

The Fraternal

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EDITORIAL

One of the many exciting statements found in the Resurrection narratives is the message given to the three women who visited the tomb early in the morning on that memorable first Easter Day. "Go tell his disciples, and Peter, that He is leading the way for you . . ." (Mk. 16:7). Manson made the fascinating suggestion that the women did not deliver the message about travelling to Galilee because they were afraid of the possible consequences. "The only safety, as it then seemed, for themselves and their friends was to lie low. And it is common knowledge that there is no better hiding-place than a big city. To return to Galilee would be fatal, with Antipas waiting there to liquidate the remnants of the Nazarene movement." (*The Servant Messiah*, 94f). The idea is an interesting one. We often fail because we are afraid to venture. Our natural caution is often our greatest obstacle in things spiritual. In moments when we are confronted with new opportunities to experiment we do well to remind ourselves of this Easter promise—"He is leading the way for you". The present issue of *The Fraternal* tells the story of new ventures by the Baptist Men's Movement, of new opportunities opening to inner city churches, of new experiment in theological education overseas, of a new understanding of the role of the Church in the ministry of healing, and a final article pleads for our willingness to venture in faith in the days that are ahead. He is leading the way for us. The only adequate response to His assured leadership is deep personal trust and a willingness to adapt ourselves to new situations.

JUBILEE

Fifty years ago there was a war on; the biggest the world had ever seen. It had raged for three years; the bitterest contest, the most demanding in its claims upon civilians as well as those in uniform. For the first time in our history (apart from the Nursing Services) women formed part of the Forces of the Crown. The year was one of strain and shortages and slaughter.

In these circumstances laymen in our denomination found something else which demanded their attention: the needs of the Baptist Missionary Society. So there came into being the Baptist Laymen's Missionary Movement. It is hard to imagine more difficult days in which to begin a new movement for the extension of the Kingdom of God.

This year we celebrate the Jubilee of this brave adventure in what is now known as the Baptist Men's Movement.

From the beginning the Movement has shown itself to be concerned with the practical support and furthering of the Kingdom of God in the hearts and minds of men, not only in other lands but also in this country.

It began by studying the needs of missionaries in their work in the different zones of the Society. The annual conference at Swanwick was the place where men home on furlough spoke with more freedom than in the pulpits of the churches of their problems and frustrations. The writer remembers the conference in 1926 when he first began to understand that the work of the missionary was not all preaching and baptising willing converts. The dangers, the heartbreaks, the physical strain as well as the spiritual pressures on men in the dark places of the earth were made clear in frank speaking and in answer to penetrating questions.

But this was not to be a society for intellectual exercise only. In 1922 the Movement was instrumental in purchasing the house in Kettering where the Baptist Mission was born, in order that it might be preserved for the Society, and to become a home for missionaries on furlough. Not long afterwards in 1923, a house was purchased in North London to be used as a hostel for Oriental Students studying in the metropolis. There the students came into contact with neighbouring churches and joined with Young People's Fellowships in worship and in parties and in the ordinary home life of Church members. This concern for the needs of men of all colours has been a feature of the Movement's ministry through the years.

The Missionary Literature Association had been since 1926 supplying missionaries on the field with technical papers and periodicals. The needs of teachers, medicals, builders and preachers are our concern, and their wives too. What a joy it must be when the post brings Digests and women's papers to a station far away from home, where the staff have neither the money nor time to buy out-of-date numbers at local prices even if they were available.

Operation Agri began in 1961 at a Swanwick conference where there had been much discussion until one man rose to say "Mr President, enough has been said to convince us of the need, I will give £25". That sum grew to over £200 before the weekend was over. The scheme itself has gone from strength to strength, and many of our churches have caught the vision. B.M.S. agricultural missionaries are supplied with stock and equipment from funds subscribed by individual supporters called "Farming Partners" and by offerings made by congregations at Harvest Festivals. Last year one church placed an offering plate before the Communion Table, which was laden with gifts, and the congregation were invited to place their offerings in it during the singing of one of the thanksgiving hymns. It was a most impressive

spectacle to see young and old make their way to the front to offer their personal gifts to God for the help of some of His children in need in other lands.

And now a housing Association is in being: given formal approval at Swanwick last year it plans to build flats for retired missionaries and ministers. The Men's Movement is constantly thinking of the needs of others.

One of the great leaders in the early days was Harry Hemmens. It could almost be said at one time that he was the Movement. On his death a memorial fund was raised and invested, and from its resources grants are made to prospective missionaries who are training for work in Congo. So through the Movement the influence of a great man and a visionary makes practical contributions to the needs of those who are preparing for their life's work.

The Movement is organized in groups or clubs in our churches. These groups are brought together in District Federations and Regional Associations. Federations usually have a chairman by annual election while the Associations are under the guidance and leadership of Regional Commissioners.

After the first world war a man who had served in the Royal Army Chaplains' Department returned to South Wales very much aware of the friendships he had discovered in the Army. All sorts and conditions of men had been his friends, and it seemed that this wider circle of influence was to be nothing more than a dream when he returned to a civilian pulpit. He started getting the men of his church together and invited them to bring their non-church-going neighbours and acquaintances to informal meetings in Church premises. This effort became known as a Contact Club. G. W. Harte was its instigator and he worked out his dream in Cardiff and Bristol and finally in Beckenham. The Laymen's Missionary Movement invited him to talk to them about this work at Swanwick in 1933, and the impression he made was such that it continued to exercise the minds and the activities of the men resulting in a reorganising of local group work and finally a change of name in 1944 to the Baptist Men's Movement. The constitution states its aims as: (a) to bring men to Christ; (b) to intensify Christian work in our churches; and (c) to promote fellowship among Christian men throughout the world.

The form of meetings vary: they range from Bible study to lectures on hobbies, civics, business interests, holiday experiences (the latter with coloured pictures, of course!). One club was responsible, in addition to its weekly meetings, for an early prayer meeting at 7.30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. If the nature of the meetings generally appear to be of an informal nature it is because those who are responsible for their arrangement have a great desire to bring in men who do not usually attend our churches on Sunday, and would not understand our formal pattern of hymn-prayer-hymn-reading etc. That such meetings are achieving their objective is beyond doubt, though the keenest members are the

most disappointed at our rate of progress. One secretary observed that it was a matter to be expected that at least one member of his club joined the church each year on profession of faith. A present adherent of that club was picked up in a drunken stupor months before by a member of the church. Members of the club visited him, and the effect was that the man had visited the club to see what kind of an organization produced men who called on such as he. He liked what he saw, and continued to attend and has since brought five other men with him, "none of whom", said the secretary "would have come at my invitation". The club is now praying that they all find Christ as Saviour through the ministry of fellowship.

