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"Brantwood", Garth Drive, Mossley Hill, Liverpool, 18.

PRECEPTS FOR PREACHERS. POINTS FROM CHARLES SIMEON.

IT is to be hoped that the recent centenary celebrations in commemoration of the Rev. Charles Simeon, Cambridge, have served to quicken an informed interest in one of the most remarkable men and one of the most influential ministers in the records of the modern Church. Certainly his story is one to warm the heart and it will put iron into the blood of every believer in the saving power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Charles Simeon was born at Reading on September 24th, 1759, and educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge, of which he became a life-long Fellow. In 1782 he was given the important charge of Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, and there he ministered for the rest of his long life. He received, and coveted, no other church preferment. The early years of his ministry were harassed and hampered by almost incredible difficulties, from within the parish and the University, but his firm faith, resolute will and solid good sense finally prevailed, and when he died, on Sunday, November 13th, 1836, all Cambridge mourned. On the day of his funeral every shop was closed and every lecture was suspended.

Of his influence in the Church of England, Lord Macaulay, who had ample opportunities for watching him and his work, wrote in 1844:—"As to Simeon, if you knew what his authority and influence were, and how they extended from Cambridge

to the most remote corners of England, you would allow that his real sway over the Church was far greater than that of any Primate." It was the opinion of Bishop Charles Wordsworth that his following of young men at Cambridge was greater than that of Newman at Oxford, and it was sustained, of course, over a much longer period of time.

I cannot deal with his share in some of the Christian activities of that time, including the work of the Church Missionary Society, nor is it necessary to write about his friendship with prominent men in various sections of the Church of Christ. These included J. J. Gurney, the Quaker, and Robert Hall, our own illustrious Baptist preacher, as well as such men as Henry Venn, Henry Martyn and William Wilberforce in his own beloved Church of England.

One of Simeon's most useful institutions was a Sermon Class, which he began in, or before, the year 1794, for the benefit of would-be ordinands. He was himself a preacher of robust ability, as we may learn from the ample evidence of his regular ministry in Holy Trinity Church and his occasional ministry in the University Church of Great St. Mary's, and to this class he gave of his best, thereby doing incalculable good. His textbook was Robert Robinson's (the Cambridge Baptist minister) translation of the "Essay on the Composition of a Sermon," by the famous Huguenot preacher and controversialist, Jean Claude (1619-1687). Finding that this essay largely prescribed the chief rules which he had adopted for the regulation of his own practice, Simeon abridged it, made some alterations and additions, and then used it as the basis of his class teaching.

His purpose was to help men to become intelligent and intelligible preachers of the Word—preachers who knew *what* they wanted to say and *how* to say it in a way that would both arrest and reward attention. A sermon is neither a treatise nor an oration, but a setting forth of God's Word by a commissioned messenger to an assembly of living men, and so he sought to train his disciples in the right kind of preparation and in the most effective delivery. There must be careful exposition of Scripture, clear arrangement of material and then a direct appeal to the conscience and will of the congregation. Preparation having been completed, as carefully and adequately as possible, he advised that the actual wording of the sermon be left to the inspiration of God at the time of its delivery.

Preachers must see to it that their sermons are full of matter—they must have a solid body of teaching—but they must also see to it that their form is such as to secure attention and aid memory. The manner of their delivery must be perfectly natural, free from the artificial mannerisms of a conventional pulpit.

A few of his shrewd and practical precepts may now be quoted.

“Bite your words”—a warning against the slurring of consonants and final syllables. It is required of preachers that they be audible, and audibility requires careful articulation.

“Avoid a continuous solemnity; it should be as music, and not like a funeral procession.”

“Too great familiarity does not become the pulpit, but a monotonous, isochronous (i.e. uniform, like the swing of a pendulum) solemnity is even worse.”

“Seek to speak always in your natural voice. You are generally told to speak up; I say rather speak down. It is by the strength not by the elevation of your voice that you are to be heard.”

“But the whole state of your own soul before God must be the first point to be considered; for if you yourself are not in a truly spiritual frame of mind, and actually living upon the truths which you preach or read to others, you will officiate to very little purpose.”

He despised and condemned needless circumlocution, mere decorations of style, the devices of a conventional rhetoric, and wrote to a friend who consulted him, “Poetry is beautiful in itself, but if you will come from the mount of God, you will find prose better suited for telling men about their golden calf.”

The preacher of the Gospel must not becloud his text, nor should he wander at will from it, but rather he should make it his aim to “*let it speak*.” In this way the sermon will have unity, intelligibility and interest, and the power of God will be behind it.

Finally, we may note that Simeon defined the great aims of all his preaching as threefold:—“To humble the sinner. To exalt the Saviour. To promote holiness.” To these he adhered, with quite extraordinary pertinacity, and God signally honoured his ministry with His abundant blessing.

E. W. PRICE EVANS,
(Pontypool).

A BAPTIST COLLEGE IN OXFORD.

IT is a year since the Council of Regent's Park College put before the denomination their plans for new College buildings in Oxford and appealed for the necessary financial support to make these possible. The response has been most encouraging. The gifts and promises amount so far to some £10,500—a very substantial sum to have secured for such an enterprise in so short a time, especially when it is considered that it is made up not of the large amounts of a few wealthy individuals but of more than three hundred contributions, ranging from 5s. upwards. Help has come from the mission field and the colonies, and in this country not only from past students and supporters of Regent's Park College, but from many prominently associated with other collegiate traditions within the denomination.

