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THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY

1 THE BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

MOST POPULAR DISCUSSION on this subject starts from the Old Testament Commandment (*Exodus xx, 8*) 'Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy'. And in many cases the argument revolves around the meaning of 'Holy' and the extent to which the great mass of Levitical, Scribal and Puritan tradition is really necessary to a worthy observance of Sunday. But it is, to say the least, a very moot point whether the Commandment, even in its barest form, let alone the traditional interpretations of it, has any relevance to the Christian Sunday. Whatever religious sanctions may attach to one day's rest in seven, and what ever benefits may be conferred upon mankind by its scrupulous observance, it was clearly not the intention of the early Christians to regard the first day of their week as another Sabbath, either in lieu of or in addition to that enjoyed by the Jews on the seventh day. 'It is said that the ancient Fathers nowhere cite the fourth Commandment as an authority for observing Sunday' (*H. B. Porter, The Day of Light, p. 22*). Sunday is a different day from the Sabbath, not only numerically, but also in kind. The institution of the Sabbath among the Hebrews was above all a piece of humanitarian legislation to ensure that slaves and working animals received at least one day's break in seven from their daily toil, and were not, as in other nations where the seven-day week was not observed, dependent upon the whim of their masters and occasional public festivals for such relief as they obtained (*Deuteronomy v, 14-15*).

For such a law to gain universal acceptance, it was necessary to apply some religious sanction, and the required authority was found in the doctrine that God Himself, having completed the entire work of Creation in six days, rested on the seventh (*Exodus xxxi, 17 al.*). Therefore all men, whether masters or servants, natives or sojourners, must accept a similar break in their daily routine. Thus the day took on the character of a holy-day, an occasion of special religious significance: ' . . . it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you' (*Exodus xxxi, 13*). Further, since no-one was at work on this day, it was the most convenient time for religious services to be held and sacrifices offered. In time, the religious character of the Sabbath tended to dominate the way in which it was spent; it was a day especially devoted to God, and any breach of the law concerning it was regarded as a crime worthy of death (*Exodus xxxi, 14-15*).

Although the prophets saw the dangers inherent in this somewhat exaggerated reverence for one day of the week, and complained that many who were scrupulous about its observance were not so particular about what they did with the remaining six days, (e.g. *Isaiah, 13-17*) their pleas for a more spiritual approach to religion fell on deaf ears, and even after the restoration of a relatively pure faith with

the return of the exiles under Nehemiah and Ezra, the laws concerning Sabbath observance tended to become more and more rigid. As long as 'Working on the Sabbath' was regarded in such a serious light, it was necessary to define with some precision just what constituted 'Work' within the meaning of the Act! Nehemiah set the pattern for the next four or five hundred years of scribal tradition when he prohibited wine-pressing, fishmongering, marketing and the carrying of any load on the Sabbath day, and having shut the city gates to enforce his order, threatened with arrest those who camped outside, waiting for opening-time! (*Nehemiah xiii*, 15-21). The development of this legalistic attitude to the Sabbath culminated in the multitude of petty restrictions, mainly without foundation in the Old Testament, which bedevilled the religious life of Our Lord's time, and made, for the devout man, what had once been a day of peace and joy in God, into a painful and, for many, an intolerable burden. The Maccabees (*I Maccabees ii*, 9) may have preferred to die rather than fight on the Sabbath, but most of the common people of Our Lord's time welcomed his more humanitarian attitude.

Not that Jesus despised the institution; on the contrary, He appreciated its value, attending the synagogue service and taking part when invited to do so (*Luke iv*, 16). But he did try to free the day from the rigid rules with which it had become encrusted and to show, by his actions as well as his words, that no amount of legislation was capable either of expressing or enforcing God's will for it.

In particular, Our Lord's attitude differs in Three Ways from that of the scribes:

1. He saw it as a day for doing good rather than for doing nothing. The scribes and Pharisees encouraged idleness; works of charity were strictly limited and medical attention might be given to the sick only where life was endangered. Jesus, however, saw that 'the Devil finds mischief for idle hands to do' - eg *Mark iii*, 1-6 - and declared that He, who healed the sick even when they were not desperately ill, was not profaning the Sabbath as much as those who, while outwardly conforming to the Law, plotted murder in their hearts. Furthermore, he disputed the doctrine that God ceased from all activity after six days, claiming rather that The Father was still working - even on the Sabbath! - as the miracles performed on that Day showed.

2. Jesus insisted that the Sabbath had been instituted for man's good, a means to an end and not an end in itself. No man, therefore, should be made to feel the Day as a burden. That would defeat its whole intention. 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath' (*Mark ii*, 27). Human need overrides any law, even those laws considered as especially sacred: Jesus quotes with apparent approval David's action in eating the consecrated 'Bread of Presentation'. And even where the need is not very great (for there is no evidence that the disciples were actually starving as they 'threshed' the corn in their hands), the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. The meaning of the term 'Son of Man' in this context is the subject of

dispute, but to the present writer it seems to mean 'Man' in general. The Sabbath was given to men for their own good, and each man must decide for himself how best he will benefit from it.

3. Above all, to Jesus, the demands of the Kingdom of God override all other claims, loyalties and laws, including those relating to Sabbath observance. Even the Scribes recognised that there were more important laws, and permitted the circumcising of infants (*John vii, 22-23*). Jesus extends the principle, working other, and to him more vital, works by which he demonstrates that the Kingdom of God has come and is active in men's lives. (C. F. Hodgkins: *Sunday: Christian and Social Significance*: p. 6). Thus he not only heals a lame man on the Sabbath, but also encourages him to carry his bed home – an action expressly prohibited (*John v, 1 ff*). He opens the eyes of one born blind because his work is urgent and must be done while it is day (*John ix, 1 ff*). He looses a woman whom 'Satan hath bound . . . these eighteen years', for Satan observes no Sabbath truce, and those who fight on God's side must be busy also. (*Luke xiii, 10 ff*).

Our Lord's attitude to the Sabbath thus makes it plain that even were we to regard the Christian Sunday as being the equivalent for us of the Jewish Sabbath, as much traditional piety implies, that would not thereby commit us to the acceptance of all or any of the O.T. legislation concerning its observance. The letter of the law, here as elsewhere, must yield to the spirit and intention behind it. But it is extremely doubtful whether a case can be made out for treating the Lord's Day as a kind of Christian Sabbath at all. Those who are to write about the place of Sunday in a society such as ours, which accords two days rest per week to most of its workers (if not to ministers!) may feel that a strong case can be made out for a strict observance of Sunday, but the Christians of the apostolic age had no intention of allowing the First Day of the Week to resemble the Jewish seventh day, either in letter or in spirit.

