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Doing Priceless Work

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DOING PRICELESS WORK

A New Year Message from the Chairman of the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship

It is no mean honour to be given the opportunity to voice New Year Greetings to the hundreds—even thousands—who make up this Fellowship, at home and overseas. What a wonderful variety would be revealed if we could only get together for a Conference! Germans, Swedes and Muscovites, and the dwellers in Australasia and in Calcutta, in Brazil and Asia, and in the parts of China about which we know so little, we should hear them speak in many wonderful tongues the wonderful works of God! If not a new Pentecost—and it might be that—it would certainly be a new and happier Babel! And whatever differences of language and custom might temporarily perplex us, we should all rally to the ringing call from the Psalmist "The Lord reigneth! Let the earth rejoice!"

Is there any part of our Gospel that more needs emphasising today? How apparent it is from the events of the last 50 years that men need urgently to have it brought home to them that there is a Sovereign God, and that He still rules! We *must* have an overlord; if we turn from the true God, we perforce set up a false one, as did the Germans with Hitler, and as Britain is in danger of doing with its worship of Mammon. The sense of security and happiness without which we cannot be our best only comes in the long run from knowing that God reigns and will never abdicate.

This is what invests with enormous importance the quiet patient work of the Ministry. "It is impossible to measure" says Herbert Butterfield, speaking as a historian and not simply as a Christian, "the vast difference that ordinary Christian piety has made to the last 2000 years of European History." I believe it to be simply and soberly true to say that a faithful Christian Minister is doing priceless work for his Country as well as for the Kingdom of God. There is still no calling higher than that of the Minister of a Church. We do need to remember that in these days of Bureaucracy! There are wider forms of service, there are tasks perhaps more scholarly, more technical, more specialised, but there is none that costs more, or counts for so much, as when a man gives himself to the task of proclaiming by lip and life, week in and week out, to the people to whom God has sent him, this great message—"The Lord reigneth!"

So "Be glad in the Lord ye righteous, and give thanks to His holy Name", and may 1967 be a truly blessed year for us all, the world over.

HARRY PEWTRESS