginning of their confidence to the end".

Preparation, Persuasion and Presentation—all three have their part in the work of the evangelist. What makes a man set his hand to that work? I confess that I came to it through a crisis in my relationship with Christ. It was in Australia in 1926. My personal habits needed a stiffer discipline, and after a struggle I yielded on that score. My inner life needed a closer communion, and at the cost of some conflict, my lethargic spirit agreed to take the upward way. But the hardest battle had to be fought about the fundamental nature of the ministry to which Christ had called me. I did not want to become a fool for Christ's sake, and I shrank from giving myself, in a great city pulpit, to open and ardent soul-winning. In the end I bowed my will to Christ on that account, and set out deliberately to do the work of an evangelist. The criticisms were instant and painful. The results were immediate and rewarding. I have tried to keep at it ever since, in season and out of season, in the pastorate and in the superintendency, in big churches and in little churches; in public and in private, in the midst of "the care of all the churches". As long as I have breath, I shall keep on

sounding the persuading note. And if ever I have to write a farewell letter to a young Timothy, I will end it as Paul did

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant, in season, out of season; do the work of an evangelist.”

W. D. JACKSON.

### SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

**M**ANY people have reflected that they would not have chosen the disciples Jesus did. On the other hand, it has been remarked that Jesus chose His disciples, not for what they were, but for what they were going to become. They were not exactly “born leaders”, rather they were made.

This may serve to point a fundamental difference between the “natural” gifts which make for leadership in the world and those which make for leadership in the church, which are primarily “spiritual” gifts. When Paul categorised the various offices which obtained in the church of his day, he declared that one had to be endowed by the living Christ to be an apostle or a prophet, and so on. Accordingly, we insist at our Induction Services that it is by the gifts of the Spirit that ministers are made. Were there a perfect response to New Testament teaching in our churches, all our leaders would be people who were specially gifted by the Spirit of God.

It would be wrong to decide, however, that in those who are leaders in the church there is never a correspondence between natural and spiritual gifts. When a man with splendid natural gifts dedicates himself to God, surely there must be joy in the presence of the angels because of the rich opportunity heaven obtains. Such people as the Apostle Paul, a Henry Martyn or an Albert Schweitzer are examples. Nevertheless, the constant possibility and wonder is that plain men not possessed of outstanding gifts, but gifted by the Spirit of God, do become spiritual leaders. This is not to say that anybody can become a leader in the church. Only a few may lead. But the gifts of the Spirit may come at any time to equip very unlikely people. The best men in several churches I know are farm labourers who are not “cultured” but who clearly exercise spiritual leadership in their fellowships. Here, as in other departments of experience, “the wind bloweth where it listeth”.

Consider further certain factors without which there can be no effective spiritual leadership.

1. There is never spiritual leadership without a sense of vocation.

The experience which obtrudes in the stories of Biblical leaders is their sense of vocation. They were consumed by the fact that God had called them. While they shrank before the call and questioned

its wisdom and their fitness for it, they had no shadow of doubt about the call itself. One could covet a sense of vocation after this pattern throughout the ranks of our church leadership today, for much of our weakness derives from the fact that our sense of vocation is not tremendously keen. A young minister came to me recently chagrined and hurt and shaken because, in a vote of his church renewing his pastorate, he barely received the necessary majority. He was beginning to wonder whether he might not better be a school teacher. We talked and travelled back to his beginnings, remembering how God had called him, and to what God had called him. Before these remembrances, he squared his shoulders, took grip again, and recaptured his sense of mission. The fine devotion, which is the strength of many churches and which keeps so many of our people in their place of responsibility for long, faithful years with no question of giving up or casting aside, is sustained by the consciousness that God has called. On the other hand, the incidence of leaders who appear ready enough to surrender their responsibility for personal considerations, reveals a weak sense of vocation; and our very concern at this should make it incumbent on us, when our church officials come to be elected, to relate their offices to the call of God and the equipment of the Spirit, as emphatically and clearly as we do when our ministers make their beginnings.

Under his sense of vocation, Paul once cried, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." He was, as he strikingly said in another context, "a prisoner of Christ". He had no freedom save to do the Master's will. From this conviction came that which gave him stature to make him the leader he was. Little though he may have thought of himself, believing that God had called him, he bore with him the note of authority. For much is conveyed to others from a life lived under the conviction that it is God-called. You remember the experience of Carlyle in the "burgher" congregation of Ecclefechan when, as a child, he says; he saw the light of God veritable in the rapt peasant faces, and there kindled "What was best in me and what has not even yet gone out". Not only by words and deeds, but by that compound of life we call personality, a man becomes influential when he lives day by day with a sense of vocation alive in his soul. High spiritual leadership has always had that sense.