The first believers were, of course, Jews by both race and upbringing, who therefore continued to enjoy the benefits of the Sabbath rest and to spend at least a part of it in public worship (*Acts xiii, 14 ff*). But they met additionally for specifically Christian Worship and fellowship on the first day of the week – the day on which the Lord was raised from the dead. And the First Day was by no means a rest day. 'The first day for the Jews had much the significance of Monday for us: It was the day on which the shopkeepers reopened their stalls and labourers returned to their work.' (*Porter, op. cit. p. 14*). Nor could Christians, a small minority group, insist on the day off. If they had jobs to go to, then on the first day of the week they went to them. Their Christian prayers and breaking of bread had to be fitted in either very early in the morning, before daybreak, or else, as was probably the more usual custom, during the evening after the Sabbath, which according to the Jewish reckoning, belonged to the next, ie, First, day of the week. (*cf Acts xx, 7 ff. which appears to be an evening service*).

Jewish Christians continued for a long time to observe the Sabbath in addition to participating in the Christian acts of worship on the following day, but the attempts of Judaisers to have Sabbath observance recognised as an integral and obligatory part of Christian Faith were strongly opposed by Paul, who saw it as a first step towards bringing the Gentiles into complete submission to the Law. At its best, Sabbath observance was a matter of personal taste (*Colossians ii*, 16). At worst, we may infer from what he says in general about works of the Law, it would constitute a denial of the Gospel of salvation through grace and faith alone. The Council of Jerusalem apparently agreed with him, and did not insist on Sabbath-keeping by Gentile Christians (*Acts xv*, 19–29); for a Gentile to be excused work on that day, he would probably have had to proclaim himself a Jewish proselyte; and this thought, among others, was distasteful to more than Paul.

One might have expected, therefore, some movement to install the First Day as a Christian Sabbath, but during the New Testament period, no such move seems to have been made. Clearly, Christians could not hope for public co-operation such as the Jews received, since Christianity was 'religio illicita', but the idea does not seem to have been seriously canvassed even within the community until the time of those apologists who looked on the Faith as a 'New Law' and on Sunday as the 'New Sabbath' – a fundamentally different view of things from that obtaining at least in those churches under Paul's influence. In fact, during the apostolic period, the whole atmosphere of the day was totally different from that associated with the Sabbath. That was the last day of the week; a day in which to rest, along with God, from one's labours; this on the other hand, was forward looking, the first day of a working week consecrated to the service of Christ. The Sabbath commemorated God's resting from the work of Creation; The Lord's Day commemorated the Day on which that work was begun (*Genesis i*, 1–5), on which Jesus had been raised from the dead (*Mark xvi*, 1 ff, etc.), and on which, in all probability, the Holy Spirit had been bestowed on the Church. (For detailed argument on this last point see *Porter, op. cit.*, pp. 40–45.) By its very position in the calendar, the first day of the week would remind the Christian community of what God had done, and would impel them not to idleness, but to action – to an active participation with God in the accomplishing of His purposes. It was in this spirit, that, worship being concluded, the believers went out to their daily work. As Porter says, the real distinction between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday is not 'whether one day of the week is better or worse than another day . . . nor is it a question of which custom has greater authority. The point rather is that each observance has a totally different kind of authority, and is carried out for a different purpose and in a different manner' (p. 19).

If then we ask how the first Christians spent Sunday, the answer must be that they spent it just like any other day – at work; the only

difference being that at some time before the working day began, they spent time in remembering their Master, breaking bread, prayers and fellowship together. Of the details of their worship at this time we know little, there being only three clear references to the Lord's Day in the New Testament. In *Acts xx, 7 ff.* we find the Christians at Ephesus assembled to break bread on the first day of the week, but learn little else except that Paul preached an extraordinarily long sermon with the result that at least one of the congregation fell asleep!

In *I Corinthians xvi, 2*, we find the Apostle 'giving orders' on the subject of the Collection for the saints, and suggesting that the Corinthians should set aside a sum on the first day of the week; and this was apparently to be a public collection, as the aim of Paul is to avoid 'collections when I come'.

The sole remaining reference is to John the theologian, who, being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, saw his great vision of things normally hidden from mortal eyes.

Much more could be inferred from the many New Testament references to the disciples being together, to their preaching, to the regular breaking of bread, teaching, fellowship and prayers (eg, in *Acts ii, 42 ff.*), but this is not the place to begin a detailed study of New Testament worship. What seems to emerge of relevance to the use of Sunday is that the day clearly began with some such service as has been described (though attendance at such is nowhere expressly enjoined, and was probably just taken for granted), after which people went about their ordinary affairs, each man according to his conscience, but each aware that by beginning the week with God, he had offered not just one day, but all seven to Him.

GORDON F. GLOVER.

CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

IT SEEMS LIKELY that we are entering a new phase in the development of Christian Education through the County Schools. A brief review of the situation may have value for brethren whose reading and experience has been in other directions.

We have heard much of the opportunity for 'RE' in County Schools opened up by the 1944 Education Act, some of us have felt it right to buy up the opportunity by teaching whole or part-time in the schools. We have been equally aware of the limitations of the County School situation from the viewpoint of the Churches.

Direct evangelism seems to many of us to be entirely out of place in the classroom. The children are in effect compelled to be present at the 'Scripture' lesson, parental option is rarely exercised, the adolescent is particularly conscious that he has no choice. Any form of 'getting at' a class in that context is alien to the spirit of a Free Churchman and self-defeating as far as converting the children is concerned. Nor is it morally or legally right for the teacher to seek to link young people under his influence at school with any particular Church. The conclusion is that County School 'RE' must tend to lack

spiritual bite and/or encourage a Christianity dissociated from the local Church and hence radically defective. Such criticism hits the mark still in too many schools, but it would be well for us to realise that the Churches are themselves partly responsible for such a situation and that in many places these defects have been or are being steadily remedied.

Earlier in the nineteenth century our Dissenting forefathers, in common with other Churchmen, were deeply suspicious of any State participation in Education. In 1843 the Congregational Union passed a resolution entertaining 'the gravest doubts whether any compulsory interference (in the provision of formal education) can take place without establishing precedents dangerous to civil and religious liberty . . . and superseding the duties of parents and Churches'. The background to this was Sir James Graham's Factory Bill proposing compulsory schools for factory children, under the control of the Established Church. The use made by Communist States of the public education system reminds us that in other circumstances our forefathers' suspicions might be given new life.

