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# The Fraternal

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## EDITORIAL

THERE is much talk today among Christians about "our unhappy divisions". These come to their sharpest focus in the Communion. Anyone who has attended a conference of Christians of many denominations knows the poignancy of growing into a rich fellowship and friendship with others in Christ, only to find it broken when separate Communion Services are announced.

Perhaps because it was here that Christians felt most keenly their divisions, the ecumenical movement endeavoured for a time to deal with this. "Until we can meet together at one Table", it was said, "we cannot go along far together". That was like trying to paint a picture from a photograph; to communicate a living experience in a finally developed, fixed and finished form. Unfortunately we all had photographs taken from different angles, so that in some the Table appeared to be in the wrong place, while in others the right person was not even in the picture. It was, however, a salutary beginning because it did two things for us. It made us look elsewhere for the source of our fellowship and sent us back to a fresh examination of our beliefs and practices of Communion.

This issue of *The Fraternal* includes articles on The Communion which should encourage all of us to go on thinking with that humility of mind which makes us teachable.

The most hopeful thing about our different Communion beliefs and practices is that through them all there is an essential unity of experience summed up in those words which we often sing at the Lord's Table:

*Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face.*

To Roman Catholic, Protestant, Anglican and Free-Churchman the two basic truths and experiences which find us in this service are The Grace of God and the Presence of our Lord. Some, like the Roman Catholics, attempt to deny that these are given in Communion services other than their own. If we look closer we find that the real point of our differences is how and under what conditions they are, in fact, given. Perhaps the first step for all of us to take is to recognise that:

*The Love of God is broader  
Than the measures of man's mind.*

One of the greatest needs in our own denomination is to recognise our own failings. If we criticise the separation of the Word and Sacrament in those denominations which hold Communion services without any preaching, we must go on to condemn that same separation in Baptist churches where many members walk out after the sermon and do not stay for Communion.

How much the Communion comes to mean to our members depends, humanly speaking, mostly on what it means to us who preside at the Table. That is an awesome thought. If here, we who are the least of all saints, find grace to continue in the ministry by allowing our Lord to feed us with that Bread of Life which we endeavour to proclaim to others, there is good hope that they, too, will learn "to feed on Him in their hearts with thanksgiving and to drink of His Cup of the New Covenant".

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#### B.W.A. CONGRESS, July 16th—22nd

The pattern of the Jubilee Congress is now becoming clearer, and a fascinating design is emerging. At the moment of writing the number of registrations is a little more than 5,500, but it is expected that the total will be nearer 7,000. These will be coming from 40 countries, as against 23 countries in 1905. They include nationals of many lands then regarded as heathen. From our B.M.S. Congo field, for instance, two fully trained and ordained African pastors are coming. How men like Thomas Lewis and George Grenfell would have rejoiced to see that! From countries behind the Iron Curtain delegates are coming: 3 from Poland, 4 from Hungary, 1 from Jugoslavia, and 9 from Russia. Other registrations include 48 from Spain, 13 from Nigeria, 2 from Cameroons, and 2 from Japan.

All the big Congress meetings will be held at the Albert Hall, where we are making history, for the authorities say they have never before had the Albert Hall booked morning, afternoon and evening for a whole week. It is obvious that Baptists are creating interest in circles wider than their own. That is not less true of the engagement of the Arsenal Football Ground for the Final Rally on the Friday evening, July 22nd. The concluding address has come traditionally to be known as the Coronation Address, and it will be delivered by Dr. Billy Graham. There, too, it is probable that we shall make history. Has there ever been in this country a gathering of over 60,000 Baptists?

Sectional meetings for Women, Laymen, Young People and Ministers will be held at other centres, Westminster Chapel, Bloomsbury and Central Hall, where Headquarters for the week will be situated, with Rest Room, Information Bureau, Currency Exchange, etc. There, too, will be staged the Exhibition, which will express Baptist life and activity in many lands.

On the Wednesday evening a Pageant, prepared by the Rev. A. C. Davies, will be presented. For those unable to see it then the Full Dress Rehearsal on the previous Friday evening will be public. A Congress Newspaper or Bulletin will be issued three times during the week; and there is so much else to say that this note could easily run on into a complete article. Let me conclude, then, by saying that, the picture being thus presented, it remains for us all to pray for God's blessing upon it all, and not least the precious fellowship in Christ that the Congress represents.

E. E. PESKETT.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

### I. INSTITUTION

**W**E have in the New Testament four accounts of what we are accustomed to call the institution of the Lord's Supper. Three of these accounts, those in the Synoptic Gospels, are firmly set in the historical framework of the passion narrative. The fourth, the account of Paul in 1 Corinthians xi, is presented as a specific tradition received from the Lord.

The contradictory opinions which are held about the nature of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament are, in part, traceable to the divergencies of the accounts themselves. Perhaps an even more divisive factor, however, is the problem of the nature of the last supper of Jesus with His disciples. If agreement could be reached at this point it would not be so difficult to answer the numerous problems connected with the divergent accounts.

The first question which must be faced in determining the nature of the last meal of Jesus is whether or not it was an observance of the Passover. The problem is extremely complex and cannot be fully presented here. It is essentially a question of whether the chronology of the Gospel of John or that of the Synoptics is correct in the dating of the last events in the life of Jesus. In the Synoptics, Jesus sends his disciples to prepare the Passover on the afternoon of the 14th of the Jewish month Nisan. In the evening, which is the beginning of the 15th of Nisan, he eats the Passover with his disciples and is crucified on Friday the 15th of Nisan (Mark xiv, 12 ff.). In John, the events occur a day earlier and Jesus is crucified on Friday the 14th of Nisan at the time when the paschal lamb is being slain. Thus, in John's Gospel, Jesus did not eat the Passover with his disciples, but ate his last meal with them some twenty-four hours earlier than the observance of Passover (John xix, 31, 42; xiii, 29; xviii, 28; xix, 14).

Many attempts have been made to decide between the chronology of John and the Synoptics, including appeals to astronomical calculations to determine whether the 14th of Nisan fell on Thursday or Friday in the year of the crucifixion. All attempts to present conclusive evidence have failed. Perhaps the most satisfactory answer that can be given to the problem is that of Leenhardt, who says that although we cannot be certain that the last meal of Jesus with his disciples was a Passover, yet the nearness of that feast and its importance for the piety of every Israelite forces us to think that paschal theology dominated the thoughts of Master and disciples at the last meal. Such an answer means that although there is some justification for interpreting the Lord's Supper against the background of the Passover, we must be warned against giving such an interpretation too much weight. It is clearly unwise to start from the Passover in our attempt to interpret the Lord's Supper in the New Testament.

A second question about the nature of the last meal of Jesus must be raised in regard to the intention of Jesus at this last meal. If it was a Passover meal, did Jesus intend to institute an observance which was to replace the Passover? Did he intend the meal to be repeated each year or more often? If it was not a Passover meal, was Jesus intending to introduce a new practice into the religious observance of his disciples, or was the meal simply the conclusion of a long series of fellowship meals which Jesus now knew to be coming to an end? Was it the intention of Jesus that the meal should be repeated in the life of the coming community? The answer we give to such questions will be dependent upon our interpretation of the nature of the earthly ministry of Jesus and upon our reconstruction of what Jesus said and did during the last meal.

That Jesus intended to establish a rite which should be repeated after His death seems to be quite in harmony with the mission of Jesus and His own interpretation of that mission. If He knew Himself to be the chosen instrument of God for the salvation of the world, there can be no difficulty in assuming that He instituted the Lord's Supper as a rite to be continued or (and the two cannot be separated) that He intended the creation of the Church.

But what about our sources? Did Jesus, or did He not, command that the last supper should be repeated by the disciples? Here we must answer with some hesitancy. If we had only Paul's account there would be no question about the matter, for in connection with both bread and cup Jesus says: "This do in remembrance of Me". Luke, however, has the command to repeat in connection with the bread alone (assuming that the longer text is original), and in both Mark and Matthew there is no indication of a command of repetition.

We must remember, of course, that it is entirely possible that although Jesus intended that the meal should be repeated, He did not give a specific command to that effect. In that case it would be possible to assume that some action or word of Jesus was sufficient to indicate His intention and that this later became fixed as a definite command in the tradition which Paul received. If the command to repeat were originally present in connection with both bread and wine, how could we explain its complete disappearance in the Marcan tradition? It seems that we must be satisfied with the probability that Jesus intended the meal to be repeated and with the fact that the Church at a very early date, and apparently from the beginning, observed the Lord's Supper as a vital part of its worship.

Much more important than the Passover nature of the last meal or the command of repetition is the question about the actual words of institution. What did Jesus say about the bread and wine? Or, more properly, what is the earliest recoverable form of the words of institution?

In regard to the words spoken about the bread it is relatively simple to determine the earliest form. The introductory formulae of Matthew and Mark are evidently liturgical additions. They have:

"Take (eat); this is my body". Both Luke and Paul have no introductory formula and simply state that Jesus said: "This is my body". The original form was probably without introduction.

The additions of Paul and Luke at the end of the phrase are also secondary. Paul has: "This is my body which is for you", while Luke adds: "which is given for you". That these additions are secondary is clear from the fact that such an expression as appears in Paul is impossible in Aramaic. If it were original how could we explain its omission in Mark-Matthew? Evidently it is an interpretive addition which seeks to define more clearly the connection between the bread and the substitutionary death of Christ. Thus we must conclude that the earliest recoverable form of the words spoken about the bread is the short form common to all four accounts: "This is my body".

It is not so easy to determine the earliest form of the words spoken about the wine. Our choice, however, must be made between Mark and Paul, for Matthew is evidently only an expansion of Mark and Luke is essentially a reproduction of the Pauline form plus the Marcan element of substitutionary sacrifice.

