

The Fraternal.

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THE EDITOR'S NOTES.

Resuming his task after a long space of years, the Editor has to begin by asking the most lenient judgment of all readers concerning the plan of this issue. Also he would express his gratitude to those who have helped in a task which circumstance has made most difficult. With equal earnestness he pleads for the help of the members of our Union toward the making of this little quarterly what it was always intended to be: a bond between men engaged in the same great vocation, and a help especially to those who above all things need a hopeful outlook. To the isolated and discouraged in particular, we may hope to make its ministry real.

With this in view, we need not offer apology for giving relatively so much space to St. Andrew. He is, or should be, our patron saint, if we can tolerate such a thing, and still face the portraits of our predecessors in the vestry. Some of them anyhow were fortunate men, they fished in fisherman's weather. Our lines have fallen—in rougher water. Hence we may welcome the message even though it be stoical and a little forbidding.

In the space of years which has elapsed since we last attempted this task, our world has been shaken to its very foundations. It would seem that there remain only those things that cannot be shaken: immutable verities, hopes, and divinely authorised dreams. We may despair of everything save the Kingdom of God though we may have learned from more than one experience, to be slow in hailing "the flags of dawn," yet our hope in the Kingdom does not falter. With mere educational efficiency for ever discredited, and the doctrine of moral evolution, bankrupt for a generation to come, if not for ever, we may if we will, gird ourselves for our tasks, with the clean pride of knowing

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that the promise of the future lies with the people of the Kingdom. We lift our eyes to the hills, not to St. Stephens.

A very necessary optimism bids us hope that this issue will reach the hands of its readers, before they leave home for the Spring Assembly. Our Prayer Union, for which Dr. Meyer, so tenderly pleads, may well occupy itself in the large task of interceding for the maintenance of all that is noblest in temper and action during the Assembly week. We are happily free from the deadly opiate of perfect agreement on any conceivable subject. Burning questions are among us, and may quite wholesomely burn. But for a fine temper of discussion we may well pray and plead, so that we may be freed from the ugly moods which of old disfigured so much that might at least have been Christian, even though controversial.

May we venture to urge brethren who can constructively answer the questionnaire, set out in the paper by J. E. Roberts, to send him their answers speedily. Further than that the Editor will be glad to have from any brother, of experience in such things, a succinct account of effective experiments in inter-Church fellowship. These may be very generally helpful if they exclude those semi-civic occasions when the rector joins the Baptist Minister in some public function, now too frequent and common an event to matter much or mean anything.



FOR THE DISCOURAGED.

Vivas to those who have failed!
 And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!
 And to those themselves who sank in the sea!
 And to all generals who lost engagements, and all overcome
 heroes!
 And the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest heroes
 known!

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ST. ANDREW.

(From the Problems page of the SATURDAY WESTMINSTER).

When Andrew went a-fishing
 All night in Galilee,
 Dawn would bring him a heavy net,
 Or five fish, or three.
 It was just as the sea would have it,
 And fisherman's luck, said he.

After, he went a-fishing
 For wilder fish than of yore,
 And many straining netfuls
 He drew in to shore.
 But at last they hung him cross-wise—
 Fisherman's luck once more.

There be many go a-fishing
 'Twixt the Poles and the Hebrides,
 And the winds sing their elegy
 To the shifting seas—
 "Landsman's luck for landfarers,
 And fisherman's luck for these."

Christ sends one man a-fishing
 For brown folk in the isles,
 Among the happy bread-fruit trees,
 From Haiwai to Hahils.
 When the head-hunter runs him down,
 "Fisherman's luck," he smiles.

Another goes a-fishing
 For blacks in Zanzibar,
 Where the swamps reek of poison-breath,
 And the slave-raids are,
 And all that the bitter years have won
 Fisherman's luck may mar.

All ye that go a-fishing
 Know this of the patient art:
 Eight days harvest may break your nets,
 And the ninth break your heart.
 Then on the dawn-tide tearlessly
 When fisherman's luck depart.

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WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER.

OF the calling of Conferences there is no end; and each man is tempted to think the conference he attends, the most important ever held. I do not wish to make any extravagant claims for the Conference I attended, as Baptist representative, in Geneva 1920. But a mere recital of a few facts must indicate its importance. Over 70 Christian Churches in every part of the world, were represented; indeed every part of the Christian Church was represented except the Roman Catholic Church, which still refuses to co-operate officially in preparing for the World Conference on Faith and Order. "Geneva 1920" was a preliminary conference. Perhaps its most significant members to a British Free Churchman were the representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church who came in their official robes and after some early shyness, joined most usefully in the discussions.

The atmosphere of the Conference was delightful. It reproduced on a wider scale that confidence and comradeship which have been realised by those who have been privileged to attend Re-union Conferences at home. The distinct impression made deeply on me was that co-operation between all Christians is far more possible than many people suppose, and that even a measure of re-union must not be ruled out of the sphere of practical politics.