By 1870 the Free Churches had moved to a somewhat reluctant acceptance of the need for a national system of education, it having become clear that the voluntary bodies did not have the financial and other resources to meet the growing need for general elementary education. But even at this stage the typical Dissenter wished State schools to be dissociated from all religious education and all Church schools to be absorbed into a National system of secular education. The Forster Act of 1870 was a compromise. Church Schools were taken into the National system supported in part out of taxation, while in schools provided entirely by local authorities out of rates it was required that any religious instruction should avoid Denominational associations. 'Simple Bible teaching without note or comment' was the phrase used by Dissenters. Principal Huxtable asks (Cadoux Memorial lecture 1961), 'Can Bible teaching be divorced from theology? Can religion be taught without reference to the Church?' But these questions, provoked as they are by the emphasis of our nineteenth century fathers (whose minds were conditioned inevitably by the current theology and ecclesiastical relationships), express precisely the limitations which some of us feel about contemporary school 'RE'!

In fact the opportunity afforded by the 1944 Act was far from limited even along these lines.

I. Serious as the limitations of some of the Agreed Syllabuses may have been when used too mechanically, in intention the majority encouraged a genuine Christian education. The introduction to the West Hartlepoons Syllabus (1949) claims that it is 'professedly Christocentric for we believe that the teaching of the Bible is purposeless without this 'evangelistic' basis'. The Middlesex Syllabus says that 'the primary function of Christian religious teaching is to show the way in which Christianity offers the right relationship between

God and Man'. Plainly the sincerity, conviction and professional skill of the teacher are essential conditions in 'RE' as they are for effective teaching in other subjects. But at least the syllabuses supplied the opportunity. The Central Joint Education Policy Committee of all the non Roman Catholic Churches was formed in 1959. It exists among other things to help implement the working of the 'RE' requirements of the '44 Act. In March 1963 it issued a 'Common Basis for Christian Teaching in Schools' in which there is a summary of doctrine very much fuller and for its purpose more satisfactory than any of the classical creeds or catechisms. It is there said that the teacher must recognize that 'he is not merely teaching about a particular revelation in history, but sharing in a continuing and dynamic revelation, whereby the whole of man . . . may be drawn into vital relationship with God'. Again the problem of interpreting this at the young persons' level remains, a problem into which fruitful research has recently been conducted. But the first thing to have clear is that as regards content the 'RE' lesson can legitimately carry theological commerce. There is a difference, difficult though it may be to define, between 'getting at' children and 'teaching for a verdict'. The latter is not only legitimate but required.

The other serious questioning of County School 'RE' has concerned its dissociation from the life of the Churches. Here again closer acquaintance shows the limitation to be potentially less constricting than might be supposed. Many of the syllabuses provide for instruction about the nature and purpose of the Church in the Divine plan. The syllabus from which I work at the moment includes material on the sacraments in this section. The Lindsey syllabus (1951) in a celebrated reference speaks for many of the others - religion in schools should 'increasingly lead pupils to become and remain full members of a worshipping community outside the school'. The terms of reference provide a remarkable opportunity. How is it being worked out?

In today's *Baptist Times* (9th January, 1964), David Clark reports from Leeds on the value of the relationship which he has been able to build up with his local Church school. Many of us have had the same experience in the local authority schools. Invitations to local clergy (sometimes laity too) to participate in school daily worship, end of term services, School-leavers' services, services on special occasions in the Christian year or School year, all these can strengthen the link between the minister and his own children and open the possibility of contact outside the Church-Sunday School circle. There is nothing new perhaps in this but it is the conviction of many working in this sphere that there is the possibility of a new breakthrough at the present time if the Churches see it as a priority and encourage ministers to give time and thought to it. The British Council of Churches published 'Growing Christians' in 1957 urging in a brief paragraph the need to form links wherever possible between Day-School and Sunday School staffs, parsons and teachers. The Free

Church Federal Council report of 1960 'Church, Child and School - Partnership in Christian Education' underlined the necessity for closer co-operation and in a final chapter gave some modest, practical suggestions. In 1962 the Institute of Christian Education published *Partnership in Christian Education*, a survey of progress. In 1962 the National Union of Teachers produced a booklet, *School-Church Relationships* (currently being revised) offering advice and sample programmes from various localities of Leavers' Conferences, short Church-YMCA initiated Day Release courses for young apprentices, a Brains Trust and conference organised by the local Council of Churches and visiting all secondary schools in the area with the consent of the Heads and LEA, Parson-teacher groups, SCM camps in association with local Churches, regular Padre's hour in school, etc. J. A. Wainwright's book *School and Church* is reviewed elsewhere in this *Fraternal*. It gives even fuller and more practical advice. Much depends on local situations and personnel as always, but clearly a new fabric of Church-School partnership is coming into existence in many parts of the country, it is being built up both from the Churches and the Education service and schools sides, it ranges from well established clergy representation on Education Committees to visits by classes of children to their local Churches and the running of a school Christian newsletter. Industrial mission has been one sphere of significant development in post-war Church life; developments we have been reviewing are of no less radical importance. GORDON SMITH.

THE FAR HORIZON

I WAS BORN in a green, placid Midland shire, in sight of its winding river and the distant hills. The Gospel had been known and loved round Leicester for centuries and with the Gospel had come a sense of Mission. My forbears belonged to Arnesby, from which in 1792 the young minister had gone to Kettering to be one of the founders of the BMS. My early years were spent close to Carey's cottage in Leicester, and, when a student, I preached from his pulpit in the old chapel in Harvey Lane. As a boy I was one of a great crowd which heard the white-bearded J. G. Paton tell the exciting story of his work in the South Seas and of his marvellous deliverances from flashing savage spears. When the BU Assembly met in 1900 I was allowed to return to College a fortnight late in order to attend. Dr Clifford preached the Missionary Sermon but I remember most how F. G. Benskin closed an early morning service with the appeal 'Who will fill up the gaps? Who will be baptized for the dead?' After one session I shook hands with George Grenfell. He was not a great speaker and his manner was reserved but he made you feel that his heart was in Africa with the people he served and loved. While I was at Rawdon the brass tablet was erected to the memory of former students who had died on the mission field. After unveiling it Dr Tymms said that the blank spaces were most significant, waiting for the names of those who would follow in their train.

After fifteen years in the home ministry the way opened for China. The first World War was drawing to an end; no young men were available, and Fletcher Moorshead, always a good friend, encouraged my wife and me to volunteer. Just then I read somewhere that at thirty a man's ability to learn a foreign language rapidly decreases and at thirty-five it ceases altogether, but the BMS Committee, always hopeful, took me at forty. That summer I was preaching in Bristol and Timothy Richard was in the congregation. He came up afterwards, and beating one hand into the other said with great emphasis, 'Learn the language *first*'.

