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A table of contents for *The Fraternal / Baptist Ministers Journal* can be found here:

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The Fraternal

JANUARY, 1945

No. 56

EDITORIAL. THE INSIDER.

MINISTERS necessarily spend much time and thought on those who attend no place of worship, whom we rather clumsily term—the Outsider. We are here concerned for those who do attend, and whom we may call—the Insider.

First, let us be aware of them. We glance at the empty gallery and the scattered few in the centre of the church and think, by contrast, of the queue at the Cinema or the crowd in the High Street and at times our hearts fail us as we announce the opening hymn. But the Insider is present: the few are there; they are our people and we are their Man; they contribute to our support, they pray for us and love us, they sustain the service of the church—they are our ain folk—the Insider. True, they must not absorb the whole of our time and thought, but they are entitled to our first love and should have the primary call upon our prayers and service. The Good Shepherd knoweth his own sheep and calleth them by name. Their sorrows and anxieties, especially in a day like this—their hopes and joys, are they not those of the Shepherd as well? Talk not of “coddling the saints,” or being ever on people’s doorsteps! It is very much more than that. He careth for the sheep, but the hireling draws his—if you like—meagre salary, and fleeth to other concerns. We plead for the Insider.

Second. In order rightly to regard this aspect of our ministry, it is well to consider the value of the Insider. Some are insincere, and not one is perfect, but, all in all, they are the salt of the earth. The critic may gird as he will, but it remains true that these men and women have a touch of the Christ about them, which marks them off from other people who know Him not. Their Christian accent comes out in word, deed and character, and they exercise an influence far beyond their numerical strength. Their attitude to our enemies, for instance, is different from the unreasoning bitterness so often displayed by the man of the world. Their bearing in the food-queue, their behaviour to the shopkeeper, or the transport worker, their courage in danger, and self control in sorrow; all this is seen and, unknown to themselves, is remarked upon. The influence of even one Christian in the Unit or the home, or on the Public Board, is beyond words. Among the Insiders, there may not be a Carey or a Spurgeon, but, in their lesser capacity they work a work for good and they help to keep the soul of the country alive.

Third. Appreciating the truth of all this, we are moved to our duty by the Insider. The nature of that duty is not far to seek. Comfort? Yes, certainly, when the bad news arrives from the Front. Instruction? Yes, not only in the Articles of the Faith, but also in the lead such men and women can give, the letters they should write, and the kind of influence they can exert. Most of all, however, we suggest, they need Inspiration. If we are discouraged as we look down on Sunday from the pulpit at the little knot of Insiders seated there, what must they feel during the six days in every week? “What is the good of trying to carry on?” “What can I do—one alone in a crowd?” My influence, my life can make no difference in this war-stricken world. Such are the

thoughts of the Insider. Now here is, at once, our duty and our opportunity. The betterment of the world lies with folk like these. They are the "remnant" that will save Society. It is hardly too much to say that the nature of the peace settlement will largely be determined by the conditions created by little groups of Christian people in every land, enemy or otherwise! If they fail Christ, one might almost say that the day will be lost. It is for us to uplift their hearts and to challenge them with a sense of their responsibility and their matchless opportunity.

We begin another year with these faithful few, and they are worthy of the best we can give. It may well be, by the grace of God, that as the Tiny bit of leaven leavens the whole, so the vast community, represented by the Outsider, will be won for God and His Christ, by His Spirit working in and through His loyal friends. We plead for the Insider.

THE NATURE OF OUR FAITH

THE Christian Faith is something which is in this world but not of this world. It arises, in the person and work of Jesus Christ, with an eternal act which is also an historic act, since the eternal Son of God was Jesus of Nazareth. Because Jesus Christ is an historic figure the Christian Faith is always relevant to history. Because Jesus Christ was the Son of God the Christian Faith always transcends history. This paradox means that we live in a state of tension between the historic and the eternal, and both the Church and the individual are therefore perpetually tempted to ease the tension by moving either to the left or to the right. On our left hand is the bog of worldliness in which we equate historic values with eternal values and throw the cloak of our religion over the secular policies of men and nations. On the right, is the abyss of other-worldliness in which we renounce the world and cut ourselves off from the historic strivings of humanity. In the former case we deny the Divinity (the eternity) of Our Lord; in the latter we deny the reality of His Incarnation. Our most difficult problem, therefore, is to keep to the middle way in which we affirm the reality of history and historic values without elevating them to the level of absolute reality or confusing them with eternal values.

All this may be clearer if you ask the question, "What should be the Christian attitude to the British Government?" On the basis of the above analysis we may answer, "The policy of the Government is good, but it is not the final good of man." When some Christians say that the Government of to-day is bad in all its works, they retreat from historic reality which asserts (rightly in my opinion) that the struggle against Nazism is worth while. When other Christians assert that the final Will of God is being done by the British Government they reveal that they have lost touch with the transcendent insights of Christianity which stand in judgment upon the sinful aspects of all historic effort. Our acceptance of any historical order can only be a critical acceptance.

This relationship of tension between the Faith and the world has two distinct forms. There is first the simple form in which it was presented to the Early Church. The Church faced an utterly un-Christian world in which the thoughts and institutions of men had been entirely shaped by paganism. The first missionaries in Africa, India, China and Japan faced a similar situation. In this form the issues tend to be clear cut. The Christian spirit is set against the pagan. The Christian values oppose the values of the world. The choice for the prospective convert is hard but simple.

But the relationship soon enters into a second and more complex stage when the Church has won a measure of success, and it is this form of the tension with which Christianity has had to deal, in Europe and America. Our world has been influenced by Christianity. It has been educated in the Christian school. It has received a vaneer of Christian culture. Its citizens have been shaped to some extent by Christian values. They have unconsciously adopted certain Christian attitudes and their emotional life has been modified by Christian truth. Thus the Christian finds himself in a semi-Christian environment, since those around him are not Christians but neither are they complete pagans, and their social institutions have been permeated by the Christian spirit. In this situation we are perpetually faced with the difficult analysis of deciding where the partially Christian society or individual ceases to be Christian and stands under the judgment of God.

We must pause here for a moment to consider the objection which many Catholic writers would now interpose. While agreeing that this tension now exists, they would deny that it existed in the Mediæval world. There, they maintain, you had a society which was Christian through and through, the whole consciousness of man being permeated with the Christian spirit and his institutions built to a Christian model. To-day men and societies may be haunted by the ghost of Christian truth but then, Church and world were integrated into one Christian society. For such thinkers the Christian way forward must be the way back. They would seek to cancel out the experience of the last 450 years and strive for a Christian society of the mediæval sort.

To this argument there are two obvious objections. Firstly, the Church and the world were never such peaceful partners as is suggested and the mediæval struggle between the two was as real as the modern. One proof of this is to be seen in the urge felt by Christian souls to retire from the world, which resulted in the establishment of the great religious orders. These at any rate remained dissatisfied with the synthesis of Church and world. But, secondly, the mediæval synthesis was not only broken on the side of the world by the rise of the National States, it was also broken on the Christian side by the Reformation. The Reformation in essence was the assertion that the Mediæval Church was not giving sufficient expression to the heights and depths of the Christian Faith, and that in making peace with the world she had become secularised. That is to say that such peace as was established was bought at too great a sacrifice.

