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# The Fraternal

September, 1973

No. 168

## HMF IS MISSION

The co-operation of every minister is sought in presenting the challenge of the Home Mission Fund.

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## EDITORIAL

The overwhelming demand of our members for some kind of refresher course has been acted upon with commendable speed by the Department of Ministry of the Baptist Union, and it was the writer's privilege to attend the first such course at Bristol College over a period of nine days this summer.

The theoretical was well balanced by the practical; a visit to a great steelworks at Newport, Mon., was followed by a session with Ray Taylor, who is industrial chaplain in that setting. Mrs R. Tapley led our thoughts on Christian Education, and we had the benefit of sessions with a psychiatrist and a general practitioner on the subject of pastoral care. J. F. V. Nicholson and J. J. Brown gave us some of the fruits of their experience in Group and Team Ministries, and Mrs Monica Reeve conducted a course in "efficiency reading", introducing us to some new techniques for the improvement of reading speed—with some surprising results!

Theology and philosophy occupied a large part of our attention, and Dr. Adrian Thatcher and Dr. Donald Hudson led us respectively in these disciplines, making us more sharply aware of the progress of the theological ferment of our time and more assured than ever, not only of the reasonableness of holding religious beliefs but of the ways in which those beliefs can be interpreted to our contemporaries who are schooled in rationalistic ways of thinking. Dr. R. E. Clements took us into the field of Old Testament studies, showing some of the exciting ways of interpreting the material available, and bringing home to our minds new discoveries which illuminate the meaning of familiar concepts such as "Covenant" and "Wisdom". Dr. G. H. Boobyer enriched us from the vast store of his knowledge of New Testament studies, enabling us to link up the history of those studies with the progress in the field of theology which we had already noted.

Running through the whole course like a living thread was a series of group discussions around certain books which had been read by all those participating in the course. Three groups dealt respectively with W. Pannenberg's "The Apostles' Creed in the Light of Today's Questions", D. Edwards' "The Last Things Now", and J. N. Ward's "The Use of Praying". These groups constituted a stimulating experience for all concerned.

Our devotional sessions were led by some of those already mentioned, as well as by K. W. Clements and Geoffrey Rusling, and all of us felt that we were being richly helped and blessed.

No brief account of this course could give more than "the barest of bare bones", and it is just not possible to get over to the reader any real impression of the atmosphere, the fellowship, and the sense of positive achievement and spiritual profit. One sentence, however, quoted by Dr. Boobyer from another eminent New Testament scholar, may serve in some measure to give a glimpse of the sense of

adventure which was sharpened in all of us: "The end of all exploring is to arrive at the place where we started, and to know that place for the first time.

Criticism of the course must include an acknowledgment that no such project can ever be perfect; it could perhaps be said that a somewhat more specific "briefing" of visiting experts such as medical men, etc., might ensure that they do not have to underestimate the knowledge and experience of their audience and thus be freed to spend more time over the things which are most helpful to working ministers. Yet the time spent with them was far from wasted time, and we are grateful. The one important gap in the course, it seems to the writer, lay in the fact that we did not have any session on the subject of the proclamation of our message. At a time when the sermon is under fire in some quarters, its usefulness and relevance being seriously questioned, it would have been helpful to consult someone who is outstanding in the art of preaching and communication.

Having said all that by way of criticism, however, let it be added that we had a wonderful experience—and a highly profitable one. We would congratulate Geoffrey Rusling and his Department; and we would offer our warmest thanks to Morris West, Norman Moon, and Harry Mowvley, for their helpful participation in the course, as well as to the domestic staff of the college for the superb way in which they fed us and looked after our creature comforts.

If this report stimulates other ministers to enrol for any of the further courses which are planned, it will have succeeded. May you have as fine an experience as we had—and if you do you will be greatly blessed.

W.H.W.

## THE VOICE OF THE TRUMPET\*

Job, 39, 24.

"He cannot stand still at the voice of the trumpet.  
When the trumpet sounds, he says "Aha!"  
He smells the battle from afar,  
The thunder of the captains and the shouting".

Job's description of a war horse is magnificent, but Lord Alanbrooke said it is an even better picture of Winston Churchill. And better still of John Knox who belongs inescapably to Christ's Church Militant. We do not much like military metaphors nowadays, but his writings are full of them, and trumpet is his word, almost to the point of obsession. And at least the word makes us sit up for it is very evident that in our modern ecumenical orchestration, among its sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, trumpets are in short supply.

\*A sermon preached in the Kirk of St. Giles', Edinburgh, on November 26th, 1972, in commemoration of the Fourth Centenary of the death of John Knox. The sermon is reproduced here by kind permission of Professor Gordon Rupp and the editor of the St. Giles' Cathedral News Letter.

Had he chosen a text it might surely have been "Give God the glory: as for this man we know that he is a sinner". And those who have written most perceptively about him, Lord Percy and Pierre Janton for example, tell us to begin with the inward man, with Knox's prayers. He knew the heights and depths which lie behind the phrase "Justification by faith alone" which not only Luther but Gerard Manley Hopkins have so poignantly described:—

"O the mind, mind has mountains: cliffs of fall Frightful, sheer, no man fathomed. Hold them cheap who ne'er hung there".

"I know" said Knox "how hard the battle is . . . I know the anger, wrath and indignation against God calling all his promises in doubt and being ready every hour utterly to fall from God . . . against which rests only Faith . . . wherein our most desperate calamities shall turn to gladness and to a prosperous end".

And then he was not only a Paul man but a John man, joining Romans and Galatians with St. John's gospel, and Ephesians. There, in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, the colloquy between the Eternal Son and the Eternal Father is where his soul last cast its anchor, but he rested there many times, from his first call to preach, huddled with his bairns in St. Andrew's Castle, in the galleys pondering Henry Balnaves' astonishing treatise, at the heart of his treatise on Predestination, and in the Scots Confession at the point of eucharist—"ut ipsi in Christo maneant et Christus in eis".

In Van Eyck's great altar piece, there are two side panels. On one side the young warriors, in their vigour and prime, with banners, armour, swords, and the great war horse pawing the ground. On the other, the old men, hermits and pilgrims leaning on their staves. John Knox begins in the one, clasping his great two handed sword as chaplain to George Wishart. And he ends an old bent man, leaning on his stick—"miles emeritus"—but the clue to both is that they are turned to the vision of the Lamb. John Seventeen: Master Calvin's sermons on Ephesians—and Isaiah 53. These were the famous last words which he read.

His prayers, and then his preaching. "Send out preachers" wrote Calvin to the Duke of Somerset "whose trumpet voices will reach into the corners of men's hearts". It is with the great, small company of Edwardine preachers that he really belongs: with Latimer who denounced great sinners by name in the presence of a King: with Bradford who like Knox called on whole cities to repent: with John Foxe who was not only a prophet but a seer and who discerned the shape of things to come.

Like Luther, he took Ezekiel 33 with deep seriousness. He was God's watchman, called to sound an alarm, as one who must give an account, at whose hand blood might be required. It is the clue we must admit to some of Luther's most unhappy writing against the Jews, and some savage pages in Knox's "Admonition". But we have never touched the vocation of preaching unless we have known what it is

to be bound with a whole people, not only in a solidarity of suffering, but also in a solidarity of guilt, such as today binds the Reformers to us, and to the Protestants in Northern Ireland.

Knox had for apostasy a mediaeval revulsion against a lapsed heretic. He knew the primitive Christian polarity between the traitor and the martyr. England had heard the gospel, had begun its reformation, as after 1560 had Scotland. And he believed nations do not get two chances.

"The sun keepeth his ordinary course and starteth not back from the West to the South: but when it goes down we lack light of the same until it rise the next day . . . so it is with the light of the gospel, which has its day appointed wherein it shines to realms and nations: if it be condemned, darkness follows".

It is this which accounts for the fierce bitterness of his last days. He would not have enjoyed the hymn "Ein Feste Burg" for it would have reminded him of the "damnable house of the Castle of Edinburgh", and its two inmates, the Laird of Grange and Maitland of Lethington, on whom he turned a fiercer wrath than ever directed against the two Marys—for these were once his comrades, might have been the Mr Standfast and Mr Valiant for Truth of the Scottish Reformation, turned into Mr Facing both ways and Mr By Ends.

We are most restive at Knox's little dooms and judgments, the univocal relation he finds between the Old Testament and his own day, the ever repeated Ahabs, Jezebels and Jehus, reclothed in gilts and kirtles and bonnets, begging it seems to us all the questions of which since Vatican II we are all aware. But amid so much that is naive and simplistic, we had better heed Knox's words:

"My assurances are not the marvels of Merlin, nor yet the dark sentences of profane prophets, but the plain truth of God's Word, the invincible justice of the everlasting God".

The historian Froude said:—

"One lesson and one only history may be said to repeat with distinctness, that in the long run it is well with the good, that in the long run it is well with the wicked".

Knox would have queried "long run" and we in fear and trembling, and remembering Auschwitz and Berlin may wonder if we have reckoned with the prophetic interpretation of history. And when we smile at those geographical expostulations, which in Gilbey and Bradford come so near to bathos "O Bolton repent! Turn to God O Manchester! O Scotland. O England, England". But have we in our gospel reckoned with the sins of cities and of nations, on the nexus between manners and morals and that Righteousness is that by which the nations stand and fall. The shattering truth that I belong to Glasgow, but Glasgow belongs to God?

He had a knack of turning up, of steering for the sound of the guns, in him a bit of an adolescent David who in the naughtiness of his heart, had come to see the battle. But when he came, the news "John Knox is come" made Papists

hastily bring meetings to a close and timid Protestants stared at one another with a wild surmise, for he was like Luther in this too, that he not only scared his enemies but also terrified his friends. But his was the clear, ringing trumpet known which not once or twice rallied the ranks in the very moment of panic and despair. Thomas Randolph that Lloyd George like politician with a Welshman's nose for a sermon has told us:—

“The voice of this one man is able in an hour to put more life in us than 500 trumpets blustering in our ears”.

If we could see John Knox—this is the X in the equation—we should understand why he and not Willock or Craig or Erskine of Dun bore the prophetic brunt of Scotland's reformation, that vibrant fire which again and again brought his accusers to awe-struck silence. Three great qualities he had. Integrity. The man was a hero to his valet as Bannatyne confessed:—

“It has pleased God to make me a servant to that man John Knox whom I serve, not so meikle in respect of wordly commodity as for that integrity and uprightness I have known”.

Shakespeare saw “tickling Commodity”—self interest as the hall-mark of that venal age. In his will Knox said:—

“None have I corrupted, none have I defrauded, merchandise have I not made of the Evangel of Jesus Christ”.

And courage: for in the pulpit he neither feared nor flattered any man. And when one gibed “You are not in the pulpit now” he had the answer:—

“I am in the place where I am demanded of conscience to speak the truth: therefore I speak”.

And loyalty in a time of turncoats, traitors, ever changing sides and breaking faith, Knox could say that he had never abandoned a friend or failed his country:—

“In your most extreme dangers I have been with you: Sanct Johnston, Cupar Muir and the Craggs of Edinburgh yet recent in my heart: yea and that dark and colourous hour wherein ye all, my Lords with shame and fear left this town, is yet in my mind”.