In September 1918 being in Brighton I went one week night to the Strict Baptist 'Galeed'. The venerable minister, J. K. Popham preached from the word of Jeremiah to Baruch, 'Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest'. If ever God spoke to a man he spoke to me that night. I went to China on that text, and I lived to prove it true. We sailed for New York a fortnight after the 1918 Armistice, and though holding through tickets we had to find our way stage by stage. In New York City in the First Baptist Church we heard Dr Haldeman preach the most brilliant sermon I ever heard. He stood up on a bare platform in a crowded Church without a note and poured forth for an hour a torrent of eloquence on the rivals of Christianity, from the text, 'To whom shall we go?' Christmas Day found us among the snow covered Sierras from which we ran down through orange groves to face a golden sunset as we crossed the Bay to San Francisco. Between Honolulu and Japan there was a tremendous storm. For three days the huge liner was like a cork on the tossing waves and the Captain was afraid it would break in two. Our first sight of Asia, after a faint outline of land, was the white ghostly peak of Fujiyama high above the clouds. After ten days amid the shrines and temples of beautiful Japan we took a coasting vessel, which crossed the Inland Sea and brought us to the yellow waters of the Yang-tze and to Mrs Evan Morgan, waiting on the crowded quay at Shanghai.

In Peking the China sun shone on the splendid palaces and on the willow trees growing green by the canals. One Sunday on our way to church we passed the primitive fire engine going to the house of a pro-Japanese statesman, which had been set on fire by young patriots. This was the first expression of the student feeling in China from which all later revolutionary movements have sprung. Another day we met the Sadhu Sundar Singh, who was visiting the Far East. A striking figure in his flowing robes he spoke to a crowded Cathedral on 'So great salvation'. In the Union Church, speaking on 'Ye shall be witnesses', he told how a former messenger had died for Christ in Tibet (as he himself was soon to do). 'They cut off his ears, they tore out his eyes, but he still spoke of the love of Jesus; and when they pulled out his tongue, every wound became a tongue and spoke. To die for Christ is glorious; what is hard is to live for Him and die daily.'

Our first summer was spent among the Shensi hills. In Taiyuanfu we were taken to the beautifully kept Martyr Cemetery by the veteran, Joshua Turner, who had baptized the famous Pastor Hsi. The scholar had insisted on being immersed in his official robes and when they came out of the pool his Mandarin cap was left floating on the water. On the long journey into Shensi day by day in mule-litter, or on foot, we followed the westering sun. We were so excited at the end as to walk the whole of the last stage, over twenty miles, into the city of our dreams. It was an unforgettable moment when we saw miles away across the yellow plain the towers of Sianfu, where we were to make our home for twenty years.

We came in Shensi into a family of devoted missionaries. The senior was A. G. Shorrock, a notable personality of great experience. He had built the Chinese Church on the Epistle to the Romans and the strong foundation held. The head of the Jenkins-Robertson Memorial Hospital was Andrew Young, the beloved physician, and the most selfless man I have ever known. Our first home was in the Hospital Compound and many nights we heard his footsteps and saw the flash of his lantern as he went by on errands of mercy. Three years later I took part in his funeral service and saw the tears roll down the cheeks of the Chinese sitting in the front row. In 1924 we had to follow Donald Smith at Yen-anfu, the most inaccessible of BMS stations. Donald was a little, dark-eyed Highlander who had been attacked and left for dead on the road in the revolution of 1911. He had no social gifts and all his concern was to make the Saviour known. He died suddenly after baptizing sixteen converts, making a total of fifty who had been prayed for by the church through the year. Yen-an, an ancient city among bare yellow hills, is now the shrine of Chinese Communism, but Donald Smith's lonely grave in the shadow of the Church wall claims it for Christ.

Sian had been the capital of China in the greatest dynasties and was full of history. The Confucian Temple was a haunt of ancient peace and close by, carved on the Nestorian tablet, was the cross that had survived twelve centuries. The Governor was an ex-bandit, who was said to have made a million dollars out of the province. He was chased out by Feng, the Christian General, a genial giant who bombarded the city before his army marched in, singing Gospel hymns. Nothing like these soldiers had been seen in China before and many of their officers were red-hot evangelists. All through my time amid the fighting and banditry the authorities treated us as honoured guests. When Chiang Kai Shek and his wife came up they held a reception for the missionary body and avowed their Christian faith: later on I was one of those invited to tea by Chu Tê, the Communist Commander-in-Chief, that he might tell us how grateful he was for all we had done for his country.

God blessed China in those days with distinguished witnesses, and it was inspiring to meet so many of them. Having contacts with Moslems in the city I was able to guide through our splendid Mosques

the trio of gifted ladies, Miss Cable and the Misses French. They had left their home and fruitful work in Shensi to face the terrors of the Gobi Desert and evangelize the strange, attractive peoples of Central Asia. Their vivid account of deliverances and conversions proved that, like the Apostles of old, they had been sent forth by the Holy Ghost. It was my privilege to share in Summer Conference work with two other remarkable women. Ruth Paxson, from New England, was a great Bible teacher. She was a martyr to asthma and had each day to be prayed on to the platform. One moment she would be fighting for breath: the next she would be speaking, when she would go on to hold her audience for an hour by sheer force of mind and spirit. Marie Monsen was a short, thick-set Norwegian. Shortly after, she was captured by pirates, lived with them, the only foreigner, for twenty-one dangerous days, and was finally released because of the respect she had inspired in some of the vilest of men. Miss Monsen was mighty in faith and prayer. She had little English, and I can still hear her voice, repeating over and over again 'It shall be done'. It was her habit to ask everybody she met the same question, 'Have you been born again?' If the answer was 'Yes', she had a second question, 'What evidence have you that you have been born again?' Many Chinese and foreigners, pastors and people, were convicted and converted by this direct approach.

Another notable convention speaker was R. A. Jaffrey. He had the distinction of being the pioneer in three needy fields. First in Kweichow, the most backward province in China, then in French Indo-China, then in the Dutch East Indies. With helpers whom he had trained he went from island to island till in New Guinea he was the first to reach some of the most primitive tribes on earth. He died in a filthy Japanese prison just two weeks before the war ended. To the last he was seen poring and praying over the map of what is now Indonesia and planning fresh advance. He was a quiet but attractive speaker, plainly called of God. I heard him say, 'If I were eighty, or if I were to die in my tracks, I had to go'. He had been made to feel the need of the forgotten lands and he believed the slogan which few today accept: 'Every man has a better right to hear the Gospel once than any man has the right to hear it twice.'