Of course there are those who would deny to the Reformation any religious validity whatever; and it was only a matter of economics, and would never have succeeded but for its economic effects. Thus, they say, the wealth of the Church was plundered by Kings and councillors, because it was the simplest way of defending their pockets. Since this line of thought is popular to-day it is necessary to state that it is neither a Christian nor a Catholic argument. It is a modern and secular argument, and involves a surrender to the modern idea that the final determinant in history is economic. That is a two-edged sword equally deadly to Protestantism, and Catholicism. No Christian, Catholic or Protestant, can accept it, because it involves the acceptance of a non-Christian view of human nature, its motives and destiny. Great historical movements depend upon spiritual causes primarily, and the Reformation is not exceptional. Doubtless economic forces played their part, but the primary cause of the Reformation was the spiritual revolt of men who had returned to the deepest Christian insights.

Therefore, our modern situation is the age-long situation of the Christian Church in the semi-Christian world. We must find our way and

preach our Gospel amongst men who know enough about Christianity to misinterpret it. We face an idealism which is not utterly foreign to us because it is a secular version of the eternal Christian insight. We fight with enemies who often wear our uniforms and use our weapons.

For illustration, every few weeks a newspaper correspondence breaks out in which various "plain men"—often serving men—define what they call "true" Christianity and pour scorn on the Church and the Bishops who don't understand their own religion and have buried it beneath a mountain of unintelligible theology and ecclesiastical convention. The "plain men" who write these articles are not pagans. They illustrate at once the success and the failure of the Church. They possess, that is, Christian knowledge without Christian understanding. In them we face our major task because they create the world in which we must witness.

Could you in a word state where the issue is joined between the Christian man and the modern man? What is the moving idea in all modern thought which we Christians are constrained to deny in the light of our Faith? What is the false assumption upon which modern men proceed and which makes them anti-Christian despite their knowledge of Christianity?

There is a superficial answer to these questions to which we have all resorted at times because it is so much easier to describe symptoms than to penetrate to causes. Mention has been made of the modern pre-occupation with economics and we might be tempted to say that the issue was simply between the economic and the spiritual interpretation of life. But why this economic pre-occupation? When we ask that question we observe that the economic argument is a refinement upon a more general argument. Economics is but one science amongst many, and the economic argument is therefore a narrowing down of the older and more general scientific argument. Many modern people of the older generation still use the general argument and say that they cannot be Christian because Christianity is unscientific. But that in turn is the narrow form of a still more general objection, that of rationalism. Science is but one among several activities of the human mind and it used to be the total activity of the mind which was set against the Christian Faith. We have seen in turn the war of Reason on Religion, of Science on Religion, and the war of Economics on Religion. The Church is not rational, said the Eighteenth Century. The Church is not scientific said the Nineteenth Century. The Church is not revolutionary, says the Twentieth Century. What is at work in the modern mind to keep it constantly hostile to the Faith and yet constantly changing the ground of its hostility?

I believe that the real issue can be expressed in one word—Progress. Now progress is essentially a Christian idea and is foreign to Eastern thought as it was foreign to ancient thought. But Christian Progress involves the eternal world. It is the Pilgrim's Progress—the progress of man from earth to heaven. It involves the passing away of this world and the coming of the Son of Man and the Kingdom of God.

The modern mind has seized upon this Christian truth and secularised it. Progress in its secular form is progress not beyond, but within, history. What Christianity sees in the eternal world the modern man dreams of achieving in history. Therefore he substitutes "the Future" for Heaven and escapes the transcendent element in the Faith. All modern thinking is dominated by the simple and absurd idea which was given classic expression by Ramsay MacDonald when he said that we are "going on and on, and up and up." Over this simple matter the supreme battle of the Faith is being fought out in our time. It is this upon which modern pride and selfhood are built and in its name Christianity is rejected.

Comparing himself to Shakespeare Mr. Bernard Shaw writes, "My sensitiveness to social, political, and religious injustices and stupidities was certainly shared by Shakespeare; but as he saw no way out it drove him to a pessimism in which he saw Man in Authority as an Angry Ape, and finally into a cynicism made bearable by the divine gaiety of genius.— Not thus Shelley, Wagner and myself. We saw a way through the Valley of the Shadow and believed that when men understood their predicament they could and would escape from it."

There you have the whole of modern thought in a nutshell with its repudiation of experience and insight of the past and its proud confidence in the future. Notice too that not merely is there a conflict here between modern thought and Christianity but also between it and the classical thought of man in non-Christian cultures. What shall we say of it?

First that there is nothing in history to support it. Man has not gone "on and on and up and up." He has on the contrary gone "round and round." But that argument counts for nothing with the progressives who ignore the human past. Look to the future, they say. So let us, secondly, look to the future. In the eighteenth century the future was to be secured by universal education, and in that dream Mr. Shaw sees Shelley's superiority to Shakespeare. When the enlightened masses turned away from the glories of humanity and fed instead upon the popular press, the progressives changed their ground. Not education but science was exalted as the saviour. This looked safer because science is impersonal and can't let you down by having a will of its own. Nevertheless it has let us down because it is subject to the imperfect human will. And that is why economics and psychology have had to be enthroned in its place. A few years ago Mr. Bertrand Russell was calling science the saviour of mankind, but more recently Mr. C. E. M. Joad confessed that his faith had been in a society of properly psycho-analysed communists. Even that illusion is dying as the world masters demonstrate how psychology and economics can be manipulated for the destruction of humanity.

Some of the progressives now point to the short time humanity has been on the planet (what are a few million years?) and say, "Give us time." But if time is to be measured in that way then Shakespeare becomes relevant with his "cloud-capp'd towers and gorgeous palaces," reminding us that the whole historic effort of man will end in dust in the darkness of a lifeless universe. The worship of the future of humanity is ultimately the worship of death.

And yet it is into that kind of despair that we are being constantly urged to change the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The world which is blind itself to eternal values now beseeches us to forget the Heavenly, the transcendent, dimension in the Faith and concentrate upon the Future of Humanity. And the ground of this appeal is always the same—popularity. Give men what they want; speak to them about what interests them. Sir Richard Acland in an address to the Baptist Board in London, gave us very much this sort of advice. Pointing out that an aircraftman in the R.A.F. would not understand the language of the Church, he illustrated how that language could be altered to make it appealing to the average man by striking out of one of the collects the words "eternal life" and substituting "the Beveridge Report." In that little emendation, to which we London ministers listened with a strange passivity, lies the pathetic fallacy of the Modern world. Man has lost the eternal dimension, and comforts himself with an economic readjustment. Therefore his economic readjustments assume an eternal value, and he labours for them with a religious intensity. Therefore the world is delivered over to violence and passion which tears civilisation to pieces and destroys the very future it is supposed to safeguard.

Let us return to our aircraftman who can understand the words "Beveridge Report" but not the words "eternal life." What is our Christian duty towards him? And before we reply let us remember upon our reply is going to rest the whole future of the Christian Gospel and of humanity. When we think quietly and deeply upon it, isn't Sir Richard's suggestion obviously absurd? What strange consequences would spring from it were we to transpose it to a different setting and suppose it applied to a missionary living amongst a tribe of cannibals in the South Pacific. Doubtless "eternal life" is a somewhat difficult idea for certain cannibals. Doubtless the eating of one's enemies is a familiar and interesting one. Would Sir Richard here also agitate for a revision of the Prayer Book in the direction of popularity? Then why have one law for the black savage on his hunting ground and another for the white polytechnic savage on his?