One thing which surprises those responsible for the Movement is the general lack of interest among so many of our ministers. Granted that ministers are busy men; it seems strange that so many are just not interested, and some frankly critical of what they think is only a chit-chat gathering of a few men who want to look at pictures or argue about religion. G. W. Harte is on record as saying that "unemployment in religion is as serious as in industry", to which might be added the observation "to be unknown in the church is as dangerous as being unknown in business". What has been written will show, clearly enough, that the Movement seeks to set men at work, as evangelists in contacting the men outside and in getting to know the brethren inside.

The Movement is virtually concerned with helping others, ministers included. Would not any man welcome the opportunity of talking to a group of men in his church, especially when he had not to organize their meetings or their attendance? And what man trained in the ministry cannot use any subject under discussion as the vehicle of a declaration of his own faith in his Saviour and Lord? Other ministers seem to be devoted to a reduction of meetings during the week and, of course, that is understandable. It is equally clear that if strangers are to find their way into our fellowship, that way will probably be among their own age groups and sex. Men are notoriously difficult to get into the church today, and they are extraordinarily shy in matters of worship: how can we expect them to come into a meeting where women are present? The Movement, knowing this from its own long experience sets out to be a contact for Christ with those who do not care or are quietly wistful and it does it in the provision of a meeting for men and men only in the place where Christ is worshipped. If evangelism is to be more than a shibboleth, it must have a centre to which the non-committed can be introduced. This is the *raison d'être* of the Movement which has as its prime objective, "to bring men to Christ".

One of the dreams we cherish for the future is that B.M.M. will become increasingly effective in maintaining contact with the young men who grow out of Scouts and Brigades. Many of them marry and are faced with the problems of preparing a

house or flat for their new home. Not all young men have the ability or the equipment to tackle such tasks: here is a ready made opportunity for men in the church to help with tools and time. For those who find they are just too old for their existing organizations the Men's Movement provides the way from enthusiastic adolescence to more mature manhood. This is one of the activities to be stressed in our Jubilee year. Most of us in the ministry can remember perhaps one man to whom we are indebted for the achievement of our dreams. We modelled ourselves in his style of preaching, we read the books he suggested, and our gratitude will never die; but seldom, if ever, were we included in a group of men dedicated to the support of missions at home and abroad. This is one of the greatest questions of our time; what do we do with young men recently converted? The minister's hands are always full, as is his diary. Turn them over to the Men's Movement where they will find friends and interests, saints and examples. This is our hope and we cannot imagine any minister thinking of such a possibility in his church without great joy.

These achievements and dreams are not exclusive to this country. We have contacts in the "far places", Australia having more personal members than any other country, but we have personal members in New Zealand, India, Africa, Far East, U.S.A. and on the Continent of Europe. A small committee made up of representatives of Denominational Men's Work in this country has a counterpart on the continent, and we meet in conference every other year. This year the British are making plans for Canterbury in September.

So there are men in our Movement already dedicated to Missionary endeavour both abroad and at home. Some of them are members of our churches in fellowship with the Union. They already form a link, perhaps frail at the moment, but nevertheless a link which can help to bring closer together the two main branches of Baptist work in this country; thus ensuring a more effective presentation of the Gospel which we are called to preach. If this idea seems very remote, remember that the strongest cable is made up of fine strands, and in the creation of such an implement there must be the first thread.

The Movement began in days of conflict: Our days are just as difficult in a variety of ways, but again, this is the time to go forward. The men of our churches have been on the move for fifty years with the usual pattern of failure and success. They are set for a new effort to serve the Denomination both at home and abroad. They would treasure the friendly help and co-operation of their ministers in this endeavour. In providing that ministers will discover a fruitful field for evangelism and an almost embarrassing friendship from the men of their churches, who are the salt of the earth.

JOHN POTTS

A COOL LOOK AT THE INNER CITY

“Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would be he of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.”

(“Upon Westminster Bridge” W. Wordsworth 1770-1850)

“Hell is a City much like London.”

(“Peter Bell the Third” P. B. Shelley 1792-1822)

“For months past we have been engaged in collecting facts and examining places in South London. We now publish the result, under the belief that the public are utterly ignorant of the grave dangerous condition of things which a variety of exceptional circumstances have combined to produce, and that the surest way to find the remedy is to make the want of it known. South London eighty years ago was only a few streets and courts; today it is a great City of 800,000 souls. It is increasing with tremendous rapidity, As it grows bigger, it gets poorer. What South London will be eighty years hence it is terrible to conceive. Christianity is no longer in possession in South London . . . leaden indifference the result of hopeless penury, is settling down more and more into the hearts of the people, and is making religious work harder and harder. The clergy are keeping up the fight bravely. But year by year the resources procurable on the spot dwindle, as one well-to-do parishioner after another goes away southwards; and it is difficult to see how, if nothing is done, the struggle can long be maintained even on its present scale. If things once begin to slide back, there can, humanly speaking, be no recovery; the land will quickly become heathen, and there will then be less chance of Christianity acquiring possession in South London than in Central Africa.”

“It is terrible to conceive what London will be like eighty years hence . . .” We are now living in the time of this man’s fears, for the above extract was taken from an article which now resides in the British Museum, entitled, “South London: its religious condition, its needs and its hopes.” This article was written at a time when C. H. Spurgeon was in his prime, but the words hold a freshness that is almost frightening in its awareness of the present day. A cool look is needed at the religious condition of the Inner City. There must be help offered to the Inner City, help that is relevant to the needs.

Of course it is recognisable throughout history that certain areas of London enjoyed a notoriety that seemed to induce out-

side help to be offered. By the aid of a genius for advertising or possibly by making squalor seem picturesque some found assistance in men and money. But men throughout the denominations in the Inner City today, for the most part, do not go about telling the world that they feel dull and listless, and discouraged and nerveless, and that they want sympathy. But it is only too obvious that men's hearts are breaking with the stress of the hopelessness and the isolation of the work. It is sad indeed, to see men plodding wearily forward, bearing an impossible burden as best they can alone, when there is possibly an intelligent assessment that can be made that might be, at least, part of, the answer.

