

# The Fraternal

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## EDITORIAL

### FORGOTTEN MEN?

The recent discussion in 'The Baptist Times' concerning the B.U. Superannuation Fund raised many questions of importance to ministers and not least to the position of retired ministers. Echoes of this discussion, although covering a wider field of concern, have come to the Editorial Board. One minister with an honourable record writes "a retired minister may as well be a dead minister as far as the Baptist Union is concerned". Another man of excellent record wrote "Our Denomination has no policy for retired ministers except to write them off and give them a meagre pension". Strong words, but are they true? Are retired ministers the forgotten men of the Denomination? None will dispute that the welfare of senior Brethren should be an active concern of the Denomination and certainly of the B.M.F.

What are the concerns which lead retired ministers to feel that they are forgotten men? We list reasons which appear to be the main causes of concern (a) Disenfranchisement at the B.U. Assembly (b) the small Superannuation Allowance (c) lack of opportunities to use their preaching gift and pastoral experience (d) loneliness.

It is abundantly evident that retired ministers feel that it is poor reward after a life-time of service to be disenfranchised at the B.U. Assembly. They can have Assembly rights by becoming personal members of the B.U. on payment of the appropriate subscription. Some do; others would if they could afford it, many do not because they feel a retired minister should have Assembly standing by right. Only a change of the Constitution can alter this position and if change is proposed it will take two Assemblies before it can become operative. The present incredible position is probably unknown to the Denomination generally. The B.U. Council should take the initiative and recommend the change.

We turn to the Superannuation Fund. The articles and letters in the 'Baptist Times' about the Fund have thrown a good deal of light upon its basis, resources, benefits and prospects. One correspondent concluded that retired ministers and those who retire during the next ten years have little hope of betterment because of continuing inflation unless a capital Fund is found to meet their need. The position of retired ministers of very advanced years is even worse since they do not qualify for National Insurance Pension. Younger ministers have better prospects and the more so if ministers become involved in the proposed new Government scheme designed to assure a man or woman that at the end of a full-time working life they will be able to enjoy to a reasonable degree the standard of living to which they have been accustomed.

The position of many retired ministers is that their modest stipends were insufficient to enable them to save enough to purchase a retirement home. After paying rent for accommodation, their weekly pensions, National Insurance and B.U. Superannuation, leave them with a pittance to provide other essentials of life.

It would, however, be wrong to suppose that the Denomination has been inactive concerning the material needs of retired ministers. Pensions have been increased as the Fund allowed. An immediate increase is anticipated and the pension is to be a pension by right at the age of 65. B.U. flats and bungalows provide a home for a few at reasonable rents, a provision which will be increased in due course by the plans of the B.M.M. Housing Association Ltd. At best these provisions are for the few who feel happy to go where accommodation is available. Many more will desire to retire to a place of their own choice in order to be near family or friends as the years advance. A Superannuation allowance realistic to the costs of today would enable many to do this.

A third cause of concern is the void which occurs in the life of some retired ministers when they cease full-time ministry. They find themselves in the pew and without any responsibility. This may be good and refreshing for a brief while but if a man has preaching in his soul and is in good health very soon he will long for opportunity to preach and/or make use of his pastoral experience. Much will depend upon the place to which a minister retires. Some retired ministers have ample opportunities to preach and to use their pastoral gifts. The opportunities will be less if they go to a district where there are few Baptist churches. Men can isolate themselves by their own decision. Nevertheless, we brethren can make more preaching opportunities for those retired if we have a mind so to do. The minister can suggest in the vestry the names of preachers for his absence during holidays and maybe other occasions. Always assuming that the retired minister has not lost his edge as a preacher surely he should be a priority consideration.

We are told that there is a shortage of ministers. We assume that the shortage is related mostly to small causes. If so, many situations could be met by the service and experience of retired ministers. The number of retired ministers increases. Some will not wish to be involved again in pastoral work but there must be many who would be willing to offer some service. How can this reservoir of preaching gift and experience be brought to situations of need? No doubt the Superintendents have a list of men who retire to their areas and intimate to the churches the presence of these brethren. But it is imperative that the retired minister should inform the Superintendent of his desire to be of service.

It may surprise our readers that we have listed loneliness as a cause of concern. This is a very real experience of some retired ministers. Their partner is taken from them, or physical strength fails and they are housebound. Amidst their many responsibilities we would hope that our Superintendents are

able to keep contact with them in some way. But the responsibility is surely that of the local minister and church. All of us should be mindful of the helpfulness of the ministry of the pen in keeping in touch with retired ministers known to us.

Leaders of the Denomination have many urgent cares and concerns pressing upon them. Their primary task is to lead our people forward, to call them to spiritual renewal and inspire them to use their material resources to ensure a ministry and a church matched to the tasks of today and tomorrow. They will not forget the men who have served in the past. The words of Sir Cyril Black as reported in the "B.T." "It is the responsibility of the rest of the denomination to care for the ministers and missionaries who have given the best years of their life to the Master's service and to the Baptist cause" should be heard again and again across the denomination. If the needs of retired ministers are known, our people will most surely respond.

## BAPTISTS IN EUROPE

Without writing on each country individually the only way to give a continental view of Baptist life is to think of it as existing under three political or ecclesiastical influences.

The first must be concerned with Baptist people who live in areas of totalitarian atheistic government and under Communist authority. This comprises the greater number of our people in Europe. In each Communist country in Europe, except Albania, there are Baptist Churches with an organised Baptist Union or Convention. All of these had their beginning in the days prior to the 1917 revolution, survived the Nazi occupation and continue to worship and witness to Christ and the power of His Gospel under a regime of atheistic authority. It is not possible to write in general terms of the conditions under which Baptist Christians live in Communist countries because the conditions vary, quite considerably from country to country. It should be added that they can also vary considerably from time to time in any one country. In no country is there complete religious freedom and in no country, except Albania, are all forms of religious worship forbidden. In all countries freedom of worship is guaranteed by statute. However, it is when 'worship' is defined that the conflict between the interpretation of the State and the understanding of the Church is seen and felt. The areas of religious life in which the State imposed restrictions are most keenly felt can be summarised but the order of importance would vary from country to country. Generally it can be listed in the following way: Restrictions on—

- (i) the propagation of the faith by organised evangelism outside of the building registered by the State for religious worship

- (ii) the teaching of the faith to children and young people in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes
- (iii) the theological training of ministers
- (iv) the building of new Churches and the repair of old buildings
- (v) travel and the participation in Christian Congresses and meetings
- (vi) Further problems arise from the shortage of Bibles, New Testaments and Devotional and theological literature.

However, despite the restrictions and in some cases hardship and persecution, the Churches in these areas are faithfully and energetically witnessing and in some places are growing. They are a challenge to those whose circumstances are easier and whose freedom is unrestricted.

The second group are those of our Baptist people who live in countries where the Roman Catholic Church is the State Church—Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Austria and Belgium. It is in these countries that our Baptist Churches are small minority groups and in years gone by their life and existence has been hazardous. In Belgium, for instance, there are only 300 church members in the whole country with about 1,000 in Austria where the Baptist community is still regarded as a sect and not as a part of the Christian Church.

In the days before the 2nd Vatican Council the story of the courageous and dedicated witness of these small isolated and oftentimes persecuted minorities constitutes one of the great chapters in Baptist Church history. In Spain, for instance, the years following 1950 were a most trying time. More than 35 Evangelical Churches were closed by Government order (12 Baptist). Believers were imprisoned for witnessing to their faith and many heavy fines were imposed. There was no opportunity for any form of public evangelism and when the first Baptist Conference of the Latin Countries was held in Barcelona delegates were advised not to wear their badges in public.

Since the 2nd Vatican Council there has been generally a considerable easing of restrictions although the battle for full religious freedom, particularly in Spain, has not been finally won. It is in opportunities for evangelism that the greatest change has come and Baptists in these countries have quickly and effectively taken advantage of it. During the lean and hard years they prepared themselves for the opportunities which they prayed for and firmly believed God would give to them in the future. Consequently when the opportunity did come they were ready to launch out. Spain led the way and Portugal, Italy and France quickly followed in organised simultaneous evangelism. In October 1964 over 700 souls were won in 15 days in Portugal—the work has been even more impressive in subsequent simultaneous evangelism campaigns, and the membership of the Union has increased by seven and a half per cent each year for several years.

Accepting the challenge of the new opportunity the Spanish Baptist Union adopted the challenge to double the number of Baptist Churches by 1970 and establish a Baptist witness in every province in cities of more than 100,000 population.

The remaining group of Baptists in Europe are those who live in the countries where there is a strong State Church. This includes Great Britain, the four countries of Scandinavia, Germany and Switzerland. The Baptist Unions in Germany, Great Britain and Sweden are among the strongest in Europe and throughout the years they have contributed generously to the help of their fellow Baptists particularly in the Eastern European countries. However, it is in these countries which have long historic recognition of the church and where religious freedom has been accepted as the rule for many years that problems affecting the growth of the church are being experienced. However, although from some of these countries there have come reports of decreasing membership, nevertheless two things need to be said. It is from these Baptist Unions that there has come evidence of attempts to discover new and more effective methods of evangelism involving the life of the whole church in continuing witness and Christian involvement. It is also from these areas that there has come continuous challenge seeking to awaken Baptists to their Christian responsibility for the needs and plight of mankind in all areas of human life in all places.