The list of those who have responded to the appeal shows that there is widespread recognition that it is time Baptists had a theological college at one of the older university centres, and that the detailed proposals for a new Regent's Park College are on right lines. Congregationalists and Unitarians are already in Oxford, and Methodists have recently received a large bequest with which to establish a College there. Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Methodists are at Cambridge. The Regent's Park plans have been so drawn that the College will later be able to seek recognition as a permanent Private Hall of Oxford University, able to present its own students for matriculation, etc., and a part of the University in a way that Mansfield and Manchester Colleges, as at present constituted, can never be. Those who know Oxford life will realise the importance of this from the Free Church point of view and will agree that the extraordinarily good site in St. Giles's, now held by the College, is worthy of the best possible development.

The ten years since Regent's Park started a centre in Oxford have deepened the convictions of those in touch with these developments as to the soundness of the scheme. The University authorities will give us a genuinely warm welcome. There is great need of our witness. Our men can easily hold their own academically. The type of training given by Oxford and the opportunities of its rich and varied life are of tremendous value.

One or two questions that are sometimes asked by those who hear of the scheme may here be noted:—

1. Why make an appeal like this, it is asked, just at the time of the Forward Movement? The College vacated its property in Regent's Park in 1927. It was held only on lease and the authorities were fortunate to be able to quit when they did. The Oxford site became available by a curious combination of circumstances and was secured on the advice of laymen like Mr. Herbert Marnham. Five years earlier it had been decided that when a move was necessary a new home should be sought at Oxford or Cambridge. No general appeal for money was made in 1927 because the Superannuation Fund was then before the churches. A beginning can be made with the development of the Oxford site in 1938. For ten years the College has endeavoured to do its work with the handicap of no buildings. Dr. Wheeler Robinson, to whose foresight, persistence, and authority we owe so much, is not getting younger. It is essential that an appeal now be issued, if we are to go forward. That this is recognised by the denominational leaders is shown by the fact that Mr. Aubrey, Mr. Grey Griffith, Mr. Arthur Newton, Mr. Ernest Wood, and others, have signed the appeal. Moreover, the proposals themselves are in no way contrary to the aims of the Forward Movement. New churches will need new ministers. The times in which we live require that they shall have the best possible training. As Baptists we need one College at least of the kind proposed. We can have it now, if we will.

2. Should there not be closer co-operation between the Colleges? Should not a scheme like this be put forward by all the Colleges or even the Baptist Union itself? Ideally the answer to these questions may be in the affirmative. But let the facts be faced. Our Baptist Colleges are independent, self-governing trusts with long histories behind them. They are not subject to the Baptist Union Council, and most of those who think over the matter carefully and who have a real regard for educational efficiency and a knowledge of what has happened in certain other bodies will have few regrets about this. There is far more co-operation than there was a few years ago. The establishment of a College in Oxford is likely to increase it. Already Regent's Park has received at Oxford men from Bristol, Cardiff and Rawdon. A very close working arrangement has

now been made between Regent's Park and Bristol. If denominational feeling demands more co-operation between the Colleges it will not be resisted by the authorities of the Colleges. On the whole it would surely be truer to say that the latter would willingly go further than they are allowed by their various constituencies. The needed motto at this point is *festina lente*. The Regent's Park scheme has the expressed good will of the Principals of Bristol, Rawdon and Spurgeon's Colleges. The Building Committee has on it Mr. Aubrey and three ex-Presidents of the Baptist Union.

3. The practical issue remains. How can the necessary sum of money be secured? The progress already made suggests the answer. Gatherings in support of the fund have been held in Northampton, London, Oxford, Liverpool and Sutton. Others are in prospect in Reading, Essex, Cardiff and the West of England. There are many other provincial centres where something should be done. A number of churches have contributed. Their number should be greatly increased. This is more than a sectional appeal and need not wait upon the presence or leadership of a former Regent's Park student. Our denominational honour is at stake. Money given to this object is a contribution to the Church of the future not only in this country, but in India, China and Africa. Let the facts be put before our people. Large or small gifts will be welcome. This is the kind of scheme which might well be commended to those making their wills, but it is also a scheme worthy of immediate support. "The Regent's Park scheme," wrote Dr. Ewing recently, "appears to me an eminently wise one . . . I believe the establishment of Regent's Park College in Oxford will promote the work of our denomination on every side, both at home and abroad."

Full particulars may be had from the Secretary, 5, Temple Avenue, London, N.20.

ERNEST A. PAYNE,
(London).

THE CHRISTHOOD OF GOD.

TREMENDOUS controversies have raged around the doctrine of the divinity or godhead of Jesus Christ. It has become borne in upon me that it would be more profitable and less likely to cause fatal misunderstandings if we were to concentrate attention upon the Christhood of God, or the Jesusness of the

Divine. This is the very centre and essence of New Testament teaching and it is in consequence of this that it has been the aim of the historical creeds to state the unity of Jesus with the Father.

But is it not possible that great harm has been done by approaching this idea from the wrong end?

THE MESSAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament repeatedly asserts that we know God through Jesus Christ. That the knowledge of God is the supreme need of man needs no urging, but it may be worth while to cite the surprising words of Bertrand Russell:—"In all forms of love we wish to have knowledge of what is loved, not for purposes of power but for the ecstasy of contemplation. 'In knowledge of God standeth our eternal life,' but not because knowledge of God gives us power over Him." Is Bertrand Russell also among the mystics?