We have in the past in one way thought of our activity in the Inner City as rescue and we can quite easily see the development of the wide range of "Rescue Mission" work. But this must now be seen to be insufficient to meet the spiritual need of the whole man in the Inner City. Do we want still to be titillated by horror stories and have our guilt feelings excited, or do we want to probe a little deeper into the haunting hidden issues? If the latter is the desire, to reach a truth, however costly, then we must realise again that the truth is hidden within the dying seed. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die..." We surely must address this weighty concept of renewal to many areas of our Church life... the forms... the methods... the language... it seems especially so in areas of the Inner City where these things so often appear to be so outmoded as to be a hindrance to the renewal process. If the Church is to become aware of the Inner City need it cannot afford to imagine the "omnicompetent suburbanite bearing gifts" as the *only* solution to that need.

If we believe ourselves to be the "Body of Christ" in the world, within the City, then let us remind ourselves again that there is no safe isolated spot from which we may diagnose and prescribe. There is no way even to think about the Inner City which is not at the same time a confession of personal guilt... personal guilt yes, because of the body's common interaction and dependence. It seems at the moment, that listening is the most important activity in which we ought to be engaged. We need to listen in order that we might realise that the illnesses that call for renewal are common, and that therefore they say something to the whole community body about the way it has been living. The only possible result of omitting this listening part of the renewal process is that the old, unexamined, unadmitted illnesses will be reconstructed in a new form. If we really begin to listen, possibly we will come to recognise that in some way the suffering of the Inner City is a suffering of a part of the Body for those of us who have forgotten that we are all part of the whole.

When I was asked to write this article it was suggested that I made use of the wealth of material and experience that came my way during a trip to the United States of America. This trip had as its sole purpose the viewing of the situation that obtains

in the American Inner City, and seeing how the Church is beginning to respond to the many glaring and basic needs that have been obviated. The trip was made possible by the London Baptist Association's fine response to an equally fine offer from the American Baptist Convention who, through Dr Paul O. Madsen of the Home Missions Department, had suggested that they sponsor the American side of such a training period. In this time I was able to visit thirteen of the major cities in the North-East and Mid-West of the U.S.A. and talk to and be involved with many of the key people who are working within the context of Christ's mission in the Inner City. I became aware of the fact that there were groups of people who were beginning to do a great deal of listening. Listening to the cry that came from the many class-built, hate-filled ghettos, listening to the cry of "... the least of these". Taking up one's own cross is a call to discipleship that demands a self-crucifixion which is only possible in the context of the howling, jeering world. So it was there within a frame of reference determined by the world that I found people listening.

The American Inner City is very difficult to describe. It seems to be the melting pot into which all the really acute social problems are flung, stirred, and left. The issues are blatantly obvious, race, colour, inadequate housing, unequal educational opportunity, insufficient welfare, lack of opportunity and incentive. It is a little more difficult, once having stated the obvious, to suggest how the problems are being dealt with. The Church is beginning to say and rightly so, "we do not know the answer". The component parts of the pre-packaged, middle-classed, instant-church, no longer fit the bill. The Church is beginning to listen and to respond, finding itself present in all sorts of unlikely places.

Some of those who have heard me speak to the subject, "The American Inner City" have tried to warn me as to what can happen when one hangs around the pickle-barrel of American Ecclesiastical Sociology. The warnings are heard. But the situation is also etched into my mind; and it will be a treasured and meaningful memory each time I recall standing alongside Christian Action Group workers, black and white together, linking arms and singing, "We shall overcome for God is on our side." This must surely be seen to be a present working of the Spirit of God through the Church in Mission today.

Much of the work of the Church in the American Inner City is found within this complex of social problems. And it seems that from within these alarmingly captive situations the worshipping congregations are finding that real exodus for which they are praising God.

No one situation in the Inner City in the States exactly parallels a situation that is found in the heart of London. There cannot be the immediate referral of an approach that could be

transferred into the English scene. The real value in the trip was in questioning people concerning the strategy that was behind the various experimental approaches. It was encouraging to see the releasing of men, ordained men, to take part in these experimental ministries. Much of the potential that was offered out of these varied situations was made realisable because denominations were prepared to free men from the usual parish duties to allow them to be fully employed in the experiments. This is being done in London in a small way, and indeed, this is most encouraging. It would be a very tentative proposal on my part to suggest that this be encouraged and enlarged.

There are many exciting areas of development in our own great cities that demand our attention. Not the smallest of these is our whole relationship to the total urban renewal situation.

A realistic approach is needed within areas of urban renewal. Urban renewal is not just demolition of houses. Quite often an urban renewal project is a combination of demolition, conservation, and rehabilitation. The term urban renewal is a shorthand description of an approach to town planning which aims at a reconstruction of the total physical and social structure of urban life. We need to be informed of the significance of this process before it occurs in our neighbourhood. It is part of the Christian witness to seek to influence the creation of these new areas. In London it is clear that the new road system and the current comprehensive development of both the Greater London Council and the Local Boroughs will create new environmental patterns, and will isolate many church buildings from the centre of population. This will leave many of them unrelated to the physical structure of the new communities and unsuited to meet the demanding needs of the social and spiritual requirements of the new environments. It seems then absolutely imperative that we get in on the ground floor of local development planning. The challenge which a new community, of the kind projected in many areas of London, presents, is the challenge to think in a systematic way about the whole religious life of the community.

The relationship between the Church as a community of faith permeating a whole community, and the specific tasks of the churches as institutional structures is brought into sharp focus. How does the Church participate in the determination of the values which are to guide the planning process in developing communities? How does the Church influence and help to determine the quality of human, community life in a growing urban culture? How are the churches to relate to one another in an ecumenical concern, to be a positive, helpful, and genuinely Christian contribution to the life of the City? How is church extension to become competition for greater faithfulness to the Mission, rather than competition for institutional success? Whether or not churches survive as institutions does not matter, whether or not they are true to their Mission does. We must continue to ask these questions and accept

the challenge of change, and continue to minister as "Body of Christ" in the world.