I hear the reply, "But the Beveridge Report is TRUE CHRISTIANITY!!" Nonsense. True Christianity is the way from earth to Heaven, the way of eternal life, and it must not be changed into any passing and local reform. True Christianity was as relevant to the first Century as it is to our time and it will be equally relevant 2,000 years hence just because it resists the effort made in every age to make it more relevant than God meant it to be.

I have not forgotten the aircraftman. If we won't take the simple way of changing "eternal life" into "Beveridge Report" then we must take the difficult way of turning the aircraftman into a man who is capable of understanding the glorious meaning of "the life everlasting."

DOUGLAS STEWART.

THE FLIGHT FROM REASON

ARNOLD Lunn gave memorable expression to the theological trend of the times in the phrase—"The Flight from Reason." That flight to-day might be described as a stampede. In his case, refuge from the tornado was found in the placid sanctuary of the Roman Catholic church. Others sought to find a resting place amid the strident slogans of the Neo-Calvinism of the Barthian School. The High Priest of this noisy temple is, of course, Karl Barth. His chief acolyte, Brunner is quite as assertive and at times less intelligible. Nearby stands Niehbuhr, wrecking the peace of Orthodox and Liberal alike with a ruthless dialectic that brands every attempt at articulating a system as a fool's game. The last state of the seekers after tranquility is worse than the first. They are confronted with an ultimatum that offers them this gift of God on one grim condition—the surrender of their personality and the right to think.

So commanding has been the voice of these two writers, so assured and intolerant is their assumption of omniscience that otherwise quite rational individuals have been brought to heel in unquestioning submission. Very lordly are these leaders and teachers; very uncompromising their attitude. No voice from the Vatican has ever claimed to speak for Almighty God with more presumption than this imperious company who seek to dragoon their fellows into unreasoning acceptance of their doctrines. They hold a pistol at the head of every protestor and consign to outer darkness all who dare to question their infallibility. Reason has no longer any standing with these theological refugees. The only instrument by which man has traditionally sought to probe the Eternal Mystery is condemned out of hand. If it is retorted that only by exercising their mental powers have these theological dictators arrived at their conclusions

we are told that to them had been given a vision, an insight denied to thinkers of past and present alike. Indeed it is hinted that no mental processes of the normal kind went to their production of their system. The truths they proclaim broke upon their receptive spirits with the suddenness of a typhoon or an earthquake.

The great ones of the past are given scant courtesy. Every endeavour to discover the truth, every devout aspiration, every eager quest after the Holy—to many an epic record—of man's moral and spiritual pilgrimage is scorned as a mere futile wandering in a Never Never Land. No saint, no mystic, no thinker of repute is left with a name worthy of mention. All alike were the victims of the illusion in believing that God had given them the urge to seek and the joy to find. Any sense of having caught the gleam of the Eternal was blatant presumption arising out of an inflated idea of their own powers.

In the view of these thinkers and their satellites in pulpit and theological halls all the centuries in which man has used his God-given faculty of reason to explore the dark hinterland of the human soul, have been without one fruitful result. The means by which outstanding thinkers sought to fit themselves to grasp Eternal Truth, the discovery of inner imperatives that seemed to clothe study in the beautiful garments of Divine Law, the rapt aspirings of a soul aflame with passion to make contact with God—the entire world of moral and spiritual adventure, is laid to man's charge for a fault rather than a virtue. In our own time the social interests in which men think to find an outlet for their moral enthusiasm and an expression of their spiritual fervour are stigmatised as an attempt of self-glorification.

All roads by which man has sought access to God, or contrariwise to blaze a trail along which God can be brought to men, are forbidden as nothing more than the projection of their own desires and their substitution for the Will and Purpose of God as conceived by them alone. Even that gnawing sense of need which, in such a classic as the Book of Psalms, is the spiritual deep out of which the soul struggles to lay hold on the unseen Helper, is brushed aside as a by-path of delusion. Man is denuded of any gift of mind or soul by which he can articulate his own moral condition and glimpse the secret of deliverance. Not only is his reason voted out of court but his sense of moral and spiritual constraint—for many the supreme indication of that pressure from above which is inescapable and ultimate—is dubbed invalid. God's dealings with man are reduced to one stereotyped technique—that of Crisis and challenge. The theology of Barth concentrates upon one dramatic episode in which man is confronted with an ultimatum he cannot even deal with by any power of his own. The right to accept or refuse, is not in his hands. Only by the action of God within can he respond to that of God without. And even the God-inspired response cannot be final it must be repeated again and again by the agency of God's spirit within.

No doubt this is a form of spiritual experience. It may be indeed that to every soul at sometime the Word of God comes in accents of challenge and command, and in a moment of crisis when the soul is faced with a Now or Never decision, which, but for the Divine spirit within he would be unable to recognise, far less to accept as final. But such experiences are not the only interventions of God in man's spiritual history. And even these are not detached from the normal activities of his moral and spiritual nature. They have a background of experience in which mental processes have a place. They are described in terms that are the product of mental activity and a knowledge of theological thought. Even as they are presented in Barth's theology they have passed through his mind and been stamped with its approval. No scheme

of salvation, no theory of revelation, but must stand before the tribunal of the mind if it is to command respect. The spirit of man will not be bludgeoned by any theologian, however forceful his personality, for that spirit was itself kindled by a spark from the Divine fire, and is a link between God and man whose operation in theology as in other branches of knowledge, is none other than the working of God Himself. Nor is that spirit limited to one rigid line of approach. It touches man's thought and life in every phase of their activity inspiring every vital attitude, the urge behind every lofty quest, the very soul of His soul.

The divorce of religion from the operation of Reason robs it of any recognised standard and any trustworthy scrutiny. We are at the mercy of any voice representative enough to awe us into silence. In the case of the theological dictators like Barth it may be granted justification because it does emphasise an experience whose activity, so far as it goes, cannot be gainsaid. But if an unquestioned authority is to be yielded to his reconstruction of spiritual experience, and this is to be the end of all enquiry, what security has the mind of man against some other outsider equally confident in his own infallibility? History shows what short shift man has given to those who sought to arrogate to themselves so autocratic a jurisdiction. The Reformation was the reply of awakened intelligence to the arrogance of Rome. The Humanism born of the Renaissance and the New Learning is out of favour among the Neo-Calvinists of our day. But it embodied a truth that needed to be thrust in the face of a Protestantism that had become as intolerant as the Romanism it had challenged. Every attempt to keep mankind in blinkers has provoked a similar reaction. The claim to authority by creed-bound churches gave rise to the Nonconformity of which the Free Churches are the heirs. All self-appointed guides were warned off this Holy Ground where man has converse with the Eternal. That decisive contact has come about in manifold ways. Not in the earthquake or tempest or fire did the prophet hear the message that brought deliverance, but in the silence and the still small voice. This prophet has had his followers in every century who found God, not in contending slogans or rival creeds but in the authentic whisper within the soul. The seat of authority is not in any formulated doctrine but in the compelling urge of that Spirit that touches us in the great depths of our soul and grips mind, conscience and heart. Here is a transaction that has its place in front of all our theologies, which at the best, are only attempts at explanations, imperfect attempts all of them. For God's mighty spiritual urges will burst all barriers and man in his own soul will come face to face with God along lines of approach not marked in any official ordnance survey map. Indeed some of our latter-day dogmatists are in danger of by-passing ways that are indicated clearly in Scripture. Protagonists of orthodoxy are found belittling words of Christ that cannot be squeezed into the rigid moulds of their thinking. Sublime utterances in the Sermon on the Mount are queried by Karl Barth. Our Lord's tender conception of God's Fatherhood is set aside as a thing of nought in his interpretation of the Christian Faith. His Credo betrays his difficulty in reconciling the august simplicities of the Gospels with his own theology. Fundamentalists who have regarded him as a kind of Calvin Rederivivus may well be dismayed when their eyes are opened to his doctrine of Scripture inspiration, just as Christians of a liberal temper are aghast at his disregard for the ethical content of our Lord's teaching. And those who have delighted to trace some approach of God to the soul in unaccustomed ways, and the soul's discovery of God in strange places, will refuse to be bound by the fetters of intransigent dogmatism. The poets are our good friends here, reminding us that "God fulfils Himself in many ways" or that God may be found in "a fancy from a flower bell, someone's death, or a chorus

ending from Euripides." Prophets in poets' guise have revealed, time and again this invasion of man's experience by spiritual forces that bring him to heel in staggering vision of the Ineffable Glory or in ashamed realisation of his own moral obliquity.