At any rate it is the often reiterated message of the New Testament, that we know God through Jesus. "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son . . . He hath declared Him." "If ye had known Me, ye would have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him." Paul twice describes Jesus as the Image of God. The term from a Jew is startling. Every religion had found the necessity of giving its adherents some idea of their god or gods and had taken the obvious method of making images as more or less symbolic representations of them. For reasons repeatedly proved valid in the history of his race, this was forbidden to a Jew. Hence, in effect, Paul is saying, "Here is the only image of the Invisible God, which is not only permissible, but authorised and authentic."

True image of the Infinite,
Whose essence is concealed,
Brightness of uncreated light,
The heart of God revealed.

Taking the New Testament as a whole it is wrong to say that its message is that Jesus is just like God, but it is emphatically that God is just like Jesus.

TURN CHRISTOLOGY ROUND.

On the other hand, almost infinite time and energy—and often bad temper—have been devoted to asserting and arguing that Jesus is just like God. Now, if we agree with the New Testament writers that, apart from Jesus, we know very little indeed about God, this is obviously a waste of time. Further, if men have a wrong idea of God—and that is strongly insisted upon in the New Testament—then to proclaim that Jesus is just like God is likely to lead men astray.

If a man believes that God is one who actually commanded massacres, the statement that Jesus is just like God may well lead him to believe that under some circumstances at least Jesus would approve of massacre. Indeed, is not this the actual reason why men have dared justify the waging of wars in His name and why many leaders of the modern Church, including those of Free Churches, express approval under certain circumstances—circumstances, which the rulers of this world will assuredly take care to provide—of the unspeakable hellishness of present-day warfare?

Was not this wrong approach to the question the source of the asinine verbiage of the so-called “Creed of St. Athanasius”? (I am, of course, quite aware that it was produced long after the time of that redoubtable—and very dubious—saint.) “The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible . . . as also there are not three incomprehensibles . . . but . . . one incomprehensible. This, in my opinion is, to use a good, old-fashioned term, a damnable heresy, from which I turn to the warm forthrightness of the Fourth Gospel: “From henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him.”

As a matter of historical fact, the glorious Person of the Gospels has largely been lost sight of in theology, and Jesus of Nazareth has been obliterated to make room for the inscription of a palimpsest of Greek Philosophy, Judaism and Paganism. Harm has particularly been done by the influence of Greek thought. The “incomprehensibles” of the Creed of St. Athanasius are the direct descendants of the Greek Absolutes.

Over against this it is worth while to remember that Jesus Himself thought and taught in Jewish forms, and the background of His teaching was the stark realism of the Hebrew

prophets—anthropomorphism if you like. In our days, when Einstein the Jew has broken the bonds forged upon scientific thought by Greek Absolutism with his revolutionary anthropomorphism known as Relativity, I think it is time that—despite Adolph Hitler—we realised that if we want reality, we must go to the Semitic thinkers. In science the Jew has prevailed. In theology—the knowledge of God—the Galilean must prevail.

For lack of this there has been that sense of remoteness with reference to Jesus Christ Himself which has led—among other evils—to the invocation of saints to intercede with Him. “Blessed Mary, pray for us to thy Son, that His wrath may be turned away and that He may be gracious to us.” It is this that has opened the door to all that “bad religion” to which Dr. Townsend has rightly traced the greatest evils of present-day Europe.

If further justification were needed, I might quote some recent words of Canon Peter Green, commenting upon Berdyaev’s “Meaning of History”: “Any true interpretation of history was impossible to the Greeks Nor is it possible to Absolute Idealism, for which all change must necessarily be confined to the phenomenal world and so be at best unimportant and unreal So the Jewish conception of life, and much more the Christian development of the Jewish idea, is the only one which can yield a true picture of history.”

Or let me cite MacMurray: “The idea of incarnation merely expresses the fact that our awareness of the personal infinite comes to us, and can only come, in and through our awareness of the finite personality.” In other words, we do not know Jesus by identifying Him with God, but we do come to a knowledge of God by identifying Him with Jesus. Contrary to this, customary theology has resulted in Jesus the Friend, Comrade and Saviour becoming obscured, while He has been likened to someone who is conceived as remote, incomprehensible and unapproachable. It is time to stop attributing preconceived notions about God to Jesus Christ and to realise that to sit at His feet with Mary of Bethany is to know God, attributing to the Father just what we know of the Son.

I venture to say that this is not easy at first. It involves a change in our whole frame of thought-reference as revolu-

tionary as that involved in the change-over from Ptolemaic to Copernican cosmology, but the effort will be as greatly rewarded. As a matter of fact, vital Christian evangelism has always been associated with the approach to God through Jesus, although the foundations and implications of this have been rarely, if ever, consciously thought out.

CONSEQUENCES VITAL AND DYNAMIC.

I hold that if we boldly and sincerely accept this method of approach to our Christology and theology, we shall obtain an idea of God which is unique and unspeakably precious. The character of God which is revealed in and by Jesus is one which could not have been imagined, although a few have, here and there, caught fleeting glimpses of it. It is often said that in their essentials all religions are the same. This is arrant nonsense. If our God is exactly like Jesus, He is different from all others. This is indicated by the desperate and not very successful efforts which have been made by some Hindu reformers, by means of omission here and exaggeration there, to show that Ram or some other deity is a bit like Jesus in parts. Sooner or later all thought of the Deity must become Christlike.

