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# The Fraternal

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## EDITORIAL

### A MESSAGE FROM THE B.M.F. CHAIRMAN.

From the distant memories of College Sermon Class there comes a sentence uttered in criticism: "You are more interested in ideas than in people". Whose sermon was being criticised I forget. It is worth reflecting that the balance between ideas and people was not rightly struck.

We ministers ought to be interested in ideas. We need to inform our minds about the great issues which run through history. It is sound advice that suggests we always have in hand one big book, which stretches us and is a bit beyond us. Lesser more ephemeral literature we may take in our stride. Our speciality is theology and related studies. We are expected to keep up in these areas. One's circumstances may encourage us to undertake special investigation along a particular line. I know a minister, whose church had to be rebuilt, who has developed a real interest in ecclesiastical architecture. Another became involved in factory chaplaincy and read sociology. Others involved in administration of local education have equipped themselves by reading. All ministers need a framework of reference for their practical witness.

Our main work is with people, and here we are very fortunate. By and large, the folk in our churches welcome us and wish to know us and to be our friends. Their homes are open to the minister who has a pastoral heart. We encourage them and win their trust, and they make us rich through sharing their personal hopes and fears, joys and sorrows. They turn to us in their troubles and are eager to see us and the comfort we bring when others, except perhaps the doctor, are relatively powerless. We, of all people, are very much prayed for by our people. In all the churches in which we have served we have felt the sterling worth of Christian character. We watch the growth of babies we dedicated who are now in middle life in influential positions. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3 John v. 4) Pastoral relationships might fill a book, but they are not for publication. The humour, pathos, courage and tragedy of life as seen by an experienced minister is no small reward for faithfully trying to be an under shepherd of Christ's flock.

New Year may be a time for taking a fresh look at our job and questioning the balance we make between ideas and people.

Do we read enough? Have we dropped into the habit of reading easy little books which confirm us in what we already know? Are we dodging more serious reading? Worse still, do we only read what we believe we shall agree with? Could all our reading and thinking be an escape from hard life?

Are we giving enough time to people? This is harder than it used to be, because women go out to work, and so in some

places afternoon visitation is just "not on". In evenings T.V. is destructive of conversation, and the car takes people out. But we still have to make time to know people under ordinary circumstances, or we shall find that when a pastoral relationship becomes imperative we and the people are comparative strangers.

And the bridge between ideas and people? It is not expedient to read just to turn our reading into preaching, but it seems reasonable to say that what moves me in my study might stimulate others too, if it can be popularised and pass through me with enthusiasm. Haven't we envied the really great speakers who are authorities and who speak with the utmost simplicity?

Finally, there is a moral here for the local Fraternal. When did it last have some sessions wrestling with big themes? And is there a pastoral concern by all the men in it for one another, transcending theological or temperamental affinities, and do they care for the absentees who would benefit so much by coming?

C. SIDNEY HALL

## TWO HONOURED TEACHERS:

### ARTHUR DAKIN (1884-1969)\*

The feelings in our hearts today are marked by lights and shadows. We want to express our gratitude for the life and ministry of Dr. Arthur Dakin, for this is rightly a service of thanksgiving. But our gratitude is shadowed by sorrow, sorrow for all of us, deep sorrow for some of us. We have known him through many years. He held a special place in our lives. In our sorrow, therefore, is a sense of impoverishment. Life for us is poorer because he is not there to share it. We miss and shall miss the stimulation and meaning which he always brought. Yet the shadow of impoverishment is lit by the awareness of enrichment. He has completed his earthly days with unflinching faith and growing kindness and he enriched us all.

But we are not here to dwell upon our feelings. We are here to remember with gratitude. Such memories provoke discernment and a sense of the abiding value of a good man's life.

Many remember him as the forthright, vigorous preacher. In his pastorate at Waterbarn, Lancs., Queen's Road,

\* *An Address given at the Thanksgiving Service for Dr. Dakin.*

Coventry, and Ferme Park, London, his preaching both challenged and comforted. He possessed a remarkable ability to seize upon the main issues of any matter and to ignore a mass of irrelevant detail. Consequently he could present the fundamental issues of the Christian faith and life with clarity and power.

His thinking was always vigorous and virile. His vision was wide ranging. There was something of the prophet in him, for his strong, searching preaching was both personal and social. He called for personal obedience to the righteous will of God; he spoke strongly against those social ills and injustices which prevent the obedience.

He strove to clothe his message in attractive language. He was a lover of words, delighting in the poets and writing a little poetry himself. He hated what Quiller Couch called 'jargon'; stuffy, verbose, obscure sentences. Use Anglo Saxon words, he would say. Use concrete nouns and active verbs. He knew what T. S. Eliot has called 'the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings', for he wanted to make his message clear and compelling.

And he was not ashamed of the gospel he was called to proclaim. Like Paul, he knew it to be the power of God unto salvation and all his powers of mind and heart went into its proclamation.

Many of us remember him too as teacher. His 29 years as principal of the College gave him full scope for the exercise of his outstanding gifts for teaching. Students could shrink before his vigorous words and thoughts, but that was a superficial reaction. Whatever he taught became interesting and significant. It might be a phrase from Shakespeare or a psychological theory, it might be a passage from the New Testament or an exposition of Luther or Calvin, of monks or of Methodists—all came alive and all possessed meaning and relevance.

Like Chaucer's pilgrims or Bunyan's characters, the pageant of God's people through the ages was unfolded. Students were invited to think great thoughts with mighty scholars and theologians, to see splendid visions with reformers and prophets, to feel human needs with the compassionate servants of Christ and always to company with the vast host of those who have prayed and worshipped, loved and suffered, lived and died by the grace of God.

The preacher and the teacher was always the man. A man of integrity! He was consistently himself in whatever company he happened to be. Dr. E. A. Payne refers to this characteristic when he writes in a letter about Dr. Dakin: "He was unique among us and a most refreshing personality. The whole denomination is a better and saner place because of him and those he influenced."

With this strong integrity was combined a profound compassion which showed itself in many ways. He cared deeply for his brother ministers. He was disturbed at their limited material means and their enforced austerity. He struggled to

improve their lot. His compassion showed too in his innate respect for each individual person. To every human relationship he brought a warm humanity and a sensitive kindness.

Integrity, compassion—and courage. He showed courage when a disability threatened to bring his preaching to an end. He fought the disability through many months and conquered it. But he needed his courage even more when for a whole year he saw a loved daughter lie a helpless victim of polio, and her illness and death beginning to break his wife. During those dark days he said to me, "All one can do with this kind of thing is to accept it." That was not resignation or lack of feeling. It was a poignant cry of faith which in deep sorrow could yet place its loss in the purpose of God in such a way as to give what is inexplicable positive significance.

I have mentioned faith. There was in Arthur Dakin—and this I believe was the secret of all his living—a profound sense of God. A. J. Gossip, whom he once brought to the College for the annual reunion, has a chapter in his book on the inner life called: 'On thinking magnificently about God'. Dr. Dakin lived that phrase.

His theology—his thinking about God was never small, never academic. His theology was the intellectual expression of his living experience; his experience vibrated through all his theology.

In his book on Calvinism he wrote: 'I could wish that the following study might send others to the Reformer's monumental work, to be brought into contact with his earnest spirit and feel the mighty sweep of his thought.' He acknowledged that he was writing about events in history, but history, he wrote, readily passes over into a challenge to us as once again we face the urgent task of creating a truly Christian civilisation in which the glory of God and the good of man may be achieved."

The glory of God and the good of man! Here are the two foci of his thought and life. The glory of God is seen in the good of man. The good of man promotes the glory of God. So his thought was as vast as the universe and as profound as life itself. He lived his days with the majestic and grateful sense of God's goodness.

I recall a moment over 40 years ago when he spoke at a communion service in the College. He referred to his own student days and a spring morning when all nature about him was thrilling and singing with the glory of life. He was aware of the living God in it all.

I recall another moment many years later when we were travelling over the Cotswolds. As we passed a certain place, he told me that soon after coming to the College he stopped there in the still beauty of that serene countryside. He thought of his home and family, his friends, his health, his work at the College, his opportunities for preaching. He thanked God for so much richness and went on his way rejoicing.

I recall yet another moment later still, when in a sermon class a student had preached one of those sermons of sombre

pessimism of which young men are strangely capable. The principal said that that morning he woke to find the sun shining and to anticipate his day's work. He realised the unvarying goodness of God.

These are simple incidents speaking of one who lived his days with this large sense of the majesty and mercy of God. But let his own words speak to us:

Oh Thou! whose thoughts and purpose stand  
Whose sway is over every land,  
Whose goodness holdeth star and flower,  
Lord of eternity, God of the hour,  
Whose love on all mankind is set,  
Whose heart abides at Olivet.  
Who loving, longing, lookest still  
For man's response, that earthly ill  
May turn to his abiding gain,  
Through Thy benignant reign:  
Oh God of now! and God of then!  
Ruler of worlds! and Father of men!  
Grant us at least our part to see,  
And make us wise to love with Thee  
Till love shall meet with love again  
And Heaven rejoice in Earth's AMEN.