One of the most amazing assertions of these latter-day dogmatists is that the present tragic condition of the world is due to the Humanism associated with the liberal movement in theology at the end of the last century. The crisis in international affairs is laid at the door of the optimism of later 19th century thinking, the belief that the progress of civilisation would be by easy and inevitable stages, that man could work out his own salvation without fear and trembling and without God's working in him. Mankind apart from Divine blessing would win through to sound character and a stable social and international order. Certain it is, if man was possessed by any such idea he was courting delusion and disaster. It would not, however, be difficult to show from the writing of Christian thinkers, that these charges are largely based upon misunderstanding. As a matter of fact, that generation was haunted by a sense of the cruelty that permeated the social system and the expression of which it found in the ruling economic condition. At the same time it did not blink the fact that the root cause lay in man's inhumanity to man and in that selfishness which is the basic sin. The social awakening of that era had a Christian urge behind it, due to the leading of the Holy Spirit. And the remedy was found in a new reading of the will of God and a deeper understanding of the dictates of the Gospel. For the Christian, at least, the foundation of all reform lay in the redemption of the soul. The reason for the dire condition of man and society was not Economic; it was to be found in the corruption of man's heart. The belief in the ultimate transformation of man's behaviour was inspired by confidence in the spiritual energies of the Christian Faith to overcome all obstacles, both without and within the human soul. It may be that their analysis was defective in its estimate of the awful might of evil. It may be that it was too confident of the power of God to gain a speedy victory. It is, nevertheless, unfair to charge the religious thought of that time with a belief that anything short of a radical renovation of human nature would save mankind from ruin.

To the suggestion that the present war has been brought about as the result of superficial theology that placed human initiative in the place which should have been given to God, it may be replied that wars also occurred when traditional views of Christianity held the field, when Calvinism was dominant. Indeed, most of the wars of the past were sponsored by religious leaders who were not shocked and horrified by them as are their successors to-day. The truth is that all wars have much the same origin in man's lust for dominion, his greed of gain and the demand for territorial expansion. The ending of war is not to be brought about by the substitution of one theology for another and certainly not by the dogma that sets reason at despair and enthrones obscurantism. The consummation can be reached only when the Christian Ethic, the spiritual values of the Gospel and the timeless Love of God, is applied to every relationship of individuals and of nations by the exercise of human reason ruled by the Holy Spirit.

The Flight from Reason, which means the flouting of all endeavours to discover the truth about God and His ruling in the problems of the age, must bring about its own Nemesis. Every dogmatic system in the last resort is the work of some man's mind stirred by the living spirit of God which finds in new occasions, not only new duties but new unveilings of the will of God and His ways with men.

JAMES HAIR.

A TWO-WAY SERMON

Pew to Pulpit; Pulpit to Pew.

WHEN a man begins his ministry there is an ordination service if it is his first church, or an induction service if he has already been in the ministry. Usually there are addresses to the minister and the congregation, reminding them of their mutual responsibilities in the work to which they have all been called. It is a type of service that could be repeated with profit from time to time. In this paper I shall try to do that.

I remember in my schooldays how carefully the sense of pride in the school and of honour in belonging to it were nurtured and developed. We were all made aware of the fact that the school had produced one Prime Minister up to that time. Another has since been added to the roll. The youthful ambitions aroused by that fact were legion. I remember early morning prayers in the Great Hall and the talks by the headmaster. We were made to feel that an honour had been conferred upon us because we had been allowed to become members of the school, that the good name of the school was in our keeping, that we had an individual part to play in its life. So there came to our young minds the first awareness of the fact that life was a great trust and that we had to be worthy of it.

Thirty years ago I remember facing a similar challenge in army life. When war came, I remember coming to London to join the Inns of Court O.T.C. It was known by the ominous name of "The Devil's Own"—a strange title for the temporary home of a theological student. But the sergeant major made the devil into a saint. You were made to realise that the long and honoured tradition of the corps had been given into your keeping. Later on in the Cameronians, the old grand tradition of Richard Cameron and his men became the background of our thinking. The honour and good name of the regiment were all in your hands. You were not your own.

Joining the Christian Church was like that. Years ago no one suggested to you that you were conferring an honour on the church by becoming a member. It was the other way round. You were made to feel that the greatest honour had been conferred upon you. Nothing greater could ever happen to you in life. Here was a history, an experience going back over 1900 years. You were fortunate because you were counted worthy to share in it. Humanity, gratitude, the sense of honour conferred—in such a mood we had to think about the church and our membership in it.

It is good for us to be reminded of the honour that is ours, and of our duties and responsibilities, because we are members of the Body of Christ.

Let us begin with the minister and listen to the pew speaking. What are the things of which the minister needs to be reminded? What would we like to say to him in the name of and spirit of Christ?

I think this is where we ought to begin. We would say to him; remember always the experience by which you have come to your present office. You were not choosing a profession, not selecting a career. You were not concerned with salary and livelihood.

There may be others who will speak of your work in those terms. You may often wish yourself that, like Paul, you could be a tentmaker, so that your work might be free from the charge of professionalism. But even if such an arrangement is not possible, do not therefore allow yourself to think of your work in terms of a career. Unkind people may remind you that you are paid for your work. Never permit yourself to think in such ways.

You are in the ministry because Christ has come into your life. He has called you to this special service. He keeps you there. The moment you are free to do something else with a clear conscience you ought to go and do it. For if once you lose the sense of the compulsion of Christ, your ministry is really finished. Remember always why you are a minister of the Gospel.

Remember, too, the purpose for which you are a minister. You are there to preach the Word of God. In the search for that word you must be painstaking and sincere. You must resist the temptation merely to express your own views about a number of things. You are to preach the Word of God.

You must preach it without fear and without favour. Do not be afraid to speak uncomfortable and challenging things. Do not merely tell us what we would like to hear. We may often resent your preaching. We may often fight against it. But in our deepest hearts we shall know if it is an authentic Word of God. You will not be a true minister of the Gospel if you proclaim Peace when there is no Peace.

You are there to administer the Christian Sacraments; to call us into the Holy of Holies at the Communion Service; to baptize us when in a symbolic act we unite our lives to Christ; to minister the presence of Christ in our family circles in the great moments of Birth and Marriage and Death. As our minister we call you into our intimate lives in great big experiences. It is a great privilege and responsibility we have put into your hands.

Then, we would like to remind the minister that although he has been called to the work by Christ, and we have recognised that Divine Call, yet the calling has to be expressed in very human terms. We would ask the minister to remember that even in the Christian Church human factors will play their part.

