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The Fraternal

APRIL, 1945 No. 57

EDITORIAL.

NO less than £20,000 was given by the churches in 1944 through the Simultaneous Collection, in response to the New Home Work Fund appeal of the Baptist Union. Even allowing for the fact that money is plentiful, this is a remarkable thing, and its implications are worth pondering. It is clear that in spite of the fact that the Baptist Union comes in for a good deal of criticism it can yet command a substantial loyalty from the churches. Our leaders may well find encouragement in this reflection.

We would also draw the implication that the churches approve of the broad and comprehensive interpretation of its task which marked the Union's appeal. It was an appeal not only in the interests of our churches, but for funds to establish a home for unmarried mothers (to which there has been an extraordinary response), and for the support of industrial and hostel chaplains. Though it is of the utmost importance that we should put our own house in order concerning the adequate maintenance of our Ministry, the Denomination has clearly shown that it welcomes the generous interest of the Union in the wider claims of Christian service. Here is something in which William Carey would surely have rejoiced.

What of the future? We believe that our churches are waiting for great leadership. The March meeting of the Baptist Union Council was notable for its deep concern for the spiritual condition of the churches. The need of the world for the liberating and quickening power of the Gospel of Christ is starkly evident to us all. There is among us an eager longing that our churches should rise to the height of their great opportunity, and that through them God's light and truth should go forth into the darkness of our world.

Our leaders are giving much time and thought to the fashioning of a Long Term Plan. It is an essential task, and we hope that the proposals which emerge will be marked by the faith and courage of the Short Term Plan. It would, we believe, prove in the long run an immense advantage if individual churches could be told, after consultation with the Associations, what their minimum contribution to the funds of the Union ought to be, having regard to their strength. If such a target were freely accepted, the funds of the Union would be put on a firm foundation.

Our final word is a plea for great **spiritual** leadership. Let the Union, through its leaders, get out into the country more. The President's visits are enormously appreciated. Everyone knows that our General Secretary is himself deeply concerned for the spiritual effectiveness of our churches. We plead that in the months ahead he may be sufficiently relieved from the heavy burdens of administration to make it possible for him to sound the call to spiritual advance up and down the land. That is the call we need at this hour, and we believe that the Union has leaders who can sound it.

A PASTORAL PROBLEM.

"I WONDER whether one of our older men, or a young man for that matter, if he felt keenly about it, could write something about the Minister and Visitation? I have come to the conclusion that in this matter more time

is wasted than over anything else. Why should a man be expected to visit every member of his congregation once a year at least, be they ill or well? The daily round of visits is perhaps the most fruitless business—I had almost said, the most soulless business—a man can engage in. And that for the reason that they are mostly "duty" visits, and get nowhere. Have you never felt that yourself? Is it not time that someone gave us a new idea of visitation as a real "cure of souls"? I am sure that there is more than enough work for a Minister not only in visiting the sick in body, but in dealing with the sick in mind and soul. How to get people to recognise this higher conception of a Minister's pastoral work is the problem. They expect the friendly call, but it has often seemed to me that any attempt to make it other than a social call, to make it a "business" call, so that a man gets to grips with the souls of people, is not regarded as friendly. Why should that be? I should say my own "technique" was wrong, if I did not know that many of the younger men are feeling the same thing. How to educate our people, and people who have no connection with the church for that matter, to call in the Minister as they call in the Doctor, when the sickness is that of the mind rather than of the body? And even when they are sick in body, and expect to be visited, it is often left to someone else to tell the Minister. There is a reluctance to send for the Minister which I feel we shall have to overcome before we can ever do any useful work. When anyone does send for me, I feel lifted up to the skies, and that I am at last justifying my existence. But such calls are rare. Please excuse this outburst, but I feel so keenly that we ought to be far more than just 'social callers,' 'nice men,' 'hail-fellow-well-met' sort of people, and at work for God all the time. Is it a legitimate subject for a paper by some brother who is competent to write about it?"

The foregoing is an excerpt from a private letter written by one of our younger men. An apology may be due for our here giving it publicity, even although we withhold the name of the writer. We might have asked him to state his problem in a formal article, but we felt that the less restrained phraseology of a private letter would be more impressive. Here is an honest man, honestly struggling with his problems and anxious to make the best of his job. In a future issue we may be able to publish a reply, but, whether or not, it is certainly a question which should provoke useful conversation at local fraternals. EDITORIAL BOARD.

"WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?"

A Survey of a Religious Broadcasting Experiment.

THE minister who preaches each Sunday to a familiar congregation can gauge to some extent the fruitfulness of his ministry. Without in any sense estimating his work according to self-praise, he will know from his pastoral duties whether the words he has spoken have indeed been a Word of God to his people. Yet even so he can usually have only the barest indication. What he perceives is invariably but a fragment of the total effect of his work. Often without much encouragement he must labour as a minister called by God, walking by faith and not by sight. He will perform his ministry with persistent self-criticism and the maximum integrity and will rightly leave the issue to God.

If that is true of the minister who lives and works among a relatively small and well-known group of Christian people, how much more difficult is it to estimate the results of Religious Broadcasting. For one thing, by any ordinary Church standards the congregation is vast (some five millions listen regularly to the Sunday morning service); but it is also private.

That is, listening is done in the home by individuals or small groups. For another thing, it is a very mixed congregation, not only as regards denominational allegiance but, more important, as regards the division between Church-goer and non-Church-goer (of the five million Sunday morning listeners it is estimated that two millions are non-Church-goers). And again, all the advantages of the familiar personal presence of the minister are lacking; the listener has nothing but a disembodied voice from which to gain all his impressions. With these limitations the Christian message is broadcast—what are the results?

It must be said at once that the limitations of religious broadcasting are only the reverse side of its tremendous opportunity. The broadcast word can win its way into countless homes which are shut (at least for the present) to the approach of the local minister. The work of religious broadcasting is fundamentally evangelistic. Its aim is to make Britain a more Christian country. Those who are responsible for it feel upon them the call of God to use the medium of radio to bring the challenge of the Gospel to more and more people.

It is possible to gauge the results of nation-wide religious broadcasting in two main ways. The first depends on the Christian Churches and, in particular, on the local congregations. The radio is not intended to be, and can never be, a substitute for the common life and worship of the Christian congregation. It depends for its effectiveness not only upon the *existence* of such congregations but upon their *co-operation*. If they are aware that the radio is performing an evangelistic work, then they should perceive that it is their task to gather in the fruits of evangelism. This may well involve a reformation of congregational life, an attempt to fit itself to receive babes in Christ. It may mean working out new ways of gathering into bundles the harvest that is certainly being reaped. But whatever it means, the results of religious broadcasting will be known by what Christians do first to re-dedicate themselves, and second to seek out and join into their fellowship those who have been moved by the broadcast word.