So we remember this human, invigorating, staunch man of God. Now that he is no more with us in the flesh, let him speak just one more word to us. He is reflecting on the central facts of the Christian faith, the unique revelation of God's grace in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God's word is last  
And God's last word  
Is triumph for the suffering Lord.  
Defeat is victory.  
Death the conqueror conquered is,  
And sorrow's tomb is seen to be  
The womb of heavenly bliss.

For him now, the heavenly bliss. For us, the grateful memories, the tasks of the present and the abiding grace of God.

L. G. CHAMPION

## H. H. ROWLEY, 1890-1969\*

We are met here this afternoon—a company drawn from many places and circumstances and representative of a far larger company—to remember a remarkable man and to express our respect and regard for him. Known in scholarly circles throughout the world, H. H. Rowley was one of the outstanding workers in the field of Old Testament studies; and his interests reached out into a number of kindred fields, particularly those of comparative religion and Chinese studies. He became a Fellow of the British Academy. He received the coveted Burkitt Medal for Biblical Studies. He taught in three Universities. A dozen more in this country and overseas honoured him. For nearly half a century he was able to pour out a stream of learned articles in a score of professional journals and books both large and small. He was indeed a prodigious worker, indefatigable in the tasks he undertook, driving himself and others to the last.

All his work had strongly marked characteristics—careful balanced judgment, attention to detail, a passion for accuracy, a comprehensive, and to others daunting bibliographical range. For these things his books and articles will long be valuable tools for the students and research scholars of the future. They will look to see how Dr. Rowley summed up the issues, where the sources may be found. This was indeed a workman who had no reason to be ashamed.

Were this all that could be said—impressive as it is, even extraordinary—we should not be here. But there is more to be said.

Harold Rowley was born and brought up in Leicester. He was one of the bright boys in a Sunday School attached to a large church—Melbourne Hall—which was at that time strongly evangelical in its tradition and emphasis, but open-minded and intellectually alive. As his pastor, during his most impressionable years, young Rowley had the beloved W. Y. Fullerton, an Irishman of rare spiritual as well as physical stature, gifted both in speech and with the pen. In 1907, when Rowley was seventeen years old, Fullerton went on a mission to China, then rapidly opening up to the West. It was no doubt Fullerton who fired the youth to think of missionary service in China under the Baptist Missionary Society.

He went in due course for training to Bristol Baptist College and then to Mansfield College, Oxford, his progress made possible by winning the Dr. William's Scholarship, his stay in Oxford crowned by gaining the Houghton Syriac Prize. It was war-time. He undertook the pastorate of the Union Church in Wells, Somerset, but at length reached China in 1922.

The country was in turmoil. Anti-foreign feeling had been growing since 1919. Russian influence was increasing. In the

\* Address delivered at the Memorial Service for Dr. Rowley at Bloomsbury Baptist Church, London, on 29th October, 1969.

country-side civil war was almost endemic. In Shantung, to which Rowley was posted, and around Tsinanfu, the seat of the Christian University, where he was to teach the Old Testament, Chiang-Kai-Shek was fighting the Japanese. In addition, during the seven years Rowley remained in China, Sun Yat Sen died; there was excitement over the revision of the unequal treaties; and then came the difficult issue of the registration of all missionary schools. It was not an easy situation for an eager young academic.

He returned to this country in 1929, greatly exercised—as were many missionaries—as to how far the opportunity of continuing to teach the Christian faith would be available in educational institutions in China. He had added to his biblical and semitic knowledge a considerable insight into Chinese culture and religion. He soon found himself at Cardiff, assistant to another noted Old Testament scholar, also a Baptist, Dr. Theodore H. Robinson. Robinson had himself at one time taught at Serampore College in India. After only four years at Cardiff, Rowley moved to Bangor as Professor, and ten years after that, in 1945, to Manchester University. There, in close association with the late Professor T. W. Manson and with the great Rylands Library nearby, he worked and taught with the greatest diligence until 1959.

But always the convictions of his youth and his missionary passion remained alive. While he was a master of Syriac and Aramaic and produced learned studies on Darius the Mede, on Apocalyptic and—in more recent years on the Dead Sea Scrolls; while he ventured to deal with almost all the main matters of dispute in the field of Biblical scholarship—he wrote and spoke also about Israel's mission to the nations, about the missionary message of the Old Testament, about the rediscovery, the relevance and the unity of the Bible, about the biblical doctrine of election. And as soon as he began to be free of his teaching responsibilities, though he undertook exacting new tasks mainly of an editorial kind, he not only accepted the honours which the Baptist denomination wished proudly to bestow on one of its most gifted and famous sons—President of the Baptist Union, Chairman of the Baptist Missionary Society—he showed himself ready to spend long hours in travel to and from Manchester and later to and from Stroud, in order to serve on committees. For five years he was chairman of the General Purposes and Finance Executive of the Baptist Union. As the General Secretary in those days, I know what it meant to have as colleague and counsellor one as clear-minded, business-like and understanding as was Dr. Rowley.

Even this is not all that comes to mind on an occasion like this. Cautious and disciplined as Dr. Rowley was, sometimes almost magisterial, he could at times be impulsive. He could be generous almost to a fault, of his time, his substance, himself. As soon as World War II was over, he set about restoring links with the Old Testament scholars of Europe, supplying them with books, helping many who were in dire material need. The Society for Old Testament Study, always one of

his special interests, became thereby an international body. It was fitting that he should be called to preside over its fiftieth meeting. But the help he gave to foreign scholars was an act of compassion. It brought Dr. Rowley something he cherished more than the accompanying honours, namely, friendship. To many in this country little expecting his notice or interest, he did many unexpected kindnesses; a book, a letter, a box of chocolates, a five-pound note. Several of you could tell of these things. He was a witty companion, ever ready with good stories, no dry-as-dust scholar, truly a human being.

He owed, of course, a great deal to his home. Twenty-five years ago he dedicated one of his books to Mrs Rowley. I hope she will not mind my reading to you what he wrote. It was, after all, a public acknowledgment and, as we know, richly deserved. "To my wife, whose patience and help never fail and whose courage has never faltered in our adventures, this study is dedicated in love and gratitude". Since those words were written the enormous and ever-growing collection of books and papers has been moved at least three times. He was proud of his children and often spoke of them to his friends.

The secret of this life lay deep, in the inner recesses of the mind and heart, in the commitment he had made in his youth and in what he had come to hold on to through the chances and changes that had been his. In a footnote to the printed version of lectures he gave at Spurgeon's College, he quotes a sentence of Eduard Schweizer, of Zürich: "There are in the Church no idle members, as there are in the body no members without function." No drones, only workers in the true Church. This is what became his master conviction and motive; and it kept him active to the end, ready, even when subject to disabling weakness and pain, to wrestle on with the editing of the English edition of Léonard's history and many other tasks. He thought the Almighty wanted still more from him. There he was wrong. He was spared further anxiety and suffering. He has been taken to a place where, we believe, there is rest, refreshment and enjoyment.

Dr. Rowley spent much time in intensive study in order to tell us about the hopes and fears of men many centuries ago. He believed that the Old Testament is of enduring importance because it has throughout it a forward look, because it points beyond itself, because it speaks of a Golden Age in the future which is to be the Day of the Lord. He found the key to the meaning of the Old Testament in the New. This was the faith which sustained him in his labours as a scholar and in life's joys and ordeals. In the last of a series of lectures on "The Faith of Israel", which he gave in Richmond, Virginia, he spoke about the Day of the Lord and the deep concern for others which it engenders in all who are moved by the thought of it. These were the closing words of the lecture:

"How little does the world, with all its anxiety for itself and its future, heed the great message of this book, that if it would but forget itself in its desire to seek God and to

understand and do his will, it would best serve itself. In losing itself to him, it would find itself in him."

Of the one we remember this afternoon, we can in truth say: he lost himself to God. He has surely now found himself in Him.

ERNEST A. PAYNE

### **NONCONFORMITY AND THE NEW AGE\***

It would not be fitting for me to offer any opinion as to whether or not the Committee of Deputies has now exhausted its usefulness as such. The eminent German theologian, Dr. Hans Küng, has rightly reminded us that "a protest, even though justified in its time, should not necessarily be repeated for ever". But when Dr. Küng goes further, and seems to doubt whether Protestants have given enough thought to this, I am constrained to make three brief comments. As a Roman Catholic, Dr. Küng may not perhaps be aware how great is the need still in some parts of the world for such skilled and resolute advocacy as the Dissenting Deputies have provided for the cause of civil and religious liberty. Secondly, no-one should suppose that the work of the Deputies exhausted itself in negations. Nonconformity, like the Protestantism of which it is one expression, took the form of a protest movement because it was not allowed by its opponents to do otherwise. But its essential witness has always been positive and constructive. To quote Mr. Bernard Manning: "Protestantism is not a negative thing; it is a positive re-statement of catholic truth". Nor is Nonconformity concerned merely with Church-order in the narrower sense. "Our reasons for dissenting from the Church of England" wrote Principal Fairbairn, "are too fundamental to be merely or mainly ecclesiastical. We dissent because we believe that she fails adequately to interpret and realise for the people of England the religion of Christ". Speaking in all charity towards our Anglican brethren, I believe that that judgement is still valid. And therefore I say, thirdly, that we shall not discover what contribution Nonconformity has to offer to the future of English religion by rejecting the insights and convictions of our forefathers, but rather by trying to understand and apply in the changed conditions of our day, the principles that they defended. It is these principles, surely, that entitle us, who belong to different Denominations, to speak of "Nonconformity" as a single concept.

