

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON, EDUCATIONALIST

Part 2 - THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

OF PASTORS' COLLEGE

Staff

The staff of Dissenting Colleges in the nineteenth century always faced the danger of becoming rigid and teaching a static theology. Many came from narrow homes, agrarian backgrounds and possessed little experience of industrial life. At Spurgeon's, pastoral experience was common among tutors and the College was linked to a local church. Yet academic qualifications were moderate and longevity of service exposed them to the danger of diminishing effectiveness. Staff leadership lay in the hands of President and Principal. Spurgeon's principles and personality influenced every area of college life. But his Friday afternoon lectures to the students on ministerial life and practice were the main occasions when his gifts were indelibly marked upon the character of the students. He said: 'I am as much at home with my young brethren as in the bosom of my family and therefore speak without restraint... I have purposely given an almost autobiographical tinge to the whole, because my own experience, such as it is, is the most original contribution which I can offer, and with my own students, quite as weighty as any other within my reach'. (137)

Whilst it is true that Spurgeon did little formal lecturing, his role as President meant that he was the spiritual mentor and model for the students. He interviewed most of them before they were accepted for training at the College; superintended their settlement procedure; often acted as financial adviser and support for their young growing churches, and continued voluminous correspondence with many of the students once they were out in the pastorate.

The day-to-day administration of the College was in the hands of his brother, James Spurgeon, and the Principals, Rogers and Gracey. But because the Pastors' College was linked with the Tabernacle Church in a way that was quite unique, C. H. Spurgeon became the model pastor, whose preaching eloquence, theological position and spiritual stature the students sought to emulate. His influence in word and deed upon nearly half a century of Baptist ministers was profound.

The main burden of teaching fell in the early years to George Rogers. He was an uncompromising paedobaptist but was catholic-minded, witty, judicious and shared Spurgeon's enthusiasm for Calvinistic doctrine. He was born in 1799 into a large nonconformist family in Essex. Educated at Rotherham Academy 1819-21, he served briefly at Hulme, Manchester, and then as an assistant to John Clayton at Weigh House Chapel, London. Later he was pastor at Upminster and then ministered with great distinction in Camberwell 1829-65, whilst

The first part of this paper, which was originally delivered at the Society's Spurgeon Day Conference in September 1984, was published in October 1986 (Volume XXXI, No. 8).

acquiring for himself a thorough academic and theological knowledge. (138) His home was the base for College studies in the first five years when fifteen students began their course - seven from Southwark, and eight from the provinces. Classes were conducted in the style of a late 17th century Academy. Rogers served as Principal until 1881 and was remembered as 'grim, gaunt, grey' (139) by his students, to whom he acted as a fatherly figure and theologian.

In early days he was assisted by men in full-time pastoral ministry. James Cubitt, whose main charge was at Thrapston, and J. W. Genders of Wandsworth both taught the students. (140) Lecturers such as B. Davies, W. R. Selway, D. C. Evans and W. Durban taught both ministerial candidates and evening class students. Once the College moved to premises at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1862, the teaching was mainly in the hands of two men - David Gracey, whose 'influence upon his students cannot be measured', (141) and Archibald Fergusson, who taught English.

H. O. Mackey says of Rogers: 'All his previous training and mental habits had been getting him ready for this life-work'. (142) He had continued to study assiduously, preparing himself to be a capable teacher of others. Writing after ten years' friendship, Spurgeon said 'Mr Rogers is a man of Puritan stamp, deeply learned, orthodox in doctrine, judicious, witty, devout, earnest, liberal in spirit and withal juvenile in heart to an extent most remarkable in one of his years'. (143)

Many students never forgot his ordination addresses, in which he set before them the ideals of ministry. His upright, venerable figure, the measured tone of his speech, the lurking humour, all made up a formidable influence as he appealed for prayerful support in the new ministry.

He delivered lectures on systemic theology each Wednesday morning in College. They were characterised by doctrinal instruction, scriptural proof and logical presentation. After a bewildering variety of criticism, a few racy sentences of pithy description from the Principal would sum up the sermon class. Some remembered his verdicts for their courteous but crushing condemnations; others for their balanced but helpful appreciations; all for their keen insight. He also made a rich contribution in addresses to the annual Conferences of former students.

He laid down some of his responsibilities in 1881 and retired completely in 1884 from the work of the College, dying in 1892. It was coincidental that he and the President should pass away in the same year. Both came from Essex and although one was twenty-three and the other nearly sixty when they came together at the beginning of Spurgeon's College, their friendship was firm, cemented by a common doctrinal commitment.

In 1881 David Gracey assumed the Principalship and F. G. Marchant came to assist in teaching science. Gracey was born in Co. Down, in September 1841, into a Presbyterian family. He began to work for a firm of grain importers, but developed a sense of call to

the Baptist ministry, and soon entered Glasgow University in 1859 with a view to that end. During his short stay in Glasgow University he acted as a city missionary in Glasgow, but on learning that students and staff at Pastors' College disapproved of University qualifications in a Baptist minister, he abandoned his studies and on the same basis many years later declined several offers of honorary degrees. After hearing Spurgeon preach in Glasgow in 1861, Gracey applied for membership of the Baptists, and for admission to Pastors' College.

He appears to have entered the College in some dual role. At first he was considered one of the students who then began to help out with tutoring. Two or three months after admission Mr Cubitt was forced to retire and David Gracey became Classical Tutor. He had never exercised pastoral charge, but between 1873 and 1886 he served the church at New Southgate. He remained Classical Tutor until 1881, when he became Principal, a post he held until his death in February 1893, aged fifty-two.

At the College Conference it was said of him, 'To a succession of more than 800 students he brought scholarship of no mean power, a character beautiful as it was modest . . . , a loyalty to God and truth which eminently fitted him to guide others, and a patience beyond praise...'.(144) Colleagues recalled his courtesy, graciousness, industry, acumen and perseverance which would have enabled him to succeed in the commercial world.

His self-forgetfulness exposed him to daily visitors whose passing needs could overburden him. But it was his gifts and work as a teacher that most won admiration. Orderly in his methods, exact in his observation, he was a skilful dialectician and possessed vast information on almost all subjects that ever came under discussion. His lovable disposition, devout and deep faith and his whole-hearted consecration enhanced the quality of his work.

Former students who resided with the Gracey family recalled his calm temperament and his charm, which won and held their affections. Ever approachable, he sympathised patiently, listened carefully, and offered gentle but confident advice. His commercial background complemented Rogers' pastoral experience; his youth enlivened Rogers' maturity.

Gracey and Rogers took little part in denominational affairs; they taught the students - the Spurgeon brothers represented the College to the wider world.