The second way of gauging results is by means of Listener Research. In the first quarter of 1944 quite a new experiment in religious broadcasting was attempted. All the services of that quarter were devoted to one single theme "Man's Dilemma and God's Answer" (since published in book form by the S.C.M. Press). It may be noted in passing that this was an experiment in broadcasting (not only in *religious* broadcasting). Never before had a complete quarter's programme been designed to guide the thoughts of the nation in a particular direction. The whole course was quite deliberately a piece of evangelism. In order to estimate its effectiveness, the Listener Research Department made a special enquiry with 500 men and women over the three months. The group contained more Church-goers (representing most denominations) than non-Church-goers, but all opinions were represented from devout Christian to hostile atheist. Within the Churches there were many who confessed to considerable obscurity on some of the fundamentals of this faith; and outside the churches, the ignorance of some listeners, especially the younger end, would be difficult to over-estimate.

The great majority of listeners were of the opinion that the series had fully justified itself and were thankful that enough agreement had been reached between the denominations for them to present a united front. The series, with its freshness of presentation, threw new light on familiar truths for many listeners, as was to be expected. But it did more than that: it succeeded in presenting Jesus as a living person. "I now look upon Jesus as somebody real" wrote a housewife, "and not as a figurehead or a Greek myth."

Three points in particular stood out in listeners' memories as having made an outstanding impression on them. Among a long list of subjects, these three recurred most frequently: Canon Cockin's insistence on social responsibility; the Bishop of Hull's teaching on forgiveness; and Mgr. R. L. Smith's statement that God means man to share His joy.

The suggestion that everyone was to some extent responsible for social evils and for the war itself seems to have startled a good many people. While by some it was strongly resented, and by others complacently set aside as not concerning themselves, many were disturbed by it. A number followed the Canon's advice and read "Our Towns"; others said that they had subjected the conduct of their business and private affairs to a new standard of honesty, and had reluctantly decided that certain practices would not stand the test and must be abandoned.

The Bishop of Hull's address seems to have had an immediate result in action. Many wrote of steps taken to renew broken friendships, and of resolutions to adopt a different attitude to others in future. That exclusiveness and resentment should be regarded as sins was, however, a new idea to many and did not meet with universal approval.

The appeal of Mgr. R. L. Smith's addresses seems to have lain in the promise of release from frustration, of fulfilment and, above all, of joy. That the Christian life not only could, but should, be joyous instead of repressive, an attitude rather than a set of rules, was eagerly received by all but a small section who considered the doctrine to be doubtfully true and certainly dangerous. Some hostile critics of Christianity complained that this was not Christianity as they knew it, or as it was generally practised. Although a few hesitated to accept what they feared was too good to be true, the effect on the majority is fairly expressed in the words of a middle-aged woman who wrote, "I liked the idea of God wanting us to share His life and find it rather wonderful to think about."

As a direct consequence of the impression made by these and other points, listeners asked for more Bible reading and information about the life of Christ. Many wrote to say that they had begun to attend church regularly again since the course started. But undoubtedly the most significant consequence of these broadcasts was that so many were brought face to face with God. It is true that many were exceedingly rebellious and subjected speakers' statements to severe criticism—but the striking point is that listeners felt compelled to reckon quite seriously with God.

It may not sound like splendid progress to have reached only that point. The minister can normally assume so much with the people for whom he is responsible (though every minister now and again finds occasion to challenge the assumption); indeed he must assume it if he is to build up the Church into mature faith in Christ. But Religious Broadcasting speaks also to a world in which the assumption is largely invalid, in which also the corollaries of Christian faith have lost this effective hold on the non-Christian mind.

Very significant was evidence of a decline in the conception of human nature. This appears to be both new and widespread. According to many listeners, mainly, it may be noted, among the non-Christians, man is a mere unit, scarcely differentiated from the rest of his kind, with no power to shape his destiny or even to build up his own character. Man-in-the-mass was still believed to be all-powerful, but individual man had fallen far below the humanist conception of the last century, to a level of almost complete futility. This attitude was especially brought to light in connection with the decline in honesty referred to by Canon Cockin. This was recognised and deplored, but nothing, it appeared, could be done

about it. No one could be honest under the present social system. Even if one or two *could* make a stand, no purpose would be served, since only mass movements were worthwhile. Furthermore, this impotence was apparently sealed by a dread of appearing different from one's fellows. If a man were to make a stand for honesty, "he would look peculiar," and that, it seems, would be unthinkable. It is perhaps in this connection that interpretation should be sought of a curious remark of a middle-aged traveller, who said that he preferred services from a church to those from a studio, as "the presence of the congregation gives you confidence."

One other result therefore of this Religious Broadcasting experiment is to present anew to the Christian Church the challenge of evangelism.

KENNETH GRAYSTON,
Assistant Director of Religious Broadcasting.

THE PREACHER IN A CHANGING WORLD.

THE Preacher to-day has need to recognise that he lives in a changing world. Modern science, modern humanism, modern political ideologies have contributed to intellectual and spiritual upheaval which is at once ordeal and opportunity. At the same time the unchanging purpose of God has found its expression in prophets moved by vision of the Divine majesty and constrained by the sovereignty of Divine Grace. This article is concerned with the Preacher and His Message in these fateful times.

The Preacher.

The Preacher is "taken from among men, and appointed for men in things pertaining to God." He must be intensely human. Emerson went to Church one day, but could not tell from the sermon whether the preacher had ever really lived, loved, sinned, or suffered, had ever known temptation or the torment of dismay, had ever heard the laugh of a child or looked into an open grave. To exercise an effective ministry the preacher must be of the people, he must live with and know the people.

He must speak their tongue. Latimer aimed to speak so that "the servant and the handmaid shall carry away as much as the gentle sort." The twentieth century has its own problems, outlook and idioms. Taken from men and appointed for men of the twentieth century in things pertaining to God, we must declare His purpose and present His claim in the language of the twentieth century.

It is not enough that the preacher be a man among men; he must be a man of God. He dare not be a trafficker in borrowed beliefs, an exponent of religion which is a mere legacy from others. He must have personal experience of God and His Word "Every man is his own Columbus here, and his experience is as fresh and full of wonder as if no other man had known the joy of the same discovery,"

How essential is this experience is clear when we remember that the preacher is "appointed for men in things pertaining to God." The wandering tinkers who insisted in taking George Borrow for a minister, revealed the ultimate need of the human heart, when they cried, "O, sir, give us comfort in some shape or other, either as priest or minister. Give us God!" Mid all the changing scenes of life that need remains constant. It sets our task.

The Preacher is a man called and sent by God. It is possible to regard the ministry as a means of earning a living, as a calling that offers cultured

leisure, coveted leadership, or gratifying publicity. It is possible to enter not by the door, but by some other way, and to live and die as a hireling, if not a thief and robber.

The Call to the Ministry comes to few in dramatic, unmistakable setting such as Moses, Isaiah or Paul knew. To others it comes as a consciousness of the Divine imperative, an urge to proclaim the love of God in Christ, a conviction that a confirming Providence goes before, and that signs follow service for the Master.