The World Conference on Faith and Order, to which the Geneva meeting was preliminary, is to meet in Washington, U.S.A., the first Monday of May, 1925. This has been decided by the Continuation Committee appointed at Geneva and of which your representative was elected a Vice-Chairman. At the very least "Washington 1925" may be expected to do for Church work in Christian lands what "Edinburgh 1910" achieved for missionary work. Therefore it behoves all Christians to do anything in their power to make the World Conference successful. A unique opportunity is coming to Christians, let us be ready to grasp it.

In order to make the best use of the Conference, much patient preparation is necessary; it has been decided to follow the plan of Edinburgh, now so frequently adopted, of getting fundamental questions discussed beforehand so that a large body of opinions may be collated, compared, and reported upon. "To be helpful, a conference must begin with the fundamentals and

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limit itself to a few topics. The divisions of centuries cannot be healed in a few months or years, nor at all except by patient and thorough effort. Hasty attempts at agreement merely cancel differences or provoke more bitter divisions."

Therefore the Conference decided to ask groups all over the world to discuss the questions which emerged at Geneva as vital. At the last meeting of the British Commission it was suggested that the Fraternalists might be willing to discuss these questions and to send in a considered judgment on them; and at a meeting of the B.M.F.U. I was asked to write an article for "The Fraternal" inviting the local Fraternalists to undertake this bit of work. A few groups have already done some valuable work. But if the Fraternalists all over the country—not only denominational Fraternalists of course, but also inter-denominational—will consider the questionnaires and send along their judgment they would be rendering the cause of Re-union a most important service.

The first series of questions proposed by the Committee is as follows:

1. What degree of unity in Faith will be necessary in a re-united Church?
2. Is a statement of this one Faith in the form of a Creed necessary or desirable?
3. If so, what Creed should be used? or what other formulary would be desirable?
4. What are the proper uses of a Creed or of a Confession of Faith?

The second series of questions concerns the Ministry in the re-united Church:

1. What degree of unity in the matter of order will be necessary in a re-united Church.
2. Is it necessary that there should be a common Ministry universally recognised?
3. If so, of what orders or kinds of Ministers will this Ministry consist?
4. Will the re-united Church require as necessary any conditions, precedent to ordination, or any particular manner of ordination?
5. If so, what conditions precedent to ordination and what manner of ordination ought to be required?

It will be a great advantage if the questions can be answered in their order, and if the arguments on which the conclusions are based can be succinctly stated.

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It will be obvious that the questions raised at the World Conference are very similar to those raised in the narrower British Conferences about Re-union in this country. That is one reason why efforts to deal with these questions will not only assist the World Conference, but also throw light upon the problems at home.

I venture, therefore, to urge upon my brethren throughout the country to try to secure discussion of these deeply interesting topics. If they will forward their reports to me (at 32, Heaton Road, Erthington, Manchester), I will be glad to forward them to the Secretary of the Committee.

If I may venture to add a word of personal testimony my experience at the Re-union Conferences at home and in Geneva, rebukes the faithlessness which considers all such discussions a waste of time. Organic re-union may be a far-off goal. It would be a much nearer goal if everybody desired it, and anyhow, the spirit engendered by the Conference, the advance in mutual knowledge and understanding, as well as the practical possibilities of co-operative service are well worth securing. I have been amazed and humbled by the widespread yearning for Christian fellowship amongst the leaders of all sections of the Christian Church. Would it not be unworthy of Christian Ministers to neglect any opportunity that offers of making the "body of Christ" more equal to the tasks to which our Lord is longing to send us?

J. E. ROBERTS.

ORIGINAL SIN.

IT has been increasingly felt in recent years that the time has come for a reconsideration and re-statement of the Christian doctrine of Sin. It surprises one to recall that it was so long ago as 1904 that Sir Oliver Lodge, uttered his famous dictum. While the statement is well known the explanation which Sir Oliver subsequently issued is not so well known. He protested that he did not mean that men were not aware that they were sinners, but that to work at something hard was better for the sinner than worrying about his sins. Even in the amended form the assertion is not a whit more acceptable, and is clean contrary to recent psychological thought.

The writer of this paper is attempting a much more modest

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task than the re-statement of the doctrine of sin. He merely desires to set forth the elementary facts calling for a reconsideration of the doctrine of Original Sin. A distinction is commonly made between Original Sin and Actual Sin, but the two are so intertwined in our thinking that the larger theme becomes easier of approach when the ground has been somewhat cleared by clear statements concerning Original Sin.

We are the children of Reformers and Puritans, and they took over the full-bodied conception of Original Sin which they derived from Augustine. Luther maintained that Original Sin is really and truly sin, and that Adam's Fall involved all his descendants in personal guilt and its consequent punishment of eternal death. Calvin, arguing backwards, came to the same position. He declares that the entire human race must have sinned in Adam's transgression, since God's punishment has fallen upon the whole race, and God could not punish those who were not guilty. Such views as these have for generations constituted part of our mental furniture, and though we have not deliberately adopted them as our own, they have nevertheless subconsciously coloured our thinking.

