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EDITORIAL

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OF INTEREST TO YOU

THE WIDER CIRCLE

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITORIAL

ON Saturday, 7th April, a Service was held in the new Baptist Church in Bilborough, near Nottingham. The purpose was to remember Thomas Helwys, who was born very close to the spot, and to perpetuate his memory by the placing of a plaque in the vestibule of the Chapel. For it was 350 years ago that Helwys led a small company of Baptists home from Amsterdam, to set up the first Baptist Church on English soil.

From all reports there does not seem to have been a very large congregation to share in the Bilborough occasion. Perhaps this is significant. As a denomination we seem sometimes to be all too little interested in our own history. This is a great pity, for it is the past which has made us what we are today. If changes are to come within the life of the denomination—as come they must—then it is surely necessary for us to know the way Baptists have come. How else can we distinguish between that of the past which is of lasting worth and that which is not? This is not to suggest that we should advance backwards into the future, but rather that we should advance confidently into the future, sure of the particular insights into the truth of the Gospel which have been entrusted to us by God.

It was in 1612 that Thomas Helwys returned from Amsterdam, with a group numbering perhaps a dozen in all. They settled in Spitalfields on the north-east corner of the London of that day. In returning they risked imprisonment and they knew it. But what has 1612 to do with 1962? 1612 was the occasion of the founding of the first Baptist Church in England. From England, in the past 350 years, Baptists have gone out to all parts of the world. In 1612 there were a dozen or so Baptists. Today there is a world-wide community of 40 million of them. Forty million who hold, in 1962, to the principles which sent Helwys to prison—almost certainly to die there: the principles of the gathered church with the baptism of believers as its foundation, of the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures, and of the right of religious liberty for every man.

These are the insights we have inherited from the past and carry forward into the future. Surely we shall all rejoice to remember and honour Thomas Helwys and his unknown companions, in this 350th anniversary year; and to take what initiatives we can in our own localities, not only to honour a great and all too-little-known Baptist pioneer, but to requicken in the hearts of our people a realisation of the significance, for our own times and for the ecumenical movement to which we have our own contribution to make, of the principles for which they stood,

1662-1962

AUGUST 24th, 1662, "Black Bartholomew", is indelibly imprinted upon the nonconformist mind; and its tercentenary will no doubt be commemorated far and wide. It is good to look back to our forefathers, and to give thanks for vision and courage. We do well to give thanks for all that their stand for freedom and conscience has meant in the life of our nation and of other lands far afield. We have a heritage of which to be proud; and there is no reason why our (recently acquired) ecclesiastical good manners should prevent lusty thanksgiving.

At the same time, it would be as well for us to realise that looking back is a dangerous business: "remember Lot's wife"! For one thing, our assertions about historical events are apt to be very inaccurate. We are apt to infer, for example, that all those who were ejected in 1662 were against the establishment of religion, whereas the facts make it quite clear that by no means all of them were of separatist convictions. It is all too easy to make general assertions about the men of that time and what they were doing, which have little relation to the truth. The men involved were so different from one another and the issues they had to deal with so complex that general assertions about them are likely to be wide of the mark. For another, we are apt to read back our own problems into the events of three hundred years ago and to seek from our forefathers answers to problems which they never envisaged. This is not to say that their struggle and achievement is irrelevant to our condition; but it is to utter the warning that we need to be careful how we seek to relate what they were doing to our own setting. Without sympathetic imagination we can very easily misread the lessons of history. Is it too much to hope that no one will give tongue on this tercentenary theme without doing some reading and thinking? Mouthing threadbare platitudes is easier than making sure of the facts; but we are more concerned with reality than rhetoric.

If we ask what were the real issues of 1662, we shall do well to ponder that summary of them given by Professor F. G. Healey of Westminster College, Cambridge, in his book "Rooted in Faith" (Independent Press, 1961), which was specially written that we might learn to see the Great Ejection and all that followed from it in true perspective. Professor Healey enumerates four convictions as being implied in the stand which the ejected ministers took: "(i) that the authority of the visible Church, in any matters concerning its Faith and Order, is distinct from and not subordinate to the civil authority; (ii) that the revelation of God mediated through the Scriptures is the supreme standard within the Church in matters of Faith and Order; (iii) that the historic episcopate is not a divinely required constituent of the visible Church, and that the validity of the exercise of the functions of spiritual oversight and of the ministry of the word and sacraments by ministers duly ordained otherwise

than by a bishop, but agreeably to the will of God as discerned through the Scriptures, should be recognised; and (iv) that the orderly worship of God should not be required exclusively to follow the patterns laid down by a particular book" (op. cit. p. 117).

No one can say that these are dead issues today, although we bear witness to them in a very different setting from that of our fathers; and indeed part of our justification for commemorating the Great Ejectment is that we believe that these convictions are still fundamentally true and that Christians of other traditions need to pay heed to them. The younger Churches run into difficulties with the powers that be; and wherever Christians discuss disunity and its cure, the proper authorisation of the ministry and the due form of Christian worship are bound to be discussed. Our commemoration has more than a local interest.

It is true, however, that other Christians have recognised the truth of some of these convictions. Not all Anglicans are happy about the present establishment; nor would all of them subscribe to such a doctrine of apostolic succession as Charles Gore propounded, which would, we may guess, have been more acceptable to William Laud than to the Presbyterians and the Independents. Nor has the learning been all on one side. Free Churchmen are not as a whole so clear about "a Free Church in a Free State" as once they were, and look at the Scottish settlement with sympathetic and even envious eyes. In recent years there has been a considerable revival of interest in liturgy, to which Baptists have made their contribution; and Congregationalists as well as Baptists with Moderators and Area Superintendents have recognised the value and importance of a wider oversight than can be exercised by the pastor of a local Church. We cannot pretend that we stand precisely where our seventeenth century fathers stood; and if we believe in the guidance of the Holy Spirit there is no more need for us to idolise the seventeenth century than there is for Christians of another tradition to idolise the fourth!

Two revolutions in particular have happened, the effects of which mould us whether we are conscious of them or not.

The first is the change which has come over biblical studies as a result of what is vaguely called "the higher criticism". Our fathers handled the Bible in a way no longer possible. The confidence with which the writers of that period assumed that in Old and New Testament alike there was a pattern of Church Order laid down which it was our duty to discover and reproduce rested on assumptions we no longer make. We do not see the Scriptures in that way, and have discovered other ways of judging whether this or that way of ordering the Church is scriptural; and if we still cling to a congregational form of government, it cannot be because we are at all sure that the churches founded under St. Paul's ministry had that form. Even if we could prove that they had, we should still ask the question whether we should follow the pattern. Moreover, in formulating our theology we no longer use the Bible as a source-book in the same way

as our fathers, though we still seek to be biblical. Such is the revolution which has taken place in biblical studies; and it is doubtful whether, even yet, we have taken its full measure.