The Preacher is sent with a Message; he is a servant of the Word. There is preaching which God give us grace to shun!—"pretty quotations, apposite anecdotes, an evident acquaintance with novels and biographies, a little dabbling in sentimental psychology, with a due reference to Jesus to round off the neatly turned sentences . . . with not enough Gospel in it . . . to save the soul of a tom-tit."

Whoso has seen God and come from His presence, has grasped the marvel and witnessed the outrage of human civilisation, and frankly faced the riddle of the individual—whoso takes on his lips such words as creation, sin, redemption, eternity, will speak with authority and urgency. For, under a holy unction, he goes forth to probe the heart, challenge the will, call for decision, and offer dynamic in the name of God. He becomes God's "Thou" to the hearer's "I." He cannot thrust his claim, his offer, into another's mind. He cannot get beyond the threshold, but, in the name of his Lord, he can stand at the door and knock. Thus he comes into the prophetic succession which has roused the race from ignoble sleep, has fired its imagination with lofty ideals, has nerved it for costly sacrifices, and has led it to victory, by declaring the will of God, especially the evangel of Christ.

The Message.

Turning to the Message, let us remember that in times past the messengers of God stood in intimate relation to their environment. The truth they announced was never in abstract terms, but was always linked up with the situation in which they found themselves. The Gospel is timeless and changeless; it is nevertheless contemporary—God's word for the present hour.

These preachers were careful not to compromise the Word. They did not seek to lead the world but to confront it with eternal truth. They used current thought-forms, not to echo its thought or to justify its ethic, but to make known the whole counsel of God.

For a generation influenced by the modern scientific outlook the preacher has no longer to find room for spiritual and religious values. The intellectual justification of theism is no longer one of our chief tasks. It is rather to proclaim a God who may be spoken of as "my God"—God realised in personal experience. The God of many scientists is little more than a principle of causality, far removed from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Erskine of Linlathen met a shepherd in the Highlands of Scotland, to whom, in that tone which combined sweetness with command, he said, "Do you know the Father?" The shepherd, taken aback, said nothing, but the wonderful personality of the questioner made so deep an impression that he could not get past the question. Meeting Erskine years after, he recognised him and said, "I know the Father now." It is not in Science to express the whole truth. When the scientist has spoken his last word, he cannot but leave the seeker unsatisfied, still echoing Philip's plaintive cry, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." The answer to that cry lies in the word of Jesus: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

To a generation steeped in philosophical or practical Humanism we preach the Grace of God that bringeth salvation. The Divine Initiative is utterly central in the New Testament. Christianity is not, as Brunner reminds us, something about our states of mind or religious experience. It is something primarily about God, who for us men and for our salvation revealed Himself in the Word made flesh.

"In these last days God has spoken unto us in a Son." That finer Humanism which exaggerates the Divine Immanence, at the expense of the transcendence of God, we confront with event, not argument. Humanism must reckon with the Babe of Bethlehem, with the fact of the Incarnation. In the days of His flesh men "beheld His glory." This is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men choose darkness rather than light."

The Christian proclamation is not "Christ," but "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." For amid all the changes of thought-form and expression there are elements in the human heart which are perennial. The modern man may not be worrying about his sins, but he is worrying about the burden of the world's sin as it presses hard upon him; and this, not merely as "the defect of the gregarious instinct," but as a matter for the individual conscience. The secret of man's sin and misery is his refusal of God's claim and call. Thus the Atonement lies at the heart of Christian preaching—the Good News of Redemption wrought in the Death of Christ, of Salvation offered by the Risen Lord.

To a generation delivered to the horrors of world-war by Totalitarian Ideology, and crushed by the pressure of modern Industrialism, we proclaim that valuation of human personality which is discoverable only at the Cross of Christ. The Totalitarian State sees man only as a means to an end, itself being the end. Industry has too long regarded the worker as an insignificant cog in the machine,, the machine being all. Hence the sense of the futility of human life. This we meet with the revelation of man created in the image of God, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, called into the fellowship of His body, the Church, and sent forth to establish the kingdom of God. No narrowing faith this! but one that sees the individual in the community, striving to direct it to the way of life in Christ.

Ours is a day of opportunity. The scientific attitude toward life, the trend toward a re-valuation of experience, the undertone of deep world-craving for moral and spiritual power, are all preparing the way for fuller appreciation of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Men have everything but life—the abundant life of which Jesus spoke, which is to be found only in Him. That we proclaim as having ourselves received it, as being ourselves charged with the message and dynamic of Divine Grace.

ALEXANDER CLARK.

THEOLOGY AGAIN.

IN a recent competition in a widely read weekly, modern variations of ancient proverbs were asked for. One of the aptest of the entries ran: "If theology goes out at the door, ideology comes in at the window." It is a truth which the present generation is having to learn in tears and blood. Many of those who ignored, if they did not scorn, theology, are now treating her with a new respect. They may not be ready to accept at once the statement of Mr. D. R. Davies that "the shortage of butter, e.g., is ultimately a theological question more even than an economic one," but they would assent far more readily to Forsyth's words than they would have done when he first uttered them: "The work done by theologians is not done for a small group of people with an interest in that hobby. It is not sectional work at all. It is first done for the

preachers and their preaching, and through them for the public, on the question of most universal moment." The statutory provision for religious worship and instruction in the schools, as contained in the new Education Act, and the discussions regarding the place of theology in the universities, modern as well as ancient, are straws in the wind. Their inspiration is lay rather than clerical. They indicate a renewed recognition that the nature of God, man and the universe as a whole is not only of ultimate and theoretical significance, but something with immediate, practical and far-reaching consequences.

The Christian minister, therefore, is once more required by those on the pavement, if not those in the pew, to be a Christian theologian. Whatever is expected in his services of public worship, if he is to be listened to at all by those whom he may meet in the streets, he must have something to say about the nature and destiny of man and the character and purpose of God. He must be ready to enter deep waters and no longer to keep to the shallows. The human scene is too tragic and the experiences of the past thirty years too searching for any easy answer to satisfy men's need. Mr. Charles Morgan in a recent much-discussed essay in the *Times Literary Supplement* went so far as to urge that the lack of a deep theological note in preaching was one of the main reasons why pews are empty. In his view, the absentees' "most frequent disappointment is in the sermons—not, as many parsons too modestly suppose, because they are too long or because they give offence, but for the opposite reasons that they are too scanty, that they do not strike deep enough, that they are too conciliatory and timid." This is to ask of clergy and ministers both harder thinking and a new technique, for recent decades have appeared to want only a topical address, of a rather chatty character, without passion and without dogmatism. But if Mr. Charles Morgan and others are right, the structure and delivery of sermons will require much closer study than they have had of recent years, and Biblical exposition, Christian apologetics and the preaching of the Word, will come once more into their own. Baptist ministers do well to note that it was a lay-President who prepared for the Annual Assembly the most seriously theological fare of recent years.

