

We need to find out what we are supposed to be. We are 'God's ministers'—His servants, mouthpieces, ambassadors, the stewards of His mysteries, and surely He has a blueprint for ministerial activity in His Word. Do we know our marching orders? Now is the time for us to find out! Should this ultimate goal affect our present preparation? May it not be left to that time when preparation is ended? But if we do not have this vision now, then we cannot expect to gain it later in a 'valley of dry bones'. The call of the prophets preceded their ministry. For them the 'Thus saith the Lord' depended upon a reception of His Word, and an utter obedience to it. So it does for us.

HYWEL R. JONES.

THE PERSONAL LIFE OF THE MINISTER

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IT IS DIFFICULT to think of any other profession concerning which such an article would need to be written. Law, medicine, education have their own professional standards and etiquette, but the personal life of lawyer, doctor or teacher is of no direct concern to the profession. The minister's case is different, because his work is different. 'We are pledged', said Bishop Hensley Henson of Durham in one of his ordination charges, 'to a consecrated life not merely to the pursuit of a profession.' On another occasion he succinctly defined that minister's work as 'the public aspect and formal expression of his life, and that', he added, 'is altogether "holy to the Lord"'. .

The old ideal of the parson, the 'persona', in the parish had much to commend it. Before the complicating factors of large population increase and mass communication intruded, the parish parson's whole life was his ministry. With his family he was called to live a representative Christian life in the midst of his cure and his people were to learn Christ, not only—possibly not chiefly—by his sermons in Church, but by his life and works exhibited in ordinary human contacts. The importance of this may be illustrated from a slightly different context in the principles of the Dohnavur Fellowship founded by Amy Carmichael in South India in 1901. The official description of the work, appended to each of the Dohnavur books by its author, includes the following: 'We have no workers who are only preachers. "We have heard the preaching, can you show us the life of your Lord Jesus?" said a Hindu to one of us.' The churches of this country have developed a settled, professional ministry of the Gospel and any fundamental change in this system is unlikely. But the lesson may certainly be learned that the minister's life preaches. Far too frequently this is forgotten, the official takes precedence of the personal and the ministry suffers. For this purpose it does not matter whether the official image is that of priest, pastor, preacher or administrator (and we find all of these in most of our denominations). If the minister as a man is indisciplined, unstable or immature, no amount of theological learning, doctrinal correctness, pulpit eloquence or evangelistic energy will compensate.

Thus the personal life of the minister is concerned with the sanctification of the man who holds the office. The office itself, even if we dignify it with the name of the sacred ministry, will not suffice to sanctify him. The prayer, the almsgiving and the fasting which are done in secret (Mt. 6) bring the open reward of a holy life and a fruitful ministry.

It is at this point that we must take note of the profound social changes which have come to affect the ministry in the first half of the present century and more especially in the last twenty years. Most of our tradition in pastoral theology was developed against a background of comparative security and leisure for the minister which have gone for ever. The modern minister must normally find time and energy for the maintenance of house and garden, the care of a young family and the assistance of a wife, overtaxed with domestic duties. At the same time he is hampered by shortage of money to buy books and of time to study them. He may learn in principle from his predecessors, but he must work out his own solution.

If we consider this problem in relation to what has been said about the need for the sanctification of the man behind the minister, we shall find that much has been gained as well as lost in the changed circumstances.

The modern minister is no longer committed of necessity to a middle class way of living (if indeed this distinction has any surviving meaning). He is still set apart for the ministry of the Gospel, but the circumstances of his life are not otherwise markedly different from those of the rest of his parish or congregation. His children will quite likely attend the same school and his wife shop at the same shops as the bulk of his parishioners. He will share the same social services (including the waiting room at the doctor's surgery). He will very likely read the same newspaper (though, for his better information, he may struggle to take that affected by the top people as well). The parsonage door may well be opened by the minister's wife, hastily removing her apron, with the steam of washing emerging from the kitchen behind her, or the caller may be intercepted on the way to the house by the minister himself, none too respectably dressed, doing his stint in the garden. Here is the human contact, the opportunity for preaching by life, but here is more, the very raw material for sanctification, for it is in his personal relationships and not merely in his individual life that the minister must seek to be sanctified.