## 2. There is never spiritual leadership without prayer.

This is not to say that a person must pray because he is a spiritual leader, as if he needed not to pray were he still in the ranks. The church is a praying community and nothing must ever be allowed to remove the sense of responsibility to pray from any of its members. Rather, I mean to point the fact that spiritual leadership emerges from a life that prays. I cannot conceive that God is likely to bestow the gifts which make a leader without the exercise of prayer. Moreover, the gifts of the Spirit need to be sustained. Without prayer, the

form of leadership may persist, but there will be no power in it. We are creatures of volition, not automatons. We have constantly to make our personalities available to God, if the power of the Spirit is to operate. But there is no technique whereby divine power can be invoked and assimilated. It happens only through prayer in which our spirits meet and mingle with God's Spirit. In this fellowship, convictions are renewed; purposes are given birth; life is cleansed and revived, and the whole being is quickened and made strong. It was the way of Jesus who, while he represented spiritual leadership at its best, prayed more than any man. Someone has written, "Most failures in the ministry are due, not to lack of visiting, or study, or of organisational activity, but to lack of prayer."

From another point of view, the leader will be deeply concerned to keep at the heart of his prayer the task to which he has been called. Spiritual leadership means a life of ministering. "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest," said Jesus, "shall be servant of all." He came to minister and, as He ministered, His leadership manifested itself. Part of His ministry consisted of praying for people. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," he said once to Peter. One of the things some of us had to set before ourselves with deliberation, when we began our ministries, was the duty of praying for our members. We had to create a clear place for it in our routine, so that at least we might be delivered from insincerity when we told our folk we were praying for them. Such praying does as much for the man who prays as for those for whom he prays. It deepens one's sympathies. It thrusts the consciousness of human needs firmly into one's heart. It serves to create the spirit of the shepherd. Perhaps also it points another deficiency which haunts the leadership of some churches. As leaders in the work of God we perhaps need to discipline ourselves to a more definite, methodical and imaginative routine of prayer for our people.

3. There is never spiritual leadership without a determined and calculated self-application.

Spiritual leadership is not a rank to be enjoyed. It is a service to be fulfilled. I fancy it would be exceptional for any who have been appointed to positions of leadership in our churches just to swell with pride, and to do nothing more. It is not, however, exceptional to find those in positions of leadership who are merely "carrying on". They do not exercise themselves very greatly either in thought, in prayer or in activity.

One of the effects of the calls of the Ter-Jubilee has been the awakening of many diaconates. The revival they have experienced has been one of coming alive to the quality of service which they can give to the church. It has frequently become evident that too many deacons have never faced the implications of their election to office, nor have they really applied themselves to the job of being a deacon. One diaconate recently woke up to the fact that it was almost



completely cut off from the life of the church. Forthwith, the deacons decided to go, two by two, into the church's organisations to discover what was happening, and to learn how they might offer help and leadership. That such a condition could obtain is pathetic, but the recognition that leadership can fail so lamentably is a challenge to seek to make all our leaders conscious of their responsibilities and of the possibilities which lie within their field. We ought to pray that under Ter-Jubilee our leaders everywhere may sit down to rethink their function and to win a vision of all it could become.

To become more particular: one function of all leadership within the church is the creation and maintenance of standards; and this is very largely done by setting an example. We might describe it as leadership at its simplest. Can there be any conception of leadership which does not evoke also the thought of followers? To be a leader is to be followed. "Where Thou hast set Thy feet, may I place mine," we sing, as we press hard after Christ. As a sectional leader in Christ's army, the leader in the church fellowship ought surely to order his life as if he were inviting his contingent to mark his steps and to follow in them. The possibilities of a leadership of this kind are illimitable. I know ministers who long for their deacons to become faithful, and thus exemplary, in their attendance at worship. At least that! Which is pathetic in the revelation it gives us of the kind of leadership some churches are receiving.

Another function of leadership which demands comment has reference to the on-going life of the church. The mind of the true leader will ever be looking to the future. He who would lead must have a heart which is open to receive new light and truth, knowing that God is always striving to reveal more of Himself and His purposes. The true leader will conceive it as his duty to open doors into new situations, to create healthy and progressive climates of opinion, to live, as it were, with the sunlight of a new day on his face. This means maintaining an awareness of developments taking place in the life of the church at large. As one interested in the denomination and in the wider sphere of Christian activity, the true leader will regard it as his duty to glean information and to seek to discern fresh opportunities; for as a leader he must precede and, if he can, pioneer.

As I make an end, I remind myself that the one who leads in the things of the Spirit is himself led by Him who is the Pioneer of our faith. All the leadership we may ever give that will be effective for the Kingdom will flow from our submission to Him who is our Lord and King.

J. H. G. ADAM.

### WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY

**I**T is to me a cause of disappointment that, in the 21 years since I became a minister, no other woman in our denomination has been ordained and recognised by the Baptist Union, and I have often asked myself why that is. I find it an exceedingly perplexing

question, and I am not sure that I have the answer to it. In the Baptist Union's "List of Women Ministers", given in the current handbook, there are 3 names. In the handbook of the Congregational Union there are 50 women on List A (30 in charge of local churches) and 7 on List B. (The Congregational Union does not find it necessary to list its women ministers separately).

