

Editorial

BY the time this issue appears, six months will have passed since Dr. Ernest Payne was taken from us. During this time, it has become even more evident what an unenviable task faces anyone who attempts a comprehensive account and assessment of his life and work, and in the light of these, an adequate tribute to him. Anyone who may eventually be called to the work of biography will in effect have to survey in detail the life of the denomination and the ecumenical movement for the greater part of this century, not to mention those fields of historical scholarship which Dr. Payne made his concern. If not already possessing such, that thorough author will certainly acquire a unique knowledge and insight into twentieth century British Christianity.

As indicated in the last issue, it was felt that this journal, of which Dr. Payne was sometime editor, and in which throughout his presidency of the Society he took a close and invaluable interest (quite apart from his own numerous contributions), should do what is possible to register our sense of loss and gratitude, without attempting the impossible task of immediately venturing upon the full scope of all that has to be said. Many readers will recall that the July 1967 issue of the *Quarterly* recognised the occasion of his retirement, with papers by some of his former students, either paying tribute to him, or reflecting his interests.

The present number, it is hoped, will be seen as not inappropriate to the hour. In the first place, we include the addresses given respectively by Dr. Barrie White at Ernest Payne's funeral service at Regent's Park College on 21st January, and by Dr. Morris West at the Service of Thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey on 27th February. The former occasion, in particular, provided the means whereby Ernest Payne's family, friends and Baptist associates remembered him for the man he was, and Dr. White's address conveys their feelings. In turn, those present at Westminster Abbey were conscious of sharing in a uniquely historic occasion in Christian life in this country. The setting, together with the presence and participation of so many leaders and representatives of other traditions within this country and abroad, and in the world-wide ecumenical movement, befitted Ernest Payne's lifelong vision of Baptists belonging with all other Christians, in the world, throughout the world and for the world. Dr. West's address, in facing us again with all that Ernest Payne stood for, bids us take on our own responsibilities with the same faith. Those who left the Abbey that night knew that they had witnessed the summing up of a whole generation of denominational and ecumenical endeavour, and had received an inescapable challenge and inspiration for the future of the same quest.

Second, indefatigable to the end, Dr. Payne in his last months

submitted to the *Quarterly* yet one more article, "Illusion or Failure? Efforts for Peace before World War I". Originally given at the Baptist Historical Society Summer School at Norwich in 1978, and also at the British Council of Churches' Anglo-German Consultation at Addington Palace in 1979, it is an especially fitting article in this issue. The responsibility of the Church to proclaim and work for peace and social justice was part and parcel of Ernest Payne's commitment to the gospel, as he repeatedly made clear both in Baptist Union affairs and through his leadership in the World Council of Churches. Moreover this article, together with its characteristic scholarly thoroughness, is imbued with an unusually personal note, as we are made to realise how significant were his own memories and family connexions in the events he describes. What is more, at a time when world events are lurching in an ever more uncertain direction, with a nuclear militarism of demonic proportions, we should be grateful for whatever lessons and insights can come to us from the struggles of previous generations of Christians, as presented in this paper.

Ernest Payne's influence left few areas of church life untouched. Perhaps it has almost been taken for granted, but his contribution to our practice of worship should not be forgotten, most especially through his collaboration with S. F. Winward in the widely-used manual of 1960, *Orders and Prayers for Church Worship*. This was a perceptive and creative response to the post-war liturgical movement. Ernest Payne would have been the first to recognise that in worship as in all else, the life of the People of God is one of pilgrimage, and that being true to tradition is not the same as being bound to one fixed expression. This year we welcome the manual's successor *Praise God*. One of the authors, the Reverend Michael Walker, has written for this issue an introductory article, which will not only be helpful to the book's users, but provides a useful record of the history of styles and changes in worship over the past decade and a half. Mr. Walker, it will be noted, acknowledges the permanent debt to "Payne and Winward" as well as the need for fresh (albeit much from the ancient church!) material.

Finally, neither Dr. White nor Dr. West could pay their tributes to Ernest Payne without the aid of John Bunyan who also, we see, has found his way into *Praise God*! Dr. N. H. Keeble's essay on *The Pilgrim's Progress* forms the longest contribution to this issue, testifying to the inexhaustible sources of interest in Bunyan. This essay will richly repay careful reading for it makes us look again at Bunyan not only as a brilliant story-teller, but also as a theologian. Dr. Keeble persuasively argues that the Puritan theology and the literary genius were not accidental to each other. The theology, by its very nature, required a human, concrete and everyday narrative style. There are some highly important issues to be followed up here, regarding the way theology, now as then, should be capable of expression and communication.

In Ernest Payne, we were given one for whom the forward look and

the backward glance, the vision and the memory, belonged together and required each other. Directly or indirectly, it is hoped that the following pages confirm this integrity as our own abiding need and possibility.

Come Wind, Come Weather!*

WE have come together this afternoon to thank God for the life and work of Ernest Alexander Payne. We have also come as his friends to honour his memory, to share our sorrow at parting with him, to offer our sympathy to his immediate family. Above all we have come to rejoice in that sure and certain hope in Christ which we have shared on earth with Ernest Payne and which he now knows in that place where faith is turned to sight and struggle to victory.

It is fitting that this service should be held during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. So much of importance in his life was done in the wider fellowship of the Christian Churches that we are both glad that justice will be done to that wider work and witness at the service in Westminster Abbey in February and also that so many friends of his and ours from other Christian communions are here with us today. Mrs. Payne has asked me especially to thank all of you who have come to this service whether of the Baptist family—we rejoice to have the President and the Secretary of the Baptist Union here—or of the wider family of the Christian Church.

But this afternoon our service does not focus upon the wider scene of Ernest Payne's life and work. Today, we shall be thinking less of his work for the Baptist Union, for the British Council of Churches or for the World Council of Churches. These were the activities which led the Queen to make him one of her Companions of Honour. Today, we shall be thinking of him particularly as he was in his family, among his friends and in this College which gave him so much joy across the years.

Many years ago when, I suppose, he could have had no thought of the wider responsibilities which would one day be his own, he wrote these words in a *Memoir* of Dr. Wheeler Robinson:

“Some who read this memoir will perhaps be most surprised to discover Robinson's unwavering loyalty to the Baptist denomina-

*Address given at Regent's Park College, Oxford, 21st January, 1980.