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THE PRAYERS AT PUBLIC WORSHIP

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE PRAYERS AT PUBLIC WORSHIP

THIS is the first of three articles on our Church Worship. We shall not be concerned primarily with the theology of worship, but rather with the practical problems which confront a minister of the Word and Sacraments in a Baptist Church today. The second article will be on the administration of Baptism and the third on the Lord's Supper. Perhaps I may also add, by way of introduction, that sixty-six ministers have now replied to our letter in the spring issue of *The Fraternal*, indicating their desire to attend a conference devoted entirely to worship. It is hoped to arrange this at Swanwick in the late autumn of 1962.

No apology is, I trust, needed for beginning with the subject of public prayer. It is at this point that our worship is most inadequate, and is being subjected to increasing criticism. In his introduction to "A Book of Public Prayers" recently published, Dr. H. E. Fosdick writes: "When the non-liturgical churches decided to dispense with officially recognised forms of public prayer, and to trust the individual ministers with the responsibility of formulating their own prayers, they took a fateful step. Those clergymen who have been reared in the non-liturgical tradition and who would not feel at home in any other, should be the first to confess the widespread inadequacy of public prayer in their services of worship." This widespread inadequacy is in some measure due to the assumption that all genuine prayer, all prayer inspired by the Spirit of God, must be spontaneous and extempore. But as Fosdick adds: "This emphasis on spontaneity, however, neglects the important fact that leading a congregation in public prayer is a work of art, demanding expert skill and painstaking preparation. Extempore spontaneity is not the only alternative to a printed liturgy. The real alternative is thoughtful, careful, skilful preparation."

It will be helpful at this stage to define our terms a little more carefully. Isaac Watts distinguishes between *free prayer* "done by some work of meditation before we begin to speak in prayer" and *extempore prayer* "when we without any reflection or meditation beforehand address ourselves to God and speak the thoughts of our hearts as fast as we conceive them". We are here using the phrase "extempore prayer" as just defined—of spontaneous, unprepared prayer. Now there is no doubt that some ministers (and laymen) have a special gift for extempore prayer. By God's grace they are able, without preparation of their prayers, to lead a congregation into His holy presence, and give adequate expression to the desires and aspirations of the people in prayer. No one could reasonably require that such gifted men should employ any other way of praying in public. But what widespread harm is being done by the assumption that what is true of the few is true of all! Why should a minister who has no gift for extempore preaching, assume as a matter of course that he has a gift for extempore praying? The fact that we rely entirely on the Holy Spirit does not exempt most of

us from the discipline of careful preparation, for both preaching and praying. Now experience indicates that *most* of our ministers have no special gift for extempore prayer—free prayer is another matter. We continue to suffer terribly from the assumption of many ministers that they have this gift. The result is often a long, meandering, mixed up, didactic, and uninspired monologue. Perhaps at the beginning the people are praying with the minister; but one by one they fall exhausted out of the race in which “only one wins the prize”. You doubt whether they do fall out? Put the question to any group of Baptists in any part of the country. Only a minority of our people pray during the whole of our prayer times.

There is, of course, no virtue in swinging from one extreme to another, and it is not being suggested that a minister should never offer extempore prayer in public worship. In our preaching we frequently say things “on the spur of the moment” which have, or may have (!) a rightful place in a prepared sermon. The average minister, not specially gifted for extempore prayer, should prepare his prayers in much the same way as he prepares the sermon. Free prayer is prayer prepared in advance for one particular occasion. It is the best of all ways of praying in public. Just because it is prepared, it is for most of us superior to extempore prayer, both in logical order, language, and content. Also, because it is prepared for a unique occasion, it is superior to liturgical prayer; it fits the occasion, is relevant to the situation, related to the unique circumstances. It is not ideal that our free prayers should be read in public worship. Prayers read by the minister alone, like read sermons, are apt to sound wooden, impersonal, formal in the bad sense. If they have been well prepared, either in the form of notes or written out in full, the minister will be able to recall the main sequence and content, without straining to reproduce the exact words. Memory improves if constant use is made of it. What is of supreme importance in the preparation of free prayer, is adequate rootage in the biblical and liturgical tradition. For in preparing free prayers, the minister must not be merely expressing his own individual piety. He is “a liturgical man”, and the common prayer of the Church is to find expression through his lips. Just as the man who preaches to the Church must inwardly digest the Scriptures, so the man who prays with the Church must be rooted in the common prayer of the Church. Freedom and tradition are not enemies; they are not necessarily two, but like man and wife in marriage, are intended to be one. Like a flower rooted in the soil, the best free prayer springs from the Bible and the liturgy. In this connection, the training of our ministry is still open to serious criticism. Fortunately we have never had a theological college in which the study of the Scriptures was thought to be unnecessary. We still have theological colleges in which the study of worship, liturgy, and the whole devotional heritage of the Church is regarded as an optional extra, and not as a necessity.

So far it has been maintained that the prayers at public worship should be well prepared in advance by one who is adequately rooted in the biblical and liturgical tradition. But while this would go a long way towards improving public prayer, it is not by itself sufficient. It would improve the order, the language, the content, the general quality—but it would not abolish the monologue, the ministerial monopoly, and the passive congregation. We must of course avoid the error of assuming that there is no corporate prayer unless the congregation is speaking. On the other hand, congregational praise is usually expressed vocally in words sung together. Should not congregational prayer sometimes find vocal expression in something said together? One way of doing this is for the minister, in place of “the long prayer”, to offer a number of concise prayers, at the conclusion of each of which the congregation responds with “the sound of a grand Amen”. It may be helpful to say in advance what each of these prayers is about. Both the brevity and the congregational “Amen” help to maintain attention. There are also many responses which can be used to give the people a vocal part together in the various kinds of prayer. For example, during a prayer of thanksgiving, the minister may say several times “We thank Thee, O God”, after which the congregation responds “and praise Thy holy name”. During prayers of intercession, the sentence “Lord, hear our prayer”, can be followed each time by the people’s response, “and let our cry come unto Thee”. The best way is for the congregation to learn these and other responses outside the context of Church worship. Church meeting can be used for this purpose. This is preferable to explaining during a service what the congregation is expected to say, as this tends to spoil the atmosphere of worship. If these responses are learned one at a time, in the course of two or three years it is possible to build up a prayer dialogue in place of monologue. Such memorised responses, not requiring the use of a book, may be used in the opening greeting and sentences, after the scripture lessons, during prayers of confession, thanksgiving, and intercession, and when using the Sanctus and the Gloria. Responses may also be used effectively with “biddings” and silence. There is general agreement that we need more silence in our worship; but discretion is needed here, as, unlike the Quakers, we are not yet disciplined in the right use of it. One helpful way is for the minister to bid the people to pray for a specified object, to follow the bidding by an *adequate* period of silence for prayer, concluding with a memorised prayer response. This may be repeated four or five times—perhaps not more. The series may be concluded with a collect, since the original use of these admirable prayers was to collect the silent prayers of the people.