\* The substance of an address given at the Annual Meeting of the Deputies of the Three Denominations, March 1968.

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Some weeks ago I stood at the foot of the steps that lead up to the West door of St. Paul's Cathedral, and I noticed, carved in the granite pavement, an inscription to the effect that there, on June 22nd, 1897, Queen Victoria gave thanks to Almighty God for the 60th Anniversary of her accession to the throne. As I looked at that inscription, it seemed to me to be a landmark in more senses than one. I am myself a Victorian, and proud of it. I was born in a Gloucestershire village six years before the date carved on that stone. And as I look back I realise that it has been my lot to live through one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, of all periods in the history of mankind (apart, that is to say, from the first few decades of the Christian era). Let me remind you of some of the outstanding developments in the human scene that have taken place in the relatively short time that has elapsed since the death of Queen Victoria.

I begin with the discovery of new sources of power. Seventy years ago, gas and electricity were more or less in their infancy. The real break through came with the invention of the internal combustion engine, which led swiftly to the production of a multitude of new machines and instruments of various kinds. More recently, the situation has been further transformed by the discovery of the process of nuclear fission, and the consequent release of new forms of energy of unimaginable potency.

The possession of more power has resulted in an unprecedented expansion of the means of communication between countries and peoples, and the opening-up of the surface of the globe to explorers and prospectors. As a young man, I saw exhibited in a London store the first aeroplane to cross the English Channel, piloted by M. Blériot. In the following years, telegraphic and telephonic communication grew apace, and we were given in quick succession the cinema, the motor car, broadcasting and lastly, space-probes and satellites. The whole world is now a network of communications of one kind or another.

A third area of change within the same short period has been that of political and international affairs. With the First War, the old Imperial systems collapsed one by one, and they were succeeded by the new Great Powers of Russia, America and China. The grant of independence to India and many other smaller nations followed, so that, by 1967, the United Nations Organisation, founded in 1945 with a membership of 51, included over 120 nations.

Fourthly, the proliferation of life on this planet has, in the last half-century, become a major pre-occupation of the economists and statesmen of the world. Improvements in health and living conditions have not only increased man's expectation of life. They have raised the question how, in a world to which seventy million new lives are being added every year, adequate food and employment, education and medical care can be provided for all who need them.

Finally, let me remind you of one further development in this century which, although it is of a quite different kind

from those I have been mentioning, may prove in the end as important as any of them—I mean, what has been described as the gathering tide of Christian Union. The rise and growth of the Ecumenical Movement is usually associated—and rightly—with the great Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. But even before that date, through the Student Christian Movement and kindred organisations, there was beginning to take place a radical change in the relationships of Christians of various denominations with one another. The ecumenical movement has its critics; but when I compare the attitude of Christians to one another today with that which was normal when I was a boy, I am amazed at the extent of the change and I cannot but believe that something is taking place amongst us, by the grace of God, which is of the deepest significance for the future of mankind.

Such are some of the major changes in the human scene that have occurred within the present century. Each of them is significant in its own right; but their combined importance is enhanced enormously by the fact that they have all been taking place at the same time, and are continuing to make their influence felt with increasing momentum. Each magnifies the effect of the others so that, taken as a whole, they constitute a spontaneous outburst of creative activity on our planet that is without parallel in human history. It is this fact that justifies us in believing that we are witnessing nothing less than the disappearance of a whole order of life, and the birth of a New Age. I know no better commentary upon this situation than some prophetic words written thirty years ago by that distinguished pioneer of the ecumenical movement, Dr. J. H. Oldham, in his book "The Church and its Function in Society": "There is a widespread sense, which finds expression in the writings and utterances of many serious thinkers, Christian and non-Christian, that we stand to-day at one of the major turning-points in history." The basal assumptions which have hitherto given a meaning to life, and unity and stability to civilisation, have lost their unquestioned validity . . . The foundations of human society are quivering".

The far-reaching developments that I have been describing have brought with them radical changes in traditional ways of thought and action. It would be hopeless—not to say presumptuous—for anyone to try and draw up at this stage a balance-sheet of gains and losses. Something elemental is happening on a scale beyond our power to measure. But we can all see that the horizons of human life have been vastly extended and its quality greatly intensified, both for good and for evil. What then should be our general attitude to this situation? There are, it seems to me, three possible answers to this question that stand out from among the rest. The first is that of simple resistance to change. We are all in some degree sensitive on this point, and are prone to resent any proposal that promises to threaten the habits and traditions to which we are most attached. Who was it who said that the only way to persuade an Englishman to accept anything new was to convince him that it did not, in fact, involve any change? The



dodo may be extinct, but his posterity are still very much alive, as our daily newspapers make abundantly clear.

If resistance to change is almost instinctive among the old, the commonest reaction to-day is to adopt an attitude of uncritical acceptance of everything that is new; and this is not confined to any particular age-group. Our homes are filled with new and allegedly better articles of furniture and decoration to which we are constantly adding, often for no better reason than that the advertisements speak so well of them. Our life is ridden by slogans like "keeping up with the Joneses" or being "with it", even though the Joneses themselves are on the move, and we cannot be "with" anything for more than a few weeks at the outside. For those who take up this attitude, life tends to become a ceaseless struggle to reach ever higher standards of material well-being, so that they may be able always to have what others have, and have it whenever they want it.

I do not think we can deny that both these attitudes are represented within the Christian Church as well as outside it. The spirit of the Age works more powerfully upon us all than we like perhaps to acknowledge. But if we make the effort to disengage ourselves from involvement in these attitudes, and put to ourselves the question whether there may not be a specifically Christian approach to the modern situation, then I believe there can only be one answer. The Christian attitude is to *claim the New Age for God*, and to assert His right to rule in it. This attitude is not new, though it seems to have been widely forgotten to-day. It stems from the revelation of God's character and purpose that has been given to the world in the Bible, and particularly in the life and ministry, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is embodied in a Christian tradition that is now nearly 2,000 years old, and that has brought men through the gravest of situations in days gone by. Yet the Christian attitude is new in the sense that it is now called upon to face a fresh revelation of God's purpose for mankind that is deeply awe-inspiring in its scope and challenge. The developments in man's situation in the last hundred years have this peculiar significance, that they are not a mere succession of changes unconnected with each other, or with what has gone before. They are illustrations of that kind of organic change that we call growth. They announce the fact that the long process, by which God has brought man from lowly origins to his present position on this planet, has now reached a new stage. To quote Henri Breuil: "We have only just cast off the last moorings which held us to the Neolithic Age". In short, God is now inviting man to take that more responsible share in the shaping of his destiny which, according to the Bible, it has always been intended that he should have (Cp. Ps. 8). He is still burdened by weakness and sin; he is still mortal, and far from being in control of his destiny. Yet he is being asked to-day to take decisions on a world-scale that tax him to the limit, and presuppose a wisdom, a self-restraint, and a spirit of humanity greater than any he has used hitherto. In a word, he is being called upon to grow up. The world has always been One World for God; it has now become One World

for Man. And anyone who is in doubt about the new maturity now required of our race cannot have weighed sufficiently the gravity of the questions that are demanding an answer, from the meaning of Marriage and control of Birth and Death, to the rôle of chemistry in Medicine and Agriculture, the growth of racial bitterness, and the menace of nuclear war.

The creative factor in all this has been, as we know, the amazing growth of Science. But Science is not an idol to be worshipped. It is the servant of Truth and of God. And the changes that Science is bringing about will only be for man's good as he is ready to acknowledge the sovereignty of God, and will seek to rule the world as the responsible steward of His bounty to all. This means, of course, that what the world needs is a revival of Religion, and when I say Religion, I mean Christianity. I do not wish to deny the values that are hidden within other religious systems about which there is such natural curiosity to-day. But I believe that God has given to the world in Jesus Christ a unique and final revelation of his character and purpose that will prove adequate for all needs. What the New Age calls for, in my judgement, is not a new Faith, but a better understanding and expression of the one of which the Christian Church is the trustee, and which is centred in the Living Christ. As Dissenters, you and I naturally want to know what place there will be for Nonconformity in such a revived Christianity. But a more important question is whether the Christian Church as a whole can make the changes that are necessary if the old Gospel is to speak clearly to the New Age. To quote Dr. Oldham again: "It will make all the difference to the discussions whether the assumption, conscious or unexpressed, is that all that is needed to enable the Church to fulfil its mission is an extension and improvement of its present organisation, activities and methods; or whether we are willing that these familiar forms should give place, if God so will, to others more adequate to meet the needs of the present time, and are ready for the stream of Christian life to break out in fresh ways and create for itself new channels of expression". (I notice by the way that Mr. Charles Davis thinks the ecumenical movement has already lost its radical nature in the eyes of many Christians because "the present structures of the Churches have been taken too much for granted, and an immense effort expended on fitting them together").