The other revolution may be described by saying that nowadays we regard other Churches very differently. In the seventeenth century Anglicans and Presbyterians searched the Scriptures to find the true pattern of Church life and came to very different conclusions from those of the Independents. This could no doubt be explained in those days by their depravity! We no longer think in those terms, however strongly we may be convinced of the truth of the congregational way, which Baptists and Congregationalists share. Moreover, we are much more aware of other Christians as our brothers than was possible three hundred years ago, when the heat of party strife engendered bitterness and division. More important still, a variety of factors, biblical, missionary, ecclesiastical, and sociological, have brought us to think of the Church's unity as of supreme importance. No general agreement has been found as to the proper definition of this unity, whether it should be simply spiritual or whether it should find some corporate expression, and, if so, of what sort; yet the several Churches have come to see that disunity is not Christ's will for them, and have a bad conscience about it. Discussions of the matter take place in an atmosphere of cordiality made the more possible because of the vast amount of co-operation in all departments of the Church's life. It is no consequence of this welcome change of climate in church relations that the several Churches should not continue to bear witness to their convictions about Christian truth; but it is of importance that this testimony now takes place as conversation rather than controversy.

There is, however, one point of especial importance at which we can be entirely at one with our fathers. They carried through such reforms as they were able because of their obedience to a fundamental principle: the whole life and thought of the Church should be under the judgment of the Word of God and shaped and reshaped in the light of what that judgment revealed. The great phrase "agreeable to the Word of God" describes the motive of their reformatations and the one standard of judgment to which the Church should continually submit. No ecclesiastical forms are sacrosanct. It follows, then, that we shall be most loyally commemorating our fathers' sacrificial witness by asking whether the pattern and content of our present Church life are really in keeping with the Gospel? How much of the local Church's programme has anything to do with the Kingdom of God? Is it Christ's will that there should be Separate Baptist and Congregational Churches in the same small town? And if not in a small town, why in a large? What does Christ will His people in X to be doing now? To set about such questions seriously is about the best commemoration of 1662 that any local Church can envisage; and without such a discipline, to commemorate our fathers may be no better than whitewashing

the tombs of the prophets. There are hard things said in Scripture about those who claim to have Abraham as their father!

Looking back is dangerous, for it can so easily result in a nostalgia for the past which is nothing other than a lack of faith about the future. If our recollection of the past does no more than evoke the exclamation "those were the days", we have misread the story of what God has been doing in history. There He has revealed Himself as the One who, though eternally the same, is for ever active. It is doubt and fear which make us believe that God is less able to work now than at any time in the past. We truly read history's witness to the power of God when we understand that this same God is ours, and that our present duty is to commit ourselves and our Churches to Him in unflinching obedience. What He will make of us is more important than whether we are doing what our fathers did. To celebrate 1662 is not to live in a museum, imprisoned by tradition, but to catch the faith of those who so understood the activity of God recorded in the Bible as to trust themselves to the guidance of the Spirit to be led where He would take them. The true sons of Abraham never settle down to some denominational routine, content to repeat the war cries of yesterday; they are up and on, pilgrims as all their fathers were, until God has done with them His perfect will, and brought them to His eternal city.

JOHN HUXTABLE.

A STUDY IN 2 CORINTHIANS

2. THE COST OF OUR WITNESS

AFTER the customary greeting which opens this epistle Paul at once plunges into a subject to which he repeatedly returns in this letter. His theme is the afflictions which Christians experience. Evidently the Corinthians were perplexed by the many troubles which had come upon them since their conversion. Doubtless they were asking the age-long question so familiar to all ministers. "Why, in view of God's grace and power, do these things befall us?" Before their conversion they had shared in the ills which are the common lot of all men. Now they were discovering that to live for Christ and to witness to Him brought additional suffering into their lives. It is this latter experience with which Paul is mainly, though not entirely, concerned. What comfort has he to give them?

The foundation of everything which he has to say about this situation is his conviction that all believers are "in Christ". They are indissolubly one with Him. They live, yet it is not they who live, but Christ Who lives in them. Sharing thus the life of Christ, the experiences of Christ will in some measure be reproduced in them. Paul does not think of Christ as an example, separated from us by time, Whom we must strive to copy, but as One Who has drawn us into His own life that we may live His life. The crucial experiences of our Lord are His Passion and Resurrection. Here is the embodiment of the Gospel from which all else springs. Hence, because the

believer is in Christ, he too will know the suffering, and through the suffering will know the newness of life. He returns to this conviction again and again. It is this two-fold experience of dying and living in Christ that he is chiefly concerned to expound.

1. It is inevitable that Christians will experience suffering. We live in essentially the same world our Lord lived in. We are engaged in the same task and the same conflict. When we proclaim and practice the life in Christ we shall meet with the same evil forces which brought Him in the end to the Cross. We too shall endure "the contradiction of sinners" against ourselves. The servant is as his Master. Paul's phrase "dying with Christ" is a vivid metaphor to denote all the affliction which Christian witness brings in its train. He can write of himself "I die daily", and this is the condition of all disciples. "In our bodies we have to run the same risk of death that Jesus did."

The Church in the first century knew the truth such words express. To choose Christ was to choose trouble. They faced the hostility of their kinsmen, and the hatred of their fellow-countrymen. They lived insecurely, at the mercy of mob violence. Soon they were to know the ruthless power of Imperial edicts, when "dying with Christ" ceased to be a metaphor and became a reality. From the beginning Christ had prepared them for this. "In this world ye shall have tribulation." "If they persecuted Me they will also persecute you." "Ye shall be hated of all men for My sake." "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." Thus Paul regards suffering as an inevitable element in the Christian's life. It is not something which may happen but something which must happen. The Church, when true to its calling, is a suffering Church.

2. The Church that dies with Christ is the Church that lives with Christ.

After death the resurrection. To know the suffering is to discover the power and joy of Christ. The Christian will share in his own person the paradox of comfort from suffering, strength from weakness, life from death. Paul repeatedly links together the "dying" and the "living". "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth in Christ." "We are continually handed over to death for Christ's sake in order that the life which Jesus gives may be clear for all to see in our mortal flesh." "We who are weak in Him shall live with Him by the power of God." As with our Lord there would have been no resurrection had there been no Passion, so with His followers. Suffering is the gateway into life.

In asserting this the Apostle is not putting forward a theory but describing an experience. It was when he had been most sorely beset, when he had come to the end of his resources, that he had most fully experienced the power of God. "When I am weak, then am I strong." In fact he puts this experience forward as one of the reasons why God allows suffering to come to his servants. He describes an occasion when he was "Pressed out of measure above strength,

insomuch that we despaired even of life", and goes on to say "We had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead". It is when the human power fails that the divine power is fully manifested. It is not God's will that we should be adequate of ourselves to all that life brings, but that we should be inadequate, for the gifts of God in their fullness remain latent until human strength fails.