And wherever he went, a church grew—first those house communions in the homes of the lairds, then more and more the great audiences, and the devout companies of men and women earnest, hungry and thirsty for the Word of God. And there were his people elsewhere, his ministry in Berwick and Newcastle with its Baxter Kidderminster like flavour—in Dieppe in France and Frankfurt in Germany for as Thomas Fuller said his merits naturalized him in any Protestant congregation and above all in Geneva with his dear flock of exiles for Christ's sake. Jean Gutton says that letters to women reduce the pain of writing, and we do not need to remember St. Francis of Sales, or Fenelon or John Wesley, or even John Bradford, who is the closest parallel to this correspondence of ghostly counsel. There was that which came upon him daily: the care of his mother-in-law, but then Mrs Bowes was no black sheep, but a rather silly, woolly lamb who thought that the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah

were eating peas with a knife. It is Anne Locke who was the prophetess amongst them to whom he shared his triumphs:—

“We do nothing but go about Jericho, blowing with trumpets as God giveth strength, hoping for victory by his power alone—Christ Jesus is preached even in Edinburgh and his blessed sacraments rightly administered in all the congregations—Edinburgh, Saint Andrews, Dundee, Sanct Johnston, Brechin, Montrose, Aire and now upon the south borders—so that the trumpet soundeth overall, blessed be God”.

And so the frame of a great Church—a Confession, which however composite its authorship bears his mark upon it. And a Liturgy and a discipline. The art of the possible did not include its educational vision, but the devout imaginations of John Knox won through in the end. His Scotland produced more schoolmasters and doctors to the square mile than any country in Europe. I was not surprised some months ago in the deep south of New Zealand, within touch of the cold winds from the Antarctic, to find a community built by Scotsmen, with a fine University and to see that the finest theological library in the southern hemisphere was in Knox College Dunedin. And are not the roots of this in Knox and his vision of the commonalty of Scotland?

“Neither would I that ye should esteem the Reformation and care of religion less to appertain to you because ye are not Kings, rulers, judges, nobles or in authority. Beloved brethren ye are God's creatures, created and formed to his own image and similitude for whose redemption was shed the most precious blood of the Son of God”.

John Knox was not the very model of a modern ecumenical. But in his controversy with the Jesuit there is one splendid hint of better things to come.

“We are bold to affirm that if it ever shall please Almighty God to bring the Kirk of Rome to her original purity, that she shall not be ashamed to embrace and reverence the Pure Kirk of Scotland as her dearest sister, and next resembling her in all things—she shall vote in our favours, against all such as shall deny us to be a Kirk.”

Vatican III, who knows?

But if that prophecy is unfulfilled, we are here today to fulfil another. About old man Knox there is a touch of King Lear. It was the ingratitude which hurt.

“What I have been to my country albeit this unthankful age will not know, yet the ages to come will be compelled to bear witness to the truth”.

It might have comforted his old heart to know that four hundred years after we should come from north and south and east and west to do him honour as a great servant to God, from churches where the trumpet of the gospel is muted or even forced to be silent, and perhaps from churches only too given to blowing their own trumpet, yet knowing that if we had not come, the very stones of this place would cry out. This noble church has been called the

heart of Scotland. While he spoke within it it was also a great nation's conscience.

“One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake”.

So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

E. GORDON RUPP

## A GROUP WITH A DIFFERENCE

Groups have been with us from the beginning of the race. When God saw the lonely man in the Garden He said: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will provide a partner for him.” (Gen. 2:18 NEB). This gives us a clue to the redemption history of the Bible. It is set in a societary context. Man is not redeemed alone: he is redeemed along with others.

Abraham is called from Ur of the Chaldees to go to the Promised Land. He did not go alone but took his family with him. Abraham was anxious to secure the continuity of his family, and at Sarah's suggestion adopted an accepted practice of that day to try and bring it about. God, however, had His own plan for making sure the family group continued. Joseph was not left alone in Egypt and, through the providence of God, Jacob and his family eventually joined him. When the Israelites finally entered the Promised Land the tribal groupings were firmly established.

The societary feeling was so strong that when Achan was found guilty of breaking the ban placed on Jericho his immediate family was also reckoned as sharing in his guilt, and executed along with him. The societary sense also ran backwards. The exiled Nehemiah prayed: “. . . I confess the sins which we Israelites have all committed against thee, and of which I *and my father's house* are also guilty . . .” (Neh. 1:6 NEB). The societary concept was so strong that if a man for any reason was alienated from his family or tribe he was no longer considered a true person. He had identity as a person only within the group or collective personality of the family or tribe.

In the later history of Israel the societary concept was qualified. Jeremiah said: “In those days it shall no longer be said, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge’, for a man shall die for his own wrongdoing; the man who eats sour grapes shall have his own teeth set on edge.” (Jer. 31:29f NEB). Ezekiel quoted the same proverb and added: “The soul that sins shall die.” (Ez. 18:4 NEB). This only qualified the societary concept; it did not do away with the idea that men are bound up together in the bundle of life.

(Ez. 18:4 NEB). This only qualified the societary concept; it is doubtful if at any time Israel was wholly dedicated to the Lord. However, within the nation there were those who grouped together to share their common faith in the Lord. The schools of the prophets are one example. Malachi said of the faithful in his day: “Then those who feared the Lord talked together . . .” (Mal. 3:16 NEB). An exercise that could hardly avoid meeting in a group!

The inter-testament period throws up its groupings. The most interesting and well-known, perhaps, being the monastic Jews of the Qumran community.

When the border into New Testament country is crossed we first meet with John the Baptist who gathered his own group of disciples. The most notable group in the New Testament is, of course, that of our Lord and His disciples. He spent three years with His men, and together they shared in His life and teaching. The New Testament church met largely in the homes of its people. Even in Jerusalem where the Christians could meet in the Temple, they felt the necessity to meet in one another's homes in smaller groups.

Christians have always felt the necessity to group with those of kindred heart and mind. Our enthusiasm may run cold at the thought of monasticism; but at its truest it met the need of those who wanted something warmer than they could find in the Christianity of their time.

Monasticism has not been the only form of Christian grouping. Throughout the church's history there have been those who, dissatisfied with the official church, have broken away and gathered with others of like mind. In the 12th century the Waldensians, followers of Peter Waldo, established and maintained their own church against fierce opposition. In the 14th century John Wycliffe promoted his teaching in Oxford; sometime later Scots students took it back to the Universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow and St. Andrews. It takes little imagination to visualise the students getting together to talk about the new teaching. Wycliffe gathered together the Lollard preachers who promoted his views throughout the land. This would have demanded people meeting together to share the new teaching. Our Baptist forefathers went to great lengths to meet together to study God's Word, and encourage one another in the faith. Risking imprisonment they made determined efforts to group with others and share in their common Christian experience.

Turning to the Reformation we discover that although it brought spiritual liberty to Europe, its teachings have not always been an unmitigated blessing. It set people free from the bondage of Romanism when it taught that men could approach God directly without any intermediary except Jesus Christ. The soul in the final issues of life would stand alone before God, accountable to Him, and through personal faith in Jesus Christ would find pardon from Him. The Reformation taught the right of each Christian to judge in all things according to his conscience guided by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. This teaching has led, un-

fortunately, in some directions to an unhealthy individualism. It has weakened the sense of our belonging to each other in Jesus Christ. Baptists hold the church as being the gathered community of God's people. There is no doubt about our being gathered together at certain times; but there is serious doubt about any deep sense of belonging together in a normal Baptist congregation. Too many times churches have been crippled because of those who claiming the right of conscience have failed to see the Body of Christ.

It was, perhaps, in the Victorian era that the doctrine of individualism came to its zenith. It was worked out politically and socially, and the man to be admired was the man who stood on his own two feet and made a success of his life. To keep the record straight it was also in the Victorian era that the co-operative movement began. Men discovered that by grouping they could command greater political and social power, and thus overcome the weakness they felt as isolated individuals.

The Trade Union movement is a movement of groups. Like many good things it has been spoilt by the sinfulness of man. What was meant to support and overcome the social and political weakness of the working class, has to a certain degree become a means for forcing sectional interests and advantages. Commercial and industrial concerns have discovered the advantages of grouping. Once again, however, what could be for the advantage of all has been diverted at times from good ends by the policy that profits come before people. Psychiatrists have realised the great possibilities for healing in group therapy. Not only the mentally disturbed, but alcoholics, have found help and healing in groups.

Since the last war groups have multiplied in the church's life. At one time it was the 'in' thing. Hope was placed in the group idea that it would open the way to a new and better era for the church. To a certain degree that hope has been fulfilled. Others, beside the ministers, are given opportunity to express their insights into Christian faith and life.

The group with a difference which can be of great value to the church and the Christian is one in which the Bible and prayer have their place; but its vital function is to create a basis and an atmosphere where a person to person encounter might take place. This kind of group has for long been promoted in the U.S.A. through a movement called 'Faith at Work'. It exists to promote groups of all kinds, for all ages, outlooks and classes of people. Whatever the group's programme, however, its aim is to establish openness and honesty between members of the group, so that God might speak through each to other. Its magazine carries this heading: "This magazine expresses Life lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ: a life committed to others in open, honest fellowship; a life of involved concern for individuals and society; and a life demonstrating that faith brings changes to people and situations." It carries many stories of ministers, married couples, young people and many others finding a new depth of Christian living through meeting in groups where openness and honesty were practised.

Our church structures largely prevent such kinds of meeting and encounter. Our surrender to individualism has diminished our understanding of the church as the People of God who belong to each other, and who share together the Christian experience. It is the few who speak and the majority who listen. When we gather for the few to speak and the rest to listen it is mostly at such a level that any openness of heart is simply out of place. We come, we go and there has been no real meeting of persons. A certain measure of help is received by some; but rarely is the opportunity given for them to share this with others. Unfortunately, when meetings are small enough for people to really meet each other, the result is a discussion when a subject is thoroughly aired; but no one exposes their true self to the fresh air of openness and honesty. To be fair, this is not the kind of thing you can drop on people. There is the need for kindred hearts and minds which are prepared to take the risk and explore into this realm of openness and honesty between persons. In our churches there is the need for such an opportunity to be given where Christians can share their experience, and where at times they can find release from anxiety, fear or guilt.

On more than one occasion I have made tentative attempts to get openness between members of my churches; but so far not with much success. At one church I decided to be more open about myself. In the course of our conversational Bible study I admitted my children at times 'drove me up the wall', and because I was under stress I relieved my tension by unjustly punishing them. After a further attempt to be more open, and when no one else was prepared to be forthcoming, I gave up the solo attempt. The value of this exercise was, however, vindicated. The next day after the first attempt to be open with my fellow Christians I visited a young mother who had been at the meeting. She had three small children and suffered from chronic asthma from which she died a few years later. She admitted her children irritated her at times, and that she felt guilty at unjustly punishing them. She went on to say how much it had helped her to discover that her minister was also very human, and had the same problem. It gave the opportunity to give her spiritual and moral support, and to re-assure her that in her circumstances her tensions and reactions were understandable. It helped to overcome her feelings of guilt, and also gave her courage as she realised she wasn't alone in the daily conflict of the Christian life.