Mark has: "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many". Here the reference to the covenant presents a difficulty. In Aramaic the expression is grammatically impossible and even in Greek it is quite awkward. We can see the difficulty if we translate literally: "This is the blood of me (of the covenant) which is poured out for many". Evidently "of the covenant" is an explanatory addition and the original Marcan form was: "This is my blood which is poured out for many".

The reference to the covenant is firmly anchored in Paul, but the form of the expression is quite different: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood". The question may be raised as to whether the words "cup" and "new" are original, but the essential meaning is not affected and we need not consider the matter here.

If this analysis is correct, we have before us two forms of institution from which to choose: (1) that which lies behind Mark, "This is my body. This is my blood which is poured out for many"; and (2) that which lies behind Paul, "This is my body. This (cup) is the (new) covenant in my blood". Which of these is the more original?

If the original form is that which lies behind Mark, as for example Jeremias argues, the institution is a sort of double-acted parable. The broken bread is for Jesus the representation of His body which is soon to be broken; the wine points to the fact that His blood is so soon to be poured out. The essential meaning of this last parable of Jesus would be: "I must die a sacrificial death and my death will be a sacrifice for many". The significance of the distribution of bread and wine to the disciples must be then that in the eating and drinking Jesus gives to them a share in the cleansing power of His sacrificial death. His gift of bread and wine is to be understood as His gift of Himself for the sins of His disciples.

This view seems quite possible and the semitic flavour of Mark's language speaks in its favour. But there are some difficulties. If this is the original form, why do we have "body" and "blood" instead of the more natural "flesh" and "blood"? How is it possible to explain the loss of this original parallelism of expression: "This is my body; This is my blood"? How is it possible for Paul to separate the sayings and place one at the beginning, the other at the conclusion, of the meal (1 Cor. xi, 25)? Does not the idea of drinking the blood, so abhorred by the Jews, lie near enough at hand that we would expect some indication that this was not intended? Such questions will at least show us that the originality of the Marcan form is not absolutely certain.

If the original form is that which lies behind Paul, as for example Eduard Schweizer argues, some of our problems are solved. It is natural that the two sayings are not parallel in formulation, for they are separated by the whole meal. The choice of the word "body" instead of "flesh" is also perfectly natural, since there is no parallelism with "blood". It should not be forgotten also that Paul's account, earlier by some twenty years than the time when Mark wrote, is dependent upon a received tradition which must go back at least to the Antiochian Church of the 'forties, if not to the Church of Damascus or Jerusalem of the 'thirties.

In this form of the words of institution there are two major emphases. The bread, distributed at the beginning of the meal, represents the presence of Jesus himself. Jesus is saying: "This bread is my presence, my person". (In Aramaic the word for "body" means also one's self, one's person.) The cup at the end of the meal is the symbol for the new covenant sealed in the blood of Jesus. The Old Testament background is not only Jeremiah xxxi, with its reference to the new covenant, but also Exodus xxiv, where, in connection with the establishment of the covenant at Sinai, we hear not only of the blood of the covenant sprinkled upon the people, but also of the fact that Moses and the elders "beheld God, and ate and drank". (Exodus xxiv, 11.)

If this is the earlier form, we must assume that the Marcan form has developed from it because of the desire to stress the substitutionary nature of the death of Jesus. There has been a shift of emphasis from the cup to the blood and from the covenant-blood to the substitutionary-blood. Mark is, of course, correct in his interpretation, but he places a different emphasis upon the words of the last supper from that which they must have had on the lips of Jesus.

A third element of the words of institution, which must at least be mentioned, is the so-called "eschatological outlook" of Mark xiv, 25, and parallels. The exact form of the saying and its original position cannot be discussed here, nor can we investigate in detail the question of whether it is an original part of the last supper or is an addition of the church influenced by its own observance of the Lord's Supper in eager expectation of the return of the Lord. Suffice



it to say that in all likelihood it is an original element of the last supper and is to be connected with the cup as in Mark. The disappearance of the eschatological outlook in Paul, except for the reference in the context ("until he come", 1 Cor. xi, 26), may be due in part to the peculiar situation in the Corinthian Church, but probably reflects a tradition in which the eschatological outlook has been divorced from the cup and applied to the whole meal.

The Lord's Supper is thus seen to rest upon three "words" of Jesus: the bread; the cup; the eschatological meal. Jesus must have said much more than this at the last meal with His disciples, but these are the elements which were remembered because they were of central importance for the early Church. These three must also remain central for every observance of the Lord's Supper. The presence of the living Lord of the Church; the participation in the new covenant relationship established at the Cross; the forward look to His Parousia and the fulfilment of the Lord's Supper in the messianic meal of the kingdom of God—these must remain.

HEBER F. PEACOCK.

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## THE LORD'S SUPPER

### II. HISTORY OF OBSERVANCE AND INTERPRETATION

#### (a) *The Early Church:*

**T**HE first major modification to the character of the Lord's Supper was that the bread and wine were reduced from being a full meal to token quantities.\* Thus freed from the dead weight of sensuous abuse the Supper began to develop its own historical characteristics of form.

By the middle of the second century the major elements of Christian worship were thus:

    Lections (O.T. epistle plus gospel).

    Instruction and exhortation (based on lections).

    Prayers (largely in litany form), psalms and hymns.

Then followed the "liturgy of the upper room":

    Kiss of peace.

    Offertory (alms and elements).

    Consecration (by celebrant, with congregational Amen)—

        Thanksgiving for creation, providence and redemption.

        Memorial of the Passion (Anamnesis).

        Oblation of gifts and self-oblation.

        Invocation of Word and Holy Spirit to bless the bread and wine (Epiclesis).

        Intercessions.

        Fraction and libation.

        Communion.

        Dismissal.

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\* Cf. 1 Cor. xi, 20-34.

The predominant note was that of thanksgiving (Eucharist). This is also found in the earlier Jewish Christian version of the Quiddush-Supper, in the Didache and the later Apostolic Constitutions. The form was beginning to follow a certain pattern, but was still generally fluid. There were local divergences; for example, in the Church Order of Hippolytus there appears for the first time the western emphasis on the Atonement. Other features of later days appear, such as the carrying of the consecrated elements to the sick as a bond of fellowship. The basilican posture (the celebrant behind the Table, facing the congregation) was universal.

In the third and fourth centuries the general structure of later days emerges clearly. In addition there was an increasingly sacerdotal approach, elaboration of devotional acts, censing, crossing and genuflexion, particularly round the reading of the Gospel and the consecration of the elements, increasing elaboration of the liturgy at these and other points, and a consequent lengthening of the service, together with an increasing separation of the mass of the catechumens and the mass of the faithful. There was also emerging a certain major difference of emphasis between east and west, the Incarnation and Atonement respectively.

(b) *The Eastern Churches:*

The characteristic emphasis of the Mass in the east was the mystery-drama of the Incarnation. The whole "Heilsgeschichte" of Christ from the Pre-existence to the Heavenly Intercession, via the Incarnation and Death, was dramatised symbolically. The complete calendar of the western church was virtually included in each celebration of the liturgy, which was without variation except during Lent and Easter. Characteristics of the eastern liturgy since the sixth century have been:

(i) The liturgy became triple from the point of view of temporal order—Prothesis (preparation of elements and priests), mass of catechumens, mass of the faithful.

(ii) The liturgy became two services in one. The real service took place behind the iconostasis, largely unheard and unobserved by the congregation. The latter was kept informed of the progress of the drama behind the scenes by the deacon—who also acted as the residual representative of the congregation in the drama itself.

(iii) The liturgy and devotional symbolism was extremely elaborate and long. The language was generally flamboyant and diffuse. The appeal was to the emotions rather than the intellect.

(iv) The Lesser Entry (Incarnation) with Gospel Book and lights, and the Greater Entry (Passion) with the holy elements, provided the two high-spots of the service, and the two occasions on which the celebrant was observed by the congregation.

(v) Communication by the laity was in two kinds, with the bread intinctured in the wine and delivered by spoon.

- (vi) The sermon was omitted, neglected or ill at ease.
- (vii) The language was frequently Greek, but varied greatly, but the vernacular was comparatively rare.
- (viii) Mariolatry and other extraneous items were accumulated.

(c) *The Western-mediaeval Mass:*

The characteristic emphasis of the western church was on the Atoning sacrifice. The Passion and High-priestly action of the Lord was recalled and celebrated, with some variations according to the church calendar. The "feast upon a sacrifice" passed into a representation of the sacrifice, but finally into a repetition of the sacrifice. The miracle wrought by God became a miracle wrought by the priest, and the Mass acquired an independent value of its own, by the action of the priest-celebrant. Altars and priests were multiplied to increase the merits available to man. Private Masses were held, frequently paid for to acquire merit for the payer or with some other particular intention. The consecration and elevation of the elements by the priestly repetition of the Words of Institution became the climax of the action. Since there were not enough priests for High Mass to be said each time, Low Masses in which only one priest was required were multiplied. These could degenerate into an inarticulate recitation by the celebrant. The use of bells enabled the congregation to be present merely for the consecration and elevation. The eastern position (with the priest facing the altar in front of the people as their representative) replaced the basilican. The Thomasian theory of transvaluation of the elements in the popular and superstitious mind became the theory of Transubstantiation. Actual communication by the laity decreased to three times a year by the thirteenth century, or even once a year on occasions. Round about A.D. 1215 the cup was withdrawn from the laity (both the body and blood were said to be in each of the elements). The cake or loaf was reduced to the wafer.

The early Roman rite was outside the general line of development in both east and west. It was austere, brief, economic, dignified and with no marked separation of the mass of the catechumens from that of the faithful. From about A.D. 500 the Gallican and other non-Roman rites co-existed alongside in the west. All the other rites were, however, more flamboyant and sensuous. From about A.D. 900 to the Reformation the Latin rite acquired symbolic and prolix accretions and elaborations from the Gallican and other rites and so gradually displaced all other rites in the west. Its present form shows its syncretic origin, e.g., its Latin basis with vernacular items, and the disorder of the canon of the Mass. Only after the Council of Trent did it become rigid in its present form. The O.T. lections have disappeared, the Psalms are reduced to snippets, the epiclesis has disappeared, the sermon has been reduced to the homily, the deacon has become the assistant to the priest instead of the leader of the congregation, and such features as mariolatry are noted.