After all, the only practical religion must be of this sort. If God is exactly like Jesus, He is near at hand; He is interested in little people and their small affairs; He is readily accessible and, in the full sense of the word, humane; He is glad to serve, even to be our servant. He is a God who would rather suffer than that the worst should suffer. He is a God who does suffer, who is in the conflict of life with us in an unlimited partnership.

It is interesting to note that Canon Green baulks at Berdyaev's opposition to the orthodox idea of the "immobility and inertia of God," and reasserts the doctrine of "the impassibility of God." I wonder why? Still more I wonder why Baptists should be terrified by the idea of a suffering God and are only beginning to mention it in stuttering and awe-stricken whispers just because a long time ago a Council declared that God must be considered incapable of suffering? After all, that is not a Scriptural idea. "In all their affliction He was afflicted and the angel of His presence saved them." It was a tortured Jesus who said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

The practical implications of this are obvious. Nothing else can supply equal dynamic for the redemption of the world from its present disasters or deliver it from impending catastrophe. As Mr. C. E. M. Joad has said, "We belong to a generation under sentence of catastrophe The danger arises from a persistent refusal on the part of the peoples of Western Europe to pay any attention to the teaching of Jesus Christ. No civilised community has hitherto conducted its affairs for five minutes on the assumption that Christ meant any of the things He said, or that if He did mean them, any of them were true."

Instead of starting from our philosophies and theologies, orthodox or otherwise; instead of trying to fit Jesus into any preconceived picture of God, however generally accepted, let us experience a *metanoia* and start with the facts about Jesus as we know them. Even after New Testament criticism has done its best or its worst, we shall still have plenty to go upon. These facts and they alone will make our theology and philosophy to come alive, just as they enabled the first Christians to discover the Old Testament as a dynamical book. It has been truly said by Dr. T. R. Glover that we do not discover Jesus Christ by the Old Testament, but the Old Testament through Christ. So also we do not discover Jesus Christ by saying that He is God, but we do discover God by realising that He is consubstantial with Jesus Christ.

HUMPHREY CHALMERS,
(Warrington).

MAKING RELIGION A FORCE.

TO our deep regret the word "force" is very much in our minds and upon our lips just now. Would to God that it were otherwise!

As we know, there are two kinds of force: there is material force and there is spiritual. No definition of either is necessary; we are fully aware of what each means and represents. All that need be said is that if only as much enthusiasm could be awakened for the exercise of spiritual force as can be aroused for the display of material, what a different complexion would soon cover the face of world affairs! Why is it that the devilish spirit of war can be so easily and quickly stirred into activity? But we must pass to our theme.

The title given to this article almost suggests that religion is not a force. Probably few of us would go so far as to say that. It would be foolish to suggest that religion plays no part in fashioning human thought and conduct. On the other hand, however, it must be agreed that religion is by no means the power it might be, or ought to be. We cannot escape the feeling that somehow or other the spiritual forces at our disposal are not exercising the vital influence they are capable of doing. This applies equally, whether we view the matter from the standpoint of the individual or of our collective Christian witness.

Moreover, we are compelled to acknowledge the same weakness to exist whether we think of religion as applied to matters immediately around us, to national affairs, or to concerns of world-wide importance. The feeling takes even firmer hold upon us that our religious faith is not dealing with these various issues with that sureness of conviction and confidence in its mission that should ever mark the spirit and action of those who have heard the call of God sounding in their ears. The prophetic "Thus saith the Lord" is sadly missing to-day in many directions.

The day is not very far behind us when we heard a great deal about the "Nonconformist Conscience." Despite the ridicule poured upon it from unenlightened quarters, it stood for something definite, it embodied a vision, it sought to give expression to spiritual ideals, it tried to relate the evangelical message of the Gospel to the needs of mankind. What was given the somewhat derisive name of "Nonconformist Conscience" enshrined those principles of faith and liberty which in still earlier days had been won for us at so great a cost.

But whatever we may feel regarding the "Nonconformist Conscience," a matter of even more urgent concern for us is to enquire whether we have a "Religious Conscience." There are moments when one has serious doubts about it. It is little short of a calamity that amidst the complex and manifold problems that face us, the voice of religion appears to possess so little power and authority in the counsels of the nation and the world. Whereas it should be the most potent and commanding force at work for the promotion of all that is best in human life, too often its voice is but dimly heard, and its appeal scarcely heeded. Think, for example, of what might be achieved on

behalf of peace, temperance, and social righteousness, if the influence of religious thought could be brought to bear with vital import upon those urgent questions that clamour for attention. Too often, let it be said, the effectiveness of Christian appeal is weakened and made innocuous because the Church is divided in its own allegiance. If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who will obey its call? There will have to be greater unanimity and determination if the power that Christian thought once exercised in the affairs of our common life is required.

It is little short of a platitude to say that God has always seen fit to further His purposes in the world through human channels. His people are to be His witnesses. And the witness we are called to bear in our day, as in the past, is twofold in character: it is individual, and it is collective. If religion is not the force it ought to be—if it is not making the impression upon the community it should—the fault is to be found in one or the other, or both, of these—that is, in the individual Christian or in the Church as a whole.

One thing is quite certain: the Kingdom of Heaven is not coming by means of some overwhelming and compelling intervention of God. We have Jesus' own word for that. His Kingdom parables impress us with the unmistakable feeling that the coming of the reign of God will be gradual in its process. Nor is religion to be accepted in terms of selfish delight in one's own enjoyment of the blessings salvation brings. If the span of our own existence here is small, it is not for us to say that the world as we know it has no essential part to play in God's future plans. We have a responsibility for the future progress of the race. Henry Drummond used to say that Christians could be divided into two groups: those who thought everything of this life and very little of the life to come, and those who thought nothing of this life and everything of the life beyond. What is needed is a blending of the two, a realisation that each generation and each age is the outgrowth of what has preceded it. Only, therefore, through human toil and faith, controlled and directed by the spirit of God, will the Kingdom of Heaven come.