A group in which there is openness cannot be organised against people's wills. It needs organisation; but basically it has to grow. Do we, however, in our churches give the opportunity for such growth. The essential ingredients are confidence and trust which spring from a true Christian love between members of a group. In such a group faith in Jesus Christ can come to flower and fruition, the weak find renewed courage, strength supplied for witness in hard places, and each member made aware that they belong to a vital Christian fellowship.

Such a meeting of persons does not mean the exposure of everything: the soul being laid totally bare. There are some things which should only be expressed to God or a friend. Also, efforts should be made to ensure the group does not become isolated from other Christians, making itself into a spiritual élite. There are dangers to be avoided; but there is a greater danger in not giving church members the opportunity for enriching their fellowship, and a place where at times they can find spiritual and emotional release from anxiety, fear or guilt.

Ministers need not only to meet with their people on a deeper level; but also on such a level with one another. The ministry can be a very lonely affair. We walk alone amongst our people and our fellow ministers afraid to show our true selves. A man can stand isolated as upon some Darien peak with a vast and lonely ocean on either side. The truth is that a man can go to a fraternal feeling lonely and go away still feeling the same. There has been no true meeting of persons, no fellowship at such a depth that a man has felt a re-vitalising grace flowing into him. No warm glow that came from realising he belonged to a fellowship of brothers who intensely cared about him. He had enjoyed the meeting, and talking with his ministerial friends. The paper or address had given him something to talk about; but not much more.

For 26 years I have been going to fraternals, and rarely missed any. I have enjoyed them, and found a great deal of help and friendship in them. I have not missed a fraternal if I could help it. They have, at times, been greatly encouraging. Yet in all that time, and including annual conferences, I have never known a fraternal where there has been an honest person to person meeting. A paper, a book, an address and the occasional visitor from another denomination; but never the opportunity to get to know one another at any real depth. Never an opportunity when a young minister bewildered, confused or frustrated; or an old minister tired and disillusioned, could open their hearts and find a loving sympathetic hearing, and an honest and strengthening encouragement. Never a moment when a man could find the opportunity to confess his weakness, and find compassionate understanding and relief from his guilt.

Paul Tournier in his book *The Weak and The Strong* writes about the kind of front we put on to face the world and overcome our problems. Some manage life by being aggressive, others by yielding. Each adopts the pose that suits them best. He points out, however, that the weak have strength and the strong have weakness. In an honest meeting of persons in a fraternal we could learn how to control our strength and to surmount our weakness. Unfortunately, when we face one another in a fraternal we are afraid to be known for what we truly are. Afraid to come out from behind our mask. We keep up the charade, for after all we do not wish to fall short of the high spiritual and ethical ideals that we preach. We do like to appear successful. Stephen Verney in his book 'Fire in Coventry' tells the story of the clergy of the Monks Kirby chapter in the Coventry

diocese. When they met the usual pleasantries were exchanged. They would ask how the other men's parishes were going, and received the answer all was well, and gave the same reply themselves. In their hearts, however, they knew all wasn't well. Because of this cover up they never really met. The time came when they decided to meet for an hour every Monday morning to pray and study the Bible. At the end of three months a radical change had come over them. They discovered they were a band of brothers who really cared for each other, who belonged together, and who were not afraid to admit their weakness. They lost their suspicion of each other, and found a strength they could not find alone.

The ancient pre-Roman Celtic Church of Scotland taught that it was important to take part in soul-friendship. That was its way of describing the confessional. We reject the confessional; but there is tremendous insight in that description of soul-friendship. The sharing together of the deeps of life, both good and bad. John Wesley in his wisdom established classes in his societies. He was fond of saying: "The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." The classes had a maximum of 12 persons. They were made up of persons who expressed willingness to "speak everything that is on their heart without exception, without disguise and without reserve." The procedure was to "speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our own souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word and deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting." Rather strong meat, and perhaps too radical in parts, yet it indicates that the need for Christians to meet at depth is not a modern novelty. Reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ is the fountain head of our faith; but its streams must find proper channels through which to flow in our churches and fraternals. A group of open and honest persons can provide at least one channel.

A fraternal ought to be a loving fellowship of kindred hearts; so that when a man is burdened, or feeling he has fallen flat on his face and bitten the dust, he can find with his brethren new strength and courage to get up and go on again. With a number of men and women in our ministry suffering nervous breakdown, and at times even worse, the following meditation may help to point up the need for fraternals to be not only places for the exchange of ideas; but places where healing of the soul might take place. It was written as a tribute to a fellow clergyman who took his own life, and was read at his memorial service. It is given in part only.

**"Therefore Stand"**  
(Kenneth E. Grice)

I see you standing there, my Brother,  
Tall and serious.  
I see you standing there,  
And in your eyes I hear an invisible cry.

And I wonder how I failed you,  
That you never thought to share the desperate things,  
The desperate things with me,  
The things that beckoned you to death.

And I am puzzled at this exclamation-point  
That now closes your life in mid-sentence.  
It leaves so much unsaid,  
Unsaid by you or me.

And so I see you standing there,  
And I speak these words,  
These words you can no longer hear,  
And I wonder what words you would have said to me,  
Had you only known how much that we are brothers,  
Had you only known you could have shared so much,  
And had I known you had so much to bear.

I see you standing there, my Brother,  
And I hear your invisible cry  
Calling me to be your note of explanation,  
To a world that cannot understand.  
And I pledge to you  
That I shall keep the faith,  
And not betray your trust.  
I pledge myself to battle  
Against the demons of despair  
That felled you.  
And to all men everywhere  
My heart, so open now with tears,  
Shall be always open with compassion  
And understanding.

I see you standing there, my Brother,  
And I salute you in Jesus' name,  
And press on for the Kingdom of God.

'Faith at Work' magazine, April 1966, page 36. Publishers: Faith at Work, 279 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, USA.

LESLIE W. WALTERS

## **FAITH OR WORKS— WHERE DOES THE ACCENT FALL?\***

In this article I will attempt to do three things. First, try to uncover the Biblical relationship between faith and works; second, explore some of the theological issues which the Scriptural teaching raises, and do this against the background of certain periods in the history of theology; third, suggest a way whereby the Biblical accent can be maintained.

\*This article is the substance of a lecture given at Spurgeon's College Conference, June 1971.

## **I. Faith and Works in the Bible**

At its most popular level the question of the relationship between faith and works in Scripture resolves itself into the old chestnut of the relationship between Paul and James; and that is where we will require to finally arrive. However, it is important to see any conclusion we reach as to that relationship against, and consistent with, a wider Biblical background; and so we will attempt to approach it from the faith/works relationship which appears elsewhere in Scripture. We begin with the Old Testament.

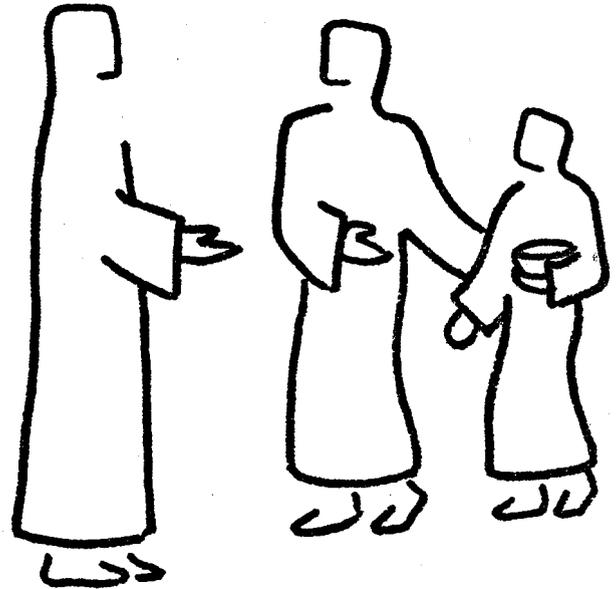
Probably the most popular misconception of the O.T. in relation to the N.T. is that it sets out a religion of law and the N.T. one of grace. Implicit in this is the view that salvation in the O.T. is a matter of keeping the law—i.e. as far as our theme is concerned the accent falls on works. Now I imagine that few would challenge the term "misconception" with respect to that view. We would recognise that the primary factor in the O.T. as in the New is the presence and action of the living God who creates heaven and earth, who elects Israel as His own people and brings her to Himself in the mighty saving acts of the Exodus. Israel as God's chosen, bound to Him in covenant relationship, is summoned to acknowledge Him in a trusting dependence upon Him and an obedience to His revealed will. From the manward side the way of salvation in the O.T. has at its heart a simple trusting reliance upon God alone. This is the case both for the nation as a whole (Hosea 5, Isaiah 31) and for the individual (Ps. 34:6, 85:9, 17:7, 7:10). The challenge of God at the Red Sea, which is in some respects the paradigm case of salvation in the O.T., gathers this up— "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (Exod. 14:13). The cultus taught and exemplified this truth but did not in itself establish it. As H. H. Rowley comments "In the O.T. it was not supposed that man could save himself from his sin either by his penitence or by his sacrifice"<sup>1</sup>—salvation is of the Lord. But the trust which men were to display was to issue in obedience, and here is where the law comes in. Israel as God's chosen is to serve the Lord. This is the whole burden of Deuteronomy and is gathered up in the Decalogue where the "Thou shalt" of the commandment is preceded by a statement of God's saving action "I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 20:2f also Deut. 5:6f). Thus we can gather up this brief survey of the O.T. doctrine of salvation in a statement of Michael Green who, after a full exploration of the conditions of salvation in the O.T. comments "We have seen little enough evidence to justify the popular misconception that salvation is achieved by good works in the O.T. and by faith in the New. It would be far truer to say that salvation is seen in both covenants as springing from God's free grace appropriated by faith and issuing inevitably in a changed life."<sup>2</sup> In the O.T. then the accent falls on faith, but faith, the trusting reliance on God to save, issues in works of obedience.

In the Judaism of the first century however a profound and quite fatal alteration had taken place. The fundamental

terms of man's relationship with God had been altered. Concern with the *living* God, the cause of all things, who acted in history to save and redeem His people was replaced by a concern for the law of God and the niceties of religious observance— especially the former. By this process religion became a moralism, a matter of right action, defined as action in direct obedience to the explicit injunctions of the law, and action in accord with its implicit principles. In the Rabbinic writings particularly, this reverence for Law attains great prominence. The law is God's supreme gift. G. F. Moore in his great work on Judaism quotes one author to the effect that "the world and everything in it were created solely for the sake of the law".<sup>3</sup> Nor did they restrict themselves to the Biblical law but worked out an elaborate and massive jurisprudence which gave its application to each specific situation. Thus we have the ludicrous picture of lengthy and solemn discussions on questions such as whether it was right to wear a false tooth or teeth on the Sabbath. The imagination boggles at the implications for worship if they had decided against it! The implication of this as far as our subject is concerned is that Judaism became a religion of merit. Man was required to earn his salvation and had to bend all his energies to acquiring a credit balance with the Almighty by his good works. Repentance, in time, came to be viewed as a good work, and finally the whole range of relations with God came to be seen in terms of merit. Bultmann in his *Primitive Christianity* refers to a passage in 4 Ezra where the seer hears the angel say to him "Thou however has many times ranged thyself with the ungodly. This must not be. But even on this account thou shalt be honourable before the Most High, because thou hast humbled thyself as it becomes thee and has not assigned thyself a place among the righteous and so shalt thou receive the greater glory."<sup>4</sup> It would be wrong, of course, to suggest that this was all that Judaism amounted to. The appearance of figures like Zechariah, Simeon and Anna in the gospel record is evidence of a strain of warm piety and deep personal trust in God within Judaism, nor can one forget the strong eschatological aspirations of the period; but there can be no question that what we have outlined here was the prevailing tendency. The accent had moved from faith issuing in works to the works themselves.