In contrast to the intellectual emphasis, educational experience and career pattern that characterised the Anglican theological colleges, the staff at Spurgeon's College displayed a haphazard career development. It was more general for the tutors to remain in their job until their death or retirement. Most of them had one or more pastorates before they became a tutor, and some had a pastorate while they served as a tutor. Very few of the tutors engaged in a writing ministry; for most of them it was important that they could speak eloquently and teach winsomely the doctrines of Grace.

Some of the earliest tuition was undertaken by local ministers, whose time at the College was thus limited. John Genders (145) was of Huguenot origin and received a grammar school education. Brought up in the Established Church, he heard Spurgeon preach in London, was baptized and became one of the first students at Pastors' College. On leaving the college he first went as a tutor at schools in Weston-super-Mare and Bath, but Spurgeon recalled him to teach Hebrew and Greek at Pastors' College; and while doing so he was minister at East Hill, Wandsworth, where a new church was built under his auspices. He subsequently ministered at Luton, Portsea and Ilfracombe, but retired from pastoral office at the age of fifty-five to devote himself to writing and translation work.

James Cubitt (146) grew up in rural Suffolk and from earliest days took part in Sunday School teaching and village preaching. At twenty-one he began to study for the ministry under the oversight of W. Hawkins of Derby, and finished his ministerial training at Stepney College in 1834. After twenty-six years of pastoral ministry, he taught Classics at the Metropolitan College for two years.

George Rogers was not the only Congregationalist on the staff of the College. A colleague, William Robbins Selway (147) served as science lecturer at Pastors' College, and although he was a layman he certainly reflected Congregational principles and a paedobaptist point of view. He was a surveyor, who served on the Metropolitan Board of Works.

The main teaching in the nineteenth century was done by three long-serving tutors who were Baptist ministers and who typified the pastoral connection and longevity of service which gave stability and continuity to the teaching work at Spurgeon's College.

Frederick Marchant (148) was born at Brabourne in Kent in 1839, into a Churchwarden's family; but was baptised and received into the Baptist church at the age of sixteen. Not content with the education then given to farmers' sons, he studied at home and engaged in local preaching. He later became one of Spurgeon's earliest students and had his first church in Lodge Lane, Birmingham, where he stayed six years. He had two further pastorates, at Wandsworth and Hitchin, before becoming, at Spurgeon's request, classical and mathematical tutor at Pastors' College in 1879. After serving eighteen years in that capacity, when Gracey died he became acting-Principal and theological lecturer. He had retained the pastoral oversight of the Hitchin church and about that time he was additionally engaged in writing a commentary on Joshua. But in 1887, following the death of his wife and the increasing ill health of his daughter, he gave up the pastorate in Hitchin, retaining only his tutorship. By 1898 his own ill health was hindering his work at Spurgeon's College, yet he was still nominally serving the College when he died in 1899.

Archibald Fergusson (149) was born in Scotland in 1821 and converted at Dundee in 1839. Nothing is known of his early life, but he came to London about 1860 to take up a post as evening tutor in Pastors' College. Six months later he became one of the regular tutors, while retaining the evening class responsibility. He directed the

English department, which was a painstaking responsibility. Although hard-worked at the College, he planted a Baptist cause at Ealing, meeting at first in a barn behind a public house. Eventually a new Baptist chapel was opened there and Fergusson ministered there for twenty-eight years, alongside his tutorship. He published his only book while at the height of these activities, in 1870, called *Particular Redemption and the Universal Gospel Offer*. He died at the age of 79.

James Archer Spurgeon (150). younger brother of the founder, was born in Braintree in 1837, into a godly household. His father was a Congregational minister, and James undertook four years' commercial work on leaving school. At the age of nineteen he entered Stepney College to train for the Baptist ministry. Although impressed and influenced by the gifts and spirituality of his brother Charles, he was able to attract crowded congregations in his own right, and accepted the invitation of Alexander McLaren to the pastorate of Portland Chapel, Southampton. After great local success he was called to Bayswater and began to call himself an evangelist. He accepted Charles' invitation to become Vice-President of Pastors' College, and in 1867 when Charles Spurgeon's health deteriorated, James was elected co-pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. At the same time he took charge of a small congregation in Croydon, where the twenty-nine who called him had swelled to 441 members at the time of his death.

Always slightly overshadowed by his older brother, he was an outstanding personality and wielded great influence. He served as President of the London Baptist Association, Vice-President of the Baptist Union, toured the U.S.A. and Canada, received two honorary American degrees and exercised a fruitful evangelistic ministry. He was a sound Hebrew scholar, a fine teacher, a consistent but tactful Baptist.

It would be foolish to denigrate the business acumen, theological commitment and academic ability of the staff of Spurgeon's College. Nevertheless, the organisation and the apportioning of teaching responsibility was modelled on the 17th and 18th century academy model without that development in educational organisation and intellectual advance which characterised New College in the 19th century. Spurgeon's represented a practical training, undertaken by many men whose educational advantages were very slim. Such people needed meticulous tuition, a great deal of personal care and the development of practical skills for a pioneering and church-planting ministry. The staff were personally selected and appointed by Spurgeon to meet those needs.

Students

Writing in 1870 Spurgeon could comment on the principles behind the choice of students. They would be gracious men, full of the Holy Spirit, called of God to their work, anointed, qualified and divinely sustained. He recalled the revivals of the past to determine the qualities of his men. He agreed with Richard Baxter that no charge is spiritually higher than its Pastor, and with George Whitefield that preaching ought to be simple - ruin, redemption and regeneration was the kernel of the message. He listed these characteristics of effective

ministers in the mid-nineteenth century (i) plain speech and sound doctrine; (ii) common sense, humble in the estimate of their intelligence; (iii) popular sympathy; (iv) men whose one object is to save souls; (v) men of varying intellectual ability to speak to the cultured of the West End and the uneducated of Bethnal Green; (vi) self-sacrifice and dogged resolution. (151)

In order to gain such men, Spurgeon wished to cast his net as widely as possible, giving access to all men truly called of God and of proven ability in preaching. They would be trained in a spiritual atmosphere at a church-based college 'by tutors of Puritan theology to an academic level each could attain.

In 1856 there were seven Baptist training colleges in Britain. Talk of rationalisation was in the air. Yet in that year C. H. Spurgeon began a further institution for the benefit of one initial student, T. W. Medhurst, who was to pastor churches in England, Ireland and Scotland for forty years, concluding with a period of service at Hope Baptist Chapel, Canton, Cardiff. First hearing Spurgeon speak at a Sunday School Anniversary meeting, he was convinced of sin. (152) He wrote to Spurgeon: 'Do, dear Sir, tell me how I can find Jesus'. (153) A number of letters were exchanged. Medhurst was converted and interviewed for baptism and church membership. Spurgeon recorded in his notebook: 'A very promising young man - his letters to me evince various degrees of progress in the pilgrim's road' (154).