Many of the innovations in the development of the religious life of these Inner City areas hinge upon the development of a Cooperative Ministry of some kind; a Cooperative Ministry that has sufficient authority, resources, and competence to enable the Church to respond to the challenges and opportunities which will be present. It is a unit which must provide the range of administrative functions efficiently, economically and in close enough relationship to the state of the community, to match Church response to the needs of the area. The structure of this Cooperative Ministry will need careful attention. Basic policy commitments with respect of denominational and local church funds, assignment of personnel, job definitions, communications, ownership and management of facilities, will need to be worked out. Furthermore there will need to be a positive commitment to such a Cooperative Ministry on an experimental basis by the denominations, including funds and backing of credit if the Ministry is to be an adequate one.

Perhaps the most likely and most dangerous mistake will be to create a Cooperative Ministry that is assigned responsibility without authority and resources to meet its responsibilities. This can lead to nothing but frustration and confusion. Either the Cooperative Ministry must be given the necessary strength and tools for the task or it should not be created at all.

Another very real point must be very carefully looked into, particularly as it relates to the work in the Inner City, that is the problem of housing and accommodation for workers, whether ordained or lay. If there is to be a choice between the provision of accommodation for people as against the building of a church, then I think we need to look into the question very seriously indeed. It may well turn out to be a very short-sighted outlook that will plump for the church every time. Meeting places can always be hired. Whilst talking of accommodation for workers we also have to state that for other Church members committed to the Inner City scene there will have to be the acceptance of the fact that they, in all probability will be paying rent for their accommodation. Many will never know the security of owning their own property. This is one price that will have to be paid.

Taking a cool look at the Inner City is a lifetime's task, and can hardly be complete in an article such as this. So in conclusion I will say that it is not because there is no evidence of the reconciling work of God in the Inner City that the changing shape of things challenges the churches, but rather that the churches must always strive to find relevant ways of ministering to the Eternal Truth in Christ, set in the heart of the world that is in constant change.

D. J. HOLLIDGE

THE JAMAICAN SCENE— ACHIEVEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Not many years ago the word "Jamaica" was probably associated in the minds of most British Baptists with a few stories about William Knibb and Emancipation, and a shadowy picture of a tropical island in the Caribbean (if not off the coast of Africa!). Nowadays, as a result of the presence of so many Jamaicans in English cities and churches, not to mention the visits of West Indian Test teams, there is a greater knowledge of Jamaica and Jamaicans, and a curiosity to learn more.

I have been asked to write on three aspects of the Jamaican scene. The first is the contribution of the B.M.S. to the present religious situation on the Island. It will be as well to remind ourselves that Jamaica is no longer a mission field in the traditional sense. All the leading Christian communions of Great Britain are represented here in varying degrees of strength. Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians, who have recently come together in the United Church of Jamaica, Disciples of Christ, Methodists, Moravians, the Salvation Army, and the Brethren. Most of these have been working in Jamaica for upwards of 100 years.

Other branches of the Church have come in from the United States: the African Episcopal Methodist Church, the Church of God, Seventh Day Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals, Mennonites, to mention only some.

Finally, there are the autonomous charismatic groups, whose rythmical singing and highly emotional preaching reveal their African provenance.

Most, if not all, of the branches of the Church in Jamaica receive financial help from overseas, but with few exceptions their control is vested in the hands of national leadership. A noteworthy feature of the Church in Jamaica is its deep commitment in the field of education. All of the larger communions have many schools, and there is a very close connection between church and school, especially in the rural areas.

This "church situation" is the product of 150 years of development, and the B.M.S. have played a distinguished part, both in the initiation and progress of this. I do not propose to rehearse the well-known story of the decisive, often dramatic, part played by men like Knibb and Burchell to the emancipation of the slaves. Not unnaturally, an independent Jamaica does not want to be continually reminded of its origin, but the glory of these apostolic men remains undimmed, not only in Baptist churches, but also among all competent historians of the West Indies.

The more positive aspect of their work appears in the "Free Village Scheme" which they conceived and carried into effect, under which freed slaves were given plots of land to cultivate.

Many of the villages now in the island came into being in this way. The early Baptist missionaries were also fully alive to the importance of education, and it is owing to their efforts that the Baptists possess such a large number of schools. Moreover, Knibb, Burchell, their associates and immediate successors were tireless church builders, and a large proportion of the Baptist churches and circuits in Jamaica today owe their foundation to the initiative of these men. One is astonished and humbled by their achievements. Modern Jamaica, with its good roads, cars and medical services, is an exhausting place to work in, but Knibb and his associates were often racked with fever, and made their innumerable journeys by mule along rocky roads. Only their wives are deserving of greater honour.

The pioneers were followed by a succession of missionary-pastors from Great Britain, many of whom gave their lives to Jamaica and are buried there. Few of them possessed gifts equal to those of the emancipators but they made a sterling contribution to the development of the Island. The majority of the earlier missionaries devoted most of their attention to the rural areas, and for this reason Baptist strength lies there, and among the lower income levels of society. This is not a cause for regret, but it means that the voice of the Baptists is not as influential in Government circles as is that of some other branches of the Church. However, now that an increasing number of young people from the country parts are winning scholarships to the University of the West Indies we may look for a steady increase of the number of Baptists in posts of national leadership.

The Jamaica Baptist Union became independent in 1849, but this, fortunately, did not mean the severance of its links with Britain through the B.M.S. The Society has unflinchingly made a generous annual grant to the Union, without which the progress of Baptist work would have been greatly reduced. Nowadays the grant is earmarked for the General Fund from which the stipends of pastors are supplemented, and for the support of the two Jamaican Baptist deaconesses.

A survey of this kind would be gravely defective if it omitted reference to Calabar College. Lest it should be felt that the writer's testimony is prejudiced, let it be stated that the value of the College's contribution during the past 123 years has been acknowledged by many who have done research into the progress of the churches, and of education, in Jamaica. The foundation of a college for the training of an indigenous ministry was another brain child of William Knibb and his contemporaries, and from the outset the venture received the support of the B.M.S. The Society has always provided the regular college staff though recently an additional tutor was appointed by the Jamaica Baptist Union. Calabar has been the source from which has flowed, for over a century, a stream of dedicated and trained men, who have served in Jamaica, in other parts of the West Indies, and in Latin America.