The use of responses, however, does not go far enough. For congregational prayer we need a congregational prayer book. Few, if any, Free Churchmen would desire the re-introduction of a fixed liturgy. But the word “liturgy” does not have to be qualified by

the adjective "fixed". The false antithesis—extempore prayer versus fixed written liturgy—which has for so long bedevilled all our thinking in this realm, needs to be replaced by the two complementaries—free prayer and free liturgy. Just as we have a praise book, and are not compelled to sing the same eight or ten hymns every Sunday (do all ministers realise this?), so we need a prayer book, containing all the great prayers of the Bible and the Church, which we are free to use, as occasion requires. Not a prayer book for ministers, but for the people, so that on some occasions, perhaps once each Sunday, they can all pray vocally together. It may be readily admitted that there are certain disadvantages in praying—as in singing—from a book. The manual act of finding the place; using the prayers without thought because they are familiar; using up all one's attention in saying them because they are not familiar—these are some of the disadvantages. They are far outweighed by the advantages of doing something together, of using the eyes and the lips as well as the ears, of praying with the Church throughout the world and in other ages, and above all of using prayers of rich content, prayers which enshrine in language of beauty the spiritual experience of the saints. Now that we have an excellent new hymn-book, is it too much to hope that a number of men within our denomination might be brought together to compile a prayer book, not for the man in the pulpit, but for the people in the pews. Of course there would be opposition—as when hymn singing was introduced. Let us be true to our tradition of freedom in worship. Our fathers were undoubtedly right in discarding a fixed written liturgy, and insisting on the truth that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But true liberty in this realm is freedom to use, as well as not to use—and to use written liturgy in Church it must be available. Have we become enslaved all over again, conformists to our own non-conformity? Or have we the courage to move out beyond the sterile antitheses of the past, to a combination of free prayer and free liturgy, to church prayer which is at once truly free and truly congregational? "That together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

S. F. WINWARD.

LOOKING BACK

THE time is the last decade of the nineteenth century: the scene is radical Leicester, clean, unpicturesque and thriving, and full of nonconformist chapels. The shire had been a stronghold of puritanism and its main interests were still religion and politics. I had the privilege of being brought up in a home where there was little money and much affection, where faith, built on the Bible, bore its fruits in human kindness and spiritual freedom; and Sundays came to me as days of heaven upon earth.

Those were the spacious years of Queen Victoria, an age of peace and comfort, of much fine thinking and earnest endeavour, when

men worked hard and enjoyed their work, and had a boundless belief in progress which I did not share. We attended the fashionable church of the town, full of wealthy manufacturers who had started from nothing and looked down on anyone who had not made money. They and their families occupied the floor of the Gothic building while working folk sat in the gallery. The ideal of many was a smug respectability, and people did not speak unless they had been introduced. I myself heard a prosperous solicitor say, at what was called a "soirée", that Victoria Road Church had done its work and that all it had to do was to rest and be thankful. It was a long way from the New Testament. The minister, J. G. Greenhough, was an able, eloquent and popular preacher, who exulted in larger, kindlier views of God and in all the victories that the gospel was about to win. Coming from a back street in Bradford he had been first in all England in a civil service examination, and had given up good prospects to enter Rawdon College. With some prophetic gift his father had named him "Gershom", strange as he was with a shambling walk, cold blue eyes and a tongue that could take the skin off. He was completely indifferent to the many stories told about him, but the beauty of his pulpit prayers and the happiness of his home life witnessed that the root of the matter was in him, and I owe him much.

Among other Baptist ministers of that time two stand out in my memory. The most notable place of worship was Belvoir Street Chapel. Designed by Hansom and semi-circular in shape, its acoustics were perfect. The door into the pulpit came out of a vast wall, upon which were three white marble tablets to the deathless memory of three great men: William Carey, Robert Hall and James Philipppo Mursell. To worship there under James Thew was an unforgettable experience. As the preacher came into the pulpit you saw first the mop of greying hair and then the small, thin, sensitive face. He spoke in little more than a whisper and his range of thought was limited, but the sentences flowed like exquisite music and in moments of insight the whole man became so suffused with feeling, as to produce an overwhelming impression of spiritual power. I can hear him still. "The ministry is the most miserable business on earth unless you have your heart in it." "To quote my distinguished predecessor, in that highly Latinized style of which he was so great a master, 'Lapsed intelligences have no recuperative power'." At the Baptist Union Assembly in Bristol in 1896, he closed a moving sermon on "Warning every man" with a reference to his own experience when the word of a friend lifted his feet to the rock. "From that hour he felt he had a gospel to preach; and, blessed be God! he has not ceased to preach it to this day. Nor will he, till his poor stammering tongue lies silent in the grave. Go forth, then, on this holy errand. You will meet with many a discouragement. But if you lead one wanderer to the warm, safe shelter of the fold, you have 'saved a soul alive' and covered a multitude of sins."

At Sion Strict Baptist Chapel there was a minister of great reputation, Grey Hazelrigg, son of a Baronet and descended from one of the five members who defied Charles the First. Converted when a young army officer, he threw in his lot with despised dissenters, felt a call to the ministry like a fire in his bones and went on preaching till he was 94. He was a venerable figure with aristocratic features and flowing beard who took one back to the seventeenth century. The hymns were given out verse by verse by the presiding deacon, and sung slowly as if every word were weighed and felt. Gadsby's hymns are a goldmine of experience, and the long prayer and longer sermon were full of Scripture and full of Christ. The preacher excelled in pithy sentences, such as "Soul's blood stains deep", Halyburton's "Sirrah! Unsanctified wisdom has done much harm to the Church of God", and Luther's "The power of Scripture is in the personal pronouns". His favourite hymn was "The sands of time are sinking" and the text of his last sermon was "The Spirit and the bride say, Come". I never went to that bare meeting-house without being braced by the moral realism of the teaching and getting some word from God for my own soul.

In my impressionable years I felt the influence of three great men. Peter Taylor Forsyth was an Aberdonian, who in his first church had shocked people by his violent heterodoxy. In 1888 he came to Leicester and took a prominent part in the life of the town. I heard him give his Presidential address on "Gothic Architecture" at the Literary and Philosophical Society, when he spoke of Lincoln Cathedral, poised on its hill like a great eagle waiting for its spring. With his pale face and piercing eyes he was like an eagle himself. He could talk eloquently on any subject and at any length, and was beyond question the most brilliant mind I have encountered. His first wife died in 1894, and the sorrow is said to have ploughed deep into his sensitive being and opened it up to the grace of God. But two years before I heard him say that the death of God's Son was the divine heart itself breaking in saving pity over the world. A boy in my form at school had accidentally shot himself and his brother, and Mr. Forsyth spoke to the whole form standing at the graveside. "Death is always solemn—in this case it is tragical, clothed with an unusual terror and with an unspeakable pity. I find no light in mere optimism but only in the greater, more luminous mystery of the cross of Christ."

In 1896 he came back to Leicester to preach before the Congregational Union the sermon on "Holy Father", which opened a new day in British theology. The great crowd listened spellbound and when he spoke of the Great White Throne it was as if their faces blanched and trembled under a sense of the presence of God. "It is the silence of the moving heavens, of the rising sun, of all the mightiest actions of the Holy Ghost—yea, it is the silence of the witness borne in your hearts, my brethren, in this hour when I speak these holy names and presume to call these awful powers."