Perhaps most of the crucial theological issues of our own and the next generation are being hammered out and shaped in discussions in the fighting services, and in prison and concentration camps. Others, however, are being formulated in the schools and universities. Dr. Glover was fond of drawing attention to the significance of the fact that Paul, Augustine, Luther and Wesley were all academicians and that their epoch-making and soul-saving theologies were wrought out of their debates as young university men. It may, therefore, be useful to draw attention to one or two of the main topics which are being argued about in theological circles. Amid the multifarious demands made upon ministers to-day it is far from easy to keep abreast of what is being said and written and to see it in the right perspective.

One returning to a university after a dozen or fifteen years spent in unacademic pursuits is perhaps most surprised to find that the controversy regarding the relation of Science and Religion, which bulked so large in the nineteen twenties, is no longer of primary interest. The scientists are perhaps a little less sure of themselves, and the theologians a little less keen on accommodating their claims to the theories of science. Whether there has been any real or lasting reconciliation may be questioned. A few theologians—Dr. C. E. Raven being one of the most notable—believe that Christian thinkers should be busy preparing themselves for a renewal of the argument, which will perhaps have as its starting-point the widely accepted belief that the scientific attitude can itself become an adequate

philosophy of life. In the main, however, this is not a topic which at the moment stirs deep feelings.

Nor is there so much interest in Comparative Religion. Instead, the chief fields of debate are much more strictly Biblical and theological. The literary criticism of the Bible—conducted with great learning and care of recent generations—though it has solved many problems has created not a few new ones. It is now clear that many who have analysed Scripture have missed its impressive unity and that mere analysis and comparative and linguistic study fail to explain the authority of the Bible, the integral relation of Old Testament and New Testament, and the nature of the Canon. "Historical exegesis," said Dr. Wheeler Robinson recently, in a very significant article in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, "like patriotism, is not enough." The books of Canon Phythian Adams and Father Hebert may be criticised in places for an unscientific and uncritical exegesis. There is a danger in certain quarters of running back to a crude allegorism. Nevertheless, the interest in what is described as "Biblical theology" the interpretation of Scripture by Scripture, is the following of a true insight. The gains of "criticism" need not be surrendered, but it is plain that both O.T. and N.T. scholars must go on to provide our generation with theological commentaries which shall enable Scripture once more to speak to the plain man of Christ to Whom it witnesses from beginning to end.

Linked with this revived attention to the unity and the fundamental message of the Bible, is the study of what has been called "Confessional Theology," that is, a return to the foundation documents of the different theological traditions. The Renaissance and the Reformation represented a return across what seemed the arid expanse of many dark centuries to the glories of classical literature and the early Christian writings. What was then overlooked in medieval thought as much as that recent centuries have forgotten in the systems of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Reformers are now seen to have in them considerable truth and relevance to our present distresses. Maritain and Gilson have led the way back to Thomas Aquinas; Swedish and German scholars have turned again to Luther; Barth and his followers have found inspiration in Calvin. Their critics sometimes accuse them of archaism and obscurantism, but that is to miss the point of their appeal. Not a few Baptists are beginning to realise that there is still much that our own seventeenth century Confessions may say to us.

The new Confessional Theology has raised two vital issues. The first concerns the status and scope of Natural Theology considered as something distinct from Revelation. Over this matter there are acute differences of opinion. Are there certain general truths of religion? If so, what are they? What is their authority? And how are they related to the revelation of God in Christ? Kraemer raised these questions in 1938 in preparation for the Madras Conference. They continue the subject of keen debate by both Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians, and in addition attention has recently been focussed on the idea of natural law.

Confessional Theology leads back also to the question of the Church, its nature, authority and mission. The great Ecumenical Movement of the past thirty years has reached the stage where this doctrine claims close attention. The challenge to the Christian faith and way of life in both east and west has been met by believers bound together in worshipping, witnessing fellowships—believers conscious that they are part of the Body of Christ, sharing in the divine life by Word and Sacrament. The Church, then, can hardly be the secondary thing it has often been painted of recent generations. Is our traditional Nonconformist distinction between Faith and Order quite as obvious and secure as we have been

taught to believe? Would Smyth or Helwys or even Carey have thought so?

These are some of the issues being discussed. The debates will surely spread to ever-widening circles, for they are of far more than academic importance. All these theological issues are bound up with the gospel in its New Testament setting. The questions involved are not easily answered. The right answers demand the constant collaboration of theologians with pastors and preachers.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

AN EXPERIMENT IN CHRISTIAN UNITY.

AN interesting and probably a unique experiment in Christian unity is now being tried in Bristol. Five churches in one district—two Anglican, two Methodist and one Congregational—are functioning together as the Church of Christ in Redfield. The clergy and ministers understand each other and have a passionate desire to present the unity of Christian faith and life to the people in this working class area. They meet every Tuesday morning for a communion service, followed by breakfast and a conference, when the work for the week is planned out. They have a United Youth Club, meeting mostly on Methodist premises, but partly in other church halls. They have one magazine, to which each church contributes news of special interest. They hold united open-air services in the Summer, and a number of meetings and courses of talks during the rest of the year. They endeavour to secure cells of Christians of all denominations in each street in the district, to leaven the neighbourhood with the Christian faith, in much the same way as Communistic cells spread Communism. Each church has its own Sunday services and many of the normal church activities, but there is much interchange of pulpits and there are many opportunities of inter-church fellowship.

The neighbourhood, which was one of the poorest and most apathetic to religion in Bristol, has been markedly impressed. One Anglican church, practically derelict when the present vicar came, where often in the morning there was no-one present beside the vicar and the verger, is now humming with life and activity, and there is an atmosphere of real devotion in the worship. The vicar of this church, an Anglo-Catholic, is a most brotherly man, strongly evangelical, with a passion for social righteousness. Every Sunday evening he holds a simple unritualistic service of an evangelical character, which is the one which most draws the people, and which laymen and Free Churchmen as well as Anglicans are invited to conduct. Sir Stafford Cripps is among those who have conducted this service.

A great deal of the success is undoubtedly due to the vicar's personality and initiative and freedom from the "spikiness" that all too often is found among those who share some of his beliefs and practices. He impressed the people of the locality when at the beginning of the War he took up cudgels on behalf of those who were the victims of sharp practice or injustice. For example, if, when a man was called up, some firm that had sold him furniture on the hire purchase system unduly pressed the harassed wife for payment and ultimately took back the furniture, that firm would be pilloried by name from this pulpit, and the vicar, on the Monday would call on the principal of the firm and tell him face to face what he had said, adding that he would go on saying it until matters were put right. Any tradesman found profiteering illegally would be warned that if he continued the practice, attention would be called to the fact in the pulpit. It was amazing how shady practices, perpetrated against the poorest, were stopped.

Ministries of this kind are not too common, but this fearless passion for social justice, this burning desire for a united witness of the gospel of Christ, this brotherly love embracing all who profess and call themselves Christians, and reaching out to all those who are without Christ, is at the heart of this truly remarkable experiment; and it is perhaps not surprising that there should be spiritual results.