Our last term of service was marked by the rise, all over China, of men and women evangelists, plainly sent to prepare the Church for the suffocating night that was soon to fall. Wang Ming Tao came to Sian for a special Mission and was for ten days an honoured guest in our house. He had a gift of polished language, which with a profound knowledge of the Bible and of the human heart made him a mighty preacher. His closing sermon on 'Keep yourselves in the love of God' was one of the most moving I have ever heard. He became minister of a large congregation in Peking, where for a time he was tolerated by the Communists. Then accused of being a reactionary he was put in prison, where, if alive, he still is. The most notable of these messengers was John Sung. He had been a brilliant student in America, where he

won a Doctor's degree and lost his faith. Then God laid hold of him, broke him up and sent him back to China as a flame of fire. A wisp of a man he possessed amazing energy and a dramatic gift which drew thousands to his meetings. The famous sermon where he used a model coffin to illustrate the sins of the carnal Christian was preached all over the Far East and everywhere he left a trail of preaching bands and spiritual believers. He wore himself out, but on his deathbed spoke a prophetic word, 'The work of these last days is prayer'.

But the most precious memories are of ordinary men and women, who made such splendid Christians and such faithful friends. In my early days I had gone out with John Shields, visiting the Churches on the Eastern road. Not far from the Yellow River the sacred mountain, Hwa Shan, rises some 5,000 feet above the plain. It stands like a cathedral tower, with sheer precipices on every side and there is only one way up, at one point by steps cut in the rock. We were about to go to bed in the half-way temple when a Taoist priest came in. He told us he had been on pilgrimage for two years, visiting shrines and accumulating merit. 'Have you found peace?' I asked. He shook his head. Then my companion began to tell him the Gospel story. He went on for an hour and never for a moment did our visitor take his piercing black eyes from Shields' face. When he finished I said, 'God has sent us to tell you this. This is His word. Do you believe it?' I shall never forget how he said solemnly, 'I believe that Jesus is my Saviour.' He had never heard even the name of Jesus till that hour. Moments like these point beyond themselves. Surely in the radiant morning we shall meet again those whose lives we have touched through the spirit; and may not He, who made me a missionary, and who knows how little I accomplished, enable me to render some better service to China and her people in a brighter world than this?

H. W. BURDETT.

THE RE-EMERGENCE OF THE DRINK PROBLEM

A FEW PEOPLE have probably been inclined, in the past, to fix the position of drink too high in the 'order of precedence' of our moral and social problems. At least as many, I would think, in the more recent past, have been inclined to rate it too low. Am I merely being guilty of wishful thinking when I entertain the idea that the problem is being viewed with new seriousness today by many who had thought it virtually settled? I think not.

The rising number of convictions for drunkenness (only needing to grow at the present rate until 1970 to reach the kind of figures familiar before the first World War), the persistent increase in accidents due to drunken drivers (despite Mr Marples' laudable efforts to stop people mixing drinking with driving), and the tripling, in ten years, of convictions for drunkenness among the under-twenty-ones, all combine to make complacency difficult for any whose conscience is alive. In these circumstances it is natural that we should review the matter

afresh, for which purpose soundly-based judgments on four main questions are important.

I - WHAT IS THE PRESENT POSITION?

During the last ten years a rather severe increase has occurred in the consumption of intoxicants in Britain. As far as beer is concerned, it has not been cataclysmic, the main increase having occurred between 1957 and 1961, since when, despite all the high-pressure publicity, the amount consumed has remained virtually static, at a figure about fourteen per cent above that for 1938, of which about ten per cent may be accounted for merely by the increase in population during the period. Wine drinking has increased more. After decreasing considerably during the war and early post-war years, consumption has grown so much since 1951 that it is now fifty per cent above the 1938 figure. More seriously still, the consumption of spirits has mounted by a little over fifty per cent in the same period.

This does not mean, by any means, that the Total Abstinence movement is no longer of consequence. An enquiry by the Gallup Poll,* in May 1960, showed that of 1,000 or so people over sixteen years of age who were asked whether they ever had occasion to use alcoholic beverages, twenty-eight per cent replied that they did not. Since many non-abstainers are only 'occasional drinkers' - people who take a glass at a wedding, or at Christmas, but not otherwise - it is clear that there is still a very substantial proportion of the population indeed which does not habitually use alcoholic beverages. The increased consumption of alcohol may well, therefore, be at present principally due to those who would have been drinkers anyhow being led, by the affluent circumstances and increased opportunities of our times, to take more and stronger drinks, rather than to a great increase in drinkers.

II - HOW IS THIS LIKELY TO DEVELOP?

It could, clearly, develop badly. People who are light drinkers now may be heavy drinkers later; and obviously there are many influences which are liable to make drinking increase. Much 'Trade' advertising is now blatantly directed to appeal to young people, and to women. Partly with the idea of providing everything that may be asked for, all sorts of respectable societies, clubs, and colleges have obtained drink licences, so that many of our young people are likely to be confronted with the suggestion of imbibing at every turn - a suggestion the more difficult to resist because it is brought to them by members of a social group which they respect. The increase in the number of licensed restaurants produced by the 1961 Licensing Act, tells in the same direction. And many people, entering social circles to which they are unaccustomed, are nervous of being seen to deviate from the habits they find prevailing there, though those habits would be better altered. It does not follow, however, that these influences are bound to prevail. Much depends on the Christian church's response to the situation.

*Quoted by permission, with acknowledgments to 'Social Service (Gallup Poll) Ltd', and 'The Daily Telegraph'.

III - HOW SHOULD WE FEEL ABOUT THIS?

I need not dwell on this question. Few Christians, I imagine, who are really conversant with the facts, can regard them complacently. Those who still imagine that any decent person should be able to drink intoxicants without becoming a drunkard should visit a clinic for alcoholics. They will see there some of the pleasantest people, some quite young, and many in middle life, who are compulsive addicts; and if they open the *Primer on Alcoholism* written by Marty Mann, the brilliant American writer who was once herself an alcoholic, they will read that 'one whole group of alcoholics make the most notable exception' to the general pattern; these are those 'who leap straight into full-fledged alcoholism at the very first drink they take'. A serious objection, surely, to the view that 'all young people should be taught to drink moderately'? Most of us, also, are reasonably aware of the danger indicated in a remark made to me by Dr A. G. Mearns, a consultant in venereal disease. He said that he was prepared to believe the statements of some girl patients who told him that they did not know what had happened at the time they became infected, the occasion having followed a dance at which they took a couple of cocktails - 'not realising', said the doctor 'the knock-out draught they were pouring down their throats'.