Many influences have combined to produce theological uncertainty, but perhaps the most evident has been the change in the accepted doctrine of Holy Scripture. Original Sin has always been considered as associated with the story found in Genesis iii. Our forefathers generally took this to be literal history. The early chapters of Genesis are not now accepted as serious history. Scholars have analysed the narratives, and they attribute the story *in its present form* to the writer known as J. and the date of it to be somewhere round about 700 B.C. in the early days of the writing prophets. It is plain that the writer is using material of a much earlier date, and that he is not drawing largely on his own resources in telling the story. The nature of that original matter, and the date of it are still in the realm of conjecture. There are many similarities between it and the legends of other peoples. The distinguishing feature of scripture is the way in which the old narratives have been purified from their grosser elements, and applied to spiritual uses, though this work of purification has been only partially achieved. These chapters deal with origins, the origin of the world, of man, of civilisation, of art, and of sin. It has been assumed that the story of Eve and the apple is intended to be an account of the origin of sin.

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In familiar words Milton, sets forth the Puritan interpretation, when he announces his great theme to be: "Of man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste

Brought death into the world and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till One greater Man
Restore us and regain the blissful seat."

Milton conceives of that act of Eve, with which Adam associated himself as tainting the nature of our first parents that the very process of generation has transmitted the evil to every succeeding race. Thus a fatal disability has been inherited by all the descendants of the first pair, from which there is no possibility of escape.

But is it necessary to accept the interpretation of Augustine, Luther, Calvin and Milton? Does scripture connect sin in any way with that earliest known transgression? There is another story in Genesis vi., which seems much more likely to have been intended as an account of the beginning of sin. It says that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose." Then it goes on to say that the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man, etc. There is no question that here we are tracing the origin of that sin which caused God to destroy mankind by the Flood. What we call the Fall story contains so many features which deal with other matters than sin. Moreover in the Fall story the serpent told the truth when he said that by eating the fruit their eyes would be opened and they would know the difference between good and evil. But surely such knowledge cannot be contrary to God's desire! It may well seem that in that ancient story we have a relic of the time when the gods were supposed to be jealous of their powers, fearing lest men should compel them to share their greatness. Adam and Eve, were turned out of paradise lest they should eat of the tree of life and become immortal. It is on a par with the Divine frustration of the tower builders, lest they should climb up to heaven.

But what is more surprising still if the story in Genesis iii. is intended to be the classical account of the origin of sin, is the fact that it is nevermore referred to in subsequent scripture until

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we come to the apostle Paul. Perhaps that is too strong a statement, for in Ezekiel xxviii., there seems to be an echo of the expulsion from Eden. The king of Tyre is compared to a legendary being who lived in the garden of God, and who, in consequence of his overweening pride, was expelled from the Divine abode. This may be another variant of the tradition found in Genesis, though there is no attempt to build upon it any explanation of the beginnings of sin. If this story had held the place in ancient thought which it held in mediæval thought we should have had continual mention of it.

When we come to the New Testament we do not find much more. So far as the recorded utterances of Christ are concerned He never even mentioned Adam, nor did He ever make a suggestion that mankind was suffering from the consequences of that early disobedience. This is the more remarkable inasmuch as there is evidence that the doubtful view was becoming by this time somewhat popular in certain rabbinical schools so that any such reference would have been likely to have been noted. How far Paul's use of the story is determined by his rabbinical training we cannot say. But the passage in Romans v., is not certainly an expression of the doctrine which Augustine taught. Sanday and Headlam's *Romans* shows how indefinite and vague is the language of Paul in the passage named. There is also the sentence so familiar from its occurrence in the burial service, in 1 Corinthians xv. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This passage is merely an illustration, and as such is incapable of bearing so heavy a weight as the doctrine of Original Sin.

But what is the implication of this teaching for which the authority of scripture is claimed? In Hodge's Systematic Theology it is thus described: "In virtue of the union, federal and natural, between Adam and his posterity, his sin, although not their act, is so imputed to them that it is the judicial ground of the penalty threatened against him coming also upon them." A much more recent writer, Bishop Handley Moule, says: "Our normal sinfulness has a profound connection with Adam's sin; and the connection is such that we have from him not only an infected nature, but an *inherited exposure to condemnation, antecedent to our acts.*" He maintains that this is the very point of Paul's argument that not infection primarily but

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condemnation lies on the race and on the individual for that all sinned in the offence of the one.

This doctrine is so repugnant to our moral sense that it would produce a profound shock if we were sure that it was really taught in scripture. We should then have to choose between our inward sense of justice and the authority of a book. If I have inherited exposure to condemnation antecedent to my acts I am indeed to be pitied; but then, on the other hand, I am not the real culprit, and it would not be fair-play on God's part to hold me responsible and to condemn me before any sin can be laid at my door. If I once come to doubt God's justice all my religion tumbles into the dust. Moreover such a doctrine insults my commonsense. If the Fathers tell me that inasmuch as I was in the loins of Adam at the time that he sinned therefore I sinned in him; I reply that the real logic of the situation would rather be that Adam and Adam alone is responsible for all the sins of the race. It is not I who am responsible for his sin, but he who is responsible for mine. If a connection of guilt is to be made that is the only fair way to make it. "Original Sin" has nothing to do with me; it did not originate with me, and for it I cannot be held guilty.

