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The Fraternal

APRIL, 1947

No. 64

EDITORIAL

HERE'S TO YOU, SIR.

IN view of your forthcoming anniversary—or is it change of pastorate? we are not quite sure—we ask privilege to send you a special greeting; undeterred by the fact that you, least of all, will expect it. We are not aware that you are in the Area or even Association Committee. We have no recollection of your appearance on the B.U. platform although, possibly, once or twice, you seconded a vote of thanks at your local annual assembly. Your name has never figured in the *Baptist Times* Table Talk, although we have seen it occasionally in a brief paragraph of Church News.

In giving ourselves the pleasure of writing to you, please do not regard it as ill-mannered patronising, or as a consolation prize for an “also ran”—rather it is because you, Sir, beyond many, are eminently worthy. According to the Handbook you have spent twenty—or is it thirty years? in smaller churches in town or country. It is possible that you would have chosen spheres offering greater scope but somehow they have not come your way. Your Superintendent has received no complaint nor has your Fraternal heard of your disappointment—all that, has been kept within the Manse walls.

But really, Sir, yours is a great record. You have quietly pursued the even tenor of your way unperturbed by disappointment, undaunted by difficulty and humbly grateful to God for success. Success truly has been yours and that kind which cannot be published in annual reports or set forth on the forms examined by the S.F. Committee. Through the long years many homes have been gladdened by your welcomed visits, children have looked smilingly up into your face knowing you to be their friend, young people have turned to you for guidance and have never sought in vain. Above all, men and women have been inspired to nobler living and souls have been won for the Kingdom of Heaven. Long after you have left the pulpit for ever, your name will be recalled with gratitude. “He baptised me”—“He married us”—“That

man helped me through my greatest sorrow"—or "He led me to Jesus Christ," and so forth and so on.

We gladly bear this testimony to you, Sir, that throughout your whole ministry, your Christian character has been deeply noted, and now, as memory holds the door, some suggestion from Galilean hills, some association from Old Jerusalem comes crowding in and hearts are warmed again and lives are touched to higher issues.

So we fold our letter and direct your envelope. You will think the postman has delivered it to the wrong address, just as some day when you enter the gate of the Eternal City you will join in the spontaneous outburst of applause, deeming it intended for the great man, behind you—but the angel who knoweth best will speedily correct your mistake.

Once again—Here's to you, Sir.

THE CIRCLE WIDENS

We give a special welcome to thirty-eight brethren in South Africa and six in Australia who have recently joined the Fellowship. Now it is for us to make the fellowship worth-while by corresponding, at least occasionally, with our brother ministers, many of whom are labouring in isolated spheres. The same applies to the many B.M.S. members—far away from home. Greetings to all these friends across the seas.

THE MAGAZINE

The series of College issues will be concluded in July by what may be termed—an Extra-College-Number—the contributors to which will be men who have qualified for our ministry by means of the B.U. Examination or have studied at other theological Colleges. Melville Evans has kindly consented to be Editor.

FELLOWSHIP OF BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

We are glad to hear of the re-formation of the above Fellowship which should do much to draw together, in deeper unity, the men in our various Colleges. We send best wishes for success and hope that some way may be found of keeping contact between this organisation and our own. Congratulations to Secretary and Committee on excellent progress already made.

SPURGEON'S COLLEGE ISSUE

FOREWORD

SPURGEON'S men are glad to take their turn in providing the contents of this issue of *The Fraternal*, because they love the brotherhood. This number was planned, and the contributions secured by R. A. Ward, and I am grateful to him and to all the writers of the articles that follow. They represent differing generations of former students, covering a span of forty-four years, and their ministries have been fulfilled in Africa, Australia, and the homeland. That may account for the diversity of topics with which they deal. Each man selected his own theme, of course, and developed it according to his own judgment. We offer thanks to the Editorial Board for the opportunity of speaking as a College to our comrades in the ministry.

G. G. Coulton described History as "a battle in which everybody wins except the man who ceases to fight." That is true of our warfare. We all might have fought better, but, thank God! we have not ceased to fight. There is also the joyous fact that we are conscious of fighting side by side more than once we did. In this unity of purpose and effort we greet all our fellow-members of the Fellowship.

P. W. EVANS

(The Editorial Board associate themselves most heartily with the thanks expressed to R. A. Ward in above Foreword).

 WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

IN the engine room of a large factory I recently saw an enormous wheel revolving at an incredible speed; but within it I noticed another wheel revolving in a diametrically opposite direction. It set me thinking; and, in the process, Ezekiel's striking words came forcibly to my mind. *Their work was, as it were, in the middle of a wheel.*

Something very similar characterises the life and work of a Christian minister. There is the larger wheel. He is involved, by the very nature of his sacred office, in certain imperative obligations. He *must*, for example, be able to create and communicate a spirit of worship; he *must* be able to expound the Scriptures; and he *must* be able to evangelise those who are alienated from the kingdom of God. As a rule these three imperatives, harmonising

naturally, will melt imperceptibly into each other. The minister who dwells in the secret place of the Most High and who abides under the shadow of the Almighty will, by every movement, glance and gesture, make the people feel that they are in the immediate presence of the Most High. Such a man, unconsciously radiating so solemn and reverential an atmosphere, will instinctively magnify the Scriptures and infect his hearers with a love for the inspired page. And such a man, permeated with a consciousness of the divine presence, and exulting in the wealth of the divine Word, will, as a matter of course, be both passionate and persuasive in his appeals to those who are out of the way. The three imperatives co-ordinate. It was said of Jean Baptiste Massillon, the greatest of French preachers, that his own sense of God filled each individual hearer with unspeakable awe. Louis the Fourteenth was terrified and yet magnetised by Massillon's inspired eloquence. Even in a thronged cathedral, he had a way of securing for himself not one congregation of two thousand, but two thousand congregations of one.

"The dome has vanished," he would exclaim dramatically, "the ceiling has disappeared; nothing now intervenes between you and Almighty God! And see, the walls have evaporated and the great congregation has dispersed; you and I are left alone together! Just you and I!" And then, like a skilful surgeon alone with his patient, he would probe to the very depths of his hearer's secret being.

Louis the Magnificent used to say that he enjoyed hearing other preachers; he never enjoyed Massillon, for Massillon seemed to tear his very soul wide open; yet, if he had to select one preacher and hear him only, he would wish that one preacher to be Massillon.

But it is extremely important that we ministers should recognize that, within the great outer wheel of inflexible imperatives, the smaller wheel of ample and gracious freedom harmoniously revolves. And the success of our several ministries will depend quite as much upon the use that we make of that liberty as upon our loyalty to the major obligations. The inner wheel is just as important as the outer.