Paul's experience has been shared by Christian men and women throughout the centuries, and it is being shared in our time. In the July, 1961, issue of the *Ecumenical Review* this comment is made on the application of the Orthodox Church of Russia to join the World Council of Churches: "In the greater part of the world the Church is no longer dominating the culture in which it lives, but lives under the pressure of non-Christian forces. . . it is precisely this living under pressure which demonstrates most clearly that the life of the Church is maintained by the Holy Spirit". More than one Confessional pastor has written of his experiences in a concentration camp, and always the story is the same. When their strength was at its lowest ebb they entered into their richest experiences of the strength and peace of God. In that moving book of Pastor Hamel's, "A Christian in East Germany", he reveals that it is those who witnessed most boldly to their faith, accepting all the dire consequences, who discovered the riches of the resources of the Spirit. They entered into a peace and a joy hitherto unknown and found a new effectiveness in their witness to others "God's strength is made perfect in our weakness." "When our outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day."

It is this experience which brings comfort to hard beset witnesses. Paul uses this word nine times in chapter i, 3-7. Its meaning has become watered down through the years so that today it signifies little more than soothing sympathy. Paul uses it to denote that which brings strength and courage to a man, enabling him steadfastly to endure. To comfort is to enable men to witness in deed as well as in word, revealing the power of the Gospel to others by the way they face hardship for Christ's sake. He writes in chapter vi, that we commend ourselves as ministers of God when in affliction "by the innocence of our behaviour, by our grasp of truth, by our patience and kindness, by the sincerity of our love". We witness not simply by patient resignation, but by the enriched quality of our whole life.

Paul goes still further. Affliction has brought him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory", and so heartening is the experience of the divine grace that has come to him in his sufferings that he is thankful for them and rejoices in them. Thus when he is afflicted by some distressing physical malady, which he describes as a thorn in the flesh, and has prayed in vain for its removal, there came to him so rich a spiritual experience that he can write "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,

in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." How many of us are able not only to endure patiently but to rejoice in it? Inevitably one recalls the words of our Lord, Who told us that the reviled, the persecuted and the slandered shall be blessed, and bade us to rejoice and be exceedingly glad.

This then is the picture of the Church, the witnessing fellowship, which Paul holds before us. It is a suffering community, which through its suffering has entered into the riches of the risen life of Christ. In its affliction it has found comfort, in its weakness strength, in its sorrow joy and in its insecurities peace. It is a Church alive, triumphant, rejoicing, effective, revealing in life and word the presence and power of God.

How remote this seems from what we know of the Church today, especially in the Western world. We frequently bemoan the low spiritual vitality of our churches. May the cause be that we are too comfortable, too prone to accept the outlook of the affluent society and to acquiesce in the standards of comfort of our age, unmindful that we must share the sufferings if we would share the life? In many parts of the world today suffering for Christ's sake is being thrust on men. We cannot here artificially create such conditions, but the Cross of Christ is not only something which is thrust upon us. It is something which we voluntarily take up. The Apostle's teaching compels us to examine our own lives, especially those of us who are called to be leaders and examples to the flock, lest our spiritual poverty should spring from our unwillingness to pay the cost. In H. W. Burdett's article in *The Fraternal* of October, 1961, he recalls hearing Dr. P. T. Forsyth preach when he was minister in Cambridge. His text was "Let us also go that we may die with Him". At the end of the sermon he left his MS. and said in a low voice: "When we think of the Cross of Christ how poor our lives seem, how awful the distance between ourselves and Him". It is when we begin here, and continue here, that we enter into life. We must suffer with Him if we would reign with Him.

FRANK BUFFARD.

BAPTISTS AND INDUSTRY

IN this cliché-ridden age, words and phrases become debased in meaning all too quickly. To say, however, that the wind of change is blowing with increasing force through most sections of our industrial society is not under-stating the situation. Developments in technology, the rise of new industrial powers and trading blocs, the growing powers and responsibilities of workers in key industries and other factors, are all bringing, and will continue to bring, undreamed of stresses and opportunities to British industry. In industry, as broadly defined, twenty three million people are spending up to eight hours each working day in the manifold activities of manufacturing and marketing goods and of providing services to the community. What should we Baptists be doing about this sector of our national life?

There is a growing awareness of the relevance of Christianity to all aspects of life, but if we British Baptists are honest with ourselves we must admit that too few of us have given thought to the many problems and opportunities with which our industrial society faces us as Christians.

It is not the purpose of this article to analyse the historical, social or doctrinal reasons for our neglect, or to recount what the Baptist contribution has been. Mr. Cleal and his colleagues of the B.U. Citizenship Department have dealt capably with these and similar questions in numerous articles and publications. The object is rather to offer some reflections on the topic from the standpoint of a Baptist layman involved for the past twenty years in the technical development and production branches of one of our major industries.

(i) *The Individual Baptist in Industry*

We speak glibly of industry, picturing a giant car assembly plant or an atomic power station, but industry covers a far wider range of activity, size and form than these two examples. A considerable portion of our gross national product comes through the efforts of small businesses employing ten men or less, though there is a growing tendency for mergers, many of which preserve individual, discrete units in name only. Nevertheless, whether in large or small firms, there are common problems facing individual Christians.

It is my experience that many such individuals in industry are perplexed. What does it *really* mean to be a Christian in industry? To be a Christian manager, a Christian apprentice, a Christian process worker, a Christian electrician, a Christian salesman? As a Christian, what should one's attitude be towards trade unionism or the increasing unionisation of white collar staff and so on? In reading the Bible one is confronted by the word "separation" from the world, yet there is a vague consciousness of another word these days, "involvement". What do these ideas mean in the context of an individual's working life? The other day, for example, a fellow Baptist, a chemical process worker, said to me "I read the *Baptist Times* but so much of it seems to be written by theologians; the ideas expressed, the words used, the books reviewed are too often remote from my daily life and experience".

Now it may be argued that the New Testament lays down principles and that it is the individual Christian's task and duty, assisted by the Holy Spirit, to interpret and apply these principles to his own daily life and experience. This is, of course, true; but Paul, for example, was not averse to being specific on occasions and set forth answers to questions put to him on such subjects as meat offered to idols. Specific teaching about the out-working of one's faith in the workaday world is a much neglected part of the Church's ministry. It is as true today as ever that faith is dead unless the result of it is that bad men become good and good men better. The witness of a Christian in deed and word, when opportunity offers, is an essential part of the programme of Christianity. But we need to be taught

much more clearly how to live and what to say. Thinking laymen must get down to the task of collaborating with ministers in this vital teaching ministry.