(d) *The Lord's Supper Reformed:*

The abuses of the Mass provoked the protests of Martin Luther which ushered in the Reformation. Each of the Reformers revised both the interpretation and observance of the Supper, but they could not agree on any one new interpretation or form.

Luther, the most conservative of the Reformers, rejected the repetitious sacrifice in the Mass, though he accepted an associated self-sacrifice on the part of the communicants. He rejected the miracle of transubstantiation dependent on the priest and Words of Institution, but asserted the miracle of the consubstantial presence effected by faith in the relevant promises of God. He invoked a theory of the ubiquity of the body of Christ (*Gottesfleisch=Geistesfleisch*: "the flesh of God=the flesh of the Spirit"). His Mass was a revision in the vernacular of the Roman, and emended by the deletion of objectionable features and the insertion of hymns.

Zwingli was not a scholastic, but a humanist. He rejected all idea of the miraculous (*wunderhaft*) in the Supper: he thought of it primarily as "Eucharistia" or "breaking of bread". He emphasised the historical-memorial aspect, the fellowship round the Table, and virtually reduced the presence of Christ to the mental recollection, making fellowship with Him tenuous. He preferred "sign" and "seal" to "sacrament". He introduced pew-sitting reception and quarterly communion. His rite was bare, with no music at one time, and didactic prayers.

Calvin and Bucer rejected the corporeal presence, but asserted the real, spiritual presence. Christ's body was in heaven till the last day: meanwhile the confirming grace and faith in the Supper was effected by the virtue of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Bucer-Calvin rites, richer than those of Zwingli, and more constructive than those of Luther (since they drew on pre-Roman sources unheeded by Luther), abolished all sensuous appeal and relied on ear and intellect. The metrical decalogue was introduced, the Scriptures were restored to their ancient place, and a balance of Word and Sacrament was restored. Calvin wanted weekly celebrations, but was overruled by the civil power. Calvinist churches were built round a central Communion Table.

The Presbyterian Church in Scotland, and the Westminster Assembly's Confession and Directory in England, followed the general lines of Calvin's reformation. The English Book of Common Prayer was a *via media*, incorporating Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist elements.

(e) *The Lord's Supper in the Second Reformation:*

Some major issues of the "second reformation" were the posture for receiving the elements and the Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper of the Book of Common Prayer. The Independents were largely Calvinist in their view of the Lord's Supper. Particular Baptists were divided between Calvinist and

Zwinglian views, while the General Baptists were almost entirely Zwinglian. For all these bodies the Supper was the seal of the fellowship in Christ. It was restricted therefore to those who were members of the local communion of saints, i.e., the local church.

A simple liturgy more like that of Zwingli than that of Calvin obtained among these bodies. The prior preaching of the Word was essential. The imitation of the Last Supper was basic to their thought. They thought that the New Testament gave all the necessary rubrics. The General Baptist order was as follows: After preaching and prayer came the "decent" preparation of the elements, next exhortation to humility and reverence; statements respectively as to authority, institution, "mystical signification", and the qualifications necessary to partakers; blessing of the bread with fraction and distribution; the separate blessing of the cup, libation and reception; exhortation to gratitude, thanksgiving, fellowship offering, "hymn of praise" (at first a solo by the minister). The "Double consecration" and the last three items were characteristic. The elements were carried by the deacons to the communicants sitting in their pews.

The Society of Friends discontinued the use of the Gospel sacraments, as of all outward forms of worship, while maintaining a sacramental view of life. Some other "spirit" sects also abandoned the Supper.

(f) *Current Trends:*

This century has seen the liturgical movement come to life. This movement has affected all the churches, not least the Roman Catholic Church, so that F. G. Van der Mer even asserts that "drastic reformation may be expected before long from Rome". The whole point of the movement was well expressed by Pope Pius X, who played a prominent part in it: "How are we to win people to take an active and intelligent part in the public prayers and worship of the Church?" There is a reaction against the subjective, individualist approach to the Eucharist ("making my communion"): there is a new emphasis on the corporate action by the whole Church, and involving the whole community and its common life (cf. Parish breakfast and Parish communion, with offering in kind by representatives of the people). There is a new emphasis on the celebration of the whole Gospel (not just the death) in the sacrament. Practically every aspect, from the place of sacrifice to the position and audibility of the celebrant, has come under review.

The ecumenical movement has brought certain other aspects under review—such as inter-communion—and has brought about some mutual appreciation of the diverse practices of various Christian bodies. There is a growing emphasis on the eschatological aspect with its consequent tension.

Baptists, too, have become increasingly concerned at the neglect of the Supper, and the careless manner of its administration in many churches. Suggestions have been made for a better use of

symbolism and for a more ordered and rich form of service. A few churches have restored the Supper to its central place in the Lord's Day worship as understood in the Reformed tradition.

E. P. WINTER.

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## THE LORD'S SUPPER

### III. SIGNIFICANCE

**C**OMPARATIVELY recent study of the Old Testament has given help in two ways for the understanding of the communion of the Lord's Supper. There is in the first place the idea of

#### DOMINICAL SYMBOLISM

Wheeler Robinson placed all students of the O.T. in lasting debt by his isolation and interpretation of the symbolic acts of the O.T. prophets as media of revelation. Ahijah's new garment, Isaiah's nakedness, Jeremiah's yokes, his earthen flask, and the many signs of Ezekiel are typical illustrations of the symbolic actions performed by the O.T. prophets to illustrate their message. In words often quoted Dr. Robinson explained the meaning of these actions: "The prophetic act is itself a part of the will of Yahweh, to whose complete fulfilment it points; it brings that will nearer to its completion, not only as declaring it, but in some small degree as effecting it". The prophets not only proclaimed their message; they "performed" it.

Dr. Robinson himself suggested that this idea of "Prophetic Symbolism" should be applied to certain aspects of N.T. thought, including the "sacramental teaching" of that book. There is clearly a portrayal in action of the teaching of our Lord, as well as a proclaiming of that teaching. The chief dramatic symbols enacted by Jesus are His Baptism, His riding into Jerusalem, His cleansing of the temple, and the last meal with His disciples. Such actions could represent the "Prophetic Symbolism" of Jesus. At the same time I hesitate to apply the term prophetic to him. Messianic would be more appropriate, though rather archaic. Best of all would be Dominical, because more absolute as befitting the Son of God. I suggest that we shall best convey the genealogy and yet the originality of the symbolic actions of our Lord by applying to such actions the terms "Dominical Symbolism". The Baptism and the Supper are the dominical symbols whereby He sought by action to illustrate His mission and message. Yet such symbols do not merely illustrate and expound; in part they bring about the will of God which they illustrate. His Baptism is not merely an illustration of the Incarnation, it is part of the incarnating. He, who became flesh at His birth, and He, who knew no sin, became sin at His Baptism. He who had identified Himself with mankind, now identifies Himself with sinful mankind. The Lord takes upon Himself the role of the sinful believer. He asked for baptism. The king took the king's

shilling. The Messiah joined the messianic kingdom. (N.B.— Authentic Christian baptism never takes place unless the person baptised asks for it.) The Baptism of Jesus is an illustration and also part of the Incarnation. In the same way, at the other end of His ministry, the Lord's Supper is the dramatic representation of the death of Jesus, of the Messiah giving Himself for His own. Yet it is not merely an illustration of the Cross. It is part of the Cross. No one can doubt that when one recalls His words about the Supper, and His suffering at the Supper. Further, at the Supper He commits Himself irrevocably to the way of the Cross, and thus helps to bring about and to fulfil that will of God illustrated in the bread and wine of the Supper. Through this symbolism He was not merely illustrating His sacrifice. He was in fact and actually offering Himself. The Supper illustrates the death of Jesus, but is also part of that death. The Supper is the symbolic portrayal of the last act of the Incarnation. At the Supper the deeds are handed over, and on the Cross the purchase price is paid.

It is evident that Wheeler Robinson has bequeathed a most helpful and creative line of approach to the ordinances of the Gospel. Here then is the opportunity for a distinctive Baptist approach to the question of the ordinances. It is an approach which is biblically based and which has been soundly erected. In our preaching, in our exposition, and in inter-denominational discussions, Dominical Symbolism is an attractive title and a creative theme for the elucidation of the mind of our Lord and our own Baptist contribution to the understanding of the Lord's Supper. It would be wise and provident that Baptists everywhere through the land and through the world should become known as the exponents of this type of thinking summarised in the idea of Dominical Symbolism.

In the second place there is the so-called

#### MYTH AND RITUAL RELATIONSHIP

If there are two words which Baptists dislike in regard to religion they are myth and ritual. The idea of falsity in the first and of formalism in the second make both terms unwelcome to Baptists. Yet they are used today in Old Testament and Semitic studies in quite a new and distinct way. By myth is meant a story told about the gods or about the things they did. Myth is essentially in this context a story of divine action, and it is a story that is eminently suitable for telling and recital in worship. In this sense myth becomes the spoken part of a service of worship. Correspondingly ritual is that part of the worship which is performed or enacted. Myth is the story of the divine action, and the ritual is that same story presented in dramatic action. Thus the tendency today is ever more to use these terms, myth and ritual, as literary and especially cultic terms. Myth describes or expounds the ritual, and ritual enacts and fixes the myth. There is a fundamental and underlying unity of which myth and ritual are the expression. By such definition these terms lose their

sinister meanings for us, and become the useful vehicles of our own thinking. Indeed, in another form, they are already very familiar and very respectable among us.