Quite clearly, some action ought to be considered.

IV - WHAT EFFECTIVE ACTION CAN WE TAKE?

Contrary to the general impression, a great deal. In the first place we can see - by suitable allusions in sermons or Youth Club discussions - that all the young people who come under our influence are informed about the real nature of the 'kick' which such a large portion of mankind gets from intoxicants. What so few people realise is that there are many contrasting ways of feeling 'bucked up', and that, strangely enough, one of them is derived from having your perceptions *diminished*. Simple illustrations will make this plain. For example, it is clear that if, before going for a row on a lake, we took something which made us so unobservant as not to notice the position in which we were holding the oars, nor the main features of the shore, we might easily slip into 'pulling' with the blades of our oars parallel with the water's surface, instead of at right angles to it, and then feel thoroughly elated at how easy we now found it to row. We would not, however, have achieved much, or covered any appreciable distance, and the later discovery of this would be a serious offset to our 'doped' pleasure.

Alcohol provides a 'kick' in just the same way - making us think we talk better by blinding us to our own gaffes, and so on. We need not be surprised at this, for so do other anaesthetics. 'Oh, Tom', wrote Robert Southey to his brother, after inhaling nitrous oxide - 'Oh, Tom, such gas has Davey discovered, the gaseous oxide! Davey has actually invented a new pleasure for which language has no name'!

Once people grasp the fact that alcohol acts in this way, it is bound to be a chastening thought. Few young folk consciously look for their pleasure in dope, and my own belief is that much of the lure of alcohol for the young will be destroyed when this fact is understood. Christians, especially, can hardly be very happy to believe that God's world can only be fully enjoyed by looking at it under a sedative!

Much can also be done by seeing that all who pass through our classes for baptismal candidates are led to consider seriously their responsibilities as 'their brother's keepers' in this matter. I have repeatedly used the fact alluded to by Marty Mann in the passage I have here quoted, to bring young Christians to see that they ought never to be the ones who start non-drinkers indulging in intoxicants. The clear connection between alcohol and accidents, and between alcohol and crime, is another thing which I feel should be raised at this point, with the question whether a Christian's influence should encourage or discourage a habit which just tips the scales for thousands of people, turning into criminals those who would otherwise have been merely mischievous or foolish. How many girls' lives have been taken by men low sex outlook, who only proceeded from foul thought to of foul action because of the 'Dutch courage' they had taken! Should anyone seeking to lead a Christian life close his eyes to such questions as these?

Temperance sermons, at appropriate moments, I believe, have a place, preferably when 'paired' with others dealing with peace or social justice, or some other aspect of Christian Citizenship. Perhaps equally, or more, effective is a 'Citizenship' sermon with Temperance as one of its heads. A visiting expert giving an informed and balanced address on the subject can be most useful, and names of such experts in various parts of Britain would be willingly supplied by the Temperance Council of the Christian Churches.

We can help the 'weaker brethren' (and sisters) by introducing them to the better non-alcoholic drinks, which look and taste well at a dinner or a wedding reception. Nor should we forget to support the Temperance Societies that promote Temperance education in Day Schools, and wise legislation to check the multiplication of inducements to drink.

Above all, we must never be defeatist (for how many habits, once universally followed, like bull-baiting, and cock-fighting, and slave owning, have finally bowed before the onslaught of enlightened Christian consciences!); and we must ensure that our message has a positive ring. For it is a positive message! We call men to an elation greater than any narcotic ever gave – an elation which comes because we are made *more*, and not less, sensitive to our surroundings. It springs from a warm perception of the glory of God's world, like that in which Wordsworth cried 'My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky!'; and from a deep sensitivity to our brother's needs which instinctively perceives the very word to bring comfort to the pain-racked soul, and sees the sunshine light the eyes of those who know that we have *understood*. Who, that has felt these things, would

seek to *dull* his mind with drink? We are not seeking to *deprive* people of something when we draw them to a Christian fellowship that takes no alcohol; we are calling them to something more thrillingly wonderful than they have ever known!

ARTHUR C. DAVIES.

PARTNERSHIP

THE SUPREME AND ULTIMATE GIFT of the Holy Spirit is *koinonia*, which might better be translated partnership than fellowship. This partnership in the Holy Spirit is not only a sharing together in the gift of the Holy Spirit but also a partnership with one another which He creates, and into which He leads us after we have believed and confessed.

In the Acts of the Apostles St. Luke writes not only to shew how the first disciples obeyed the command of their Lord to preach the Gospel unto the ends of the earth, but also to shew how the Holy Spirit led them into deeper, wider and richer experiences of partnership. First there was the bringing together of the Jews of the dispersion who had gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost into 'the fellowship' of those who received the Holy Spirit following their confession in baptism. We read that their experience of partnership was so real and inspiring, as they shared together the benefits of Christ's redeeming work and a living faith and hope, that they spontaneously shared their material possessions. This action was not the result of a misguided eschatological hope or of a passing emotional enthusiasm, it was rather the consequence of an experience of being sharers together. So we read, later in the Acts, of a further act of partnership in material things when the Christians 'in the provinces' sent their material gifts for their brethren in Christ in Jerusalem. These gifts were described by Paul (*Romans xv, 26 f. and 2 Corinthians viii, 4 and 9, xiii*) as *koinonia*. They were not just an expression of it but the thing itself. The same gifts are described as *Charis* in *1 Corinthians xvi, 3 and 2 Corinthians viii, 4*.

St. Luke makes quite clear in Acts that further experiences of partnership were the direct work of the Holy Spirit, and shews that the first disciples were led to see that this partnership was always an inclusive and never an exclusive one, and was with Jews and Gentiles, Romans and barbarians, men and women, slaves and freemen.

There are some among us who speak as though the primary work of the Holy Spirit is revival. I'm sure we all see the need for a revival of real faith within the Church and the nation, and of the radical conversion of men and women to sincere Christian belief and behaviour. It is only converted people, who repent, believe and confess, that are able to enter into the partnership of the Holy Spirit. Their conversion, however, may depend as much on the reality of the partnership of Christian disciples as upon the proclaiming of the Gospel by those disciples. *Koinonia* and proclamation belong together. It may well be that if we look for the Holy Spirit to work only unto revival in the traditional way, we may miss seeing His work unto *koinonia*, which so often is the necessary prelude to true revival. Thus we may miss

sharing in this vital work of the Holy Spirit that alone will result in what so deeply concerns us; for the revival for which we hope and pray may not come until the partnership that the Holy Spirit offers to us is more fully accepted.