(ii) *The Ministry and Industry*

If our industrial society and the changes taking place affect the lives of our church members and their families, so too is there an impact on the lives and activities of our ministers. The life and work of the minister is growing increasingly complex, with the proliferation of paper and committees, the strident noises of the new mass media of communication, the changes in habits of a car-owning community, the consequences to individuals of the stresses of life, and many more factors!

While there is a welcome and necessary revival of interest in the theology of the ministry, are laymen as alive as they should be to some of the practical problems of the ministry in these days? It is easy to say that our ministers ought to concern themselves with problems about Christians in industry, but what chance has a hard-pressed Baptist minister to acquaint himself with more than the basic facts about complex industrial situations?

This is another field of the Church's activity where collaboration is essential. Laymen should take the initiative in acquainting ministers with the facts, problems, and opportunities of the local industrial situation. In small churches there may not be laymen of experience in industrial matters, but in a district it should be possible for a gifted layman to make this field of witness his special interest. Such a man should be prepared to pass on to local Baptist ministers his advice and help. The old proverb "to see once is better than to hear a hundred times" is true. Works visits would be a useful experience, and there are few managers who would not be willing to arrange them.

The subject of factory chaplains still continues to be highly controversial. Some conclusions can be drawn, however, from the many experiments which have been conducted.

- (a) Appointment of a paid factory chaplain by management places an almost impossible handicap upon the minister chosen, however capable and well-meaning.
- (b) An industrial chaplain must be gifted and trained. Considerable skill and wisdom are necessary if the barriers of mistrust and prejudice are to be breached.
- (c) "Make haste, slowly" must be the motto. An essential start is to build up the confidence and trust of managers and men in the minister.
- (d) Teamwork between Christian laymen, ministers of other denominations and the local churches is essential if progress is to be made.
- (e) There is an unexpected eagerness to hear what the Church has to say about some of the problems of industry and of life. The Minister, however, can never take the place, for example,

of shop stewards or management in negotiations. What he can sometimes do is to improve the climate and atmosphere in which negotiations take place.

If a Baptist minister is invited to become Chaplain of a local factory he would be well advised to seek as much help as possible from experienced industrial chaplains and from laymen before embarking on the task. It is an asset to have worked in a factory at some time or another. In areas where shift working is practised, a stint at shift work gives chaplains, as well as managers, an understanding and sympathy which is hard to acquire otherwise!

Recent trends in industry present practical difficulties which should not be overlooked. With the shorter working week, men often prefer to spend not more than thirty or forty minutes on a meal. The use of incentive schemes, particularly team incentive schemes, tends to reduce the opportunity for chatting "on the job". Making contact, under these circumstances, is not easy. Many positive attempts are being made, however, to develop joint consultation and to promote the idea that both sides of industry now-a-days have a common aim. It is in discussion groups of this kind that a minister may have an opportunity of presenting the Christian viewpoint.

Some take the view that the factory floor is no place for a minister and that the work of witnessing must fall entirely on the shoulders of the laity. This view, to me, is refuted by the achievements of industrial chaplains in Sheffield, Luton, London and Tees-side, to name only a few areas, who have proved that trained and gifted ministers can make a vital contribution. There is no denying, however, that the factory is in the front line and that great damage to the cause of Christ can be done by well-intentioned but inadequately equipped local ministers.

Finally, one practical suggestion for ministers and laymen interested in industrial questions. A film such as the recently produced "Dispute"* can provide a useful starting point for discussion. The film itself offers a dramatic and penetrating analysis of the human problems lying behind an industrial dispute. It is full of situations calling for comment and interpretation from a Christian stand-point.

Happy is the minister who has in his congregation members who are willing to share their experiences of industry and who, in turn, are prepared to benefit from the spiritual insight and help that can be given to them.

(iii) *The Local Church and Industry*

It is a common, and mistaken, belief that the Church has little that is relevant to say in this present era. How false this belief is can be illustrated in several ways. For example, in many modern automated plants, direct wage costs are only a few per cent of the total manufacturing costs. The able manager, however, knows that

* Information about the sound film "Dispute" can be obtained from: Visual Aids Adviser, British Productivity Council, Vintry House, Queen Street Place, London, E.C.4.

one third or more of his time may have to be spent in matters concerning people. That people *are* important is no platitude but a very essential truth. The manager of today must rely on persuasion and a spirit of mutual helpfulness, rather than on old-fashioned authoritarian methods, if he wishes to organise a team to work successfully. He must concern himself a great deal with human relations.

Industry needs good men, good managers, good shop stewards; men who are not only capable, but good in the highest sense. The other day a group of senior managers were discussing with the company medical officer the problem of absenteeism. They were concerned about the much higher incidence of so-called sickness absence among payroll who, thanks to a generous scheme, received full pay when sick, compared with the absence rate of men not yet eligible for the benefits of such a scheme. The difference in rate was too great to be accounted for solely by age, need for money, etc. There was a firm belief among the group that it was all too easy to obtain a medical certificate and that malingering accounted for a fair proportion of the absenteeism. While disagreeing about the "fair proportion", the doctor admitted that medical certificates could be readily obtained, for a busy practitioner finds it extremely difficult to detect malingering. So much of his diagnosis depends on the testimony of the patient. "Employ only good, honest, reliable men", said he, "and the malingering part of your problem will disappear".

For 2,000 years or so, the Christian Church has been concerned with the relationship between God and man, and between man and man. She has a great deal of experience in such problems of human nature! A local Baptist church may not have the same opportunity for a direct link with industry as the Church of England where the concept of the parish responsibility of the state church is strongly held. Nevertheless there are several ways in which it can improve its effective witness in an industrial society. The education and training of its members to be more effective Christians in such a society is of primary importance. Among other suggestions are the following:—

A discussion on "Christians in Industry" at a week night meeting or at a Men's Club could provide both help to members, and also the opportunity for contacting men and women outside the church whose interest might be aroused by the subject.

Again, a few churches in a district might link up to share the cost of hiring a film such as "Dispute" (previously mentioned) or "Men at Work"* and to engage in discussion around it. It would not be a bad idea for the church to hear the views of a local Trade Union official, whether or not he shares the Christian viewpoint.

* This film can be hired from the Central Film Library, Government Building, Bromyard Avenue, Acton, London, W.3. Film Number U.K. 1352.

In its prayer life, too, the church should not forget to intercede on behalf of the world of industry and its problems. Harvest Festivals still remain a feature of church life, but have many churches not been too slow to express gratitude to God for the products of industry, the result of His gifts of brain, skill, craftsmanship, minerals, power and energy?

In the final outcome, no organisation can be better than the individuals of which it is composed. What is true of industry is true of the visible organised church. In all our discussions and thinking we have to come back to the individual, and to personal faith and holiness of living. "To become like Christ" wrote Henry Drummond, "is the only thing in the world worth living for, the thing before which every ambition of man is folly and all lower achievement vain". Industry and the church need men of that conviction.