This was the situation which faced our Lord when he entered upon His mission. Inevitably it led to conflict. The story of Jesus' clash with Judaism is too familiar to need repeating. What is particularly significant for us is His attitude to the self-righteousness which we have seen to be inherent in its teaching. This attitude is focussed in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican—a parable addressed specifically to those "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous" (Luke 19:9f). In the parable it is the sinner, the publican, the man of the underworld, who attains justification through his humble repentance rather than the pharisee whose religious standing is impeccable. The prodigal son story points in an identical direction (Luke

*"There is a lad here" . . .*



*. . . who has a need*

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15:11f). God in His grace receives the penitent and freely acquits him, and the condemnation falls on the elder brother with his merit philosophy. The message is clear. For Jesus Judaism has missed the way. The attempt to force a passage to God by religious and moral action cannot succeed. It leads to a dead end. The true road to God is a road for penitent sinners, a road laid by the grace of God, a road which He Himself will secure forever in His baptism of blood as a ransom for many. If a man travels this road, however, he is not to be absolved from moral obligation. He thereby comes under the yoke of discipleship and hears the summons ringing in his ears "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48).

All this is the background to the traditional faith/works controversy of the later N.T. period. For Paul had been reared in Judaism—a zealot beyond his fellows, a pharisee of the pharisees, an ardent advocate of works righteousness. But his whole religion had fallen about his ears on a dusty Damascus highway and Paul had been apprehended by the Lord as the apostle of grace to the gentiles. Even as the apostle of grace, and author of Romans and Galatians, Paul continued to agree with Judaism at one point—namely that theoretically speaking acceptance with God could be obtained by works of the law if it were utterly obeyed in letter and in spirit (Gal. 3:21). But this is only a theoretical possibility because of another factor—sin, and in particular the power of sin (Rom. 3:9). Paul had known and continued to know something of this power in his own life (Rom. 7:19 and 24). He had known what it was to pursue righteousness with a fanatical zeal but to be left with the nagging disease of an accusing conscience. But something further had happened to destroy any hope of righteousness by the law. God in Christ had died for men, and in that death Paul now saw the utter and unqualified judgement of man and all his works and words. The creature for whom Golgotha was necessary in order to save him was deprived of every conceivable ground of boasting in the presence of God. How then could man attain righteousness? Paul's answer—the sheer miracle of God's grace in Jesus Christ. God in the stupendous miracle of His love had taken man's place at Calvary and made Himself responsible for the totality of man's hopeless plight; had carried on His own shoulders the full load and weight of man's guilt and condemnation, and further, by a wondrous exchange, the very righteousness of God in Christ was now freely given to man as he responded to the work of grace in faith (Rom. 3:23, Gal. 2:16). In Paul, therefore, we have an uncompromising rejection of the merit tendencies within Judaism and the placing of the accent squarely upon faith, in direct opposition to works, as the way of salvation. But this in turn raises the question of the relationship of this teaching to that of the Epistle of James with its accent on works.

Putting this at its baldest it is the question of how to relate Rom. 3:28 "We hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law" to James 2:24 "You see that a man

is justified by works and not by faith alone". Here the N.T. itself appears to raise the question for us—where does the accent fall? And to answer it in two ways, on *faith* in Paul and on *works* in James. Can we reconcile these? Here we confront one of the oldest and most discussed questions in the history of exegesis. One of the most concise and helpful approaches to this issue was made by Jeremias in a lecture given at St. Andrews Summer School of Theology several years ago and I can do no better at this point than summarise his argument.<sup>5</sup> He believes that reconciliation between Paul and James is possible if we bear in mind two factors (a) the different language used and (b) the different errors to which they are addressing themselves. Under the first of these there are three terms which are used differently.

(i) Faith (*pistis*). In James faith is equivalent to the intellectual acceptance of monotheism. For Paul, faith equals faith in Christ, the existential trust in the risen Lord who died for our sins (Roms. 5:1).

(ii) Works (*erga*). In James 'works' means "the fulfilling of the royal law, the perfect law of liberty" which is "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". Paul by 'works' is thinking of the works of the law i.e. works done to earn salvation apart from Christ. Thus we can say Roms. 3:28 is speaking of Christian faith and Jewish works. James 2:24 is speaking of Jewish faith and Christian works.

(iii) Righteousness (*dikaosune*). In James the reference is to intrinsic, analytical righteousness—a man's actual moral character. In Paul righteousness is usually in the context of justification, i.e. a declaring righteous, an extrinsic, synthetic righteousness. When Paul thinks of the future judgement, what Jeremias calls the eschatological justification, he too introduces the issue of conduct (Rom. 2: 6, II Cor. 5: 10). Paul is as concerned as is James that faith should express itself—"Faith working through love" (Gal. 5: 6).

Under the second heading, 'the different errors addressed', Paul as we have already seen is grappling in his gospel with Jewish confidence in meritorious works. To this Paul opposes a salvation *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, in full accordance with the teaching of our Lord "Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . this man went down to his house justified rather than the other". James has a different situation on his hands. His opponent is a dead orthodoxy, an unchristian quietism. He wishes to rouse his congregation by impressing on them that faith if it does not motivate life is spurious and dead. Here too our Lord's words are honoured "not every one who says to me Lord, Lord shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father . . . every one who hears my words and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock".

Thus if we hold these factors in view we can assert that James Chap. 2 has every right to stand beside Romans and Galatians. Works have a place in the gospel. Not as the means of salvation but as the inevitable outcome and expression of a true faith in Christ. Thus the witness of Scripture as a whole is one, whether in O.T., in the teaching

of Jesus, or in the Apostolic writings. Faith or works—where does the Accent fall? The accent falls on faith, but works are faith's echo.

We can gather up the teaching of Scripture here in three simple propositions which will lead us into our next section.

- (i) Good works cannot earn salvation
- (ii) Salvation is by faith in Christ alone
- (iii) Saving faith will express itself in good works.

## II. Theological Issues

We turn now to explore some of the theological issues which are raised here and to help us do this I want to look in turn at each of these three propositions in the context of a particular period in the history of theology. In fact, the three propositions belong so closely together that to raise one in each of these periods inevitably means raising the others as well. However, I will attempt nonetheless to examine each in separation as far as possible. I wish to take the propositions in reverse order and so we begin with the third which asserts "Saving faith will express itself in good works" and we look at this against the background of the reformation.

The reformation of the Church in the 15th and early 16th centuries is a familiar enough story. The historian Henry Brinton puts his finger on the crucial point as far as theological development in the period was concerned when he writes—

"In many ways there was a close parallel between the Jewish establishment of St. Paul's day and the Catholic Church at the time of the reformation. In both institutions religion had tended to become formalised. More than that there had grown up a tendency to think that it was the letter of the law that mattered, that salvation came from a scrupulous observance of a set of symbolic acts".<sup>6</sup>

The parallel situation not surprisingly threw up a parallel solution—the gospel of grace. Thus what began for Luther as a dispute about indulgences, which was what the 95 theses of 1517 were substantially concerned with, soon became a question of the very nature of the gospel itself. Hence by 1520 in his *Freedom of the Christian Man* Luther is writing in thoroughly Pauline terms—

"The words of God cannot be received and cherished by any work whatever but only by faith. Therefore it is clear that, as the soul needs only the word of God for its life and righteousness, so it is justified by faith alone and not any works".<sup>7</sup>

Once again the message of grace, salvation *sola fide, sola gratia* rang out, as Luther sought to sweep aside the medieval structure of merit and replace it with the Word of the Divine mercy, grace not for the holy but for the sinner. The Lutheran reformation, however, provoked a countercharge—that this exalting of free grace led to a moral indifference—the charge that the work of salvation affected a man's standing with God without in any way affecting his character. One or two of Luther's statements did appear open to this

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I have no idea who is Sheila Black but I am grateful to her for her thought-provoking title.

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C. J. L. Colvin  
General Manager

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interpretation e.g. "A christian man is righteous and a sinner at the same time, (*simul iustus et peccator*) holy and profane, an enemy of God and a child of God" or his advice to his followers on one occasion "sin boldly (*peccata fortiter*) but believe and rejoice in Christ more boldly still".<sup>9</sup> By this salvation appears exposed to the charge of being a merely verbal reality, a "legal fiction" without any relation to actual being. The same charge is put in a more sophisticated manner by Louis Bouyer, the present day catholic theologian, in his *Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*—

"If the grace of God is such only on condition that it gives man nothing real; if man who believes by saving faith is in no way changed from what he was before believing; if justification by faith has to empty of all supernatural reality the Church, her sacraments, her dogma; if God can only be affirmed by silencing his creature; if He acts only by annihilating it—then what is condemned by Protestant theology is not man's presumptuous way to God but God's way of mercy to man".<sup>10</sup>

The question here really is the question of the ontological basis of the Christian's existence as a believing man. Now in fact Luther attempts to defend himself on this point to an extent that Bouyer does not give him credit for and in numerous places Luther insists that justification by faith is the gateway to a life of loving service of our fellowmen. However, it is in the thought of John Calvin that the real answer to this question is given. Faced with the charge that the early reformation preaching of the gospel led to anti-nomianism Calvin had to rethink this whole doctrine and try to give it a more adequate basis. He found what he was seeking in the doctrine of union with Christ by the Spirit. Calvin has, of course, lengthy and celebrated discussions defending justification by faith alone, but in distinction from Luther, Calvin stresses as early as his commentary on Galatians in 1548 that Justification is in fact not the final word in Christian salvation but that it is simply part of the two-sided blessing which comes to men in their faith union with the crucified and risen Lord.—

"Christ lives in us in two ways. The one life consists in governing us by his Spirit and directing all our actions; the other in making us partakers of his righteousness; so that while we can do nothing of ourselves we are accepted in the sight of God. The first relates to regeneration, the second to justification by free grace."<sup>11</sup>

In distinction from most other Protestant theologians and confessions, Calvin in the *Institutes* does not deal with justification and sanctification in separation from each other but holds them together as distinguishable parts of the double grace received in union with Christ.<sup>12</sup> It is this central notion of union with Christ by faith which enables Calvin to give a real theological basis to the doctrine of Salvation by faith alone. Here is the ontological grounding of the believer's new being and the good works which he will manifest—it is a being in union with Christ by the Spirit. One must hasten to add here that the idea of the believer's union with Christ is

certainly not absent from Luther but he does not develop it in the full manner in which Calvin does. In all this Calvin is not shifting the accent from faith to works. Clearly both justification and sanctification are in Christ alone, but what Calvin is giving us is a proper theological basis for the third proposition and uncovering its true relationship to the second one. He is in effect making clear to us why the third proposition must be maintained—why faith must lead to works, why indicative must pass on to imperative, why belief must express itself in behaviour, why sanctification must follow justification. To fail to insist on holy living from God's people is to divide Christ up and to truncate the gospel.