Medhurst continues the story: 'I at once began to preach in the open air and elsewhere, though I had not then any idea of entering the ministry. Two persons who became members at New Park Street through my preaching led Mr Spurgeon to suggest that I should prepare myself for pastoral work. Arrangements were made for me in July 1855 to go to reside with the Rev. C. H. Hosken at Crayford' (155). In 1856 he was invited to become pastor at Kingston-upon-Thames and this was undertaken part-time until two years training was completed. He went to reside with Rev. George Rogers on 21st March 1857, and a little later a second student, E. J. Silvertown, was received.

In 1862 forty-six students were accepted for training now that accommodation at the Metropolitan Tabernacle had replaced the cramped conditions at the Camberwell Manse. These included two converted Jews who went to work among their own people (156) and D. Sheen, a Primitive Methodist who returned after a year's course to work in the circuit in North London. Each student received 15/- a week and the men were boarded in twos and threes in the houses of Tabernacle families. This unusual method of lodging was preferred to community living because it kept the students in touch with family life, problems and finances, which meant that they were not elevated above the social position which in all probability they would have to occupy in succeeding years.

The selection of candidates for admission was principally determined by evidence of spirituality, a teachable spirit, great zeal for the salvation of souls and some evidence of effectiveness in Christian work. As a third of all students came from the Tabernacle,

testimony to character and achievement was not difficult to obtain. Great stress was always laid on the role of the sending church and great value attached to the references provided by those who knew the candidate best. Once the sense of call was clear even a penniless man was welcome at the College. Only when relatives and friends could make a subscription was this desired. Students were encouraged to buy their own books through the availability of cheap editions. There was no entrance examination to the college.

Initial applications were made to the lay secretary. Spurgeon interviewed candidates personally and tried to put them off the ministry, emphasising its demands and poverty. Certainly he never tempted men into the College. Many students were daunted by the need to have preached regularly for two years before entering College. Others were turned off by the long and tedious enquiries made before they were accepted. Yet others were thought unfit for the ministry. Within the Baptist denomination such a refusal did not necessarily mean that a man could not pastor a church. There was no central ministerial recognition. Others found churches who 'in the unanimous judgment of the tutors, we feel bound to dismiss' because of flaws exposed during their course. They 'occupy the post of teachers with a training of the poorest kind'.(157)

Spurgeon was rigorous about the need for careful discrimination and refused to shrink from the task of removing unsuitable students from the college course, for once such men are in churches 'the grief is deeper because the mischief is not so readily remedied'.(158) Correspondingly, he believed any called and gifted men's ministry would be enhanced through training: 'divine truth loses none of its power by being spoken in correct English: neither will it be any the less clear if set forth by a person familiar with his Bible in its original tongue'.(159) This value was recognised even by men already in pastorates and so the age of students varied widely.(160)

The length of course was fixed at two years. This was lengthened to three years in 1880. But there was flexibility depending on academic ability and openings for service. Of those who entered in 1862, eighteen stayed one year, nineteen completed two years, three left in 1865 and six had to remain for four years. In the early years students were tempted away by churches before their courses were complete. Men entered their ministry prematurely and in a raw state. Deacons entreated them to take churches and thus save souls. Such leaders thought Spurgeon a 'harsh jailor' if he detained students when there was work to be done. But in the eighties there was a lull in demand from churches and men could stay for a third year, which was 'more useful than the other two'.(161)

Vacations were short,(162) giving an intensive course brief enough not to cool the first ardour for the ministry and extensive enough to equip a man for further study and work in his later life. The numbers oscillated each year - 17 came in 1863; 40 in 1864; 14 in 1865; 25 in 1866; 37 in 1867; and overall numbers varied from 93 in 1868, 78 in 1873, to a peak of 110 in 1877. These were all training for full-time ministry and do not include those engaged in evening classes.(163)

The devotional life of students was encouraged by Spurgeon (164) and recognised in the Press.(165) Corporate prayers were held at the beginning and end of each day and a prayer meeting each week. The College Missionary Society and Temperance Society encouraged wide vision and self-control. The link with the Tabernacle gave the students the counsel of wise officers of the church and a familiarity with church discipline and organisation. It was claimed it created an atmosphere free from disagreement, envy, jealousy, adverse criticism and unhelpful frivolity.(166) Spurgeon expected one distinguished minister from every eight students, but he could boastfully describe the work of most as 'perfectly marvellous' and 'exceedingly gratifying'.(167)

Curriculum

On Tuesday 9th August 1881 the students reassembled after the vacation, gathering in the grounds of Joseph Tritton's home in Upper Norwood. They engaged in a short devotional service, new students were introduced by Spurgeon, various outdoor amusements were enjoyed as a means of engaging friendships and the day ended with the hope 'May this session be rich with benediction and the College do the best work it has ever yet accomplished'.(168) Educational ambition was not lacking.

In the reports of each year's work there is inevitable repetition: 'the usual course of study has been steadily pursued for the past year with quite average results'.(169) Student progress was maintained with painstaking effort by long-serving professors teaching a stable curriculum.

The pastoral work of the main lecturers did not detract from the advance of the students. Mr Marchant held a pastorate at Hitchin, which made 'severe demands upon my time and strength' but he was 'much gratified by the general progress of the students in my classes'.(170) Indeed the work at Hitchin benefited from his wider work: 'My congregations were never so good as they have been for the past three years; a spirit of unusual prayer and earnestness has animated the people; seventy persons nearly all from the world were last year added to the work'.(171)

Visiting lecturers came in times of need. For instance in 1889 when Spurgeon was away in Mentone his practical lectures were given by David Davies of Brighton, Dr Sinclair Paterson and James Douglas; Mr Richardson came in regularly to give class teaching and individual instruction in the special skill of public speaking. The students were mainly surrounded by familiar faces and were taught according to clear principles. Spurgeon said 'To all we labour to give a liberal English education and sound Biblical instruction'.(172) Rogers stressed that, unlike universities, the separation of 'secular and theological studies is not ... one of the most hopeful signs of the times'.(173) Thus Spurgeon was clear about the balanced curriculum he desired:

1. A knowledge of the Scriptures, studying whole books and making the best use of commentaries, expositions and introductions.

2. The study of doctrine.
3. The history of the church and the history of the nations.
4. The rudiments of Astronomy, Chemistry, Zoology, Geology and Botany.
5. Mental and Moral Science, Metaphysics and Casuistry.
6. Mathematics.
7. Latin, Greek and Hebrew.
8. Composition and Style.
9. Poetry.
10. Practical Oratory.
11. The Conduct of Church Work. (174)

This curriculum was designed to give men the education of which many were deprived in childhood and to enable them to proclaim the Gospel with interest and relevance. Up to 1880 the weekly timetable of student study was substantially unchanged. Every man's progress was checked in classes on Mondays and Fridays with James Spurgeon by question and written work. At the beginning of the week it was the junior students who met the Vice-President to study Greek history and read short essays on topics like the History and Dogmas of the Church of Rome and Mission Work.