Holland does not come into any of the three categories because it is a free country and without a State Church. However the Dutch Baptist Union has the distinction of being able to report a steady increase in the membership of their churches ever since the war and now has 9,500 members and 67 churches. In 1967 it appointed for the first time a full time General Secretary for the Union.

From 6-12 August this year European Baptists will be meeting for their five yearly Conference in Vienna, Austria. It is anticipated that representatives from all European countries except Albania will be there. Because Austria is a Non-Nato country it is expected that more visitors from the Eastern European countries will be there than ever before and the outstanding choirs from some of these countries will be singing. The theme of the conference is "The people of God in a world in Turmoil" and at the main Conference sessions we shall have the opportunity of facing some of the perplexing problems confronting both the Church and world in a truly international setting.

It is also hoped that by accepting the invitation to Vienna in such numbers and from so many places we shall be able to create new opportunities for our Baptist people in Austria during future days.

The division of Baptist life in Europe into these three groupings is only one way of emphasising the diversity of circumstances under which we live and work. It is inadequate to present a general picture but it is perhaps enough to show that the very real and growing fellowship which at present exists and which the European Baptist Federation was

created to foster and encourage is truly an act of God's grace and an evidence of the reality of that deep "tie that binds our hearts in Christian love".

RONALD GOULDING

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

*The first of two articles.*

On Easter Day, 1955, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Frenchman, eminent paleontologist, Jesuit priest, died in New York. About a year earlier, in conversation, he had expressed the wish that when death came to him it might come on the day of the Resurrection. Most people were out of town that weekend and few gathered for the funeral. His burial had to be delayed owing to the hardness of the ground, and when he was finally lowered into the earth at the Jesuit cemetery there were no mourners present.

At the time of his death he was well known in certain scientific circles. He had established a fine reputation as a paleontologist, both by his contributions to scientific journals and his work in the field with a number of notable expeditions. As a philosopher and theologian he was virtually unknown. A favoured circle had through the years been able to read his work as it was passed from hand to hand in type-written copies. But the interest and scrutiny of a wider public had been prevented by the ban placed on the publication of all his theological work by the Holy Office. At his death that ban could no longer be put into effect and his writings were brought to publication by those who had closely guarded them through the years. The attention they have received contrasts strangely with the anonymity of that funeral in Easter week, 1955.

Teilhard was born in Auvergne in 1881. His father was a gentleman farmer, and it was from him that Teilhard inherited his powers of observation and fascination for the world of matter. A family walk with Teilhard's father in charge was not simply a means of exercise but an exploration into the thousand details of nature. From his mother, Teilhard inherited his piety. It was the strength of her Catholic faith that set the seal upon the devotion of the whole family. The centre of the Teilhards' faith was the adoration of the Sacred Heart, and it remained so for Pierre until the end of his life. The cult of the Sacred Heart has attracted some of the worst, most bizarre, forms of religious devotion in the Catholic faith and it seems to accord ill with a man of Teilhard's culture and profound spirituality. Yet, stripped of its excesses, it became for him an object of faith and contemplation. The heart of Jesus, aflame with the fire of love, was the heart of all things.

At the age of eleven he went to the Jesuit boarding school in Villefranche-Sur-Saone. Here he pursued his interests in scientific study, and here too, was awakened his religious commitment that resulted in a vocation to the priesthood. He resolved to become a priest within the discipline of the Jesuit order and received from them his training in France and later in Jersey. Side by side with his religious training he was encouraged to continue his scientific studies. He was ordained in August, 1911. He joined the French Army in the 1914-18 war and here distinguished himself both by his courage and his compassion. He was awarded the Military Medal and the Legion of Honour for the bravery he displayed as a stretcher-bearer in the face of battle. He was approached with the offer of a chaplaincy which he declined, saying he would rather remain with the men. After the war he was offered a post teaching science in the Catholic Institute in Paris. It was here that his unique combination of scientific acumen and theological reflection began to attract the attention of the students who flocked to hear him lecture. In 1923 he went on a research expedition to China. During his absence a paper that he had written on original sin was brought to the attention of his superiors who construed the boldness of his thought as dangerous unorthodoxy. When Teilhard returned to Paris it was to a hostile and suspicious atmosphere and he found himself in a conflict with those in authority within his own order that was to last for the remainder of his life. His position in Paris became increasingly intolerable until there was no alternative but for him to return to China in 1926 and continue his work there.

It was to remain his 'home' until 1946 though he had little love for it, returning whenever he could to the more intellectually congenial atmosphere of Paris. However, these years were filled with work: he shared in a number of notable paleontological expeditions and developed his unique synthesis of scientific research and religious faith in his writings. He wrote his two major works **Le Milieu Divin** and **The Phenomenon of Man**, the spiritual and scientific sides of the same coin. Both were submitted to the Holy Office for permission to publish: its refusal brought dismay and depression to Teilhard. The dead weight of authority that he bore like a cross all his life, had settled on his shoulders again. Yet when friends urged him to resign from the Jesuit order he refused to do so; the same system that stifled his intellectual expression provided the devotional, sacramental and disciplinary framework that sustained his faith.

After the Second World War he returned to Paris, but his hopes that he might be allowed to teach again were illusory. Nowhere was he regarded with more suspicion than here, the place he loved above all others. In 1950 he accepted a post with the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York and continued his work with them until his death. It was only after his death that the world was exposed to his thinking, and his thinking to the world.

The background of Teilhard's life is inseparable from his

thought. Few can hope to judge him with equal competence as a scientist, philosopher and theologian. A theologian without scientific training has to accept on trust a good deal contained in a work such as **The Phenomenon of Man**, whilst a scientist with no philosophical competence might find himself floundering in Teilhard's reflective work. There is however, another aspect of Teilhard's work that provides a common ground for scientists and theologians. He was a poet. This poetic quality is evidenced in the lyricism of a work such as **The Mass on the World** and certain passages in **Le Milieu Divin**. In the white heat of words and phrases he welds his scientist's perception of the nature of matter with his prophet's insight into the last things. As he described himself, "I am a pilgrim of the future on the way back from a journey made entirely in the past".

His 'journey in the past' adequately describes his work as a paleontologist. His concern was with fossils, rocks, matter, the earth beneath us, for from these was to be wrested the secret of our origin. Inevitably he believed in evolution and this is the basic promise of all his work. He saw it however, as rather more than simply the survival of the fittest. Evolution is constant movement from simple to complex. This is typified in the single cell which divides. It has moved from the simplicity of its singleness to the complexity of multiplicity. The ability to survive depends as much upon adaptation to complexity as it does upon strength or fitness. The culmination of the evolutionary process is the emergence of man, and the emergence in man of consciousness. It is this that places him at the summit of the created order. In the language of **Genesis** he has within him the breath of life, he is made in the image of God, he is aware of good and evil. Or, to put it another way, he is a reflective being, a feeling and articulate being, and a moral being.

For some the summit of evolution is attained with man, there is no movement beyond that. But Teilhard believed that evolution as a movement from simplicity to complexity is taking place all the time. The basic physical adaptation may be complete (though the new stresses of civilisation may call for adaptations within the body), but an increasingly complex world demands an ever greater degree of adaptation. The growth of knowledge, the shrinkage of the world involved in more efficient communications, the intermingling of cultures, all conspire to spawn ways of life and thought far more complex than those known in autonomous national communities. With this complexity goes man's increasing ability to control his own environment. He is no longer determined by environment or the unwitting subject of evolution, he is in a position to fashion his environment and determine his own evolution. This leap in knowledge Teilhard described as the **noosphere**, the area of understanding, the most significant development in man since the emergence of consciousness. Within the **noosphere** there takes place the growth of the most complex organism of all, the corporate body of mankind. Man is evolving as a social being.

The limits of man's social life have gone beyond the village, the town and the nation and are hastening rapidly to the limits of the whole human family. This movement, paradoxically, makes for both complexity and unity. It becomes more complex in the realm of education which Teilhard described as one of the areas of the ongoing evolution of man. Each generation passes on to the next the knowledge that has been amassed from the past. This process is complicated by the speed with which new knowledge is being gained, the diversity of human exploration and invention, and the internationalisation of disciplines such as science and technology. There is insufficient time for one generation to assimilate the accumulated body of knowledge in order to pass it on to the next and indeed, in some cases, a new generation becomes acquainted with recent knowledge before its elders. The sheer speed of the process accounts in part for the gulf between generations and also the prevalent contempt for the past which owes something to ignorance of it.

Yet side by side with the apparently disruptive advance in knowledge there is a greater convergence of human beings, a movement towards unity. This is evidenced in the way the concerns of one nation often become the concern of all. In the past Africans could be shipped from their homes and sold into slavery in America with protest only from an enlightened few in various parts of the Western world. Today slaughter in Vietnam, Biafra or the streets of racially divided Western cities or the imprisonment of intellectuals in Russia becomes the concern and the object of protest for people all round the world. There is also the way that technological expertise filters through an international grape-vine regardless of political barriers, whilst internationalism is evidenced in the continued if precarious life of the United Nations Organisation, and that new breed of international civil servant, epitomised in Dag Hammarskoeld and U Thant. Teilhard welcomed the growing unification of the human family, believing it to be the means by which creative love could be released. He looked to the future with all the radicalism of an apocalyptic prophet, seeing the story of man, which he had read so clearly in the past, moving towards a final convergence that he described as the **Omega-point**.

It can be fairly claimed that this aspect of his thinking could equally have been the work of any scientist, any philosopher, or any observer of human affairs as perceptive as Teilhard. What distinguishes him is the Christological faith that he wedded to his scientific theories.