The first circle of relationships to be considered is that of the home and family (I assume the minister to be married). Here he is provided with a continual source of experience and discipline. 'One that ruleth well his own house', wrote St. Paul to Timothy, 'for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?'

There are two contrasted dangers, first that of neglecting the family in the pressure of the ministry and secondly that of allowing the family to intrude. Although it is easy to cite an impressive list of notable and Christian men and women who have been children of the Manse or the Vicarage, it is also true that there have been all too many apostates and delinquents from the same sources, and this has not been entirely due to a natural reaction of child against father. The minister needs to safeguard time for his family, to be with them and entirely at their disposal. If he does not do this, not only the family, but also the ministry will suffer. On the other hand the minister must be careful to guard his ministry from family intrusions. Simply because he is so much at home there must be appointed times of study and of prayer with which neither wife nor child must be allowed to interfere.

This leads on to the positive part which home and family may play in the work of the ministry. To secure smoothness of administration as well as time for prayer and study there is much to be said for the system of having a church office apart from the parsonage to which the minister withdraws as the main centre of his activity. But, in the opinion of the writer, this can never replace in pastoral effectiveness the natural human contacts obtainable through a ministerial home which is open to all comers. The clear principle of the New Testament is that the minister, as well as the Christian layman, must be given to hospitality (1 Tim. 3: 2; 1 Pet. 4: 9; Heb. 13: 2). This is not only a Christian social duty but an unparalleled evangelistic and pastoral opportunity. Again and again men and women have been won for Christ, or have received guidance and encouragement in their service for Him, through Christian homes which have been open to them. The minister should expect this of his people and he should be careful to set them an example. This will mean hard work and inconvenience, not only for the minister's wife and family, but for the minister himself, for his home will no longer be a place of escape or of easy relaxation, but a continual field of service.

The second centre of sanctification is the congregation, the body of regular worshippers which forms the church of which the minister has the charge. This is likely to be a very varied company of those who are growing in spiritual stature, though the rate of growth may in some cases not be particularly noticeable. In the language of 1 John, some will be children, some young men, some mature.

Now a varied community life inevitably means friction and discomfort. In fact it is the friction in a community which both enables it to grow and holds it together. A collection of people without this creative friction is a mere crowd, without proper personal relationships. But the minister responsible for this Christian community is himself growing. It is to be hoped that he has attained a measure of maturity, but he is certainly not

perfect. He is no more free from the attendant dangers of growth in a community than are the rest of the members. This may provoke in him one of two reactions. On the one hand he may be tempted to assert himself and to 'lord it over the charge allotted to him' (1 Pet. 5: 3). Far too many ministers grow to despise their flock and to censure and criticize them, even in the hearing of others, instead of praying for the patience and insight to understand them. On the other hand the minister may allow himself to be drawn into the bickering and disagreement, to become leader of a party or a clique in the church, and so to forfeit his title to be a true pastor.

The third circle of sanctification is the wider community, particularly those who live in the parish or district, but are outside the church's normal range of influence. For these his calling as a minister of the Gospel gives him both a concern and a responsibility. But this does not mean that he will find relationships with them easy or congenial. To start with, they cannot be expected to look at things from a conventional Christian point of view and he will be faced with the problem of how far he should accommodate himself to them in things not clearly forbidden. Changes in social habit have been such that some of those questions which, for the evangelical of twenty-five years ago were as good as settled, if not by personal conviction, at least by group pressure and convention, are now open again. The minister must make sure that his answers are worked out at a deep level and are not mere reflections of Christian (or worldly) convention.