Three years later I heard Dr. Forsyth preach in his own pulpit in Emmanuel Church, Cambridge, on "Let us also go that we may die with him". At the end of the sermon he left his manuscript and spoke in a low voice a few pathetic words: "When we think of the Cross of Christ how poor our lives seem, how awful the distance between ourselves and Him. There will be great reversals. There will be desolation when those who have never felt the cross gaze upon the sacrifices of others, and many now overwhelmed with distress will learn for the first time that they are near their Lord."

In 1902 he preached a mighty sermon for the Wesleyan Missionary Society on "Can these bones live?" After surveying with prophetic insight the whole world of Church and Missions, "I know," he said, "God has made life out of my shipwreck. I know I have only been saved by something which has saved the world." Then he closed a long, passionate prayer with "Have mercy on those who are dead and buried here. By the Holy Ghost open our graves, enlarge our hearts and deliver our souls into their native land."

I first saw Alexander Whyte in Bradford, when he spoke to the United College on "William Law". He was a noble figure in his Moderator's robes. At the subsequent tea he left the important people and sat down with the five of us who had come from Rawdon. "You Baptists have a great heritage, Bunyan and Spurgeon. There is a warmth, a depth, an inwardness and pungency in the Baptist witness not found elsewhere." Later he sent each of us his book on Law.

On the last day of my College course he addressed the students at Rawdon, and his gift was the "Memoirs of Thomas Boston". "If it helps you", he said, "let me know." It is a wonderful study of providence and, as it had been a comfort to me when settling, I wrote to Dr. Whyte to tell him so, and received by return of post his book on the Apostle Paul. There was a strange power in his utterance that night. "Read the best books." "Preach from your own experience. No one who is fighting his battle of sanctification can go into the pulpit without having something to say." "I never read a chapter that text after text do not leap out upon me as if written expressly for me." He quoted Patrick Fairbairn's last appeal to an assistant, "Prepare for the pulpit. If you have to choose between visiting a deathbed and preparing for the pulpit, prepare for the pulpit." From that hour I read all of Alexander Whyte's that came my way. His flaming imagination, grip of the gospel and profound teaching on sin, were gifts of God to my generation.

Alexander McLaren was for sheer personality the greatest man I have known. His face was like a Scotch mountain with sunlight and shadow playing over heights and depths. No wonder that Henry Irving said on seeing him, "What a man!" I first heard him at the Assembly in Leeds, when Joseph Parker preached the sermon to a vast crowd and McLaren took the service. I can still

hear the silvery voice with its rolling r's giving out "Before Jehovah's awful throne". The following year at Leicester he was Vice-President and I heard him speak five times. At the Rawdon dinner, when Dr. Green was presented with his portrait, he described his old friend as the noble example of toilsome, patient, resolute searching after truth. At the first Congress of the World Alliance in Exeter Hall, I remember the morning when, as the last speaker finished, there was a rush for the doors. McLaren rose from the Chair with flashing eyes and said, "We will wait till the chaff has blown off." There was dead silence while he pronounced the Benediction. His short Presidential address had been: "In the name of Christ: by the power of the Spirit", and he made familiar words come alive. "We are crying out for revival. Revival must begin with each of us by ourselves. Only the man who has let the Spirit of God work His will upon him has a right to expect to be filled with power." He had a reserved, sensitive nature. "To efface oneself is one of the preacher's first duties." Not long before he died, when a letter had been read to him expressing gratitude for what he had been, as guide and leader, he said, "I cannot listen to words like these. When I awoke this morning and thought, I said to myself, 'A sinner saved by grace, that is all'." And that at the end is all anyone of us can say.

H. W. BURDETT.

MENDING AND MARRING: THE DOINGS OF HYMN BOOK EDITORS

JAMES MONTGOMERY complained that every writer of hymns had to bear the cross of seeing them revised "at the pleasure of every Christian brother, however incompetent or little qualified to amend what he may deem amiss in one of the most delicate and difficult exercises of a tender heart and an enlightened understanding". He does not complain that his hymns have been re-published, though sometimes without his permission being sought, "being rather humbly thankful that any imperfect strains of his should be thus employed . . . But of these liberties taken by some of these borrowers of his effusions to modify certain passages . . . he must avail himself of the present opportunity to remind them that if good people (and such he verily believes them to be) cannot conscientiously adopt *his* diction and doctrine, it is a little questionable in them to impose upon him theirs, which he may as honestly hesitate to receive".¹

Such a heartfelt complaint can be found in the writings or on the lips of many hymn writers. Sir H. W. Baker, the editor of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, used his powers of revision very freely.

¹ Preface to *Original Hymns*.

“ Now I know what A and M stands for ”, wrote one disgusted author. “ It means Asked-for and Mutilated. ” There is a famous protest in John Wesley’s preface: “ Many gentlemen have given my brother and me (though without naming us) the honour to reprint many of our hymns. Now they are perfectly welcome to do so, provided they print them just as they are. But I desire they would not attempt to mend them, for they really are not able. None of them is able to mend either the sense or the verse. ”

But “ circumstances alter cases ” as Dickens remarked, and when writers become editors they sing a different tune. When Montgomery produced his anthology of hymns, *The Christian Psalmist*, he did not scruple to alter, and when he was helping Cotterill to produce his hymn book in 1819, he wrote, “ Good Mr. Cotterill and I bestowed a great deal of labour and care upon the compilation of that book, clipping, interlining and remodelling hymns of all sorts, as we thought we could correct the sentiment or improve the expression ”. And Wesley, like Montgomery, did not do as he would be done by. He was an incorrigible mender of other people’s hymns, of his brother, George Herbert, Isaac Watts and many more: sometimes for the better but often for the worse. Charles owes much to his brother’s blue pencil. But in his Charleston book John made a sad mess of Herbert’s “ Teach me, my God and King ”. He turned Austin’s lovely spring hymn, “ Hark, my soul, how everything ”, into Long Measure: “ Hark, my dull soul, how everything ”. And what excuse could he have for altering “ Our God, our help in ages past ” into “ O God, our help ”, or “ I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath ” to the pedestrian “ I’ll praise my Maker with my breath ”?

But though John Wesley illustrates the perils as well as the gains of editing, some of it is in fact inevitable. Julian says that “ Hark, the herald angels sing ”, “ Awake my soul ”, “ When I survey ”, and “ Rock of ages ” are the four best hymns in English, and that no one of these has normally been sung as its author wrote it, and some have been drastically revised. Every man has his own list of the four best hymns, and I should want to argue about that, nor do I endorse all the changes made in these ones; but the fact Julian has noted at least shows how widespread the practice of revision is. I shall return to some of those he mentions shortly. Meantime I venture the assertion that if no alterations were permissible, about half the hymn book would disappear altogether. It would be unusable. Certainly the author’s original is to be preferred where possible, and there is often great gain in restoring his version, as in the instances just mentioned. But if the changes are not frivolous, an editor or editorial committee need have no bad conscience about the principle. A hymn book is not an anthology of poetry, in which normally an editor would be under obligation to print the author’s exact text. It is a collection made for a particular, practical purpose, the public worship of God. “ A hymn’s business is to

strengthen the faith of today, not to present an historical record of the faith of the day before yesterday."¹

There are many good reasons why alterations may be necessary in a hymn to fit it for public worship. To begin with, often a slight change in the order of even the same words will make a hymn singable. The originals of some did not scan and had no uniformity of syllables. Some still don't: they are what are politely called "irregular". They demand inserted grace notes, a breathless scrambling to get the words into the tune. But a certain amount of attention to the rules is essential if a congregation is to be able to sing. A slight change may also avoid having the emphasis fall upon a work like "the".