His interpretation of Christ has more in common with the Greek fathers than the Western. He places great emphasis on the redemptive act of the incarnation as a whole as opposed to the specific implications of the death of Christ upon the cross. His thought is more comparable to the 'recapitulatio' theories of Irenaeus than the later legal theories, centering about the cross, of the Western fathers. Biblically, his description of Christ comes nearer to the Johannine Christ than any other, though as we shall see, he was above all a

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My dear Colleague,

"Now if I were chairman of the Home Work Fund Central Committee I would . . ." All right then — what would you?

For a start, what would you feel like confronted by a deficit equal to the highest increase in Home Work Fund income for any previous year, as well as by an asked-for increase of twice the highest increase in any previous year? You might be tempted to feel just a trifle despondent. I frankly admit that there already have been moments when I have been inclined to feel just like that. Gradually, however, I found myself being quite distinctly stimulated by the element of challenge—and even of crisis—in the situation. I understand that when France fell in 1940, Winston Churchill called his cabinet together late at night to report that the French Fleet had defected to the Axis powers. With the loss of that fleet we had also lost our secret code, so that our own fleet was immobilised for a time. Churchill built up the gloom to a dramatic climax. The whole cabinet expected him to suggest that "We had better pack in". Instead, he said quietly, "I find it all rather inspiring."

If only I can share something of this emotional reaction to the astounding H.W.F. demands of the coming year with you, my brother Ministers, then together we might be able to achieve something quite dramatic.

But had you been appointed to chair the H.W.F. Central, far more important than your feelings would be your thoughts, ideas and decisions; in other words, what would you do?

Naturally, I have begun to do my share of thinking. Before reaching a great many decisions, however, I need a good deal more information than is at present available. I have taken first steps towards providing myself with this. In addition to that, however, again before reaching too many far reaching decisions, I would like to discover if any of my colleagues have other ideas—better ideas—than those which have begun to form in my own mind. If you have, may I urge you to communicate them to me. You will appreciate that I cannot possibly cope with lengthy 'essays' on the Home Work Fund. I would, however, be delighted to receive a mass of frank criticisms, and especially imaginative suggestions, all (if you please) concisely expressed. The sooner your ideas reach me, the better for our denomination in general, and if I may say so quite frankly, for our ministry in particular.

If you do not respond to this request, then may I quite bluntly point out that you will no longer be in a position to criticise the Home Work Fund Appeal, and still less in a position to condemn the Home Work Fund Central Committee if it fails to gather in the money needed to maintain much of our Baptist work in the service of our Lord and His Kingdom.

With kindly Christian Greetings.

Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR LISTON

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Paulinist, Christ is the Word, the focal point of all reason and intelligence within the universe. It is from him that the **noosphere** derives. It is through the Word that God, in the beginning, created all things, thus making a world that would finally be understood solely in terms of reason and grace. In this world that He had been instrumental in creating, He became incarnate. He has become flesh and blood, He has been immersed in matter. Thus a dualism that would sunder God from matter, and a docetism that would deny to matter any reality in itself are precluded. Within His incarnate life, Christ has revealed the meaning of humanity and is Himself the key to the **noosphere**. He is also the focal point of that reconciliation by which alone unity is to be attained. In Him man has been reconciled to God, and thus the most ancient enmity of all has been healed, and in His one body the enmities of men (of which that of Jew and Gentile were the classic expression) are broken down and those who are divided are made one new man (Ephesians 2). So Christ's redemptive work continues within the body of mankind, bringing to birth that humanity that shall finally be gathered together at **Omega-point**, a humanity that is none other than the body of Christ. Taking the key eschatological passages in 1 Corinthians 15: 20-28, Colossians 1: 15-20, and Ephesians 1: 1-10, Teilhard was driven to the ineluctable identification of Christ with the **Omega-point**. The Christ through whom God created all things, the Alpha, is the One to whom all things move and in whom they have their destiny, the Omega.

It will be seen that Teilhard's emphasis differs radically from that made in a good deal of recent theology. For Tillich He is the Christ Who inhabits the depths, who is most explicable in those areas of our human experience that express our 'ultimate concern'. For Bonhoeffer, He is encountered in the secular structures of the world. For Altizer He is the Christ who has emptied himself into humanity, willing the death of God, whose resurrection and ascension are the reactionary affirmations of a church too nervous to accept the implications of God's death.

The Christ we meet in the writings of Teilhard de Chardin is a Christ who is other than we are, and who is to be adored—"No, what I cry out for, like every other creature, with my whole being, and even with all my passionate earthly longings, is something very different from an equal to cherish: It is a God to adore" (*Le Milieu Divin*, p.68). He is present in the world, and the redemption He has brought is total and cosmic, reaching deep into matter itself and stretching to the farthest limits of human life. Yet the vastness of that redemption rests upon the transcendence of Christ. Only a Christ at once cosmic and infinite, present and eternal, within matter and beyond it, can bear within himself the life, sustenance and redemption of the created order. He is the Christ who, if He has emptied himself into humanity, it is in life and not death. Far from witnessing in Him the death of the transcendent God, we see that eternal heart of love from which all the energies of earth derive, light at the heart of reason, life at the heart of mortal-

ity, love at the heart of matter. It was this sense of Christ's transcendence that drove him to see "the world become through Your power and my faith the glorious living crucible in which everything melts away in order to be born anew..."

MICHAEL J. WALKER

## FAITH AND MORALS

In this third and final paper I want to offer an opinion as to how the connexion between Christian faith and morality should be viewed. This is not altogether clear in my mind. The connexion between any 'is', religious or otherwise, and the moral 'ought' is a contentious issue amongst moral philosophers at the present time. But I will try to share some thoughts on it as precisely as I can and to do so with the questions which were left over from the previous papers in mind.<sup>1</sup>

### I

In those two papers I was much occupied with the reasons which are given for moral judgments. It is important to remember that not just any reason for action can (logically) count as a moral reason. As we saw, if I gave the fact that capital punishment usually occurs early in the morning as a reason why it is wrong, that, as it stands, would be absurd; but if I offered the putative fact that it does not deter would-be murderers as a reason, that would not. Why? The point to take, I think, is that what would-be murderers do, or don't do, makes a considerable difference to human life in any society, whereas whether an event occurs at dawn, noon or sundown, other things being equal, usually does not. Moral reasons, then, must have something to do with the kind of life men live; they must show that some state of affairs, or course of action, makes a material difference to that life. This, you may feel, is a point so obvious that only a philosopher would waste time making it. Well, here is another. The kind of difference which acts or states of affairs, for and against which moral reasons may be given, make is the difference between the well-being and the ill-being of man, between human good and human harm. That is what morality is about.

Behind these obvious points, however, there lurks, in all its appalling simplicity, one of the most difficult of questions: What is human good and harm? The moral philosopher's dilemma with regard to this question is not the same as the moralist's. A moralist wants to know the answer in order to tell people what to do. A moral philosopher, as such, is pre-occupied, not so much with the question 'What is the answer to this question?' but with the problem of what a statement must be in order to qualify as an answer to this question. To put one possible formulation of this problem crudely: Will an answer to it be a decision or a discovery? Nobody decided that the planet Neptune should be there; someone discovered it. But would it be true, in the same way, to say that no one

decided that capital punishment—or abortion, or apartheid, or anything you like—is morally wrong? As I indicated in my first paper, it seems pretty clear that we are doing a different kind of thing logically when we register a moral judgment from when we state a scientific fact. Some would say that this is precisely because, in the last analysis, moral judgments are decisions, whereas statements of scientific fact are discoveries.

What gives one pause so far as this view, that morality is grounded in decision, goes is such an example as this.<sup>3</sup> Suppose I said that I thought drug addiction a good thing and that I had a moral obligation to induce it in my children. You would say that I must be a moral imbecile; and you would be right. You might go even further and say that it was contradicting the very meaning of the word 'moral' to say that this judgment of mine was a moral one. The question is: Would you be right in this? I am inclined to think you would, but I am not quite sure why.

One thing which could be said of that judgment of mine is that it runs contrary to the prevailing moral judgment of the overwhelming majority of people in our society. If you said to someone—with, I'm afraid sad inaccuracy—'Hudson is a dutiful chap', they would take you to mean, if you left it there, that I was hard-working, honest, took great pains with my pupils, arrived on time for my preaching engagements, and so on. But if you went on to say '...he tries hard to induce drug-addiction in his children', they would, to say the least, register some surprise. This is not what 'dutiful' means to them because it is not in their view amongst the duties of a parent. The prevailing moral code is dead against it. But is that all there is to be said? When you talk of human good or harm are you only talking, when we get right down to it, of what conforms, or fails to conform, to certain moral principles which the overwhelming majority in our society, albeit tacitly, have decided to accept?

The feeling which many moral philosophers now have is that you are talking about more than that; that somehow or other, talk of human good or ill is grounded, not simply in what men have chosen to approve of, or disapprove, but in what is the case. I do not for a moment mean that they are willing to take back all the criticism which they have levelled at intuitionist objectivism or 'natural law' morality; but there seems to be an uneasy feeling abroad that morality, to be morality, must (logically) be grounded in what man is. Very tentatively, I offer two observations, not as premises from which this conclusion necessarily follows, but as possible pointers in that direction.