NORMAN MACLEOD.

CHURCH AND GOSPEL IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

TO many readers of the *Fraternal* the North is a strange, dirty, wet jungle of decrepit remnants of the industrial revolution.

Its inhabitants speak in a broad, uncouth manner and clatter around the cobbled streets in clogs. Its churches are large and given over to snooker, pantomimes, potato pie suppers and such like unspiritual activities. It is indeed "Coronation Street". So when seeking a move they say: "not North".

The truth is that this is an exciting period in which to serve the church in the North. It is a period of reconstruction, physical and spiritual. Old towns are being replanned. New towns are being built. Our churches, therefore, must face the consequences of this reconstruction and they need experienced guidance and help. They are, I believe, ready to respond to active leadership and, though they do not understand the language of Zion, they will bless a man who comes to show them the deeper realities of the gospel.

Those who minister in the North must be prepared for the challenges it brings. Otherwise they will meet with frustration and disappointment. There are few large congregations and fewer easy suburban areas. Perhaps the major problems are to be found in the old towns. When a minister faces a congregation of 60 in a building seating 1,000 and knows that around his church are masses who think it irrelevant, his total ministerial outlook is challenged. Amongst the thousands at his doors are those whose families for generations have had no room for the church. Amongst them also are thousands who once passed through our Sunday schools and came out with a vague, sentimental attachment to the school, but not the slightest idea of the nature of the church. Inevitably questions about its worship, its evangelistic methods and the relevance of the gospel arise. It is, perhaps, for this reason that men who have ministered in the North either have a realistic appreciation of the situation in which the gospel has to be preached or, disappointed and frustrated,

they seek service elsewhere. This also accounts for the slightly cynical air of many northern ministers to much that calls itself evangelism and originates from a suburban situation. Their situation demands a fundamental approach.

The situation challenges, in the first place, a man's conception of the *gospel*. If he preaches month after month with little encouragement and if he is spiritually and intellectually alive, he must begin to question his own presentation of it and its relevance to the life of today. This means an effort to apply the gospel to the true situation and not merely to the symptoms that reveal the situation. It is a great temptation to attack moral evils, gambling, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, and not deal with the underlying spiritual emptiness or anxiety. While it is true that there are occasions when we should do this, let us beware that our eloquence on such matters does not blind us to the poverty of our contribution to their cure. I have found Paul Tillich's analysis of the present situation helpful. The reader will remember that he describes four basic human anxieties and lists them in the following order of intensity in our time—the anxiety about meaning, status, guilt, death. It is interesting to note that commercial interests have learnt to exploit these basic anxieties for material ends. This can be seen by reading *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Hidden Persuaders* or by spending an evening watching the adverts on I.T.V.

The above analysis, if accepted, does affect the way in which the gospel is preached, and the emphasis which certain aspects of the gospel receive. Indeed it is the order rather than the analysis itself that will meet with criticism. The traditional way is to start with man's sin and guilt and then to present the redeeming love of Christ. If the order above is accepted, it will by no means exclude this, but the major emphasis and approach will be the fundamental need of man for meaning and status. There are many ways of being lost. The lamb frightened in the loneliness of the wilderness is as lost as the prodigal in the far country.

The gospel is the presentation of the Christ who is always contemporary. There are four doctrinal words which, re-examined, can help to make Him so to our generation. These are the words, *creation, man, reconciliation, hope*. In each there are two truths, both of which must be given equal emphasis. It is so often the failure to do this that distorts the gospel and makes it look irrelevant to our generation.

Our doctrine of *creation* must emphasise that the meaning of the universe (so wonderfully revealed by science) is to be found in the Word made flesh and that nature is a gift from God, and so sacred. Thus labour has its dignity and the universe (surely we must now say this) must be used and not exploited.

Our doctrine of *man* must recognise his achievements. He was appointed to have dominion over nature and to subdue it, and we do not serve God by denigrating his achievements. By the grace of

God man has succeeded in creating for himself in the midst of the perils of the natural world comfort and enrichment of life. But he is also incapable of saving himself from the distortions within his own nature, from anxiety and sin. It is by grace, and by grace alone through faith, that man is saved from self-destruction.

Reconciliation again has this twofold richness. Reconciliation is the work of love that unites, the love of God revealed in Christ that unites us through faith to the Father in whom we find our true status as sons. But the love which unites us to God is evidenced in our response to our neighbour. Wherever there is found a man in Christ there is found also a centre of reconciliation, the action of God within the community. Love always means a cross. It meant the cross for the Redeemer and it means a cross also for those who are redeemed into his service. This latter we are too apt to forget.

Hope has its present application and future fulfilment. Hope in Christ makes it possible to live the other side of death now. Death is swallowed up in victory. But Christian hope contains within it the promise of the ultimate consummation of God's purpose for the universe. We may not know what is coming, we do know Who is coming.

There are those in the North who find this approach helpful in their proclamation of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. On the other hand there are those who still prefer the traditional approach and the traditional language. Their positiveness has given them some success, but whether they have really made contact with the mind and problems of our age is open to question. There is always, however, in a theological situation like this, the danger of a dogmatism that is unlovely and unloving. Experience may prove that both methods of presentation have their place and that both can help in the building of the church. The tragedy to be avoided is a mental and spiritual excommunication of the one by the other. There is no such thing as a conservative gospel, or a liberal gospel. There is only the gospel in all its richness, and there are Christian men and women with their small insights into the largeness of its truth.

In the second place the northern situation challenges a man's conception of *worship*. Enclosed within four walls a congregation offers its worship to God. How relevant is it? Is it real worship or has it become self-centred "God bless me, the missus and our aunt Mabel". The folk at the doors are indifferent. To them it is irrelevant. The kids kick a ball against the church door. Mum and dad prepare to watch "tele" or go to the pub or the club or visit friends. Is their judgement right? Has worship become a mere sentimental whim for those who like that sort of thing? One moment of revelation rescued at least one minister from the feeling that maybe they were right. It was the sudden understanding of the priesthood of all believers. Worship involves a priestly sacrifice. The church is a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices Mentally the walls of the church disappear and the whole world is in the church, in the

hearts and minds and prayers of a worshipping community. Its adoration, confession, thanksgiving, offering, as well as petition and intercession are on behalf of or for the world. Though the world is indifferent, the church as part of the sinning world offers worship. Patterns of worship are varied here in the North, but there seems a greater richness, not only in those churches that have been directly influenced by the liturgical movement, but in the more orthodox churches as well. This is all to the good. For though worship is an end in itself, it is also our strongest evangelistic force and richest method of Christian education. I would put in a plea for variety in worship, for the recognition that the same form of worship may not be suitable for every congregation. The liturgical movement is doing us a great deal of good, but it should not lead us to conformity.