Again, many of our best hymns are selections from a much larger number of original verses. Stopford Brooke wrote and published long hymns and declared that congregations liked them that way, but five or six verses are plenty for normal purposes. Whittier's "Dear Lord and Father" had originally seventeen verses and his "Immortal love" thirty-five: sometimes two or more hymns have been made out of it. Keble's "There is a book" had twelve verses; Addison's "When all Thy mercies", thirteen; Byrom's "Christians awake", written at her request as a Christmas present for his small daughter, had forty-eight lines not divided into verses. Not a few hymns, including some of those just mentioned, were not intended as hymns at all. Baxter's "Lord, it belongs not to my care" is a selection from a lengthy poem, and Neale's "Jerusalem the golden" comes from a translation of a poem of three thousand lines, which is mainly a bitter satire on the follies and vices of mankind, with four hundred lines describing in contrast the peace and glory of heaven.

Often a good hymn contains in the original a bad verse or two which would ruin it for modern worship. A well-known example is the verse in "All things bright and beautiful":

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high and lowly
And settled their estate.

One wonders if the altogether admirable writer, of whom I would speak only with respect, had forgotten the parable about the rich man in his elegant dining-room with a beggar lying at his gate. Bishop Christopher Wordsworth made Christian giving sound like an investment in Premium Bonds, only with an assurance of drawing a bonus:

Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee
Repaid a thousandfold will be;
Then gladly will we give to Thee.
Who givest all.

¹ Bernard Manning. *The Hymns of Wesley and of Watts*, p. 117.

Less well known is the opening verse of "Before Jehovah's awful throne":

Sing to the Lord with joyful voice.
Let every land His name adore.
The British Isles shall send the noise
Across the ocean to the shore.

Further, words have a way of actually changing their meanings or becoming obsolete. I have read that when Wren showed Charles II over St. Paul's while it was in course of erection, the king exclaimed in admiration that the building was "amusing, awful and artificial". What he meant, and would be understood to mean, was that it was an amazing, awe-inspiring, and skilfully beautiful creation. "Awful" is a difficult word to keep in a hymn nowadays, as is "dreadful": they have been degraded. They once meant holy, sacred, awe-inspiring, as in Tersteegen's grand hymn in John Wesley's translation:

Lo, God is here! Let us adore,
And own how dreadful is this place.

Charles Wesley originally wrote in "Hail the Day", "There the pompous triumph waits", which would convey quite the wrong impression today. Few would wish to sing with Toplady:

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyestrings crack in death.

Only pedantry could demand a return to "Hark, how all the welkin rings", which Wesley wrote, from the familiar revision of Whitefield, "Hark, the herald angels sing". The 1904 edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* did read "welkin", and provoked a public outcry and changed its mind. *The English Hymnal* and *Songs of Praise* actually print the hymn in both forms, as separate hymns.

A writer cannot always foresee the honest or malicious misreading of words and phrases, like the little Levite who kept the old man's watch, or the more intelligible bewilderment of the child at the green hill that hadn't got any city wall. But an editor must look out for such possibilities.

The fondness of many hymn writers for the word "blood" would grate on the ears of most modern congregations. It has, of course, New Testament associations, notably in relation to the Lord's Supper, but it is often used in hymns in quite a non-New Testament sense, with a misunderstanding of the underlying metaphors and references. Cowper surprisingly is one of the worst offenders with "There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins". That otherwise moving hymn cannot be mended. It has to be taken as Cowper wrote it or not at all, and so editors often reluctantly leave it out.

Even more puzzling, because with much less justification, is the fondness of a past generation for worms. Bernard Manning poked some excellent fun at squeamish editors who went round with a tin of Keating's or D.D.T. and was all for keeping the robust language

of our great-grandfathers. (*Hymns of Wesley and Watts*, p. 129.) But it really wouldn't do. When William Carey directed that no eulogy and none of his many honours were to be inscribed on his tombstone but only the words from a hymn by Watts:

A wretched, poor and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall.

we cannot help admiring the spirit of the man, though we still wonder at his choice of words. But Carey would see nothing odd in such a use of the word "worm". And that grand hymn, "The God of Abraham praise", declares "He calls a worm His friend", which does not mean that God loves even His most humble creation; but is a reference to the author. "Great God of wonders", by Samuel Davies, read originally:

Crimes of such horror to forgive,
Such guilty daring worms to spare.

Like "blood", the word had lost all its original meaning, and hymn writers could solemnly produce astonishing lines. Dearmer¹ has collected one or two from hymns once in common use.

Earth from afar has heard Thy fame
And worms have learnt to lisp Thy name;

or another,

O may Thy powerful word
Inspire this feeble worm
To rush into Thy Kingdom, Lord,
And take it as by storm.

Yet another author, addressing the Almighty, exclaims
Permit this humble worm to bow.

HUGH MARTIN.

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(To be continued)

ANGOLA

ON 1st April, Frank Bryan wrote asking whether I would write something for the *Fraternal* about the inner life of the Congo churches and their new relationship to the BMS. That was a fortnight after the outbreak of the rebellion in North Angola, and I was already in Luanda with Theodore Tucker, of the North American Foreign Missions Conference, seeking to assess the significance of what was taking place. On my return, although Congo affairs still held more than a marginal interest, it was the Angola situation that took central place not only in the prayers of the churches but even for a short time, in the life of the country. I am therefore jotting down some of the data of what, at a later time, may be studied in greater and more judicious detail.

¹ *Songs of Praise Discussed*, p. 116.

Tucker and I travelled out to Luanda via Geneva and Lisbon, establishing contact with Protestant mission leaders in both places, and arriving in the Angolan capital on 30th March, the eve of Good Friday. The air was tense, Luanda swarmed with refugees and with rumour; shots broke the stillness of the night, yet the full extent of the calamity and the nature of the uprising was not yet fully appreciated. On the Saturday a Luanda illustrated weekly had a sequence of pictures showing a young man committing suicide by throwing himself down from some scaffolding. The following week, after many protests had been received, the paper chided its readers by pointing out that the date on the paper was 1st April. Such was the tragic misreading of the situation at that time.