If I were left alone for a few minutes with a young minister, whose soul was still aglow with the solemnity of his ordination, I should place my hands upon his shoulders, look straight into his fresh young eyes and pour into his ears a word or two from my very heart. "In respect of the general tone and character of your ministry," I should say, "you are a free man. You possess the

priceless gift of individuality and you must express it in the most effective way that you can discover. Do not follow any course simply because other men adopt it. Be yourself. Dress as seems most natural and most fitting to your own case. Do not model your behaviour upon any prevailing fashion. Show a reasonable respect for convention: if it be soundly based, follow it: but do not let it enslave or hamper you. In the preparation and delivery of your sermons, consider only the best possible way of conveying all that is in your own heart to the hearts of your hearers. If the method that you adopt happens to be the method that is generally adopted, all well and good: but if it differs in any respect from the usual procedure, do not let that circumstance embarrass you." I once went to hear a well-known Anglican preacher. The church was crowded. When the time came for the sermon, the good man announced his text, and then, to my surprise, descended the pulpit steps and delivered his discourse whilst walking up and down the aisles, turning now *this* way and now *that* as he addressed himself from time to time to particular sections of his large congregation. It struck me as singularly effective—for *him*. I could not do it. I imagine that very few preachers could. But, since it appealed to him as being the way in which he could best express himself, I admired his courage in adopting it.

Great preaching has three distinct values. It has *entertainment* value; it has *educational* value; and it has *evangelistic* value. I need not say that the *first* and the *second* are of value only so far as they lead to the *third*; yet, since they may so easily lead to the *third*, they have an inherent value of their own.

When I affirm that great preaching must have entertainment value, I do not, of course, mean that it must be amusing. Humour has its place in preaching as in everything else; yet there is no more pitiful spectacle under heaven than a preacher trying to be funny. Comedy is not the only kind of entertainment. For one actor or actress who has achieved fame as a comedian, a dozen have covered themselves with glory as interpreters of romance, adventure or even tragedy. Nobody who has witnessed a performance of the *Medea* of Euripides, of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, or of Ibsen's *Ghosts*, will doubt the entertainment value of tragedy. There come moments in which every person in the audience, gripped by the tense horror of the unfolding situation, forgets everybody and everything outside the actual play.

But I am no more suggesting that the preacher should aim at becoming a tragedian than I am suggesting that he should aim

at becoming a comedian. The thing that I *am* insisting upon is that, by every art at his command, he should capture and hold the attention of his hearers. It is not enough that he should say what it is his duty to say. He must arrange his matter so attractively, and present it so effectively, that the most listless and languid will be compelled to follow him. There is no earthly reason why actors, barristers or statesmen should state their cases more attractively, more convincingly or, if you like, more entertainingly, than the preacher.

Somebody has said that, of preachers, there are three kinds. There is the preacher that you *can't* listen to; there is the preacher that you *can* listen to; and there is the preacher that you *can't help* listening to. In reality, the third is the only preacher of the three. The art of preaching is not so much the art of preaching as the art of compelling the congregation to listen to your message; and you can be sure that they will listen only if you make it worth their while to listen. And if you make it worth their while, it is because in the best sense, your preaching has entertainment value. The master-preachers—Jesus, Paul, Wesley, Whitefield, Spurgeon, Moody and the rest—knew that they had something to say that was well worth saying. They therefore made it their business to say it in such a way that other people would find it well worth hearing. In the full flood of their oratory, you could have heard a pin drop. You forgot everything in your eagerness to catch every syllable.

We shall never attract or arrest our hearers by an elaborate display of theology: The prominence of theology in a sermon suggests a slipshod preparation. Theology is what the ladies call a foundation garment: it imparts shapeliness and affords support to the drapery of your utterance without itself becoming visible. It is very noticeable that Jesus Himself seldom or never became theological. As Sir Edwin Arnold says:

*The simplest sights He met—
The Sower flinging seed on loam and rock;
The darnel in the wheat, the mustard tree
That hath its seed so little, and its boughs
Widespreading and the wandering sheep; and nets
Shot in the wimpled waters—drawing forth
Great fish and small:—these, and a hundred such,
Seen by us daily, never seen aright,
Were pictures for Him from the page of life,
Teaching by parable.*

In his fine chapter on *Jesus as a Preacher*, Dr. James Stalker says that if, in the course of a lifetime, we have been fortunate enough to hear an orator of the first rank, we talk of it all our days; or, if we can remember a preacher who first made religion real to us, his image is enshrined in our memory in a sacred niche. "What then," Dr. Stalker asks, "must it have been to listen to Him who spake as never man spake? What must it have been to hear the Sermon on the Mount or the Parable of the Prodigal Son issuing, for the first time, fresh from the lips that uttered them?"

Preaching of this sublime quality had a distinct *entertainment* value; it forced men to pay attention. It had *educational* value; it filled the minds and hearts of people with thoughts and emotions that were startlingly and sensationally new to them. And, as an inevitable climax, it had *evangelistic* value. For, in fulfilment of the purpose that the preacher has secretly cherished through all the processes of preparation and delivery, it led his hearers to the feet of God. And when, by the strategy and science and spiritual intensity of his preaching, a minister has made his message so alluring and so persuasive that his hearers ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, the crown that he most fervently covets already decks his brow.

F. W. BOREHAM

ESSENTIALS TO SALVATION

IN the discussions now taking place on questions of Church Order and re-union, one word is used with a variety of meanings, viz., the word "essential." Yet there is seldom an examination of this word, which generally has a moral connotation when it is used with a spiritual reference. We speak of baptism as not being "essential to salvation"; that is, baptism may be useful, desirable, but it is optional. So also church attendance is desirable, not essential; the Lord's Supper is useful, not obligatory (or do the rules in some churches requiring deletion for continual non-attendance imply obligation?).

The question is usually referred back to the contention of the reformers that Justification by faith alone is essential to salvation. There is little doubt as to the truth of that statement, but it is only one aspect of the truth. It emphasises rather the initial stages of salvation, and leaves open the question of what may be necessary for the continuance of salvation, i.e., the building up of faith, the

means whereby growth in understanding of the Gospel is to be gained. Further, its emphasis is on the salvation of the individual and leaves open the matter of the obligations of the company of believers as a spiritual community within a secular community. It is axiomatic, however, that personal faith must grow, and that the church is under obligation to evangelise or perish. These can be rightly regarded as essential to the life of the individual believer and to the life of the church.

Salvation, then, is concerned with the relationship between God and man, not only in its initial stages but as that communion is sustained by grace and strengthened by devotion to God and to the community. We may disagree as to how personal development is to be attained, or how the evangelistic duty of the church is to be performed—yet behind the disagreement there is unity as to Christian obligation in these spheres. This larger view of salvation implies a larger view concerning what is essential. Is it not possible that what is not essential for the initial stages of one's salvation, may be essential for its maintenance?