(i) Moral judgments are certainly evaluative; in making them we are grading states of affairs or courses of action which have to do with human life and which make a material difference to the way it is. Now, for there to be any **point** in such evaluation must it not be directed to the continuance and flourishing of human life? Must not the price-tags, so to say, be related to that end as desirable? In certain circumstances, of course, it makes perfectly good sense to judge the

discontinuance or non-flourishing of human life to be good or right. 'It is my duty to lay down my life.' 'It is expedient that one man should die for the people.' 'It is better to be dead than red.' The fact that such remarks make sense (whether one agrees with them or not) is what makes one hesitant about the point which I am now giving a short run for its money. Nevertheless, I am inclined to feel that there is something in this point. To take the last of those three quotations, even if one were speaking of the whole human race, its recommendation of the latter's discontinuance as 'better' only makes sense when continuance would entail something which could be called, without excessive rhetoric, the destruction of man—bestializing him, enslaving him, or whatever. Now, since you need to have some knowledge of what man is in order to know what constitutes the continuance and flourishing of human life; and since to be moral a judgment, it would appear, must be designed to further such continuance and flourishing; it would seem that, in some way, morality is logically grounded in what man is—or in what he is taken to be. It would follow that if, as Christians believe, man is a being destined for eternity, moral evaluations are logically related to what makes for his continuance and flourishing as such a being.

(ii) That brings me to the other point I tentatively make, which is that different kinds of moralist always seem to have different conceptions, not only of what the good life is, but of what man is. The ethics of, for examples, Marxists and Existentialists vary pointedly. Is it just coincidence that those who hold that what ought to be done is what will further the ends of the proletariat in the class-war also believe that man is 'economic man' and nothing more; or that those who recommend the fullest expression of individual freedom believe that man is a being in whom existence precedes essence? Surely not. Moralists seem always to say, in effect, not simply that something or other is good or right for man, but that it is good or right for him as ... whatever they take man to be.

## II

If there is anything in all this, then I think we can see how a Christian ethic can (a) be based on the principle of love and (b) be completely honest about the factual evidence to which it turns for support. The difficulty of conceiving of such an ethic was my last point in the second of these papers.

If man is a child of God and if God is love, then man can only be himself in love. It follows that what purports to be directed to the continuance and flourishing of human life, namely moral evaluation, will operate, in the last analysis, in terms of the realization or non-realization of love. This follows from what man is taken to be; but not, let me emphasise, from what he is taken to be apart from God. I can make no sense of the idea of a Christian ethic which is derived from exclusively humanist premises; this seems to be a contradiction in terms.



Again, Christians believe that the revelation of the love of God in Christ continues and grows, that the spirit of truth leads us into all truth; then if this is true, what the realization or non-realization of love, as I have called them, come to may well vary from age to age, occasion to occasion. We do not need to hold on desperately to prefabricated answers to moral problems. If the facts show that one set of answers, appropriate to New Testament times or the Middle Ages, does not fit the facts of modern times—if, to be specific, extra-marital sex cannot now truthfully be regarded always as 'using' other people or 'taking liberties' with them—then we do not need, as Christians, to stand by these out-dated factual statements nor indeed the moral judgments to which they once lent good reason. This is a point of view easy enough to state; but is the price of adopting it too high? If we accepted it, what it would amount to, I think, is that we would have to move away from ethical fundamentalism, as we have moved away from physical or psychological fundamentalism, where our Lord is concerned. What I mean is that we do not now take it to be any defect in Christ, as Son of God, that he evidently did not know that the universe is not three-storied and that mental illness is not caused by demons. We say that this was a kind of conditioning by terrestrial and historic factors inseparable from a true incarnation. Is it conceivable that we should say the same sort of thing about some of Christ's recorded pronouncements on moral issues? The answer seems to be that, in some respects, we do this already. For example, what many of us think about divorce is not—is it?—quite what Christ said? If we are not there already, it certainly looks as though, in large sections of Christendom, divorce under certain circumstances will soon be an accepted thing. Is it conceivable that there should be a similar 'softening' in Christian attitudes over a wider moral field—homosexuality, extra-marital sex, etc.? Is it possible that Christ should be considered by Christians to be 'dated' ethically, as he is considered to be dated cosmologically and psychologically? And if not, why not?

You may feel that I have not ended in a position much different from that of the 'new moralists'. But I think I have. For one thing my view is more God-centred than theirs: it is the fact that man has to do with a God 'out there', other than himself and to whom he is related in love, which is the most important factor in what man is, and so in what a right-minded morality must be. In that respect my position is more traditional than that of many of the 'new moralists'. But I think it is also more radical. For the question which I have just been posing is one which many of them seem to me to avoid facing. They flirt with the idea of renouncing ethical fundamentalism, as I call it, but, when it comes to the crunch, retreat to it by moves such as saying that if a young man sleeps with his girl friend, he will inevitably be 'using' her, or 'taking liberties'.<sup>5</sup> Whatever else may or may not please the Lord of

glory, I do not think it earns his 'well done' to defend what is taken for his will by contentions as dubious as that.

W. D. HUDSON

#### NOTES

- 1 'The Fraternal' October 1968, January 1969.
- 2 G. J. Warnock uses a similar illustration in his excellent Papermac *Contemporary Moral Philosophy* ('New Studies in Ethics' series), p70.
- 3 On this see my *Ethical Intuitionism* and D. J. O'Connor, *Aquinas and Natural Law* (both in 'New Studies in Ethics' series).
- 4 I discussed this in 'The Present Crisis in Christian Ethics', *Baptist Quarterly*, April 1966.
- 5 Cf. J. Robinson, *Honest to God*, p119 and my comment thereon in my second paper.

### TEAM MINISTRY

Into a Lancashire town noted for its glass making industry came a deaconess straight from College in 1955. With a population of 108,000 the town had numerous churches, three of which were Baptist. One of these had a minister, the second a lay pastor and to the third came the deaconess.

After a year or so the minister moved on and the lay pastor resigned because of ill health. As the years came and went the two churches were still without pastoral oversight. Eventually the three churches agreed on a Fellowship Scheme for pastoral help but were adamant that their autonomy should not be destroyed. So the St. Helens Fellowship of Baptist Churches came into being and in 1963 the Rev. Derek Cook, formerly of the Workers' Christian Fellowship, joined the deaconess to form a ministerial team. Now began the experiment of two people working in three churches. Lessons were learned that may be of interest to others in these days of constant talk of fellowship schemes and team ministries.

At the end of three and half years the deaconess moved and her place was taken immediately by Rev. Brian Wilson.

The virtues and advantages of fellowship schemes are so frequently extolled that they must be well known. The main purpose of this article is to point some of the weaknesses so that in considering experiments in the future these may be avoided where possible and faced where not.

**Preaching.** As each church was determined to maintain its own identity this meant that there were three morning and three evening services to be conducted each Sunday. Various preaching plans were used but with two between three it was inevitable that lay preachers had to play a large part. The churches watched carefully to ensure that they had their fair share of preaching from the team.

One admires the zeal and devotion of lay preachers but with many the standard of preaching was low. The idea of training preachers from within the fellowship proved difficult.

The main reason being that, as is usual in smaller churches, those with the potential are normally the few who are able to bear the burden of the administration. There is a limit to what people can do if the task is to be well done.

The core of the membership was present whoever preached. Others tended to pick and choose. In addition to depleting the congregation this erratic attendance provided a good beginning to the possibility of drifting. It was unusual for members to follow the ministry to another church in the fellowship. A discovery made was that the zealous few were put off inviting outsiders when unproved laymen were due to preach. Often it could not even be remembered who was preaching and by the time this fact was ascertained the opportunity for an invitation had passed. This experiment has helped to confirm the belief of this writer that the Baptist tradition of consecutive preaching is the best.

**Pastoral Care.** At the commencement no division of the membership was arranged. This meant that no team member had the particular responsibility of one person, nor the church member a sense of belonging to one Pastor. As effective pastoral work comes out of a relationship, this proved to be a mistake. With a change of personnel this has been remedied by using a geographical division. Another result of this meant that much time was spent by the team in consultation. It also brought the tension of keeping the balance between passing on information and not betraying confidence.

To this deaconess the idea of preaching regularly to people for whom someone else has pastoral responsibility does not appeal. Also so much pastoral care can be exercised by seeing the same congregation each week both from the pulpit and by the greeting after the service.

With this kind of team ministry it will be obvious that deacons and others have to be taught the necessity of observing the congregation with the idea of discovering the absentees; then having done this, to see that enquiries are made and followed up. This was a lesson that was learned all too slowly.

**Leadership of Church and Deacons' Meetings.** It was discovered that with both in triplicate and united deacons meetings in addition it was impossible for both the team members to be present at every one of them. Therefore, unless a very controversial issue appeared on the agenda only one of the team attended a meeting. Often, to fit them all in, meetings were held in two churches on the same evening. It was found to be a weakness not having the same chairman at consecutive meetings.

Although each could inform the other of what transpired it was much more difficult to convey the feel of a meeting. So often this was more important than the decision of the majority. With the change of personnel one team member has become responsible for the administration of two of the churches and the other of the third.