Can we explain this difference between our two denominations?

In trying to find an explanation we need to ask ourselves some questions. Have we, as a denomination, failed to encourage women to enter the full-time pastoral ministry, as the Congregationalists have encouraged them? Have Baptist college principals and area superintendants felt that they had to try to dissuade women, who were seeking guidance about the possibility of the ministry, in a way that their Congregational counterparts have not? This may well be so, for a special committee on "Admission of women to the Baptist Ministry", which reported to the Baptist Union Council in 1926, expressed its feeling that "In view of the reluctance of our churches to invite women to the pastorate, the Council should appeal to all College Principals and Committees to make as clear as possible to all women candidates for the ministry, before admitting them for training, that the prospect of finding such spheres of service as they desire at the end of their College courses is exceedingly small". That committee reported 34 years ago, but I believe its influence is still strong among us, and there is sometimes today talk of "the reluctance of our churches to invite women to the pastorate", and the difficulty of placing women in "spheres of service". This happens in spite of the readiness of our churches to receive deaconesses in full charge, which proves it cannot be women as such that churches do not want. Further we ought not to talk today about "the reluctance of our churches to invite women to the pastorate" when few, if any, of the area superintendents of today have had the experience of trying to help a woman find a suitable sphere of service. Even that statement of 1926 was based on very limited experience, i.e. the experience of one woman. I think we have got to ask ourselves whether this discouragement is justified, whether, if there were women available, the churches would be reluctant to call them, and whether we have not got to learn by Congregational experience that the more women there are, the more the churches become accustomed to the idea of having them. Further, in the light of the experience of so many churches that have had deaconesses in full pastoral charge, might we not find churches eager to have women as ministers if they were available? I believe, too, that if we gave real encouragement to some women to become ministers, and the denomination received them happily and as a matter of course, more and more able and qualified women would come forward. Can we not put a stop to this discouragement and begin to give some positive encouragement?

Secondly, we must ask whether the difference between us and the Congregationalists is that we are more conservative in our attitude to women (I will not use the word "prejudiced"). Are the women of our churches more opposed to members of their own sex as ministers than Congregational women? I would hate to think that these things are true, and here I would like to bear my own testimony to the willingness and friendliness with which I have been received both by my fellow-ministers in fraternal, etc., and by local churches which have invited me to conduct their Sunday worship. I recognise, of course, that there is a great difference between having a woman in the pulpit occasionally and having her as a full-time minister in a local church. I would, however, say that I have seldom met this prejudice of which we sometimes hear, though there was an occasion when an elderly man, seated in the front pew, got up and stumped out of the church as I announced the first hymn! I believe that, given the chance to have some women as ministers, our churches would be no more unwilling to receive them than Congregational Churches have been.

The third question I must put is this. Is the difference between us and the Congregationalists due to the fact that we have an order of deaconesses and Congregationalists have not? The only full-time job in Congregational churches open to women is the pastoral ministry, whereas a Baptist woman has to choose between pushing her way into the ministry or offering to the Deaconess Committee, which, if she has the necessary qualifications, is likely to receive her with open arms. If we had had no deaconess order would a number of the deaconesses of today have been in the pastoral ministry? That is a question which no one can answer, but one which is, nevertheless, worth pondering.

We must surely say categorically that by us, as Baptists, there can be no fundamental theological principle brought against women as ministers. This was stated clearly by that same committee of the Council in 1926: "The Committee is clear that it would be contrary to Baptist belief and practice to make sex a bar to any kind of Christian service. The Church is within its rights in calling a woman to the pastoral or any other office, and this carries with it the right to accept such a calling." When faced with the issue I am sure that most Baptists would give assent to that statement, but we surely have to admit that it is *not* basic in our thinking and planning as a denomination. So often we lament the lack of good recruits for the ministry, but why do we not clearly and openly say to the young people of our denomination that both men and women are needed and welcome? Why is not the possibility of entering the ministry put to women at B.S.F. conferences and our denominational summer schools? Why, when recruitment for the ministry is being discussed, is it so evident that those who share in the discussion are thinking only in terms of the male members of our churches? Why do we appear not to want in the ministry older women who have

done other jobs, and would come with years of experience of life in the world and of the power and grace of God in their own and in other lives? Why do our theological colleges not make the appropriate adjustments and make it plain to the whole denomination that they are able and prepared to accept women students? Sometimes I am told that it would be unfair to invite women to the ministry when it may prove for them such a hard and difficult calling. I fear that that is a veneer of chivalry used to cover an unreadiness to receive them, for we have to admit that our denomination has not been unready to call women to hard and difficult tasks. We have proof of that if we look at the jobs which we have committed to women missionaries and deaconesses.