Apart from this the minister will often be faced, in his relations with the wider community, with attitudes or practices, which he would certainly not allow in his own life or that of his family and would censure in the case of members of his flock. Is it necessarily right, however, to do this in the case of those who make no real Christian profession? The minister will have to consider here underlying motives and, in his efforts to commend the Gospel, will encourage the good motive even if it leads to the wrong action, rather than look for an outward conformity or respectability which may cover a bad motive. The example of our Lord as recorded in the Gospels is most instructive in this respect and is the minister's surest guide. Sometimes the minister will be faced by deliberate attempts on the part of men and women of the world to shock what they consider to be his sensibilities. It is part of the minister's sanctification that, without condoning sin, he becomes very nearly unshockable.

But most important, with regard to the wider community, is the minister's witness as a man. He must be determined to be free from the love of money or of the slightest suggestion of luxury—his house, his furniture, his clothes, his habits, his car and his holidays all need consideration here. He must fight the temptation to be unbusinesslike or unpunctual, although the circumstances of his life may well provide him with excuses for yielding to it. Above all he must be scrupulously honest and a man of his word in all dealings, even where he stands to lose by it. It is the man and not the minister who stands to commend the Gospel. The minister is only the one set aside by Christ with the responsibility of preaching it.

These, then, are the three circles in which the minister must seek his sanctification. They provide in abundance the circumstances which the Father uses to chasten us—and He does it 'for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness' (Heb. 12: 10). The personal prayer life of the minister remains essential, but the response to the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God is to be made in the sphere of the minister's personal relationships. It is through the man that the minister works and his humanity achieves its significance as it comes into contact with the humanity of others.

THE MINISTER'S USE OF PSYCHOLOGY

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CHRISTIAN MINISTERS are not immune from the temptation to look for Aladdin's lamp, something that will be a short cut to powerful results. Psychology seems to be just such a lamp. Once we can master a few techniques, we can romp away from success to success!

This is not entirely a caricature of our hopes and fears. On the one hand there is the hope that a study of psychology will give us a new weapon for our ministry; on the other hand there is the fear that it will be a threat to the simplicity of the gospel.

Psychology is basically the attempt to understand the reactions and behaviour of human beings. As such, it is no more an enemy of the gospel than is straightforward medical science. Facts are facts, whether they are discovered by atheists or believers, and since, as ministers, we are largely concerned with human beings, anything that we can learn about human behaviour will be useful. So far probably all who read this article will agree, and one can suggest two inexpensive books that will give a reliable introduction to psychology in general. The more academic of the two is *A Modern Introduction to Psychology* by Rex and Margaret Knight (University Tutorial Press, 9s.), and it is no handicap to the book that Mrs. Knight is an avowed agnostic. The other is *Teach Yourself Psychology* (6s.) by W. E. Sargent, who is a minister, and who should not be confused with the William Sargent who wrote *Battle for the Mind*. Sargent's book is rather more dynamic than Knight's.

Psychology of this type is foundational, but takes us only part of the way. Our concern is with deeper issues than instincts and IQs. We are meeting human behaviour as a strange and powerful thing, which has become terribly mixed up through the Fall. At times it becomes so confused that we speak of a complete breakdown. Continually we are finding elements below the surface, in ourselves and others, that cannot easily be understood.

Thus we look for help from the depth psychologists, who at least offer some hypotheses about the cause and control of these unruly elements. In looking to these men we must realize two things; (1) They are continually in touch with abnormalities, often gross abnormalities, while we are ministering chiefly to the normal. Yet *normal* and *abnormal* are relative terms, and I should not care to say where one shades into the other. This means that, although the depth psychologist sees exaggerations, and may make judgements that are too sweeping because they are based on exaggerations, yet we shall often find ourselves meeting drifts or currents of behaviour that flow in the same direction as the psychologist's flood.

(2) Unless we have ourselves had the full and specialized training that is necessary for a practising psychologist, we must not attempt to do the psychiatrist's work. We must recognize our limitations, as we do when we minister to those who have a straightforward bodily illness, but some knowledge of the basic concepts may well help us in our pastoral ministry to those who will never need professional psychiatric treatment, as well as to those who are, or who have been, under the care of the psychiatrist.