In every church you will be sure to meet with some people who will not like you. They will not like your preaching or some of your methods. But if you are gaining the love and loyalty of the majority of the people, you must not allow your judgment to be unbalanced by the difficulties that may sometimes arise. Fighting the frailty of your own nature, you must try to express your Divine Calling in terms that will be as winsome and attractive as you can make them.

Be friendly with people. Be friendly with all the people who share in the fellowship of the Church. Do not be selective in your friendliness, either on social or intellectual grounds. Be the friend of everyone. See to it that you have time for people. Do not be the man who is always in a hurry. Time is not wasted when you give it to other people. The overworked phrase about the man who would not suffer fools gladly, may not describe a Christian quality after all. Never mind if files and documents and such like have to wait. Do not allow "things" to crowd out the warm human side of your ministry. You have become the servant of "people" for Christ's sake, not the slave of some particular system of doing your work.

Your Divine Calling has to be expressed in human terms. When you are meeting people be as unhurried and tranquil as Christ was when He gave all He had to give to a solitary individual. The minister of the Gospel must be more than an efficient robot. He must be the friend, the very human comrade, if he is to mediate the Word of God to our lives. Manly, simple, friendly men are the only men who have any chance of being effective ministers of the Gospel and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Along some such lines the pew might preach its sermon to the pulpit to-day.

There is also a sermon which the pew must preach itself. It ought not to be forgotten. For although a minister may do much to create the atmosphere of a church, he is not the church. The church is composed of its living members. Churches do not exist for ministers, ministers exist for churches. If the minister has his high calling and needs to be reminded of it, church members have their high calling too and need to remind themselves of it.

The starting point is surely this, that if a minister is a minister because Christ has come into his life, people are members of the church for the same reason. They must remember that. They may be attracted to certain churches for secondary reasons; they like the people, or they are made welcome, or a pulpit ministry appeals to them. Being human these influences affect us. But the ultimate reason why people are church members ought to be that Christ has come into their lives. Where that experience is lacking you get a very defective churchmanship. If the minister is driven into the pulpit by the compulsion of Christ, people are in the church for the very same reason, or they ought to be.

They must never allow themselves to forget the purpose for which the church exists and their membership must fulfil that purpose. To put it quite bluntly, the church exists for worship and prayer and the service of Christ. People are members of the church to share in those activities and for no other reason. The first obligation is to share in all its sacramental ministries.

A soldier is not allowed to be careless about parades and enthusiastic about social gatherings. Whatever else he may do, he has to be on parade. He is there for military duty. That is his first obligation. In the same way people are church members for religious reasons. The first obligation is to use the sacramental ministry which the church provides—worship, prayer, baptism, communion. From that comes all our other service for Christ.

Many of us need to rethink the whole question, for in our churches there is often a marked tendency to substitute activities of varying hues and colours for the culture of the soul. All our work, however excellent, will fail in its main objectives, unless the church assembled for worship and sacrament is right at the centre of our lives.

How far is that sense of supreme obligation developed in church members? There is the first duty. If we are half-hearted and unfaithful there, all else we try to do will be ineffective. If we want our christian witness to count in the world, documents, committees, will not take us far, unless we are showing fidelity and eagerness for the means of grace provided by the church in its worship. That is the acid test for church membership.

There is another thing church members must not forget to do. They must discipline themselves to think of the honour that is theirs in belonging to the church of Christ. They must speak well of it. I sometimes grow alarmed at the way church members speak of the Christian Church. Perhaps much of the criticism which we hear to-day from outside, originated first of all within the church. We may have ourselves to blame.

In my lifetime I have listened to many criticisms of the church from without and within. But I shall always be grateful for the fact that in the christian home of my boyhood, I never heard my parents utter one word of criticism of the church. I have no doubt there were many

things that could have been criticized in their little Bethel. But whatever may have been wrong, it was covered over in silence in the home, at least, in the presence of the children. The church was the church of Christ and the frailties of its human members were not discussed. All I heard about in these years was the glory and wonder of the great church of Christ. I am grateful for it. It captured the imagination of a boy. When I have fallen into lower ways, the old memories return. I can never get away from a certain awe and reverence for the Church of the Living God.

Perhaps we all ought to discipline ourselves to see habitually the greatness of Christ's church, to speak of it with reverence and to think of the honour that is ours in belonging to it.

If we could train ourselves to think in this way, it might mean the beginning of new days for the church. The cynical, fault-finding attitude to the church in which some have indulged, has had disastrous effects upon our churchmanship. There is a better way. We belong to Christ's church. It is HIS church.

If the Nazis and Fascists and Communists know what they stand for, if they give all they have for the triumph of their way of life, it is no less true that those of us who are in the church, standing for Christ's Teaching and His way of life, must give all we have for the triumph of His cause. It is for such a purpose we are its members. We have pledged our allegiance to Him. We count it an honour to be called by His name. We are irrevocably committed to His cause.

Let us remember these things. Let us recall the supernatural foundation on which there is built this fellowship that we call the Church—our confession: that Christ is Head of the Church, our Saviour and our Lord. "The church" said Paul, "whereof I am made a minister"; "the church," say we "whereof we are made ministers and members." Life has no greater honour to offer!

R. GUY RAMSAY.

ENVIRONMENT AND WORSHIP

"DON'T you think that if a Cross stood on the Communion table the beauty of the church would be enhanced and our worship enriched?" More than one member supported the implied suggestion, and later I was asked to accept a beautifully carved Cross in oak.

At the re-opening of a Baptist church which had been renovated, a brother minister was unstinting in his admiration of the changes made; but he expressed vehement disapproval of the Cross: superimposed on the centre panel of the front of the new Communion table. That Cross did enhance the beauty of table and church; the objection was, that it would **not** enrich worship.

The influence of environment on worship is greater than most realise, and those who think of worship as purely subjective, unconditioned by environment, are apt to make unwarranted claims and false accusations. We cannot worship as disembodied spirits may; we are "in the body," and the action of environment, through the senses, upon the mind does not cease when we meet to worship God in spirit and in truth.

In worship the congregation tries as a congregation, to get into relationship with God. It is not a case of so many isolated individuals at their private devotions. Each is in a human environment and is receiving from others more and stronger influences than he would readily

acknowledge. He feels, thinks, acts, as he would not if he were alone. Even if no word is spoken, many of the distracting interests which intrude upon his private devotions are banished when he is one of a group intent upon a common purpose.

There is in a group a contagion of feeling, and the individual's emotional response to the idea of the divine presence is much greater when he seeks God in company with others, than it is in private devotions. Furthermore, the outward uniformity of action and attitude which also contributes to the worshipper's sense of the presence of God, and which is so evident in more highly organised worship, may be discerned in the very simple Quaker service. As the individual conforms to the will of the group in behaviour the emotional content of his experience as a member of the group is heightened, and his suggestibility, his readiness to accept without adequate reasoned demonstration the idea. (in this case) that God is present, is increased.

Turn to the non-human element in the worshipper's environment.

The massive dignity of a cathedral and its seeming immunity against the ravages of time proclaim by contrast the feebleness and mortality of a man; its large stillness shuts out reminders of life in the world; its half-light suggests the unknown. A man of any of a dozen faiths might say, "God is here." The Gothic cathedrals were a product of an age of faith and fear. They embodied in stone the religious ideas of the time: God and devils and dread mystery were represented in an architectural masterpiece which we may admire for its beauty yet believe to be unsuited to the worship of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Reformation swept away much ancient superstition, and places of worship which were then built reflected the clearer, simpler faith and the more austere life of Protestants. When in 1666, Wren was commissioned to build fifty-three parish churches, he wrote "The Romanists, indeed, may build larger churches; it is enough if they hear the murmur of the Mass and see the elevation of the Host; but ours are to be fitted for auditories." Thus he achieved an ecclesiastical design which met the requirements of a learning people and a teaching ministry, and yet did not sacrifice beauty to utility.