Myth and ritual describe phenomena which are but the ancient Semitic equivalent of the Christian word and sacrament. Scripture and sermon are the recital, the proclaiming of the Gospel. The Last Supper and the Communion are the dramatic presentation of the same Gospel. Sermon and sacrament, oracle and ordinance, belong together as the preaching and portrayal of the Gospel. It can be shown from the history of Christian preaching that outside the context of the sacraments, Christian preaching can become merely ethical essays or the advocacy of a social order. Similarly, without the corrective of the word the sacraments can quickly become magical practices. It is the word which explains and sanctifies the Supper, but it is the sacrament which keeps preaching Gospel. Both are necessary to each other. Word and sacrament are the proclamation of the Gospel, its sacred story and its expression work. In such a context it is clear that the Lord's Supper pictures and thus preserves doctrine, because it illustrates and fixes Gospel faith.

This double line of argument serves to illustrate an obvious and simple fact in regard to the interpretation of the Lord's Supper. As an illustration of Dominical Symbolism, and as belonging to the Word and Sacrament but on the sacramental side, it is clear that the Lord's Supper belongs to the Gospel as action. The celebration of the Lord's Supper is the memorial of divine action for fellowship and for the union of faith with our Lord. This is not to say that we offer again the sacrifice of the Cross in the elements of the Communion, but it is to say that our celebration of the service, of the whole service as a service of worship, is a sacrifice, a sacrifice of praise and of our obedience.

This exposition of the ordinances as actions carries with it important consequences for us as Baptist Ministers. Of these the most important is that our celebration of the Supper should be marked by action, and not by words. The words, the scriptures, the prayers should be cut down to a bare minimum, so that the action and the silences should be supreme and final. It is not out of place to suggest that our present tendencies are the other way. The books of orders of worship which are commended to us, and the increasing custom of many a minister among us, is to increase the comfortable sentences, the scriptures, the prayers, and thus to lose the action in the words. If preaching is the radio of the Gospel, the ordinances are the television of the Gospel. On radio there has to be a noise all the time. On television silence and action are intelligible, because visible.

There is a further practical point. Whatever we Baptists decide, the televising of the Communion will increase, and great will be the variety of the forms of the Communion and perplexing to many. Sooner or later the question will come: Which is the right way to do



it? Then will come a new turning to the New Testament for an objective standard, to the adult and believing Baptism of our Lord, to Mark and Paul for the words of institution. Today we pay homage to the words of institution as a part, a proper and necessary part, but nevertheless only a part of the Service. So we crowd out the Saviour's words, and swamp the Saviour's actions in words, scriptures and prayers. So I plead for the dramatic symbolism, the breaking of the bread, the pouring, the sharing, the giving of the cup, fringed with the words of Institution.

Let us think again of the fewness of the words of Jesus at His Baptism, and at the Supper. Think of the brevity of the prayers. Think of the bareness of the Marcan account, think of the austerity of the slightly expanded Pauline account in 1 Cor. One of our Baptist leaders once defended the expansion of our present-day Baptist Communion services by solemnly saying that Paul's account was of course incomplete, that it should not be taken as final, and that it needed to be supplemented. A moment's reflection will show how false this view is. We are asked to believe that Paul's account is incomplete, when it is already fuller than Mark's account, and when Paul is giving the account only in order to prevent the abuse of the Supper. At the moment when Paul is seeking to prevent the introduction of abuses we are asked to believe that he left things out. If Paul had done that he would have been opening the door to the very thing he was seeking to avoid.

There are of course differences between Mark and Paul, and these are best explained as the difference between the record of the Last Supper in Mark, and one of the first adaptations of that record for use as a form of worship. The Pauline account is the apostolic order of the Communion service based on the underlying historical tradition. Personally I would not go beyond the Pauline account. Elements found in the services of other churches, but having no equivalent in Paul, I would disregard. Many voices testify today that many Christians of all communions have lost the feel of the ordinances as the dramatic exposition of the Gospel. Perhaps that is also true of Baptists. What I am afraid is true is that we can no longer "stand" the silences of the Supper. To view the Supper, and to bear the silence, is getting too much for us.

In January, 1954, the Synod of the Church of South India approved an order for the service of the Lord's Supper. This order I find to be helpful, scriptural and most moving, but I cannot find it to be apostolic. In the "Breaking of the Bread" no fewer than 29 separate acts of worship are listed. If we could place such an order of worship in the hands of the Apostles, what would they have said? One thing is certain. They would have required the help of a modern ecclesiastic to stand beside them, and to prompt as to what came next. That is the issue before us. Shall we be faithful to apostolic practice or shall we, in the interests of the re-union of the Church, take up some such order as that of South India? For myself, I plead

for the brevity, the austerity, the action-silhouette, the silences of the suffering Saviour at the Last Supper.

The Last Supper is Israelite, not Greek; it is action, not words; it is ordinance, not sacrament. A word concerning ordinance is required of me. We are told very often that the word ordinance is unsatisfactory, and that we should replace this word by sacrament. I have yet to find somebody who will explain what it is that sacrament does in the Latin Vulgate and in the Church that Ordinance does not do in the Bible. Ordinance is unsatisfactory, we are told, because it is only a command, and does not therefore convey a means of grace. But the ordinance is the command of God. So I am expected to believe that God ceases to be gracious when He gives commands. Behold the dividing of God! The commandments of God are as much the means of His grace as His saving deeds. God gives grace when He commands, and He commands grace as He saves.

On the other hand, sacrament was the Latin word for a Roman soldier's oath, baptised into the Christian faith by somebody like Tertullian and used in the Vulgate to translate "mysterion", which is sometimes used in the N.T. for institutions which are not sacraments. For these and other reasons my vote is still for ordinance, though I realise that it would be a gain to use sacrament as that would bring us into line with other churches.

In conclusion there are three familiar principles which are the focal points of the Baptist exposition of the Communion. It is:

#### 1. A MEMORIAL

It is a memorial not merely because it is commanded as such, but because it is a recapitulation or re-enactment of the events of the Last Supper. This memorial or remembrance under the ministry of the Holy Spirit is also a re-capturing of the occasion and the meaning of the climate and the character of the Supper. Fresh insights into the Biblical idea of remembrance have shown that the occasion, method and purpose of remembrance serve deeper purposes than the mere act of remembering. Remembrance is the prime Biblical means for the regeneration of theme. Remembrance at the Supper spells regeneration of theme, and the theme here is the love of the dying Saviour, which is the theme of the Gospel of the kingdom of God.

It follows that any given Baptist Communion service is not separated by centuries of church history and tradition from the night in which he was betrayed. Any Baptist service is the very next repetition of the original occasion. That is why we repeat it as precisely as we can, so that our obedient repetition of the rite shall be the occasion when God's grace offers to us again the benefits, gracious and saving, of Messiah's death.

#### 2. A FELLOWSHIP WITH OUR LORD IN THE SPIRIT

Through the Holy Spirit remembrance becomes fellowship with the dying Saviour yet risen Lord. In the Spirit we are given and

enjoy the real Presence of our Lord. The Last Supper becomes contemporary, the Upper Room is extended to include our meeting place, and history becomes the kingdom. In the fellowship of the Spirit He that sitteth at the right hand of the majesty on high is among us. He achieves the immemorial plan and passes the low lintel of the human heart.

### 3. A FORETASTE OF THE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

It appears that in the Upper Room Jesus did not Himself partake. Instead of eating, which would have been the signal for them to partake, He said: "Take . . ." This meant "Go on, do not wait for me". Similarly he anticipated drinking the fruit of the vine new in the kingdom. In the same way every Communion service points to the Supper of the Lamb. The incompleteness of the service is gradually being overcome. Soon it will be possible to have a whole denomination participating in a televised Communion service. The Roman Catholics have shown us the beginnings of European Catholics at Mass. The day may come when all European Baptists will enjoy a similar occasion. It is as yet but a mocking daydream, but it is conceivable that some day, if the world lasts long enough, that all Christians the world over will be able to have a world Communion service, televised from Calvary. It is of the nature of the Communion service to aim for completeness. When the family gathers, how great the longing is that the family should be complete. So Jesus held off until the family should all be present, the church militant, the church triumphant, the redeemed, the whole body, at the Supper of the Lamb. It is of the nature of the Supper to be inclusive, to be complete, to be total. That is why it is the fundamental evangelical method.

So there remains that final acute perception of Paul. Nothing better about the Supper has ever been said than "For as oft as ye . . . ye do shew the Lord's death till he come . . ." In that perception two things are united. The Supper is the supreme act of worship: the Supper is the supreme act of evangelism. Paul had penetrated to the secret of the unity of worship and evangelism.

G. HENTON DAVIES.

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## THE LORD'S SUPPER

### IV. PRACTICE

**I** REMEMBER during the First World War reading of a Communion Service that was held in a dug-out before the launching of an attack. Ecclesiastically it was all highly irregular. Army biscuits were used for bread, water for wine, and there was no properly ordained minister to preside. Nor can I recall that any prescribed or customary order of service was used. But that it was real communion with the Lord no one who read of it could doubt. The grace and the peace that were imparted came from "His Presence and His very Self".

But instances of this kind must not be adduced as arguments in favour of a haphazard practice as a general rule. There are merits in spontaneity, if it be within a recognised and adequate framework, based on the words and ritual given us by Christ and His apostles. But with us almost anything can happen. I have known even the words of Institution not read, and, in place of prayers of thanksgiving, a general invitation to "anyone who feels led" to pray. It is surely important that whoever presides at the Lord's Table, minister or layman, should understand what he is doing. I would judge that lack of understanding of what needs to be said and done, and of the most reverent way of doing it, is responsible for not a little "unworthy participation" and quite a lot of the neglect to attend the Communion at all.