Reading and dictation exercises often ended these sessions. The first hour and a half on a Wednesday was devoted to Systematic Theology. This was taught by the Principal. There exists a set of notes taken down in detail by one of the students during Gracey's lectures in the autumn term of 1879. (175) There are eighteen lectures recorded: five of an introductory character, ten on the doctrine of sin and three on salvation. The first lecture surveys the main heresies from Gnosticism to nineteenth century scepticism. The student is to be taught to challenge deviant opinion.

Lectures 2 - 4 justify the arrangement, discussing the system by which the truths of revelation are connected, the method or principle by which truth is ascertained, and finally the order of those truths in a Scriptural system. It is clear that the Bible is to be the only ground of authority: 'We go not to the pages of the Bible to underline, to erase or to add to what is written there but as disciples to learn their contents; not to put our ideas into it but to draw our ideas from it'. (176) After reviewing the systems of Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin and Doddridge, Gracey emphasised the Christocentric stress in the evangelistic preaching of Jonathan Edwards and Andrew Fuller. He determined that the simple should come first and that the practical should have a just place. Finally, in lecture five he emphasises his aim in lecturing in this way - to make better preachers of the Gospel and enhance personal devotion to Christ.

Lectures six to fifteen are on the familiar evangelical starting point of sin, covering its fact, its biblical expressions, its nature and definition; the requirements and the authority of the law, sin in man, the fall, the imputation of sin and the outlook of sinners. The lectures display an orderliness and depth. Gracey gives four reasons for considering sin as a priority subject; (177) and then expands ten Hebrew and thirteen Greek words on the topic. The purpose in examining the biblical words in the original languages is to 'Dispense

as much as possible with speculation and to fill the mind with Biblical truth before forming a theory, so that we may be better able to examine the theory'. (178)

In the lecture on the nature of sin, breadth is added to the perspective when Strauss is quoted scornfully: 'Human kind is impeccable for the progress of its development is irreproachable'. (179) Ten Protestant divines are quoted to define sin. Passages such as I John 3 and 4 on the subject of unrighteousness and Romans 5 on the subject of Adam-Christ typology are expounded in detail. Dale's theory of antithesis that we can conceive of law apart from God but not of God apart from law is derided as 'darkening counsel by words without knowledge'. (180) Gracey adopts the theory of moral law that acknowledges two elements in law - intelligence referred to the Divine understanding and binding force referred to the Divine Will. Extensive space is given to expound the Calvinistic view of total depravity and the literal place of Adam in the spread of racial wickedness as the natural and legal head of the race. The lectures on sin end with a portrait of divine wrath and judgment handled with brevity and sensitivity. All this is 'introductory and preparatory to the declarations of God's free mercy in Christ Jesus. 'Tis for the purpose of shutting men up to the hope of the gospel, not for the purpose of shutting them out'. (181)

Salvation is treated as hope, speculation, doctrine, mystery and its unfolding in history, language, imagery and experience. Conservative writers like Chalmers and Trench are quoted approvingly and the imagery of the material, social and legal world is explored fully. The concepts of ransom, reconciliation, justification and salvation are expounded and the penal substitutionary view of atonement is dogmatically asserted. One cannot be sure whether the lecture notes are complete. The section on salvation is rounded and conclusive, even if brief. The notes are almost verbatim, achieved either by slow delivery, shorthand, or copied accounts. The last three lectures may have been abbreviated for the sake of completion at the end of the term; but the disparity of the ten lectures on sin and only three on salvation may point to an unbalanced concentration on the negative aspect of doctrine. However, there is in the possession of the College a copy of 'Lectures given by Principal Gracey in the Pastors' College to the students in 1887-89'. (182) It appears that the student, Mr Morrison, took down about fourteen pages of notes per week. The topics Depravity, Imputation of Sin and Salvation were covered as they had been ten years earlier; but the course went further and prophetic insights into salvation were thoroughly explored under three headings:

- I The growth of variety in the course of prophecy
- II The growth of the distinct personality of the Saviour
- III The growth of the particulars of His life and death.

The person of Jesus was examined, affirming His true deity, true humanity and unity of two natures in one personality. Particular stress was laid on His Deity, which was examined under five headings:

- 1st There is in Christ a nature superior to the human
- 2nd That this superior nature is pre-existent to the human

- 3rd That this pre-existent nature is divine
- 4th That this divine nature is the deity of the Son of God
- 5th That as the Son of God He is co-equal with the Father.

This typical Evangelical approach began, not with God's love but with man's need. There are few references to contemporary theologians. Indeed, the only people quoted in the Lectures are the Scottish theologian, Thomas Chalmers, and the former Principal of Homerton College, Dr Pye-Smith.

Three important classes were held to enhance preaching gifts. A well supported Bible class was attended by many students and members of the church on a Monday evening to discuss a given topic. On Thursday mornings one of the students read a prepared sermon which was then helpfully criticised by other students. Later that morning the whole student body discussed a given topic or passage of Scripture. Extempore contributions were encouraged and confidence was given to the speakers and light was shed on difficult subjects through this exercise. Up to 1888 it 'has been doing good service in training in debate and in ready impromptu speech'. (183)

A record exists preserving the main features of the Discussion Class between 1868 and 1871. Subjects were proposed in the formal manner of a debating society and both staff and students were free to participate under the Chairmanship of the Principal. Topics chosen embraced theological, devotional, ministerial, and social issues. For instance, Hall proposed that 'Man was capable of promoting his own salvation'; Blandford debated whether the 'Saints will be judged with the wicked in the day of judgment' and it was abstrusely asked: 'Is there any communication of thought or feeling between embodied and disembodied spirits?' Unanswered prayer, unfulfilled prophecy, 'the propriety of using imposition of hands in setting apart church officers', the observing of the Lord's Supper, and the meaning of a Scriptural call to Ministry, all claimed attention. Manning debated 'The influence of climate and scenery upon the mental and moral character of men' and the students' minds ranged over education, missionary work, total abstinence and the letting of property. Touches of humour appear in such popular student subjects as 'The manner in which students may turn their studies to the best account', 'the advantageous combination of preaching with study', and most explicitly, 'No examinations promote the main purpose of the College'. In 1870 they debated the relevant theme 'What may be the probable result of the Council now being held in Rome?' and the topic relevant for them every week 'Can ministers travel on Sundays consistently with their profession?'