It may be that the revival for which we long cannot come to this generation while the Church of Christ is living within its denominational walls. If it be so, a great deal of our activity, our commissions and enquiries, are so much beating of the air. Would that this experiment might be multiplied in other places, that we might see if this thing be not indeed of God, pointing the way forward for the Church as a whole.

F. C. BRYAN.

OUR DIET OF WORSHIP

Paper read to the Berkshire Association Fraternal at Reading.

WHILE this paper aims at the practical, there are certain fundamental ideas which must first be considered. The nature of the Worshipper determines the nature of Worship. Whether it be Christian worship will be decided, not by the outward expression, but by the inward experience of the worshipper. To affirm that "worship is a way by which we come to God," leaves open a prior question. A report published by the Congregational Union upon the subject of worship, making this assertion, leaves it vaguely open who is meant by "we." Neither is this a small point, for a man who approaches God as a Christian worshipper must already "believe that He is, and that He proves Himself a repayer of those who earnestly seek Him." Again, "God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"—"For the Father seeketh such."

Therefore it is some previous experience of God which enables worship; an experience in which God comes to the man, the sinner. Without that experience which brings God's active Grace into his heart, it is impossible to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. We shall fail to distinguish truly between Christian worship, and all other worship, unless this point be clear. It is necessary to emphasise that this alone is Christian worship, that only those "can come to God by Worship" to whom God has already come in redemption. Dr. P. T. Forsyth declared, "Everything has come to turn on man's welfare, instead of God's worship, on Man with God to help him, and not on God with man to wait upon Him. The fundamental heresy of the day, now deep in Christian belief itself is humanist." The man who experiences God's redeeming grace will recognise worship to be something God has a right to expect, is willing to evoke, and gave His only begotten Son that it might be possible.

Free-churchmen will do well to emphasise this view in a day when State Departments urge worship upon the nation because somehow it seems to help maintain morale. In a pamphlet "Worship, Decline and Recovery" a group of Free-church ministers plead for fidelity to the Gospel in worship. They believe that the Free Churches need to be recalled to the standards of the Gospel. Dr. Dakin, more explicitly, declares, "Underlying our worship is the fundamental idea of the sacrifice of Christ. Baptists share this with all evangelicals. It is the evangelical type of worship they adopt. In it there is, first, the continued effort to appreciate ever more fully what God has done for us in Christ, and then, secondly, to appropriate ever more fully the benefits and blessings of it. Evangelicals hold it a mistake to start from the human end when thinking of worship, and to talk about our offering something to God." There is real need for evangelicals to test their worship in the light of that state-

ment. Karl Barth has somewhere written that the "Baptism-communion context" is the true framework of true Christian worship; a statement Baptists have a greater right to assert. Christian worship is real only within a covenant relation, in which God initiates the approach and man responds in self-surrender to God on His terms.

There is a way for man to rise,
To that sublime abode—
An offering and a Sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An advocate with God.

Yet another point. The Free Church minister has a function in public worship different from that of the worshippers in the pew. Like Habakkuk he is obliged to speak with God on man's behalf as well as like Amos, to speak to men on God's behalf. This more priestly office has received less thought amongst us than the prophetic office. Does this leadership in the worship of God give to us some responsible function in which the congregation does not share? (That any one of them would bear that especial burden if occupying the pulpit we have no doubt. It is not for a special office we plead, but clearer thinking about a function of Ministry). A better understanding of this leadership would help us to efface ourselves the more effectively. There is a human "numinous" as well as a divine which is often mistaken for the Holy Spirit. Do our people experience in our services but the imposition of the preacher's numinous? Is the fellowship of worship oft-times nothing more than the stone of human "crowd" numinous, rather than the bread of Holy Communion with God? The human numinous, his own and the crowd's, is part of the stock-in-trade of all public speakers, and there are pseudo forms of worship in which man is more prominent than God. For this reason mass meetings must be suspect as vehicles of true worship. The spirit of "Where two or three," may be much more honoring to God, if less flattering to man. Ought we not to arouse, in our people, something of that deep overwhelming experience they knew when first they saw the Lord? When we lead *their* prayers should they not feel what Francis Thompson once felt?

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched, caressingly?

In this our aim should be two-fold. Among Christians to stimulate adoring wonder at God's gracious presence. Among non-Christians to create the conditions in which God's word may wing its way into the unsaved heart. Who is sufficient for these things? May we not learn both from those who have built devotional forms of worship, and from those evangelists who evidently knew more of this sacred art than is usually credited to them?

What forms should worship take? Dean Inge's taunt of "squalid sluttery" is not deserved. The Free Churches are building upon N.T. foundations a type of worship which one day will be more deeply rooted in universal Church practice than present Anglican forms, borrowing, as they increasingly do, from the pagan-founded "meritricious gaudiness of Rome." Let us be true to N.T. origins, and our reformed traditions. We must avoid ruts as we have learned to avoid ritual. No one order of Service should slavishly be followed twice every Sunday. The element of surprise in a service may stab broad awake some slumbering soul, and introduce a freshness inspired by the winds of heaven. We all have our patterns upon which we choose our hymns, they may well be useful, but not as chains.

Some still cling to the "hymn-sandwich" type of service in which other items are *separated* from each other by a "good sing." The uncritical, and the unsensitive will be satisfied with this sort of provision, but it may be doubted if they have been led to worship God. Ought there not to be some provision for the public declaration of faith in words corresponding to the Creed? It would not aim, as the Creed does, to complete or final statements. But our folk need some reminder of the "whole round" of their faith, which is not, nor could be, supplied by preaching. It could be scriptural in terms, and of varied forms and emphasis. There is a field here for the writers of our service manuals.

It is fatal to think of prayer as a separated item in worship, yet leadership in prayer as such is the crucial test of every service. For if we fail here, the preaching will also fail in proportion. Increasingly we are using a variety of forms, and the shapeless rambling prayer known as the long prayer is dying out. Our forms should vary from week to week; guided prayer, or bidding prayers; prayers modelled on an announced theme; groups of prayers on given subjects in a progressive order; read prayers; our own, or other people's (this more rarely as a help in a dry season), are all acceptable.

Of special forms of worship there is little space to speak. A word or two about some must suffice.

1. Prayer Meetings. Here is a field for experiment. Young Christians show little desire for aptitude in the older type of meeting. Is it right that the major part of such meetings should be borne by the leader? There is need for more thoughtful contribution by both leader and led. Our people need nothing so desperately as to recover the lost art of co-operative prayer in some form or other.

2. Dedication of Infants. This service should be renamed "A service for the Dedication of Parenthood," in which the Child-Parent relation is the key note It should never be a service in isolation, but part of the worship of the whole Church in which the responsibility of both Parent and Church under God for the child is fully recognised. Literature about our view of such a service ought to be prepared which could be placed in the hands of expectant parents well before the service takes place. Spiritual preparation for the coming of the Child must catch up with advance in material preparation. Some following up of the Service, at least annually, seems to be called for. The dignity of the family is thereby recognised, and worship shown to be in touch with life.