To begin with I wish we could agree among ourselves, once and for all, to end the practice of making the Lord's Supper an appendix to another service. All too often an ordinary service is held, which as like as not has no obvious relation to what is to follow; at its close there is general movement and conversation; the organist plays a loud concluding voluntary; the minister goes down to the door to shake hands with departing friends and to spot strangers, or retires to the vestry with the deacons who feel it incumbent on them to make conversation; as often as not there are last-minute discussions as to who serves and where, and who takes the prayers and in what order; and if the minister is a stranger he may be instructed at that point as to the special customs of the church and the excellent plans they have to expedite the service. He may gather it is the custom to have one short hymn, split into two regardless of sense, before and after. He is probably told as he moves in that brother so-and-so will give thanks for the bread and brother someone else for the wine, and is clearly expected to catch the whispered names correctly and remember them at the right times. Sometimes there will be an added reminder that certain friends have a bus to catch. It is all very natural and kindly. But as prelude to a solemn Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ——!

No, it is not worthy. Not so are we helped to "discern" the Lord's Body. Not so are we being prepared to "feed on Him in our hearts by faith". Not so are we being inwardly led to that "place somewhat ascending on the top of which was a Cross", where memory is stirred and imagination quickened to apprehend afresh the Lord "who loved me and gave Himself for me". Surely those of our churches are on the right lines that have ceased to treat the Lord's Supper as an appendix to worship, but, on mornings or evenings when it is to be celebrated, make it the climax of one service, and conclude all the necessary arrangements and instructions before that service begins. Of course there are difficulties, especially with regard to the presence of those who do not desire to stay or are not entitled to communicate. But where sensibly handled these are not insuperable. During the last verse of a hymn, when minister and deacons

take their place at the Table, these friends can quietly leave. Whatever the difficulties (and they lie almost entirely in initiating the change), the spiritual gains are enormous; notably because the service can be planned as one service and lead uninterruptedly to its climax in the Communion. The Communion thus becomes central to the life and worship of the church, instead of being an appendix to it.

And now as to the elements proper to a worthy observance of the Lord's Supper.

It is a strong belief in all those churches that have roots in John Calvin that the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacrament should go together. The heart should be searched and solemnised by gospel preaching, so that it becomes conscious afresh of its sin and of the unspeakable love and mercy by which it has been redeemed, before participation at the Table. "Let a man examine himself", says St. Paul. Doubtless this should be done individually and privately before coming. But there should be opportunity in the service itself for those "who do truly and earnestly repent them of their sins" to make their confession to God, if not audibly together, then each silently in his own heart, lest he eat and drink unworthily to his own condemnation.

In days of old the Table of the Lord was "fenced" against "unworthy" participation. This is done but little in most of our churches today. For attempts to regulate admission to the Lord's Table by such methods have tended to keep out "publicans" and admit "pharisees", and it is by no means certain that our Lord has pleasure in them. More often, therefore, today an open invitation is given "to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ", and no enquiries are made or disciplines imposed save for notorious sin. It is the more important, therefore, that at some early stage in the service, words of Scripture be read that will help to "fence" the Table from the impenitent sinner through the Holy Spirit's power to make these Words live and to quicken the voice of conscience within. In some churches the ten commandments are read. But it has always seemed to me more fitting to use words of our Lord Himself or of His apostles. The beatitudes, or the fruits of the Spirit, or the qualities of true love in the middle of 1 Cor. xiii, or some half-dozen of the searching and challenging sayings of Jesus read slowly with brief pauses for self-examination, are among those apt for this purpose.

The preaching of the Word should illumine the Cross and the central things of our faith, holding up "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world". Topical preaching and other kinds of preaching that have their legitimate place are not in order here. We are gathered "to remember the Lord's death", to seek cleansing "in the blood that has been shed", to renew our allegiance as penitent sinners saved by grace; and the purpose of the preaching is to make us so sensible of all this that the solemn, symbolic acts to which it all leads up may bring us into living communion with the crucified, risen and present Lord Himself. For we *do* believe in His

real presence; not as located in the bread and wine as some hold, but as located in the midst of His believing people, His Body, the Church, engaged in this sacramental rite of His own appointing.

This leads me to my next point, the importance of there being some element in the service that helps the worshippers to "discern the Lord's Body" as they communicate. Of course, in the primary sense of the body that was pierced upon the Cross, the whole service speaks of it. But in the secondary sense of His Body, the Church, there is need in many of our Communion services that more should be done to help the worshippers to discern it. Let there be at some point a special prayer for the Church, apart from the prayer of thanksgiving for the bread and the cup. Let any special need of the local church or any of its members be laid before God, that the communicants may be conscious they are part of a living, loving, local church fellowship; then let prayer swing out to the wider fellowship of the Local Association, the Union, and the World Alliance; and to churches of other denominations, in the locality, and throughout the world in the World Council of Churches, that no worshipper at the Lord's Table may go away unaware of the reality of Christ's Holy Universal Church throughout all the earth. Let prayer be made, after our Lord's example, and with His passion, for its unity and its mission to evangelise; and here the B.M.S. will find a place. Finally, not only let prayer be offered for the Church militant here on earth, but praise for the saints triumphant in glory, who "with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, laud and magnify Thy glorious name". So are we helped to discern the Lord's Body.

I have often marvelled that, standing so punctiliously as we Baptists do for total immersion in baptism, as the form observed by our Lord and as symbolising the profound spiritual significance of the act, we yet have allowed ourselves such freedom in the ritual actions of the Lord's Supper. Take an up-to-date streamlined Communion service in a biggish modern church. Coming in one sees on the Table no cup, no loaf, no plate of bread even, but neat trays of tiny glasses, capped by tiny aluminium plates, each with its minute cube of bread. Before the first hymn the stewards deftly distribute the glasses and plates to soft music. There is then no further ritual act till, at a word from the minister, each for himself takes and eats his cube of bread, and, a few moments later at another word, takes and drinks his sip of wine. It is difficult to see in it any likeness to what happened in the upper room, except that in each case a piece of bread has been eaten and a drop of wine drunk; as if "*This do* in remembrance of Me" meant no more than that! In the account given us by St. Paul "the Lord Jesus took a loaf" (Moffatt) and after thanking God "He broke it". The loaf is symbolic and so is the breaking. They are as much parts of the ritual act as the eating. In the same way "He took the cup" and poured wine into it and said "This cup means the new covenant ratified in my blood" ("shed for your sakes" adds Luke). The cup is symbolic, and the pouring of wine

into it, as well as the drinking. The loaf was passed round, and one by one they broke a piece from it; the cup came round, and one after another they all drank of it. Each man in his turn made his personal response, took his own vow of allegiance, accepted humbly and gratefully his place within the covenant sealed in blood. No eating and drinking in a mass response. Loyalty was pledged, the vow was taken, *one by one*.

Some modification of the ancient ritual was inevitable. Mere numbers, for example, make it impossible for considerable congregations literally to sit round a table. Modern ideas of hygiene and table manners make it, possibly, impracticable to revert to the practice of drinking from one cup, or breaking pieces of one loaf. But it is quite practicable for a piece of the one loaf to be put on the table for the minister to break in symbolic fashion, placing a piece on each plate, and for a flagon of wine and a silver cup to be set in the middle of the table, so that wine may be poured out in symbolic fashion, as the words of institution are spoken. And it is, one hopes, not too late to arrest the trend to depersonalise the serving and partaking. Surely there is no valid reason for regimenting so intimate and personal an act as that of Communion. The natural instinct is to take the bread from the hand that serves it as from the hand of Christ, and reverently eat it, bowing one's head or falling down on one's knees in gratitude and allegiance to Him. And the same with the wine. To take it and hold it and wait till all are served, for me at least, checks the natural flow of devotion. One's spiritual response stands in a state of suspended animation, losing impulse as it does so. "Take, eat"—it was one act, an intensely personal act. Why break it up? For what purpose is this change in the rite as instituted by Christ? Why do Baptists do such an un-Baptist thing? Is there any other denomination that does it?

Finally, a word about the close of the service. Can we ministers not set our faces against the tendency in some churches for a general snipping of bags and shuffling of feet to be heard within a few seconds, sometimes, of the drinking of the wine? It is in those few moments that, if we know what we are doing, we should be paying our vows unto the Lord and looking ahead to the consummation of all things in Him. We are renewing our fidelity in remembrance of His Cross and passion "Until He come". Can't we help our people to understand this, and to see to it that no one stirs till the minister has expressed our personal and corporate loyalty to the Lord in a sentence or two of prayer, or we have all done it together in the family prayer "Our Father . . ." ? Then let the handbags be opened and the offerings made, a hymn sung and the Grace said, and let us greet one another (if not with a holy kiss) at least with a warm grasp of the hand, as befits those who are knit together in the closest and holiest of all bonds. And so depart on our way in peace.

F. C. BRYAN.

## FOUR AMERICAN PREACHERS

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, editor of *The Christian Century*, has stated that America has produced only four really great preachers—Henry Ward Beecher, Phillips Brooks, Harry Emerson Fosdick and George Arthur Buttrick. The first two have long since left this perplexing world; the third, 76 years of age, is living in retirement after a memorable ministry of nearly half a century; the last named has just surrendered the pastorate of a New York church for the post of Plummer Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard University.

A few years ago I was summer preacher at a beautiful Presbyterian church at East Hampton, at the tip of Long Island. Its members are proud of two facts—one that it is one of the oldest churches in America, being founded as far back as 1648; the other, that one of its pastors was the great Lyman Beecher. Lyman Beecher had thirteen children, all of whom were brilliant, six of them winning national recognition. No wonder it was sometimes said that Lyman Beecher “fathered” more brains than any other man in America.

The two best known of his children are, of course, Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) and Henry Ward. It was in honour of Lyman Beecher that the famous series of *Yale Lectures on Preaching* was established, and it was fitting that the first lecturer should be his brilliant son. Henry Ward Beecher is known mostly because of his three series of Yale lectures, rather than through his other writings, such as *The Life of Jesus the Christ* and *Evolution and Religion*. He was an orator and a vigorous thinker, and his greatest influence was exercised by the spoken word from the pulpit. For forty years he was pastor of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. In those days Brooklyn—one of New York City's five boroughs—was almost entirely Protestant, and was known as “The City of Churches”.