In the third place the northern scene challenges to a broad understanding of *mission*. Mission is seen to involve the total life of the church—its teaching of children and adults, its care for the community about its doors and the situation of its buildings, as well as its direct evangelistic efforts. Teaching in the North has always been thought of in terms of the Sunday school. This has led, as we have seen, to a definite division between church and school. Sometimes this has been shown in the way the Sunday school has been organised as a separate entity from the church altogether. More often the difference has been psychological, and even when the tie-up between church and school has been organisationally sound this mental attitude of separation is to be seen. There are some who wish to experiment with the American "All-age Sunday school" and feel that because of this strong sentiment for Sunday school it has a good chance of success. In essence this means only the transference of the Sunday school to the morning and an attempt to revive the old adult classes which still linger on in many churches. I feel this to be the wrong approach. Nevertheless, such experiments will be watched with interest. More helpful are the experiments with family church; although it must be recognised that no church has yet included within its experiment a scheme for adult education.

One other matter may be mentioned in terms of the church's mission, and that is the strategic placing of our buildings. Involved in this is the wise use of the ministry. Everywhere in the North new building is proceeding and the question of our witness in new areas arises. Obviously we must not spawn. When we establish new causes we have to be sure that the area is adequate to support them, and, equally important, that there is a nucleus of people prepared to do the work of the church, to be its pioneers. Many new churches have been opened in the North. Most are proving successful. We have, however, learned enough to be very careful how we start new causes in future. The biggest impending challenge is the new town at Skelmersdale. We shall hope to prepare very thoroughly for this and to have a worker on the spot the moment the new town begins to grow.

This work is interesting and exciting, but equally so are the possibilities in the old towns. Several experiments are being made in the North-West which are typical of the whole of the area. Moss Side, for example, was once a very respectable and fashionable district. Our church there was one of the most influential in the North. The area has declined and is noted for its crime and prostitution. In addition, during the last years 10,000 coloured people have moved into the area. It is evident that no one man can tackle this situation and we plan to have three workers here, a Jamaican pastor, a deaconess and a lay-pastor. If our plans materialise we shall hope in time to employ also a full-time youth worker. In one town, after a long discussion between representatives of five churches, it was decided to explore the possibility of closing four of the five and building one modern church in their stead. In several other towns deacons are considering a shared ministry in terms of a senior minister and a junior minister or deaconess. Usually the idea is for the two ministers to serve three churches. This latter experiment demands flexibility, not only on the part of the layman, but also on the part of the ministers. Its success depends on the comradeship between the two ministers and in the wise use of laymen in the teaching and preaching work of the church. There must not be too wooden an approach to the sharing of Sunday services or the routine of mid-week activities.

Let me end as I began. It is exciting to work in the North in these days if one has the imagination to look beyond present conditions to future possibilities. There are many opportunities to revel in the current ministerial sin of frustration, but, thank God, there are many opportunities also to preach the gospel. Our difficulties are leading us to recognise our dependence one upon another. We are learning that mission involves fellowship, fellowship involves sacrifice and sacrifice—the stewardship of money. It is to the Home Work and Ter-Jubilee funds that we shall look for help with many of our experiments. These funds are basic to our work. I was not asked to write this. It is something I have learned as church after church, either for new buildings or for the filling of their pastorate, has asked me for help.

NORMAN JONES.

EXCAVATING ISRAEL'S FIRST CAPITAL: SHECHEM

AT 3.30 a.m. the muezzin climbed his minaret and broke the pre-dawn stillness with his call to prayer. The light sleepers among us awakened under the spell of the lingering chant, but, deciding that it was better to sleep than to pray, pulled up the blankets and lay still. Far off across the plain of Shechem a donkey answered the muezzin. Then a cock crowed, and somehow it aroused the feeling that I should have prayed. Suddenly, always sooner than it was expected, a loud clanging in the midst of the camp announced that it was 4.30 and time to prepare for the day's work. Hurriedly everyone slipped on the clothes that had been

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To the Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal.

Dear Friends,

On acquiring Capital at age 65

In the April issue of *The Fraternal* I wrote about the letter issued by me to all ministers on this subject, and I make no apology for again drawing your attention to this important matter.

Ministers and students through a wide range of ages have displayed a lively interest. Many of the older men have regretted their inability to effect an Endowment Assurance when they were younger and many of the younger men have made a point of effecting an Assurance now so that maximum benefits may be enjoyed at age 65.

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Please do not hesitate to write to me on this or any other point affecting assurance or insurance.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN,
General Manager.

pulled off the night before, shook shoes upside down to avoid getting in them with a chance scorpion, washed in cold water, snatched a cup of hot Arab coffee and dry bread spread with jam and peanut butter, and reported at various parts of the mound of ancient Shechem at 5 a.m. for the day's work.

Such is the beginning of the day on most excavations in Palestine. On a British sponsored dig, like the Jerusalem Excavations begun last May, one has hot tea instead of coffee at 4.30, with dry bread and the apparently inexhaustible orange marmalade. The days are long, the sun blistering, the food monotonous, and everyone loses weight and much of whatever good nature he has. But try to exchange a holiday in Paris for an archaeologist's six weeks of life on a dig!

There are many things about excavations and Biblical cities that we could discuss. Significant progress is being made both in techniques and knowledge. New developments are appearing on a number of fronts, from the unique stone-age cultures of Jericho to the Dead Sea Scrolls. With so many interesting possibilities, I can only deal with one, and will give a brief summary of results of the present excavations at Shechem. This particular excavation is not completed yet, but much interesting information has already come to light, and I can speak from personal participation as a member of the excavation staff. I have heard the muezzin call, the cock crow, and the hoe suspended on a string clang.

THE SHECHEM EXPEDITIONS

The circular mound of ancient Shechem, Israel's first capital, covers about twelve acres. It commands the east entrance to the pass, between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, as well as the fertile plain of Shechem. Hermann Thiersch identified the mound in 1903, and Professor Ernst Sellin, of Vienna, began the first excavations in 1907. Work continued until 1909, then resumed in 1913 and was halted by World War I in 1914. In 1926, Sellin returned for two seasons. His archaeologist, G. Welter, brought serious charges against him in 1927 with regard to technique and personal competence. As a result, Welter was put in charge of the excavations in 1928 under the supervision of the German Archaeological Institute. He continued intermittently until 1932, and again in 1934, after which conditions at home terminated the project.

During the years of activity at Shechem, preliminary reports appeared in the *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palaestina Vereins* and *Archaeologischer Anzeiger*, but no definite report was published. After 1934, Professor Sellin began collecting his field notes and by World War II he had prepared a detailed manuscript on his excavations. But one night Allied bombers destroyed his home in Berlin and all the enduring fruits of his labours at Shechem were lost.