The difficulty seems to be that we are almost compelled to use a word such as duty, obligation, essential, necessity—in fine, a word with definite moral associations—to express the outworking of a spiritual relationship. Now it is true that the result of man's new relation with God will be manifest in a new moral life, but the driving force of that life is not primarily moral but spiritual. I do not mean to imply that duty and obligation have no meaning for us—Kant could say that they had no meaning for a holy will, a will that does not have to engage in moral struggle, but none of us has a holy will in that sense. The Kantian categorical imperative, which is of the nature of "must" rather than ought, is rooted in the nature of God, and so in the love bond created by God for man, every "ought" declared by God becomes a "must" for the Christian. Now Christian ethics has down the years sought to differentiate the essential imperative of divine principles laid down for Christian living from the thought-form or temporal framework in which it has been given to man. The principle remains the same, but the changing pattern of society and man's thought demands a periodic re-statement of the Christian Ethic. There has been adaptation, and growth in understanding, but no new principle has been discovered. It has, in effect, been the continual discovery that the "ought" of the Christian ethic is binding on Christian individuals and society.

We are also confronted with the idea that there is a divine "ought" in the spiritual realm, which constitutes, within the love bond, a "must" for each one of us. For example, in His Sermon on the Mount our Lord seems to be concerned with recovering principles of conduct and of relationships with God and declaring them vividly within a new framework rather than seeking to show that the Old Testament ideals were outmoded. As Christians we do not argue about the reasons for loving our enemies but only how that love should be expressed. So also He did not destroy the need for man to work out his salvation but showed the initial need of a new relationship with God. That imperative ("that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent") we regard as essential for salvation. Yet whenever we strive to express it in language it becomes a creed, (employing that word as confession of faith) demanding not only intellectual assent, but the allegiance of the whole man. Shall we say, then, that a creed is not essential? We may differ as to what creed is essential—that is, how much should be put in or left out—but every presentation of the Gospel demands assent to a rudimentary creed. It is possible to say, from our Lord's words, that a creed is essential, assent to it being obligatory; and it is for our generation to say what especial emphasis that creed shall have to fit the thought-forms of this age without losing the essence of the Gospel as declared in the New Testament.

Further, we may say, that a divine command from our Lord has all the nature of obligation for the Christian. If it is a moral command, it is essential for the outworking of faith; if its essence is spiritual, then we must regard it as essential to the divine life offered to us, and we neglect it at our peril. How shall we interpret the command concerning the Lord's Supper, viz., "do this in remembrance of Me?" Against the criticisms which asserts that all such statements are later interpolations or interpretations of the church, there may be placed the fact that down the centuries most Christians have regarded the observance of the Lord's Supper as essential for the believer. The sacrament may be interpreted at its briefest as being a command to remember our Lord's death. Paul writes that he received it "of the Lord." Then we may say that a divine institution demands the wholehearted acceptance and observance by the Christian. Its form has changed considerably, and new meanings have been found by all denominations, yet the divine obligation behind it remains for all who name the name of Christ. The sacrament itself is essential as being a divine command, but any one particular interpretation may become obsolete with the passing

of the years. It remains for us to accept it as necessary, but to ponder anew its meaning for us now.

The question of the dominical institution of the sacrament of Baptism is still being debated; but it behoves us to enquire whether if we accept it as a divine command, we can in any way suggest that baptism is not essential for the Christian. True, it is not essential for salvation in a limited sense, but is it not essential for the Christian life? It was Christ's designated mode of public confession and identification with Himself—that is the principle and can we therefore really suggest that it is merely desirable? It would seem that we have amended our view of its necessity in order to exclude ideas of baptismal regeneration or to conform to a narrower view of salvation. We have tended to regard only that which is moral as obligatory and reduce the spiritual to a minimum. There seems to be no reason why this initial declaration of faith should not be as essential for us, in the will of God, as the very faith itself. Many deplore the fact that we are becoming a denomination where baptism is the exception rather than the rule, but that decline must surely continue unless we return to the idea that our Lord's command implies necessity for the Christian.

Finally, with regard to the church and ministry. There is general agreement that the church is of divine origin. This is implied in the Gospels, and tacitly assumed in Acts and the Epistles, therefore, it brings with it all the essence of obligation, for that which God promotes for our benefit it becomes the duty of the Christian to prosper. The Church, then, is essential for the Christian, both for his growth in God and his service for God. When we seek, however, to go beyond this point and would investigate the question of divine order within the church, we are baffled. Every type of church government can be found in germ in the New Testament, and no one form appears to be essential. The emphasis throughout is upon the fellowship, separateness, and unity of believers. Forms of government reflect the influence of the form of State government or political view in vogue at the time of the rise of that particular church. Bishop Walter Carey argues that the government in the Church of England is monarchical and that that form is of divine ordering. Without debating this, it would appear that the argument of Apostolic succession has its analogy in the now obsolete view of the divine right of kings. Even Dom Gregory Dix admits that it is easier to trace back their form of government to Constantine than to the early church. (How much

does our transformation from interdependence to independence owe to the *laissez faire* of Liberalism of the last century?). But the idea of a church is fundamental, and the church is essential by its very nature. Similarly our Lord by His appointment of the Twelve designated them for leadership, for the establishment of order and for a deepening of knowledge of Himself, within the church. These three things are essential for a church; so a ministry meeting these elementary needs of the Christian soul at worship is essential. Yet there is no clue in the Word of God that a ministry *must* be of a particular kind—full-time or part-time, Bishop or Elder. The early church appears to show differences according as the local church was predominantly Jewish, Greek or Roman. Yet the principle of leadership, order and instruction, was regarded as essential for the church, however small the group may be.

It may be, then, that *a church, a ministry, a creed and the Sacraments* are within the Divine Will for our growth in grace, our service, our salvation in the widest sense. They are essential for us because God in His love has ordained them as vehicles of grace and truth. Guided by the wisdom of the church down the years and the Spirit of God operating in our hearts and within the church we must begin the task of examining the type of government, ministry, and creed useful within the framework of our civilisation. We must remember that what may be of value to us may be unhelpful in Congo, Russia or America, but the essential will unite us and allow for variety within that unity.

E. H. WORSTEAD

THE USE OF SYMBOLS IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

“WHEN the heart is deeply moved” says a Chinese classic, expression is given to it in ritual.” The thoughtful and well-disciplined man is more likely to express his deepest emotions in a conventional and systematised form such as poetry, or drama, than in the gibberish of tongues or a Corybantic dance.