How is this individual and collective witness we are called to give to be made an effective force?

First, by loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ. With that nothing else can compare in importance. Judgment must begin at the house of God. We cannot claim from others in the way of service for the cause of Christ more than we are prepared to give ourselves. Perhaps one of the chief weaknesses in our Christian life and witness in these days is that we take our spiritual responsibilities much too easily. Far too many other interests are allowed to have prior claim over what should always receive first consideration. If we would have those around us impressed by our faith they must see in it a reality of expression that leaves no ground for doubting our sincerity.

What is needed more than anything else at the present moment is the re-emergence of the spirit of Puritanism, not in those cruder forms that we associate with two or three centuries ago, but a Puritanism that has definite affinities, the needs of the age, and is endured with that same devotion to truth and high-minded purpose that made the faith of our fathers a bulwark against the unspiritual aggression that threatened the religious life and liberties of their day. Whatever in times like ours we may think about some of their ideas and methods, these pioneers of religious truth constituted a force to be reckoned with; they could make kings tremble upon their thrones and those in high places fear for their safety.

Are we their worthy successors? Would it not be well for us if more of that noble quality of purpose that helped to lay the foundations of religious freedom and fidelity to the revealed will of God had place in our witness to-day? We have no right to condemn men who stood firmly by their principles in days gone by unless we can offer something equally as worthy or better in our own time. They were faithful to the light they had, and none can be more than that. A religion made easy is no religion. We need that touch that will kindle within us the fire of out-and-out enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God.

Second, by prayer. How is that so many ministers find it so extremely difficult to maintain prayer meetings in their churches? In some they have ceased altogether. No achievement in Christian enterprise is possible apart from dynamic power. Prayer is the driving force of all the Church's effort. Without it religion is deprived of its chief constituent element. No matter how perfectly equipped our various departments of work are, or how efficiently organised, they are nothing but

useless and occasions for despair rather than joy, until life begins to flow into and through them as the result of earnest and persistent prayer. The prayer life of any church is its power centre and the source of all effective service. Until this truth comes to grip us with greater reality than it appears to be doing at present, religion will still fail to be the force it ought to be.

Third, by making converts. Possibly it is in this connection that we discover one of the most promising signs of an awakening. Quite a number of Christian "bodies" are coming to realise the urgent importance of this, and in their respective communions are urging their members to this great task. The words "conversion" and "personal surrender" are becoming rehabilitated in our Christian vocabulary. What our fathers rejoiced in we are coming to accept as not being quite so out of date as in our superiority we imagined it to be.

As a result of definite efforts along this line, many churches have experienced great blessing. There is certainly no substitute for it. While, as we shall see in a moment, the Gospel has social implications as well as individual, it can only be as individuals are won to personal allegiance to Jesus Christ that the Kingdom of God will come. For that glorious work there is no substitute. No clarion call falls upon our ears with greater urgency to-day than the one bidding us give ourselves with ever new intensity to this enterprise.

Lastly, we can help to make our witness a vital force by seeking to apply the Gospel to life in all its varied phases. The teaching of Jesus is social as well as personal in its implications. There is such a thing as the salvation of society. Personal and social salvation are two aspects of one great ideal, their boundaries intersect each other, their frontiers overlap. Not only must we be ready to speak of what Christ has done for us individually, but also of what He can do for the world as a whole. To be an effective force Christianity must be able to speak unflinchingly and without hesitation on the great issues affecting human life and the well-being of our fellow men and women—moral, social, spiritual questions of all kinds.

Unfortunately, let it be reported, on many of these matters the voice of religion is not heard as it should be, and, if heard, is not heeded. We have to see to it that this condition of affairs is soon altered. The moral and spiritual conscience of our own country, and other countries, has to be stirred. Who is to do it if not the followers of Jesus Christ? That is what we are

here for. Are we to wait until all those responsible for the many forms of evil that exist all around us have experienced a change of heart before we denounce and fight these evils or seek to remedy them? Surely not! We have an unmistakable duty resting upon us as servants of Jesus Christ to relate the message and truths of the Gospel to all that affects human life and the well-being of the people individually and collectively. The teaching of Jesus covers both. He could talk to one person, or He could drive the traffickers from the Temple with the burning flame of righteous indignation. To us is committed the same duty, and we shirk it at our peril.

So, in conclusion, let it be affirmed once more, with all the emphasis one can command, that if we would have the world to see in our religious faith a force capable of achieving those great ends we have in mind, then (1) this faith must grip our own hearts with a reality nothing else is capable of doing, and (2) we must insist upon its truth being applied to everything that materially affects the interests of our fellows.

H. J. DALE,

(Lymington).

WHAT IS THE FUTURE LIFE?

DURING the closing years of last century there seems to have been a happy period in which the preacher of Christian truths, and not only the man in the pew, but also the man in the street, shared the same world of thought. This was particularly true in their thinking about the after life. Christians and non-Christians shared a belief in heaven and hell, so that when a preacher spoke of hell-fire he spoke things not sounds. The men and women he was addressing believed the things he believed and were suitably impressed. To-day the same man, saying the same things, would make no impression, for his hearers outside the Christian Church, and many inside, do not share his background with regard to the future life.