It seems that on most subjects up to ten students would speak and then members of staff would have the concluding word. The topic 'the Peccability of Christ's Human Nature' lasted more than one class and produced seven student views and a divided faculty! Mr Gracey and Mr Fergusson were against the possibility of Christ sinning, Mr Rogers was in favour, since it made Christ 'a real man'. (184)

The high-point of the week for most students was the lectures by the President on a Friday afternoon. He felt that preachers of the

so-called 'simple Gospel' should have a breadth of knowledge which would help to make their sermons clear, interesting and articulate. They should also be introduced to elementary techniques of public speaking. His lectures to his students were full of practicalities. He dealt with the use of the voice, its projection and modulation, the importance of posture to avoid the impression of slovenliness and the control of gestures. But his chief concern was not with the mechanics of sermon production and presentation, but with the preacher's spirituality.

In the series of published lectures, (185) all given before 1879, he mainly deals with the minister's private life, preaching and illustrations. The first book of thirteen lectures pictures the pastor in the study guarding his own spiritual life, fulfilling his ministry of intercession, choosing the text, caring for his health. It contains a special word for those 'with slender apparatus' as pastors. The second book contains ten lectures stressing the importance of Truth, the Holy Spirit and conversion in preaching. Practical detail is given on open air preaching, positive gesture and earnest manner. The third series contains eight lectures and two appendices, all on the gathering and use of illustrations and anecdotes. Books are recommended, literature and science explored, and all with a view to illuminating the preached word.

Edgar R. Pullen was a student at the College in 1886-7 and has preserved contemporary notes of a year of Spurgeon's lectures. Thirty-three subjects are covered, dealing with practical and biblical topics. Familiar territory, like 'errors in speaking', 'preparation of a sermon', 'preaching from experience', 'soul winning', 'anecdotes', and 'open-air preaching', is expanded to include biographical material on Ambrose, Augustine and Bernard, historical material on the Baptists, devotional topics like 'religious doubt' and 'the promises of God', and doctrinal topics such as 'inspiration'. There are ten Biblical lectures all aimed at illustrating the art of preaching. These embrace Genesis, prophecy, John the Baptist, Luke's Gospel, the journeys of Paul, Colossians and the Pastoral Epistles. The content is practical and the style ordered. Most lectures have enumerated headings (186) and there is an example of the way in which a passage of Scripture was commented upon as it was read. This practice was common in Baptist worship and twenty-six comments are recorded in an 'expositional reading' of Luke 1.

Most of the studies were assessed by half-yearly examinations. No specific examination results exist, but there is an Assessment Book covering the years of the 1880 decade. (187) In it each tutor makes a comment upon the general performance of each man. Of 180 students recorded, 46 were to serve overseas and so the vision of the men was wide. Of the 31 who began their course in 1885, only seven had mental abilities above average. It was usual to see phrases like 'education defective', 'he has never reached the advanced classes', 'an average man', 'slow in development', 'I fancy he will do!' James Spurgeon was scathing in some of his comments - 'Bad temper', 'Does no work, I do not believe in him', 'Weak', 'not much as student', 'plodding'. The main comments concern preaching gift and character development. Of those students listed between January 1882 and September 1889, only

eighteen failed to complete their course of training. This was mainly due to ill-health or domestic circumstances.

The curriculum was enlarged in two ways - evangelism and evening classes. Apart from preparation for Classics and Mathematics classes, little demand was made on a student's personal time. This was left free for preaching and pastoral opportunities. All lectures were delivered in a popular and illustrative form and allowed adequate time for discussion so that a man might learn to express his ideas. The large and well selected library was provided to enrich a man's grasp of language. Their developed gifts were exercised as they went out to preach in the open air, in hired halls, stables and garages. *The Daily Telegraph* gave a popular impression of the impact of the students: 'Suddenly a change sprang up, numbers of young men ... went out ... preaching a crusade against indifference ... they were warmly received by the people to whom they appealed'(188) J. C. Carlile claimed more ambitiously that their influence changed the current of religious teaching in England.(189) When Spurgeon died, George Lorimer wrote 'The curriculum of the Pastors' College was devised and inaugurated as an institution for practical equipment and as such it has unquestionably justified its existence'.(190)

Archibald Fergusson spoke in 1890 of house-to-house visitation undertaken by students in the most destitute localities in the south of London. This was 'an education not to be found in books and classrooms. Only in immediate contact with human nature soaked with suffering can we really learn our work'.(191) This work was organised into the College Home Visiting Society with Mr Rumsey as Secretary. The students visited in pairs, handing out printed sermons to each household in the district. Consequently they 'will all manage personal conversations with readiness'.(192)

Several decayed, weak or young churches were adopted by the students. Through their preaching and visitation these grew strong enough to support their own pastor. David Gracey commented 'Very rich has been the blessing outpoured upon the work done at some of these advanced posts'.(193) Gipsy Road Baptist Church, West Norwood, had the Rev. Walter Hobbs as its first pastor. His training at the College evoked 'profound gratitude and high appreciation'(194). It had developed his natural gifts, quickened his spiritual impulses and strengthened his faith in God. At the beginning of his course in 1875 he was sent to preach at a large mission room in Norwood New Town, erected at personal cost by Mr E. J. Everett, a former Plymouth Brother. The eleven people present 'appreciated the ministry'.(195) They asked him to return each succeeding month until, after three years, they issued a formal call to the pastorate and enlarged the building at a cost of £1000. By 1882 the membership numbered 180. Spurgeon took the warmest interest in the project so near to his own residence and became its Treasurer and liberal donor. He also maintained a warm personal contact with the pastor, 'His oversight ... was watchful and sympathetic and clearly he had high confidence in him'.(196)

Material Resources

As the work of the College grew in reputation, applications were received from all parts of the United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal, Italy, British America and the United States. Such expansion made great demands both in terms of buildings and financial outlay.

From 1861-73 the College work was conducted in the rooms under the Metropolitan Tabernacle. During this time numbers rose by 600% and the erection of larger buildings in the immediate neighbourhood robbed the college rooms of natural light. Gas lamps were often burnt all day and lectures were conducted in increasingly stifling conditions. This affected student concentration and general health.