Nowhere has ritualism and symbolism been more maintained and developed than in religion. There it can be seen even to excess. In its highest form it is expressed in the symbolism of the Christian Church. Some have a very well-developed and regularised form of symbolism in ritualistic practice, such as the Greek

Orthodox and Roman communions, others, a minimum. But symbolism is absent from none. The austere and impressive silence of a Quaker Meeting is a form of ritual and so are the emotional gatherings in evangelistic meetings. The difference lies in the number and form of the symbols used, and the degree of intensity of the free spirit running through them.

Symbolism is a concern for our age, for we have come to a period in which men have not the time or possibility for an exact understanding in any other than one department of life. In consequence, in religion the purely intellectual presentation of the faith is insufficient. The modern mind cannot sustain the strain of a moral, how much less a theological, argument. This is reflected in the poverty of thought of much modern preaching, and the retreat upon the quotation of emotional poetry or the use of anecdotes. The lack of ability or desire for abstract thought accounts very largely for the emptiness of our churches. The symbol is the concrete representation of the abstract. In being given it a man feels he has something in his hands. This sense of the possession of the concrete accounts for the passage of some quite intellectual men away from the simpler forms of the Christian faith to the more ritualistic, and others into a philosophy with a materialistic basis.

The symbol being concrete has the advantage of æsthetic presentation, so that the human mind is addressed not only through truth and goodness, but beauty as well.

We of the Free Churches have been proud of our lack of ritual. Nevertheless, for all our boast it is very plain that our buildings and services have in the past hundred years undergone a great transformation. We have sought not only to build more beautiful churches, but also churches symbolical of our worship and faith. The eighteenth century Baptist Church often looked like a cottage. To-day we should never build a church that looked like a house, although some are strangely like cinemas and others have an exterior like that of a modern factory.

At the same time our services have been embellished. Not only are they more decorous, but congregations find help and delight in the various symbols that have been introduced into worship.

Ecclesiastical symbols fall roughly into three groups. The constructional—that is in architecture or design. The confessional—that is expressed in conventional languages. The physical—expressed in posture or by gesture.

By its architecture and by the designs employed in its decoration a church should clearly proclaim its purpose. All worship is sacramental—that is, its chief purpose is not the presentation of a gift to God but the reception of His Grace. The two ordinances and the pulpit, as the means of Grace, should therefore be prominent. For that reason the organ is best concealed, and the choir with its variety of costumes made as unobtrusive as possible. The advantage of a gowned choir is that it is not self-advertising. The cynosure of all eyes should be the pulpit, the baptistery and the table. They should be placed in closest juxtaposition. As far as possible the pulpit should be central and pre-eminent, signifying the supremacy of the Word of God. Our closed baptisteries are to be deplored, and in many churches with a little skill and design they could be rendered permanently open, a silent witness to the open confession of repentance and faith in Christ. The communion table is best placed in the nave of the church rather than in a chancel, so maintaining the conception of fellowship and debarring the retreat to the wall which makes it an altar and a place of oblation.

The sign of the Cross is merely an adventitious aid and is useful only as a recognised symbol of Christianity. It is to be doubted whether it brings to many minds the Passion of our Lord. It simply stands for Christianity as the Crescent does for Islam, and the Hammer and Sickle for the Soviets. Its usefulness lies entirely in its conventional character. The crucifix should be eschewed. It is more than a symbol in the strict sense, but is rather a representation and as such involves the danger of being venerated.

There are other recognised symbols such as the Agnus Dei, the Burning Bush, the hand-clasped Cross, but they are secondary and, if used, at best have only an artistic value. The descending Dove is to be seen in some of our churches in the stained glass of the windows, or on the wall behind the baptistery. This has more than an artistic service; it is a silent testimony to the gift of the Spirit so closely associated with baptism. Alpha and Omega, and the monogram I.H.S., have a similar hortatory value, testifying to the Lord Jesus Christ, and are certainly preferable to some of the exhortations that have been placed on the wall behind preacher or organ.

It should be remembered that the use of artistic symbols is not for the creation of religious atmosphere, to provide an emotional sense, but to teach silently to the waiting congregation the truths of the Christian faith, and in Alpha and Omega and I.H.S. the Person of Christ is set forth.

The use of these letters leads us over into the use of the confessional symbols or creeds. We make a foolish boast when we say that we are a non-credal church. Indeed, if confessions of faith are creeds (and are they less?), our church has made and used more creeds than any other; and, remembering the theological battles, often very bitter, in our midst, it might be said that we have exacted a very strict credal adherence, at least from our ministers.

All our confessions of faith have been constructed about the Apostles' Creed. Just as Calvin and the Divines who formulated the Westminster Confessions of Faith went to the Apostles' Creed to find the form of their own confessions, so the Baptists of the seventeenth century went either to these or to the source itself for the outline of their confessions. These Baptist confessions of faith are altogether too long and obscure for congregational use, or indeed for doctrinal teaching either. In the Apostles' Creed we have to hand a succinct and all-embracing statement of Christian truth. It should be used in worship as a proclamation of our faith. It is often said that our people are woefully ignorant of our beliefs and a statement of faith would be valued. The Apostles' Creed is a sufficient and brief enough statement to be used. On occasions the Nicene Creed may be used. It is at least the sign of a Christianity that has triumphed over its doubts! However, the plea is for the use of some creed. Such a creed may be constructed from passages of Scripture or may be composed by the minister or officers of the church. The one thing that should concern us is that such a creed is a plain statement of all the salient elements of our faith; not merely those essential to salvation, but those also essential to the Person of God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and the Church. The Spirit of God is a free Spirit and there is no need for a confessional symbol to be stereotyped or confined to one form. The supremacy of the Apostles' Creed is assured because of its brevity and all-embracing character, and by the fact that it satisfies the Vincentian Canon.

When should these confessional symbols be used? Most certainly at baptism, the entrance to the church and at the Supper when the church is in fellowship. It is often more convenient to use them as prayers than proclamations. A well-taught congregation will not accept them as routine utterances.

Physical symbols have done much to make the magnificent and garish ritual of the Roman Church. To what extent are they permissible and at what point do they obscure rather than illuminate

the Christian faith? As a general principle symbols should be used only as the necessary interpreters of the faith, and should be kept at a minimum and not multiplied for the sake of impressiveness or the creation of religious atmosphere.

First of all we should end our slovenly fashion of prayer and decide on a standing or kneeling posture. In our private devotions we do not think of praying lounging in a chair or bending forward, then why do this at church? It was common Baptist practice years ago to stand for prayer. The prayer with which worship begins may be offered with the congregation standing and the prayer of confession and intercession with the congregation and preacher kneeling. As prayer is a congregational act and not a priestly, there should be some part of the prayer which should be congregational. If this is not an utterance of thanksgiving or a confession, it should be at least a response to the prayers offered.