For many years ministers of other communions were trained at the College. There can be no reasonable doubt that the present numerical strength of the Jamaica Baptist Union, its unity and maturity are due in large measure to the leadership which has been provided by Calabar men. One of the things which strikes visitors from the United Kingdom is the orderliness and richness of the worship in Jamaican Baptist churches. I cannot refrain from adding that a young Jamaican who returned to the Island after a visit to Great Britain confessed that he had found the worship in many English Baptist churches rather 'thin' by comparison!

The Baptists have also made a great contribution to Jamaica and the West Indies through Calabar High School, which was founded just over fifty years ago by the late Rev. Ernest Price and the Rev. David Davis. It is now one of the largest schools in the Island. The B.M.S. which has taken an active interest in the school from its beginning, is represented on the Board of Governors by two members. The present Headmaster, the Rev. Walter Foster, originally came to Jamaica as a missionary of the Society.

My second theme is the future of ministerial training in Jamaica. As this is being written the three leading theological colleges in the capital city, Kingston, are on the verge of undergoing a metamorphosis. Our churches and governing bodies have decided that we should become constituent parts of a United Theological College of the West Indies. The decision to create this College was the culmination of several years of deliberation, and could not have been taken without the promise of generous financial help from the Theological Education Fund, a service of the World Council of Churches. As will be realized the decision to participate was not an easy one for Jamaican Baptists to make, partly because we are Baptists, and partly because we possess our own historic college. However, a number of factors united to cause the great majority of us to believe that God was directing us to go forward. First there was our tradition of co-operation in ministerial training. For many years our tutors and students have shared with those of other communions in a joint programme of training, to the great benefit of all. The proposed United College was the logical development of this. In the second place, the new College will be located on a site adjacent to the University and its students will share many of the advantages enjoyed by the undergraduates. A number of them will be eligible to sit for the Licentiate of Theology, which the University has shaped in consultation with the theological colleges. It is hoped that a B.A. (Theol) will follow. Not to have participated might well have meant the relegation of Baptist students and ministers to a theological and ecclesiastical backwater.

The architecture of the new college is unusual, as the students will live in bungalows, each of which will contain four study-bedrooms. The bungalows will be separated by small quadrangles and will be arranged in groups of various sizes. The Baptist students will be together in an identifiable block. The Chapel, hexagonal

in shape, will stand in the centre of the complex. The site is said to be well supplied with cool breezes, but there will be no need to instal central heating.

An attempt has also been made to create an indigenous curriculum for the L.Th. "Elements of Sociology" is included among the required subjects, "Church History" includes the history of the Church in the West Indies, whilst "Comparative Religion" includes "an outline of the history, belief and practice of religions related to the West Indian society: Hinduism, Islam and West Africa Religion". Eleven communions will be participating in the College at the outset. Two additional West Indian tutors will join us in September, and it is intended that the proportion of West Indians on the staff should further increase.

Finally, I have been asked to write on the opportunities open to British ministers for service in Jamaica. The assignment is not an easy one, and it well illustrates the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of conveying a balanced impression of a country and its conditions. Statements made earlier in this article may have given the impression that Jamaica in general, and the Jamaican Church in particular, have no need of help from overseas. This would be a mistaken impression. There is still great need out here. Whilst there is a considerable amount of wealth in the Island it is in the hands of a few, and many Jamaicans eke out a precarious existence in wretched conditions and on a very poor diet. Young children are frequently brought to hospital dying of malnutrition. Education is not compulsory and could not be made so until many more schools are built and many more teachers are available.

Lack of employment is a very serious problem, and many men in their 20s and 30s have never had regular work. In rural areas there is virtually no employment for young women and this is one of the factors which encourage sexual promiscuity. In spite of so many churches and their evangelistic activities the illegitimacy rate and the practice of concubinage show no signs of retreating.

Nor is the supply of ministers anything like adequate, in spite of Calabar and the other colleges. The latest figures show that there are 268 churches in the Jamaica Baptist Union, and only 65 ministers in active service and two deaconesses. Apart from members of the staffs of Calabar College and High School only two of the ministers are British: John M. Bee, who has served here for about thirty years, and Michael J. Woosley who has had charge of the Oracabessa Circuit since 1964. With scarcely an exception, the ministers are saddled with circuits of four to seven, or even more churches. (Brethren in the United Kingdom might pause to imagine five deacons' meetings per month, five church meetings, visitation of five different congregations and at least one new building in process of erection!) The answer to the problem would seem obvious: break down the larger circuits into smaller

ones and recruit ministers from every possible source, including the U.K. The increased output of students from the College during recent years has made it possible to begin to consider reducing the size of some circuits . . . Among the chief obstacles, however, is the difficulty of finding the finances for additional salaries and manses. Moreover since the coming of Independence to Jamaica it has been necessary for immigrants who wish to work here to obtain permits, although, up to the present, there has been no difficulty in obtaining these for ministers.

Some time ago I was in conversation with a Church of England minister from the United Kingdom, and in some ways conveyed to him the impression—an entirely mistaken one—that I was contemplating becoming an Anglican. He promptly began to expose the short-coming of his Church, especially the weakness of episcopal government, but went on to add “Don’t let me discourage you from coming over. We shall be only too happy to have you.” With much modification, similar ambivalent advice could be given to a minister in Britain who is considering offering for work in Jamaica. He is greatly needed here, and if he is of the right type he would be very happy working in Jamaica. The obstacles in the way of his coming are greater now than at any time. These fortunately, are not of the kind described by my Anglican friend, they are presented by the financial limitations of Jamaican Baptists, and it is not likely that they will be speedily removed. This is not written, however, to act as a discouragement or to suggest that where there is a true call the way would not open.

DONALD MONCKOM

THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY OF HEALING

The title is not original; it has been used in one form or another by several writers on this subject, and probably for reasons similar to my own. It calls attention to the fact that every kind of healing is the business of the church.

And it is not only the theologians who make this claim. Some doctors dislike what they describe as our meddling in their business, while others speak freely of “our overlapping professions”. A general practitioner said to me “My patients do not always get well when they ought to: after the physician, surgeon, or psychiatrist has done all that is necessary for them they linger in their illnesses because of a spiritual factor which has not been dealt with. It is often the spiritual counsellor who must say the last word.” In the words of an eminent physician:—“I tended him, God mended him”.