**History and Tradition.** As the churches were brought closer together it highlighted the fact that each had its own history and background. Some of the past history brings no credit to

the name of Christ but had brought members from one church to another. Memories of the past were inevitably stirred in some cases. Differences of outlook presented difficulties particularly with regard to finance. At the commencement of the scheme it was agreed that a ministerial fund should be set up to which all three churches should contribute. From this all stipends and ministerial expenses would be paid. If any church was unable to meet its commitments it would be considered sympathetically by the other two. This seemed straightforward. The problems arose firstly through different conceptions of raising money and secondly from differing views on the need of the ministry for more than a subsistence allowance. One section was determined to resist any attempt to find more than the equivalent of the H.W.F. stipend and to be as cheese-paring as possible over expenses. Others wanted to be generous and there was this constant clash. The argument that the one could not afford it did not go down well. The men knew more about the wages structure in the glass industry than the ministry team. Therefore, they knew that there was no real shortage of money, just a reluctance to give. The alternatives were for the generous to accept more than their fair share of the burden, or the ministry to go short. Either decision did not make for happy relationships between the churches.

One section raised most of the money from efforts such as coffee mornings and socials, and most activity in the church was linked with money. To those who believed in giving realistically through the offering and therefore having time and energy to devote to other activities, this was an added bone of contention.

When the constitution of the Fellowship Scheme was drawn up it was agreed that when ministerial expenses were discussed the team would withdraw. Although this was intended to avoid embarrassment to the other team it created problems. The team was unable to influence the discussion on the policy of raising money or attempt to keep the meetings calm and to the point. If the discussion on finance occurred at the beginning of a meeting of the three diaconates it ruined the atmosphere for the rest of the evening. If at the end, it destroyed any fellowship that had been created. The team were thankful that the treasurer did not make a demand for more money at every meeting.

As the different outlooks concerning the activities associated with church life became more apparent there was a growing sense of dismay in the hearts of some parents. They realised that as their children grew up they would be surrounded by these tensions and feared lest their conception of the church should be warped.

This difference of outlooks and histories was something that had to be reckoned with all the time.

**Midweek Service:** A united service was held a month at a time at each church in turn. This had obvious advantages but the intimate prayer fellowship of one church disappeared.

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Ideally this same fellowship should be experienced between the three but this was slow in developing.

**Youth Work.** A youth club for the three churches was commenced and this always met in the church in the centre of the town. On a Sunday night an after church fellowship was held. This moved round the churches. Some young people only attended when the meetings were at their own church. The main reason given was the length of journey home afterwards. Other less worthy reasons were given. There was a distinct advantage in having a large number of young people but it did mean that some only benefited intermittently.

Some would say that two is not a team. Financially three would have been impossible even if three had been available. The idea so often put forward of including a layman to share the pastoral responsibility was not possible. There was no one available.

Some would say that to call it a fellowship was a misnomer. This scheme was not adopted by the churches for its intrinsic value. It did not start with a sense of the need for the three churches to draw closer together. It was an expedient. With the national shortage of man power in the ministry and the reluctance of men to work in the north it was the only answer to the two pastorless churches. The third was made to see the need to be unselfish and give up something for the benefit of the other two. To the majority any suggestion that ultimately there should be one Baptist Church in St. Helens was fiercely resisted.

When the hymn "Lord from whom all blessings flow" was sung at the Induction Service many really meant it when they sang "Never from our office move", the 'distinctions to be rendered void' did not seem to extend to buildings and the communities linked with them.

MURIEL WESTCOTT

## II

The article by Sister Muriel might easily give the impression that everything has been said and that the whole idea of team ministry must now be abandoned. The opposite, however, is the case. What Sister is describing is the consequence of the very thing she would extol "every church independent with its own minister". It is this latter conception of ministry which has brought about a situation which, unfortunately, is not peculiar either to St. Helens or the North. Churches which should be caring and helping each other in the outward mission of the church are more concerned with their own internal fellowship and have become spiritual ghettos. What results, in many cases, is a battle for the survival of the fittest, rather than planning for mission. In this free for all, the 'fittest' are usually churches with that little bit more money, 'fittest' being a very relative and temporal term. The final outcome of the cut-throat struggle could well be that in many towns Baptist witness would 'cease to be' within a relatively short time.

The situation in St. Helens was like this seven years ago. One church received H.W.F. help for a deaconess. The other

two churches, either for financial reasons or because no one would accept an invitation to the pastorate, were without pastoral oversight of any kind. The main reason for suggesting a Fellowship and team ministry was not, as Sister seems to suggest, expedience, but mission, and this was impressed on the churches at the time and has been reiterated again and again in preaching, in committees, in church meetings and conferences. Part of the difficulty was that Sister herself was ill for a long time and this led to certain pastoral and preaching difficulties.

It is not, I think, right that I should write about the situation at St. Helens when two of my colleagues are working very hard indeed to meet a very difficult and changing situation. No man wants his ministry examined in public, particularly by his Area Superintendent! Suffice to say that one of the churches has been completely rebuilt, a number of the members of the churches, particularly among the deacons, are beginning to see what mission means, and if certain material needs can be met I am assured that the outlook is hopeful. The Fellowship has never been supported by the Home Work Fund; the standard stipend (£1,500 for two ministers from 180 members) with full allowances has always been paid, together with quite reasonable expenses. The old Park Road building has been demolished and rebuilt for a cost of just over £9,000 and there is only a debt of £500. This for an active membership of 65 members is not unreasonable. There was no compensation but this money was raised, much of it by direct giving, £6,000 of it since the start of the Fellowship scheme. During the five years of the Fellowship's existence fifty-three members have been welcomed into membership of the churches. Thirty-three of these were by Believers' Baptism, the others by transfer. The five years prior to the start of the Fellowship had seen nineteen new members joining the churches.

What I would wish to do in particular is to put to the ministers the dilemma that we face in many situations so like St. Helens. There seem to be only two possibilities. (1) To choose one church and concentrate all the resources of ministry upon it, and let the others die. (2) To try and inspire all the churches in a town with the necessity of unity in mission. Now if it is accepted that normally the right thing to do is to try and unite all local resources, the ideal would be to get the churches to form one church with one church meeting, although until redevelopment plans were clear a number of worshipping congregations would remain. This is a step that Baptists steeped in a false independency find it difficult to take—and this is true of both churches and ministers.

The only possibility then is to get the churches to covenant to work together as far as possible and to pray that through education they will come to see the needs of effective mission require unity. When these groups are formed we have discovered that ministers normally find great strength in sharing together and that they are able to meet the tensions which inevitably arise with greater confidence. When this latter does

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Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN

*General Manager*

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not happen it means quite often that ministers themselves have not learned to share, and are afraid of self-revelation.

There are obvious difficulties in the process of growing together. The ideal would be either a full or part time pastor for each group in the Fellowship, but it is not easy to find part time ministers adequately equipped or even prepared to take training. It is the finding and training of such part time ministers to which the denomination should address itself in the near future. Perhaps only in this way can the difficulties mentioned by Sister Muriel be overcome. However, what is revealed in Fellowship experiments is the total immaturity of most Baptist congregations. It is obvious that each group depends far too much on one man for its spiritual life and discipline and that the pastoral difficulties present in fellowship schemes are present in churches with pastoral oversight, but their immaturity is hidden behind the pastor. Members have not learnt to share and to pastor each other.

Much in Sister's article reflects a 19th century attitude which is all too characteristic of many ministers today. There is a nostalgia for the past when things were easier, and a failure to face the present. The average Baptist church is 80 strong (or weak). The three churches in St. Helens comprise 180 members—really only just economically and spiritually viable. It is impossible for each church to have a full time pastor and some might say they do well to support two at the present moment. Because of the smallness of our churches we have to rethink our ministry and we have to do it against the opposition of good people who have no knowledge and vision and who themselves produce problems which would never arise in a spiritually mature people, and thus more time is spent on facing internal problems than external challenges.

The problems raised by Sister are the problems to be faced and solved in all fellowship schemes. No one at St. Helens believes that he has solved them. All that is claimed is that they have been faced realistically. Out of the tension and experiment of the present, Baptist witness in St. Helens will find its future and take its part by word and example in proclaiming the reconciling love of Christ.

NORMAN B. JONES

### III

The Dagenham Scheme was inaugurated in October 1961. It was designed to provide continuity of ministry and pastoral care, to draw four Baptist churches into close working association, to give leadership in outreach, to provide a meeting point for members of a ministerial team, and to make available the necessary financial resources. Both strategy and expediency inspired the plan.

At the outset three of the four churches in the area agreed to participate. The fourth came in two years later, missing the formative years of the grouping with obvious though not prohibitive disadvantages. As was to be expected, there were hesitations lest the identity of the local church should be lost in some larger body. There will always be watchdogs of

autonomy, even though they are not always clear as to what they are watching! The fact that there is work to be done in four localities, where there is a population of ten thousand within easy walking distance of each church, is accepted. There will always be the need for local machinery to deal with local matters. Nor must we pretend that it is easy for four groups which have "enjoyed" an independent existence for more than a generation, whose members have been brought up on the pre-supposition that local autonomy is scriptural and of the esse of Baptist Church life, to subscribe to a plan which seems to put a curb on local liberty. It is, therefore, to the credit of the diaconates and church meetings concerned that they were at least willing to enter into an arrangement which involved some re-organisation of finance, the acceptance of the leadership of a team of ministers, and the responsibility to meet together to think and pray more often at a deeper level than ever before.