It was thickly populated by church-going people, and the pastor of Plymouth Church did not have to “beat the bushes” in order to get a congregation. It is true that he was something of a sensationalist, and church members today still point with pride to the table at which Beecher dramatically sold by auction a coloured girl. This was during the Civil War. Beecher was an outstanding leader in the movement for the abolition of slavery, and he auctioned the little negress at a public service in order to dramatise the cause he championed. In order to show his appreciation of Beecher's courage and support, Abraham Lincoln worshipped in the Plymouth Church; and the seat in which he sat is memorialised with an inscription. (Incidentally, when some time ago I preached in the Foundry Methodist Church, Washington, my wife was given the seat of honour—the pew, not normally used, in which Sir Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt sat when they attended a Christmas service in 1940.)



I have heard many sermons in this country, and I have heard many preachers and sermons quoted. But I do not recall ever once hearing Beecher referred to by an American preacher. The only reference I can recall was made by an Englishman—A. D. Butler, of Whitfields Tabernacle—who, after announcing his text, remarked: “Henry Ward Beecher used to say that a text of Scripture is like a gate into a wide field, but far too many preachers spend all their time swinging on the gate—they never enter the field”. When Beecher visited Britain, and was the guest of Joseph Parker (how wonderful it would have been to see those two ecclesiastical giants side by side in the City Temple Pulpit or walking together along High Holborn!), he was asked at a ministers’ conference: “Do you ever get into difficulty when you are preaching?” “Often”, replied Beecher, “and do you know what I do then? I shout for all I’m worth. And I notice that next day the newspapers, in reporting the sermon, generally add: ‘Just here Dr. Beecher waxed eloquent’.”

His successor at the Plymouth Church was Lyman Abbott, who maintained a distinguished ministry for twelve years, and then went into religious editorial work. Beecher’s real successor in the hearts of the people of Brooklyn was an Englishman—a Shropshire lad, who emigrated to America in his teens—Samuel Parkes Cadman. This remarkable preacher is a study in himself, but I mention him here only to relate two things about him. One is this: he used to hold a remarkable men’s meeting on Sunday afternoons. He would give a vigorous address and then answer questions. It was the time when the “social gospel” was very much to the front. A man asked him: “Do you think, Dr. Cadman, that a man can live the Christian life in New York on fifteen dollars a week?” (a miserably low wage). Like a flash Cadman replied: “If fifteen dollars a week were all that he had, then the Christian life would be the only kind of life he could afford to live in such a city as New York”. The other thing is this: Towards the end of his life—very successful and very rewarding, so it seems—he made this confession to his friend, Frederick K. Stamm: “My people are very fond of me, but they don’t love God”.

One of the dormitories of the University of Pennsylvania is known as Brooks House. When my son was a proctor he had charge of this house, and I was often in it. It was not until quite lately that I discovered that this building was named in honour of Phillips Brooks. Then I remembered that it was in the City of Brotherly Love that this great man began his ministry, in 1859, as rector of “The Church of the Advent”. That most popular Christmas hymn—and certainly one of the most beautiful—was written by Brooks:

*“O little town of Bethlehem”.*

Phillips Brooks, who miserably failed as a teacher, but succeeded brilliantly as a preacher, was the fourth lecturer in the Yale series, the first being Henry Ward Beecher. Edgar De Witt Jones has said that “if Beecher was the Shakespeare, Brooks was the Browning of the American pulpit”, but adds that there is nothing of the obscurity

of Browning in Brooks's preaching and writing. He also quotes a statement made by Brooks about his preaching: "When I am interesting I am vague; when I am definite I am dull".

Phillips Brooks's definition of preaching, given in his Yale lectures, has probably been more quoted than any other definition of pulpit oratory. Preaching, he said, "is the mediation of truth through personality", and it is doubtful if we will ever improve upon it. The lecturer himself exemplified to the full his own definition. The Gospel truths did not merely trip over his tongue, for he was not a glib talker; they shone out through all that he was in his character and person. His sermons in the volume *The Candle of the Lord* are still worth studying, as is also a series of lectures on *The Influence of Jesus*.

There is a statue of Beecher in Brooklyn; there is a statue of Brooks in Boston; but no statue has yet been erected to the honour of Harry Emerson Fosdick. It may be that the Riverside Church, built at unknown cost largely through the munificence of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., specifically for Fosdick, is monument enough. Of course, this great preacher is still very much alive, though he no longer bears the burdens of the pastorate. Despite his seventy-six years he still preaches and lectures, and his impact upon the religious life of America is still tremendous. And when he is not preaching he frequently worships in the great church of which he was so long the minister. His successor, Robert James McCracken (for some years a Scottish Baptist minister), has no warmer supporter and no more appreciative hearer than the man who preceded him.

The Riverside Church has to be seen to be believed. It is a tremendous structure, situated on the banks of the River Hudson, in up-town New York. Nearby are Columbia University, Union Theological College, International House, and the apartments of wealthy New Yorkers. But also, just around the corner, as it were, is Harlem, so densely populated by negroes; there is an adjoining district crowded with Puerto Ricans. Both localities are amongst the most infamous slum areas in America, and are drenched with crime and destitution. In what ways the Riverside Church seeks to touch the lives of these depressed peoples I am not able to say. I doubt if any of them ever find their way into the cushioned pews and cultured atmosphere of the Riverside Church. This is not a count against the church. Its preaching ministry is beamed in another direction altogether. Three thousand people, from all walks of life, crowd the sanctuary. Visitors, especially students, from almost every land, are to be found in the congregation; and the church's ministry reaches out to the ends of the earth.

Fosdick has never been a very good Baptist, and the Riverside Church, which he virtually founded, is not a Baptist Church in the strictest sense. For some years Fosdick was "special preacher" at First Presbyterian Church, New York. It was here that he was the centre of a fierce controversy, in which he was bitterly attacked by the ultra-fundamentalists. Presbytery action led to his resignation, and his final sermon on "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" made history.

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**A MESSAGE FROM MR. SEYMOUR J. PRICE TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE BAPTIST MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP**

My dear Friends,

When Sydney Morris, my friend of over forty years' standing, asked if he could write our January advertisement letter, I wondered what he would do. Had he a magnificent scheme to propound of which no insurance man had thought? or would he give a gentle lesson in the art of writing these letters? or had some minister an imagined cause of complaint concerning us? I might have guessed that our denominational greatheart would write that letter of warm-hearted appreciation. Many thanks, Sydney. The letters shall continue and, when you want more money for the space, we will gladly pay!

A few years ago I wrote on "Going the extra mile". In the same passage we are told "From him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away". One of our Churches recently gave heed to that. Another Church asked for the loan of their baptismal garments, which, while in the custody of the borrowing Church, were destroyed by fire. The lenders were insured with the Baptist; the borrowers with another company. The usual practice in such cases is for each company to bear half the loss, and thus avoid legal discussion as to the respective rights and liabilities of lenders and borrowers. Unfortunately the policy of the borrowing Church was defective; and, acting within its legal terms, the company denied liability. What were we to do? Claim against the borrowing Church and make them pay out of their funds? Of course, we couldn't, and, being the denominational office, we bore the whole loss. Surely this suggests the slogan

**THE BAPTIST INSURANCE COMPANY  
IS ALWAYS THE BEST FOR A BAPTIST CHURCH**

In this Jubilee Year, perhaps we may add "AND HAS BEEN FOR FIFTY YEARS".

I hope that, despite the inclement weather, you have all had times of blessing in your work.

Your fellow-worker,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

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It was inevitable that Fosdick should be a contributor to the Yale series, but it is surprising that this mighty preacher did not deal with the subject of preaching. Instead he lectured on "The Modern Use of the Bible". The lectures were a vigorous defence of his own position, given at the time he was the centre of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. Furthermore, these lectures brought up to date the course given, thirty years earlier, by George Adam Smith, on "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament".

Much more could be said about this great man, but I will content myself with relating a story which Fosdick told to a small group of preachers. When the church was seeking his successor, the committee went to hear a likely candidate—a man with an already established reputation. They heard a remarkably good sermon, which however struck a familiar chord in the minds of the committee. Further searching of the memory revealed that it was one of Fosdick's own sermons. The preacher lost the opportunity to succeed the man whose sermon he had plagiarised.

In the opinion of many on this side of the Atlantic, George Arthur Buttrick is the greatest preacher in active service in America today. I often heard him in Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York (where he succeeded the distinguished Henry Sloan Coffin), and it was always a rewarding experience. George Buttrick is a superb homilist, with more than a touch of genius. As Edgar De Witt Jones says of him, he combines artistry with sound interpretations; he is an expositor who uses freely the garlands of literature and the freshest of illustrative material. He has a book on *The Parables of Jesus*, which is worthy to be set side by side with Trench on the Parables, and far more useful homiletically today. His further books—*The Christian Fact and Modern Doubt*, *Christ and Man's Dilemma*, and *So We Believe, So We Pray* (a study of the Apostles' Creed and of the Lord's Prayer)—are well worth reading.

Here again we have another contributor to the Yale series, and he is in no way one whit behind the most brilliant of the lecturers. His series, entitled "And Jesus Came Preaching", shows George Buttrick at his best; while his monumental work on "Prayer" could well serve as the source book for a rewarding course of study in ministerial groups and colleges. After twenty-eight years in a great city pulpit, at sixty-two years of age, George Buttrick moves into one of the most strategic positions in American church life. Here, as the successor of such giants as Francis Greenwood Peabody (remember his "Mornings in the College Chapel"?) and Willard L. Sperry, he may well render his most important service to the Church of Christ in North America.

Charles Clayton Morrison did well to single out the four men with whom I have been chiefly concerned in this article. But it is only fair to say that there have been, and still are, many other men of note in the American pulpit; but to speak about them would be another story.