As a Christian pastor like yourselves I would prefer an even more uncompromising title, something like “The Healing Ministry of Jesus in His Church”. Without going into the theological implications raised by using the term “Holy Spirit”, I wish to

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"Charlie"

The end of an era on British Railways was marked on February 21st, 1967, by the retirement of Charlie, the last of the shunting horses.

This reference to Charlie brought to my recollection an experience in the Children's Church many years ago. The session subject was "Moses" and I had enlarged on the preservation of Moses for the years of preparation, without his being aware of it, for the leadership of his own people and on his acceptance of challenge. At this point, one who happened to be listening said "Moses was a proper Charlie, wasn't he?" Whatever the word Charlie may now mean to an eight-year old, it certainly then was meant as a tribute of admiration for one who saw the end of an era but who also saw the beginning of another.

I suppose it could be said that my own Company in 1905 was close to the end of one era and to the beginning of another, for within a few years the world was involved in conflict. But in itself the Company is a continuing force which constantly adapts itself to the growing complexities of business and of denominational life.

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It is a long time since I first read Kenneth Graham but I have never forgotten these words in "The Golden Age"—

"You have been in the fields in the early morning? Barren acres, all! But only stoop—catch the light thwartwise—and all is a silver network of gossamer!"

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convey my belief that every good thing within the Church is due to the indwelling of Jesus with His people. It is sufficient for me here as elsewhere to remember Paul's identification of the Lord with the Spirit. It was another G.P. who one day called me into a house saying, "You are a minister of Jesus Christ—this job is yours, not mine".

I think many of you have been similarly called upon to supplement the doctor's work, and even to do in the Name of Christ things that were impossible for him to do. You have exercised a healing ministry, by prayer more often than by applied psychology. I wish I could forget that blessed word, for it can lead me to think more of techniques than of persons. Our ministry of healing is rooted in theology, in the very Gospel we are called to proclaim, in the good will of God as it is seen in Jesus.

Our commission to heal is bound up with our commission to preach and to teach. It goes back to the New Testament and especially to the Gospels. You are, no doubt, familiar with the relevant passages, but I will remind you of some of them. I am assuming, of course, that the commission given to the first disciples is ours also.

See Matthew 10: 5-8, Mark 3: 13-15, Luke 9: 1-2: Also Luke 6: 13-18, where the call of the Twelve is linked with a great manifestation of the Lord's power. Luke 10 tells of the appointment of the Seventy, of the authority given to them and the use they made of it. "... Even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name." The failure of the nine at the time of the Transfiguration emphasises the fact that Jesus did expect His disciples to perform healing miracles in His name. Their failure earned His rebuke.

When we turn from the Synoptics to the Fourth Gospel we find that the call of the several disciples is linked with the proclamation of the Messiah, and the commission is held back until near the end of the ministry. But it is there, in chapter 14, where it is included in the command to pray. "He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do, and greater works than these shall he do ... Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do."

A few more New Testament references should be noted, the end of Mark, the Epistle of James, and Paul's comments on spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12. Not that this is a complete record, for among other things it omits almost all of the healing stories. But it will suffice. It matters little that the end of Mark is a fragment; it is in a way a summary of what is found in the Gospel as a whole, and a pointer to what is recorded in the Acts, where the apostles show their acceptance of the Lord's commission, and where the church shows its early obedience and vitality.

In James the believer is advised to pray in times of affliction, to sing psalms in times of joy, and in sickness to call the elders

of the church, who must pray over him and anoint him with oil. The instructions precede the claim that the prayer of faith shall save the sick. Paul's words about spiritual gifts seem to indicate his belief that the diverse gifts including the gift of healing will be spread over the whole church. Ideally every gift would be found in every church. The point to note is that the gifts belonged to the church rather than to an individual person.

In the New Testament the disciples exercise their commission in extension of the ministry of the Lord Himself. He sent them to do what He had done, to preach, teach, and heal, and so far as we know He has never abrogated that commission nor withdrawn His authority. There are "Healers", or Healing Groups, who have no concern with Christ's work or His commandments. The Body to which I belong has the aim of "bringing back into His church the Lord's healing ministry". It is a Bible-based movement, and here it may be said that much of the revival of spiritual healing today is related to the revival of biblical theology.

THE KINGDOM

Looking again at the works of Jesus, and its extension through His disciples, we note particularly that He came preaching the Kingdom and healing the sick (Matthew 4: 23). We need to understand what He means by the term Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven. Perhaps we need to grapple with the word miracle, which is used to denote the signs of the Kingdom.

For a long time I have wished that I could find a substantial book on the theology of the Kingdom, which is not just an element in the teaching of Jesus but a manifestation of the power of God at work in His world. Many years ago my attention was called to A. G. Hogg's '*Christ's Message of the Kingdom*'. It was recently described as the best on this subject, and not very long ago "The Expository Times" gave it a considerable amount of space. Having read what the E.T. printed I read the book again. But it was written for Study Groups and divided up into days and weeks. Also it is out of print. It is well worth reading, for it surveys the whole field of thought concerning the Kingdom in the Old Testament and the New. The Kingdom is "a system of Divine action towards man in which (God's) infinite resources become freely available" . . . "Belief in Christ's message of the Kingdom will mean that we venture to draw upon the miracle working power of God".

Is this what we think of the Kingdom? We could quite easily have thought of it as an other-worldly state and have justified ourselves by quoting "My Kingdom is not of this world"; or we could have identified it with some of the political developments of history. The biblical Kingdom is a realm or reign of God in which all His will is done. It is the replacement of the rule of Satan by the rule of God in all things. It is the triumph of good over evil, of life over death, of health over sickness, through the intervention

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of God in Christ. In a sense it is God's reckoning with the Fall, the restoration which God alone can supply for His alienated children.