Is then Original Sin merely a theological figment? Has it no substance in fact? Whatever Sir Oliver Lodge may say, it is quite clear that for hundreds of years men have been much troubled by their sins. The great names in the Christian story are names of men who have been profoundly concerned by sin in general and their own sin in particular. Augustine, Pelagius, Anselm, Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, said much on this theme because they felt deeply. When men have thus "worried" it has been the universality of sin which has confounded them. Whatever hesitation one may feel in ascribing the doctrine of Original Sin to scripture there is no doubt that the universality of sin is an emphatic teaching of the Bible in both testaments.

A universal fact demands a universal cause for its explanation. If I find that "there is none that doeth good, no not one" then I say that something in the very constitution of things must be the cause. If there was a minority which escaped the common fate, or if there were periods when sin disappeared, I might attribute every man's sin to a fall that was not inevitable. But when I find the whole race involved, I must seek a cause wide enough to embrace all mankind. As a matter of fact I

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find the same sort of acts go on being repeated generation after generation, with scarcely any variety, or any display of independence or intellectual ingenuity. In other spheres there has been advance, but not here. Quill pens have yielded to typewriters, coach and horses to motor cars and aeroplanes, and tallow candles to electric light. And yet we murder as Cain did, and drink like Noah, while the domestic scandals of which we read in the daily press are not to be distinguished from the affair of Potiphar's wife and Joseph, and men try to get rid of other men as David tried to put Uriah out of the running, and for a similar reason; and just as he did they attempt to cover up their tracks. Commercial morality is not so different from the day when the buyer said to the seller: "It is naught," and having completed the purchase he goes away to chuckle at his own slimness. We may be radical reformers of our country's laws and of other men's moral, but we are the most stubborn of Tories when the question of self-reform is up. Original sin indeed! I suppose the doctrine must have taken that name because of the utter lack of originality which sinners display. It requires sanctified resourcefulness and inventive genius to grow a character, but no brains at all to find the broad and downward path that leads to the pit.

Consider Childhood. Wordsworth says that "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," and some cynic has added that everybody lies about us when we grow up. Childhood is very beautiful: its instincts and impulses seem sweet and lovely, and all our advance in goodness seems to be but a revival of the innocence we once knew as children. But the characteristics they display are such that we should be angry with adults for the same manifestations. They are impatient of restraint, and selfish and passionate. Some of their actions toward dumb creatures reveal incredible cruelty. If you had a piece of garden land on which a few flowers were growing: and you discovered in a week or two that weeds were growing luxuriantly between the flowers, you would not attribute them to spontaneous germination. You would conclude that the seeds must have been in the soil all the time, only waiting for appropriate weather conditions to mature them. Our natures are like that soil that seems so clean in childhood, because the seeds of evil have not yet sent up shoots above the surface. People are afraid of adopting children of whose parentage they know nothing, lest some subsequent manifestation of unsuspected evil should break their hearts.

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“ My child is mine. Blood of my blood, flesh of my flesh is he,
 Rocked on my breast and nurtured at my knee,
 Fed with sweet thoughts or ever he drew breath,
 Wrested in battle through the gates of death.
 With passionate patience is my treasure hoarded,
 And all my pain with priceless joy rewarded.

“ My child is mine. Nay, but a thousand powers of ill
 Dispute him with me ; lurking wolf-like still
 In every covert of the ambushed years.
 Disease and danger dog him : foes and fears
 Bestride his path, with menace fierce and stormy.
 Help me, O God ! these are too mighty for me.”

How did these powers of ill get hold of him? Whence came they? That is the problem that confronts us. And if we cannot accept the old explanation can we find one more in accord with the present state of knowledge? Augustine, Luther and Calvin related their teaching to the mind of their own age. If they were living to-day how would they relate it to this age?

Tennant maintains that it is scientifically impossible for a man to inherit evil tendencies, on the ground that acquired characteristics are intransmissible. That however is a conclusion with which many scientists would not agree. Suppose we limit ourselves to considering evil environment. We are then confronted with the fact that by the time an infant has become capable of moral life, its nature has been so profoundly shaped by its environment that it starts such life with a handicap. Now the point to observe is that the mischief is done and the evil bent acquired before the age at which conscious choice becomes possible. It begins moral life in an environment which reflects the estrangement from God which all men admittedly share. That is the fact to which our fathers gave the name of Original Sin. McDougal says: “The aggregate which is a society has, in virtue of its past history, positive qualities which it does not derive from the units composing it at any one time: and in virtue of these qualities it acts upon its units in a manner very different from that in which the units as such interact with one another.” We are somehow involved in the mesh, receiving from the group and contributing to it tendencies to evil. Tennant would substitute the term “moral disease” for Original Sin. But a movement of the race away from God can scarcely be described by a less

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serious term than sin. If the qualifying adjective is not the best no substitute has yet been suggested.