I am driven, therefore, to conclude that the existence of an order of deaconesses has been, for us, as a denomination, an escape route by which we have avoided facing the real issue of women in the pastoral ministry, and we have been content, because of the shortage of male ministers, to let women do the work of the pastoral ministry and call them by another name. Is this honest? And is it fair to those women who, as deaconesses, often do not know whether, in their local situations, they will be treated as ministers or not, and are sometimes made to feel that they are a second best? At the end of 1959 there were 52 deaconesses working under the Baptist Union. Of those 41 were in full pastoral charge, and 11 were working as colleagues to male ministers. These women are all trained to be deaconesses and not ministers. They are not paid as ministers, and they are not officially treated as ministers, and yet they are required to do the work of ministers and carry the heavy responsibility of full pastoral charge. What explanation can we give of this extraordinary situation? It is obvious that a church will be prepared to have a deaconess when it cannot afford a minister, because she is cheaper. Such a church prefers a deaconess to a male lay pastor because it can get a Home Work Fund grant for her as it cannot for a layman. Further, if a church wants to get rid of a deaconess it is possible to request the Baptist Union to remove her, whereas no such procedure is open to a church which has a minister. But these are unworthy considerations, and if they are a part of the explanation of our present situation, then it is more than time that we faced the issue fearlessly and honestly and sought God's will for us as a denomination, refusing to be influenced by any such financial and administrative considerations.

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul wrote "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone" (R.S.V.). I would plead for the recognition of "varieties of service" for women in full-time paid work in Baptist churches, and urge that women be encouraged to use their "varieties of gifts" in at least two "varieties of working"—as ministers and deaconesses. Some

women, I believe, are called of God and equipped for the work of a deaconess, and some for the pastorate, but I know that today some who feel called of God to, and gifted for, the pastoral ministry, are entering the deaconess order as the only effectual door open to them. That is our heavy responsibility as a denomination. Some of these women have made it clear that it is the work of the pastorate that they desire, and they do not wish to work in a church which already has a minister. On the other hand some deaconesses, whose calling and equipment are to work with a minister, have had thrust upon them the duties of the pastoral office, conducting weddings and funerals, administering both the sacraments, and presiding at deacons' and church meetings. It must be clear that this results in perplexity and difficulty for those of us who are entrusted with the preparation and training of deaconesses. Are they to be prepared to be deaconesses and good colleagues to ministers, or to take full responsibility in a local church, as virtual ministers, with all the demands on initiative and powers of leadership of "an initial pastorate"?

Do we, or do we not, believe that there is a real difference of function here? Are there still jobs to be done in our churches by deaconesses, as distinct from ministers, as those who began the order believed that there were? If not, then let us abolish the order of deaconesses and make all the deaconesses accredited ministers, and, in those churches where they work with a minister, make them co-pastors. I, for one, believe that we ought not to do that. I believe that the way forward in our churches is to discover new "varieties of service", not only for women but also for men, and not to reduce the possible full-time service for both men and women to one variety only. Can we not rather prepare ourselves for a new facing of this question and, refusing to be influenced over-much by the past or by practical or financial questions, seek the will of Him whose Church it is of which we are a part, and in which we all, both male and female, are called and equipped by Him to serve?

GWENYTH HUBBLE.

### THE CHILD AND THE CHURCH

**F**OR many reasons it is time that we gave ourselves to a serious consideration of the place of children within the church. It is not enough, in these days, to deny infant baptism and to speak simply of believing "that from birth all children are within the love and care of the heavenly Father and therefore within the operation of the saving grace of Christ" (1948 Statement on the church). We do not doubt the veracity of such a belief, but to leave the matter there raises all sorts of questions. At some point in the child's life the church, which is the sphere in and through which the saving grace of Christ is made known in the world, has to become operative. It may be argued that this intervention of the church in the child's life is seen in our practice of infant dedication

and in the life and work of the Sunday School. This indeed may be granted. But the purpose of this article is to call in question whether it is always sufficiently recognised that the church *is* involved in the service of infant dedication, and whether the Sunday Schools are always sufficiently thought of as being a department of the church's life. Or to put the problems negatively: is not the Dedication Service often thought of solely as an act of thanksgiving and dedication by the parents and of blessing of the child, with the congregation as spectators of the act rather than as participators in accepting responsibility? Is not the Sunday School often operated as though it ran parallel to the church rather than as part of it?

The time seems to be ripe for explicit statement that we agree that at the Dedication Service the local congregation of the church accepts responsibility, together with the parents, for directing the steps of the child Christwards, which, if it means anything, means churchwards. Further, that the congregation of the church will see to it that the child is placed within the care of the Sunday School as early as maybe, and that there is a clear recognition that there is not, as it were, a waving goodbye to the child until he re-appears years later for baptism, but that the church through its minister, teachers and church meeting watches the progress of the child. This latter statement is in no way an attempt to decry the present work of the Sunday School, but is made only to emphasise the need for the Sunday School to be seen constantly as part of the church. Let us seek to make this point rather clearer by certain practical suggestions.