We turn next to look at the second proposition "Salvation is by faith in Christ alone" and we will explore this with the help of the dominant theology of the first half of this century, the theology which gathered round the name of Karl Barth. Barth in his early years was a fairly typical product of the liberal protestantism of the 19th century. This whole way of understanding, whether in the romantic psychologism of Schleiermacher or the neo-Kantian ethicism of Ritschl was characterised by a pervasive concentration on man. Man occupied the centres of the stage and his moral and religious experience, his social and cultural awareness became the all-absorbing centre of attention. General to these 19th century approaches was the notion, variously defined, of a religious *a priori*, a primal religious potentiality inherent in man as man, and this was only too often the starting point and the controlling pole in theological construction. Through a combination of the Kaiser's war, the demands of preaching, and above all a real grappling with the message of Paul, Barth came to a profound disillusionment with this theology. It became clear to him that under the guise of a religious concern and interest man had in effect come to draw God down to his level. In place of this immanentism Barth sought to recover the God of the Bible, the sovereign, transcendent Lord towering infinitely over man in judgement and grace. His commentaries on *Romans* in 1919 and 1922 are recognised landmarks in the history of theology. The great Pauline slogans, the slogans of the reformation, 'by faith alone', 'by grace alone', rang out once more. In particular, and this is where it relates to our second proposition, Barth turned his guns on liberal protestantism's views of faith, about which subject it had had a great deal to say. As Barth *now* saw it, under this notion of faith, man had attempted to smuggle in a sense of his inherent worth worth before God. Thus in his commentary on *Philippians* in 1927 Barth writes—

"The best way to understand the word *pistis* (faith) is to make as little as possible a definition of human action by man himself, and place the whole emphasis on the Object that is the ground of *pistis*, in other words, on what takes place in *pistis*; the determination, illumination, qualification of man by God or Christ. If we operate too much here with trust, confidence, faithfulness, etc., on man's part towards God, then we almost inevitably come

imminently near to the very thing that Paul wanted his concept to abrogate and replace—man's own 'righteousness from the law' . . . The *positive* thing that happens in faith . . . is not the act of the human but of the originally *divine* faith."<sup>13</sup>

Barth's question to us in other words is this—Is it possible that in our theology "faith" has subtly assumed the character of good work? Are we guilty of substituting a doctrine of salvation by the works of the law with a doctrine of salvation by the works of faith? Is our accent in fact falling in the correct place after all? T. F. Torrance has taken up cudgels on behalf of this kind of view and argues that faith requires to be understood christologically. Thus he speaks in *Theology in Reconstruction* of Christ as "the great believer—vicariously believing in our place and in our name."<sup>14</sup> Faith is to be understood as simply an acknowledgment of His faith, His believing for us. Prof. Torrance goes on to sharply criticise evangelistic preaching when it summons men to respond to the call of Christ saying (for example) "He has done 99% for you, you have only 1% to do—to make your decision for Christ". This, says Torrance, is in effect throwing men back upon themselves. Indeed, it is near blasphemy since it implies that my subjective psychological response is necessary to complete and fulfil the holy and blessed work of Christ upon the cross for me. This theological trend is not calling into question the validity of the second proposition it is merely asking us to look carefully at the relative value we give to the two terms of it—faith and Christ. Certainly this line of criticism is not entirely beside the point. There is an evangelistic preaching which can certainly mislead. Our task is not to point men to their inner capacity to believe, but to Christ in order that they may believe. Saving faith is faith in Christ, not faith in faith. The crucial issue here, however, is the way one thinks about faith. Considered as a human movement, as a movement of man the sinner, it is inevitably an imperfect, even sinful, movement. In its subjective aspect it does not escape from the limitations and contradictions of our fallen humanity. In one sense, therefore, even our faith requires to be justified and atoned for and the notion of Christ in his humanity responding to God for us seems to have a certain meaning in this context, even if the actual notion of His believing for us is not found in the N.T. Thus the way is apparently opened for a distinction to be drawn between salvation by grace i.e. by Christ, and an alleged salvation by my personal decision of faith i.e. by the good work of faith. It is to be seriously questioned, however, whether Scripture draws this distinction. There is no attempt made to isolate the 'human' aspect of saving faith. Faith rather is understood as a unique event, a movement in which the human and divine are inseparably united. In Schlatter's sentence "in faith two characteristics are inherent—it is worked by God and willed by man"<sup>15</sup> Neither element may be isolated from the other. Understood in this way, the supposed division between divine grace and human faith appears distinctly questionable as also the accusation

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that those who are concerned to make much of the cruciality of faith are resurrecting the law as a means of salvation. In fact, the question has to be put in turn as to whether Barth's reaction against the anthropocentricity of the 19th century has not been an *over*-reaction whereby man has not only been reduced to his proper, secondary place, but in the end given virtually no place at all. Barth has attempted to answer this charge in his later theology by his stress on the Word made flesh—Jesus Christ—as the bond between man and God. In my judgment, though one obviously cannot establish this here, he has failed to do this, and this accounts for his inability to really reflect in his thought the cruciality with which the N.T. clearly invests the act of faith. Paul in his invective against the Jewish legalists and the circumcisers is quite happy to set faith against works as the way to God and obviously he had no thought that this appeal to faith alone would be viewed as a covert appeal to works. Rom. 1:16 is sufficient N.T. testimony in this respect with its statement that the revelation of God's righteousness is a matter of faith "from start to finish" (C. H. Dodd).<sup>16</sup> Nor has the action of the work of faith so shoddy a pedigree if we recall the answer of our Lord to the Jews who asked Him what we must do if we would work the works of God. He replied that the work of God was to believe in Him whom the Father had sent (Jn. 6:29). Provided faith keeps in view the Christ to whom it is directed and does not subjectively turn in upon itself and its psychological accompaniments we can affirm the second proposition without hesitation and give both terms of it unhesitating stress—"Salvation is by faith in Christ alone".

This brings us to the first proposition, though the third in our order of discussion—"good works cannot earn salvation"—and I wish to look at this against the background of the new theology. The history of this movement is familiar enough to us all. Its true genesis is probably Bonhoeffer's imprisonment in 1944 though its popular spread dates from John Robinson's *Honest to God*. in 1963. A great many issues are raised by this new theological vogue and a really adequate discussion of them would certainly not begin with, far less limit itself to, the issue I take up here. Nevertheless it is an issue which would have to be looked at at some stage and I take the liberty of raising it in isolation here. The issue is this—is there not in this approach a highly sophisticated attempt to resurrect works-righteousness, i.e. to call in question our first proposition? It is the combination of two elements in the new theology which for me prompts this question. The first concerns its secular understanding of the gospel. In this understanding there appears to be a quite evident loss of the transcendent. Its advocates argue of course that this is to misunderstand them, they are merely changing an outmoded, medieval, prescientific, pre-*come-of-age* type transcendence for one which is relevant and honest in today's world and with today's knowledge. Thus in Robinson's case God as a "supreme person, a self-existent subject of infinite goodness and power, who enters

into a relationship with us comparable with that of one human personality with another"<sup>17</sup>—is rejected in favour of the unconditional ground of all being.<sup>18</sup> Now some of the things said at this level are very much to the point. Certain ways of representing the transcendent are less than helpful for communicating the gospel today. But this goes much further and appears to represent a real *loss* of the transcendent—and here is our problem, because this loss has profound implications for the question of salvation. To refer to Robinson again, the secular understanding of the gospel involves the abandoning of "the whole scheme of a supernatural Being coming down from heaven to 'save' mankind from sin."<sup>19</sup> It appears to me that Leon Morris is drawing attention to a quite crucial issue when he comments that the new theology "places no stress on God's saving activity in Christ. This has always been regarded as central to Christianity, but not only is it not mentioned, there seems no place for it in the new scheme of things."<sup>20</sup> To some extent the way towards this was paved by one of Bonhoeffer's often quoted epigrams from prison "to be a Christian does not mean to be religious in a particular way . . . but to be a man".<sup>21</sup> The trouble with this, as with so many of his statements, is to know what precisely this means. There is *one* sense in which I can go a long way towards agreeing with that, but I rather doubt if it would be the meaning Bonhoeffer intends. What is not in dispute however is the way this has been popularly understood. The goal is no longer reconciliation with a personal God through a costly repentance and trust in Christ alone. It is rather as for Harry Williams, growth in self-awareness;<sup>22</sup> or as in Norman Pittenger, self-realisation in love;<sup>23</sup> or in Harvey Cox, responsible freedom.<sup>24</sup> The terminology is various but the idea is fairly generally agreed. We are not to think of man as a sinner, a rebel against God, in wilful flight from Him. Rather man has a certain possibility, an innate personal and social potential. Salvation means its being realised as fully as possible and Christ helps in this process by providing the motivation and the ideal towards which the process moves. This is the first element in the new theology which I wish to draw attention to—the loss, in its secularised version of the gospel, of a sense of man's need for personal reconciliation with God in Christ. The second element is reflected in its view of the secular mission of the Church. Robinson interprets this in terms of the parable of the sheep and the goats, the Church as a gracious neighbour, an accepting community.<sup>25</sup> Cox spells out this function more fully in terms of the Church as God's *avant garde* and gives great stress to its call to be the deacon of the world.<sup>26</sup> Richard McBrien, the Catholic radical, puts it in one place in terms of the Church as the embodiment of charity and one of charity's principle instruments in the world.<sup>27</sup> The clearest common element in this view of mission is its commitment to *activity*. As Leslie Newbigin in his *Honest Religion for Secular Man* comments, "involvement is now almost the primary virtue".<sup>28</sup> Now I am certainly not arguing that everything these writers

urge about the mission of the Church is out of place. To some extent one can hear in them an echo of James calling the Church to express its faith in works which are relevant to today's world. However, when this stress on activity is set forth as the *primary* responsibility of the Church in its mission, and when this is set alongside the first factor we noted above, then the question I believe has to be seriously looked at—have we not here a subtle form of works-righteousness? We must of course judge with charity. The new theologians would not be the first who have gone much further in their writings than they have in their prayers. But if we are to assess them at the level of their written statements then it appears to me that the issue I have raised here cannot be overlooked. At the end of the day there are two possibilities and these are exhaustive of the options. Either sinners are justified by what they are and do, or they are justified by Another. If a theology will not clearly embrace the second it stands exposed to the threat of the first.