Consequently *The Sword and the Trowel* of 1873 displayed a design for a new college building on land purchased at the rear of the Tabernacle. (197) The design by Mr Currey of Norfolk Street, Strand, managed to cover every available inch of an odd-shaped piece of land. It was for two floors of red brick with stone dressings. The ground floor would consist of a large hall suitable for conference gatherings, with movable partitions usable as classrooms both on Sundays and weekdays. On the first floor the main college lecture room and library would be situated, with roof lighting by lantern to give maximum ground space. J. C. Carlile recalled the plan from personal memory:

On the ground floor a large hall, a students' common room, the arena in which student gladiators fought, mixing metaphors and chopping logic. The assembly hall was on the first floor; there conferences were held upon which occasions the clans gathered from the ends of the earth and the chief of the clan sat at the middle table. ... On the same floor there were small classrooms and the famous room at the end of the corridor where trial sermons were preached and many tears shed. (198)

The foundation stone was laid on 14th October 1873 and the building opened eleven months later. The permanent trust deed was executed in January 1877. The total cost of £15,000 was met by 1876. £3000 was given in memory of a husband, £2000 was a legacy from a reader of Spurgeon's sermons, £1000 was raised by the generosity of former students, and other gifts came from interested churches and Tabernacle members. Two years later a trust fund was operative in which sufficient money was set aside to pay for repairs and rates, once the freehold had been purchased from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

The property was vested in the trusteeship of the pastors of the Tabernacle and eleven deacons. All accounts were examined by church auditors and passed by the Church Meeting. The financial backing of the Church was something upon which Spurgeon relied heavily. In a letter to the members of 6th November 1886, he thanks them for helping 'in my life work of the College for these many years'. He indicates that he has never liked to press the weekly offering for the College - it has been an act of love for him and his chosen work. He indicates that £36.5s is required for each week and this has not been reached recently. Therefore, 'I shall take it as proof of your esteem

and confidence if you will make this up by two collections on November 14th ... Please come next Lord's day with such an offering as you judge that the College demands'. (199)

A small finance committee of the pastors and two deacons managed the affairs of the College and monthly figures of income and expenditure were published from the mid-sixties. In the month of December 1865 the total income was £201 16s 1d; by July 1867 it had risen to £495 per month. In the 1865 account, there were such named donors as 'Mr Dodwell, Mrs Baker and Amy', anonymous gifts from 'A Christian brother; R.W.; Faith and a Friend'; church gifts from 'Chelsea, Woolwich, Wandsworth and Southampton' and weekly offerings from the Tabernacle totalling £108. (200) In the 1867 account there is 'a birthday gift for Mr Spurgeon' of £33, four collections from churches where Spurgeon has preached and a thankoffering for him of £73. (201)

By 1877 Spurgeon believed that college finances were on a firm footing. No great increase in funds would be required and income came from three main sources - Tabernacle offerings totalling £1880, donations amounting to £3153, and student collections raising just over £400. Board and lodging accounted for over half the expenditure. Salaries accounted for one-fifth. The work of preaching stations and College Conference claimed one seventh and books took only £350 out of total payments of £7489. In that year there was a surplus of £1500. In the following year 'from an accountant's point of view the ordinary income is at least £1000 below the expenditure'. But 'usually a large legacy falls in just when the exchequer runs low'. (202) By now a growing number of students were able to bear their own costs but no charges were ever published. About one-tenth of the donations came from churches, all the rest from supporting individuals.

Spurgeon was never afraid to appeal for money, direct deacons of churches to cover students' expenses, or ask for a preaching fee which would be donated to the college. Yet he was unflinching in expressing thanks for the fact that the college never ran into debt, nor was its work curtailed for financial reasons. He realised that it was easier to raise money for the orphanage. 'Many will give to an orphanage out of natural compassion who will not contribute to a college out of zeal for the truth'. (203)

Supportive Agencies

The College recognised that 'Our ministers generally cannot afford to buy books and our desire is in some measure to supply this grievous want. A minister without a book is like a workman without tools'. (204) The college course was extensive in order to overcome ignorance and a circulating library was in operation from 1867 to help a man continue study after college. Boxes of books were sent in circuit to former students settled as pastors in different parts of the country. These were kept for two months and then forwarded to the next in circuit. Thirty-four boxes were in circulation, containing Puritan literature, Spurgeon's books and advice about ministerial reading matter. Alternatively, deacons were asked to purchase books for a church

library to which the pastor had access.

To check on the progress of former students the College Conference was formed in 1865. It met in March in successive years for five days; in 1867 it changed to September. Ministers were scattered all over the country, some working in areas where there was no fellowship, some in villages where progress was slow; some in urban areas where circumstances were uncongenial to health and faith. It was soon recognised that there was need for a gathering to encourage flagging spirits. The constitution of the Conference consisted of agreement about the doctrines of grace, believer's baptism and evangelism. The London pastors were formed into a standing committee which would deal with administration, organisation and discipline. Membership was open to all students of six-months' standing or ministers who received three-quarters of the members' votes. Most administration was carried out by J. A. Spurgeon, the Secretary. Meetings were mostly held at the Tabernacle, but other venues like Upton Chapel, Sloane Street Chapel and Stepney Green were used.

During the first two conferences a great variety of topical papers were read and discussed. These included theological topics on the inspiration, study and exposition of Scripture; denominational topics such as the need for evangelists, the belief in the doctrines of grace in the denomination and the stance to be adopted towards the Established Church; ecclesiastical subjects like eldership, duties of pastors, discipline and salaries; educational discussion on the use of classical and scientific study to the pastor and the best way of securing an educated ministry; pastoral themes on personal holiness, oneness of aim in the ministry, the conduct of prayer meetings and the use of printing; and evangelistic subjects such as the conversion of the young and the poor, and the temperance of ministers.

On the Tuesday evening of Conference a dinner was usually held to invite present and past students to meet supporters and on these occasions it was not uncommon for £1000 to be contributed to college funds. The happiness of such gatherings was marred by the Downgrade Controversy of 1888. Many members of Conference, whilst loyal to the old faith, felt Spurgeon's censure too severe and did not resign from the Union. He felt they were either under a 'misapprehension' or clinging to a 'denominational institution'. (205) He desired to welcome them back into the brotherhood but in the wake of the controversy the Conference was reformed.

It met on 16th April 1888 as the 'Pastors' College Evangelical Association'. Members, whether former students, present students who completed the course satisfactorily or elected ministers, had to sign a doctrinal statement which contained evangelical sentiments. A committee was now set up to enquire into cases of moral delinquency and a bye-law incorporated, defining subject matter as that 'only for spiritual profit and for the promotion of the cause and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ'. (206) At the reformed Conference 'the assembly of brethren was a larger one than on any former occasion'. (207) The roll of membership stood at 546 with about another 100 expected to be added when they returned their signed doctrinal statement. This figure was under half the total number of former students. But at the

Tuesday evening dinner £3700 was subscribed for the college, 50% more than ever before. This first reformed Conference was a demonstration of support for Spurgeon, who was elected President for life. Concern for the brethren was also expressed in offerings for the Communion and Assurance Funds. The main papers at this Conference were on biblical reforms, such as Hezekiah's reform, and lessons for today from Philemon. Letters giving details of the Conference events were sent by the President and Secretary to all brethren abroad.