Modern psychology does not use the name Original Sin, but it does make a contribution to the understanding of the facts which underlie that term. Darwin has taught us that our bodies have come to us from lower forms of life, by minute changes through long ages. Psychologists tell us that in like manner our minds are similarly derived from a few primitive instincts, by successive changes so slight as to be imperceptible unless we consider widely separated periods. Personality was not achieved at a leap. Although instinct has in it elements of cognition, its central core is feeling. These instinctive feelings organise themselves round certain objects and desires, into what are called "complexes" or sentiments. Instincts are the driving force of life. We imagine that we are prompted by reason, when really certain likes and dislikes and instinctive preferences determine our actual behaviour. When we act in response we say that we are moved by common-sense.

Another finding of psychology is that the thoughts and feelings of which we are conscious form but a small part of the mind. Instinctive impulses rise out of the subconscious realm, forming complexes which sometimes conflict with each other. We end the conflict, not by deliberate judgment, but by shirking the issues. The impulse repugnant to the dominant characteristic is pushed down into the subconscious region. The mind ignores what is unpleasant. But the ignored element does not cease to be active. It waits there to assert itself when opportunity presents itself. We may be unconscious that it is there and yet it may be producing a morbid change in the ground of the mind. That twist which is thus given to the mind is very similar to what the theologian meant by Original Sin. At least psychology does suggest to us what is the raw material out of which sin is made. Psycho-analysis seeks to bring to light the disturbing element, in order that reason may consider it and direct it into healthful forms of activity. It is that refusal to face the facts of life which alone can be called Sin, but that refusal is probably more prevalent than we suppose until we have carefully pondered these tendencies of the mind.

There does not yet seem to be any very clear way out of the confusion ; but it is evident that there was great reality in

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what our fathers spoke of as original sin. Moreover it is something for which we cannot acquit ourselves of blame; it is the prolongation of the reign of instinct beyond the period at which the moral judgment emerges in condemnation; and it is the use of these instinctive impulses for selfish ends. The true Christian attitude is the yoking of such instincts to the good of others, using them as the driving power to accomplish what is impossible without their aid. We have been tempted to think of religion as a repression only, leading us to cherish scruples where we ought to be filled with enthusiasms. Christ's attitude and teaching direct our thoughts into other fields. Sin is selfishness, the true life is the life of love, a love so completely controlling our nature that not only the conscious but also the unconscious part of us responds to its sway: it points to a perfection in which nobility will be as spontaneous as now passion and greed are, when we shall not only do the unselfish deed after struggle, but when it will be the sort of action towards which our whole nature will leap at a sudden call; and the conflict between the subconscious and the conscious, between the flesh and the spirit, shall have been solved by the spirit directing the flesh with all its forces into the doing of the will of God.

R. C. FORD, M.A., B.D.



THE BODY—A SUGGESTION.

WHAT is the body? The prison house of the soul, replies Plato. A drag upon the spiritual life, says Pachomius, and every monastic with him. The great wonder of animal evolution, says our biologist. What shall we Christians say upon this matter, for we are called upon to pass judgment on this question every day of our lives. It is by means of the bodily organism that the soul expresses itself: it is in the actual powers and dispositions of the body that evil finds a point of attack: we bear about with us, in every moment of waking life, this physical envelope of ours. What part must the body occupy in our scheme of things?

The answer will depend very largely upon our line of approach. Speaking broadly, as far as men have approached the matter from a religious point of view at all, they have taken their cue from Athens or from Jerusalem. Plato and the

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Platonists are responsible for a great deal of the thought of the Church. Dean Inge regards this as a matter for gratification. The only permanent contribution of the Christian religion, for him, is that which has been mediated to the world through Greek influence. Harnack, on the other hand, sets down most of the troubles in Christian thinking during the early centuries to this very seduction by Hellenists. But whatever our judgment on the matter, the fact is plain: for many centuries the thought of the Church on the question of the body was diverted from that point of view which is peculiarly the contribution of the Old Testament.

But the Christian conception, i.e. the conception of the New Testament is fundamentally Hebrew, owing much more to Jerusalem than to Hellas. In the Old Testament the bodily factor in personality is of first importance (see the importance attached in Hebrew thought, at the beginning of life, to the making of the body in the womb, and at the end of life, to the need for the preservation of the bones). The Hebrew does not regard the body as an inferior something to be crushed and despised. Asceticism never took firm root in Hebrew soil. The Hebrew conceived personality as essentially a unity which could be approached from either of two points of view, that of soul or that of body. Dualism, in any metaphysical or ethical sense, is absent, although there is a close regard for the actual conflict of soul and body in the struggles of the moral life.

This attitude is, in essentials, taken over by the New Testament. Once again the bodily factor personality is dignified. Where can nobler teaching on the body be found than in the Synoptics, and in Paul? Paul, no doubt, uses language which bears in mind the need of men and women who are living in a Greek atmosphere, but he still remains a Hebrew of the Hebrews. This body is a temple of the Holy Ghost: there is no echo of Plato in that. It is true that Paul groans to be delivered from the body of this death, but it is not the body he desires to get rid of, but the evil which makes the body such a strong centre of attack. There is not the slightest idea of a purely spiritual immortality in Paul. He takes over and spiritualises the Old Testament view of the resurrection of the body—a redeemed soul with an appropriate organism. Thus he appears to preserve the unity of personality which is so marked a feature of Old Testament thought. (The interested may find some food for reflection

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in a suggestion in R. H. Charles Eschatology, Ency Bib. that the final position taken up by Paul is that resurrection occurs immediately on death, and without any intervening period at all).