The minister should be gowned (we have our traditional forms) to distinguish him from the congregation and the choir, but more than that as a sign that he is clothed with authority and power—the authority of the Word of God and, we trust, the unction of the Spirit.

We have accepted the uplifted hands as a sign of benediction. But there are other signs which might be usefully employed, particularly in the ordinances. The bread at the Supper should be broken in the sight of the congregation and both it and the wine set aside from common use, for this is what we all do; the sentences which are recited merely make this plain. To kneel at the communion service is contrary to our faith. It can be confused with an adoration of the elements. The bread and the wine are best received sitting, and thus the sign of fellowship is maintained. For that same reason our Baptist practice of handing around the elements is preferable to coming forward to a communion rail to receive them. All should eat at the same time and drink likewise, as a further sign of fellowship.

In the service of baptism everything should be arranged not for impressiveness but for the interpretation of the rite. Some of our baptismal services are hurried, in others the ministrant adds unnecessary embellishments. It should be as simple as possible; at the same time the purpose of the act must be interpreted, or it may be quite meaningless. Often this interpretation is given in the sermon but it would be better if the sermon were a gospel appeal for faith and decision and the rite had certain features that explain it. Therefore it should be introduced with relevant passages of Scripture

and the commendation of the candidates in prayer. Each candidate should then be asked in a question or a series of questions for his testimony. The writer uses three questions. The first is concerning faith in God, the Father, the Son and the Spirit; the second is concerning repentance and faith; and the third concerning fellowship in the church. Baptism is a time of great joy and the minister as he descends into the water should use words that express such joy as the Gloria. Each candidate should be received into the water with a blessing; the most suitable is the threefold blessing of Numbers 6, 24-26. Where it is convenient they should enter the waters from one side of the baptistery and come out on the other, as a sign of passing through from death unto life.

In services of ordination more than the right hand of fellowship should be used. The laying on of hands is a practice of New Testament origin and is a sign of the appointment of the church and the gift of the ministry by God through the church. The laying on of hands should be conducted by at least one minister and one layman. The presence of the layman dispels suspicion of a mechanical Apostolic succession.

There should be also services of induction of elders and deacons. Where the office is one of life-appointment the laying on of hands should be used, but in any case there should be some sign that the church is conferring a privilege and an office under God upon the recipient, and at least the right hand of fellowship should be used in induction.

All these services are primarily symbols—signs of the recognition by the church of God's grace, given, and of the church's appointment. The plainer they are in statement and sign the better symbols they become.

In conclusion, we must be careful not to multiply our symbols for the sake of effect. They are solely for the use of interpretation. A symbol merely as a symbol can come between the soul and reality. It does in fact stand between to interpret, to assist, to reveal and not to conceal. Symbols should always be transparent. Our controversy with the ritualist is that his ritual is so brilliant as to be opaque, and obscures the reality and interrupts the vision of God. Symbols should be few and exceedingly simple. If they are gestures or postures or statements they should possess the grace of spontaneity and inspiration. In their careful and wise use there are possibilities of arresting, by concrete forms, busy men in a busy world, and interpreting to them by an easy, visual or auditory manner, the simple truths of our faith.

A. J. BARNARD

THE MINISTER AND THE MISSION FIELD

HE looked up suddenly. Surely it couldn't be as late as that! Where had the morning gone to? Preparing a sermon wasn't usually such a slow job. He knew what he was going to preach about. But somehow his thoughts to-day wouldn't do what he wanted. Of course, he knew what the trouble was. It was the way that one thing kept pushing its way to the front of his mind. How on earth were things going to be run now that the Church Secretary was going to move away? He had been a bit prickly sometimes, but for all that he was a good secretary. And who else was there? The other deacons were good people, but none of them was really able to tackle the job of secretary. Then there was that sharp clash at the last deacons' meeting. Surely the life of a minister —

"The field is the world." "The field is the world." What made those words keep on drumming out? He hadn't been thinking about the Parable of the Tares lately. "The field is the world." Strange how words seem to come out of the blue like that. Perhaps it might —

And then there was the problem of the women's meeting. The leader had said she wouldn't carry on if certain things weren't done. But they couldn't offend some of the oldest members just to please her. If only his own wife weren't so tied with family responsibilities. He began to wonder if —

"The field is the world." "The field is the world." Why of course they were the words on the title page of the *Missionary Herald*. It had come this morning and was lying on his desk. His eyes must have strayed to it while he was worrying things out. The World! Goodness, why, his own church was just crammed with problems. How could a man be expected to interest himself in the world. His own immediate job seemed to take everything he had. China—he idly turned the page—in China the Church had been having a time of such difficulty. India—yes, of course, very significant things were happening there. It seemed right to know as much as one could about what was going on. Work in a Girl's School —

That did seem to be without a solution. People said they couldn't get children to come to Sunday School. He thought it was harder to get teachers than scholars. Many of the younger people coming home didn't want to do anything in the church. Now at

his last church there hadn't been much difficulty in getting workers for the Sunday School. How curious it was —

“The field is the world.” There it was again. Why wouldn't the words go away! He turned over another page. The Gratitude of Congo Christians. Surely it must be difficult to explain the Gospel to savages. Of course missionary work in such places did seem to be really necessary. But here they were asking for increased contributions again. He did wish they wouldn't keep making appeals for money. How could he be expected to put his heart into raising funds for missionary work. They didn't even know if they would be able to balance the church budget. He looked at the clock again. Really he must begin to get on with that sermon.

It would soon be time now for evening prayers. Mbala and his son were rather tired. They had just done a three-day walk. Tomorrow there would be the Communion Service. That was why they had come. The last time the missionary had got as far as their village was seven months ago. There was a time when they had a visit every three months. Sometimes oftener. So in those days they always got the chance to sit at the Lord's Table four times a year. But now there were so few missionaries at the station. So they didn't often visit the villages. This meant people had to walk all the way in if they wanted to meet and remember the Saviour's death.

Mbala couldn't walk so well as when he had been baptized. He could remember the excitement in the village when the missionary came to arrange for them to have a teacher of their own. He was a lad then and had helped the older men to build the mud church. They had been very proud of their House of Worship. It wasn't till he went to the mission station and saw the brick church that he knew how small theirs was. Still on the day of the opening services there was great joy in the hearts of everyone. He remembered how they sent a word to the mission station. The teacher had said they ought to thank the people in Britain for sending them missionaries. He had told them that it was really God's doing. Yes, it was God's people in Britain they should thank. And all the congregation had said: Ee, and clapped their hands in worshipful gratitude. So the word was sent to the mission station and from there to Europe.