### III. Keeping the Accent

In conclusion, if my discussion of the theological issues has done nothing else it will at least have served to show how difficult it has proved over the centuries to retain the biblical accent in the relationship between faith and works and so this third section on how we can retain the biblical accent is made the more pertinent. This section will also enable one to compensate for the serious omission in this lecture so far, viz. the absence of any significant reference to baptism. For this is my suggestion for keeping the biblical accent—teach and practice believer's baptism! Here, as in other places, a correct doctrine of baptism means a correct theology. I am not by this arguing that the primary reason for our practice of baptism is that it retains the gospel. We practice our form of baptism precisely because it is not *our* form at all but the one our Lord authorised in Scripture. But nonetheless Baptism as an evangelical ordinance not unnaturally bears clear testimony to these gospel truths we have been considering. Let us see in conclusion how our three propositions are set fourth in the N.T. doctrine of baptism.

(i) "Good works cannot earn salvation". This element is made quite explicit in the close association between baptism and repentance. Peter's response to the enquirers at Pentecost "repent and be baptised" carries forward an association which John the Baptist had earlier proclaimed. The numerous texts setting baptism in the context of forgiveness explicitly in Acts 2:38, 22:16; implicitly in I Cor. 6:11, Titus 3:5f, Col. 2:11f, Eph. 5:25f, I Pet. 3:20 demonstrate how integral to N.T. baptism is the recognition that man is a helpless sinner unable to attain saving righteousness by his own effort and merit and that the cleansing and forgiveness he seeks can be found only in Another. The burial of the whole person under the water in the act of baptism makes this point with unambiguous clarity.

(ii) "Salvation is by faith in Christ alone". The primary direction in which baptism points is not inward to the

candidate's experience, nor outward to the congregation's responsibility, but upward to the Lord into whose name the candidate is baptised. It is baptism into union with the Lord who becomes the ontological ground of the believer's existence and new life. In particular, as Rom. 6 makes clear, baptism points to the great saving events of the cross and resurrection to which the baptised now looks for his acceptance with God. And as Paul argues there, in the act of baptism we are not merely re-enacting these events but participating in them. The death and resurrection of baptism is the death and resurrection of the Lord. In this sense, the act of baptism is a proclamation of the gospel and its text is "Salvation is of the Lord". However it is important in the face of the theological tendencies referred to earlier to make the point that while the whole direction is upwards toward the Lord, the candidate does come forward and participate in responsible faith. Salvation is *of the Lord*, but it is by *personal faith in the Lord*.

(iii) "Saving faith will express itself in good works." Here we turn to the ethical implications of baptism which is, on the surface at least, Paul's main concern in Rom. 6. A baptism which does not lead to new moral initiatives is unthinkable for the apostle. It would in effect be a denial of the baptised's participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord. As Dr. Beasley-Murray has put it "the basic significance of baptism is participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, with the tremendous consequences that involves of a new life in the Holy Spirit orientated towards the all-Holy God."<sup>20</sup>

Thus the three propositions which we were led to affirm in the light of the scriptural teaching of the relationship between faith and works belong to the very heart of N.T. teaching on baptism. As the accent falls in a correct relationship between faith and works so it falls in a correct doctrine of baptism, and vice-versa.

### FOOTNOTES

1. H. H. Rowley, "The Meaning of Sacrifice in the Old Testament" in *From Moses to Qumran*, (1963), p. 91.
2. E. M. B. Green, *The Meaning of Salvation*, (1965), p. 52.
3. Rabbi Benaiah, cited G. F. Moore, *Judaism* (1927), I, p. 268.
4. IV Ezra 8, 47-49, quoted R. Bultmann, *Urchristentum* (1949), p. 77.
5. *Expository Times*, Vol. LXVI, pp. 368-371.
6. H. Brinton, *The Context of the Reformation* (1968), p. 103.
7. Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian Man* (1520); tr. as in *The Protestant Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (1968), p. 7.
8. Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, tr. as in *Luther's Works*, ed. J. Pelikan and H. T. Lehman (1955- ), Vol. 26, p. 232.
9. Quoted by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937), p. 43.
10. Louis Bouyer, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*, tr. by A. V. Littledale (1963), p. 185.
11. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, tr. W. Pringle (1854), p. 74.
12. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III, xi, 1; ed. J. T. McNeill (1961), Vol. 1, p. 725. Calvin speaks here of our

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## WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

409 Barking Road, Plaistow, London E13 8AL

My dear Brother Minister,

There are a number of matters to which I should like to draw your attention.

### Greenwoods Extension Appeal

I am delighted to tell you that there has been a splendid response to the Appeal, as after two months of the launching of the appeal, we have received a little over £12,800, and by the time you read this it should be considerably more. Of course, there is a snag . . . the cost of the project has increased to £16,000, but we are well on the way to raising the money. We send our warmest thanks to our friends who have made this possible.

### New Mission Filmstrip

We have prepared a new coloured filmstrip telling the story of the various pieces of work sponsored by the Mission, and I personally think it will be the best filmstrip we have issued. There will be the usual manuscript to accompany it, or a tape recording if this is preferred. It is in colour of course, and there will be a special manuscript for use in Sunday Schools. This filmstrip makes a very good programme for Church Night, and we shall welcome bookings from your church. Please be kind enough to give alternative dates when you write to me, as we anticipate the usual heavy demand.

### Matron for Restawhile

Sister Ethel Kime, our devoted Matron at Restawhile, is wanting to retire, and I am looking for a replacement. We would prefer a qualified nurse, but the main qualification in our eyes would be that she should be a devoted Christian woman who likes old people and would like to serve them. If you have any suggestions to make, please write to me.

Please ask your people to remember us in their prayers and with warmest good wishes for God's blessing on your ministry.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL

Superintendent of the Mission

union with Christ bringing us a "double grace" (*duplicem gratiam*).

13. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, tr. J. W. Leitch (1962), pp. 101-2.
14. T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction*, (1965), p. 157.
15. A. Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament* (1927), p. 267; tr. as in G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (1963), p. 271.
16. C. H. Dodd, *Epistle to the Romans* (1932), p. 41.
17. J. A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (1963), p. 48.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
20. Leon Morris, *The Abolition of Religion* (1964), p. 71.
21. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (1959), p. 123.
22. Harry Williams in *Soundings*, ed. A. Vidler (1962), p. 90.
23. Norman Pittenger, *Christology Reconsidered* (1970), p. 51ff; cf. *too Time for Consent* (1970), p. 42f.
24. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (1965), p. 119f, 129f.
25. J. A. T. Robinson, *The New Reformation?* (1965), pp. 32-53.
26. Cox, *op. cit.* pp. 132-144. This is not of course the only function of the church in his view but there can be no question that the stress falls here, i.e. on the Church's action rather than its proclamation.
27. R. P. McBrien, *Do we need the Church?* (1969), p. 229.
28. L. Newbigin, *Honest Religion for Secular Man* (1966), p. 146.
29. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

BRUCE MILNE

## THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE MINISTRY

The first of two articles.

In these days Ministers need all the help they can get. For them, as for all advocates of religion, "the times are out of joint". We are sometimes told that we have a difficult task, and if we are not told so, we soon discover it for ourselves.

In such a time and situation the minister has urgent need to guard and strengthen his own spiritual life, and to put on "the whole armour". The value of our work and the quality of our service for Christ depend upon our alertness to detect and our ability to defeat the temptations that beset us. But it is rather presumptuous to write to ministers about their temptations, and I have done so only with reluctance. Having been so faulty a minister myself, I have found it painful to write of the failing of others. Only the impulse to share truths the years have taught, and the hope that these truths might be of help to young men at the beginning of their ministry, have made me do it. I have written what I felt: to use Bunyan's words about his preaching, "what I smartingly did feel".

## The Need to Take Heed

Saint Paul told the elders of the church in Ephesus to “take heed to all the flock” and “to feed the church”; but he told them first to “take heed” to *themselves*. They could not wisely shepherd the sheep, nor spiritually feed the church, if they did not first give serious attention to their own spiritual resources. We cannot do what we lack the spiritual health and strength to do.

A generation which has little use for religion has also little use for the minister of religion: people to whom the Christian church is irrelevant naturally disregard her official representatives. But we became ministers, not because men invited us to do so, but because we believed that God Himself had called us to this work. That conviction is the ground on which we stand. It was and is our ordination. We have no spiritual right to be ministers without it, and if we have received it, we must on no account let any man, or a world of men, take it from us. We must not through heedlessness lose it ourselves. When this quiet, deep conviction is true and real it imparts a constant sense of serious responsibility. It keeps us aware that we are engaged in God’s service, we have been given a work to do for Him among men, and however trivial and ordinary it may appear to be to others, it is of supreme importance to us. It is work we have been given to do, a work which if we fail will not be done, when, where, and in the way God himself has willed it should be done. “Seeing then” says Baxter, “the work is cast upon us, and it is we who must do it or else it will be undone, let us be up and doing with all our might, and the Lord *will be with us*.”

He will be with us: He IS with us. Experiences come which secretly confirm that seemingly presumptuous affirmation. But his present help requires the fulfilment of certain spiritual conditions. He cannot and will not be with us if we let ourselves grow casual and indifferent to the real effectiveness of our efforts.

## Occupational Hazards

The Christian ministry has its own occupational hazards, and they are subtle and numerous. When I was about to begin my work as a minister an old friend said, “The temptations that will come to you now will be more difficult than any you have encountered before.” I found this hard to believe. I thought of the subjects I would be studying, the company I would be keeping, the services I would be conducting, the sermons and addresses I would be preparing and giving, and how all these activities would be connected and concerned with spiritual things and the living of the Christian life. Would not such work as this make it easier rather than more difficult to resist temptation? I know now that the answer is emphatically, “no”.

To be busy with sacred things does not of itself secure and sustain a sacred spirit in the soul. A man may put on clerical attire more easily and quickly than he can “put on the Lord Jesus”. Baxter warns that we may stand at the gates of the Kingdom pointing others in, and yet not go in ourselves!

“A Holy Calling” he says, “will not save an unholy man. You know it will not.”

The duties of the ministry cannot and do not shield and shelter us from the temptations of the ministry. It is fatal to take our own spirituality for granted. If a minister is more ready to meddle in the spiritual lives of other people than to scrutinise and pass honest judgment upon his own, he is in grave danger. No one exulted more in the saving Grace of God in Christ than did St. Paul; but he was watchful “lest having preached to others” he himself at the last might be found wanting. Baxter says, “The Enemy hath a special eye upon you. You shall have his most subtle insinuations and incessant solicitations and violent assaults. As wise and learned as you are, take heed to yourselves lest he overwit you. The Devil is a greater scholar than you are and a nimbler disputant. He can transform himself into an angel of light to deceive. He will get within you and trip you up by the heels before you are aware. He will play the juggler with you undiscerned, and cheat you of your faith and innocence, and you shall not know that you have lost them. He will make you the instruments of your own ruin.” The quaint words have a very sharp edge of truth.

I now want to write about three temptations, but there is one which lies as it were behind and within all three of them. For all sins are ultimately the manifestations of one sin, the son of *Self-Love*.