At first sight the outlook for Nonconformity may not seem very promising. Does not the very word "Nonconformist" anchor us to a phase of English history that is fast passing away, if it has not already done so? To a certain degree that is true, and we should be glad that it is so. The work of the Dissenting Deputies does not need to be repeated in our day in the same form as in the past; yet there is still great need for the witness of Nonconformists, whether they call themselves by the old name of Dissenters or the new title of Free Churchmen. Even if the activities of Nonconformists change, it does not follow that the principles that have inspired them in the past are now invalid. On the contrary, I believe they were never more relevant than they are to-day; and I also

believe there is a great welcome waiting for those who know how to interpret those principles in terms that can be grasped by ordinary men and women, and are ready to support them with adequate resources of men and money. "God works wondrously in the world," wrote John Henry Newman, "and at certain eras His providence puts on a new aspect. Religion seems to be failing when it is merely changing its form." It seems to me that we are living in one of those eras to-day, and although we do not know what new form Christianity will take in the future, God is calling us now to help in shaping it, inadequate though we know ourselves to be for the task.

What are the principles for which Nonconformity has historically contended? We must not forget that Nonconformity is not an English monopoly. The insights for which we stand are shared by a great and growing company in other lands and it is in their interests, as well as in our own that we should define as clearly as possible our ultimate convictions. How shall we state these? Mr. H. W. Clark in his *History of English Nonconformity* would have us believe that "the Nonconformist spirit is, in succinct summary, the spirit which exalts life above organisation. More than that, it is the spirit which holds that life should *make* organisation." There is much truth in that. But, if we come to particulars, I suggest that, as Free Churchmen, we are committed to three basic propositions:

(i) *The principle of Personal Faith.*

Every religion worthy of the name has to do with the Supernatural, and the specific message of Christianity is that in Jesus Christ the Supernatural has become personally present in our world to deliver men from their sins, and to give them power to become the sons of God. Christians are not all of one mind as to how this great gift of new life is mediated to mankind. The traditional Catholic doctrine is that it is communicated to men through a sacramental system—the Church—into which they are incorporated as infants by Baptism. The great Reformers, on the other hand, reverted to what they believed to be the teaching of the New Testament, and taught that Grace is a personal relationship between God and man which can only be entered upon through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We Nonconformists are children of the Reformation. We do not all agree as to the mode by which the convert to Christianity should profess his faith. Some of us stand by Believers Baptism as the accepted New Testament mode. Others of us use this rite but rarely. But it is common ground with all Free Churchmen that Justification by Faith—to use the old terminology—is the ground of our acceptance with God and our hope of eternal salvation. "Perhaps the greatest contribution made by the Dissenters" wrote the late Dr. Edwyn Bevan in his fine little book *Christianity*, "was the continuous testimony they bore, by their very existence, to the character of Christianity as a society to which men adhere by individual conversion and choice, not by birth".

Justification by faith is also the charter of our freedom as persons, for we believe that, by the total submission of his life

to the Lord Jesus Christ, a man becomes both the master of his own soul, and the free and willing servant of others for Christ's sake.

(ii) We are committed, as Nonconformists, to the principle of congregational authority.

I do not mean that we are committed to a purely congregational order of Church government, although that has a long and honourable history. Again, we are not of one mind about this. But all Nonconformists are agreed that the Christian Church is not to be identified with a hierarchical form of Church government which claims to derive its authority from Christ by way of succession from the Apostles. In our view, the Church is essentially a fellowship of believing men and women who rest in the assurance of the Living Christ that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is Himself present in the midst. This, to us, is genuine "high churchmanship", for it implies that such a local group, in which the Word of God is preached, the Sacraments observed, and pastoral discipline exercised, is a veritable manifestation of the Church of Christ, and has authority to speak and act in His Name. That is why we deeply resent any suggestion that our Ministers are not Ministers of Christ, and our Ordinances are not Sacraments, unless they have been validated by the rite of episcopal ordination. We long for more unity amongst Christians of all denominations; but we find any organic union inconceivable so long as the Christian Ministry and the Lord's Table are regarded as exclusively confined to those who accept a particular view of Church order and government as final.

This corporate committal of believers to one another under the Lordship of Jesus Christ makes of the Church, in the Nonconformist view, a holy priesthood in the sense described in Scripture (Cp. I *Peter* 2. 4ff). It endows her people with that direct access to God in Christ which is her birthright; and it is also the charter of her liberties. Because the Church belongs to Christ, she is, and must be, free—free, first of all, from any connection with the State which would impare her right and duty to follow the bidding of her Master whatever that may involve; free also, to modify and develop her forms of government in any direction—Congregational, Presbyterian or even Episcopal—that may seem good to the churches concerned, always provided that they are acting under what they sincerely believe to be the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and subordinate Church-order to His rule.

(iii) Finally, we are pledged, as Nonconformists, to a *full share in the Commission of Jesus to His followers* to go and make disciples of all nations and teach them the ways of the Kingdom of God. The ramifications of this task are endless, but when I ask myself if Nonconformity has anything distinctive to bring to the world-wide mission of the Church, I am inclined to say that one such contribution at least is to be found in the tradition of *lay-leadership* that has for so long given to our Free Churches their characteristic pattern. We

find no justification in Scripture for erecting a barrier between one form of Christian ministry and another. Ministers, Elders, Deacons, Lay-Preachers, and the rest, differ in their functions, some of which are more important than others. But they are all—to borrow St. Paul's words—"ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God". And while I myself am firmly convinced of the continuing need for an ordained Ministry, I believe that the future of Christianity is likely to depend more and more upon lay men and women, through whose daily witness the Gospel shall be translated once more into the stuff of common life. Only in that way can social, political, and international affairs, as well as individual lives, be brought before the bar of the divine judgement, and the spirit of compassion and understanding flow out into the world with healing power. It is here, I think that Nonconformity will come into its own again. John Woolman, the 18 century Quaker, recorded in his Journal that "from what I had read and heard, I believe there had been in past ages people who walked in uprightness before God in a degree exceeding any that I knew or heard of now living; and the apprehension of there being less steadiness and firmness amongst people in the present age often troubled me when I was a child". This moral sensitiveness was responsible in John Woolman's case for a life-time spent in public service for Christ. Under the guise of the Nonconformist conscience it is still honoured amongst us, sometimes—it is true—half cynically, but also half-wistfully, for we know that in earlier years the Nonconformist conscience was indeed a power to be reckoned with in public affairs. It must be our prayer that God will reactivate this spirit in our time, and raise up again Christian men and women in all walks of life who will take their stand on the side of whatsoever things are lovely, true and good. Without such a revival of moral seriousness we shall sink ever more deeply into the morass of unbelief and materialism in which we now flounder. One thing is certain: no-one would welcome a change of this kind more warmly than the multitude of ordinary folk, both old and young, both within the Church and outside it, who are deeply and passionately concerned about the present condition of the world and its oppressed peoples, and who, in their hunger and thirst after righteousness, are surely not far from the Kingdom of God.

I will end where I began, with a personal reminiscence associated with St. Paul's. Many years ago I was walking through the passage that used to lead from Newgate to Paternoster Row when my eye was caught by some lettering on a stone built into the left-hand wall. The stone was obviously old, and although I have never read any explanation of it, my guess would be that it was an early surveyor's mark of some kind. For the inscription, as I recollect it, ran somewhat as follows:

Though you may search the City round,  
Yet this is still the highest ground.

The tides of war have swept away the old pattern of streets around St. Paul's; and the view of the Cathedral to-day is not

as free and open as it used to be. But facts are facts. If that ancient landmark spoke the truth, then—let the New Age bring what it may—the summit of Ludgate Hill will still be the highest point in the City of London: and the great Church that crowns it a visible symbol of Christ's presence in our midst, and an abiding pledge of His ultimate triumph.

R. L. CHILD

## MISSIONARY REFLECTIONS ON BRITISH CHRISTIANITY

The following reflections were presented originally as part of a much longer address which included, first, a summary survey of BMS work in Brazil, secondly, an attempt to analyse the reasons for the rapid growth of the evangelical churches in Brazil and thirdly, a descriptive analysis of the contrasts between Brazilian and English Baptist churches. What follows was presented as the fourth part of that address and was headed "What I have learned by being a missionary".

One may perhaps be pardoned two comments which it would be wise to include here. First, one often hears complaints about missionaries who return to this country and make sweeping and ill-considered comments about our British churches. Let it be said in reply that, although a missionary may indeed be in some ways "out of touch", in the course of his deputation work he gets considerable opportunities to visit all sorts of churches all over the country and is also able to stand back as an outsider and see things with an objectivity that is impossible to someone more closely involved. Secondly, and as a corollary to that, it seems to me to be a missionary's plain duty to use every opportunity he has for bringing home to British churches the burning vision which is his—his not by reason of any pretended superior status, but in virtue of the greater opportunities he has had. What Christian, who is not totally insensitive and blind, can have the privilege of working in the "Younger Churches" (or even Overseas) and not carry in his soul the vigorous compulsion to speak out about what he has seen and heard? Would English Christians rather then be left in peace to enjoy their own ineffective business—to sink back restfully into the grave from which Christ has saved them? Heaven forbid! Our duty as missionaries then is plain.