The body, therefore, in Christian thought and preaching, must take a dignified and noble place. We do not rightly deal with it when we disparage it, in the manner of the ascetics. It is of great importance, even in the development of spiritual life. The culture of the physical organism is, from the New Testament point of view, a religious matter. And it cannot be forgotten that in the Incarnation God Himself had eternally enriched the conception of the human body. In this matter we shall find more help in the Old Testament than in Plato.

F. TOWNLEY LORD.



PERSONAL EVANGELISM.

THE Campaign of Personal Evangelism has not been taken up with the enthusiasm expected. That may be in its favour. It might have been only a flash, and soon flickered out. There are signs however that it is slowly gripping. Enquiries are continually reaching us re its effective working. It has been seriously misunderstood. Even some Ministers have regarded it as a Campaign for way-laying people in the streets with the direct question "Are you saved?" It may be that for some, but special qualifications are necessary for such delicate work. If the Holy Spirit directs anyone in that way the direction will also be given for the best method of approach. The Campaign may include that, but it means much more. In very brief terms may I take this opportunity of showing how every Christian can be an evangelist. My brother Ministers can easily enlarge on these methods, as they also make clear to their own people that Soul-winning is not a professional business belonging only to Ministers or professional evangelists. Every saved soul is saved to serve. Christ had only one word for the sinner—"Come!" and only one for the disciples—"Go!" The sinner will not come unless the Christians go.

What are some of the methods of Personal Evangelism?

1.—Every Christian Prays. Urge that they individually pray

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daily for the conversion of at least one in whom they are personally interested. They can pray for more than one if they wish, but all should have the burden of at least one always on their heart. They need do nothing more than simply pray thus, though if their prayer is sincere they will be looking for the answer. That will make them more than ordinarily interested in the one for whom they are praying, and probably open up ways for more direct dealing. But urge that all should pray.

2.—Invite the friend for whom prayer is offered to tea, or for a chat in the home, and see that the conversation turns on the deep things of the heart. We are all far too reluctant to speak thus even to each other. Socialists and Christian Scientists are not.

3.—One friend at a conference told us that he was much interested in a young man of superior education, but always found it difficult to approach him on the question of his soul. He bought him a book, suitably chosen, which he sent him by post. When next they met he asked him if he had received it, and read it. The answer was "Yes." The natural query—"Well, what do you think of it?" gave him the opportunity which he desired.

4.—Look out for the best in everyone, and encourage that. That was Christ's method always, e.g. "They call you Simon (the wobbler! that is the meaning of the name), but I know you better than that; I am going to give you your true name, 'Peter,' the rock!" Zacchaeus—no one had a good word for him—a mean miserly, money grabber. But in a quiet talk Christ revealed to him his better self, and he responded. So did Magdalene. He saw beneath the passion the true love waiting for expression. It is certain that we shall never save men by always reminding them of, and condemning them for, their sins and faults. Give a man to know that you at least believe in him, whatever others may say or think, and you have half saved him. It will be comparatively easy afterward to get him to see that Jesus believes in him.

Parents can do this in their homes, with their children. It can be done in the works, and office, and shop. It is of universal application, and always pays.

5.—Seat Stewards have a splendid opportunity for such service. They at least, can speak to worshippers without a formal

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introduction. Having welcomed them to the sanctuary, they can further the preacher's appeal when they are leaving the service.

One can enumerate other ways, but space prevents. After all it is not so much what we say or do that counts, but what we are. It is the life that tells. Men read us who will not read the Book. We are to be "Living witnesses." The world is not yet tired of honesty. It knows what Christianity stands for, and always appreciates the real thing wherever found. "Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and much people were added to the Lord." He could not preach like Paul, or work like Mark, but he lived the life.

I am told that if every Christian led only another one to Christ this year, and they in turn did the same next year, and the next, and so on, in ten years the whole world would be evangelised. And 1920 years have gone, and the world is still in the welter and turmoil of strife and unrest. It is not Christ's fault. He has done all that He could do for its salvation. "It is finished" indicated that. It is for us to fulfil His command—"Go ye." Personal Evangelism is the last command of our Lord and it is still binding.

We shall be glad to send the complete set of pamphlets dealing fully with all points in the Campaign for one shilling (less than cost price). Include 2d. extra for postage. Address to me at 4, Ludgate Circus Buildings, E.C. 4. which is the new office of the Metropolitan Free Church Federation.

F. A. REES.

BAPTIST MINISTERS' PRAYER UNION.