The pre-Reformation type was determined by the requirements of a ritualistic worship in the line of the Jewish temple. The churches "fitted for auditories" are rather in the line of the synagogue, a simple building, plainly furnished, where the sacred writings were read and expounded to the people and prayer was offered. During the troubled times when the high priesthood was sold to the highest bidder, the synagogue took the place of the temple as the home of spiritual Israel. Jesus, "as his custom was, went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read." The Christian Church was born in the synagogue, and the Apostolic Church continued the synagogal type of worship and organisation.

A simple building need not be unlovely. Let us not imagine that we have no need of beauty of environment because we worship God in spirit and in truth. Our emotional experience in worship would be enriched by sensible contact with beautiful surroundings; our worship would be more reverent and we would receive greater benefit from every part of the service. If we are to continue a primarily prophetic ministry we must have churches planned for the preaching and the hearing of God's Word; but let them be also places conducive to the spirit of worship.

From the aesthetic standpoint, a Cross set against an otherwise unbroken surface might be like a jewel laid on velvet; but a Cross is much

more than an adornment when it is placed in a Christian church; it is a symbol, an image with a fairly uniform meaning for different people.

Symbols appeal most strongly to those whose power of directed thinking is not highly developed, or who, through association of symbol and past emotional experience, are unwilling or unable to use directed thinking in regard to the symbol or symbols before them. To millions of persons, swastika and hammer and sickle mean far more than any reasoned justification of Nazi or Communist doctrine. And, in turn, the emotional experience stimulated in part by the symbols makes possible the wholesale acceptance of teaching which directed thinking would reject. Symbols do not teach; they stir the emotions and increase suggestibility. What is taught thereafter, whether true or false, is more readily accepted than it would have been had symbolism been absent.

But this system in teaching has very grave dangers if it is carried further than need be. A religion which is passively accepted, neither grounded in the worshipper's own experience nor supported by his reasoning powers, is superficial. The suggestibility of the worshipper increases with the continued use of suggestion, and results in an ever greater dependence upon the preacher or the symbol.

Consider the human and the non-human environment together.

Symbols and ceremony go hand-in-hand. Not that they are necessary the one to the other; but the person whose emotions are stirred by symbolism naturally seeks further stimulus in visible representations of religious significance. On such a person the elaborate, solemn ritual performed by richly garbed priests whom he believes to be in a select succession has a deeply moving effect. When, moreover, this effect is increased by the presence of other worshippers, all acting alike at stated times, it is difficult for the worshipper to see the symbols and ritual as what, in simple fact, they are: in the one case, say, bread and wine, and in the other, certain movements gone through by men of like fashion unto himself. Something extraordinary must be happening. The symbol is invested with power; the ceremony of itself achieves a spiritual purpose. The doctrine of transubstantiation may be the outcome of rationalisation, of attempts to justify beliefs already held not on rational but on emotional grounds.

In the average Baptist Church service there are both appeal to the emotions and teaching by suggestion. This must be. Worship which does not touch the emotions cannot satisfy; nor can it bring the whole man under the lordship of Christ. It has been said that the appeal to the emotions is overdone in some of our services. This may be true. Repeated emotional experiences, no matter what their cause, may become an end in themselves, the subject enjoying them and believing that the more moved he is the more religious he is. Such sentimentalism blinds the reason and weakens the will. It is a form of intemperance.

Yet the preacher who is himself a lover of Christ, and is earnest in his desire to lead men to Him, will not clamp down his own feelings. Archdeacon Manners Sutton's two precepts, "Preach the Gospel," and "Put down enthusiasm," are quarrelsome company. But let the preacher be also the teacher, appealing to the heart and to the head, so that faith and reasoning are both encouraged. Then there is little danger of the worshipper associating the emotional side of his religious experience with the man or his words. The emotions and the intellect are both directed Christward, and the attitude of dependence upon the visible and audible is avoided.

The weakness of symbolism and ritualism lies in this, that objective methods of worship are ineffective if one does not believe in their objective value. Bring directed thinking to bear upon them and they lose their influence.

"My exposition and the matter of my preaching were not in plausible words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Reasoned consideration does not annul the appeal of such preaching; indeed, it confirms it by pointing to the preacher's own declaration of faith and experience: "Christ liveth in me."

Forms are necessary to worship, but if worship is dependent on forms it is spurious; it is putting the visible in place of the Invisible. Symbolistic, ritualistic, sensuous forms of worship encourage such dependence.

Our Lord gave to His Church two ordinances, involving the use of three symbols. Our spiritual life does not depend upon our being baptised and partaking of the Lord's Supper. It is aided by both, but only as we own and respond to the spiritual facts of which the symbols are no more than visible representations. When we begin to put more into ceremony and symbol than they can plainly hold they become a hindrance to personal faith, with all its implications in intellectual and moral life. If we consider worth while the guarding of the knowledge of the essentially spiritual nature of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, we shall not add ceremony to ceremony and symbol to symbol, for the reflex action of these would tend to blur that truth.

The building, the furnishings, the form of worship, are all related; and in deciding what these shall be, the fundamental question is, "Into what relationship to what kind of god are the worshippers to be led?" No less than that is involved. More reverence we do need, but let it be the solemnity of a great joy, the deep, humble adoration of the Almighty and Eternal who, though passing comprehension, has yet revealed Himself in the Saviour; for the unique element in Christian worship is based not on ignorance of God, but on knowledge of God.

WM. MANSON.

WHO'S TO BLAME?

IT would be doing no despite to Holy Writ if one took two separate Apostolic injunctions and made of them this sentence: "That the ministry be not blamed, let a man examine himself." For those of us who administer Sacraments, and who plead with hearers for repentance and faith, such advice is always timely. The nature of our calling requires us to rebuke and admonish, as well as to encourage; to condemn as well as to commend; but are we as ready to taste our own medicine as to take the tonic of applause and approbation? For myself, I sometimes doubt it.

Who amongst us does not lament the fact that failure figures so frequently in the review of our work in church or community? But when we are in search of causal connections between attempt and accomplishment, do we put ourselves in the place of responsibility? Or, to speak in figure, do we prefer the role of judge to that of prisoner at the bar?

One is compelled to notice on occasion how readily he defends himself, justifies himself, or worse still—shows an inclination to place blame without strict account of his own share. Few of us lack diligence in what we regard as the duty of self-defence. Every trench has to have a parapet; the displaced soil must be put somewhere, and why not in a mound of

defence! Whenever we are victims of our own carelessness, or even when conscience condemns, we look around for broad shoulders on which to lay our embarrassing burden. We find these near at hand but almost always just outwith our own anatomy. Most often a person serves our cowardly necessity; sometimes, as in our childhood's rages, an inanimate object may bear the brunt (vide the scars on the old chairs which once our mothers owned). The lowest level of all in this declension is to fix upon a mere abstraction, e.g., a set of circumstances, as our convenient salve.

Is not this the record of all the generations since Adam? And if parents initiated this sad decline, in a setting which poets claim to be nearest to God's heart, is it surprising that two of their boys, now out of the Garden, but still down on the farm, should carry forward the spiteful symphony? From farm to ranch the circle widened, but whether the joint-owning flockmasters be uncle and nephew, or brother and brother,

The tale of this trick is the same,

Each must find another to blame.