One point of value is that we may become less superficial in our judgements. The apparent problem may cover a deeper situation of which even the person himself is not aware. What about the difficult member of your Church, often in a position of influence, who is always at loggerheads with you? It is not wholly satisfactory to regard him as an emissary of the devil (he may be), or as someone who dislikes your views on prophecy, or who does not want you to introduce Christian stewardship. You can pray about him, argue with him, and try to love him, but until you can get a lead on what is really biting him, you are working very much in the dark. Psychology can throw no light at all upon the theological soundness of his views on prophecy and stewardship, but if you know something about his parents and his place in the family you *may* begin to see why he holds his views in such a belligerent way, and why you are such a villain in his eyes. In due course you *may* get an opportunity to help him sort himself out. And naturally the traffic needs to be two-way. The minister himself may never have come to terms with himself, and then his people will often be the victims of his inner mix-ups.

Our difficulty at first is which school of depth psychology to consult. On the whole this is more of a problem for the continental with his tidy mind than for the mind of the average Briton. Both among practising psychiatrists and among ministers who have studied pastoral psychology my impression is that there is a readiness to find help from all the schools as occasion offers. A typical example is Canon E. N. Ducker in *A Christian Therapy for a Neurotic World* (Allen & Unwin, 1961. 21s.). In some ways this is a dangerous book

for a student, since Canon Ducker has the training and experience to use treatment at a deeper level than the average minister should do. Yet his principles of diagnosis and treatment are well worth studying, and the book shows how he draws freely from the leading schools, which often anathematize one another.

David Stafford-Clark's *Psychiatry Today* (Pelican) is an excellent introduction to the points at issue, and then one can try to understand the basic approaches of Freud, Jung, and Adler. Since the student and minister are concerned with economy, it is worth knowing that both Jung and Adler are well dealt with in Pelican books, and recently another Pelican book has been published dealing with Freud and the Post-Freudians. If you can read it without being driven mad by the general approach, *Freud and Christianity*, by R. S. Lee (James Clarke, 1948, 8s. 6d.) will give you a good outline of Freud's basic points in relation to religion. One line of development of Freudianism can be followed up in *Mental Pain and the Cure of Souls*, by H. Guntrip (Independent Press, 1956, 10s. 6d.).

This has taken us one step further, but we cannot stop here. It is the application of our knowledge that is so difficult. In America pastoral psychology is a basic part of the training of most theological students, and this normally includes clinical practice. It may be that this has sometimes been overstressed at the expense of a mastery of theology, but much has been written from which we can learn. There is a magazine, *Pastoral Psychology*, published at Great Neck, Long Island, New York; it can be ordered through big booksellers like Blackwells of Oxford, but costs over £2 a year. The same publishers run a pastoral psychology book club, where one is not obliged to have every book, but can choose from a review that is sent each month. Gradually good books are being produced in Britain. Canon Ducker's has already been mentioned; another good recent one is *The Healing of Marriage*, by W. L. Carrington (Epworth, 21s.).

In nearly all these books we find something that instinctively we resist. This is an emphasis on non-directive counselling. The idea behind this is that the 'patient' will be looking for you to give the solution to what he regards as his problem, and your impulse is to give what you conceive to be the answer, whether it is a text or a piece of advice. Yet generally this will not give the person the right and mature solution. He must work this through for himself, and you, as counsellor, are there to go through the experience with him. Your answers must not be answers, but promptings and further questions. You must be aware of what is likely to be happening, but at no point must you impose your solution on the conversation. Again, some may think that this is being over-emphasized today, but it brings mature results for those who have time to pursue it. Time is one trouble. The other is the tension in our mind between what we know to be true from the Bible, and what we must temporarily accept, without direct contradiction, while the person is working through what we hope will be the steps to a cure.