To avoid flooding the ministerial market many of the students went to establish a new work and not to invade existing churches. The breadth of this work was the world. By 1863 thirty-eight men had gone into churches. One went to Australia, one to Ireland, two to Wales and one to a Primitive Methodist Circuit. J. Turner ventured to Newfoundland, T. W. Hayward went to Lancashire, eleven settled in London churches and a similar number went into East Anglia. (208) By 1873, 330 men had been trained at the College of whom two were in India, one in China, two in Spain, one in Brazil, one in St Helena, one in Turk's Island, one in South Africa, six in Australia, twenty-three in the United States and ten in Canada. On 2nd November 1880 eight brethren serving in Australia sent a letter to Spurgeon expressing gratitude for their course of training:

No words of ours can express our personal obligation to you. But by fidelity to Christ and to truth, by manifesting that we have caught the spirit of burning love to souls which burns in your own breast, and by serving to our utmost ability, we hope to show that all your care and that of the tutors and friends of the Tabernacle has not been ill-bestowed. (209)

The main outreach was done in London. In 1864 a loan building fund was established to be administered by deacons of the Tabernacle to enable churches to build anew or reduce debts. Loans were repayable half-yearly. The explicit objects were 'To assist by gift of loan, without interest, in the building, enlargement and repair of places used for divine worship and ... the furtherance of any object having regard to maintenance of the Pastor's College'. (210) At a meeting in the Tabernacle on 10th November 1865 the London Baptist Association was formed. The agreed objects were 'To advance the Kingdom of Christ ... the promotion of Christian Union amongst the officers and members and the erection of at least one chapel in each year in the Metropolis or its suburbs'. (211)

In his detailed study of London Baptist life, W. T. Whitley states that 'the number of churches founded between 1860-70 and the number surviving has never been equalised before or since'. Yet, he continues, 'While they were as busy as beavers they were as unsociable as otters; they multiplied at an unprecedented rate but each was isolated at first'. (212) In 1841, 102 Baptist churches functioned in London. By 1900, 102 new churches existed, largely founded by men from Pastor's College. In this unusual growth Spurgeon acted as a lynch-pin - people looked to him for leadership and he gave adventurous expression to his evangelistic zeal. He had founded a college 'to train men who would be able to present the Gospel in the language of the common people' and the institution 'set out upon a mission of its own'. (213)

A series of contemporary letters illustrate Spurgeon's superintendency of affairs.(214) F. W. Reynolds reflects that so many deacons 'were seeing you just now...'. S. C. Gordon desires to go with the Baptist Missionary Society to Congo 'with your consent'. C. H. Hands is returning to America and asks candidly 'What would you advise me to do?' J. C. Carlile wants to know whether he can stay at Abbey Street, Bermondsey, in spite of financial hardships, 'If you could kindly spare me five minutes I think the matter might be settled'. Spurgeon wanted Mr Loma to go to Tangier, but Providence Baptist Chapel, Hounslow, desired him as their pastor. It took pleas by the minister, church secretary, and a petition signed by 54 members to gain the President's consent. Trinity Baptist Church, Bexleyheath, expressed their indebtedness to Spurgeon by placing a copy of *The Sword and the Trowel* beneath the foundation stone of their new chapel in 1868. One of their early pastors, Rev. William Frith, was converted at the Tabernacle. In 1870 one of their members, Mr Spoffard, was commended for training at the Pastor's College and in 1873, when Mr Frith resigned, 'a small deputation waited upon the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon to seek his advice'.(215)

R. H. Gillespie, the student who began the church at Plaistow, recorded the beginning of the venture in a letter to Spurgeon: 'On February 23rd 1872 you sent for me to come and see you in your vestry. On going there I found you had company, four gentlemen whom I had never seen before. You then addressed me thus: "Gillespie, I want you to go down to Barking Road and preach for two or three Sundays and if you don't like the place, don't stay; if you do, stick to it. I'll help to support you. These gentlemen have come for you'.(216)

Such marching orders were common. Not only were men dismissed to new work, they went to revive old causes. Nor were they sent only into the suburbs of London. Many declining provincial churches in places like Tonbridge, Kent; Ryde, Isle of Wight; South Shields and Middlesborough on Teeside; Harston in rural Cambridgeshire and Whitehaven in Cumberland were aided. Students faced an uphill task in most of their initial pastorates.

In 1879 Spurgeon divulged his pioneering strategy: 'The plan is generally to begin in a hall or other hired building, to get together a few people, to gather converts and to struggle on till a small church is formed; then commence the labour of collecting money to build a school-room or part of a building or to erect an iron chapel, and this accomplished the chapel is undertaken. Thus by degrees with slender funds a new house of prayer is opened and Christian activities set in motion'.(217) He admitted many failures of such experiments to produce churches and felt the provision of a settled building was the key factor to success. In 1859 the Assembly Rooms of the Spread Eagle Tavern in Wandsworth were hired and after J. W. Genders had preached for three months, a small church was formed of nine members under his pastoral oversight. By 1863 the membership numbered 150 and a £3000 chapel was opened to become East Hill Baptist Church. In Stepney the East London Tabernacle began in the hall of the Beaumont Institute in 1858. It had a building by 1864 and an enlarged version by 1869, costing £12,000. The generosity of the Christian builder,

gifts from the college, and the proceeds of the sale of a nearby Methodist Chapel met the expenditure. South Street, Greenwich, took twenty years of 'patient and unwearied toil'(218) before a church could be erected and the members move out of the Royal Hill Lecture Hall. Initial work in Bromley in the White Hart Assembly Rooms witnessed a decline to six people in 1862. This seemed little fruit for previous open-air preaching in the market place; but by 1863 a church of thirty members was formed in a house and by 1865 a building had been erected.

A church in Upper Kennington Lane began in a carpenter's shop and then took over St Paul's Anglican church. The pastor, Mr G. Hearson, then took a course at the College. The church in Lewin Road, Streatham, began as a preaching station in mobile accommodation. Barnes Baptist Church was erected by a wealthy gentleman who then called a student, W. H. Priter, to gather a congregation in 1868. Enfield Baptist Church started in the Rising Sun Public House.

In 1883 George Rogers commented on the evangelistic tone of the College: 'Our one chief desire is to be distinguished for our zeal for the spiritual and eternal welfare of our fellow men'.(219)

Spurgeon recalled how his fervour and gift began to be enriched through involvement in education when he started addressing Sunday School in a regular fashion: 'Speedily something else followed. The older people also took to coming when I spoke; and that, 'ere long, in such numbers that the auditory looked more like a chapel than a school'.(220) Evangelism and education were linked, and Spurgeon's College attempted to train evangelistic church planters, through an appropriate educational environment and curriculum.