3. Baptismal Service. The conduct of this service has much improved of recent years. Little here need be said, except to raise a question. Ought we to include a more complete declaration of faith on the part of the candidate. The service ought always to be conducted as part of the normal worship of the community in which the candidate is known. There is still grave need to emphasise that it is *believer's* Baptism we practice; the emphasis should be here rather than on the fact of immersion. Other Free-churchmen still misunderstand our distinctive faith, and many of our own people are hazy about it.

4. *COMMUNION SERVICE.* By no means least because last. This service ought not to be allowed to become the addendum and anticlimax it so often is amongst us. That it livingly survives is testimony to its divine character ratherthan to our reverent regard for its centrality in worship. Two points call for comment. i. It ought to be restored as a service in itself with peaching as a preparation. ii. It ought to be a more regular feature of our worship, and the writer would plead for such a service every Sunday Morning. The Churches of Christ have something

to teach us in this respect, even though we could not accept all their theory concerning it. If we leave this central act of worship where it now is upon the circumference of our practice, will it not lead to decentralising the truths for which it stands? That we should find some worthier place and time for the "remembering of His Death" than at the end of the day in an "extra" service seems to be more than obvious. The breaking down of long practice will need patient handling, but there is no doubt that we must address ourselves to the task. P. H. CRUNDEN.

NEWMAN'S "ESSAY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE." 1845.

THE place a theologian gives to history in his account of revelation shows fairly well when he wrote. During the early years of the nineteenth century, British theologians still tended to think of revelation as God's communication of certain ideas about Himself, and to regard its content as a body of doctrine whose validity depended upon an external divine authority, which, for Protestants, was the divinely inspired words of Scripture, and for Roman Catholics, the infallible church. Protestants rejected the claim that the distinctive doctrines of the Roman church were divinely revealed, on the ground that since they were not taught in Holy Scripture, they were a corruption of the primitive Christian gospel. If a Roman Catholic apologist wished to contend that his church's teaching was a divine revelation, he might admit, if he were sufficiently venturesome, that neither the New Testament church nor the Fathers accepted Roman doctrine in its fullness, and then affirm that, nevertheless, the Faith defined, for example, by the Council of Trent, was a genuine development of the faith held in a rudimentary form in earlier times. That is to say, he might try to connect revelation with historical development.

Newman made this attempt in one of the most significant books of the century, "An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine." He wrote it one hundred years ago while he was still a member of the Church of England, and he left it unfinished when, convinced by his own argument, he joined the Roman Church on October 9th, 1845. From several points of view, the "Essay" is notable. It has a considerable biographical interest since it indicates Newman's thought at the climax of his earlier religious life. As literature, it is an excellent example of his more severe style. His pose in the "Essay" has none of the irony and satire it has in the "Present Position of Catholics," none of the gentle wistfulness which makes it so moving in the "Apologia," nor is it vividly dramatic as in the sermon on "The Mental Sufferings of Our Lord," but its cadences are exquisitely modulated, it is clear and supple, and in the paragraphs of the abrupt close, regal. The "Essay" is theologically important. It marks Newman's final repudiation of his defence of Anglicanism in "The Via Media;" it introduces for the first time into British theological discussion the conception of historical development which was destined to become so influential in the later years of the century.

Newman begins by discussing the development of ideas. "The idea," he says, "is commensurate with the sum total of its possible aspects, however they may vary in the separate consciousness of individuals." Living ideas grow, and the development of an idea is the "process by which aspects of an idea are brought into consistency and form." Developments of doctrine are to be expected because "the more vaim an idea has

to be considered living, the more various will be its aspects," and Christianity has the foremost place among ideas which by reason of their depth and richness cannot be understood at once. He asserts that the leading idea of Christianity is the Incarnation. Newman uses the term "idea" ambiguously; the "idea" of Christianity may mean men's notion of it, or it may mean "essential Christianity," and he confuses the two. Again, has Christianity a "leading idea?" F. D. Maurice, criticising the "Essay" in his "Lectures on Hebrews," argued that it had not, and Loisy afterwards made the same denial the starting point of his criticism of Harnack's "History of Dogma." Not all doctrinal developments are of equal importance; therefore, said Newman, an infallible developing authority is to be expected in order that it may decide among them. At this point in the "Essay" is a passage which is crucial for the understanding of Newman's theology and, indeed, of himself: . . . . " as the essence of all religion is authority and obedience, so the distinction between natural religion and revealed lies in this that the one has subjective authority and the other an objective. Revelation consists in the manifestation of an Invisible Divine Power, or in the substitution of the voice of a Lawgiver for the voice of conscience. The supremacy of conscience is the essence of natural religion; the supremacy of Apostle, or Pope, or Church, or Bishop, is the essence of revealed . . ." Maurice has a pertinent comment on this passage: the essence of revealed religion is the truth to which a Bishop or a Pope bears witness. Conscience will not own them if they seek to speak in the place of God. In the second part of the "Essay," Newman asks how we may distinguish development from corruption, and he indicates six characteristics which faithful developments alone possess. A genuine development preserves type, although preservation must not be pressed to the point of denying all variation; it exhibits continuity of principles; it has a power of assimilation so that "it becomes many, yet remains one." Here, perhaps, Newman most closely approaches the later doctrine of evolution. Further, it has logical sequence in the sense that the conclusions of a long process of thought are reached not by explicit influence, but by what Newman in "The Grammar of Assent" called "the illative sense," which, working unconsciously in many minds to mould and shape an idea, yields as a final product what is recognised to be implied by the original material. Again, an idea genuinely develops when it anticipates its future. "Early or recurring intimations of tendencies which afterwards are fully realised, is a sort of evidence that these later and more systematic fulfilments are only in accordance with the original idea." Finally, genuine development is characterised by chronic vigour, for "corruption leads at once to dissolution." Newman concluded that since the doctrine of the post-Tridentine Roman church was a living whole possessing all these characteristics, it was a genuine development of the faith of the primitive church.