Self Love will have its say in issues large and small, in things trivial as well as in things of great importance. It is ever ready to spring into action, exert itself, question, criticise, and disobey the will of God and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Jonah does not want to go to Nineveh: he sets off for Tarshish instead. Self Love in St. Paul “kicks against the pricks”. If we loved God more we would want to do his will ever more and more readily and completely, and our Self Love would be put and kept in its proper place.

Self Love is not necessarily an evil thing. Within its rightful limits it is both good and useful. To a degree self-assertion in a world like this is a necessity. Only by exercising it can we be ourselves, live our own true lives, and make our individual contribution to the building of the Kingdom. No man is more futile than the man whose “meekness” has deprived him of any will of his own. This confusion in the meaning of words has produced the stage and screen image of the parson as a man so eager to be “nice”, so anxious to be pleasant and inoffensive to every one, that he gains the respect of no one. But how easily Self Love can become our master: how strong is the desire to get one’s own way! Few among us are entirely free from tension between our will for ourselves and God’s will for us. We can of course gladly accept the will of God, when it is in accord with our own, but what reluctance is registered when His will threatens the gratification of some whim, some inclination, some desire of ours. Doing what we want to do appears so much more attractive, desirable, and profitable than doing His good pleasure. Self regard resists the demand for self surrender.

# Reference Books for Baptists

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<i>History of the English Baptists</i> A. C. Underwood	80p
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The disobedient child thinks he knows better than his father. Self Love leads us to adopt the same attitude to Almighty God Himself. It adds a phrase to the Lord's own prayer and says, "Thy will be done, except when it is different from my own." Such an attitude as this needs only to be stated to make the wrong of it, the deceptive and mistaken nature of it, obvious. The very idea that I know better than God does, *cannot* be true. It is a lie.

## The Temptation of Pride

The cardinal sin of pride, dogged faithfully by the inevitable fall, is closely related to the egoism we have just been considering. But who is wise and strong enough to recognise and consistently master it? Even noble minds, able to conquer other temptations, fall for this one; and discover that it haunts them all through life, eagerly waiting for the slightest chance to ensnare them. If, on reading this, you feel you are too wise, alert, and intelligent to fall for so familiar a sin, it may mean you have already done so. For if it were just a matter of saying to oneself, "Whatever I have done that has gained the admiration and evoked the praise of others, I will not be vain and inflated about it; I will remain humble in mind and lowly in spirit" how very simple it would be! But it is not so easily done. The question is, "What is the real motive of this excellent resolution, this charming desire to remain lowly and humble?" It CAN be pride still: hidden pride, disguised pride.

The fact is that no temptation comes to men along more secret ways than this one. We may receive, and deserve to receive, appreciation, gratitude, praise for something we have done; for conducting a really helpful service of worship or for preparing and preaching a really effective sermon, or for giving a truly useful address, and we may well be glad and thankful when it happens. But we need to be on our guard. For pride can devalue our worthiest efforts and contaminate our best achievements.

The product of pride is the strutting Pharisee of the Gospels. His religious exhibitionism is all "to be seen of men". Its motive is to make an impression and gain admiration by the performance of good deeds and acts of piety. Our Lord said that such play-acting wins its reward, such as it is and for what it is worth. But the Pharisee is really a rather pathetic figure; a man gulled and duped by his own egoism. He wants to appear worthy and wise in the sight of men, but he has not even the beginning of wisdom. The health-giving fear of God is not really in his soul. So eager "to be seen of men", he forgot that he was also seen of God! When pride secures a lodging place within us it is fatally easy to use the platform and the pulpit, the Communion Table and the altar, even the secret place of the Most High, in the same way as the Pharisee used the market place or street corner, i.e. to be seen. To God all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Him no secrets are hid. He knows when we are merely trying to make an impression on others. He knows when we hide our intent behind the mask of humility.

Genuine lowliness does not consist in thinking of ourselves less highly than we ought to think; nor deprecating and belittling any ability God has entrusted to us. It certainly does not consist in exaggerating our own sinfulness. What man who knows himself can afford to do that? He who would be free of pride must cleanse his soul of all pretence and rid himself of all that is artificial. He must strive to know himself with ruthless honesty and unflinching sincerity. He must then accept himself for what he is, and put all his trust and hope in the Everlasting Mercy. He will then find no pleasure in admiring himself in the distorting mirror of his own egoism. Once to see the silliness of pride is enough to make tasteless any desire to play fantastic tricks before high heaven. I used to visit a sharp-tongued old lady who if she thought a man was given to pride, would say, "If I could buy him at my price and sell him at his own, I'd make a big profit." It always made me think of God seeing men as they really are, and of men seeing themselves in the phantasies of their own weaving. There is a scriptural warrant for the conviction that all truth, goodness and wisdom, all worthiness, virtue, and righteousness, have their spring and source in God alone. "Only God is good." There is no "health in us". We therefore can have only what He or His overflowing generosity and self-giving love graciously imparts to us. Therefore

And every virtue we possess  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are His alone.

Not mine, nor yours, nor ours, but His. The lines of the old hymn contain not a nice thought, a poetic sentiment, or a pious idea, they state a simple, actual, literal fact, a self evident Christian truth. Micah told us long ago how to defeat the temptation of pride, and the Lord has promised us the Grace with which to do it; it is "to walk humbly with thy God." We can walk with such company in no other way.

### **The Temptation of Envy**

"Thou shalt not covet"; and as long as you do, you shall not know thankfulness nor content.

Envy has brothers and sisters. They are Covetousness, Rivalry, Jealousy, Ill-will, and that very unpleasant member I can only describe as The-Spirit-That-Delights-In-The-Downfall-of-Others. They are all the off-spring of Self-love and make up an unholy family.

Is there a man who has not at one time or another felt the pang of envy? One who has never been tempted to wish for someone else's advantages, gifts, opportunities? It is a very human failing; one that causes trouble in the nursery, and can continue to cause trouble even to the grave itself. We expose ourselves to this temptation because we will persist in making comparisons. We make them for ourselves, and others sometimes make them genially for us;—and not always to our advantage. Instead of being full of admiration for us, they pour their enthusiastic appreciation of others

in our ears. They tell us how wonderful it was to hear the Rev. X preach, and how great was the congregation—and the collection! Then they leave us to compare these with our own meagre results. But we may well ask ourselves of what real value are these comparisons? Most of them are but superficial and misleading. They generally give little satisfaction for all the unease they cause. They easily arouse the covetous desire, the envious wish, the jealous temper, the spirit of rivalry and competition, and the work of these is to break the bonds of brotherhood and cut the blest ties of ministerial friendships. The habit of making comparisons is a waste of time and energy, both of which could be put to much better use. And it can lead us into that truly sinful state of mind which one very worthy minister painfully confessed when he said, "I have realised with a shock that I would rather see God's work not done, than see someone else doing it more successfully than I can." One respects the hurtful honesty of the confession; he had realised where the making of comparisons had brought him.

How can one usefully, and with any degree of exactitude compare human beings, human lives, and human activities? What means, what weights, what measures, what tape, what ruler, what balances, does one use for such a delicate operation as this? To estimate with any precision any human being's contribution to the Kingdom of God, any Christian's service to His Saviour and Lord, is not an easy thing to do, and who really asks us to do it? We are all so different. Though engaged in the same vocation we have such different dispositions, such different temperaments and idiosyncrasies. In addition we have each one passed through very different experiences, and we live our lives and do our work in very varied, and changing circumstances. The outward situation and the clerical duties to be done may appear to be very similar, but no two men are exactly alike, no two men begin at the same starting point, and no two men run exactly the same course. A task which may prove very difficult and exacting for one man, may be quite successfully done by another with half the strain and cost. "Who knows what a man is, except that man's own spirit within him". The heart knoweth its own bitterness;—it knows its own sweetness too.

During the days when multitudes from all over the land were gathering to hear the well known American evangelist, "Punch" produced the picture of a depressed looking vicar, preaching to a small and aged congregation scattered in a forest of empty pews, and saying, "I'm no Billy Graham". He obviously was not. But the point is that he was not meant to be. He had not been made in that mould. The question is, being the man he was, what use was he making of the limited abilities entrusted to him? How faithfully was he doing the work in the situation in which God had placed him? God is our Judge. He alone knows all that needs to be known before a valid judgment can be made. Not how we stand in the sight of men, or in our own sight, but in the searching light of the One Who called us to this work and accepted us into His service; this is the one consideration

that really matters. To be truly glad in another's abilities, to appreciate the talents for the use of which he is responsible, to welcome him as a fellow labourer in his "larger" or "smaller" sphere, these restrain us from the wasteful habit of making irrelevant comparisons. Here in the world of men we can but see through "a glass darkly", we can know only "in part" and all our judgments are limited and relative. When that which is perfect is come, and we can know even as we are known, it may very well be revealed that many comparatively unknown ministers have served their Lord as faithfully, and perhaps at greater cost to themselves, than many a famous ecclesiastical figure.

Bishop Gore was discussing the Service of Ordination with one of his young men. In that service which was to be held on the following morning, the bishop had to ask the ordinand questions, each of which began with the words, "Wilt thou . . . ? Wilt thou . . . ? Wilt thou . . . ? To these questions the young man was required to reply, "I will . . . I will . . . I will." When their preparations were complete and the candidate about to leave, the bishop looking earnestly at the young man said, "Tomorrow I shall be asking you, "Wilt thou . . . ? Wilt thou . . . ? Wilt thou . . . ? But at the end of your life Another will be asking you, 'Hast thou . . . ? Hast thou . . . ? Hast thou . . . ?'"

Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, and said to Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." A man is not overcome of envy as long as he is *minding his own business*.

G. W. BYRT

Mr Byrt's second article will appear in our next issue.

## **BARDON: A PUZZLE FOR THE PROTESTANT EVANGELICAL**

Bardon is a suburb of Brisbane, Australia. Until two years ago it was little more than that. Today the name "Bardon" has become a symbol for one of the most amazing situations in the Christian life of the Australian continent.

Imagine a weekly three hour—(often longer)—prayer meeting, in which human leadership seems almost non-existent, in which tremendous heights of corporate joy are reached and equal depths of sheer compassion are plumbed by congregations averaging some three hundred in number, yet with no disorder and nothing that would jar or be other than a joyous reverence born of an uninhibited love for Jesus Christ and, for all, whatever denomination, who bear His Name.

The scene of this remarkable weekly occurrence is the Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Bardon. This church has become the recognized centre of Catholic "Pentecostalism" in Brisbane and the parent body of a movement amongst Australian Catholics that is growing

every week. This is despite the same kind of reserve, within the Catholic Church and even opposition which the Charismatic Movement often meets in evangelical Protestant circles.

For one who is a convinced Protestant of the 'Conservative Evangelical' school, and who, all his life has asked 'Can any good thing come out of Rome?' this movement presents some very real problems. To glibly quote the scripture about Satan appearing as an angel of light, and to brand the whole movement as being 'of the devil', would be coming dangerously near to sinning the Pharisaic sin against the Holy Spirit—"He casts out demons by the Prince of demons".

If, from this point, I write more subjectively, it is because this would appear to be the best way in which to present some accurate, yet vivid glimpses of what is going on.