And now Mbala had come with his own son who had been baptized some years ago. As they walked in they had passed

through villages where there was still no church. How stifling it seemed when you come to places like that. The people there were wrapped in fear like trees in thick mist. Old heathen thoughts held their minds as the blacksmith's tongs holds the iron. The children were still brought up in ways that kept their hearts dark like the storm-clouds that hide the sun. Yes, that old teacher had been right. Mbala was glad he'd thought of it. When he saw the missionary after prayers he would tell him. Sometimes he heard others asking why there weren't enough missionaries to come and visit them more often. But it was only the love of God in the hearts of the people of Britain that made the missionaries come at all.

A word must be sent to tell them that there was one old man who wanted to thank them for doing what God wanted. Of course those people had known about the Saviour for a very long time. Longer ago even than the time of their great-grandfathers. So perhaps they didn't really know how wonderful it was to hear about Jesus for the first time. Perhaps, too, there weren't any dark villages where there was still no church. Yes, he would ask the missionary to be sure to send the word in such a way that they would understand it.

There was the bell. Now they must go to the church for prayers. He didn't think he'd be able to walk all this way to the mission station. Not even to come to the Feast of the Lord. His joints were so stiff. But his heart was full of joy. When he had first had his name put down among the seekers of the Saviour they told him it would be hard. How that had come true. Here they were at the door of the church. He wondered what the House of God in Heaven would be like. But if there were going to be more joy in his heart then he couldn't picture it. He sat and bowed his head in prayer. He lifted his heart in praise to God for the men and women who had come and told him about Jesus. May God be thanked for those He has found to do what He wanted!

The minister looked again at the front page of the *Missionary Herald*. "The field is the world." Somehow the words seemed to gather to themselves new meaning. He had never thought of them before as a missionary text. And still they forced themselves on him like the noise of the wind that rouses the sleeper. He began to wonder. Was this the text he ought to preach from on Sunday? He couldn't remember ever preaching a missionary sermon. He'd always left that to the missionary deputation once a year. He

wondered what the visiting missionary usually said. He didn't really know as he usually went to preach somewhere else that day.

How odd that he'd never really thought about the mission field as a concern of his. As a minister he'd always tried to give his best to the work. Yet it was always his own work. It was as though the church was part of himself to be nurtured at all costs. He realised on reflection that he had been slightly resentful at the implicit demands of the Mission Field on his church. It had seemed to be a rival claim which had reluctantly to be allowed. Now he began to see that Christ viewed the world as he had looked on his own church. As thoughts crowded in on him he found his own problems looked different. They didn't disappear. They merged into a larger scene. He saw his difficulties as part of the world picture. Yes, that was it. The great Cultivator was concerned with every corner of his field. And "The field is the world."

Over the forests and rivers came the sound of voices. Men and women of Africa singing praises to God. People who might have been chanting incantations. People who might have been sitting in the gloom of superstitious terror. People who might have been trying as best they could to pacify the malignant powers lurking in tree and water.

So the evening song of praise rose high to heaven. And I heard the words from the heart of Mbala and many like him. "May God be thanked for those He has found to do what He wanted."

And again my mind turned to the minister in his study. Then I knew that he and his fellow-labourers were among those for whom thanks were rising to God. Men who, faithfully serving their Master where he had put them, had caught a wider vision. Men who, faced with many a hard thing in their high calling, had yet seen their task as part of a fuller picture. Men who, having more burdens than they could carry, had yet taken to themselves the burdens of others far away.

So in the presence of the Eternal Love I bowed my heart. And I gave thanks for those who diligently till their own small patch, and yet, within their hearts embrace the whole vast field which is the World.

MALCOLM GUTHRIE

ON READING VIRGIL

BUT why read Virgil? The modern minister has little enough time for further reading when he has finished Bible study and sermon preparation, written letters, and attended to details of church organisation. If he is fortunate enough to have the time, surely he would be better employed, let us say, in familiarising himself with one of the social sciences, or in reading history or biography. But Virgil . . . ? Why, even in theological colleges, Latin is neglected for Greek and Hebrew, and if students can scarcely conjugate "amo," ministers cannot be expected to puzzle their heads over "Arma virumque cano." Well, perhaps Virgil is a luxury. An 18th century Yorkshire incumbent, wishing to impress the local Baptist minister, and to correct his doctrine, wrote him a letter in Greek, but the minister, undismayed, replied in Latin. Those spacious days are gone, and now we talk together with more friendliness about re-union, the problem of community, the liberty of the individual, the atomic era, caring little about the languages which gave us the terms. Time for study probably ought to be devoted to more urgent matters, but Virgil's poetry is a legitimate indulgence in our leisure. Even those among us who are convinced by eschatology or by current affairs that we are living in the Last Days can scarcely condemn us if we choose to satisfy our odd liking for Latin poetry while we have supper by the fireside. The majestic harmonies have survived the fall of two civilizations and the close of several epochs. Poetry which for so many years has never lacked readers, and which has often brought peace to troubled minds, is not to be despised.

Virgil is not to be despised even if we are inclined to judge a writer by the help he gives us when we are making sermons. We cannot preach except by using language, and language must be well used if we are to preach effectively. Every minister should put himself to school to great writers so that he may learn how to use words. Clear expression can be learned if we will apprentice ourselves to masters of the craft. Few writers have used language with Virgil's skill. Tennyson rightly salutes him as "Wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man," but he uses his skill to give more than stateliness to his poetry. The stiff hexameters of Ennius are stately; Virgil's are also flexible; the verses of Lucretius have a grave dignity; Virgil's are also tender. He is unsurpassed in his ability to use single words and terse phrases full

of music to gain unforgettable effects. He describes, for example, Aeneas escaping from burning Troy with his little son Iulus who clasped his hand and followed him "*non passibus æquis*"—with steps that matched not his. The stillness of a moonlit night is in "*tacitæ per amica silentia lunæ*"—amid the friendly silence of the peaceful moon, and all the wistful sadness of the ancient world is in Aeneas' question about the shades anxious to return to life on earth: "*quæ lucis miseris tam diva cupido?*" What means alas! this their mad longing for the light? The beauty of the poetry is lost in translation; ". . . even here, too, honour hath its need. "And there are tears for what befalls, and hearts touched by the chances of mortality" is a poor exchange for "*Sunt hic etiam præmia laudi, sunt lacrimæ rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.*" If, as Hermann said, translation is the death of understanding, it is certainly the death of poetry. Nevertheless, translation is a first-rate means of increasing our command of our own language. William Pitt was able to declaim what J. R. Green somewhat tartly calls his "flowing and sonorous commonplaces," largely because every day during his early youth his father made him translate from the classics. In structure, Latin and Greek are so different from English and other modern languages, that we are compelled to pay close attention to the meaning of a passage before we can render it, and the need to match thought with thought develops our understanding of English far more than translation from a modern language similar to our own. Reading Virgil teaches us the right use of words, tunes our ear to their music, chastens our style, purifies our taste for modern idiom, and saves us from preaching in the jargon of the streets.