Naturally one can but generalize and generalization is always, beyond a certain point, exaggeration—though, on the other hand, detailed analysis would cause us to lose sight of the more important general trends. Thus one must pardon the unavoidable over-statement of generalization. However, preliminaries over . . .

What have I learned by being a missionary?

I have learned what it means to be a Christian. Not that I wasn't a Christian before. What I mean is that certain things have impressed themselves upon me with a deeper intensity than I had previously felt. One of these now more-vivid awarenesses is that the Cross is the symbol and summary of all human life. The Cross is the key to all the aspects of our life, not just to those which are more usually described as "suffering". We seem to have forgotten this, or perhaps never to have perceived it. We have misused the Cross; we have cut it square and polished and varnished it and put it upon our church walls as an ornament. We speak of the Cross; we sing about it, we preach about it—yet we have forgotten what it means. We have put it in inverted commas and made it a theological catch-phrase; we have lifted it out of its relation to life. The Cross is the challenge to us to redeem the world, in all its tragedy; with Christ. It means agonizing involvement, with all its implications of threat to comfort and security, psychological and physical.

It is the self-centred affluence of the "Western World" (and of its churches within it) which is the biggest indication of this forgetfulness of the real Cross. Folk in Britain do not realise how great is their wealth. Britain is rich, unimaginably rich. Figures for the prodigality of affluence are easy to come by—such as that for the national expenditure on gambling in 1967 of £2,000 million. If one takes into account all expenditure in Britain on strictly unnecessary items—such as the various popular vices, drinking, smoking and gambling, not to mention drugs and prostitution; on sources of entertainment—such as radio, T.V., cinema, sports, horse-racing; on status symbols—such as cars and fashionable clothes, one cannot resist the conclusion, unpalatable though it be, that Britain is rotten with wealth. Of course there are exceptions and hard cases but they don't alter the general picture. All I'm trying to do at this point is not to decry wealth but to call for a recognition of just how wealthy we are in Britain. Yet to cap it all there is enough evidence in the non-stop stream of industrial disputes (surely not too trite a reference) to prove that we just don't understand how well off we are.

This comes home to me vividly, as you will see from two contrasts. The first, I can picture clearly one family of four little girls whose father, who sold fruit in the main avenue of a little interior town of Brazil, had that particular year done well—so well in fact that he was able to buy for his four little girls in that year one plastic doll between them! Look then at our British children—isn't it true that they have (as a rule) so many toys that we don't know what to buy them next? Secondly: of the 70-odd millions in Brazil 60 millions have at least one type of intestinal parasite. Children in the Brazilian interior die, not just from incurable diseases, but from worms! Worms that a few shillings would destroy! Yet in Britain we spend untold wealth in the attempt to keep individuals alive on, shall we say, a kidney-machine. Our affluence is not of itself morally wrong—any more than our children's toys or our kidney-machine. These comparisons are merely

presented to make you aware of the chasm that exists between men on earth today. And these material illustrations indicate too the spiritual need and longing of the non-western world.

Our affluence is rudderless. Britain is losing its national will-to-live. Or should one rather say that Britain has sought to save its life and in consequence has lost it? We have gained the world and lost all that was more worth having. Even our old idealistic socialism has resolved itself into the clashes of group-interest. One hears continual cries about Britain's moral decline. If Britain is headed for total moral breakdown (which could happen though we still have a long way to go before hitting rock-bottom, as one can see by a comparison with public morality in, for example, the Latin American countries!)—it would be the greatest opportunity for the Gospel that Britain ever saw—if the Church were strong enough to face such a challenge.

Britain has been isolated from the world, by God—for His own inscrutable purposes, by twenty miles of water. This isolation has had incalculable effects in the history of the world, not only by shielding Britain militarily but by also making the Englishman insular by temperament and in his psychological isolation proud. Even as a boy I was conditioned to think that everything British was necessarily and essentially superior to anything and everything that could possibly be produced anywhere else in the world—and conscious though I am of the error, the sentiment still lingers. The churches have, all unaware, been drawn along with the British mentality, within the British social and Imperial scene. The churches have flourished with the national "mood". When Imperial Britain had drawn all the world within its influence the churches were on the crest of their wave too, now that the national "psyche" is ebbing, the British pulse is slackening, the churches, inexplicably, are ebbing too. The churches, a part of the calm, somnolent, traditional England, happy in the crisis-free "other Eden, demi-paradise", have thus been guilty of as big a spiritual sell-out as that of the German churches under Hitler in the thirties. We have accepted the myth of British superiority, we have confused material comfort with success, petty-fogging ecclesiastical interests with the Kingdom and the "salvation" of our own insular soul has become the aim of the spiritual culture sessions that we call worship, but which have nothing essentially Christian about them. No doubt I shall be accused of gross exaggeration—but how else may one feel when, while the world groans for its Salvation, British churches remain busily cluttered-up with questions of buildings, trust deeds and pussy-footing avoidance of political questions and while small neighbouring congregations refuse to unite (to refer to but one symptom) because each aged saint wishes to occupy the same hallowed pew he has always occupied and to see the same sacred furniture which has been such a blessing to his own devotion! Do we not, in the very name of Christ, remain blind to Christ! Surely, there are extenuating circumstances. But they are the sort of extenuating circumstances which look to an outsider very much like special pleading! The churches of today need to be utterly shattered



so that they may rediscover the real meaning of their existence as the Servant Church. The Servant of the world.

Britain needs an ideology—that is why the country is moribund. That is why the British churches have come to share the futility of their world—they share the same lack of vision. Every country that achieves something in the world achieves it because it has an ideology, or, if you like, a sense of mission. Russia and China are driven by Communism, the United States by a flagging anti-communism, the Arabs by anti-Zionism, and Britain? Britain is just in retreat! Is it possible that Christianity could become the driving force of a new Britain? That Britain could be inspired by the vision of the Servant Church?

Ecumenism is not the answer to the churches' problem. I am in principle an ecumenist—but in my opinion there is only one thing worse than unorganised futility—and that is organised futility. You don't heal the sick just by housing them in larger hospitals, nor incidentally by housing them in smaller hospitals either. We need a prophetic revival of the Church—which may have ecumenical consequences, but ecumenical action can scarcely be expected to produce, as it were by external planning, a prophetic revival.

We need to recover the message of Christ crucified. Christ the Suffering Servant must be the model for Christ's suffering Church. Yet what have we done?

We have emasculated the Gospel, and in this neither Conservative Evangelicals or others are free from responsibility. In the attempt to be all things to all men we have 'sugared the pill'. Not only are we not saving any more, we are even losing those who profess the name of Christ. We have misled people, we have offered them a painless gospel. We have forgotten the Cross or at least its real meaning, or we have relegated it to a small place in our message (perhaps because we no longer understand it ourselves!)—it hurts no one—so it is powerless to save. We have promised peace; we have promised joy. A subtopian gospel suited to subtopian souls. Is the Gospel peace? Is the Gospel joy?

Ultimately most certainly it is—but not in the first place. In the first place the Gospel is not peace, not joy—but shame, sweat, blood and death. It is not nice. It is not respectable—it is the CROSS, jagged, searing to body and soul. It is Christ crushed by the agony of the world—it is we too crushed by the agony of the world. The joy of the Gospel is the joy of battle, and the peace of the Gospel is the peace of war. When Christ came to earth His total obedience led Him to death on the Cross. It is a commonplace to say that obedience today may lead us in other directions. Bearing in mind our materially privileged position here in Britain and the need and crisis conditions in many spheres in other areas of the world, it is not merely rhetoric to ask where obedience may not lead us today.

Our need is for a radical vision of the world's crying need, in every aspect of its life,—and for a vision of the Cross as God's radical answer to that need. As a student I sat through a series of lectures on the Work of Christ without ever coming

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**The Baptist Insurance Company Limited**  
**4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1**

To Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal

Dear Friends,

“So may the outward shows be least themselves;”  
The Merchant of Venice

The story in **The Times** of Stavros Mihalarias, a Greek art restorer, living in London, has greatly interested me.

Hitherto x-rays of a painting could detect a second work underneath but a critical choice had then to be made—to leave hidden the second painting or to destroy the upper picture in disclosing the lower.

Mihalarias has changed all that for he has discovered the technique of lifting successfully one film of paint from the other so as to achieve both.

I once looked round an art restorer's studio where inter alia a picture was being transferred from one perished backing to sound canvas but that was a solo rather than a tandem effort.

The studio was a revelation. Here a piece of Grinling Gibbons tracery carved deeply in grained wood—there an icon and so on. All for me a width of experience but commonplace to the studio staff.

Familiarity sometimes breeds, well perhaps not contempt but a surface attitude of mind. It is rewarding to get below first impressions.

The image of British Insurance Association companies of which we are one is in itself attractive. For Baptists however it is well to look deeper than the surface and in my, or rather your, Company there is in depth the denominational interest—it is that which is unique.