Stanley Jones complained about the weak interpretations he had heard of passages like Luke 4: 18, 19, 21. "When we come upon a passage which is not true in our experience, or which we cannot understand, we spiritualise it". It is easier that way, but it makes us stop short of drawing upon the miracle-working power of God which is the proof of the Kingdom. And so we debate the problem of evil. In the story in John 9 of the healing of the man born blind we see Jesus rebuking His disciples for speculating on the problem and telling them to get on with the works. And in the answer Jesus sent to John in reply to the question "Art thou the coming one?" Jesus pointed to the works He had already done: "Go and tell John . . . the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them". Let John, nearing his violent death, understand that these are the authentic signs of Messiah's Kingdom.

MIRACLES

Like most of my readers I have had to wrestle with the problem of miracle. Can it happen? Does it happen? My memory goes back to discussions and seminars of many years ago, and most particularly to an occasion when a man who was both a scholar and a saint said, "God cannot play fast and loose with His own laws". Since then I have had to learn that we still know very little about God's laws, and I have come to realise that God could not allow His universe to be His prison. We can know nothing worth knowing until we understand that the ultimate law of God is His love. Love is the motive alike of our creation and our redemption. Jeremiah's vision of the potter remaking the marred vessel has its application in the life of the body as well as the life of the soul. In one sense it is a miracle that God can break into our human life at all, but He does break in.

Some people are fortunate enough to begin their study of miracle in the school of life itself, and not in the classroom. It may happen like this. A few weeks ago we were asked to pray for a woman who was told that she must have an operation for the removal of a brain tumour. Even if the operation proved successful she might lose her sight. Of course we prayed, and so did her friends. The final examination before the operation gave the surprising result that no operation was necessary, for there was no tumour there.

I can almost hear the rumblings—mistaken diagnosis—coincidence. I heard of a similar coincidence in the case of another patient, a child, shortly afterwards. We know that there are many mistaken diagnoses, suspected malignancies sometimes turn out to be quite harmless, and other kinds of disease reveal mis-

leading symptoms. But there is plenty of evidence here and there throughout the world to prove that some of the worst forms of disease, in their most advanced stages, are yielding to spiritual ministrations. This ministrations may take any one of the forms known in New Testament times—prayer, laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and even exorcism. These practices I have sometimes heard described as witchcraft: it is strange that we should be so ready to discredit events which ought to be seen as the present day working out of things promised in the gospel. In that strange story told in John 2: 1-11 we have this comment, "This beginning of miracles Jesus did, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed on Him".

CONDITIONS

The church is intended to provide the conditions in which miracles can happen, do happen, are expected to happen, in accordance with the sovereign will of God, Who has never abdicated from the throne of the universe. What are those conditions? You will probably expect me here to embark upon a discussion of faith, and that might be a reasonable deduction from some of the sayings of Jesus, and the writings of the apostles. I would say rather that all these conditions are grouped around the word love. This is the Lord's New Commandment, and is described by Paul as the most excellent of the gifts of the spirit. Love is greater than any of the gifts of the spirit—prophecy, knowledge, faith, sacrificial giving, and even the martyr-spirit. The best of these other gifts, and all of them together, will avail nothing without love.

My attention to the healing power of love was stirred by a novel by J. D. Beresford. It is the story of a desperately ill boy whose healing began when his father's love became a reality to him. Love is scarce, even in good families, even in the church.

We accept that pastoral care should be exercised by the pastor, but it is not his duty alone. The whole fellowship should be lovingly concerned about the needs of every one of its members. The complaint against the Ephesian Church (Rev. 2) was that its early love had gone. We sometimes say when healing does not come in answer to prayer, that faith has failed. This may be as untrue as it is unkind. The truth is more likely to be that love has failed, not necessarily in the sufferer, more likely in the Christian community.

If we loved more we should pray more. Prayer is the expression of loving trust in God. Intercessory prayer is an expression—one expression—of our love for our fellows in their need. More of this might bring added conviction to our preaching, for many people are sick in spirit for lack of love and assurance, and their spiritual sickness spills over into mind and body, so that this is a very sick society. People in the grip of evil, anxiety, illness should find their need met in the warm love which Jesus radiates through His church.

Some two years ago a request for prayer came to us from the parents of a 15-year-old girl who was suffering from a killing disease. We prayed for her. A little later we heard that she had been taken into hospital, quite seriously ill. Prayer continued for some time, and some members of the hospital staff joined in. The treatment she was receiving resulted in a distressing disfigurement, and the doctors decided to change it. All the time the girl was worried because her Confirmation had had to be postponed, and enquiries were made concerning a special service of Confirmation. This was arranged, and the improvement in her condition was accelerated. A few months later she went back to her school and was soon taking part in all its normal activities. More recently still we were shown a photograph of this girl, now preparing for her career, and radiantly healthy and happy.

I leave my readers to make their guesses, but would point out that in this combination of circumstances there are several factors—the prayer of faith, the personal self-commitment of the girl to Christ, the understanding co-operation of a bishop, and the equally fine co-operation of doctors and nurses. All these factors are summed up in the word LOVE. Here was the family, the church, and the hospital, working together in love.

Many similar instances could be quoted, and many more would occur within the experience of the local church if it could be set free from the materialism which has too often quenched the Spirit, and if it would live by love.

HARRY WESTON

THE CHURCH TOMORROW

It is usually more important to ask the right questions than to give (or think one has given) the right answers. Without seeking to explain or justify this assertion, I want to proceed to make another, namely that one of the most urgent needs of the Church today is to ask the sort of questions which are truly relevant. I thank God when my daughter asks questions which, though taking me out of my depth, really go to the heart of things. As we get older, many of us grow intellectually lazy. It is certainly easier to make pronouncements and give answers than to face honestly some of the vital questions confronting us today. Maybe, this is why the Church is regarded as irrelevant by most of our contemporaries. One of the most important resolutions passed by the Faith and Order Conference at Nottingham in 1964 said the questions which the world is asking Christians about their faith are as searching as those which Christians ask one another.

This article is concerned with asking questions, rather than giving answers. Admittedly, they are not about the deep issues of

theology or philosophy, but this does not mean they are unimportant. In fact, the sooner we face up to them, the better it will be for the health of the Church. One such question is, what is to be the pattern of the Church of tomorrow? This is a question which the lively enquiring mind must ask, but which it knows it cannot answer. Indeed, there is no ready-made, once-for-all answer. All that can be said is that the answer is continually in process of formulation as our situation gradually changes. The Church is not an organisation but a living organism, equipped to adapt itself to change. Where, because of disease or some other impediment, a living body does not adapt itself, it dies. Let us make sure that we do not thwart the exercise of this God-given faculty.