JOHN PITTS.

## “ I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE ”

IN his magnificent address at the 1951 Assembly, J. C. Rendall said that the ministers and missionaries who had just been presented to the President might often in the years before them be tempted to doubt their calling. He reminded them that this was an old trick of the Devil. Even Martin Luther had suffered—though he knew how to deal with the adversary. He flung an inkpot at him.

What Mr. Rendall did not foresee was that the tempter would come in the form of the woman Principal of one of our training colleges! And yet, what else is Gwenyth Hubble's article, “ Christian Vocation and Missionary Vocation ”, in the October *Fraternal*, than a temptation to missionaries to repudiate their call to a particular form of service?

I enjoy deputation work amongst the churches during my furlough, but I have always steadily resisted the efforts of chairmen to put me, as a missionary, on a pedestal. To that extent I agree with some of the things said. But when the writer argues that the call to missionary service is no more than the call to take part in the missionary activities of the Church as any other church member is called to share in those activities, I part company with her.

For there is, after all, such a thing as experience. I know what happened to me. I was only a youth, but I had my life all planned. I was interested in chemistry and I wanted to be a chemist of some sort. Chemistry was to be the be-all and end-all of my life. And then a man preached a sermon. He never said a word about missions or missionaries, but I knew perfectly well that through that sermon God had called me to be a missionary. I kicked. For weeks I resisted that call. But it was no good. In the end I went and told my people that I must be a missionary.

I am no theologian. I have had no training in philosophy or theology. All I know is that I wanted to go in for chemistry and that God said I had to be a missionary.

A friend of mine had a similar experience. A visiting minister said to him: “ Young man, you are going to be a missionary in India ”. My friend said nothing to Thomas Phillips, but inside his mind he said “ Am I heck! ” But he became a missionary in India—and would still be, except that the part of India in which he works is now called Pakistan!

So it has been down the ages. Men and women have been as sure of their call to be missionaries as was Saul of Tarsus sure of his call to be an apostle to the Gentiles. The Bible is stiff with instances of prophets, priests and kings called to their offices by God in many strange and wonderful ways. And since Bible times the same experience has come to others who have

“ Turned from home and toil and kindred,  
Leaving all for His dear sake ”.

The Bible says a lot about God calling men and women to special jobs. Over against that, Gwenyth Hubble sets "Willingen says". I get tired of those who set up what was said at Tambaram or Willingen or Edinburgh, 1910, or Jerusalem, 1928, as if the things they quote had more authority than Holy Writ itself. If the meetings were at Wigan or Ramsbottom they'd never get away with it!

Besides, how much is it going to help a young man or woman faced with the disillusionments of the first years on the field and up against a difficult climate, new language, tropical diseases, a dead local church, uncongenial colleagues or a thousand and one other things to tell them that they just had a call to Christian service—any Christian service? Why, that is exactly the loophole that some of them find to back out of their call right now! "I wasn't called to be a missionary in the first place. I was called to be a minister." And off they trot, with no qualms of conscience or any idea that they have fallen down on the job and become quitters.

Of course, the call to the mission field or to the ministry has to be tested. Human nature being what it is, emotionalism may carry away people into deluding themselves that they have a call to the mission field or to any other specific work. That call has to be examined and confirmed by the Church or one of its organisations, such as the Baptist Missionary Society or the Baptist Union. It would be manifestly absurd, for instance, for the B.M.S. to accept a person suffering from (say) phthisis. However much the person concerned might feel called to the field the Society would have to say: "We are sorry, but we cannot agree that it is God's will for you or for us that we should send you out until your health is proved to be strong enough to stand up to the exigencies of the work and the climate of a tropical country." They might come to the same conclusion on grounds of education or lack of training or other pertinent considerations.

But it must not be overlooked that the Church or the Society can just as easily be mistaken as the candidate. There are cases of the B.M.S., for instance, turning down candidates who have then gone to other Societies (of equally good standing and reputation!) and done years of useful work. And the fact that after sailing to the field a candidate still has to be a probationer for two years, at least, shows that even at that stage there may still come to light reasons for doubting either the "call" to the individual or the wisdom of the Society!

The rôle of the Church and the Society, however, is to test the call—not to give it.

Paul calls himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God". He says it over and over again, and in Galatians he says specifically: "An apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ . . .)". That was the position then. That is the position now. No specious argument can make it otherwise to any who have had the experience of the call.

J. W. BOTTOMS.

## “CHRIST LIVETH IN ME”

(GALATIANS ii, 20)

TO the perplexed communities of Galatia, Paul lays bare the secret of his religious experience. He discloses the master obsession which has energised his life. To him religion was a reality, not a form or observance, but a thrilling experience of a living Christ.

(1). “Christ liveth in me” implies a vital relationship. It is the thrill of a lover’s tryst. It implies a hospitality of life in which Christ moves without reservation. All the rooms are accessible to Him. Christ comes asking for all the rooms of my heart that He may possess every part of my being, and become a living partner of my life.

(2). “Christ liveth in me” implies a recreating process active in the workshop of life. He whose hands fashioned plows, boats and houses out of the forest timber is moulding out of the lumber of life rugged character that will stand up under the stress and strain of life. He is creating new attitudes of mind, controlling emotions with new desires, directing the will with new energies, motivating all of life to the work of His Kingdom. He is the botanist, working our creations of beauty in the garden of life: the minerologist, harnessing hidden values to service.

(3). “Christ liveth in me” implies a forecast of fulfilment of His purpose for my life. “We are His workmanship”, says Paul. We are His dream (*poiema*). It is the word from which our word poem evolves. A poem is a dream set to words. He will set His dream to the words of His accomplishment within us. “He that hath begun the good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Among my Burmese souvenirs is a chunk of mineral ore. It is a rugged parable of life, throbbing with potential riches, waiting for the process of the minerologist to harness its latent forces to practical use. My friend sees, in this ore, antimony for use in the manufacture of medicines, pigments, bronzing solutions. He sees tin for use in making plate, wire, mirrors, bells. He sees copper for use in electrical work, for making coins, for shipbuilding, and in architecture. Thus this piece of ore speaks of hidden possibilities awaiting the re-creating touch of the Master Workman. “Mould me and make me”, is the prayer preface to life’s yield of character and utility in the service of the living Christ.

FRANK ERNEST EDEN.

First Baptist Church,  
Palo Alto,  
California.

## THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

*Notes on its early history*

It may seem strange to begin an article on the Baptist World Alliance by a visit to Bunhill Fields, the famous burying place in London of many British Free Church leaders of bygone days. But in this graveyard lies John Rippon (1750-1836), who saw the need of a world organisation of Baptists even before Carey and his friends founded the Baptist Missionary Society. He often visited this cemetery and copied the epitaphs on the gravestones. He was the pastor of one Baptist church sixty-three years. He published a collection of hymns, many copies of which have sold in America. A publication which he edited, called the *Baptist Annual Register*, was dedicated to baptised believers in America and Europe "with the desire of promoting an universal interchange of kind offices among them and in serious expectation that before many years elapse . . . a deputation from all these climes will meet, probably in London, to consult the ecclesiastical good of the whole". This consultation did not come as soon as Rippon hoped, but it did come in London as he expected.

The honour of launching the Baptist World Alliance belongs to Dr. J. N. Prestridge. At the beginning of the century he was publishing a weekly Baptist paper in Louisville, Kentucky. This paper first bore the name *The Baptist Argus*, which was later changed to *The Baptist World*. In the first few numbers of this paper each year Dr. Prestridge published news letters from the Baptists of distant lands. He called these "Outlook" numbers. I was a student in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1901 to 1904 and read these numbers with interest. And they were widely read in the Southern States. The suggestion appeared in this paper that a Baptist world organisation should be formed. Dr. John Clifford and Dr. J. H. Shakespeare supported the idea. The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, meeting in Bristol in 1904, invited the Baptists of the world to meet in London in 1905.

That was a notable year in the history of Europe.

There were great stirrings in Russia that year. The Russian fleet was wiped out when Port Arthur fell. The war with Japan was lost. As often in the past, defeat strengthened the liberal movements in the country. On April 17th, 1905, Emperor Nicholas II issued a proclamation which authorised persons belonging to the Orthodox Church to leave the Church. Before that time it was illegal to leave that Church, which was the State Church. Many believers who had gone out and joined the Baptists were persecuted. This began religious toleration. Baptists began to hold meetings in public halls. Many exiles returned to their homes. And the year 1905 should be regarded as the beginning of a real revolution in Russia. That year a Duma was authorised, which was a great debating forum. The Communistic overturning of 1917 was really a counter-revolution.



1905 was also a turning point in the history of France. There had been a bitter struggle between reactionaries and liberals in the Dreyfus affair. The Roman Catholic Church was on the side of reaction. On February 9th, 1905, a bill was introduced in the Chamber of Deputies calling for complete separation of Church and State. The Catholics denounced this as persecution. The bill was passed by the Chamber and later approved by the Senate. France was the first great nation, where there had been a State Church, to carry through a complete separation.

There was a struggle for religious liberty in England when the Congress met in London. The question was whether England should have a system of national education under popular control. Many of the schools were in the hands of the Anglican Church and the teachers were Anglicans. These schools received public money, but the State did not control them. There were 12,000 such schools in England and Wales where no member of a Free Church could teach. The Archbishop of Canterbury opposed the Education Act. Dr. Clifford and other Free Church leaders refused to pay their school rates and their goods had been seized and sold and some went to prison. The movement failed to achieve its goal, but the agitation contributed to the defeat of the Conservative Party at the next general election.