NOTES

- 137 C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to my Students*, London 1877, p.V.
 138 *Congregational Year Book* 1892, p.195.
 139 Dr Archibald McCaig B.A., LL.B., *Presidential Address to the Conference of Spurgeon's college, April 13 1926*, p.3.
 140 *The Baptist Handbook*, 1862, p.28.
 141 McCaig, op.cit., p.3.
 142 *Spurgeon's College Annual Report*, 1892, p.383.
 143 Ibid.
 144 *The Baptist Handbook* 1894, p.154.
 145 *The Baptist Handbook* 1922, pp.264-5.
 146 Ibid 1865, p.121.
 147 His obituary is to be found in *The Times*, 4th July 1894, p.11.
 148 *The Baptist Handbook* 1900, pp.229-230.
 149 Ibid 1902, pp.188-190. 150 Ibid 1900, pp.236-8.
 151 *Spurgeon's College Annual Report* 1870, pp.4-10.
 152 C. H. Spurgeon's *Autobiography II*, London 1888, p.142.
 153 Ibid p.143. 154 Ibid p.144.
 155 Ibid p.145.
 156 J. Duckett and A. Sternberg working for the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews.
 157 *The Sword and the Trowel* 1882, p.261.
 158 Ibid 1881, p.309. 159 Ibid 1887, p.205.

- 174 Ibid 1885, pp.205-210.
- 175 *Theological Lectures by Mr Gracey, Pastor's College, beginning August 20th, 1879.* (Spurgeon's College Archives)
- 176 Ibid p.6.
- 177 These reasons are:
1. Because the gospel is a remedial system.
 2. The subject is nearer to us than others.
 3. Sin first engages the mind of the enquirer after salvation.
 4. This is the Divine order in Genesis.
- 178 Ibid p.34. 179 Ibid p.36.
- 180 Ibid p.56. 181 Ibid p.141.
- 182 This is deposited in the Spurgeon's College Archives.
- 183 *The Sword and the Trowel* 1888, p.316.
- 184 All this material is taken from an unheaded, unnumbered book giving records of the Discussion Class 1868-71. (Spurgeon's College Archives)
- 185 Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to my Students* London 1877.
- 186 For example nine 'Obstacles of Soul Winning' are listed:
1. Indifference and Levity 2. Unbelief 3. Delay 4. Carnal security 5. Despair 6. Love of Sin 7. Self-righteousness 8. Worldliness 9. Habits and Company (Edgar R. Pullen, *Notes on C. H. Spurgeon's Lectures, 1886-7*, p.20)
- 187 This Assessment Book is kept in the College Archives and a typical page records these facts: Name - Address in London - Comments of Tutors: J. A. Spurgeon, D. Gracey, A. Fergusson, F. G. Marchant - Date and place of settlement.
- 188 *The Daily Telegraph*, 9th May 1879.
- 189 Carlile, op.cit. p.169.
- 190 '*The Puritan Preacher in the Nineteenth Century*'. A Boston Monograph, 1893.
- 191 *The Sword and the Trowel* 1890, p.317. This visitation had been undertaken since at least 1867. In that year 'brethren worked in 47 districts, visited 2121 houses, 3777 families and distributed 4027 sermons. In addition the public houses were visited with uniform kindness by the landlords'. (*Annual Report* '1867, pp.50-55)
- 192 Ibid p.323. 193 *Annual Report* 1889, p.313.
- 194 J. Stuart, *Sketch of the Life and Work of the Rev. W. Hobbs*, p.8.
- 195 Ibid p.9. 196 Ibid p.10.
- 197 This was a front view of a two-storey building headed 'New Buildings for the Pastor's College'.
- 198 Carlile, op.cit. pp.174-5.
- 199 Printed letter dated 6th November 1886, addressed 'Beloved Friends', and signed. (College Archives)
- 200 *Annual Report* 1866, pp.60-68.
- 201 Ibid 1868, p.39.
- 202 *The Sword and the Trowel* 1882, p.263.
- 203 Ibid 1881, p.133. 204 *Annual Report* 1866, p.43.
- 205 *The Sword and the Trowel* 1890, p.314.
- 206 Conference Minute Book, April 1888 - January 1909, p.1.
- 207 Ibid p.2.
- 208 *Faith's Witness*, 16th December 1863, pp.7-10. Five left in 1859; five in 1860; four in 1861; eleven in 1862 and thirteen in 1863.
- 209 *The Sword and the Trowel* 1881, p.306.
- 210 Letter to Subscribers 1868 - from *Annual Report* 1869.
- 211 *The Sword and the Trowel* 1866, p.3.

- 212 W. T. Whitley, *The Baptists of London*, 1928, p.79.
 213 Carlile, op.cit. p.171.
 214 These letters are in the College Archives.
 215 Lionel F. Higgs, *The Story of Trinity, Bexleyheath*, 1968, p.16.
 216 *Annual Report* 1879, p.24. 217 *Ibid.* p.4.
 218 *Ibid.* p.8.
 219 *The Sword and the Trowel* 1883, p.281.
 220 *Autobiography I*, p.182.

M. NICHOLLS Vice-Principal, Spurgeon's College, London

* * * * *

REVIEWS

Alan P. F. Sell, *Saints: Visible, Orderly and Catholic: the Congregational Idea of the Church*, (World Alliance of Reformed Churches), pp.iii, 173. 1986. N.p.

A Baptist comes to this book of 120 typescript pages supported by a further forty pages of footnotes with particular interest. After all, in the Baptist tradition (although Dr Sell seems unaware of this) there is the same emphasis upon visible saints, upon ordered church fellowship and certainly the same tensions implicit and explicit in inter-congregational relationships as those he charts across the centuries in Congregationalism.

Since his story concludes with the formation of the United Reformed Church the end, in some sense, is known from the beginning. Nevertheless this quite brief review is nonetheless fascinating and the warnings implied in his last pages are relevant to Baptist problems. After all we both belong to what some have uneasily to admit is the Restorationist Tradition within the Christian Church. Of course, the predictable saints, apostles, prophets and martyrs make their appearance - from Henry Barrow to Bernard Lord Manning by way of John Cotton, John Owen, Isaac Watts, Philip Doddridge, R. W. Dale, P. T. Forsyth and many others. Although the tunnel vision endemic to the denominational historian is all too apparent, the admittedly well-trodden paths are nonetheless welcome for the glimpse of well-known and well-loved faces here and there upon the way.

Yet it has been in this century that the sense, as Dale of Birmingham put it, of the 'infinite difference between those who are in Christ and those who are not' has been blurred, that the tradition of the ordered church has been weakened and the structures of the United Reformed Church have imposed a greater sense of accountability upon the local church to its brethren but without, it seems, a consequent surge of new life. This small book would bear pondering by both Baptists and former Congregationalists alike.

B. R. WHITE