I was not myself able to leave Luanda because of the difficulty in arranging plane passages to the disturbed northern area, but missionaries and others coming down to the capital brought enough first-hand information to make us realise the shock and horror of the initial onslaught, and the even more dreadful nature of the counter measures that were being taken. In Luanda itself, though far from the scene of the uprising, Europeans bent on revenge murdered hundreds of innocent Africans in night-raids on the outer suburbs. Some of our own missionaries witnessed acts of violence in the heart of the city, and the authorities abdicated responsibility for maintaining law and order for fear that the civilian population might turn against them.

The Portuguese Press, subject as always to strict censorship, frequently attacked Protestant missions, charging them with conniving at the revolt and even of distributing arms to the rebels. The result of these calumnies was a widespread assault on Protestant church leaders and property, particularly in the areas evangelised by the American Methodists and the North Angola Mission; both of which have suffered a heavy toll of dead among their workers and adherents. Undoubtedly some Protestant Africans have been members of nationalist movements, but so also have Roman Catholic priests, notably the Vicar-General of Luanda, Manuel das Neves. But these names were rapidly passed over by the newspapers and there has been no direct persecution of the Roman church and missions.

The Canadian Baptists' Ambrizete area and all BMS districts have suffered heavily, but many of our African co-workers are known to have fled to safety across the nearby frontier. Large numbers, however, have disappeared following arrest and imprisonment, and some are known to have died violent deaths. One of the Calambata students, a young man of splendid integrity and devotion, has recently been imprisoned at San Salvador. He has been seen by our missionaries in the presence of the authorities. He had a wound across his forehead. The other students have fled with their families into the Congo Republic.

In central and south Angola too, there have been widespread arrests of church leaders and students. Some have died in prison.

Others have simply disappeared. In the early days of the revolt official propaganda alleged that the troubles in the north were caused by an invasion of foreigners from across the border, and that they were terrorising the local population. If this had been true, one would have expected the authorities to have sought to rally the Africans to their side. Instead, there were the vicious reprisals against innocent Africans in Luanda and in many other places. There was intense provocation of African patience in the Quibocolo district where the people almost to a man were "pacifist".

Church life in the north is practically at a standstill, but in the centre and south of the country, the following missions maintain a somewhat halting programme because of the arrest or flight of many of their African colleagues: the United Church of Canada, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Swiss Philafrican Mission, the South African General Mission and, Brethren Missions.

During our stay in Luanda we twice visited the Provincial Secretary for Political Affairs, Dr. Neto de Miranda, who admitted the excesses of the civilian population but saw no way of preventing them. In Lisbon on our way home, we were generously received by the Under-Secretary for Overseas, Dr. Costa Freitas, to whom we expressed our concern at the activities of the vigilantes and expressed the hope that the fundamental grievances of the Africans might be looked into. Only two days before this liberal-minded army officers had attempted a *coup d'etat* in Lisbon, and on the way back from church on Sunday morning we saw police armed with tommy-guns in the streets. There are, we know, among Portuguese politicians men who would gladly see a change in leadership and the introduction of more liberal policies.

We arrived in this country on 18th April, and the next day I reported on our journey to the Society's Congo committee. General Committee met ten days later on the 28th, and towards the end of that Friday afternoon it was decided to make a public statement during Assembly week. By the helpfulness of the officers of the Baptist Union, it was possible to have this included in the evening programme for Tuesday, 2nd May, the resolution, presented to a gathering of some 2,500 people, was unanimously accepted. It is perhaps worth recalling the terms in which that resolution was couched, for they were moderate and irenic in character, ending in an appeal to the Portuguese Government, not only to refrain from bitter reprisal but also to recognise the genuineness of African grievances.

The heart of the resolution read as follows: "The Assembly deplores attacks on women and children and all forms of atrocity, yet expresses the conviction that the present uprising of the African population is largely due to the lack of justice and charity in relationships between the races. It has noted with appreciation the pastoral letter of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Angola, drawing attention

to the existence of serious social injustices and to legitimate aspirations of Africans. It registers its own grave disquiet at the reports of large-scale terrorism by the armed European community, involving the deaths of many thousands of Africans, and appeals to the Portuguese authorities to exercise restraint lest all hope of reconciliation be destroyed. The Assembly reaffirms its devotion to the cause of truth and freedom as understood in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and appeals for prayer for all who suffer in Angola today, that of their suffering there may come, through the alchemy of God, a new freedom and a new unity for all."

No reply was received to this appeal which was duly forwarded to the Portuguese Embassy. A request that it might be delivered in person was declined.

The speech introducing the resolution was similarly intended to deal fairly with all parties to the struggle that was taking place, without, however, glossing over in any way the basic or derived evils in the situation. Perhaps you will forgive my quoting from the report given in *Time and Tide* the following week.

"Speaker B. had been a missionary in Angola, and he held the attention of the assembly while he told quietly and movingly of the events in Angola. Of the efforts of Protestant missions, and many others, to educate the Africans. Of the slave labour system, the bastinadoing until hands were a bloody pulp*; of the third degree methods used to extort confessions. And then he told of the risings of 15th March, and the atrocities and brutalities in which over 500 white people were killed. And then of the reprisals. Of the thousands of Africans killed just because they were black. Of black hospital nurses dragged out and shot in the street. Of the determination of the settlers to exterminate all the educated Africans. The vengeance of 'a civilising people with a Christian mission'. He spoke with charity of both Africans and Portuguese, of the Roman Church and of the many people of all races who were trying to do something, but he spoke with condemnation of the Portuguese Government and with condemnation of Britain's recent abstention from voting in the United Nations. His was a very Christian speech and there cannot have been one person in the hall who was unmoved by it."

It was in this mood that we went to the denomination and the country with reluctance and with regret, yet at the same time with an overwhelming sense of compulsion that we could no longer hold our peace.

For a month the Society took no further direct action. Personally I was heavily involved behind the scenes, interviewing many people, including Foreign Office officials, members of Parliament on both sides of the House and other personalities. Through the kind offices of Mr. Clifford Kenyon, M.P., I had interviews with

* verbatim "until the hands swell up and split"

Mr. Godber, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and with Mr. Hugh Gaitskell. On the last day of May, I addressed a meeting of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. There was also a fair amount of writing for the Press.

Meanwhile, our ministerial brethren at Southend, moved by the meeting of 2nd May, had rallied their churches and a large body of public opinion in the town, to the necessity of more prayer and more protest concerning the situation in Angola. Before the end of May they were looking for opportunities for further action and extended their campaign to other parts of the country. It evoked an enormous response, and interest grew steadily. No doubt at some time the drive, initiative and resource of these brethren and their collaborators will be suitably recorded.

It was through the broadsheet of the Southend Group reproduced by the Manchester Action Committee, that one day the *Guardian* was awakened to the magnitude of the tragedy that was being enacted in Angola. Its articles on 19th June, and two succeeding days, were probably the greatest single factor in making earlier protests not only audible but respectable.

It is too early yet to assess satisfactorily the part played by the quiet exercise of pressure behind the scenes, in which the British Council of Churches played a notable part, and the appeal to the public conscience. Both are significant. The campaign, which appeals to emotions like grief, pity and indignation, can stir the imagination and create a climate of opinion, of which political leadership must take cognizance; but unless that leadership has had its mind influenced by reasoned argument and the careful documentation of fact, it is unlikely to abandon its customary cautious approach to affairs of such international consequence.