The title is a grandiloquent and far-reaching one. In actual fact, its scope is much more limited. The questions we are asking concern the immediate future, and (since most Baptists, it would seem, feel that at the present time, there is a need for us to maintain a separate denominational existence and witness) the life of our denomination.

Are we right, in the first place to continue to think in terms of churches and congregations at all? Certainly, in some quarters this is the impression we are given. Whatever an expression like "religionless Christianity" means to careful theologians this is frequently its meaning in popular thinking. But if the Church of Christ is the fellowship of believers, must there not continue to be some kind of church structure, certainly at the local level? And will the people of God not want to meet together for worship, especially the Lord's Supper, in 1984 as much as 1964? That there is an urgent need to re-think our situation is clear. One question we would do well to ask is, what is the local church? Is it necessarily one congregation? Could it not mean for us rather the whole fellowship of Baptists in one place (i.e. a small town, or a district of a larger town, or a group of villages)? Such a "church" with its ministerial team, its one diaconate and church meeting might be made up of a number of congregations or groups meeting for some purposes at any rate (possibly specialist activities) in separate buildings, in some cases private houses. Further elaboration here is not possible, but then, after all, this is a question, not an answer.

What of the ministry? Are we witnessing the disintegration of what Baptists usually call the "full-time" or "separated" ministry? Undoubtedly we are going to see many changes in the coming years. Interesting experiments are already taking place, one of the most promising of which involves the "team ministry." Perhaps in future years, such a team will include not only ordained ministers of Word and Sacraments, but lay specialists as well. It would be a ministerial team, rather than a team of ministers. And there are good reasons for such a suggestion. Though the dangers of professionalism are real, the Church's ministry needs to be more professional in the sense that its specialised aspects demand

the highest possible professional skill and experience. Moreover, it gives scope for experimentation with part-time ministries, especially in terms of the worker-priest idea, and points the way to what is possibly the best way of providing opportunities of ministerial service for women. When this has been said, however, is it not true that there is still an urgent need for theologically trained ministers, ordained and commissioned to preach the Word, administer the sacraments and act as shepherds to the people of God? Neither 'prophet', 'priest', nor 'pastor' would in itself adequately describe their task. They would be "men of God" who are all three, fathers-in-God, in fact, exhorting, encouraging their people, (indeed all who sought their help) and leading them in worship. The ministry of such a person would, as at present, need to be full-time, and he would need to be financially supported by the church (neither of which need necessarily be true of the more professional members of the team) to enable him to give himself completely to caring for people in the name of Christ, to study, prayer and the conduct of worship, and to the instruction of Christians in the faith. He may not even preside at the church meeting, but, like the Superintendent within the Association, his word would be respected, not because of his office, but because of his character and calling.

Our Lord's words in Mark 7: 1-13 bring into focus a question which is being raised for us in a very acute form today. In what sense and to what extent should we be bound by the past? Certainly no-one in his right mind would dream of repudiating the accumulated wisdom and experience of former centuries. As Foakes Jackson rightly said, "Those who seek for a practical solution of present problems can never safely ignore the lessons of the past." But that does not mean we have the right to receive uncritically all that we receive from the past. Such an unintelligent (and superstitious?) acceptance of the past would be to turn a precious heritage into an onerous burden. But, are we not in danger of doing just that today? The practices and doctrinal formulations of our fathers were attempts to express in terms of the circumstances of their own day and in the light of their own knowledge certain great fundamental principles. Can we not learn to distinguish those principles from their outward form and expression? This only leads to a further question. Do we really take seriously God's promise to guide the Church in every age by the Holy Spirit, according to the needs of the day? If only we could hear afresh John Robinson's great utterance, "I charge you that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ... I am verily persuaded the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of His holy Word." Basically, I believe, there is only one Baptist principle, namely that God's people have the right and responsibility of seeking and obeying the truth, whatever the cost.

The implications of this principle are too numerous to mention.

Some are doctrinal, some legal, some practical; some concern the individual, others the local church, yet others the denomination. We can at least begin by asking for how much longer what has been done and thought in the past is to be the criterion of what God wants us to do today or tomorrow. For instance, did our fathers, in fact, intend to bind us in the way we so often are bound by the trust deeds, constitutions and other formularies which they drew up, sometimes centuries ago? The Church of Christ is a pilgrim Church, like Abraham journeying by faith, not able to see the end of the journey, but trusting its heavenly Guide. As such, it must go forward. It cannot stand still except at its peril. It is never easy to leave the familiar and the secure for the untried and the dangerous, but is this not the meaning of faith? A church meeting is by definition "the occasion when, as individuals, and as a community, we submit ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and stand under the judgments of God that we may know what is the mind of Christ." Are we prepared, not only in church meetings, but in all our denominational assemblies, thus to seek God's will for our day?

One further question may perhaps be asked, as it has an important bearing on the church's future. Why do our faith and worship so often bear little or no relation to life as it has to be lived in the world? Can it be because we have not really grasped what the Gospel is all about? We live in a world which to many of our contemporaries is entirely meaningless. They feel there is no point or purpose to existence—only frustration, tragedy and despair. We tell them, it is true, that God is love, and that meaning and purpose are to be found in Christ alone. But how can they be expected to believe that unless they see it expressed in our lives in a way which shows that we ourselves take it seriously?

The cross, viewed from one angle, is the symbol and clearest example of meaninglessness. It represents the triumph of evil and the destruction of the highest and best the world has ever seen. But God was in it. He in whom alone is the meaning of life, entered into the futility of our existence. It is perhaps easy for us, viewing Calvary from the vantage point of our Lord's resurrection, to overlook this. We claim to be walking in the steps of the Suffering Servant, but do we really care for men and women in their loneliness, sorrow and the utter frustration of life apart from God, in a way that remotely resembles God's love in Christ? Or are we too deeply involved in the "rat-race", or "power-game"—that struggle to win and maintain power, prestige or position in Church or society—to bother much about, or even to notice those for whom Christ died? These are questions we need to ask, if the love of Christ is to be seen any more clearly in the Church of tomorrow than it is in the Church of today.

E. F. CLIPSHAM