We Baptists rightly claim that our distinctive contribution to the Universal Church is our teaching on Believers' Baptism, with the necessity for personal faith and personal committal to Him as Saviour and Lord that Believers' Baptism emphasises and helps to safeguard. Sometimes we disregard the fact that in the New Testament this baptism is always into the Fellowship of Believers. Men had both to believe and to belong. To neglect this NT linking of baptism and koinonia, as is done when candidates are baptized without any reference to the Church or any regard for Church membership, is to fall into an individualism that obscures the full Gospel. A reading of the Epistle to the Ephesians makes this quite clear. In that great epistle the apostle Paul sings with wonder of the revealed mystery of God made known in the Word made flesh. This mystery was the creation of a new humanity of new men in Christ – the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It was to be a new humanity of men and women of all nations and peoples re-created and reconciled to God. The end and purpose of the re-creation and reconciliation was community. So, for the Christian, this world is a place not only of soul-making but also of society-making. Both are the work of the Holy Spirit and they cannot be kept apart.

Another contribution of us Baptists to the Church Universal is that of the Church meeting and all that is implied in it. Rightly understood our conception of the Church and Church meeting emphasises the fact of the responsible partnership of the local body of believers in the worship, witness and work of their Church. It should be at the Church meeting that the responsible partnership of the whole membership is expressed, as the members seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit that they may fulfil more adequately their pastoral, priestly and prophetic ministry together.

If we Baptists are to play the part we should in the life of society and of the Universal Church, we should be doing a great deal more than we are in shewing in practical ways the richness and breadth, the depth and reality of Christian koinonia. We, who should be leading the way, are lagging behind those of other denominations, who clearly realise that koinonia is not a static thing but living, growing, vital and practical, because it is the work of the Holy Spirit. In the few paragraphs that follow I just indicate some of the ways in which we Baptists might be more generally venturing out into partnership under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We can best help one another unto this adventuring by partnership in discussion, experiment and action.

While fellowship is not the only consideration in worship, it is an important one that we Baptists claim to emphasise. Because of this we should be constantly asking ourselves how far our worship encourages

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To the Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal

Dear Friends,

**A little fire is quickly trodden out:
Which, being suffer'd, rivers cannot quench**

King Henry VI – Part III.

In this Shakespearian year a quotation from that source is a must!

What is true of insurrection in the play is equally literally true. The mounting wastage from fire damage could be halted if in the Churches, in homes and in industry, more effective steps were taken to stamp out the causes of fires.

Well sited extinguishers of the right type (this particularly applies to oil-burning equipment) are a sensible precaution. Pilot lights fitted to switches controlling water-boilers and baptistery immersion heaters would tell at a glance that current has been left on! Thermostats could avoid overheating.

Electrical equipment should in any case be checked regularly (what about the switches in the Youth Club?) and tests made every five years for insulation resistance and earth continuity – a written report should be obtained and its findings carried out.

The Fire Protection Association publish a booklet on 'Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting in Churches' which is a mine of authoritative information. The booklet although priced at 2s 6d is *free* to you on application to me.

I hope you will ask for your free copy.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN

General Manager

the whole worshipping company to feel a lively sense of partnership in the offering of praise and prayer and in the proclaiming of the Word. There are people who find that, certainly in regard to prayer, there is often a much more vital sense of partnership in an Anglican Service than in a Baptist one, with its solo prayers. Are there not changes that should be made in our normal pattern of worship if it is to be truly led of the Holy Spirit, Who not only makes the Word living and fruitful, but also makes the worshipping company a partnership in offering and proclamation. Some of us are finding that the use of responsive readings certainly gives the congregation a more active part in the worship. In the last issue of this magazine Paul Ballard indicated ways in which the whole congregation could share in the worship more fully by the use of hymns, as prayers and as responses to prayers. We might well use some of our laymen much more frequently than we do, in having a part in the proclamation of the Word, by, say, personal statements to its relevance to their daily life and experience.

Among our Baptist churches we have had team ministries for some years, but these were sometimes arranged because of economic necessity or local expediency, and not out of a deep sense of partnership. Such experiments are not likely to be effective unless they are inspired of the Holy Spirit, Whose work is partnership. The present arrangement at Dagenham was not inspired firstly or mostly by economic considerations but by the sincere realisation that the Baptist churches of Dagenham were partners in the work of the Gospel. Isn't this the way the Holy Spirit is seeking to lead us? We can talk so easily about fellowship, but the proof is an active, practical partnership in which there is a sharing of resources, privileges and responsibilities. We look for the day when in some of our provincial towns and suburban areas, where there are several of our churches, they will come together as active partners, sending their best workers where most they are needed in the area and where they can best use their gifts. We envisage not only teams of ministers, but also of ministers and lay-preachers, planning together their work and their ministry, and ensuring that over a period of months the essential truths of the Faith shall be taught and expounded in each of the congregations. At present churches without ministers (and not only they) have to depend too much on chance and unconnected subjects that may happen to be chosen. As we see it, it is a failure in partnership here that is one of the main weaknesses of the Methodist Circuit system.

I have always been rebuked by the practical and down-to-earth partnership of the first Christians, and their spontaneous sharing of their material possessions, following their sharing together in the riches of the Gospel and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Brethren, is it not really time that we did something about partnership in salaries? If a lead is to be given in this matter it is we who must give it, for I believe that if the initiative comes from us the churches generally will

follow. There are many difficulties, but they are not insurmountable, as we can see when we look at our Missionary Society, as well as at our brethren in certain other denominations. I am not calling for an equalization of stipends, but something much nearer to it than we know today. In the present situation economic factors have a large say in the settlement of our men, and we can only speak of the guidance of the Holy Spirit with some hesitation if we are honest. If there were something like real partnership in stipends then the most suitable man would more likely be guided of the Holy Spirit to the place where he could best use his gifts and where the need for them was greatest, even though the membership of the Church calling him was 100 rather than 500, or even though it meant his working with a team in an area like Dagenham rather than in a flourishing suburban area like . . . !

We appreciate that any move to bring our salaries more in to line with each others may well cause us to consider our policy, and this would be a very good thing. The most likely system that seems workable for us is the Presbyterian, where the local Church has its measure of autonomy, but recognises that the first charge on its material resources is the Ministry. So its first concern is to send its assessed amount (on the basis of membership) to the central fund from which salaries are paid, and only after that to see to its own affairs and any extra stipend it might decide to pay its own Minister (sending a similar extra amount to the central fund). I realise that we do need to see clearly where we are going and to have a workable scheme before us; but if we wait until we work out every detail of a scheme that is acceptable to everybody, we shall never do anything.