First of all as to the Dedication Service, which is sometimes held at the end of Sunday worship with the congregation on its way home to lunch—in thought, if not in fact! It is surely better to set this Service within the total pattern of the Sunday morning worship, as part of the Family Church worship or in place of the children's address. If it is set near the beginning of morning worship, then the family are given a fixed time to arrive and can share in the opening devotions. This is rather better than being told to arrive "about twelve o'clock" and having the almost inevitable vestibule scuffling which marks such an arrival, just as the morning sermon reaches its final point. Incidentally, families seem to find it easier to parade with children and baby at eleven o'clock than later, and it is quite simple for the family to disappear at the end of the dedication hymn. Certainly, this removes the opportunity for baby worship by members of the congregation; but if the thesis of this article is accepted, it will not be the last time that the family as a family appears in church, but the first.

The form of the Dedication Service itself can of course be varied, but there are three participants who have their parts within the Service. There are, first of all, the parents and their thanksgiving for the gift of the child, together with their acknowledgement of the responsibility which the gift brings—a responsibility to bring the

child up in the knowledge of God in Christ. This will inevitably involve the right ordering of family relationships and the life of the home. Questions therefore must be asked in the Service, and answers given which clearly signify the parents' understanding of this.

Secondly, there is the child and the act of blessing. What the content of this act is, theologically speaking, needs to be considered in another place; for the protagonists of infant baptism often press us on this point. But that the child is to be received by the minister and words of blessing spoken is obviously integral to the total Service. To speak of dedicating the child, as do most of our dedication certificates, appears rather to obscure the purpose of the Service.

Thirdly, there is the worshipping church and its part in the ceremony. This needs always to be made explicit. In the new *Orders and Prayers for Church Worship* (edited by E. A. Payne and S. F. Winward), the congregation is asked: "Do you, as members of the Church, acknowledge and accept the responsibility, together with the parents, of teaching and training this child, that, being brought up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, *he* may be led in due time to trust Christ as Saviour, and confessing him as Lord in baptism, be made a member of His Church? If so, will you signify your acceptance of this responsibility by standing?" As an alternative to the congregation standing, the above commitment, slightly amended, can be accepted on behalf of the church by the Church Secretary or Sunday School Superintendent. This has the advantage of a representative of the church standing alongside the parents during the ceremony and personally sharing in it. But whichever method is followed, the child is, from the first, clearly set within the church community and the church's responsibility for the child solemnly acknowledged. As a final part of the Service, or after it, the child's name may be entered in a dedication register.

The next task is for the church to bridge the gap between the child's dedication and the age for commencing Sunday School (or Family Church). It is possible that we do not do this as effectively as we might. Probably the best link is through a cradle roll secretary. At dedication the child's name also goes on to a cradle roll. The responsibility of the cradle roll secretary will be to keep in touch with the home; to inform the minister of any illness (and particularly of the imminent arrival of further children!), to send a birthday card from the church on the child's birthday, and generally to act as a personal link between the child and the church. Obviously this link is more important when the parents are not themselves fully committed to the life of the church. But even in the case of church members the home benefits immensely from the feeling that, from the dedication onwards, the church is deeply concerned with fulfilling its responsibility towards the child. It is also very helpful from time to time—say twice a year—to arrange for cradle roll

children and their parents, to come for a brief cradle roll service. Naturally this may result in varying degrees of bedlam, but this does not detract from the value of the service. And, of course, there must be a cradle roll party at Christmas. This can often conveniently be combined with the beginners' department party, as many cradle roll families will have children in this department also. If a token Christmas gift can be given to each cradle roll child then the Christian care and concern is further manifested. It will be the cradle roll secretary's final responsibility to inform the beginners' leader when a cradle roll child becomes old enough to start Sunday School so that, if necessary, the leader can visit the home, meet the parents and invite the child to the department.

So there is, finally, the child's education in the Sunday School. We have said that the Sunday School should function as part of the whole church and in no way be separated from the fellowship. Perhaps it helps if we can think of the Sunday School as the church in embryo, with the children developing their understanding of the Faith until the day when, through their confession of faith in baptism, they are reborn into the fellowship of believers—the church. If we agree to think like this, then, in a sense, baptismal classes commence in the beginners' department and continue throughout the Sunday School. It will then further follow that this thinking will affect the sort of teaching given from the beginning in the Sunday School. Perhaps we are not always as clear about this as we need to be. Perhaps, too, we are not always helped as we might be by the various Sunday School Guide Books. Teaching in the Sunday School must not consist simply of Bible stories or stories of great heroes of church history, used solely as examples of the way to live; however noble and inspiring these stories may be. Should we not rather make a conscious attempt to interpret the Bible stories in the total context of God's activity towards men and men's response? So that the children can begin to see the Bible as a whole with its magnificent story of God; God at the beginning in creation; God in Christ turning history in the incarnation, death and resurrection of our Lord; God at the end in judgement and consummation. In this way the children can be taught to see that they live between the turning point in Christ and the final consummation of all things. In the light of this they can be brought to see that in the in-between God has given the Gospel to be proclaimed through the Holy Spirit and the Spirit filled community, the church, into which one enters through believers' baptism on acceptance of the Gospel. Thus the Abraham story is seen not simply as a story of a brave pilgrim but as the account of God's calling and founding of a nation, out of which is to come a Saviour. The missionary journeys of St. Paul are not seen solely as magnificent enterprises all over the map, but as the founding of churches through the preaching, the Holy Spirit and baptism. The heroes of church history are not simply great individuals, they are men and women of the church who have, in