The idea was to provide a team of at least four ministers one of whom would have responsibility for co-ordination, each of whom would have the pastoral care of one of the churches, all of whom would be available to serve the group according to his particular gifts and interests. Unfortunately the team has never been at full strength, but part-time help has been recently provided by a minister not at the moment in pastoral charge, and a layman from a Baptist church in a neighbouring Borough. Both men attend the weekly team meeting where, among many other items, preaching themes are discussed based on a daily Bible reading plan followed by a majority of church members, with a view to providing continuity of preaching and teaching. The preaching programme provides for an interchange of ministry sufficient for the churches to appreciate that all the ministers are at their service. At the same time care is taken that a team member is not absent too often from the church for which he has special responsibility. A close, pastoral relationship is thus maintained at the local level. In instances of absence through illness or holidays there is no break in pastoral ministry. Other team members accept responsibility—a fact which is increasingly recognised by the members of all four churches.

United gatherings for worship which have become part of the pattern of the Scheme are usually attended by anything from 60 to 100 of our 200 members. We meet in this way about fifteen times a year. During August a series of united midweek meetings for prayer and Bible study replaces the local weekly meeting. There is also a quarterly united missionary prayer meeting. In addition there are social occasions such as the Harvest Supper and the New Year Party which are quite well supported. There are simultaneous activities such as "a week of prayer" in the autumn; each church makes its own plans to stimulate the devotional and evangelistic life of its members. At the end of the week there is a Communion Service in which all four churches join. Last year the united August meetings dealt with the first half of the Baptist Union Evangelism Committee booklet: "The Spirit

and the Mission". In September the individual churches studied the second part with its practical, local application. At the Communion Service at the end of the week the studies were to be brought to a focal point—a member from each church contributing to the Ministry of the Word, and the whole fellowship being called to a renewed acknowledgement of the power of the Holy Spirit, and a renewed acceptance of the responsibility to engage in evangelism.

The Advisory Committee meets once a quarter. It is composed of two representatives from each of the four churches, three from the Baptist Union, three from the Essex Baptist Association, and the members of the ministerial team. Reports from the churches are received. Consideration is given to matters—relating to finance, ministry, the annual Rally and to the particular needs and opportunities which may require guidance and support. There is also a quarterly united deacons' meeting which deals with all matters relating to united work and witness.

An important aspect of the Scheme is the co-ordination of the local and united effort. This has been done by one of the team members who attends most of the deacons' and church meetings. He is, so to speak, the embodiment of the Scheme at the local level, acquiring the necessary information useful in discussion and planning. There are invariably two team members at each meeting where the decisions are taken.

After five years a study group was appointed to consider the progress of the scheme and to bring comments and recommendations for its improvement. The 'findings' are being studied with a view to drawing up a Constitution and Covenant. Among the suggestions are the following: that the Scheme should be known as Dagenham Baptist Church; that there should be a Quarterly Meeting of an Advisory Body comprising all the deacons of the four churches plus the representatives from the Union and the Association; that there should be one membership roll; that there should be a united church meeting convened, say, twice a year or when required for some special purpose such as the invitation to a prospective member of the ministerial team.

To what extent these and other clauses will be found acceptable remains to be seen: but the fact is that they are being actively considered in a spirit of goodwill and with a desire to do what is best for the fulfilment of the church's function in Dagenham at this present time.

There are signs of growing confidence in the Scheme and in what it can accomplish. Pockets of suspicion remain—and are to be expected. There is an anxiety on the part of each church to have "our own minister", which is natural enough. But there is also a willingness to accept all members of the team in preaching and pastoral service.

There is room in the team for men with variety of personality, outlook and interests. Each has his distinctive contribution to make. Differences of viewpoint are desirable. But trust in one another, openness to one another and a will to fellowship are absolutely essential. Rivalry in any form

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(except the sense in which the apostle meant it when he urged people to outdo one another in love) is destructive. Jealousy of another's gifts or status is fatal. And there has to be an acceptance of some measure of limitation in the sense that no one acts completely independently of the other members of the team, because we are members one of another. If there has to be a recognised team-leader or anchor man it is simply that someone must be responsible for calling team meetings, co-ordinating the work, acting in a representative capacity. The term "Assistant" is not used, the title "Associate" is discouraged. We are brother ministers, banded together for the sake of the Gospel, serving each other, the churches and the community.

Dagenham Baptists have not been without a full-time pastor for seven years, so the Scheme may at least claim to have fulfilled one of its purposes. Few would deny that the churches have been brought more closely together than at any time in their history. More than eighty people have been received into membership, more than 50 by baptism. A new, much-needed church building has been erected, and another, equally needful, is being planned. A new Manse has been built adjacent to one of our churches. On the debit side, a number of our people have moved to other districts depriving us, in some instances, of very capable leaders. One of the churches has seriously declined in numbers, but the Scheme helps to meet some of the problems this creates by providing pastoral care and personnel; and it is the object of the prayerful concern of its sister churches. No church is going it alone. But it will take another few years to establish whether or not the Scheme has come to stay. The signs are that it **has**. Given vision, co-operation and trust there should be no looking back.

J. J. BROWN

## **'BUT THOU, O CHRIST, ART THERE'**

*Adaptation to an inner-city environment*

I recently met a village schoolteacher who had previously worked in Northern cities. She spoke enthusiastically of her present situation, but pointed out its many limitations, particularly those imposed on the work of rural churches. She contrasted these to "big, city churches" where, she implied, everything is easier and more evidently rewarding. Challenged to name one such, she couldn't.

No doubt there are some. But the only big things about most city churches properly so called are their buildings, their overdrafts and their problems. They show their common features at their extreme in the U.S.A. where, as Harry Salmon' describes the situation, "There is such a sharp and

obvious contrast between the booming suburban churches with their fine premises, efficient administration, good congregations, thriving social life, and the struggling, decaying, despairing churches in the 'blighted areas' of large towns and cities." The only significance of this article is that the church it describes is like that. Were it the exception, it would have nothing to offer anyone else. Because it is almost a text-book example of an inner-city church it may, through its own travail, produce something worth sharing with others similarly placed. What follows, then, attempts to describe the particular in the hope that it may have a general relevance.

The casual visitor is at once confronted by our more obvious and superficial troubles. He sees a building that looks all its 97 years and, if it is raining, hears the steady drip of water into the row of jars and buckets which festoon the side aisle. He treads warily under the collapsing ceiling in the corridor, and notes with distaste the array of fungi which flourish beside the vestry. A look at our Treasurer's records will show him why we can't do much about these physical problems, though we may need to explain to him that in this district lead substitute is as eagerly stolen as the real thing. A look round the neighbourhood may remove his surprise at that information. He will discover a community living under sentence of death. The long, monotonous rows of terrace houses are even now under inspection by the local Health Department with a view to classification as unfit for human habitation. Some of them look it, though many are nevertheless only too fully inhabited; there are 2,100 houses in this quarter square mile, and they shelter between them nearly 30,000 people. The visitor may already have picked up Moss Side's reputation as a haunt of crime, violence, drugs, dubious cellar clubs and prostitution. It is partly legend, and bitterly resented by the long standing residents, but it has a foundation of fact. He cannot avoid the less dramatic signs of terminal illness—the strewn litter, the gaping windows, the ubiquitous and trashy second-hand shops. He will recognise a human rubbish dump, the kind of area to which those gravitate who are not acceptable elsewhere, immigrants coloured and Irish, criminals, vagrants, the poor and the merely inadequate. This is the bottom where the dregs settle, the camp of the vanquished in the struggle for survival, journey's end for the losers in the rat race.

More deeply seated difficulties don't appear to the casual visitor. He will see how small our adult congregations are, rarely exceeding 30 and often less than 20. He may, however, feel encouraged to see that even so they are representative. They include elderly members of a lifetime's standing, most of whom now live outside the immediate neighbourhood, young English members, West Indian members, middle-aged and young, and perhaps the odd drunk. Evidently we are not merely an archaic survival, awaiting inevitable extinction. But only longer and more personal acquaintance will open his eyes to traumata which this mixture inflicts on those who compose it.

1 "The Church in the Inner City", The Methodist Church Home Mission Department, 1967.

We carry with us 160 years of history much as a mollusc carries its shell, a safe retreat from the environment borne along at the cost of vastly increased inertia. Its emotional hold on our older members is extreme. Some have family links going all the way back, and all remember personally the days when they had to be half an hour early to be sure of a seat in a building that held 1,000. There is immediate and strenuous resistance to any change. In practice, this resistance may be brought to bear by recourse to the Trust Deed, a forbidding document (in more ways than one!) which is at pains to preserve unspotted the Genevan version of the Faith. If that doesn't serve, then ancient resolutions never rescinded are quoted instead. These folk-myths defy checking against the text; the prospect of searching the minutes of 2,000 church meetings is too daunting. Or the debating weapon may be less technical and more personal, a resort to something very close to emotional blackmail. The means are relatively insignificant. The fact is a strong attachment tenaciously held against what is felt to be a deeply threatening insecurity. It is no doubt common to most communities that the older members should regret the present and be largely uninterested in any future which does not attempt to recreate the past, but this is particularly keenly felt in the inner-city setting in which all the contrasts involved are at their most stark.

Over against the older members must be set the small body of young adults who come from several different traditions and profess allegiance to none. They are attracted by the very features which the older folk find distressing, reading as opportunities what the latter see as obstacles. On any issue, they are likely to take an opposite stand. Not only are they at odds with the older group, but also they are under internal stress. They are still on personal spiritual pilgrimages. It is at least arguable, further, that the kind of person who actually wants to work here is, by commonly accepted standards of normalcy, neurotic.