At the end of July, following two debates in the Commons and one in the Lords, it was clear that the Government, though deeply disquieted, was still not prepared to make a major change in policy by open condemnation of its "oldest ally", and that considerations of western security weighed more heavily in the balance than the damage being done to Euro-African relations by the continuing bloodshed and repression in Angola.

Territorially Angola is one of the major lands of Africa, larger than the Central African Federation or the Union of South Africa. In the Union we see a failure in apartheid or separation; in Angola a failure in integration. In both places the basic failure is wrong human relationships, and the primary responsibility for this state of affairs must rest upon those who have hitherto enjoyed the power to shape the destinies of the Continent. The "Christian West" is everywhere under judgment in Africa today, and the only hope for the future is a humble recognition of the follies and the sins of our western society. The greatest enemy of the Christian church is not African paganism, Islam, Communism or any other ideology. It is the failure of Christians to live as Christians; the failure of

Christendom to be Christian. This is the real tragedy of Angola, both past and present, and indeed of other parts of Africa. Christ must surely weep again, and say, "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes".

CLIFFORD PARSONS.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE CHURCH

IN an article which appeared in the January *Fraternal* entitled "The Child and the Church", W. M. S. West appealed for a serious consideration of the place of "Children within the Church". This article appeals for a similar consideration to be given to the place of "Young People within the Church". Important as is the task of nurturing children from earliest years and making them feel welcome in the family of the church, it is equally important that young people, when they come later to desire baptism and membership, should be made to feel welcome in the thought and activities of church life. Unfortunately some older members, with more set ideas and ways, don't always find it easy to accept younger members with less experience, who are bursting with new ideas and eager to try out new methods; neither do some young people, who have been given the right hand of fellowship and welcomed into the family of the church, easily find a place amongst those who, by reason of greater experience and longer membership, have church matters largely in their hands. This is a problem that in varying degrees faces most ministers. The following account from one of our Manchester churches illustrates how, if given the opportunity, young people can bring "a breath of fresh air" into church life. The initiative for what was done came first from the over-twenties.

THE OVER-TWENTIES

This group can best be described in the words of one of its members—"Membership of the over-twenties is basically extended to all young adults interested in serious discussion and not so serious social activity. Our main activity occurs after Sunday evening service, when we meet in the parlour for Bible study and discussion, together with coffee and biscuits. The meeting is led by those members in rotation whom the secretary can coerce into doing it, and the resultant discussion can be guaranteed to have nothing to do with the topic introduced. These meetings are helpful in that ideas and problems can be shared. We are not only 'young adults' but 'young Christians' too, and seek Divine guidance as a group on such questions as—What is a Christian faith? To what extent does God want me to be a Christian? What is involved? Ought I to set limits on my service? Arising from these discussions we felt impelled, soon after the group was first formed, to help local Baptist churches, which had no minister, by taking youth services for them. Apart from this, our members have joined

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During the past few weeks we have been issuing a letter to churches which hold a Voluntary Workers Policy with us. The letter draws attention to the need for an increase in the amount of benefits—premiums for higher benefits are quoted.

I hope that your diaconate (if it has not already taken action) will discuss this matter very carefully. I know it greatly helps a pastoral visit to an injured voluntary worker if deacons have already taken the positive and prudent step, through insurance, of backing up words of sympathy and appreciation.

If your deacons have not yet taken up a Voluntary Workers Policy and you would like to have particulars of the scheme, please write to me.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN,

General Manager.

P.S. Of course, the policy also covers accidents during other forms of voluntary work as, for example, a leader or helper scalded in the kitchen at a Sunday School party.

in other church work, as Sunday school teachers, door stewards, etc. Group social activities are arranged on the basis ' You suggested it, you organise it '."

This is how it all began and in its earliest stage the over-twenties were very much a separate group within the church. It was a useful group, for it attracted a number of young men and women, most of them living in " Digs ", who welcomed the opportunity this fellowship gave of meeting people of their own age, sharing ideas and problems, and joining in Christian service. The group included some from other countries—a Chinese, a young man from the Bahamas, a young married couple from Australia, and three young people from New Zealand. This variety added interest to the group and provided differences of outlook on problems shared. But valuable as was the group in itself, the problem remained as to how to integrate it more closely into the life of the church, so that the church as a whole might benefit from the freshness of thought and activity which it could contribute.

The problem was solved in quite a natural way by the over-twenties themselves. They discovered how the tiles in the open baptistry could be made to look cleaner and whiter, and without waiting for any church meeting decision, got on with the job with pleasing results. In the same way they re-enamelled the umbrella stands, cleaned and washed the hanging electric light shades, and redecorated one of the long passages. Such deeds carried out efficiently and on their own initiative, made a great impression on older members of the church. After this, events moved more quickly. One of the over-twenties proposed at a church meeting that an " Action committee " be set up, composed of a representative from each group within the church. One aim was to cultivate closer relations between people of different groups and to help members of the church, young and old, to get to know one another better. The proposal was agreed to, and one of the over-twenties was promptly elected convenor! The committee has since planned and carried through a number of social events, which have certainly helped people from different groups to intermingle and get acquainted. At another church meeting concern was expressed by some of the over-twenties at the comparatively poor average attendance at church meetings. Some older members were much taken aback when the suggestion was made that, if membership was to be taken seriously, no less than 75 per cent of those who could reasonably be expected to attend should be regarded as a quorum. Nevertheless it was decided to try it out for the annual church meeting and as a result there was a record attendance of 80 per cent of the " possibles ". Yet another recommendation made by these younger members was to keep less important business to a minimum and so provide the maximum time at church meetings for the really big matters that concerned the work of God's Kingdom. This led to an experiment that has so far proved worthwhile:—

(1) More of the routine business concerning minor matters is dealt with in deacons' meetings. (2) The church meeting agenda is kept strictly to matters that are the responsibility of church members as a whole. In so doing it has been possible to reduce greatly the amount of time needed for business (usually one hour), after which the table with minute-book, papers, etc., is pushed against the wall, as an indication that the formal business of the evening has come to an end. (3) A short devotional period then follows (not always led by the minister) commencing with a hymn, during which others who are not in membership can join the gathering. (4) The remainder of the evening is devoted to some item of special interest concerning the work of God's Kingdom, such as up-to-date news of the B.M.S. and its problems; the B.U. Ter-Jubilee or Home-work Fund projects; a report of some group within the local church, a discussion of worship or of some piece of Christian service to the local community.

The value of this experiment has been to limit business at church meetings to essentials and by so doing, to safeguard time for prayerful discussion of the bigger things of the Kingdom. It also allows those not actually in membership to share in the fellowship during the latter part of the evening. So it has come about in these and other ways that the over-twenties have made a valuable contribution to church meetings and have become much more closely integrated into the life of the church. In recognition of this two of them have recently been elected to the diaconate.