As a defence of Roman Catholicism, the book gives the impression of being a clever piece of special pleading in support of a conclusion already reached, rather than of being an attempt to follow the argument wherever it leads. The importance of the "Essay" lies elsewhere. To maintain that Newman anticipates by fourteen years the conclusions of "The Origin of Species" in their theological bearing, is inaccurate. Newman uses biological terms but he is concerned not so much with tracing the evolution of Christian theology as with the validity of certain doctrines; his valuable contribution to theology was his insistence that in judging their validity due weight must be given to the fact of historical growth. Contemporary Protestants, as Newman rightly pointed out, were deficient in historical sense, and Newman's work did much to set history in its proper place. He failed to notice, however, that when Protestants exalted the Bible, they were really exalting history, and that some Roman

Catholics, St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, have also had little feeling for history. The Christian faith is a divine revelation in history and the consideration of the truth of its doctrines necessarily involves the consideration of historical issues. When Newman was writing, both Catholics and Protestants paid little attention to the connection between history and revelation. The idea of development was unwelcome to both. Catholics felt that to admit that not all the doctrines and practices of the Roman church were those of primitive Christianity came perilously near to admitting the force of Protestant criticism, while Protestants felt that to concede development was to imperil the authority of Holy Scripture and to give standing ground to Rome. It is Newman's merit that he appealed to history for support of the unwelcome fact that no Christian doctrine is now precisely what it was in the days of the Apostles, and urged that change resulting from new experience, new thought, and new insight, was to be expected in a faith based on God's revelation and abiding presence in history.

The "Essay" has several weaknesses. It proves too much. According to Newman, an infallible church watches over the development of doctrine. But why begin by accepting the infallibility of the church? Has not the doctrine of infallibility itself developed? And why should we be content to regard modern Roman doctrine as the final repository of revelation? If development has occurred in the past, has it now ceased? Newman supplies a powerful impetus to historical relativism which, according to Bury, is much more damaging to Christian faith than the deliverances of science. Moreover, Newman's view of revelation is inadequate, in spite of his understanding of the significance of history. The content of revelation is not a body of doctrine whose truth is guaranteed by an infallible authority. Christian reflection on revealed truth is itself one of the means by which God continues to reveal Himself to men, so that revelation is continued in Christian theology as it historically develops. But what is this revealed truth by which Christians live and upon which they reflect? Is it true doctrine? Surely not. It is God's gracious action in Christ for our salvation. To have grasped that revelation is not dogma but an historic event was the great achievement of F. D. Maurice, a finer Christian thinker than Newman. Of such a revelation infallibility is not the bodyguard. God preserves his truth in the world not by an infallible authority, but by judgments in history, not by official institutions, but by the witness of events, not by a hierarchy, but by prophets, apostles, martyrs, and by all faithful men who bear witness to His saving work in Christ.

G. J. M. PEARCE.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON WORKING IN A FELLOWSHIP.

IT must be understood that these are purely personal reflections; they are not the findings of any group of Churches, nor have they been made in consultation with one's fellow-ministers in a Fellowship. They are entirely unofficial. The same work, to a different man, might appear very different; and Fellowships, too, must vary considerably by their nature, e.g., whether they are town or country groups; whether in hilly, difficult country or, as is the case with the writer, in the flat Fens

The type of fellowship here is that of seven village causes, plus the church of a large country town, and the church of a smaller country town. The two latter have each a settled Pastor, and the seven village causes are under the care of two other Pastors, called to this particular work when the whole nine churches were fused into a Fellowship four years ago. The seven village churches fall into two natural geographical groups of

three and four respectively; but the groups are too far apart (twelve to sixteen miles) to permit of much inter-working between the two ministers responsible. The business of the Fellowship is done by a Council, consisting of the four ministers, a chairman, secretary and treasurer, and two representatives from each of the nine churches. The Council has fairly wide powers, including the appointment of Ministers, the responsibility for their stipends and for the general working expenses of the Fellowship.

All the above sounds very official and may imply that the writer has this particular Fellowship only in mind; but he is conscious of the whole experiment in Fellowships anywhere.

Firstly then, the churches themselves seem to be grateful for the experiment that has been made. The ministers may be far from satisfied, and may feel that the Fellowship has not realised all that was hoped for; but the churches, looking back on the hard struggle when they were independent causes, feel that a great tension and responsibility has been lifted from them. It certainly has eased their financial strain, and at the same time relieved the anxiety of the minister. But while on the point of finance, one may raise the question—will these churches ever again make the effort and the necessary sacrifice to become once more independent and self-supporting—if that is desirable? Obviously some can never reach that status. All are working hard and sacrificing much now; but it is scarcely the same thing as aiming at the maintenance of a Pastor for themselves.

This raises, of course, the whole question of our independency. Do we, as Baptists, do our best work in single-church pastorates or in Groups? I recognise that it is not possible to give a clear-cut answer either way. Those in authority doubtless know many instances where grouping has saved a village cause from extinction. But, if it is not treason for a "Fellowship" minister to say so, I believe our Baptist genius lies in the single-pastorate tradition. The idea of the Minister being Pastor and "Father" of one flock has been in large measure the secret of our strength. This means, for the writer, that the "Fellowship" ideal should not become our aim for the whole Denomination; but recognised only as a necessity under special circumstances, i.e., for reasons of finance or of finding a minister sufficient work for his powers. Though here again the writer is so convinced of the value of the minister on the spot idea that he would favour some secular employment combined with the pastoral office, as a means of eking out the finances and of providing full employment. He has even wild ideas that some of our young men fresh from College might be asked to tackle village churches in a Commando spirit, by remaining single for a year or two and even prepared to ignore the minimum stipend provisions. I believe the Anglican Church has serious ideas on these lines, a kind of modern "hedge-priest" order, fully trained, of course. Would this recover something of the simplicity and adventure of the New Testament? I realise much that can be said against it. No man likes to suggest financial or social hardship to his brethren. It is not altogether good, either, for a young man fresh from College to begin in a hard and perhaps discouraging sphere. And I am not sure that our Baptist Churches take as kindly to an unmarried ministry as would our Anglican friends.

All the above springs out of a minister's sense of frustation when he thinks of his other causes three or six miles away from his home. How, adequately, can he be their Minister? It is almost inevitable that the church where he lives gets the lion's share of his service, and those distant churches miss, too, whatever influence his home life and public life may have.

In spite of what has been said, a Minister may be very happy in Fellowship work. There is much to be said for it from the Minister's point of view. As already pointed out it gives some relief from financial anxiety. It brings some relief, too, from the exacting work of preparing three sermons each week, and from the strain of being always before the same congregation. It introduces him to more types of people than he might find in any one church. If he has a bent for organisation or executive work, he will probably find more scope for it in a Fellowship than in a single Pastorate. This demand for detail work, plan making, committees, etc., may put others off. And, of course, the very fact that a man is coming to small churches may mean that he will have to undertake duties which he would be excused in a larger church, e.g., the running of young people's organisations, and probably the Sunday School. In Fellowship work, too, there must be a certain standard of physical fitness. A man must be prepared to cycle many miles in all weathers, although, of course, some Fellowships may be well placed for transport.

We have said that the Minister is spared the task of facing the same congregation at each service, but this brings with it disadvantages, too. He can do little consecutive preaching, and so finds it difficult to exercise a teaching ministry. He very gladly and gratefully avails himself of the help of lay preachers in the filling of his pulpit. Making out the quarterly Preachers' Plan is one of the most arduous of his duties, and he realises how few young Baptist lay preachers we have coming along. If our Fellowships are to be a success, we must face this question of calling out and training young lay preachers. It is here that the large town church often associated with a Fellowship can make a valuable contribution to the smaller churches. If it can maintain a steady supply of lay preachers, able to go out to the village causes, it is rendering very high service.