Virgil's fame during his own life-time was immense. Augustus was his friend and the critical reader of his work. To none of the other distinguished men who served him was the Emperor more closely drawn by a common sympathy than to the poet who glorified his reign. When Virgil, on his death-bed, ordered his executors to destroy the *Aeneid*, still imperfect and incomplete after the labour of many years, it was Augustus who saved it for posterity and ordered its publication. Nor was Virgil known only to the brilliant circle of the Augustan court. When he entered the amphitheatre, the crowd cheered the shy, retiring man to his seat. His poetry displaced dull class-room books and Roman boys were soon learning from it a nobler imperialism. "Others, I doubt not, shall beat out the breathing bronze with softer lines; shall from marble draw forth the features of life; shall plead their causes

better; with the rod shall trace the paths of heaven and tell the rising of the stars: remember thou, O Roman, to rule the nations with thy sway—these shall be thine arts—to crown Peace with Law, to spare the humbled, and to tame in war the proud!” The early Church regarded Virgil as a prophet who in the Fourth Eclogue wrote of “the birth of the child, under whom the iron brood shall cease, and a golden race spring up throughout the world” and so foretold the birth of Christ. The opinion was held in England until the time of Pope. St. Augustine condemns himself for breaking his heart over Dido dead for the love of Aeneas, “while all the time, alas, I bore dry-eyed my own death far from Thee, O God, my Life.” Charlemagne’s teacher Alcuin, when yet a schoolboy, woke at night to see devils bite the toes of other monks in the dormitory, and anxiously remembered that he had “scamped the Psalms to read the Aeneid.” Dido was the heroine lamented in the verses of a hundred mediæval scholars. The unlettered peasant knew her creator was a magician, a worker of marvels. For Dante, he was the embodiment of national wisdom, a trustworthy guide to the very borders of Paradise. Petrarch, the men of the Renaissance, Milton, 18th century scholars, Tennyson—“I that loved thee since my day began”—R. C. Trevelyan and C. Day Lewis, two modern translator-poets, all pay their homage to Virgil. After two thousand years his influence is as potent as ever. In the great saying of John of Salisbury: “We are as dwarfs mounted on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more and further than they: yet not by virtue of the keenness of our eyesight, nor through the tallness of our stature, but because we are raised and borne aloft upon that giant mass.”

Like all great writers, Virgil belongs to every age because he speaks home to the human heart. His sadness at “the doubtful doom of human kind” evokes the sympathy of our own age. He was a displaced person. His father’s farm had been confiscated and given to one of the Emperor’s veterans. “Is a godless soldier to hold these well-tilled fallows? a barbarian these crops? See to what a pass strife has brought our unhappy citizens.” He spent his boyhood in a countryside made unquiet by revolution and war. In his manhood, Rome, weakened by political chaos, the failure of religion, and the disappearance of hope, turned with profound relief to Augustus who promised and gave security. During the sunny years of the Augustan peace, men recovered their grip on life, and while Augustus reformed the State in a great attempt to combine Freedom with Order, Virgil worked out a theology and an account

of human nature which would at once justify and criticise the new ideals of empire. In the *Aeneid*, all roads lead to Rome, but the poem is more than a panegyric on the work of Augustus, more than variations on the theme: "So vast was the struggle to found the Roman state." It is a meditation on the ways of God and man. The goddess Juno, unrelenting enemy of the survivors of Troy, at last consents to a compromise; her favourite Turnus so much more attractive in his soldierly courage and chivalry than Aeneas with his bourgeois virtues is nevertheless slain at last. The heroic virtues are needed if a community is to preserve its soul and they can grow only in freedom, but if freedom scorns control, it grows deformed and degenerates into anarchy. The virtues of order, "pietas" and "reverentia," obedience to properly constituted authority, and respect for law, are the guardians of liberty. The whole movement of Roman history and his own experience had impressed the lesson on Virgil's mind. We sometimes ask who first wrote a philosophy of history. The author of the Book of Daniel? St. Augustine? Virgil has a good claim to be regarded as at least the philosopher of Roman history.

It is not, therefore, a waste of time to read Virgil. His pity and tenderness minister to the spirit of man, and his philosophic breadth of vision enobles the mind. But Christian humanism, like other kinds, is held suspect by many modern Protestant theologians. Natural theology is a delusion and natural piety is but the pride of man wholly lost in trespasses and sin. They have powerful supporters. There is Ermenrich of Ellwangen, for example, a 9th century grammarian who realised with consternation that he had very frequently quoted Virgil: "Not that I have any wish to see him, whom I believe to be in a Very Bad Place Let us leave him, my father, let us leave him, liar that he is, sunk with Apollo and the Muses in the foulest swamp of Styx Why then do I harp on him? Since even as dung spread upon the field enriches it to a good harvest, so the filthy writings of the pagan poets are a mighty aid to divine eloquence." A very good reason for harping on Virgil; he has enriched the mind of the Western world to a good harvest. Christianity is the inheritor of classical culture and we do well not to despise our heritage. Strident voices call us to submit to the judgment of the Word of God; all theology, we are informed, is but commentary on Holy Scripture. The emphasis is needed and the Church ought to listen, but we ought also to remember that the ripest Christian theologians, nurtured in the classical tradition, effectively used what was best in classical culture in their

defence and exposition of the Gospel. We need the poise and balance that Christian humanism gives as we make our way through the paradoxes of Neo-Calvinism. The Hellenic spirit at least helps us to detect, even in the most resolutely Biblical theology, unrecognised fragments of ancient metaphysic, and sometimes in the straightest orthodoxy, a remnant of old humanities.

GORDON J. M. PEARCE

THE MINISTER FINDING ILLUSTRATIONS

AN attack of influenza did it. It was at that contemplative period of convalescence one year, early in my ministry when I reflected that I had done a great deal of good reading since leaving College but had made little attempt to store it for use. That set a chain of consequences to work. One of which was that I immediately secured a commonplace book in which from that day to this I have carefully conserved every scrap of good reading.

I merely write about the value of that book for purposes of illustration of sermons and addresses. To begin with, I never read *for the sake of finding illustrations*. To do that would be to spoil one's reading either for culture or pleasure. On the other hand I never let an illustration or a crisp quotation or even a valuable thought escape me. The demands of the ministry are so great that we need to store up everything of real value. Whatever book I read (and I remember Ruskin's advice, "If you read this you cannot read that") I never read without a piece of paper and a pencil ready to hand. Whatever strikes me is instantly indicated by a pencil line in the margin and noted on the paper *as it strikes me*. It is vital to do it immediately, for good things are so easily crowded out by subsequent activity. Dr. Alexander Whyte used to complain that he had the worst memory in Edinburgh. This was, doubtless, an exaggeration, but it caused him to say to his student friends, "No one knows the labour my memory has cost me," and to advise them always to read, "with your pencil in your hand."