For most men and women of that generation there seems to have existed a picture of the future life that could be presented in simple, yet very vivid outlines, but that picture no

longer has any contact with reality to-day. Whether we like it or not, the "acids of modernity" have eaten away the grounds on which that picture rested.

(a) The implications of modern astronomy make it impossible for us to sing the hymns of our childhood with meaning; for example:—

"There's a home for little children,
Above the bright blue sky."

(b) The indisputable growth of a materialistic spirit has confined our interest to this life for, as Jesus warned us, where our treasure is, there our heart is also.

(c) There has been a necessary and genuine revolt against unworthy and immoral presentations of God and the Gospel for there is no department of Christian theology where so much paganism and so many sub-Christian ideas are in use as in the theology of the future life, especially in the popular mind.

Yet it is only the picture that has perished, and not the truth that picture represented. Unfortunately, since we have lost the familiar vivid picture, our grip on the fundamental truth it enshrined has been weakened: or at least we have lost our certainty and simplicity in speaking of that truth, so that there has been little preaching on the life to come in the last generation. The loss of the old picture is a real loss, but new truth is always a gain, although it may appear to be a loss at first. The vanishing of the old picture of heaven and hell is driving us back to the centre of our faith.

(a) WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE FUTURE LIFE?

First let us own that all ideas of the future life are not Christian, any more than every sailor is an admiral, and let us frankly admit that there is much paganism and superstition even in our minds about the life to come. Even, however, when we have left these lower levels behind, we find that there have mingled three different categories in the Christian tradition.

The doctrine of Resurrection which is Jewish; the doctrine of Immortality which is Greek, and the doctrine of Eternal Life,

which seems to me to be the genuine Christian doctrine whereas the others, valuable though they are, in some points, are misleading in others.

The Fourth Gospel tells us that "this is Life Eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." When we take this as our starting point, let us remember that "to know" had a wider meaning for the Hebrews than for us, and we must beware of narrowing its content to a purely intellectual meaning. "To know" is used through Scripture for the sexual union of a man and a woman, so that "to know" means to achieve a relationship on all levels of the personality. Eternal life is a personal relationship with a personal God.

(b) LOVE IS ETERNAL.

I am driven to the conclusion that it is in their relationships that our personalities are eternal. I once heard Dean Inge say that the only people we can lose are those whom we have ceased to love. Where there is no love there is no eternal life. So, too, with our relationships with things—they pass and death ends them. It is only our personal relationships that are eternal, beginning with our relationship to God. When we know Him, we *have* eternal life here and now.

When we have this exalted conception of our life here as in organic connection with the life to come, there will be a change in the scale of values by which we live. We shall have no use for the "snatch and grab" modes of living which are the inevitable products of materialism. This life is a preparation for the fuller life to come, as childhood is the preparation for manhood: we have thus another sanction than expediency for morality, and there is no room for the slovenly living we so often are content to drop into.

(c) OUR GENERATION NEEDS A NEW PICTURE OF THE LIFE ETERNAL, for only so can the old eternal truth grip men's minds and influence their living. We need a new collection of hymns for the "Heaven anticipated" section of our hymn book, for the existing ones convey the old picture. Eternal life does not mean endless life, but a quality of life which is independent of space and time. We have glimpses of this quality of life in

human friendship, and we have to learn to think of the future life in terms of friendship. This is the most adequate category we have to express the heart of the Life Eternal. There is no "place" Heaven, just as there is no "place" the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of Right Relationships: Heaven is that Kingdom completed in all its perfection—the family circle of God, for just as Jesus took the best we know of earthly fathers, and used it to show men what God is like, so we must take family life at its highest and best, as the nearest picture we can find of what Heaven is like—the Father's family circle.

G. L. PHELPS,
(London).

THE MINISTER'S BOOKSHELF.

WE give the first place to a composite volume published by Eyre and Spottiswoode at 8s. 6d. and edited by Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's. It is called *The Christian Faith* and consists of twelve considerable essays on the fundamentals of the Christian Faith. Dr. Matthews has succeeded in bringing together within the covers of this book eleven outstanding scholars from the Anglican and Free Churches, and each one is allowed to express himself with complete candour and freedom on a subject in which he is a recognised expert. The result is a volume of first-class importance to every minister who is alive to the menace and challenge and opportunity of the modern situation and is anxious to help men through the religious unsettlement of to-day. The bare list of the contributors and their subjects is enough to indicate the value of this book. Dr. Sydney Cave writes on "Why Christianity?"; Canon J. K. Mozley on "The Bible: Its Unity, Inspiration, and Authority"; Dean Matthews on "The Christian Belief in God"; Dr. G. S. Duncan on "The Historical Value of the Gospels"; the Bishop of Derby on "The Christian Belief in Christ"; Principal N. Micklem on "The Primitive Church"; Dr. J. S. Whale on "Sin and the Need of Redemption"; Principal H. Wheeler Robinson on "The Christian Gospel of Redemption"; Dr. Edwyn Bevan on "The Church"; Dr. Francis Underhill on "Christian Worship"; Canon F. R. Barry

on "The Christian Way of Life," and the late Percy Dearmer on "Christianity and Civilisation." No minister can afford to miss this important book.