Finally, a thought on Fellowships and fellowship. The name suggests that we have found a new way of drawing the churches together. On the whole this is probably true. The churches are conscious of belonging to one another a little more than in the days of the old independency. We must not forget, however, that the time-honoured District Meetings did, and do still, provide a good deal of fellowship. I am not sure that, so far as the ordinary church member is concerned, we have added anything to that fellowship. Under a grouping scheme we certainly have a closer union of ministers and Fellowship officers and representatives; but this does not necessarily mean that the congregations themselves are more closely united. It is difficult, of course, with widely separated country churches and with war-time restriction of transport, to achieve much in the way of fellowship between congregations or even fellowship between bodies of deacons; but this is what we need. It is the drawing of our people together and the enrichment of their own church life at which we must aim. The return to peace-time travel conditions and a little earnest planning will, we hope, help towards this closer fellowship.

W. B. WILSON.

THE BAPTIST CREED AND THE BAPTIST POLITY.

THE September *Fraternal* gives food for thought and discussion. In it, various writers seek to expound Baptist Polity. Each contains hints of uneasiness, and shows a desire for clarification.

A discrimination exists between Baptist Creed and Baptist Polity. The Creed is clear and is held by all Baptists. It affirms Believers' Baptism, and on this there can be no compromise. But when we turn to Polity differences appear. It may seem strange that after three hundred

years there should still be no general agreement here; yet such is the case.

The importance of the local church as a group of gathered believers has always been emphasised, perhaps over-emphasised. It is noticeable that within recent years there has been a change of emphasis: the Baptist Union in particular has tried to encourage a larger conception of the unity of the whole body. But many Baptist churches—jealous of their independence—have not risen to that ideal and remain outside the Baptist Union. And even among others there is little enthusiasm for the Union or for the polity for which it stands. Delegates to the Spring Assembly find it a refreshing holiday and a chance for meeting kindred souls. It is not the ecclesiastical interest that attracts them, and, moreover, the speeches might for the most part be addressed to any Free Church. Certainly the resolutions of the Union are far from having the authority of the Church Council assembled in Jerusalem.

Nor is there much cohesion among the scattered churches. "We know," says the *Fraternal* "of one church where the kindly offer of a minister in a nearby town to give occasional help was refused, and of another where a church in a country district, within a few miles of three towns, where there are three resident ministers, is unable to secure assistance from any one of them." Such cases could be multiplied, and they lead to one question—the system or rather lack of system which makes them possible. As Eric Knight says "there is something wrong with such a system." And Dr. Dakin says "we have taken it for granted that they know these." How true this is, and how seldom does one hear a sermon on these principles, or on the organic relation of Baptists to the universal church.

The origin of Baptist churches is not always creditable. Bold planning is denied because of the unwillingness of individual churches to delegate the necessary powers.

Nor is there any necessary connection between Creed and Polity. So far as creed goes you can be a staunch Baptist and yet prefer some other form of Church Government. Indeed, many, unable to attend the Baptist church, find a congenial home in some sister church near their homes.

On the Mission field we have abandoned the Independent Polity. It could not be translated overseas to small churches widely separated, which are unable to support a minister. What is done is to group them under the oversight of a Superintendent Minister. He examines candidates and administers the sacraments, other services are carried on by the local members. It is a combination of the Methodist-Presbyterian system. We have our Associations and our Presbyteries. The ministers are appointed by the Presbyteries, on which the lay members are represented. There are no long intervals between pastorates. The system works well, and, as all systems of church government are provisional, they need no fuller sanction. In the New Testament we find the germs of all three main church orders—Congregational, Presbyterian and Episcopal. There is no exclusive authority for any one of these. Baptist Polity can be, and often is, divorced from Baptist Creed. The church of the Mission field is at one with the Home church on the Creed, but it takes a line of its own with regard to Polity. The Church in China is a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating Community, free and independent of the Home Society.

The safety of the Baptist Creed, therefore, does not depend on its Church Polity. The Creed is primary, the Polity secondary. The trend, therefore, towards greater unity and cohesion among our Baptist churches is to be welcomed.

E. W. BURT.

B. U. ACCREDITED LIST.

THE Editorial in the September *Fraternal* pleads that every church should be served by an accredited Baptist minister. So much emphasis is laid on that word "accredited" that those who have not been allowed to attain that distinction are being overtly slighted.

Yet of the 2,000 accredited ministers nearly a quarter are without pastoral charge, and of the 2,000 ministers actually in charge of a church nearly a quarter are not on the accredited list.

If these men were kept off because of inefficiency nothing need be said, but, as I know from personal experience, some are prevented from coming on to the list purely because of age.

I was over 40 when I felt the call to take up a whole-time ministry. For years I had been a lay preacher, twice President of the Bradford Free Church Council, and was on the Executive of the National Free Church Council. I was a Trained Certificated teacher and had held three headships in Bradford. In 1937 I received a call to Cullingworth and after my recognition I sought permission to take the examination for non-collegiate ministers. I was told that while I was recognised as a minister of Jesus Christ I could not be recognised as a minister of the Baptist Union.

There was no question of financial responsibility as I was prepared to guarantee that I would not come on the Union for sustentation or pension. May I be allowed to add that my last post as Headmaster brought me more than three times as much as I have ever received as a Minister?

I was not present at the Annual Meeting of the Fellowship but I wondered what "sense of brotherhood" with us unaccredited ministers pervaded the meeting.

Our services are readily accepted and are gladly given. In spite of our treatment we take good share in Baptist activities. I serve on the committee of the Bradford Council and of the Yorkshire Association, and am the Acting Secretary of the Bradford Baptist Missionary Council.

To be cold-shouldered is never pleasant, especially when one's honest desire is to serve without regard to financial return. A little more generosity on the part of our accredited brethren would not be unappreciated.

FOSTER SUNDERLAND.

The B.M.F. includes in its membership all Baptist ministers whether on the full ministerial list or not, and the columns of the *Fraternal* are open to every point of view. The Editorial Board, therefore, willingly inserts Mr. Foster Sunderland's contribution.

The figures given are approximately correct, but it should be borne in mind that names of ministers on the full list, but not in pastoral charge, include, among others, more than 350 retired men, while brethren who are not on the Accredited list but are in pastorates include ministers accredited by the Welsh B.U., Lay Pastors, Hon. Pastors, Ministers who are preparing for the B.U. Exam. and others who do not desire B.U. recognition.

The suggestion that there was a possible absence of the "sense of brotherhood" at our Annual Meeting would not have been made if Mr. Sunderland had had the opportunity of attending. Nor do we think that, in view of the many offices he holds, he can complain of being cold-shouldered. The general question, however, of the age-limit qualification for entering our Ministry, is one worthy of consideration.—EDITORIAL BOARD.