different ways, proclaimed the Gospel; and so on. With this sort of emphasis the child is less likely to feel that he knows enough Bible stories at the age of eleven and can therefore leave Sunday School. For the Sunday School will be showing him his place in history and the church's role in it. The child will be more likely to see that beyond the individualistic decision for Christ there is the community of the church, in a congregation of which he is himself being nurtured. It will be more natural too, to encourage the child to begin to share in the worship of that congregation, a worship which, in turn, will help him Christwards. Thus it may be hoped, through the minister, teachers and church meeting at prayer, the co-operation of church with home in the responsibility of bringing growing children to confess Christ in baptism can be clearly manifested.

All these things outlined above, perhaps we do already. The plea of this article is that we should be clearly aware of why we do them.

W. M. S. WEST.

#### AUTHORITY FOR BAPTISING

IT would be possible to argue from the story of the Ethiopian in Acts 8, 26ff., that baptism is a purely individual concern, calling for no church authority and unrelated to church membership. But this would be a superficial view. It is sounder to place the incident in the general New Testament setting, which calls for a church reference. The authority to baptise was given to the disciples by Jesus and in the story of Pentecost, we see them fully exercising it. They appear to have practised it as a body. Those baptised were "added unto them" (Acts ii, 41), a phrase changed more definitely in Acts ii, 47 to "added to the church". Thus New Testament baptism was a baptism of believers involving incorporation into church fellowship and followed by the continuing life of church membership (Acts ii, 42ff.). The Apostles baptised as leaders of the church authorised by Christ Himself; baptism was, therefore, an ordinance of the church.

When Peter prepares to baptise Cornelius and his friends, his question (Acts x, 47) implies a reference to others who in some situations could or would forbid baptism. He is so sure in this instance that he can act with the blessing of the church that he proceeds with the baptism. Immediately afterwards (in Chapter 11) the matter comes up for discussion in Judaea, and his action is endorsed. It was clearly a question of church authority. Acts viii, 14ff., relates that the Apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria to confirm the evangelistic enterprises of Philip. Again, while too much must not be read into 1 Corinthians i, 15, in this context, Paul clearly senses a danger in baptising on his own authority.

The question of authority for baptising would seem to be answered, therefore, by tracing a development from Jesus through the Apostles to the church. Baptism is a church sacrament or ordinance.

Those baptised should be acknowledged by the church and accepted within it. As Schneider has said: "The question of baptism stands in the closest relation to the question of the church".

This is important when we consider the practical issue—does baptism rest with the minister or with the church? Some would undoubtedly answer, with the minister. But can such a view be reconciled with the practice revealed in the New Testament and with the principle of church authority inherent in it? Does it not create a false division between baptism and church membership? Conversion, baptism and church membership should form an integrally united experience, dependent on the preaching, baptising and receiving of the church through its duly authorised representatives. To say that the minister settles the issue of baptism and the church that of membership destroys this unity, and leads to a thoroughly unbiblical position, namely, that a minister baptises a person without any reference to the church or church membership, and only later, if the candidate opts for church membership, does the church as a body come into the picture.

A truer pattern would seem to be that a person is converted and asks for baptism. He is seen by the minister, whose first task is to ascertain and ensure, as far as he can, through personal interview and/or enquirers' classes, that the candidate has a real and informed experience of Christ. Guidance in matters of faith, worship, the devotional life, baptism, communion and church membership is a vital part of the minister's responsibility, though it is an open matter whether this should be pre-baptismal, post-baptismal, or partly both. Certainly it must be part of the instruction to link conversion, baptism and church membership clearly in the mind of the candidate. Meanwhile his name is brought to the church through deacons' and church meetings, and a visitor or visitors appointed. It is the task of the visitor to obtain through a friendly visit or interview, a testimony from the candidate which can be passed on to the church, and then to commend him to the church meeting. At this stage others, including the minister, may speak for him, and the church, in a spirit of love and prayer, makes known its mind and expresses its joy in receiving him into membership after baptism. As quickly as possible after this the minister baptises the candidate, the visitor assisting the candidate before and after the baptism; and again, as soon as possible, the new member is received into fellowship at the Communion service with the church standing in prayer. This ordering ensures that everything is, as it should be, in the setting of the life of the church. Baptism thus becomes in a real way a sacrament of the church, because the minister at no point acts in his own name but in the name of the church. From the start it is the church which is involved.