I like to emphasise these two images in “Baptist Insurance”—British insurance strength + Baptist denominational depth.

Put these two pictures side by side and I am sure you will like them.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN  
General Manager.

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to understand what the traditional theories of the Atonement were trying to say. But now I begin to understand—the Cross is not just what Christ did for us on Golgotha so long ago; the Cross is that, is essentially that, but it is much more. The Cross is God's standing challenge to us. It shows Christ's agony as He was smashed for the world's re-creation; It is Christ putting His shoulder to lift the world with its dead weight of agony and being crushed in the process. He was the trail-blazer, without Him no effort of ours would be of any avail. Yet to us, now, in the Cross, God reaches out and says:

'Put your hand here. Let the nail tear your flesh too.

Put your shoulder here. Lift the world with Christ. Be crushed as He was by the weight of its suffering, its misery and its sin. If you suffer with Him in His involvement in the world's tragedy you will be glorified with Him.'

This is what it meant for Christ to obey God—what then will it mean for the average Briton today to obey God? What would it mean if our churches were to become obedient to the implications of the Cross in the world of today?

Yes, I am beginning to understand what it means to be a Christian, and I ask for your own inward response. Are you prepared at this price to continue to take the name of Christ upon your lips? Dare we any longer even call ourselves Christians—after Him who was *truly* involved in the world's tragedy? Yet if we wish to do so there is no other way but that of the Cross. The Suffering Servant still seeks to create the Suffering Church.

TONY BOORNE

## THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOSPEL\*

Christian witness must have a social as well as a personal content; it must clearly demonstrate that the gospel is relevant to the problems of contemporary society, problems of work and leisure, industrial efficiency and disputes, commercial practice, poverty and affluence, war and peace. This is not some new "social gospel"; it is the historic position of the Christian church, and the tragedy is that 20th century evangelicalism has largely lost its vision of social witness, just at the time when the opportunities are greatest. Look through any catalogue of Evangelical publications and you will find very few dealing with the social implications of our faith. Look through any bibliography of works on Christianity and the social order and you will find very few written by Evangelical scholars—Mr Catherwood's welcome books being a notable exception. We are wary, understandably and rightly,

\* *The substance of an address given at an Evangelical Alliance National Assembly.*

of reducing the timeless evangel to a mere social gospel of good works. We are anxious to make clear the biblical revelation that man needs not reformation but regeneration. In this, of course, our position is unassailable. Nevertheless, if we of this generation are to be an effective testimony to the gospel, we must face up to and give expression to the social implications of our faith. The challenge is inescapable because our involvement in society is inescapable. We are in the world even though we are not of it. We cannot contract out of our social responsibilities for we are dependent upon our fellow men for the very maintenance of life itself. Moreover, we should not, even if we could, for our society, sinful as it is, has its beginnings in the creative work of God. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof".

As I said, this is no new heresy; it is the classical evangelical position. The mediaeval view was that religion was all-comprehensive and was the ultimate standard of all human institutions and activities, and it wasn't until the 16th century that this integrated view of society began to break down with the secularisation of political theory. Some writers such as Weber, Cunningham and Tawney have related this change to the Reformation but this is unjust, for the fact is that Luther, Calvin, Knox and the Puritans all took the view that social questions were within the province of the church. The outstanding practical feature of Calvin's teaching was his insistence upon making every aspect of daily life subject to the law of God, not only the private life of the individual and the life of the church, but also of the market place and the government offices. It seems to me that our own times desperately need this kind of all-encompassing Christian faith, because for most of us it is expediency rather than Christian principles that determines conduct. And unless we insist upon the absolute standards of the Christian faith in every aspect of life, social as well as personal, then the whole fabric of our society will be washed away in a flood-tide of materialism and self-interest.

Like the Reformers before them, the Puritans also knew and stressed this social aspect of Christian witness. I don't need to remind you that the Puritan's sheet-anchor was firmly in the world of the spirit. He knew perfectly well that his citizenship was in heaven. But because of that very fact he was overwhelmingly conscious of the sovereignty of God—a sovereignty that extended to every part of human life. Therefore he had to live to God's glory in his daily work as well as in his worship; indeed work was an essential part of worship. So Richard Baxter applied the gospel to the practical issues of labour relations; it was, he said, "an odious oppression and injustice to defraud a servant or labourer of his wages or to give him less than he deserveth." And of commercial expediency he wrote, the Christian must not "take advantage of men's ignorance, error or necessity." Modern business could do with a bit of this kind of Christian witness and, if we bore it, men might listen to us when we talked about their need of personal salvation. They would be less free to write us off as a lot of other-worldly crackpots.

Although the 18th century saw the church retreating from social and economic questions, the revival which followed John Wesley's preaching brought her back into the arena again. The abolition of slavery was the work of great Christians like Wilberforce and Buxton. The modern factory worker who enjoys the protection of social legislation owes much to Shaftesbury, Sadler, and Oastler, Christians who led campaigns against the social evils of 19th century capitalism. Said Shaftesbury, "My business is in the world, and I must mix in the assemblies of men, or quit the part which Providence seems to have assigned me." What is tremendously important to note is that these men were not just social reformers, do-gooders; they were committed Christians who challenged accepted social institutions and behaviour with Christian criteria and in the fervour of their evangelical faith. Because they were evangelicals, they had to work out their own salvation in social witness. In fact one distinguished economic historian, Professor R. H. Campbell, has suggested that the decline in the church's social witness in the second half of the nineteenth century arose "not so much from the appearance of secular views of society but from the rise of theological liberalism." This may well be true, but even if it is, we evangelicals share with the liberals the responsibility for our failure over the last hundred years to exercise an effective social witness. Indeed, our failure has been the greater, for what has been done in this area has been done largely by liberals and at the present time it is the World Council of Churches rather than the Evangelical Alliance which is doing the thinking on social questions and claiming to express the Christian view of them. As a result the pronouncements made and remedies proposed often neglect such fundamental biblical truths as the utter sinfulness of man and the second advent of Christ, and are consequently often quite unrealistic and doomed to failure. We evangelicals ought to be showing that we are the realists. We are the ones who know what man is like and what God has done and can do, not only in the human heart but also in all of those corporate activities, institutions and relationships which result from our need to live together in societies.

This is particularly important in our times, and this is why I said earlier that it was a tragedy that evangelicalism had lost its vision of social witness, just at the time when the need is greatest. I say this because our modern society is an increasingly highly organised and complex one which puts constraints and influences upon the individual at every point.

Alfred Marshall, the Cambridge economist, considered that there were two great sets of influences which had been the major formative agencies in history, the religious and the economic. And although Karl Marx was doubtless wrong in concentrating everything upon the latter, there is no denying its formative influence. There is no doubt that societal influences play an enormous part in influencing behaviour and character. The Christian cannot, therefore, ignore them for they tend to turn men either towards or away from their Creator and Redeemer.

## B. M. S.

Is it true?

One of our missionaries writes:

**"I feel that there are some fellows who have had their marching orders . . .**

During 1970 our missionaries will share in evangelistic campaigns in Brazil, Trinidad, Jamaica, Ceylon, East Pakistan and Congo.

It is vital that there is adequate pastoral guidance for those who respond.

The Society requires pastoral missionaries now.

**. . . but not yet obeyed?"**

*The General Home Secretary will welcome enquiries:*

**Rev. A. S. Clement,  
Baptist Missionary Society,  
93 Gloucester Place,  
London, W1H 4AA**



If this was true in the past of which I have been speaking, it is certainly true to-day, for ours is a complex and changing society. I have neither the space nor the skills to go into this in scientific detail; suffice it to point out one or two obvious aspects of our dynamic modern society. It is increasingly an urban society, so that many people used to the calm security of the countryside are being thrown into the unfamiliar and bewildering impersonal life of the city. It is an increasingly industrial society in which people spend their working lives in the noisy, busy conditions of ever larger and more complex business units. Social mobility is increasing and young people tend to move out of their parents' socio-economic group, with its familiar mores, into another which is strange and full of unexpected problems of adjustment. Spatial mobility is also increasing and families are split geographically. Attitudes to family life are also changing; more married women go out to work; more families break up by divorce so that the security of the home is reduced. Traditional and familiar norms of conduct are breaking down and people are confused, uneasy and insecure. Small wonder that, in a competitive, cash economy, materialism abounds and life becomes a frantic scramble after money, status and possessions, for these are the things which spell success and offer a measure of security.

The constraints and pressures which modern society puts upon the individual are powerful indeed and in the midst of it all there is a desperate need for an effective Christian witness—but it must be a witness which faces squarely the real, practical, everyday problems of our time. We cannot rely on the evangelical clichés in which we ourselves feel so secure and comfortable, simply because we have been brought up on them. We confront a world which has not been brought up on them and on which they make no impression. The eternal, unchanging evangel must be presented in a way that is relevant to men's felt needs in our time—not last century's.