An important book dealing with the present revolt against Christianity is entitled *Christianity, History, and Civilisation* by Roger B. Lloyd (Lovat Dickson and Thompson, 10s. 6d.). Mr. Lloyd is an Anglican clergyman, the vicar of an important industrial parish in Lancashire, but he has not allowed his multifarious duties to keep him from "standing on his watch-tower" (like some Hebrew prophet) and taking note of the sweep of world-movements. He is a keen and painstaking student both of history and of the trends of contemporary civilisation; and he relates the lessons of the past and the movements of the present to the eternal truths of the Gospel. He is convinced that the ideals of Christianity are not opposed to those of a genuine civilisation, and that to set them in opposition is bound to lead to spiritual and social disaster. "Civilisation has urgent need of Christian sanctions, being grounded in them, and Christianity is helpless where it does not include and consecrate civilised values." Such, in a sentence, is the argument of a brilliant book in which the writer deals with such important topics as the Nature of Goodness, the Problem of Freedom, the Menace of Communism and Humanism, the Challenge of Crisis, the Recovery of Human Dignity, the Task of the Church, etc.

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A most useful book on a most difficult problem has recently been published by George Allen and Unwin at 7s. 6d. It is called *Sex in Religion*, and is from the pen of a Presbyterian minister, Dr. G. Simpson Marr, who has high qualifications in three departments of scholarship, viz. Medicine, Arts and Divinity. In an able historical survey Dr. Marr shows that sex has played a very important part in religious experience, and that Christianity has tended to regard sex as an unholy thing. However, he is not merely concerned with historical investigation. Dr. Marr faces up to modern views on the questions of sex—such problems as marriage, divorce and birth control—and urges the Church to assist men and women to a worthier view of sex so that they may give it its rightful place in both life and religion. We ministers need to be informed

on these all-important questions, not only for our own sakes but for the sake of others, and Dr. Simpson's book will prove of considerable value.

To those who have a "flair" for philosophy I can thoroughly recommend *Causation, Freedom, and Determinism*, by Dr. Mortimer Taube (George Allen and Unwin, 10s.). The book is a critico-historical treatment of the perennial problem of the Freedom of the Will. It is significant that we are now witnessing a reaction from the rigid Absolute Determinism of the 19th century, and Dr. Taube's book is but the latest of quite a number of attempts by philosophers and scientists to rehabilitate a positive conception of Freedom. It approaches the problem through the study of some 17th century philosophers (Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Malebranche, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley and Hume), and then proceeds to work out a positive conception of Freedom by demonstrating that every *res vera* is a free, active, and creative factor in the world process. Absolute Determinism is a very subtle foe of the Christian philosophy of life, and anything that helps us to overthrow it is welcome. Hence the value of Dr. Taube's excellent study.

All ministers are indebted to that very fine "Studies in Theology" series issued by Duckworth. One of the latest additions is entitled *Psychology and Religious Origins*, by Dr. T. Hywel Hughes (who has just retired from the Principalship of the Scottish Congregational College). Three years ago Dr. Hughes published *The New Psychology and Religious Experience*, and this smaller and later work may be regarded as a kind of addendum to the earlier and larger one. Certainly they go together admirably and reveal the author as one of our leading religious psychologists. *Psychology and Religious Origins* considers the beginnings of religion and the formation of religious ideas from the standpoint of psychology. Various theories are passed in review and positive suggestions for the strengthening of faith are made. Dr. Hughes writes as an expert who is thoroughly at home amidst a bewildering mass of detail, but he keeps the discussion at a level on which it can

be followed by the non-expert reader. The price of the book is 5s.

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Two books have recently appeared by the eminent Swiss theologian, Dr. Emil Brunner, and represent a distinct and characteristic contribution to that variation of Barthian literature that might well be described as "Brunnerism." The first is entitled *Our Faith* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 5s.) and is the English translation of *Unser Glaube*, which has already appeared in French, Dutch, Danish, Hungarian and Japanese. Most people do not know how to read the Bible so as to understand it; and they need therefore "an interpreter to translate the great, difficult, strange words of the Bible into the familiar language of daily life." In this little book (as indeed in all his books, and especially in his greatest work *The Mediator*) Dr. Brunner aims at being such an interpreter. It treats of thirty-five topics beginning with "Does God Exist?" and "Is the Bible the Word of God?" and ending with "The Last Judgment" and "On Life Eternal," and treats of them with beautiful clarity and apt illustration. The other book is called *God and Man* (Student Christian Movement Press, 5s.), its explanatory sub-title being "Four Essays on the Nature of Personality." In this book Brunner reveals himself (as again in all his books) as "a keen, speculative thinker who has been captured by the Word of God." He discusses the relation of the Christian faith to rationalistic philosophy, psychology and ethics, showing that since man is a sinner—a fundamental fact which every human system tends to ignore—he can be saved and satisfied only by the message of God's work in Jesus Christ. No minister can afford to be ignorant of Brunner's work.

Five recent books which have come from the Student Christian Movement Press call for notice here. The most important of them is *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, by Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr, and the price is 6s. Five years ago he gave us that realistic and courageous study of contemporary conditions, *The Moral Man and the Immoral Society*, and those of us who studied that great book will know what to expect in anything further from his pen. In this later book (composed of the Rauschenbusch Memorial Lectures at Colgate-Rochester Seminary, New York), his main theme is that the

Christian Law of Love (although not as yet a practical guide in the immediate problems of social life) is not an extravagant impossibility, and he develops this theme with all the insight of the prophet, all the technique of the scholar, and all the yearning of the evangelist. It is a great book by a great thinker.