Nor are the Old Testament chronicles the only ones to tell this story. Around it the world's tragic drama has settled. It may be true that "Shakespeare strained the truth to make his tragic Macbeth," but he merely stressed another truth when, in a play which is the acme of human pessimism, he showed, without once saying so, that this "butcher and his fiend-like queen" continually blamed each other. An even more explicit illustration is to be found in "King John." When Hubert, the royal chamberlain and murderer, returns to give account of his ugly, sanguinary stewardship, he says: "Here is your hand and seal for what I did." The royal master plays an age-old game as he replies:

"When the last account 'twixt heaven and earth
Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
Witness against us to damnation.
How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes deeds ill done. Hadst thou not been by
This murder had not come into my mind.
Hadst thou but shook thy head, or made a pause
When I spoke darkly what I purposed,
Or turned an eye of doubt upon my face
As bid me tell my tale in express words,
Deep shame had struck me dumb; made me break off,
And these thy fears might have wrought fears in me."

Which of us can claim exemption from this folly of blaming "the other party?"

It is the privilege of the present writer to serve, under the Government's Youth Service Scheme, on a Council for the County as well as on a Local Youth Panel. The first year's operation of the Scheme has been a big disappointment to those responsible for its working. Eighty-five per cent. of the young people for whose welfare it was inaugurated are still outside the organisations which the Scheme sponsors. Such a situation is naturally a deep regret, and constant concern, to all who have the welfare of our youth at heart. In an attempt to find "causes" for such non-success as our statistics indicate, members of Council and Panel do not hesitate to indict all three of our noblest institutions, viz., the Home, the School, and the Church. But it seldom seems to dawn on the minds of those who make the diagnosis of our failures that the failure of an institution is always due to the failure of the individuals who compose or create the institution.

Does not experience of church courts and conferences provide somewhat similar evidence so far as "placing the blame" is concerned?

So we come back to the individual best known to each of us—oneself. As a young man, with much less experience than now provides "ballast for his boat," the writer prepared and preached a sermon on the text: "Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument: for they hear thy words but they do them not." Ezekiel had, of course, a right to speak for himself. Looking back on my own borrowing from him I have three regrets: first, that I wrote such a sermon; second, that I delivered it where I did; third, that I failed to notice in time the "instrument" on which I was playing. The "harp" in my hands could have had only two strings, namely, wounded pride and vanity! I had merely slandered good people. The prophet blames the people, forgetting that the people might retort by blaming the prophet.

Many readers will recall a frank auto-biography, published a few years ago by the daughter of a famous politician. The writer may have been somewhat frivolous, but she came near to choosing the perfect title. I would alter one word, substituting "also" for "only" to make it read: "I have also myself to blame," and commend the sentence as a necessary and worth-while reflection for those occasions when we view or review our life and work as ministers.

There are dangers, of course, in this as in all healthy exercises. Morbid introspection is always a menace to moral and spiritual health. When the preaching prophet asks: "Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" he ought to hear the retort from many tongues—"Yes, there are millions of them."

"In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thirstily sorrow at its side,
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With the less favoured than ourselves: that thus
We may with patience bear our mod'rate ills
And sympathise with others suffer'g more."

Cowper was merely echoing a prescription which has had age-long sanction, and with countless hosts of fellow-sufferers he found it to be effective for good. He urges us to try "contrast" for cure of ill, which, viewed by itself seems mountainous; but which, placed in its proper proportion may rightly be regarded as only of mole-hill dimension. Comparison can always be made without odium when the parties concerned are mutually desirous of improvement.

This is just where the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship can be a veritable godsend to its members. By means of Pastoral Sessions, Retreats, and "The Fraternal" magazine we can maintain a system of clinical examination, leading on to diagnosis, to treatment, and to cure of those weaknesses of which we are, in our best moods and moments, only too painfully aware. If we are to wear the garment of seamless sincerity before our fellows, we shall not shirk, but rather welcome, any and every process which helps towards so desirable an end.

And so we have extended the scope of the composite Apostolic injunction with which we started. In its final and most helpful form it will read: "That the ministry be not blamed, let a man examine himself: and let those of like mind examine each other: provided, of course, that they speak the truth in love." So shall we find, even when blame must of necessity be placed, that the burden is not grievous if we discover, in Swinbourne's phrase that "Neither was *most* to blame."

JOHN T. STARK.

CHRISTIAN JOURNALISM

IN a familiar story from the Gospels certain people wanted to see Jesus "but could not for the press." To be sure, no libel is intended on the journalistic profession, but to see more in a text than is actually there has been a long standing jibe against preachers! At least my mind is tempted to include this statement in the category of fulfilled prophecies when I look over the collection of religious papers and periodicals that arrive on my desk. I am tempted to ask, Are these all we can do for the Kingdom? Is there a single one of them stirring enough to make a labouring man let his dinner wait for five minutes? I would beg leave to doubt it. Indeed, I would move an emphatic negative. "The War Cry" is, no doubt, a spicy bit of work and above the average in its dash and vigour, but its interests are circumscribed. Among the others I would vote high marks to "The Children's Newspaper." Why? Well just because it is a newspaper and I like news, which, I suppose, is a sign that I am a very ordinary man. But all the others pay me the compliment of supposing that my literary tastes are well developed, that I am thrilled by somebody or other's old sermons (suitably disguised of course), and that the very latest feat in theological gymnastics is very important. What is news, anyway? say the editors, as they cheerfully bundle it into soulless paragraphs and run it into columns for the back pages.

That there is a place for such periodicals, and a public who like them, is quite evident by the fact that they still exist. But are they the sort of thing that will be read by the people who are at the circumference of the church's life, or by the wage-earning classes who are largely out of touch? The position seems to me to be most disturbing and a condemnation of our strategy. What agencies are we left with in the modern world for letting the masses know that we are alive and in action? The daily newspapers give scant attention to religious matters, and the Sunday Press is a fairly efficient medium for giving people something to keep them away from public worship. The B.B.C. recognises our existence, but is largely an entertainment concern and is governed by popular taste and not by the urgent need of Christian propaganda. The most powerful of the formative forces in the land is the cinema, and the least said about this the better, other than this, that its enterprise and industry put the churches to shame.

There is a case to be made out, I am persuaded, for a virile Christian newspaper of a comprehensive character with a lay-out similar to that of dailies featuring, not the pious meanderings of the "signed article" type, but news of Christian action and interest. We must evolve some medium which bears on the face of it every sign of energy and vitality. It must set forth the Church as a going concern interested, enthusiastically interested, in the things which John Smith, plumber, and William Brown, shipyard labourer, are arguing about. They thrive on headlines: well, let them have them, big and plenty. Never mind the Rev. Dr. Principal's opinions on Professor Probable's latest effusion. The tinker, tailor and candlestick maker are not worrying about it anyway, and they are amongst the people Christ entrusted us to win. Unless we get their ears or eyes we will never get their hearts, and we have little chance of it at the moment if we stick to pulpiteering and dignified journals.