AT the January Meeting of the Council of the Fraternal Union the desire was expressed that greater prominence should be given to the above, and the Secretary was asked that some reference to it should appear in each number of the "Fraternal." The best thing seemed to be to obtain a letter from the Founder of the Prayer Union and its President throughout its whole history—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Dr. Meyer at once responded and sends the following message to the members of the Prayer Union:—

"When life was 40 years younger with some of us a Baptism of Love and Power came on a group of Baptist

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Ministers who had associated in a Union of Intercessory Sunday Morning Prayer for one another and the Kingdom of God, at home and abroad. There was also, by implication, a solemn purpose to urge for a higher standard of personal consecration and an intense reliance on the paracletisms of the Paraclete, throughout our denomination.

For many years that Union subsisted in living energy. We had our annual and district meetings, our organ, and our fellowship meeting at 8 a.m. on Sunday morning, when we were aware of a consensus of trusting praying souls.

Then, through various circumstances, the golden cord slackened, though many individual ministers remained true. I greatly deplored that we failed to do as well as the Women's Auxiliary, which glories in its more than 400 members. But I gladly hail the present appeal for vigorous resuscitation of the Men's Branch.

I urge all the veterans of the Old Guard to rejoin the ranks. I hereby ask for a new card of membership for myself. Let us stimulate the interest of the younger men by reciting the story of the early days.

“Let Thy Work appear unto thy servants; and Thy Glory unto their children; and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it!”

F. B. MEYER.

I may add that I shall be glad to send Cards of Membership to any brethren who may desire to join us, or to any brethren who may desire to have a fresh copy.

The Card of membership runs as follows—“Let me remember that I am one of a Company of Baptist Ministers and Missionaries, who have promised, by God's help and so far as possible, to pray once a week (preferably on the early morning of each Lord's Day) for an increase of spiritual power both for ourselves and our Churches.

Let me also remember Christian workers in all lands who are seeking to serve our Lord,

Thy Kingdom come.”

Secretary's Name and Address—

JOHN E. MARTIN,

The Manse, Erith, Kent.

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THE FIELD IS THE WORLD.

THE parable of the Sower seems to leave the reader who would draw encouragement from it, assured of one thing alone, that his own diligence in sowing, is the only thing which is at all a controllable factor. The good seed is constant, as the mathematicians would say, and its powers of germination invariable: the modification of the final results would seem to lie in conditions which the sower cannot at all control. Is it really so?

The purpose of the parable is probably simple: it prepares the faithful sower of good seed for surprises and disappointments. It deals with simple facts of experience long since well recognised; but at the moment when it was spoken, yet to be discovered. It controverts, in advance, the easy supposition, too often finding currency even now, that faithful sowing will always bring abundant harvest. It warns the sower of every generation that when in all sincerity he has scattered seed which is indubitably good, there are conditions of human life, and the human heart, which will frustrate both his diligence, and the innate powers of the seed. He is consequently thrown from the facile promise of certain success into the seeming assurance, that he is dealing with one rigid and unalterable factor, some deep defect of the human heart or human circumstance, which will defeat him in an inevitable way.

It is then the field, which is the problem, a world so unalterably fixed and mixed in heart qualities, that some proportion of seed-sowing is doomed to failure. Are we then to take for granted, that the conditions set out in the parable, true as they are to experience, represent an unalterable state of things? To answer our question we do not need to ask of the parable more than it was intended to teach: but if we find experience through many a year assuring us that it rightly describes the resistance of the soil to the sower's purpose, we may equally well look to experience to tell us whether that resistance is to be taken as unalterable. In the field which is the world, is there no one, or nothing, which has control over the soil to prepare it for the sowing. Must we assume the stones, the shallowness, the whole gamut of resistance and refusal; or dare we invoke modern agriculture to show us, not that the parable is wrong, but simply that there is more to be said which the parable never intended to say at that moment. Surely it is a premature surrender to essential fatalism to take

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for granted that the field cannot in any way be prepared for sowing. Experience denies and rejects this. Few men in the ministry could not, if they tried, find abundant proof that the stony and shallow ground can be accounted for and that they are not unalterable factors. In school, and business, and home, there are discernible conditions which again and again are seen to affect most profoundly the field in which we sow the good seed. Therefore though we cannot generalise, and ask to have our work reduced to a system, we need not therefore despair. The soil is our care as much as the sowing.

John Foster, a century ago discussed "The Aversion of Men of Taste to Religion." He was surveying *The Field*, even in that far off day, and weighing the possibilities of fruitful sowing in a soil where 'taste' dominated in temperament. There may have been data then which led many to conclude that culture and religion are antagonistic. But surely there is no necessary antagonism. Yet we find ourselves bound to ask "Is there one thing more than any other which, for the human heart, answers to what the farmer would call bad soil?" And for ourselves we answer it almost without hesitation and say "Vulgarity." We are conscious that the suggested answer looks trivial, and we can almost expect to hear the ancient story recalled concerning a lady of 'taste,' who described a thing as "Wicked, in fact worse than wicked, vulgar!" In a clumsy unconscious way, the legendary lady may have been nearer truth than would at first sight appear; for if the total effect of an environment is taken into account, is it not conceivable that a genial vulgarity may be more resistant to good sowing, or the propagation of good seed, than one in which well recognised sins bring, as such sins do, a penalty or a weariness, which leaves the sinner and the tempted constantly face to face with the cost of any decline from moral values. The way of the transgressor may not be uniformly hard; But it is hard enough as a rule to incline him to count the cost. On the other hand, the world of vulgarity is a cheap and complacent one with little to challenge and awaken.