It is not surprising that a group of Biblical scholars in America should choose Shechem for a major series of excavations. Before David built Jerusalem as his capital, Shechem was the "queen city" of the central highlands, yet very little was known of its history

and culture. Also, because an impressive amount of work had been done there by the Austro-German expeditions, it was anticipated that much knowledge could yet be gained from their work with a minimum outlay of capital. Thus the Drew-McCormick Shechem Expedition, directed by G. Ernest Wright of Harvard Divinity School, began a series of strategic area excavations in 1956, continued in 1957 and 1960, and now projects further work in 1962 and 1964. By combining what the three completed campaigns have yielded with the results of earlier campaigns, the following picture of Shechem emerges at this point.

PREHISTORIC SHECHEM

Although stray shreds from pre-historic Shechem were found in 1957, the first stratigraphic remains were discovered in 1960, deep in the west central area of the sixty foot thickness of occupation debris that makes the mound. My responsibility in 1960 was to excavate the side of an enclosed palace area nearest the centre of the mound and work out the sequence of building phases. During the last week of work, in preparation for the 1962 excavations, I put down a 1 meter by 3 meter sounding below the earliest palace structure, which dated *c.* 1750 B.C. Underneath the structure there was a thin layer of debris and ashes, then sticky red clay almost barren of objects. After four feet of the clay, it seemed that we were done with Shechem. Then a gray packed earth surface appeared. On this surface and from a depth of one foot under it, we gathered six baskets of broken pottery that dated from *c.* 4000 B.C.! It was contemporary with the Chalcolithic remains of Tell Fara' (Biblical Tirzah), north-east of Shechem.

The western edge of the stratum was eroded and the four feet of clay that covered it sloped toward the west. We must have touched the western edge of the smaller Chalcolithic city which flourished for a time then, for some yet unknown reason, was either abandoned or extremely constricted for nearly 2,000 years!

THE GOLDEN AGE

Shechem flourished again during the Middle Bronze Age, from about 1750-1550 B.C. This is the Hyksos period, and apparently Shechem became a major fortress city. As one would expect, prosperity followed the military. On the west side of the city, a large area was filled in with white clay from the slopes of Gerizim and the palace mentioned above was constructed. This enlarged the city considerably. A massive enclosure wall eight feet thick guarded the palace, and a circular battered (sloping) wall enclosed the city. This phase of the city is still buried deep in the mound, but we know from the 1960 palace excavations that the city was captured and burned three times within 100 years.

About 1650 B.C., the palace area was filled in with more white clay, the mound was extended westward, and the great Shechem temple was constructed on top of the palace area. A massive city

wall was built around the perimeter of the mound with earth supporting the inner face of the wall. This wall still stands, over thirty feet high in one place. On a level with the top of the stone wall, the temple was built facing across the city towards the east. In front was the high place with its *massebah* or sacred stone standing in the slot of a foundation stone. The *massebah* and its foundation are still there. Even though the top part of the upright stone is broken off, it stands five feet high, four-and a-half feet wide, and one-and-a-half feet thick. We reset it in the foundation stone in 1960.

In the day of Shechem's pagan glory, the great temple, sixty-eight feet wide, eighty-four feet long, with walls seventeen feet thick, dominated the city. It is the largest Canaanite temple yet discovered in Palestine. Each morning the sun broke over the mountains of Gilead and bathed the temple and its high place in light before the shadows fled from the city below. It symbolized both the pagan culture and the Bronze Age cruelty that accompanied it, because the seventeen-foot thick walls were a last-stand shelter when the cyclopean city walls with the triple gates were battered in by invaders.

BIBLICAL SHECHEM

Soon after 1550 B.C., the Hyksos city fell, probably to Egyptian armies. The temple was rebuilt later and its axis was shifted five degrees South East from the original foundations, although the older foundations were used. This was likely done to bring the east front with its *massebah* into line with the sun's position on one of the holy days of the cult which was carried on at Shechem during the late Bronze Age. Professor Wright thinks this temple stood in Shechem when Joshua arrived there, and that it is to be identified with the stronghold of El-berith of Judges ix, 46. If this identification is correct, Abimelech burned in the roof of the structure upon the people of the Tower of Shechem, who made a last stand there (Judges ix, 49).

Most of Biblical Shechem remains to be excavated because one part of the present team has been seeking to recover the historical and cultural sequence of pre-Biblical Shechem in the palace and temple areas uncovered by previous excavations. The other group has worked from the top of the mound in an undisturbed area and has just barely reached eighth century B.C. levels. Thus the strata between the time of Joshua and the fall of Samaria, most important for Biblical scholars, remain to be investigated in 1962 and 1964.

The group working from the top of the mound discovered evidence of a flourishing Hellenistic Shechem. I shall mention only one interesting find. A small globular pot was recovered about two feet underneath the floor of a residence in Hellenistic, and probably Samaritan, Shechem. It was sent to the pottery shed to be cleaned and repaired. After it had lain on a shelf in the open shed for a week, Professor Neil Richardson of Boston University decided to have a look at it. Imagine the surprise among staff members and whispering

among the Arab workmen when he dug out of the pot thirty-five perfect silver Ptolemaic tetradrachma. The latest one dated 193 B.C., from Ptolemy V, and, significantly, five years after the Seleucid victory at Panium!

Shechem still has many secrets to give up. We should learn much of the city that Joshua, Abimelech, and Jeroboam I knew. We may learn more of the "Deuteronomic tradition" circles. As for me, I expect in 1962 to probe into the heart of the pre-historic city and inquire about what was happening there 6,000 years ago.

JOSEPH A. CALLAWAY.

"THERE'S A LIGHT UPON THE MOUNTAINS"

FOR centuries the Highlands of New Guinea have been locked away from the rest of the world. The colourful highlanders had lived without any thought of any other world but with a constant fear of the evil spirits which dominated their lives. Post-war exploration and the development of the aeroplane have brought great changes to these stone age people. Not the least of these changes is the advent of Christianity in a great wave of Missionary Endeavour. The light of the Gospel is now gradually creeping over the barriers of mountains and dense jungle belts, and the lives of primitive people are being transformed by the power of Christ.

In 1949 Australian Baptists joined in the evangelisation of New Guinea by commencing work at the Baiyer River in the Western Highlands. The Mission commenced with two men, Revs. A. H. Orr and A. Kroenert and a tent! Today, at the same site, there is a flourishing Baptist Mission Station which includes a 150-bed hospital, known as the C. J. and Mildred Tinsley Hospital, a girls' school, which recently won an award as the best school in the Highlands, a Boys' school, an Industrial training school and an agricultural training centre. More important still there is a Bible school where about forty Pastors and Evangelists are in training. From that tiny tent in the massive Baiyer Valley the Missionary work of Australian Baptists has spread to Lumusa, the Sau Valley, where there are now two stations, Kompiam and Lapolama; Telefolmin, almost on the border of West Papua and on into the North Baliem Valley in the Highlands of West Papua (formerly Netherlands N.G.). Today, instead of two missionaries, there are over fifty, including nurses, school teachers, carpenters, agriculturalists, and a number of highly trained, ordained Ministers of the Gospel, who spearhead the evangelistic programme. Every Missionary is on the same footing and is firstly a Missionary and then a specialist. During this period the budget for our work in New Guinea has grown from a modest £3,000 to over £35,000.