THE TEENAGERS

The problem of how to integrate "Teenage members" into the life of the church is a difficult one; but there is no doubt about the importance of finding some way of doing it. In the particular case to be mentioned the opportunity followed a Baptist youth conference at Pen-maen-mawr last autumn. It was arranged that three teenagers who had attended should give a report of the conference as the item of special interest in the second part of a church meeting. Each teenager who spoke did so with such freshness and frankness, that it took many of the older members by surprise. Ideas were expressed about worship and the order of service, about sermons and the need for an opportunity to discuss them afterwards, as to one or two young people being in the vestibule together with older stewards to welcome people on arrival, as to the value of home groups for making contacts with young people outside the church—and so on. That these teenage members were given a hearing at a church meeting, was in itself of value. But this was later followed up at one of the classes held monthly by the minister for young members still in their "teens". The suggestion was made there that members of the class should plan an order of service. It was readily accepted and all sorts of fresh and interesting ideas emerged.

A month or so later the service took place. Its special features were as follows:—

A brief introduction was given by the minister. The congregation was taught a new hymn and tune, which was used later in the service. The announcements were made. Then the act of worship began, led by one of the teenage group. The minister and some of the teenage members took part in the service. Hymns, prayers, readings and talks all fitted into the general theme—"Jesus, friend to all". The offertory came at the end of the service and was made a true act of dedication. The service, though of interest and help to many, had a special meaning to the teenagers, for it was "their" service. It made them feel that not only the over-twenties had a place in church life, but that those who were younger had too. Ever since, there has been a noticeable increase of interest and keenness amongst them and a new desire to take their part.

It is true to say that through the over-twenties and the teenagers there is not only "a breath of fresh air", but a veritable breeze blowing through the church. The Holy Spirit has surely been at work and who can tell what may come of it!

A. KEITH BRYAN.

THE FERNDALE CELLAR CLUB

WE are all concerned with trying to attract young people to the Church and winning them for Christ. Our methods vary according to our theological emphasis, our personality and our situation. At Ferndale Road, Southend-on-Sea, we have tried an approach which has proved effective in our situation. Our efforts have resulted in conversions and our young Christians have a better outlook than before. We believe that our enterprise has been worth-while quite apart from these results.

Our Youth Fellowship used to consist of twelve members, and our weekly meetings followed the usual rota of devotional evenings, social evenings, visits, rambles and rounders. Then, one evening, I suggested that we might clear out a disused air-raid shelter and make it into our own club room. That evening was a memorable occasion. Everybody was excited at the prospect: we talked enthusiastically about colour schemes and of what we should call the place. We obtained the approval of the Church Meeting, "on condition that no expense is incurred by the Church". It took a month to empty the shelter of rubbish and burn the tons of paper, cardboard, old mattresses and arm chairs! It took another month to whitewash the ceiling, clean the brick walls and scrub the floor. Dense clouds of dust billowed out of the exits every week. We erected a partition out of odd bits of timber. Travel posters covered the cracks. We built a smart counter complete with a striped awning. We obtained a paraffin stove and oil lamps. We fixed old Sunday School forms round the walls: now resplendent with red, grey and blue

covers and scatter cushions. In a small "nook" there is a table lit by candles stuck in bottles. Guy Fawkes masks leer down at you from one wall. And there is the record player.

The official opening was on 5th November, 1960. Three local ministers attended the opening. I do not think they appreciated the intense noise produced by our drummer, but they did enjoy the roast pork! The drums have now been joined by two amplified electric guitars and a vocalist; and refreshments are no less ambitious. Last night I tossed about four dozen pancakes, and there was a choice of rice risotto or cheese.

We now have table tennis equipment and we plan to extend our premises. We have fifty-one members, twenty-eight of whom are joining our party to Austria and Italy this summer. We produce a weekly paper called "The Cellar Yeller". We jive most of the time. We talk about boys and girls, existentialism and "the latest". We argue about religion, and we occasionally discuss politics. We dress in the colours of the rainbow, and even the Church deacons now wear bright ties!

Nearly all of the club members come to Church Sunday evening. There is no rule about this—but then there are no rules about anything. Three of the members of the club have become members of the Church. There are no epilogues; no devotional evenings. On Sunday evening there is a "Discussion of the Sermon". One preacher who recently suggested that Christians do not enjoy dancing was dismissed as "bonkers!" One of our converted members said, quite logically, I thought, "He's wrong, because I'm a Christian and I enjoy dancing".

It is often embarrassing for a Church and a minister to be identified with a club like ours, but I imagine that it is the same kind of embarrassment Christ felt when He was publicly identified with publicans and sinners, gluttons and wine bibbers.

E. L. BLAKEBROUGH.

TEACHING THROUGH PREACHING

AS part of its Ter-Jubilee celebrations the Commission of Christian Witness of the Yorkshire Association decided to organise a programme of doctrinal preaching and discussion. Principal D. S. Russell of Rawdon, President of the Yorkshire Association, prepared the syllabus for use month by month through the winter, of which a summary is appended.

The subjects were first opened up in the ministers' fraternal meetings in turn and provided excellent material for discussion. The plan was for ministers then to discuss the theme with their deacons. This did not work out too well. In some churches there were fruitful meetings, in others the multiplicity of the responsibilities of the deacons crowded out these discussions, and in yet others it did not appear that such themes could profitably be discussed—a sad reflection. As far as possible the ministers in a particular

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district preached on the chosen theme on the same Sunday evening. The congregation was invited to remain after the service to discuss, not so much the sermon, as the doctrine dealt with, especially in the light of its relevance to everyday life.

How did the course fare? There were a few older ministers who did not take kindly to the idea of having their sermon themes suggested to them, but the great majority of the ministers, especially the younger men, welcomed the scheme. In one church the minister preached the course, but there was no discussion, the church meeting having decided that the Word of God was something to be proclaimed and received, but not discussed. In most churches the discussions following the sermon were held in the schoolroom. Where the number remaining was small the group kept together. Where a larger company remained groups, usually led by deacons, were formed, though the whole company met together for the summing-up and a closing prayer by the minister. In one church coloured papers for different groups, with the questions set for discussion, were distributed with the hymn books. Another church arranged for discussion groups to be held in people's homes during the week following the preaching of the doctrinal sermon. Some of the ministers recommended books to the congregation. Bishop Cockin's recent Pelican, *God in Action*, was suggested in preparation for the sermon on the Holy Spirit.

There have been some interesting results. Many congregations now have a taste for doctrinal preaching and discussion, and there were requests during the progress of the course for its continuance beyond the suggested closing date. One minister reports a realised need in his church for "more vital interest in doctrine and belief". In the same church, a working-class one, a group has been set up for Bible study and the study of Church history, including Baptist history. Committees have also been formed to consider and produce reports on Worship, Church Finance, Christian Education, Evangelism.

The co-operation of Lay Pastors, Lay Preachers and of the pastoral churches was invited. This presents obvious problems and in future schemes we shall give more attention to it. We were fortunate in having the co-operation of the students of Rawdon College. Neighbouring ministers from the Bradford fraternal opened up the themes with them and they in turn preached on them in their visits to Yorkshire churches.