In many areas now there are both denominational and interdenominational group meetings of ministers to follow-up the psychological factors that are involved in pastoral counselling. Sometimes these are under the guidance of a competent psychologist. The classes conducted by Dr. Frank Lake, chiefly in midland counties, are a good example of what can be done. It is a tremendous help to be a member of a group like this, but anyone who has not first done plenty of groundwork study in books will lose much of the benefit and may at times hold up the group.

In this article I have deliberately kept to the subject of the psychological approach. The minister is concerned with far more than the psychologist, as psychologist, can be. He is a minister of the Gospel to bring wholeness to men and women, and he cannot be satisfied with adaptation to the general environment of life in the world. He has the medicine and the surgeon's knife of the Word to apply to the diseases of the Christian and the non-Christian. But his diagnosis of the disease and his understanding of its progress may be helped by a knowledge of psychology and of the principles that operate in converted and unconverted alike.

Very few books on these subjects have been written by conservative evangelicals. The books of Dr. Ernest White are a refreshing exception; one might mention especially his *Christian Life and the Unconscious* (Hodder & Stoughton, 10s. 6d.). I know of only one really deep book written by a symposium of

conservatives, and it certainly is deep. It is *What, then, is Man?*, with the subtitle of 'A Symposium of theology, psychology, and psychiatry'. It comes from the Missouri Lutherans, and is obtainable in Britain from the Concordia Publishing House, 42 Museum St., London W.C.1. My copy cost 25s. two years ago, but the price may be more now. We may hope one day to have a fuller book from Dr. Malcolm Jeeves, whose booklet, *Contemporary Psychology and Christian Belief and Experience* (Tyndale Press, 1960, 1s. 6d.) is well worth reading.

EVANGELICALISM AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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ONE OF THE MOST striking contrasts between evangelicals of today and those of over a century ago is their different attitude to social problems. Increasingly it has become possible to accuse evangelicals of some form of antinomianism, an accusation which, when judged by the standards of some present-day evangelical preaching, is not without justification. Many evangelicals have felt perfectly happy when they were able to rebut this charge on strictly theological grounds, which may be done easily. Their failure is in not realizing that the matter does not end there and that, even though the evangelical ordering of priorities in social reform—the reformation of men before the reformation of society—may be shown to be correct theologically, the practical challenge still remains. This is the heart of the case against evangelicals, and is the practical challenge of greatest interest to the ordinary man, and so, presumably, the greatest challenge in a parish.

I

Admittedly not all evangelicals show a lack of concern over social problems. Have those who show such concern no faults? Do they follow in the noble line of their predecessors? It is important that they should, because their views are taken as representative of evangelicals generally. Yet in one vitally important respect there is a difference. A notable characteristic of some of the great Christian social reformers of the early nineteenth century was their vast knowledge of the social matters on which they passed judgement. They realized that it was better not to speak at all than to speak with an ill-informed voice. Such, regrettably, is not always so in evangelical circles today. When judgements, sometimes dogmatic judgements, are pronounced on social matters, it is often with a particularly ill-informed voice. Perhaps it is here that the minister has to tread warily for two reasons.

In the first place, it is not possible for a man engaged in parochial work to have the time to assimilate all the vast ramifications of many present-day social problems. They all call for detailed and specialized knowledge. Unless a man has such, he should not speak on a particular issue. Otherwise his opinion might well be harmful. Better for all that ill-informed voices be silent.

Secondly, the minister, in common with many social workers, often encounters many social practices when, for one reason or another, these are not working satisfactorily; hence a false impression of their impact may be engendered. Hire purchase is a good example. Its extensive favourable features are often condemned because of the appearance of what are relatively very few unfavourable cases of its operation. The minister should be careful, therefore, not only that he is fully informed on social problems, but that his judgement is not formed from an unrepresentative sample. The effect of uninformed criticism can sometimes be much more damaging than none at all.

II

Those who fall in this group are at least fully aware of the need for social criticism; the objection is only to their method of doing so. What of those who see no such need? They lie at the root of our problem, and, let us be