For that reason I rarely read a borrowed book, for then I cannot follow my usual practice. Incidentally, it is infinitely better to know the books on our shelves than to pile up unread impedimenta. As a result of that decision nearly twenty years ago I have masses of material stored up, much of which has never, and may never be used, but "every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

What things are there! Gleanings from history and biography, from science and art, from poetry and philosophy, yes, and romance, mingle in its pages. I confess to a love for the classics, so that they will make a good starting point. Even the ancients have their value. Some telling illustrations can be gathered from such things as Plutarch's "Lives" or Lucian's essays.

The modern man, however, may be more at home with modern classics. Here is a rich field. Read them for the sheer delight of doing so. Read them because they are great literature. Years ago, the late Dean Farrar in a book called "Great Books," in which he wrote of Milton and Dante and other masters, bade his readers turn from "the gooseponds of village gossip" to the treasures of literature. That was wholesome advice, and a delving into the literature of our country alone provides a sumptuous banquet—Pope, Addison, Boswell and Johnson, and Lamb, in prose alone, besides many more in that great period that stretched from the Augustan age of English Literature to Wordsworth and Coleridge. Such a course of reading gives a minister a rich reward quite apart from the gathering of any sermon material. Yet while you read for the sheer delight of its poetry and prose you stumble over illustrations of which most of your audience will be totally unaware.

There is no fear to-day of shocking the average modern congregation by a reference to the theatre. Therefore you can use with immense effect the story Charles Lamb tells in "Ellistoniana" of the very minor member of a chorus who, upon some disapprobation expressed by a "highly respectable" audience, had fled from the stage. "How dare you," said the great Robert William Elliston. "How dare you, madam, withdraw yourself, without a notice, from your theatrical duties?" "I was hissed, Sir," came the reply from the young probationer. Then—and here you must recall Lamb's own words—then, "gathering up his features into one significant mass of wonder, pity and expostulatory indignation," his words were these, "They have hissed *me*." Or in speaking of attendance at worship tell the story of Addison's "Sir Roger de Coverley at Church" and you will find his delicious humour a great aid in stimulating a love for the sanctuary.

These, of course, are only the merest gleanings of a great harvest of grain, to be found, I repeat, not by looking for it, but by *seeing it when it is there*. Moreover, in mentioning these, I have left without the slightest reference the history, poetry, biography and the novels of the period. These added to the vast content of literature from the days of Wordsworth to our own form

an inexhaustible treasure for the preacher who will be content to read the great books and leave the "re-hashings" to folk who like them.

It is true, however, that a man may be "deep versed in books and shallow in himself" and I would not give the impression that in literature alone one finds fresh and sparkling illustrations.

How much there is to see, in the country around us, on our holiday visits at home or abroad, in our friends or the children about us. It is a very good thing for instance, for a minister to have been trained in one of the professions or trades before entering College, for that opens up a great field of interest and illustration. It is, of course, necessary for a man to be efficient in his life if he is to talk about it, but a craftsman's experience or a chemist's experiments can be turned to excellent use in later life. The thing is that you must not only see what members of your congregation would see, but you must see what they do not discern. Ernest Dimnet in "The Art of Thinking" tells a lovely story. "Come along," said the nurse to Felicite de la Mennais, eight years old, "Come along, you have looked long enough at those waves and everybody is going away." "They watch what I watch," replied the child, "but they do not see what I see."

In the choice of illustrations there are some things to watch. Avoid the hackneyed at all costs. Nothing so dulls the mind of a listener as when he says to himself, "I know what is coming. I have heard that one before." Of course, it is impossible always to use illustrations that are entirely fresh, but shun like the plague the compendiums labelled, "Moral and Religious Anecdotes," or "Little stories for little people." Find your own illustrations.

In all humility I would warn my fellow-ministers against one certain type of illustration. Sometimes I have sat uneasily as I have heard even well-known preachers commence an illustration by saying, "There was a man in my last church." It may be all right. It is all right if what you are going to say is kind and gracious, but if it should be anything detrimental, it is better left unsaid. For one thing he has not the chance of replying, and for another such things have a way of getting round to the ears of the people referred to. In any case you and I are not writing biographies, where we must paint "wart and all," but winning souls for Christ, and we need not give hurt in the process.

Side by side with illustrations culled from books and drawn from life is the vast amount of material which can be extracted from newspapers and periodicals. This needs separate handling.

My stories hold extracts from *The Times* and from religious and literary journals running back over many years. Some, of course, have become obsolete but many things remain for ever fresh in a wise preacher's hands. This material needs pasting in a scrap-book, but if carefully conserved, can often furnish material not only for illustration but for information on subjects upon which we may be called to speak in the course of our ministry.

Another vast field is that of quotation. "To quote or not to quote" is debated in James Black's *Mystery of Preaching*, with greater ability than I can command. Even if never used, good quotations may be worth noting for a stimulus to thought; but who can read Milton or Dante or Horæ Subsecivæ or the delightful books of our American cousin, Oliver Wendell Holmes, without wanting to note down some stately utterance of the former pair or some pithy saying of the latter. In any case few preachers excuse themselves from quoting hymns, which ought to be; but are not always, good poetry, and how full is our everyday language, without thinking of our pulpit utterance, of the words of the Authorised Version of the Bible. If a quotation is crisp, powerful and suggestive, by all means use it, so long as the sermon is not a series of excerpts from other people's thinking strung together with a weak thread of our own.

I have said nothing of method. Here particularly every man must find his own way. Some will want to index. They will want everything under A, B, or C. Some could not do that. They would have to leave off their work to look after their filing system. Some, like the present writer, have memories that flash back over the years and recall almost to a page the thing they want *when they want it*. The slightest reference to the commonplace book does all that is needed.

Of the value of illustrations there can be no doubt. They must never be the excuse for loose thinking. The Master, the greatest illustrator, used them freely. Carey, in his Leicester days, had the advantage of sermon criticism from Robert Hall. He said that Carey's sermons were too matter of fact, Pearce Carey tells us. They lacked windows. "There are not enough *likes* in them," said his honorary tutor, "whereas the Master was always saying, 'the Kingdom is *like* seed or treasure or heaven'."

Following in such good succession it is wise to see, to store and to use. Finally it is well, said Dr. Fullerton, to use a good illustration as soon as you can.

LIONEL F. HIGGS