It is evident that the direct work of evangelism in these days must be in co-operation with those of other denominations. The people outside have no interest in a purely denominational approach to them. As the essence of our message is reconciliation we can only effectively proclaim it as we give practical proof that we are reconciled to one another in Christ our Lord. It is in connection with this partnership between those of different denominations that we can be faced with the problem of loyalty to our own denomination on the one hand and the wider Church on the other. This clash of loyalties can be an enlivening thing, making us face the deeper issues that may have divided us and that must be frankly recognised if there is to be any real understanding or lasting unity. I believe that as we seek, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to enter into closer and worthier partnership with our brothers in other denominations, we shall be led to appreciate the more the contribution our denomination has to make to the larger Church of which we are but a small part. Maybe brethren, if we refuse to take our place in the wider partnership into which the Holy Spirit seems to be leading His people, we may be rejecting that accession of power unto revival that He gives only to those who are within His will and purpose?

L. J. MOON.

A GROUP ASSURANCE SCHEME

THE OFFICERS OF the Baptist Union have suggested that I set out here certain proposals that I recently presented to them. It is important to know, before they are further examined, whether there is sufficient initial interest and support. The proposals would clearly need the approval of ministers and churches and of the Assembly before they could be implemented. I believe, however, that they would help to meet certain sad emergencies (few, but difficult to cope with), and also, more important, the growing need for a scheme to provide ministers with a capital payment at the age of 65. My proposals are contained in the following report:

The early death of a few ministers in recent years, with consequent hardship for the widow and family, has focused attention on the need for some kind of Group Assurance Scheme which would help to mitigate at least the more serious financial problems arising in such cases, particularly having in mind the necessity of obtaining other living accommodation and the educational needs of the family. This situation arose in an acute form in the EMBA when a Nottingham minister died suddenly in 1960 at the age of 43, leaving a widow and three young children. An appeal to all the churches of the Association resulted in a gift of over £1,500 being made to the widow which, amongst other things, enabled her to pay the deposit needed to purchase a house. This appeal caused churches to press for provision to be made on an Area or preferably a Denominational level to avoid both the hardship and the urgent financial appeal such cases demand. The Executive Committee of the EMBA asked me to explore the possibilities of a scheme, and I also raised the matter at a meeting of the BU Officers. After much thought and the study of various alternative schemes, I presented a case to The Phoenix Assurance Co Ltd whose Leicester Manager had advised me in the initiation of a private pension scheme for the staff employed in my business.

After a good deal of discussion and correspondence, I finally came to the conclusion that, to be really practical and attractive to ministers, it was desirable that an Endowment Scheme should be included in addition to benefit in the event of death prior to the normal age of retirement. I therefore asked for details to be worked out for a Group Assurance Scheme which would secure for ministers, age 25 years next birthday, a maximum benefit of £1,000 payable at age 65 or at prior death. To make this scheme as simple as possible the benefit for all ministers under 60 years of age on joining would be £25 per annum for each complete year of membership on attaining the age of 65 and, in the event of death prior to the attainment of age 65, an amount equal to the endowment sum which would have been paid at age 65 to be paid to the legal personal representative. Under this scheme every participating minister will know exactly what his benefits will be by calculating the number of years between

his age on joining and age 65, and multiplying by £25. For the first 40 years the benefit will vary considerably according to age at entry, as will the total premiums paid, but thereafter all ministers joining on accreditation will receive a minimum benefit of between £750/£1,000 according to their age at that date.

The cost of this scheme, I estimate, would be covered by a premium of £20 per annum, £10 payable by the minister and £10 by the church. This again is a flat rate which eases the burden for the older men in the initial stages at the expense of the younger but ultimately, as the majority of members will be in the 25/35 age group on joining, the block premium will be considerably reduced, at which point the Committee responsible for management could decide either to reduce the premium or to increase benefits by say 25%.

Although ministers of 60/64 years of age would be excluded from the Phoenix scheme, I suggest that they could be included in a special category on the same terms as the younger men if the BU could express its official interest and practical support of the scheme by making a grant of £10,000. I estimate that this capital sum, together with premiums, would finance the scheme for the first five years, after which the Group premium would progressively decrease from a maximum of say £17,000 to an ultimate minimum of say £12,500. At this point it might be decided to repay the £10,000 grant from the BU or retain it as a capital reserve of the Group Assurance scheme in order that the premium could be met when due, thereby enabling ministers and churches to pay their premiums quarterly or half-yearly if desired.

To implement this scheme would require, I assume, the creation of a new fund designated, for instance, the BU Provident and Life Assurance Fund to be administered on similar lines to the Superannuation Fund. It is obviously highly desirable for all ministers to join the scheme and, having regard to the generous cover provided at what seems to be a reasonable cost, I should think that ministers and churches would welcome the opportunity of making a provision which many churches and leading laymen consider to be long overdue. On the other hand I consider the scheme should not, at this stage, be compulsory, as some ministers and, indeed, some churches may already have themselves made such provision.

In preparing this scheme and computing premiums I have worked on figures which may be considerably less than the total number of eligible ministers, but I think they will serve as a basis for discussion. The figures used showed 770 ministers under 60, 85 over 60 but under 65 as at 31st December, 1961. The ages then given have been brought up to date and on that basis the estimated premium would be £15,770 per annum, increasing in each of the first five years by £303 per annum to a maximum of £16,980 per annum.

I estimate the Income and Expenditure of the Scheme for the first five years to be as follows:—

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*85 Ministers 60 and over @ £20 per annum for 5 years	8,500	*85 benefits @ 5 × £25, ' £125	10,625
Grant from BU	10,000		<hr/> 92,625
Commission on pre- miums, say	6,500	Margin - say	9,375
	<hr/> <u>£102,000</u>		<hr/> <u>£102,000</u>

This scheme is worked out on the assumption that commission on premiums would be credited to the Fund created to finance it and on details and provisional estimates given me without obligation by The Phoenix Assurance Co Ltd.

Clearly no scheme of this kind could be floated unless there were virtually 100% support from ministers and churches. I hope that what I have here set down will be thought worth discussion in Fraternalists and that either through the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship or direct to me at Phoenix House, Long Sutton, Spalding, Lincs. I may learn what ministers think of these proposals.

ERIC R. GRIEF.

**Maximum premiums and benefits have been included, although both amounts will be affected by age at entry and date of death if prior to age 65, but for the purposes of estimating the total cost of the scheme for the first five years the difference would not be serious and is, in fact, amply covered by the provisional margin of £9,375.*