In our case, the factional situation is further complicated by the presence of a third group whose differences from the other two are of another kind. This comprises our West Indian members. They are local, but feel no binding loyalty to any locality in this country. They have their traditions, but these are alien to those of the other two groups and not understood by them. They have gifts to offer, but their potential is largely unrealised because of the limits imposed by long working hours, changing shifts, large families, difficulties in communication, and being made to feel relatively inarticulate and incapable.

In this magazine, it may be worth noting that this situation brings peculiar pressures to bear on the minister. He becomes the identifiable focus of all the frustrations engendered by it, in addition to those created by his own folly and those he has chosen to create in pursuance of his job as he understands it. His own flock is in a continuous state of pronounced anxiety, and his parish throws up an unusually high proportion of variously needy people. His members do not scruple to vent

their unease on him in meetings, and his wider clientele has no truck with normal conventions about what time or in what condition to arrive on the doorstep. All this suggests that he, too, may be judged to stand on the wrong side of the line which divides the normal from the abnormal.

Nevertheless, this church is still here, and still alive. Our district is littered with warehouses with spires, but our premises are not among them. Nor have we yet succumbed to a condition in which such a result is only a matter of time. Despite the friction it creates, we have built up a locally representative congregation. Is there any explanation?

It has never wholly lost touch with its environment. The environment is distasteful, and at every step the relationship has been costly, but we have kept enough hold on reality not to retreat irreversibly into historical fantasy. Even more costly, we have adapted, change by cumbrous change, to the external changes that surround us.

The most striking evidence of this was the decision made six years ago to pull down the old chapel building. With it, there crumbled the focus of countless hallowed memories and the single biggest drain on our resources. Paradoxically, it is the empty half of our site that sets the seal on the preceding decision, to stay here at all. It was a miracle of realism, and every succeeding step indicates the same ability to respond to our setting as it is rather than as we might wish it to be.

A feature of the local community is what a former lecturer of mine used to describe with relish as "prodigious fecundity". There are lots of children—as always among downtrodden peoples. Where "home" is just a room they are not wanted until they go, late, to bed, and meantime there is nowhere to play but the streets, the derelict houses and the rubble-strewn crofts. For these children we run clubs catering for two age groups. They have the run of our decrepit premises, the use of our tatty equipment, and the attention and affection of an adult who does not just shoo them away. Once a year the pace intensifies, as the visiting work camp takes over and runs them daily. The children are quick, dirty, boisterous, physically small and personally mature for their years, foul-mouthed, and no more rewarding than any other sample of children. But they respond with embarrassing enthusiasm to approachable adulthood. On evenings when they are not allowed in they batter on the door and break windows, and at one period took to swarming over the roof until one fell through and was lucky to escape with a broken ankle.

It is other children who make up the Sunday School of about 100. They are almost exclusively West Indian. They come from homes where it is considered *infra dig* to play on the streets, and where instead they must sit in a silent row all evening on pain of the strap. Released into the more permissive atmosphere of our Sunday School they tend to let off steam. It is a constant struggle to maintain enough staff for effective work, but we have just reached the point where the first "graduates" have voluntarily returned as teachers. Purists will shudder, and may be surprised to learn that these young



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## WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

409 BARKING ROAD, PLAISTOW, LONDON, E.13

My dear Brother Minister,

A recent incident at Greenwoods illustrates the difficulties inherent in the work there and pinpoints one of the risks which have to be taken at times in a work like this. Ronald Messenger was asked by a specialist at a mental hospital to take under his care a girl who had been resident in his hospital. The specialist, in answer to a specific question from Mr Messenger, said that he was sure that there was no danger of the girl becoming violent. Mr Messenger pointed out that it was necessary to be sure about this, as he had children and other vulnerable people under his charge at Greenwoods.

The patient duly arrived, and within a few hours had assaulted an adult and two children (one of them very young), who were going about their lawful occasions in the village of Stock. Fortunately, there was no serious damage, but of course the parents and loved ones of the children were tremendously exercised in their mind about the incident, and there were very strong reactions in the village.

It should be stressed that we do everything we can to make sure that other folk are not placed in jeopardy, whether they are residents at Greenwoods or Orchard House, or are our neighbours in the village. Built of course there is a certain amount of risk inherent in work of this nature, although we do everything we can to minimise it.

We ought to put on record our very real appreciation of the long-suffering and tolerant attitude of the people in Stock, who in these last 20 years of our work there have had to put up with a variety of incidents which have included attempted arson, burglary and house-breaking, and in this last case violence, and other malpractices by people under care at one or other of our Homes at Stock. It is a tribute to the essential kindness of the people at Stock that they have borne these "visitations" with resignation and understanding.

Nevertheless, the possibility of this kind of occurrence adds to the tension in Greenwoods itself, where of course the residents are much more free to express their personalities!

All this adds up to the fact that life can be very difficult at times, especially for the man doing the job on the spot and the team of workers around him. And I would be grateful if you could specifically ask your Church to pray for Ronald Messenger and his team at one or other of your Services in the near future.

You will remember that I was a little apprehensive about the results of our Christmas Appeal when I wrote the last Superintendent's Letter for The Fraternal.

I am glad to tell you that I need not have been, as we are several hundred pounds up on last year's figures, for which we give God thanks and express our gratitude to his people.

May God's blessing be on you and your own work.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL,

Superintendent of the Mission

people do very well indeed. They are conscientious, regular, and ready to learn.

The most demanding and far reaching changes have been in young people's work. Though a Girls' Brigade surprisingly flourishes, the Boys' Brigade collapsed three years ago. From its ruins grew the beginnings of a mixed open youth club. This is not the place to document the uncomfortable see saw of trial and error by which we learned. The present result is a racially mixed club nearly 200 strong, a club committee with genuine responsibility for its affairs, a team of young adult helpers who offer support and friendship and sustain a Christian witness, and a full-time youth worker. Application has now been submitted for grant aid towards a youth club building costing over £13,000. The membership includes a high proportion of delinquents, and makes its mark on the property and the people involved. There have been only two real fights, but countless situations in which the limits of tolerance have been tested by words or a display of violence, both in the club and in the homes of helpers. I have seen one helper, a classical scholar of gentle upbringing, with spittle running down his face. When you have been rejected by society as a whole and by your own family, it is a long process coming to believe that there are those who will accept. If acceptance is one side of the Gospel, responsibility is the other, and several young people who have never before been trusted with responsibility have matured remarkably through its exercise in the club. For four, the whole process has led to a profession of faith.

One of the unresolved conflicts is the relationship between the church and the club. The attempt to conduct worship for members of both simultaneously has been dropped to the relief of both sides. Two of the four converts have not felt able to settle into the present life of the church. We demand too much baggage which they don't have to bring, and offer too little that is recognisable as what they need. They constitute the beginnings of a fourth group felt as a threat by the other three, which have conspired to exile it.

We are in constant touch with the West Indian community, which regards us much as the English see their Parish Church. We add the religious ingredient to the climactic points of their family life cycles and to the celebrations of their national history. The minister represents them on committees and at conferences. But lack of time and lack of personnel mean that only a tiny fraction of the opportunities thus presented can be affectively entered into.

A lot of time is spent with other "problem" members of the neighbourhood; the penniless, the homeless, the deserted, the merely lonely. A queue of indigent Irish at the church door most Sunday mornings testifies to our local reputation as a help in time of need, or a soft touch. It also infuriates our members, who wrongly suspect that the collection boxes are in effect, being emptied on the counters of the local pubs. By some tests, this is also unrewarding work. Though my oldest friend of this kind keeps threatening to become a

Catholic because the local retreat house makes the best mug of tea, no one has in fact ever been converted because I lent him ten shillings or went to see his landlord.

We have overcome a long tradition of isolation and competition sufficiently to enter into some real partnership with other local churches. It is beyond the scope of this article to indicate the ecclesiastical possibilities which lie here, but it is worth noting that together we have been of some use to the neighbourhood in a representative capacity. We played a decisive and continuing part in the formation of a People's Association which has become quite effective as a pressure group with the local Council. Through it, street cleaning and rubbish removal, the bricking-up of derelict houses, the diversion of a threatened violent student demonstration, and the promotion of a children's playground on the empty half of our own site, have all been effected. The Council has been made aware that it cannot write off 30,000 people now because it has plans for them in ten years time.

We have plans too, partly forced on us by the state of our own buildings and partly demanded of us by the Corporation's rebuilding programme, already in evidence in the demolished area just across the road. But meanwhile we are faced by the apparently insoluble dilemma of being set in an area of clamant need while bereft of all resources and bedevilled by the internal consequences of our own history and of the impact on us of our setting. We have become a classical instance of the general situation which Harry Salmon describes:

"The church is anxious to move out into the community in service and evangelism, but is handicapped by lack of resources, baffled by apparent failure and eventually overwhelmed by the vastness of the task and the lack of a coherent strategy."

Superficial adaptation is not enough, though even that has cost us hurt enough. At the time of writing we have just emerged from the most painful period of thought and debate so far, bringing with us virtually intact a blueprint for complete reorganisation and committed to putting it into effect. It draws on American experience in parallel situations and on group dynamics theory, and endeavours to express through these the essence of the priesthood of all believers. It attempts to mobilise effectively all our small and varied membership for our proper tasks, and to lean on the support of others, including an additional minister. It is not in itself the Gospel, but we have struggled to the belief that it may be our best way at this point of embodying, expressing and conveying the Gospel. We have learned continuously what crucifixion means. And we look to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come—here.