The growth, however, has not only been geographical and financial. God has given a rich harvest of souls. At the end of 1961 the total membership of the forty odd churches in Australian New Guinea

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was 4,234. This was made up of 2,620 in the Baiyer Area, 1,589 in the Sau Valley and 125 at Telefolmin. The first of the difficult Dani people in the North Baliem Valley have received Christ as their Saviour and the initial baptisms and church formations are planned for May of this year. Each church has been established on a strictly indigenous pattern and is encouraged from the very beginning to be self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating. The Missionary acts in a purely training and advisory capacity. Each local church elects its own pastor from its own group. Usually he is a man already attending one of our Bible Schools.

The devotion and enthusiasm of some of these young Christians and their churches is very moving and a real lesson to the older churches. The Pastor of the church at Lumusa in the Baiyer River area, a very gracious and retiring man under whose ministry the church at Lumusa has grown from a membership of 47 to over 300, felt that God was calling him to leave his church and go as a Missionary to the Sau Valley area. While the Missionary at Lumusa could not understand why God was calling this trusted leader away, he readily recognised that God had spoken to him. After Kukiwa had been in the Sau Valley for some time a new station was opened at Lapolama and it was decided that Kukiwa should accompany the Missionary and assist in the opening of this new work. Today Kukiwa is in charge of the Bible School at Lapolama, training about twenty Enga Christians to be Evangelists and Pastors among their own people. He is the first Enga to be entrusted with such a responsibility.

The church at Telefolmin faced a crisis early this year when through lack of Mission Finance the work of the Bible School had to be curtailed and the twenty-eight trainees returned to their villages. These trainees had been responsible for the evangelistic programme in three surrounding thickly populated valleys where mission outstations had been commenced. The Church became concerned with this curtailment of the district programme of evangelism and decided to face up to the challenge by supporting three of the senior Bible School men to enable them to work full time in these Valleys as Evangelist-Teachers. The Telefolmin church, with a membership of 125, already supports its own Pastor, an outstanding young man named Wesani. The result of their sacrificial stewardship is that in each of these three valleys there are now a number of Christians, and Baptismal classes have been commenced. Surely this story bears out the truth that we cannot outgive God.

Our most difficult field has been the North Baliem Valley in West Papua but even in this stronghold of Satan God has been at work through our Missionaries. Last year the first Dani natives became Christians and since then a remarkable spiritual movement has spread throughout the whole valley. It is expected that about sixty believers will be baptised in May. As we look back over the past twelve years since the commencement of our work in New Guinea

we are deeply conscious that what has happened has been the work of God. Our feelings are best expressed in the statement of one of our Missionaries, "It has been a humbling experience to stand back and watch God at work".

A. G. DUBE.

CHRISTIAN STUDY CENTRES FOR THE STUDY OF OTHER RELIGIONS

PRIOR to the I.M.C. Tambaram Conference in 1938, there had been a growing tendency to see the great historic religions as allies with Christianity in the fight against materialistic secularism. So forceful, however, was Dr. Hendrik Kraemer's emphasis there upon the uniqueness of the Christian Gospel that, contrary to his own intention, the effect of his famous book, "The Christian Message in a non-Christian World", was largely to bring a stalemate into the dialogue between Christianity and other faiths. Nevertheless, in more recent writings, Dr. Kraemer himself has gone on to stress the need to prepare for the great and unprecedented encounter between Christianity and other faiths which, for various reasons, he regards as relatively imminent—not only in Asian countries, but in all parts of the world. (Buddhists and Muslims, for example, already have a considerable number of trained missionaries in the U.S.A., and a Christian Professor of World Religions in California has been promulgating what is tantamount to a Hindu attitude to all religious faiths!) The fact of the matter is, however, that by and large the churches are ill-equipped to face such a challenge. Nor are modern missionary societies in a much stronger position, for gone are the days of the great pioneering scholars, like Judson, Martyn, and Soothill, who really studied other faiths "from the inside".

It is being increasingly recognised that a vital part of the missionary strategy of the whole Church must be to break through the sterility of further discussions regarding general or special revelation, and "continuity" or "discontinuity" between Christianity and other religions, into a living dialogue with adherents of other faiths. We are realising in a fresh way that the Gospel is to be preached to man as man, rather than to Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists or Communists. But, for this very reason, it is essential that we respect men as real persons, and therefore seek to gain a sympathetic insight into the beliefs which actually guide, sustain, and inspire them in their everyday life. Only so can we be faithful and effective in communicating the Christian faith. This calls for open discussion on equal terms, which involves a willingness to listen as well as to speak. And it will be better to discuss, not religion *in vacuo*, but the common problems of religious man in the mid-Twentieth Century—for we may learn more about a man's real faith by discovering how he applies it to daily life, than by inviting him to debate it in abstract and controversial terms.

How is this to be done? Dr. Kraemer made a powerful plea for "a systematic effort for placing small bands of thoroughly trained experts in the service of the Church" who would "serve in the great non-Christian religio-cultural areas and be experts in the respective religions and cultures of those areas". Several small Study Centres in different parts of the world already seek to meet this need. Their inception owed much to the I.M.C.; under the new Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches a spontaneous movement for the establishment of further Centres will be encouraged as it spreads through Africa and Latin America. The best-known of existing Centres are the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society at Bangalore, where Dr. Devanandan and Mr. M. M. Thomas demonstrate a very fruitful partnership between the study of Hinduism and the study of Christian responsibility in social concerns, and the sympathetic and penetrating approach to Islam taught in seminars at Jerusalem by Canon Kenneth Cragg. Other Centres are to be found at Rajpur and Aligarh in India, at Colombo and Jaffna in Ceylon, and at Rangoon, Hong Kong, and Kyoto. Amid all the political disturbances, a fine Centre was established a year ago in Algiers.

These Centres are specifically and openly Christian institutions. They cannot themselves be direct evangelistic agencies, or religious leaders of other faiths would find it impossible to participate in their seminars and conferences. But their objective is not to explore "alternative faiths to Christianity" or "alternatives to conversion", nor to foster any syncretism of beliefs. They are set up to enable the Christian Church to do a better job in introducing Christ to the men and women of other religions, whom also He claims as His own.

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