Before Dr. Percy Dearmer died, about a year ago, he had practically completed the revision of a small, but important, volume which has just been published, viz. *Man and His Maker* (S.C.M., 3s. 6d.). It is a clear and helpful discussion of the evidence provided by the evolutionary process as to the character of God and His purpose for the world. The problem of physical and moral evil, the various aspects of the so-called "argument from design," and the nature of the Divine Being, are carefully considered by one who has thought long on the perplexities of faith. An excellent book!

Speaking the Truth in Love, by George F. MacLeod (S.C.M., 3s. 6d.), is a book for the preacher as such; and those of us who have heard Mr. MacLeod "on the wireless" know that he has the right to speak to preachers. The book, however, though its chapters were originally given as lectures on Pastoral Theology, is very different from the usual books offering advice to ministers. The author evidently writes as he speaks; at any rate, here is a readable book full of unconventional turns of speech, marked by a racy style, and "instinct" with a genuine love of preaching and belief in the value of the ministerial office.

Where the Shoe Pinches is by Morgan Watcyn-Williams (S.C.M., 2s.), who only a year ago delighted us with his suggestive little volume *The Beatitudes in the Modern World*. This later book is marked by the same vigorous thinking and realistic writing. Mr. Watcyn-Williams is a Presbyterian minister who for some years has been working amongst the South Wales miners (as fine a body of people as will be found anywhere!), both employed and unemployed, and this book is the outcome of group-discussions. It is just the kind of book to be put in the hands of our thoughtful young people.

Religion: Fact or Fancy is by Prof. L. W. Grensted (S.C.M., 1s. 6d.) and is made up of four talks given in the B.B.C. National Programme three months ago. It is, within its limits, a very useful consideration of Faith, Conscience, the Good Life, together with answers to questions. It is a useful little book to put into the hands of the perplexed.

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There has come to hand as we go to press a little booklet which ministers will find very useful. It is called *The Great Decision* and is written by one of our own members, Dr. F. Townley Lord. It is an outline of Christian Discipleship for young people, and should be extremely useful both in preparation classes and study circles and in personal evangelism. *The Great Decision*, which meets a definite need in our church life, is published by our own Publication Department (the Kingsgate Press) at the modest price of 6d.

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When I read the proofs of the October issue of our magazine I must have been dreaming, since I "passed" three errors. One was that I attributed the publication of J. R. Edwards's *Tell Everybody* to the Kingsgate Press; it should have been the Carey Press. Furthermore I gave the name of Dr. Herbert Gray's book as *The One Way of Peace* instead of *The One Way of Hope*, and the price of Dr. N. Micklem's *What is the Faith?* as 3s. 6d. instead of 7s. 6d.

JOHN PITTS.

SECRETARY'S NOTES.

TO all our readers a happy New Year, happy in the calm confidence of our Master's adequacy to all the conditions of this strange new time, and in the gladness of His realised presence with us in all our life and service. The list of Retired Ministers willing to serve as supplies will be found on page 2 of the cover.

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This New Year our Fraternal Union must be more and more fraternal. We must take time to be brotherly. We must

share our experiences. In all cases of need it is our desire that no member of the Brotherhood should go uncomforted and unhelped. Will you, brother-member, let us know where we can render any such service.

We mourn the passing of three valued members—all men of ripe experience and long years of devoted ministry—men who will be long remembered by those they served—who serve still by gracious memories. They are Thomas E. Howe, E. V. Tidman and George Buckley. To those near and dear to them may God's rich comforts be multiplied!

The outstanding event of the Quarter was the Quiet Day at Christ Church, Westminster, on September 30th. A goodly number accepted the generous hospitality of Dr. Egerton Chesney and his people. Elsewhere in this issue Dr. Cawley records his impressions of the day. They were shared by us all. We are greatly indebted to Dr. Wheeler Robinson, who gave us—himself. It was scholarship in the service of the soul.

G. C. LEADER.

OUR QUIET DAY.

THE ministers of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal Union who gathered for their annual Quiet Day at Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, on September 30th, spent a memorable day. They came into a fit atmosphere for intensive thought and worship, for Christ Church has a flair all its own.

The guide and mentor for the day was Principal Wheeler Robinson. In the approach through prayer, he drew all into the heart of stillness where the Presence searched men through and through, and left nothing exactly as it had been. The exposition—"The Faith We Preach," that is, faith in its objectivity—won the eager mind, and quickened heart and spirit. The seven main phases of Christian faith were mentioned, viz. Fulfilment of Prophecy, the Incarnation, the Ministry, the Cross, the Resurrection, the Exaltation, and Judgment, and then

gathered up under three main heads: I—Historical; II—Redemptive; III—Catholic (i.e. Universal). It was theology at its best.

The message of the afternoon fitly balanced that of the morning—"The Faith through which we preach," i.e. faith in its subjectivity. If the morning had quickened intelligence and spirit, the afternoon drew the soul to contrition, confession and consecration. The Principal frequently bared his own soul to serve his brethren. Theology and life were seen to be inseparable.

Without delay, as in the deeper fitness of things, the Fraternal passed over to the commemoration of the Lord's Supper.

F. CAWLEY.

Have your Sunday School Workers all the Help they Need?

The Sunday School is the most promising part of the Church Organisation, and Ministers as well as Teachers and Officers should do everything possible to make their work for the children effective.

One of the best ways of doing this is to read "The New Chronicle of Christian Education," the only weekly journal devoted to Sunday School work. It is indispensable to the progressive worker. Send a list of the names and addresses of your staff to the Editor at 57 & 59, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4, and free specimen copies will be sent to each of them.

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