But leaving, as we readily may all theorising, the experience of pastors and evangelists, will readily enable them to answer the question, whether they find much harvest from the soil of a heart saturated with vulgarity. The present writer's experience is that nowhere is the sowing so fruitless as it is where all the finer

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values of life have been lowered by a genial flippant coarse outlook, and life and love and womanhood with all the other tender things of human years, have been persistently handled with shallow feeling at best, and at the worst with positive though genial cynicism.

To be still more definite, it is our belief and indeed experience that among the young, young man-hood especially, there is nothing which so much indisposes the soul to respond to the sowing of good seed, as the all too prevalent literature and art, if such they may be called, in which the great sanctities of life are mauled and mishandled, until to those who are familiar with their vulgar interpretation of life, the time comes all too soon when having left "neither Lancelot brave nor Galahad clean," a positive Gospel of real emancipation from sin, finds no response in any sense of real bondage. The smugly satisfied vulgarised souls remain unmoved,

"Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things."

It is surely not needful to warn a possible objector that by "vulgar" we do not mean "illiterate"; or even uneducated, in the current, inadequate sense of the latter word. We have happily known far too many illiterate, utterly void of vulgarity, to make that mistake. There are even definite advantages in being illiterate, the chief of which is immunity from the subtle poison of what Canon Barry calls the "literature of death. But for all that, if the soil in which we would sow the good seed of eternal things, is of such account, and in anywise a condition open to modification, we are surely impelled to ask whether we are doing what we can to ensure for the life-bearing grain, a resting place in which it can be truly fruitful. All that can prepare good ground for the good seed is surely our care, and we dare not blunder on with our husbandry, heedless of one chief condition of success. Many present-day influences give us at least no definite help. Commercial education is an arid thing in itself and in its cheapest forms, offering swift profit for a minimum outlay, no small peril to all the best in the human soul. The realm of pure and applied science, so thronged now with busy workers, is one in which the subtle enemies of the soul find little

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challenge, and men readily come to know everything but themselves. Our hope lies in the fostering of all which makes the sanctities of life attractive or at least to be reverently regarded. We may hesitate to call it *culture*, though the word may in time regain its meaning and reality; but the thing itself is our chief and most hopeful ally: the truest preparation of the ground for the seed; and if we are careful not to confuse the term with any set form of supposed education, we shall find that our chief harvest has been, and will be, in souls which have been kept sensitive to all the high values of human life, values which are never so well understood as by those who have been cultured to understand them, for it is not an innate possession of all or perhaps of any. Home and school and social contacts, are all needed in the great preparatory task.

Surely then there is room and a call for a deliberate policy on the part of all who long for a revival of religion. We rejoice in every local revival of spiritual interest and activity. Every triumph over sin in all its manifestations is a thing for rejoicing. But we are convinced that as a preparation for a wide flung awakening, we must foster all those impulses which prepare the human heart to recognise swiftly and un-reluctantly, the Beauty of Holiness. And we must surely throw our weight of attack against that genial vulgar cult of low ideals which impoverishes all the field against our sowing; and produces in the human heart that which Shelley in one of his inspired moments, calls "The contagion of the world's slow stain."

One thing we may not leave unspoken. If it be thought that we have ignored in anywise, the work of the Eternal Spirit, in the human soul, let it be noted that we have taken that as much into account as did He who spoke the parable of the sower.

F. GOLDSMITH FRENCH.



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SECRETARY'S NOTES.

THE arrangements for the Annual Meetings are as follows:

There will be the usual Business Meeting on Thursday, April 26th at 2.30 p.m., in the Kingsgate Church, Holborn. The Annual Meeting for the election of Officers will follow, to be presided over by Rev. M. E. Aubrey, M.A., of Cambridge, (President for 1923-24), and an address will be given by Rev. S. W. Hughes, our retiring President, on "The Primacy of the Baptist Ministry." This will be followed by a discussion. A Reception and Tea will take place in the Library of the Church House at 5 p.m.

Invitations will be sent out for these meetings to members only. All other ministers who intend joining the B.M.F.U. must apply personally to the Secretary for tickets.

Nominations for the new Council must be sent in to the Secretary not later than April 23rd next.

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We are all grateful to Rev. F. Goldsmith French, for acting as Editor of the "Fraternal" and it is our hope that in future our little messenger may appear regularly each quarter.

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As will be seen elsewhere we are desirous of instituting a re-enrolment of our Prayer Union, and Rev. J. E. Martin will be found an opportunity of securing this enrolment during our annual meetings.

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All subscriptions are due at the beginning of the year and it will only be possible for us to achieve some of the purposes of our Union if every member punctually and regularly pays his subscription and helps us to see to it that every Baptist Minister who is eligible for membership joins our Union.

ARTHUR J. PAYNE,
Hon. Sec.