The First Congress was held July 11th—19th in Exeter Hall. Twenty-three countries were represented. The largest delegation was from the United States. Fifty American Negroes attracted attention wherever they went. But Canada, Germany and Sweden sent large delegations. The Russians were the heroes of the Congress. Baron W. Uexkuell from Estonia, then in Russia, gave an account of the Baptist movement in the Russian Empire. Vasily Pavloff, who came from the Caucasus, told of his preaching and of his imprisonment. Some thousands of British delegates attended. Africa, Australia, New Zealand, India, China and Japan sent delegates. It was truly a world Congress.

It was noteworthy, too, for the great Baptist leaders who attended: Dr. Alexander Maclaren, regarded since the death of Spurgeon as the greatest Baptist preacher in the world; F. B. Meyer, a well-known pastor in London. Lloyd George presided at one session. Dr. J. N. Prestridge was conspicuous as the man who had used his paper to promote the idea of a world meeting. Dr. A. T. Robertson was already known as a New Testament Greek scholar. Dr. Clifford was at the height of his power and influence. Dr. J. H. Shakespear was a man with great organising ability. It was worth coming a long way to see Dr. K. O. Broady of Sweden, Timothy Richard of China, J. B. McLaurin of India, H. C. Mabie of Boston, Holman Bentley of the Congo, E. Y. Mullins, and many others.

The subjects discussed were of vital interest. J. D. Freeman of Toronto said: "The Baptist Denomination is not an accident nor an incident". The Congress sermon was preached by Dr. A. H. Strong of Rochester, New York.

Before closing, a constitution for the Baptist World Alliance was adopted. Dr. John Clifford was elected President; Dr. J. N. Prestridge was elected Western, and Dr. J. H. Shakespeare Eastern, Secretaries.

At that time it was reported there were more than six million Baptists in the world.

It was understood from the beginning that there should be a world meeting of Baptists every five years and smaller gatherings under the auspices of the Alliance in various countries between the larger meetings. The first of these was held in Berlin in 1908. Dr. Newton H. Marshall, from England, aided German Baptists in preparing for the meeting.

Berlin was easily accessible to most parts of Europe. And many Baptists of Eastern Europe were linked with German Baptists through the labours of Oncken and his co-labourers. British Baptists sent £250 to help poorer delegates from a distance to attend the conference. One pastor from Omsk, in Siberia, travelled ten days to reach Berlin.

The meeting place was crowded when Dr. John Clifford rose to deliver his inaugural address on The Brotherhood of European Baptists. One of the most important addresses was delivered by Vasily Pavloff, of Odessa, on "The Rise, Growth and Present Position of the Baptist Body in Russia".

This conference discussed the need for an international Baptist theological school.

Dr. Clifford submitted a resolution in favour of international peace. It called upon the delegates to rejoice that the German Emperor had said a short time before: "My deepest conviction is that the peace of Europe is not in danger". While the conference was in being the autumn manœuvres of the German Army were being held on a plain south of Berlin. Many of the delegates ran away from the conference to see the greatest military spectacle in Europe at the time. Six years later the war of 1914-18 began.

The Second World Congress was held in Philadelphia, 1911, the first to be held west of the Atlantic. The number attending was greater than in London. Dr. Clifford's address on "The Baptist World Alliance" was a masterpiece. He reported that money had been raised to put a Bunyan memorial window in Westminster Abbey. Rev. Thomas Phillips, of London, preached the Congress sermon on "Grace and Glory", using Psalm lxxxix, verse 10. That sermon was spoken of many years afterwards by those who heard it.

There were thirty Russians at this meeting. Their coming was doubtful until shortly before the Congress. Reports reached England that permission had been refused. Dr. Shakespeare sent the Rev. C. T. Byford to St. Petersburg to do what he could to get the Russian brethren to Philadelphia. Byford succeeded and brought the Russians to America.

During the Congress a plan was made to raise money for a theological seminary in St. Petersburg. Over \$66,000 were subscribed.

This money, with interest added, is still held by the Alliance awaiting the day when it can be used for a seminary in Russia.

Dr. Robert Stuart MacArthur was chosen President of the Alliance, the two secretaries, Dr. J. N. Prestridge and Dr. J. H. Shakespeare, were continued in office.

Three years later the First World War began. But for this war the next Congress would have been held in 1916. That was the year of the Battle of Verdun, when two million men fought for nearly a year and one million were killed. Would the Alliance survive this war?

It did survive and a Congress was held in Stockholm in 1923. Another in Toronto in 1928, at which Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke was elected as the first full-time General Secretary of the Alliance. The next world meeting was held in Berlin in 1934 and in Atlanta in 1939. Here again, notwithstanding optimism about peace, the Second World War began before all the delegates had reached home. There was another Congress in Copenhagen in 1947. The Eighth Congress met in Cleveland in 1950.

After the First World War a relief committee of the Alliance raised and expended nearly \$1,000,000 to relieve distress on the continent of Europe and in Russia during the famine of 1921-23. And immediately after the cessation of hostilities in 1945 the Alliance began to furnish food and clothing to the needy in Germany. Later on, everything possible was done to help Baptist refugees to re-settle in the outside world. And the Alliance has stimulated and coordinated the building of about fifty chapels where refugees have settled in Germany.

And now we are looking forward to the gathering in London, July 16th—22th, 1955.

W. O. LEWIS.

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### THE TAPE RECORDER—FRIEND OR FANGLE?

**W**E hear much about the wonders of science and do not fail to remind our people that the scientist is a discoverer of God's wonders. So-called scientific laws are God's laws and it is our desire that the whole galaxy of modern marvels should be used for His glory.

History underlines the slowness of the "children of the light" in taking the initiative in the right use of new inventions. We knew an old deacon who resisted the installation of a harmonium, electric lighting and even a heating system in the church that he loved so ardently. In the same way some have been suspicious about the use of wireless and are now chary about the worth of television in the urgent task of evangelism.

All this is by way of preparing our minds for an enthusiastic introduction to the tape recorder in the work and witness of the local churches.

There can be scarcely anyone who has not seen or read about this "miracle". A surprisingly large variety of instruments are on the market, but one principle is common to them all, viz., that they make a recording on a plastic or paper tape which carries on its sensitive side an emulsion containing particles capable of being magnetised. Sound waves are transmitted to this tape in the form of magnetic impulses which are motivated by sound waves picked up by a microphone. If a recorder is to be used for a variety of duties then it is important to make sure that it is capable of receiving an extensive range of pitch and tone. Other common-sense requirements include ease of operation and portability. If a minister is to make use of the machine in the pulpit a remote-control switch which can be foot-operated is essential for the avoidance of undue distraction.

Press notices of the use of a recorder in our church work appeared two years ago and this indicates some considerable experience and an opportunity of assessing its value in fulfilling our responsibilities.

The need it was first called to meet was that of the increasing number of shut-in members. Time and again we had heard it said: "If only we could hear the choir again". "If only we could hear you preach." These wishes could only adequately be met by the use of a short-wave radio-telephone of the kind installed in taxis, but the Postmaster-General has so far refused a licence for church use. The next best thing is the recorder. Selections of a Sunday service are recorded and thereafter carried to the homes by the minister or by one of a trained band of operators who regard this as a very real piece of Christian service.

As to the effectiveness of this ministry, some of us have watched by the beds of friends who were raising anchor before "crossing the bar", and we carry as a sacred memory the sight of joy coming into tired eyes as softly from the recorder came the singing of the "gathered community". Familiar voices in anthem and hymn had become God's vehicle for reassurance and peace. We have even witnessed the removal of severe pain and the bestowal of calm to tense nerves through the medium of the recorder.

Then there was the case of an Australian bride whose friends, unable to attend the wedding, had the joy of receiving a tape record of the ceremony, by one who was present on the great day.

Take the case of two inventions being used together with effect. Some excellent illustrative material may be obtained through our film-strip libraries. The strips are frequently supplied complete with an informative script, but no good teacher or lecturer would ever dream of making a public reading of this material, or attempt to memorise the script involving the inadvertent loss of vital points. If, however, the teacher records the script and himself operates the projector, so that perfect synchronisation of talk and picture is assured, then the result is a thoroughly competent lesson. Furthermore, an interesting side to this method is the fact that children and adults

seem to respond more readily to a recorded voice in conjunction with the showing of a film or film-strip.

Now to a most important issue. "The best criticism is self-criticism." If this is true, then how do we implement its truth in our work? What about making tactful suggestions to the choir, a layman, a child, or even to ourselves? The recorder goes a long way towards answering this problem. Rehearsals for important occasions can be recorded and the various participants in the service given an opportunity of listening to their respective efforts and thereby respond with much more readiness to guidance towards improvement in style and diction. Where religious drama is an accepted part of the Church's witness the producer's lot is greatly eased when he can say upon the replaying of some unsatisfactory delivery: "Now do you see what I mean?"

Some preachers will be amazed to find how they are prone to repeat themselves in prayer and sermon and even how parsonic their manner of speech. It is rarely that a man can say delightedly, as a well-known broadcaster was heard to say: "I listened to myself for the first time. I didn't recognise my voice, but it was very good. I nearly converted myself!" The microphone of the B.B.C. does not come to us as frequently as to that friend, but when it does, preparation with the aid of a recorder takes the terror out of timing and greatly improves the right assessment of manner and tempo. The pauses that we may normally use in the conduct of worship are remarkably magnified over the air and some happy mannerisms that may mark out a speaker before a seeing congregation may become veritable rocks of stumbling to the listening millions. Script and clock are indeed terrible foes for many people, but other more subtle matters are involved and may be mitigated by recorder rehearsals.

Let an 85-year-old saint have the last word about it all. She had been confined to her room for fifteen years. Now she was listening to parts of the previous Sunday's children's service. With tears of joy she exclaimed: "But it's wonderful. Oh, what a godsend!" She was in the family again and able to tell other members how well she thought this child and that had recited or sung. Her link with the church festivals was not hearsay. She heard even as it was heard.

And the cost? Equivalent to that of a good television set, but, in the service of the Church, it will carry only the Master's programme. It's a friend.

J. PENRY DAVIES.

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