The success which has attended the Roman Church's efforts in popular journalism is worthy of notice. Consider some of their weekly newspapers. The one I see most regularly circulates in the West of Scotland and is a first class piece of work. It is brimful of news with a Roman slant and presents all it has to say in a vigorous and lively fashion. Conferences are excellently reported, special Roman pronouncements are splashed under bold headlines, every Service man or woman of that persuasion who does

anything worthwhile mentioning is featured, until the impression is created that the best things in the country are being run by the Roman Church, and its members are the backbone of the war effort. There are excellent editorials on the themes of the moment. No padding or dead matter is allowed to mar the freshness and up-to-the-minute effect. The news collecting system must be a thorough and praiseworthy organisation. I've been at meetings where the Roman point of view was being given and seen special reporters taking down their own people's speeches, and rushing off to get the report to the Press, all done with keenness and efficiency. The meetings got a mere mention in the Protestant papers. The Roman papers put them on the front page and sold their wares in a brilliant manner. The propaganda value of these papers is considerable and one does not wonder that they have an extensive circulation. The Protestant Press has nothing to touch them for popular appeal and modern lay-out, for we don't seem to treat the matter with the same fervour and seriousness.

Of course, it may be said that I am "crying for the moon." Such ventures are expensive and to do the thing decently (and it would be futile to do otherwise), would require financial backing far beyond our possibilities. That it would be costly is obvious. If any of the existing weeklies were reformed the proposition would be simpler, but since that is unlikely, the only other practical approach that I can see is for the denominations to get together and float a company, if they can't get any group of moneyed members to do it for them. I don't think the task is impossible if we are persuaded of its necessity, and I feel sure that a really live newspaper would command a wide sale and might even be a very profitable venture. It is the one field, at least, in which we can do something, for I don't see any other point of contact with the wage-earning class which we can influence to any extent. The films we might sponsor could never rival the trade articles, however useful they may be for inspirational and instructional purposes within our churches. The B.B.C. religious programmes are excellent on the whole, but tend to be taken as a substitute for church attendance; at best the time allotted is very short, and, alas, many of the subjects allowed are quite harmless. Surely something can be done, however, about gingering up our Christian Press and getting more "punch" into it. To me it is pathetic that our British religious journalism should have got into such an uninspiring state that there is not a periodical which can be said to be a first-class asset to the propagation of the Gospel and the dissemination of Christian news. We have good children's papers, good women's papers, good church workers' papers, now let us produce something that a working man will want to read. God speed the day of its arrival!

R. B. HANNEN.

CORRESPONDENTS.

THE success of our Fellowship depends to a large degree upon our Correspondents, who help in collecting contributions, in keeping the various Fraternal in touch with the B.M.F. Committee and further the general interests of our organisation.

We greatly desire that every group of ministers throughout the country should delegate one of their number as Correspondent and we now publish a list of those already appointed in the hope that, where a district is not represented, a brother may be found who would be willing to serve and whose names J. O. Barrett would be glad to receive.

North Western Area.—A. McLean, Accrington; W. G. Brown, Burnley; B. I. Evans, Bury; B. F. Savill, Manchester; T. J. Hooper, Morecambe; W. E. Moore, Liverpool; G. Dearden, Todmorden.

North Eastern Area.—R. A. Jones, N.B.A. (Southern); W. Randall, Bradford; T. J. Hamer, Craven; F. Peace, Halifax; D. H. Horwood, Huddersfield; H. Challiner, Leeds; J. R. Julian, Sheffield; K. S. Price, East Riding.

East Midland Area.—W. T. Phillips, Leicester; T. W. Hunter, Spalding; A. J. Westlake, Notts.

West Midland Area.—E. F. H. Knight, Birmingham; A. F. B. Cook, South Staffs.; K. Hinchliff, North Staffs.; G. Morgan, Salop.

Western Area.—W. G. E. Thorne, Bristol; J. Paterson, Plymouth; W. H. Condy, Barnstaple; L. J. Stones, Torquay; S. Moss Loveridge, Devon and Cornwall; D. Russell Smith, Western Association.

Eastern Area.—J. H. Hawes, Norfolk; E. Hassenruck, Suffolk; S. H. Price, Cambridge; T. W. Shepherd, Essex.

Central Area.—R. C. Rowsell, Berks.; G. R. Hooper, Watford; F. C. Rollinson, Cotswold; S. C. Crowe, Oxford.

Southern Area.—B. F. Thompson, Portsmouth; W. H. Compton, Southampton; Cunningham Burley, Bournemouth; P. N. Bushill, Orpington; A. Stockwell, Brighton; J. Tweedley, Winchester; T. R. MacNab, Tonbridge; S. P. Goodge, Aldershot.

Metropolitan Area.—W. G. Anderson, East Surrey; L. J. Howells, Northern; J. J. Brown, South East; G. W. Byrt, Western; E. Williams, South West; E. E. Peskett, Southern; S. Winward, North Eastern; W. Fancutt, Eastern; W. B. Fletcher, Harrow; E. G. Harris, Harmondsworth; G. H. Relfe, Thames Valley.

South Wales.—W. S. Evans, Eastern Valleys; R. E. Fennell, Newport; G. Sorton Davies, Cardiff; A. L. Thomas, Swansea.

North Wales.—D. Wyre Lewis, Wrexham.

Scotland.—P. S. Bryan, Edinburgh; J. McLean, Lerwick.

Overseas.—F. C. Morton, Baptist Church House.

It will be seen that there are several gaps to fill and we shall be glad to hear of accessions or of any inaccuracy in the foregoing list.

THE "GLASGOW" FRATERNAL.

PRINCIPAL Holms Coats has arranged our present issue and the articles have been contributed by Glasgow College men. We are grateful, not only for their quality but also for the quantity, as it will be remembered that in our September number there appeared two contributions by Glasgow men—Henry Cook and Gordon Wylie, and we still have one in hand for our April magazine, by Alexander Clark.

Our hearty congratulations to Glasgow on the attainment of its Jubilee. The College has a splendid record and our ministry has been enriched, not only in Scotland, by the men it has sent out. Under the leadership of Principal Coats it has gone from strength to strength, and, thanking God for past achievements, we seek His blessing on the College, in its great work of training men for the Baptist Ministry.

We may add that the next College issue will be a "Manchester" number, produced by the good offices of Principal Henry Townsend.

ROME, UP-TO-DATE.

IN our last issue we published the copy of a letter sent out by the R.C. Archbishop of Winnipeg, and made certain comments. The paragraph was shown to "Sacerdos"—A Roman Priest in East London who sends a protest and requests publication. We quote the two salient paragraphs. "I have seen the text of the letter and it made me shudder. The interpretation of it (to me the obvious meaning) has apparently made the Archbishop shudder also, for he says, in an angry refutation, 'I did not say that forty dollars would ensure salvation, any more than forty million dollars would. I said what better 'guarantee' in the sense that, if there be a guarantee (which there is not) what better title to God's mercy than to help spread the Gospel of Christ.'" Sacerdos goes on to add, "I want to protest against your unfair and illogical deduction that, an archiepiscopal indiscretion, is identical with the teaching of the Catholic Church." On these paragraphs we make two observations. First, we are surely to be pardoned for our innocent assumption that so high a dignitary as an Archbishop, could be trusted as an exponent of Roman Catholic teaching. Second, that his somewhat laboured explanation seems to us, in no material way, to diminish the inference drawn from his original letter. We are glad that both the Priest and the Archbishop shuddered; we shuddered also, but we note that their confession of shuddering was forthcoming only when the letter was given the wider publicity of a Protestant journal. In any case, we suggest that, even in its modified form, their theological teaching will need still more drastic revision, ere the Priest or the Archbishop can hope to be received from the Roman Catholic into the Baptist Catholic Church.