The office of visitor is under fire in some quarters. Some churches have discontinued it altogether; others question its necessity. In the view of the present writer the office may not always have

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been used as it should be, but it is still a significant and necessary one. It would be possible by a superficial reading of the New Testament story, to say that there could not possibly have been visitors for the 3,000 converts at Pentecost! But that was a unique event. The part played by Ananias and Barnabas in introducing the new convert Saul to the church, as recorded in Acts ix, is more significant for New Testament practice. They act as brothers in the faith to Saul. They minister to him in his early days. And Barnabas, especially, introduces him to the church and ensures his welcome into fellowship. Although we cannot argue from this incident that a church visitor was appointed, it is clear that some discussion took place about Saul and his conversion before he was received into the church. The development of the office of visitor within our Baptist churches derives from such records.

The visitor should be carefully chosen, probably on a recommendation of the deacons and minister; certainly not haphazardly by spontaneous nomination of a name in church meeting. He should be chosen for his spiritual maturity and he should meet the candidate as the church's representative, as one who is competent both to convey to it the convert's testimony and to fulfil a pastoral care for him. He should pray with and encourage the candidate, and follow up the baptism and reception into the church with continuing interest and friendship. The excellent booklet, written by the Rev. J. O. Barrett, *Suggestions for Visitors to Candidates for Church Membership* (Carey Kingsgate Press), should be more widely used. Some churches put one into the hands of every visitor. It provides a good subject for consideration at deacons' and church meetings. If the advice given in the booklet were more carefully followed there could not be the slightest doubt about the value and place of the visitor.

In sharing these views with others the present writer has often been asked, "Surely you couldn't withhold baptism from anyone who asked for it?" His answer is invariably that he could. He believes that he should not baptise until he is sure, and the church is sure, as far as is humanly possible, that the candidate is a genuinely converted believer. With this assurance the church can give its blessing and welcome, and the candidate can then proceed at once to baptism and reception into church membership. Baptism then takes place on the authority of Christ, given to the church and expressed through the action taken on its behalf by the minister and visitors, as authorised by the church meeting. Three valuable by-products would seem to come from this approach:—

- i. A fuller meaning to baptism.
- ii. A stronger conception of church membership.
- iii. A truer understanding of the pastoral responsibilities of the church.

BERNARD GREEN.

## THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE\*

“WE are poor instruments to make God’s holy Truth to be yet more and more known unto the people” wrote the Translators of the Authorised Version of the Bible in 1611. Yet their work has stood the test of time in a remarkable way, for it was not until nearly three centuries had elapsed that advancing knowledge and changed conditions rendered an authoritative revision of their translation necessary, and so gave rise to the Revised Version of 1881, and the American Standard Version of 1901.

But the story of the Bible in English could not end there, for the Revisers were enjoined to make as few alterations as possible, and to keep as near as they could to the language of the Authorised and earlier English versions. In short, their duty was “not to make a new translation but to revise one already existing”. Such conditions, however unavoidable at the time, made it certain that, in due course, a new and more thorough-going attempt would have to be made to render the original texts of Scripture into modern English. Indeed, this has been generally recognised by scholars for a long while past, for reasons which may be briefly summarised thus:—

First, there is the problem of the basic Hebrew and Greek texts. The Authorised Version was made at a time when the study of Biblical manuscripts was in its infancy, and when the material available upon which to build up a reliable picture of the original text of Scripture was relatively small in amount and late in date. Since that time, this material has been immensely enriched both in quantity and in quality by the discovery of many fresh manuscripts, and much new information has been acquired which cannot be ignored and ought to be used. When it can be said (as was said as long ago as 1908 by a distinguished Hebraist, the late Dr. Buchanan Gray) that “it is becoming generally recognised that the text followed by A.V. and R.V. alike is bad, and that evidence exists by which it may be corrected”, the preparation of a new translation can only be a matter of time.

In recent years, moreover, the technique of collating and studying the manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments has been greatly developed and systematised through the labours of many scholars of international standing, so that far more is known today about the distinctive characteristics of the books of the Bible, and the way in which they were prepared and circulated, than was ever possible before. In the case of the New Testament, in particular, much fresh light has been thrown upon its language and idiom by the discovery of very large numbers of Greek papyri which relate to the life of the society in which the Christian Church grew up.

\* Reprinted from “*Baptist Leader*,” March, 1961, copyright by the Judson Press, U.S.A., 1961, and used by permission.

Finally, the need to bridge the gap between the English which was spoken and written in the 17th century and that current today, has become increasingly urgent. For, as the authors of the "Twentieth Century New Testament" said in 1904: "the English of the Authorised Version (closely followed in that of the Revised Version), though widely valued for its antique charm, is in many passages difficult, or even quite unintelligible to the modern reader". To give a single example: What can the average worshipper today make of the following passage when he hears it read in church?

"Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him we are made full, who is the head of all principality and power: in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ . . ."

And this quotation, it should be noted, is from the Revised Version.

These reasons have driven many people to realise that an effort should now be made to bring our English translation of the Bible into line with current knowledge and needs. But opinions have differed as to the best way of doing this. On the one hand, some scholars favour what may be called the policy of "modernising the A.V.". This was the method adopted a generation ago by the international Council of Religious Education in the U.S.A. and Canada, when it promoted a revision of the American Standard Version of 1901 which should "stay as close to the Tyndale—King James tradition as it can in the light of our present knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek texts and their meaning on the one hand, and our present understanding of English on the other". The fruit of their work is with us today in the form of "The Revised Standard Version of the Bible", and it has been warmly welcomed by many British readers.

On the other hand, there are many scholars who believe that the time has gone by for trying to revise further the Authorised Version. They are convinced that the situation now calls for a fresh start; and this view is to some extent confirmed by the success that has attended such modern translations as those of Weymouth, Moffatt, Goodspeed and other more recent scholars. For the reception given to these suggests that the public mind will no longer be satisfied with revisions of earlier English versions, but is seeking for something that is genuinely new. It also suggests that the pioneering work done by individual scholars needs now to be supplemented by a concerted effort of the churches acting together on the highest level. The "New English Bible" is the product of such a joint effort.

The first overt proposal for a new translation of the Bible emanated from the Church of Scotland in 1946, and it was at once taken up by the other non-Roman Churches of Great Britain, who agreed, in

conjunction with the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge, to set up a "Joint Committee for the New Translation of the Bible".

The present composition of this Committee is as follows:

*Chairman:* The Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Alwyn Williams).

*Honorary Secretary:* The Rev. Professor J. K. S. Reid.

*General Director:* The Rev. Dr. C. H. Dodd, F.B.A.

*Membership:*

Church of England: Six representatives.

Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, Congregational Union and Baptist Union: Two representatives each.

Presbyterian Church of England, Society of Friends, the Churches in Wales, the Churches in Ireland, the British & Foreign Bible Society and The National Bible Society of Scotland: One representative each.

(Four representatives of the two University Presses attend the meetings of the Joint Committee for the purpose of mutual consultation.)

Space will not permit the names of the representatives to be printed here, but Baptists, in particular, will be interested to know that when the Joint Committee was first formed, the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland appointed its General Secretary (the Rev. Dr. M. E. Aubrey) and the Rev. Principal P. W. Evans (of Spurgeon's College) as its representatives, with the Rev. Professor T. H. Robinson (of University College, Cardiff) as "Alternate". In the course of time changes have naturally occurred, and the Baptist Union is represented today by Professor Robinson and the Rev. R. L. Child (formerly Principal of Regent's Park College, Oxford), with the Rev. Dr. E. A. Payne (General Secretary of the Baptist Union) as Alternate.

In view of the highly skilled nature of the work, and the complexity of the textual and linguistic problems involved, the Joint Committee established at the outset two Panels of experts, one for the Old Testament and the other for the New. These translation panels were later supplemented by two others, one of which was made responsible for translating the Apocrypha, while the other (consisting of "Literary Advisers") was charged with the task of scrutinising the language and style of the drafts submitted to them. The members of all the Panels are selected by the Joint Committee from persons distinguished for their eminence in the fields concerned.

The procedure followed has varied somewhat in detail, but, speaking broadly, the method adopted has been to ask a particular scholar to prepare and submit a translation of the book or books entrusted to him. This has then been examined and discussed in minute detail by the Panel in joint session, and when agreement has been reached, the draft has gone to the Literary Panel. Finally, the completed book has been circulated in typescript to the members of the Joint Committee for their comments and suggestions. All this has meant many years of exacting work by a large number of

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scholars drawn from the various churches co-operating in the project, most of whom have also been occupied in their normal professional duties. The Baptist Union, through its representatives on the Joint Committee, has shared fully in this historic undertaking, and several well-known Baptist scholars are taking part in the work of translation.

The New Testament is the first part of "The New English Bible" to be completed, and the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge (who are bearing the entire cost of the project) have announced their intention of publishing more than a quarter of a million copies in March, 1961. Work continues on the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, but this will not be finished for several more years.

In conclusion, it must be emphasised that, in the preparation of the "New English Bible", no attempt has been made to compete with the Authorised Version, or to suggest that this will be superseded. The aim in view is rather to render the true text of Scripture, so far as that can be ascertained, into contemporary English in such a way that the new version shall be directly intelligible to the ordinary reader, with the hope also that it may prove worthy to be used in the worship and service of the Christian Church. How far this aim has been fulfilled, time alone will show. Meanwhile, the prayers of all Christian people are desired for its successful completion.

R. L. CHILD.