How can this be done? Much could be said but I confine myself to four areas in which it seems to me our Christian witness to society is lacking and needs the enlightening and reviving which only God the Holy Spirit can give. First, our involvement in society must be accepted and not avoided; we must recapture the vision of the reformers and the Puritans of the sovereignty of God over every part of life, the market place as well as the church and the home. I am not suggesting that the organised church should adopt particular political or social programmes; she is committed to the eternal gospel, not an ephemeral programme of political action. Nevertheless, she corporately, and we individually, must think out and proclaim truly biblical criteria by which social institutions and behaviour can be evaluated. A society without absolute standards is a society built upon the sand; a more secure foundation can only be provided as committed Christians uphold biblical standards in ordinary walks of life and especially in positions of leadership and management, trade unions, government, journalism, and the

professions. True, the Christian M.P. or town councillor or trade union official who is faithful to his calling is in for a tough time, but who said we should expect anything else? "It is the way the Master went; should not the servant tread it still?"

Secondly, we must recapture our sense of Christian vocation in daily work; we must uphold the dignity and duty of labour in a society in which work often seems to be regarded as an undesirable necessity so that it becomes enviable to be in a position in which work is minimised and pleasure, so-called, is maximised. I am not pleading for a completely impracticable return to cottage industry, or for the abandonment of the long struggle for shorter hours and better conditions of work. I, for one, don't want to go back to the "good old days" when men slaved in filth and muck for a pittance, and thought themselves lucky if they had a job to go to. I thank God for economic and technical advance which has raised standards of living, and for social advance which has alleviated the disaster of unemployment. I welcome the welfare state and automation and the super-market. We cannot (and should not want to) turn the clock back, but we must come to terms with our times. Many modern jobs are dull routine—just as they always were for the majority of people—and they will never be worthwhile and satisfying (even the most exciting of them) until we recapture the sense of Christian vocation. That great Puritan, Richard Steele, said, "God doth call every man and woman to serve Him in some peculiar employment in this world both for their own and the common good, and let him never be so active out of his sphere, he will be at a great loss if he do not keep his own vineyard and mind his own business." A salutary word for those who tend to regard their daily work as merely a device for paying the expenses of part-time Christian work, preaching in the open-air and teaching a Sunday-school class. The division between secular and sacred is invalid. Life is whole and indivisible. There is no such thing as full-time Christian workers on the one hand, and part-timers on the other; if we are not all in full time Christian service then we are not where God wants us to be. My calling to academic work is just as valid as any Minister's calling to the ministry. I must do my daily work for the glory of God and in the spirit of Christ just as much as they. Christian vocation is universal and not confined to a privileged few.

Thirdly, and this relates very much to the other two, if we are going to witness like this in society, we have to cultivate a truly biblical philosophy of life ourselves. Unless we have done so, we shall not be likely to accept the challenge of Christian service in tough spots like trade union leadership, for example. Nor shall we be prepared to face the financial sacrifice that might be involved in following the career which God has planned for us instead of the one that has most status and the biggest salary. This all starts, of course, with a personal encounter with Jesus Christ; unless we have become "partakers of the divine nature" Christian standards are alien and unattainable. But conversion must issue in Christ-

ian character and an attitude of Christian stewardship towards material possessions. Ours is an increasingly affluent society and it is all too easy for us Christians to be obsessed with the acquisition of wealth. The Bible does not teach that money is the root of all evil, as I once heard a Bishop declare, but that the love of it is. There is nothing wrong with wealth or possessions, for God has given us all things richly to enjoy. What is clear, however, is that the means by which we acquire wealth, the purpose for which we use it, and the attitude we have towards it, must all conform with biblical principles. There are some ways of acquiring money which are perfectly legal and acceptable in our society, but which are not permissible to the Christian. Moreover, there is no room in our faith for self-indulgence, ostentation and the seeking of status symbols. If God prospers us and we have a lovely home, then it will be given to hospitality: it will be a place to which those who are in need can come and find friendship. If we are promoted to a position of high salary and great influence we shall welcome this as an opportunity to live for Christ in this even more challenging sphere, but we shall not be obsessed with the rat-race for status and power over others. So then, the true Christian will make God his ambition and not the acquisition of wealth. If wealth comes he will sit lightly to it; enjoy it but not make it his top priority; use it prayerfully as God directs; and live in the perspective of eternity.

Finally, and here I must confess to my own failure, as well as I suspect, yours; in addition to living our faith in society, we must learn to speak it in a language which the twentieth century can understand. I have spent the greater part of my time talking about the actions which so often speak louder than words, because I am convinced that it is our task as Christians to be the church at work in the world. We simply must get out of our safe little church ghettos and into the world which is, after all, despite its sinfulness, God's world. He made it; He loves it; He rules in it—and we, His children, are not to try to escape from it. We are to live, work, and play our full part in it for God's glory. But an essential part of this is speaking the truth of the gospel in words, and in words, moreover that are comprehensible to those who are growing up without the Christian influences which predisposed many of us and those of earlier generations to accept the gospel. Louise Stoltenberg, who works among students in California, asks: "What shall we say when the basic presuppositions of our culture are the opposite of those assumed by the gospel; when the culture affirms the self-sufficiency of man, while the gospel says that man can find sufficiency only in God; when the culture says man is essentially good; while the gospel says he is a sinner before God and in need of salvation; when the culture generally behaves as if this life were the only one, while the gospel asserts that there is a life beyond this one and that there will be a time of final consummation when the entire universe will find its judgment or redemption in God?" These are pertinent questions, and I have no easy answer to them, but I do know that we have got to get down to the hard work of learning to communicate with our fellows who live

in our modern, sophisticated secular culture. The old evangelical jargon won't do; most of us don't really understand it ourselves, still less our hearers. Only the life of Christ really and operationally becoming my life; only the mind of Christ effectively controlling all I do and say; only the love of Christ expressed in the totality of my personality and suffusing the whole complex network of my relationships in society; only this, I say, is sufficient to meet the challenge of our times.

NORMAN HUNT

## A SUGGESTED BASIS OF BELIEF

The Rev. Norman Jones, General Superintendent of the North Western Area, recently sent us the following 'Basis of Belief'. He explained that for two years a group of Ministers and laymen from the Yorkshire and Lancashire and Cheshire Associations have met periodically to discuss a number of theological questions. Out of these discussions a suggested Basis of Belief has emerged. Mr Jones went on to say:

"The group was a theologically mixed one. We present this to THE FRATERNAL not as a perfect document, but as a basis for discussion in fraternals. The exercise in examining one's own belief under the scrutiny of those likely to disagree is a very salutary one and is possible only where tolerance exists—and that we had".

### Preamble

Christians in confessing their faith acknowledge the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the following statement is constructed and issued as a confession of the faith Baptists share.

"Jesus Christ is Lord." The New Testament scriptures to which we appeal as our normative and trustworthy guide present Jesus Christ as Lord in three ways: in His relation to God, to the world, and to the Church. As members of the Church, individual believers know Him as Saviour and King.

### Part One

#### JESUS CHRIST AND GOD

We know God, the source of all being and life, as He reveals himself in Jesus Christ. In Him, God gave a full and final revelation of His nature and purpose for the world. This was prepared for by God's choice of the Jewish people, His revelation to the world through them, and the same revelation finds its crown and climax in the sending and ministry of His Son, as Israel's Messiah. We recognise our debt to

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## WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

409 Barking Road, Plaistow, London. E.13

My dear Brother Minister,

Here are one or two items of news which I should like to bring to your attention.

**ORCHARD HOUSE EXTENSION.**—A week or two ago, I signed the contract for the extension to our premises at Orchard House and by the time you read these notes, the work will have commenced. As you may remember, we are providing extra accommodation for both staff and boys and we shall now have something like an average of 25 boys in residence once this extension is built.

I have written to all our Young Peoples' Fellowships and Youth Groups in our Churches and I am beginning to get a response from some of them who are willing to sponsor some kind of project to raise funds for the cost of this extension, which will be at least £12,000. If you can encourage your youngsters to take a share in this, I shall be most grateful.

**THE HISTORY OF THE MISSION.**—Many of you will remember that the Revd Paul Rowntree Clifford wrote a very good history of the work of the Mission entitled "**VENTURE IN FAITH**", but we now feel that we should publish another book setting out the story of what we have attempted to do, and I am now beginning to gather up the necessary material. Some of our senior brethren in the Ministry may have some special reminiscences or stories about the work of West Ham or their contacts with Robert or Hettie Rowntree Clifford and their family, and I would welcome literary contributions, large and small, if the brethren would be kind enough to write them. It will be some time yet before the book is published, but I should be grateful to hear from any of the men who have something to contribute.

**FILM STRIP PLUG!**—We issued a new film strip in October last, and the reports coming back are enthusiastic. It is a **good** film strip and an excellent way of acquainting our people with the work that West Ham is doing. We have prepared 15 copies of this film strip and although bookings are heavy, we can still fit in extra dates. If your people would like to see the film strip, please write to me personally, and if possible, give alternate dates.

With warmest good wishes for God's blessing on your own ministry throughout 1970,

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL.

Superintendent of West Ham Central Mission.

Israel in the title **Christ**, and find the Old Testament to be an indispensable record of the way God made Himself known.