The titles of the sermons need careful thought. One or two of the older people in our congregations were somewhat alarmed by the learned flavour of some of the titles. Some demythologizing might have been helpful! It is also important to prepare a congregation adequately for the scheme. In one church the minister felt that there was inadequate preparation at church meeting level, too little notice being given. The scheme suffered thereby in its working out.

We have been much encouraged by the interest taken in the plan, and we propose next winter to have a similar scheme based on the New Delhi syllabus, "Jesus Christ, the Light of the World", and to go on in the latter part of the winter to a scheme on Christian Stewardship and finally on to one dealing with the church's responsibility to neighbourhood, country and world. Other Associations are considering such a "Teaching through Preaching" scheme, and one has decided to follow ours in detail.

JOHN O. BARRETT.

CREATION AND RE-CREATION

- I Genesis i, 1: The Biblical doctrine of Creation.
 1. In what sense does creation reveal and conceal God?
 2. God created. Does science deny or confirm this?
 3. How does it affect me that God created all things?
- II John i, 14: The Biblical doctrine of the Incarnation.
 1. What does the word "Incarnation" mean?
 2. What does it mean that Jesus is God and man?
 3. How does the coming of Jesus reveal God's purpose?
- III Genesis i, 27: The Biblical doctrine of Man.
 1. How does man differ from the animal?
 2. Is man essentially good or bad?
 3. The responsibilities this involves for me.
- IV Genesis iii, 5: The Biblical doctrine of Sin.
 1. What is the root of sin?
 2. Are people today conscious of sin?
 3. My involvement in the sin of my generation.
- V 2 Corinthians v, 19: The Biblical doctrine of Redemption.
 1. The meaning of Christ's death on the Cross.
 2. Was the death of Christ necessary?
 3. The Sacraments as witnesses to the Cross.
- VI 2 Corinthians v, 17: The Biblical doctrine of the New Creation.
 1. What does it mean to be in Christ?
 2. Is Christian conversion necessary?
 3. What is the related significance of Believers' Baptism?
- VII Ephesians iv, 4: The Biblical doctrine of Holy Spirit and Church.
 1. How does the Holy Spirit work today?
 2. Am I aware of Him when I think of God?
 3. Is the Church the Spirit's sphere of operation?
- VIII Matthew vi, 33: The Biblical doctrine of History.
 1. Can the hand of God be traced in history?
 2. Is God speaking through events today?
 3. What is the meaning of "Thy Kingdom come"?

THE B.U. DIPLOMA

"WE regret that the impact of the Church upon the world today is not as great as it should be", wrote the Rev. Alan Smith in the last issue of *The Fraternal*. He saw part of the remedy as "to train our lay people to fulfil the office which is properly theirs". It was to provide such a means of training that the Baptist Union Diploma in Religious Knowledge was instituted ten years ago.

In 1952 a modest beginning was made when the first five Diplomas

were awarded. Two years later the number had increased to twenty-one and in 1955 to twenty-five. Last year a record number of twenty-seven, including four with distinction, was awarded, and in the last examinations held in May, six out of nineteen successful candidates received the Diploma with distinction. In ten years a total of 164 Diplomas have been gained. The course is in three parts and normally entails three years' spare-time study of the Bible, Church History, Baptist Principles, Christian Doctrine and other subjects like New Testament Greek, Worship and Preaching, the Modern Missionary Movement, Christian Ethics and others from which candidates have a choice. Unfortunately many more candidates begin the course than continue to the end, and in any year arrangements are made, with the co-operation of ministers and other church officers, for about 120 candidates to take the examinations in nearly 100 centres. Most of the centres are in this country, but the examinations have been taken by candidates in Germany, Australia, India and Africa.

Not only have the candidates been widely distributed geographically, but they have also been widely different in age and circumstance. The youngest candidates are 18, but one or two candidates have been nearly 80. In fact, the average age has not been particularly young. In other words, most of the candidates have been serving in various capacities in the local church for some years before they feel they should or can undertake systematic training. Few are former students, and some have had a very limited educational background. Among those who have successfully completed the course have been busy housewives with family commitments, the fiancée of a theological student, probationer members of Lay Preachers' Associations, a West Indian immigrant, a minister's wife, candidates for ministerial and missionary training, doctors, civil servants and factory hands.

How do they study? A few prepare on their own by working through the prescribed text-books. Others take the correspondence courses provided by the Lay Preachers' Federation or the Home Preparation Union of the B.M.S. But there is no training quite equal to the personal tuition ministers can give to their own people. To refer again to Mr. Smith's article: "this, surely, is the office of the minister within the whole body, 'to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the Body of Christ' (Ephesians iv, 12. N.E.B.)". Some ministers already have a Diploma study group; others, as in Leicester under the supervision of the Rev. R. H. Tebbutt, have formed a lecturing panel to serve the needs of Diploma candidates from a whole district. If this kind of arrangement became nation-wide, and the Baptist Union Diploma, or the newly established simpler Certificate, became accepted as the normal qualification for lay preachers, church officers, Sunday school teachers and leaders of organisations, Christian education in the local church would quickly be transformed.

The examinations of the Certificate and Diploma courses are held annually in March and May respectively, so the autumn is the time to begin study courses. Syllabuses of both courses may be obtained now from the Organising Secretary, Baptist Union Diploma, at the Baptist Church House.

JOHN HOUGH.

THE BAPTIST MUSIC SOCIETY

THIS society has recently been formed to help to advance the standard of music in Baptist churches. Organists, choirmasters and members, and ministers of Baptist churches, and other persons concerned to further the work of the Society may become members by paying a subscription of 10s. 6d. a year.

The Society hopes to provide day courses, summer schools and conferences to train young choirmasters, to give advice on music for use in public worship, to set up a central music library and to purchase music in bulk. Representation of Baptist thought at international gatherings concerned with music in worship, the canvassing of Baptist opinion on matters of music and liturgy, and the expression of these opinions are also among the aims of this new Society.

Full details and application forms may be obtained from the Secretary, Mr. Leslie A. Durant, 4, Long Deacon Road, North Chingford, London, E.4.

Elijah on Mount Carmel. H. H. Rowley. John Rylands Library and the Manchester University Press. 5s.

This excellent monograph is a "must" for any minister who wants to know more about Elijah and the Mount Carmel incident. It is great value for money, for the 30 pages are packed with information and suggest many lines of thought that will develop into some fine sermons on this great Old Testament character. This is typical: "Often in the history of the world great issues have depended on lone individuals, without whom events would have taken a wholly different turn. Yet few crises have been more significant for history than that in which Elijah figured, and in the story of the Transfiguration he rightly stands beside Moses. Without Moses the religion of Yahwism, as it figured in the Old Testament, would never have been born. Without Elijah it would have died."

The Teach Yourself Bible Atlas. H. H. Rowley. E.U.P. 8s. 6d.

A most useful addition to the "Teach Yourself" series. It has 30 pages of maps (suitably indexed), almost 30 pages of plates to illustrate the Holy Land and archaeological discoveries, and a series of brilliant essays on the Geography of Palestine, History of the Hebrew people and of Christianity to A.D. 70 and Archaeology and Biblical Study. It is the sort of book that ought to be on our Church bookstalls.

R.B.