BRIAN TUCKER

## JOHN HENRY JOWETT: PRINCE OF PREACHERS

*This article originally appeared in the magazine CHRISTIANITY TODAY and we acknowledge the author's kind permission to publish it in THE FRATERNAL. As we do so we take this opportunity to greet Dr John Pitts who has been a member of the B.M.F. for many years and who, at one time, shared the editorial responsibilities for this journal. He now lives in the USA and sends warm greetings to all his friends of former days.*

"Boy, I would like the morning paper," said a kind yet imperious voice to me as, at 6.30 a.m., I handed out newspapers at the railway bookstall in my home town. I glanced in awe at the well-dressed, distinguished man who thus commanded me, as I, a sixteen-year-old lad, handed him the paper and took his money. For he was the person whom the evening before I had heard thrill a great congregation with a tremendous sermon on "Prevailing Prayer."

It was an anniversary occasion, and for such church events John Henry Jowett was a name to conjure with. He had come from Birmingham; where he was minister of Carr's Lane Congregational Church, for this special event. When I reached the church it was packed to overflowing, with several hundred people outside. I wormed my way through the crowd and came face to face with an usher guarding a closed door. "You can't go in," he said; "the church is already packed to suffocation." "Do you think that Christ would keep a boy from hearing the Gospel?" I countered. That did it! He opened the door to let me in, and several scores of people got in behind me before the door could be closed again.

The preacher's text was: "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ..." (Matt. 9:36-39). After many years three things stand out in my memory, above the overwhelming impression of the sermon as a whole. One was the thrilling way in which he said **Pray**, and finished reading the text with that great word. The second was a quotation from the Latin poet Horace: "I hate the vulgar crowd and keep it at a distance," which Jowett contrasted with, "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them." The third was a personal illustration: "When I pray for my little girl, whom I have left home in Birmingham, tonight, I will be cutting a channel of grace from the throne of God to her heart." That is what he made us feel intercessory prayer essentially is: cutting channels through which the divine power and grace can flow to meet human need.

Five years later, soon after I had entered Spurgeon's College as a student for the ministry, I heard Jowett preach two mighty sermons from Spurgeon's famous London pulpit.

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It was in the opening month of World War I. At that time Jowett was at the pinnacle of his fame as the pastor of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, and was paying a return visit to his native land. The great church was filled to overflowing, and several hundred people outside vainly sought admission. Both morning and evening sermons were based on texts taken from the prophecy of Isaiah. The morning one was a bold utterance in which Jowett urged Britain to be a mediating power between Germany and France. "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isa. 19:23-25). This was a theme which he took up with vigour and devotion after the war, also, when he had returned to Britain as pastor of Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate, London. He endeavoured in practical ways to bring about a reconciliation between French and German Christians, recalling them "solemnly and tenderly to their common brotherhood in Jesus Christ."

Jowett's evening sermon in Spurgeon's tabernacle was based on a verse much more familiar than the morning text: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). The preacher spoke with dramatic effect about power to fly (for youth), power to run (for the middle-aged), and power to walk (for the elderly)—power which comes to those who put their trust in the Lord.

I once heard a noted minister say that he did not care for Jowett's preaching because it was too **flowery**, and not **floury** enough: "When I am hungry I would rather go to a baker than a decorator; and Jowett is a decorator." His preference was G. Campbell Morgan. I doubt if the analogy was a genuine one. At any rate, whatever decorating Jowett may have done on that Sunday in August, 1914, the impression left on most of his hearers was, I think, that they had been fed with the Bread of life.

Jowett died at the age of fifty-nine. He was then minister of Westminster Congregational Church, situated within a short walk of Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral (Catholic), and Westminster Central Hall (Methodist). His was a strategic position, and he made full use of it. The church was crowded every Sunday, reminiscent of the days when Campbell Morgan occupied that famous pulpit.

Before Jowett had returned to England, just as the war was closing, several churches in Britain had sought to secure him as minister—St. George's West Free Church, Edinburgh (the illustrious pulpit of the great Alexander Whyte), and Richmond Hill Congregational Church, Bournemouth (where the persuasive J. D. Jones preached for forty years). But it

was to London that he wished to go, for he felt that there he could best serve the Church and his nation in those distressful days.

In 1915 an effort was made to secure him as successor to R. J. Campbell at the City Temple, and the deacons would have extended him the call. But the majority of the church opposed this, on the ground that some years before Jowett had severely criticised Campbell's so-called "New Theology." Fancy that—a congregation refusing to have as its minister the man who was so frequently referred to in the press as "The Greatest Living Preacher"!

From the very beginning, discerning friends and listeners saw that Jowett was destined for pulpit greatness. This was clear even in his student days at Edinburgh University and at Airdale and Mansfield Theological Colleges. It became even more evident during his six years' ministry in his first pastorate, St. James's Congregational Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne. It was therefore no surprise when Jowett was called to succeed the great Robert William Dale at Carr's Lane Congregational Church, Birmingham. Dale was the intellectual leader of English Nonconformity, a mighty exponent of evangelical Christianity, and a bold advocate of the social implications and applications of Christian principles. Once when a somewhat narrow brother, objecting to Dale's political interests, said: "Dr. Dale, there are no politics in heaven," the great man retorted: "Yes, and there are no evils in heaven either".

How different were Jowett's preaching and writings! He was wise enough, in succeeding Dale, to be himself. Before he entered upon his great ministry in Birmingham, he had made up his mind to develop the type of preaching he had already found effective in Newcastle-on-Tyne. So he was devotional instead of didactic, emotional rather than intellectual. That does not mean that his preaching was all heat and no light; he gave much care to the construction of his sermons, and there was much thought in them. He realised, however, that the mere abstract statement of Christian truths lacks the power to move men's wills and set their hearts aflame. So was he able to take up where his illustrious predecessor had left off, and continue in another vein the evangelical tradition, not only of Robert William Dale, but also of Dale's Puritan predecessor, the distinguished John Angel James.

Like Dale, Jowett was "mighty in the Scriptures," yet in a different way. He had his own technique in expounding the Word, and this became more and more effective as the years passed. He had no liking for "topical preaching," unless the topic was something to be found in the Bible. He felt that the preacher who spent his time in the pulpit presenting essays on remote subjects, or even in dealing with the so-called "living issues" of the time was failing to proclaim "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Of course, Jowett seems not to have passed through what the medieval mystics called "The Dark Night of the Soul."

In this respect he was like Alexander Maclaren, but unlike Campbell Morgan. Therefore he had no liking for apologetics in the pulpit, and no confidence that proclaiming the social gospel would be of service to the Church of Christ. Probably he felt—as James Denney did—that most preachers who proclaimed the social gospel did so because they had no other Gospel to preach.

It has to be admitted that on both counts Jowett's attitude was extreme. There is room in the modern pulpit for sensible apologetic sermons, even though it is true that "it has never pleased God to save His people by argument." Successful apologetic serves the useful purpose of prying open closed minds. Furthermore, the modern preacher cannot be indifferent to the social and political problems of the time—racial discrimination, for example, and the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. It is the one-track mind in the pulpit that has to be deplored; the preacher who seldom talks about anything else than the evidences for Christianity or the East-West tensions is offering a truncated Gospel.

When Jowett returned to England in 1922 it was clear that the war had made a great impact on his preaching. His hearers noted with satisfaction that new notes had crept into his sermons, even though he still spoke persuasively about the great apostolic themes. Christ—crucified, risen, ascended, the Lord of Life and Glory, of whose kingdom there would be no end—was still the centre of his message. But Jowett had become more ecumenically minded; he now saw more clearly the social implications of the Gospel; and above all he felt the urgent necessity for the Church to lead the way in the establishment of international peace. Alas that he died when he was at his best, a victim of pernicious anemia. His death at a time when his voice was so much needed was a tragedy for the Church as was the death of William Temple twenty years later.

In essence Jowett was an old-fashioned preacher. He was well-versed in what are called the "assured results" of modern biblical criticism (had he not been trained by the great philosophical theologian Andrew M. Fairbairn and the fine Old Testament scholar Archibald Duff?), but he never obtruded such matters into the pulpit. Was it because he did not wish to commit himself? At the time of the great preacher's death an influential religious journal contained an article entitled, "The Tragedy of Dr. Jowett," suggesting that he deliberately refused to face up to the perplexities of the faith. Thus while he was able to comfort the saints he was unable to enlighten the doubter. And even in addressing himself to those who were secure in the faith, his was a "Gospel of delicate sympathy rather than of sturdy strength" (Horton Davies, *Varieties of English Preaching*, p.42).

Jowett was a preacher par excellence of the certitudes of the Christian faith. If he did not canvass in the pulpit the intellectual problems of the Gospel, it was not because he was afraid to do so but because he regarded such questions as irrelevant. He is reported to have said privately to a fellow

minister: "The man who spends half-an-hour in the pulpit trying to prove that there were two or three Isaiahs is a fool; the man who spends the time trying to prove that there was only one is a bigger fool."

Was he not wise in concentrating on the centralities of the Gospel? As Ernest H. Jeffs points out, in his **Princes of the Modern Pulpit**, the keynote of Jowett's preaching was **grace**. The grace of God revealed in Christ he held to contain all the mystery and poetry and sublimity of the Gospel. To him the Bible was the alphabet of the literature of grace; and he rang the changes on this one grand theme as Dale's successor in Birmingham, as the pastor of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, and finally in the heart of London, in the shadow of Buckingham Palace.

Yes, he was an old-fashioned preacher; yet he was nevertheless up to date—a mighty herald of the Christ who is always ahead of his people, "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

JOHN PITTS