Jesus lived in perfect accord with the divine will, and His obedience did not flinch from the acceptance of the Cross: He was vindicated by God by the Resurrection, and as man was exalted to the heavenly presence of God. In Christ's humanity we perceive, as we turn to the gospel records, the apostolic witness and the continuing examples of His followers in every age (not excluding our own) who have caught His spirit, what manhood—now sadly defaced and deformed by sin—is intended to be, and a foreshadowing of that ideal for human life to which He calls all people.

In the life and service, death and victory of Jesus of Nazareth a knowledge of God Himself is conveyed to our understanding. This knowledge of God becomes a living reality as it is accepted by faith. He who is invisible and mysterious offers Himself to us, self disclosed as holy love, who both judges and redeems.

We conclude that in the Jesus of the gospels and the Christ of living experience we see what God intends by man and what man should mean by God. As to the precise nature of this co-existence, 'true God, true man', we prefer to remain undogmatic except to affirm a real being of God in Christ and a truly human life of the incarnate Lord.

### *Part Two*

#### JESUS CHRIST AND THE WORLD

The New Testament witnesses to Jesus Christ as the agent in creation, without specifying the exact significance of this cosmic function, but this means that the universe is no accident, but the result of the creative activity of a personal God whose character we know in Jesus Christ. All sentient and human life exists by the pervasive activity of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit who sustains the ongoing life of the universe, which is moving to the realisation of the purpose of God the creator.

The implications of Christ's present Lordship require special attention. The physical universe stands under the fatherly providence of God as known in Christ. All earthly authority is dependent upon His kingly office, which embraces all political, social, economic and cultural relationships.

### *Part Three*

#### JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

That segment of human life and society over which Christ's present dominion is an acknowledged and experienced reality, is the Church. Existing in the world as a sociological fact and with a discernible (and fallible) institutional form, the Church confesses that the essential ground for its existing lies in its life in God through Christ and the Spirit. The Church is a spiritual organism which takes upon itself recognizable embodiment within the particular culture in which it lives.

We look upon the Church as the sign and pledge of God's regard for and willingness to save mankind, to which appeal may be made in proof of His universal goodwill and concern for His world in its rebellion.

Seen in this light, the Church both embodies and speaks of God's great love in the sending of Jesus Christ who reflects that love and gave evidence of it in His death on the Cross for the world's sin. The Cross is the historical meeting point of divine mercy and man's rebellious rejection. This rejection exposes man to the divine judgement so that he is estranged from God. God in Christ bears the judgement and overcomes the estrangement by the offer of pardon to all who respond to it in faith, repentance and obedience.

Those who do so accept the overtures of divine mercy, being thus set right with God, enter upon a new quality of life which is life united with the living Christ. They both participate in, and become the agents of, God's will in the world and form a miniature or redeemed human society. They find their vocation in the worship and service which stem directly from a grateful awareness of God's wisdom in Christ's Cross, worship and service which are not narrowly conceived, but relate to the whole of life and are tokens of the Church's final destiny. The calling of the Church is focussed in obedience to Christ as Lord, both congregationally and personally. The focal point of the Church's life may be seen in the assembly for worship which includes as characteristic features the celebration of the gospel sacraments which epitomize the saving work of Christ, and in the discharge of His mandate to preach the word to every creature.

#### RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE B.M.F. LIBRARY.

Atkinson: *The Great Light* (Luther & Reformation).  
Autton: *Pastoral Care in Hospitals*. Barbour: *Issues in Science and Religion*. Bolam: *The English Presbyterians*. Borchert: *The Original Jesus*. Bosanquet: *The Life and Death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Clinebell: *Basic Types of Pastoral Counselling*. Cragg: *Christianity in World Perspective*. Davies: *The Secular Use of Church Buildings and Worship and Mission*. Edwards: *Religion and Change*. Ferre: *Basic Modern Philosophy of Religion*. Griffith: *Barriers to Christian Belief and The Eternal Legacy*. Hunter: *Teaching and Preaching the New Testament*. Johnson: *Pastoral Ministration*.

Martin: *The Healing Ministry in the Church*. Moltmann: *Theology of Hope*. Morris: *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*. Moule: *The Phenomenon of the New Testament*. Netherlands Reformed Church: *The Bible Speaks Again*. Routley: *Hymns To-day and To-morrow*. Sansbury: *Truth, Unity and Concord*. Schaeffer: *The God who is There*.

Schofield: *Law, Prophets and Writings*. Stewart: *The Wind of the Spirit*. Swete: *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*. Thielicke: *Man in God's World*. Tournier: *A Place for You*. Webster: *Yes to Mission*. White: *Apostle Extraordinary*. Williams: *Faith in a Secular Age*. Williams: *John Wesley's Theology To-day*. Winward: *A Guide to the Prophets*.

The Librarian has also received from the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon a Bibliography of "Baptist Writings on Baptism." This book, compiled by Athol Gill, contains 1250 references to books, pamphlets and articles in journals. It covers the period 1900-1968, is international in scope, and is fully indexed. While not a library book in the accepted sense, it would be of great service to anyone engaged in research on this theme. It is intended that this shall be the first of a series of bibliographies on various themes, some of which are now in preparation.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

There are several regular readers of *The Fraternal* in Jamaica, and we have recently received a communication from one of them, Glaister Knight. Mr Knight is one of the senior ministers of the Jamaica Baptist Union. His pastoral charges have included the Calvary Church at Montego Bay, and for a number of years past he has been minister of the circuit at Balaclava. He is a Calabar man, but, later in life, he studied in England, under Drs H. Wheeler Robinson and A. E. Garvie, and in Canada, where he gained the B.D. degree of the Toronto Baptist College. Some of our readers will remember his son, William, who was at one time a student at Regent's Park.

Mr Knight writes approvingly of the article on "The Authority of the Bible" which appeared in our issue of July, 1969. He believes that the problems which at present face the British people—economic, as well as moral and spiritual problems—stem from our loss of faith in biblical authority. Commenting on the decline in church attendance on this side of the Atlantic during the past generation, he describes how in 1926 he had to wait with his wife in a queue from 5 p.m. one Sunday evening in order to share in a service conducted by the late Dr Campbell Morgan. We must correct one of Mr Knight's statements, that "Parliament has excluded the Bible and prayer from the day-schools". This has not happened yet, and many of us will fight hard to see that it never does. We were happy to hear from one of the Jamaican brethren, and send warm greetings and good wishes to Mr Knight from all our readers.

W. Vellam Pitts (Windsor, Berks.) writes:

I would like to comment on the article by E. Bruce Hardy on "Authority in the Local Church". He made a significant

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observation that the development of the primitive Church reflected its dependence on the social and political milieu in which the Churches severally grew. One might assume therefore that these churches conscious of their mission to proclaim Christ the risen Lord and the good news of salvation, adapted their structure to enable them to be the most effective instrument of mission possible.

In the social and political milieu of the last 30 years of this century, the primary concern must be just the same. In the primitive Church those who were called to office were men and women who were undoubtedly dedicated and full of the power of the Spirit. If there was the slightest doubt, such a person was set aside, as Paul did Mark, and those in the Corinthian church who were 'off course'. This primary criterion was absolute, but also they were functional. They were able to exercise the ministry to which they were called. Hence the various gifts of ministry. The structure of our society is moving more and more to the person expert at his job and this reflects itself in that we are looking for ministers who are more and more expert.

Now I come to the point in Bruce Hardy's structure of the Church and make bold to say that Deacons as such are not necessarily an inviolable part of the Church structure. There may be deacons but they must meet first of all the spiritual requirements, and they must be *functional*.

In the shape of the Church as an instrument of mission there are those who are leaders among children, young people, women, men, pastoral care, missionary concern at home and overseas. These are functional appointments and therefore they should be ipso facto deacons. So often we have deacons interposed between the minister and those who are really doing the job at the grass roots but themselves are not directly involved. The so-called Deacons Court, is quite often insular and, from the point of view of becoming a channel of the Holy Spirit, is often out of touch.

In any concern of the world, the structure is more and more worker-participation. In the Church fitted for mission in these latter days of the century, I would have as the Board which listens to the voice of the Lord, the minister and those in charge of each section of the church with secretary and treasurer. These would be the sensitive ends of mission and would, therefore, have the prayer concern at the right place. Call them Deacons but be sure that they are the people who function at the right place. Obviously instead of an election of Deacons one would have the appointment of Leaders. On a close examination of the Scriptures, I believe that this was really the New Testament structure.

The question of authority will resolve itself as the Church recaptures the idea of gearing the Church to mission and bringing the key people to the inner circles. The members will feel the impact of spiritual power and, if needs be, will contribute new light from the Lord so that there will be a deep concern of the whole Church to have the will of the Lord. Surely this was what happened at Antioch when Barnabas

and Saul were set aside and sent forth. The Church is the 'body of Christ' and not a friendly society and, while we may learn from the world, we remain the people of God. Unfortunately, as Bruce Hardy points out, we carry over such world ideas as election, veto, majority vote etc. The way back to authority is an awareness of mission at all levels. To this end let us have a new hard look at the office of Deacon.

W. VELLAM PITTS