I came to Brisbane in June 1970, convinced that, at the best Rome could consist only of dead formalism and at the worst, of a hotbed of every heresy and doctrinal deviation under the sun. As for Jesuits . . .

Some members of the Church I have the privilege of seeking to serve gave me the good Johannine advice—"Come and see". In the past three years I have "been and seen" some ten or eleven times. No two occasions have been the same, and only three factors have remained constant, the minimum obtrusion of human leadership, the absolute spontaneity of the prayers and worship, and the sense of a love, that could hardly fail to melt the coldest heart present.

On the occasion of my first visit to Bardon I heard my first Jesuit priest speak in public. On my second visit, I met him. My introduction to Paul Siebert S.J., Science Master of the Iona Boys' College, Brisbane, was nothing if not dramatic. I was introduced to this physical giant of an Australian priest as "The Reverend Phil Audemard"!—Before I could put out my hand for the formal handshake, I found myself crushed in a bear like hug and my fourteen stone was lifted bodily as the voice boomed in my ear "God bless you, Brother Phil. Praise the Lord!" Then with a rhetorical—"Isn't Jesus wonderful?" Father Siebert let me down to earth again!

In some ways the first sighting of this man had been even more significant. The meeting—my first, was well under way. The congregation had expressed its worship in thirty minutes of hearty singing—"He lives"—"How Great Thou Art" "To God be the Glory", etc., etc., plus a few hymns native to the Catholic Charismatic Movement. There had been testimonies as nuns called upon the congregation to "Praise the Lord" for conversions of unruly boys, as other people gave thanks for bodily healing and many other blessings. There had been the manifestation of something I had never heard before, namely "Singing in the Spirit", a spontaneous harmony of indescribable beauty as some third or half of the congregation began to sing together "in tongues". Now the meeting had moved into a time of specific prayer. People were voicing the most delicate of family problems,

alcoholic relatives, shaky marriages, requests for the conversion of loved ones, and so on. Suddenly a man, obviously known to Paul Siebert began to pray brokenly along the following lines—"Lord Jesus, you know my family situation. You know what a rotten temper I've got and how that J - - is always picking on me—and Lord You know how the kids have given You away because of the rotten example we've set with our bickering and quarrelling . . ." The prayer got no further for the speaker broke down sobbing. Immediately one sensed something like a warm breeze of love surrounding the praying man, and Paul Siebert quietly called across the Church "Brother T - - the Lord Jesus doesn't want you to bear this burden alone. You just keep quiet and we will pray for you". Person after person prayed until somebody broke into singing:

"Spirit of the Living God,  
Fall afresh on *them*",

and then the congregation took it up, singing it over and over again until one could almost sense God actively answering the prayer. None present that night could have been surprised when two weeks later, the same speaker, with glowing face and almost delirious with joy, told how that he had gone home that night to find his own heart changed, a changed wife and a new beginning: they had fallen in love all over again and the whole family was praising God together in a new found happiness.

"Bardon" has gained a reputation here in Brisbane for many things in recent days: not the least has been the reputation of being the place where broken marriages are mended!

Another never-to-be-forgotten night was a special "healing service" held in the parish hall. Two hundred and fifty people were ringed around the walls singing and praying quietly while in the middle half a dozen groups of three or four others prayed with, and laid hands, on, the sick who had come for help. Each praying group, composed not only of Roman Catholics, but Anglicans, Presbyterians and others, including Baptists, ministered to the sick people independently of the others. The sound of separate quietly praying groups, mingled with the prayers and singing from the sides of the hall can only be described as a "quiet chaos of beauty". Little children in their pyjamas and dressing gowns played "hide and seek" around the groups at prayer, and one could not help feeling that Bardon 1972 had merged into the Capernaum of two thousand years before.

Two of the many "results" of such services may be mentioned. There was the Dutchman who had been a resistance fighter in the war, and who had been trapped under a bridge with an ammunition train upon it during an allied bombing raid. Since that day he had been unable to go under a railway bridge without extreme anxiety. If a train did go over, he would go almost berserk with terror. For thirty years he had been in this situation. On that Friday night in Bardon, the Dutchman was set free. The following day he was out on his business rounds when he pulled up in his car to check some papers. At first he did not even notice that he was

under a railway bridge; it was only the passage of trains overhead that made him aware both of where he was and of the fact that all fear had gone.

Another memory that comes to consciousness is the picture of Vincent Hobbs, the parish priest holding a little 18 months old baby boy up before the congregation and saying, "Do you remember this little fellow? We prayed for him two weeks ago. The doctors confirm that he *did* have a tumor on the brain: they tell us that a miracle has occurred and that the tumor has gone". One will never forget seeing the mother standing there with tears of joy streaming down her face as the congregation broke into applause and the semblance of a church service returned only as the building rang to the repeated, spontaneous singing of "How Great Thou Art" and "To God be the Glory".

There is much more that could be told: of the forty matriculation school boys converted after two science lessons and of the daily prayer meetings that followed in this *Catholic School!* . . . of the loving response of a lay reader in the movement the night a hostile priest voiced his noisy objections to what was going on, using the actual expression—"You call yourselves Catholics—You're nothing but a pack of rat-bags!"—of the delightful testimony of the young seminarian who was telling of the 'one by one' conversion of his fellow students with the refrain "And then there were eight"—"And then there were seven", etc., ending up amid scenes of great hilarity—"Now there's only one—that's the abbot, let's pray for him!"

One could tell of the phenomenal sale of Christian literature that is going on in that Church. One Brisbane Christian Bookshop, on one occasion was cleared out of virtually every "Andrew Murray" book in stock, while R.S.V. Bible and the books of David Wilkerson and David Du Plessis are going at a rate that would cause any bookseller to sing the *Te Deum!*

The final word must be on how this revival (for such it is) began.

On the human level it began when Vincent Hobbs, Bardon's Parish Priest, read an article by Professor Kevin O'Connor on what was happening in the U.S.A. among Catholic Pentecostals. In the January Father Hobbs had attended a retreat in which "Spiritual Renewal" was the theme and object, and in which the speaker had told of the things he had seen and heard in the circles alluded to in Kevin O'Connor's article.

On Good Friday 1970 Father Hobbs invited the speaker to meet with any in the Bardon Catholic Church who were concerned to enter into spiritual renewal. The meeting was held on 1st May and between 15 and 20 people attended. The discussion soon began to "flop" and it looked as though nothing would eventualize. At this point the little group stood to sing a hymn and then sat for spontaneous prayer. It was then that there was a breakthrough and a spirit of unity became evident, a spirit which has never left the group and which has grown with growing numbers.

The second meeting was held on Whit Sunday 1970. At one stage the number in the group dropped to 8 but then the "upward" climb began, and since then there has been no looking back.

No Charismatic phenomena were sought, but these gradually appeared until today they are frequently, although not regularly, heard.

For this writer the whole situation poses strange questions. The theological problems remain and they may never be resolved, but he has to confess that one of the Bardon "theme songs" is inescapable in its reality!

"We are one in the Spirit,  
We are one in the Lord,  
And they'll know we are Christians *by our love.*"

PHILIP AUDEMARD

## COMMUNITY CHURCH IN TASMANIA: A NEW TOWN EXPERIMENT

I read with interest Roy Dorey's article in *The Fraternal* under the title 'NEW TOWNS: Urban living for the next generation', and thought readers might be interested in the work of a Community Church in a new mining town on the west coast of Tasmania.

When the mine opened in 1967 and the town was completed, there was accommodation for 235 families and 200 single men. Two Baptist business men from the coast, 80 miles away began visiting the town, Savage River, holding Sunday School classes and a morning worship service. A Baptist Minister, Simon Bath, travelled almost as far from his home area each Thursday and conducted religious education in the new local school. At the same time Church of England, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic Churches began to send their men and a committee was formed to sort out what might be done at Savage River.

The Tasmanian Council of Churches was keen to see some workable sort of Christian witness in the new mining area. Savage River Mining Company was approached and they generously offered a complete building in the centre of the town which now became the property of the Heads of Churches of Tasmania. The purchase price was one Australian Dollar. At this stage the church was made up of Anglicans, Baptists, Church of Christ, Methodists, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, and from the outset it was obvious the Church was going to be ecumenical in its outlook and behaviour.

The building was duly transformed from a Barracks, which had 21 rooms, into a building which had a chapel at one end, and a hall at the other. Heads of the Churches attended a Dedication Service and from that time forward the Savage River Church has been an autonomous group taking its place in the community of iron ore miners.

The role of the Church in the Community has been twofold. It has provided a *facility* for families who have been

Church people in their previous places of living. A Sunday School, with Protestant and Catholic teachers, has ministered to Protestant and Catholic children. The Church has met midweek, one week having Bible Study and Prayer, and on alternate weeks having a recreation night for single men, providing indoor bowls, music, table tennis, supper, and a touch of home.

Regular Sunday morning worship services have been conducted by local residents, Anglican Lay Preachers, or R.C. Parish Priest, now married and living in the town, or R.C. Christian Brother, now serving in Education Department, or myself. On alternate Sundays, members of the major Denominational groups come to us on a roster basis, and this allows our town people to keep in contact with their original denominational groups.

We have experimented in orders of service, and find sitting in a large circle, using guitars and modern ballad-type hymns and having discussions, to be the most acceptable and beneficial method of worship. Often a subject is pre-arranged so that all the congregation may take part. Holy Communion may be as simple as a glass of wine, and a plate of bread being passed from one to another around the circle. These gatherings are happy, children often attending and sitting on the floor near their parents, lots of laughter, sometimes tears, and always a warm sense of true fellowship.

The other equally important role the Church plays in this unsettled mining community is the part of the *Helping Hand*.

There have been some major breakdowns, young couples swapping wives, and things going very badly. There have been nervous breakdowns, men and women not being able to cope with the isolation and the rough West Coast weather with its average rainfall around 100 inches a year. There have been the usual sad situations where alcohol and gambling have ruined otherwise happy homes, and at Savage River these people seem to come to the church for help. We seem to take the place of parents, we are often the shoulders that people weep upon, and in the helping hand role, I believe we do make a substantial contribution to the town.

The Church has been able to relate to the *Young People* of the town. It has provided a place for the teenagers to gather and play records and dance. Very few families in the town are practising Christians, and fewer still are the number of young people who are committed. Young married couples who stay for 18 months and move on to other mining areas, often lend a hand in running socials or outings or dances for the teenagers. Occasionally a dinner is arranged with a film or guest speaker and *all* the teenagers of the town will attend. The relationship between the Church and the teenagers has been good. Five members of the Church take Religious Instruction at the local State School (350 children including 50 secondaries) and there give instruction to young people whom they know personally.

Some points of interest concerning the Community Church are:

1. There is a genuine, good relationship between Catholics and Protestants. The former find it hard to be connected with an autonomous group. This is a fairly novel idea to them. The main reason for their loyalty to the Community Church is that the R.C. priest comes only once or twice a month to celebrate Mass and they find this inadequate. As a result of the relationship, the two groups now know much more about one another, and this has made the bond deeper and more real.

2. The church building has maximum use. The Chapel end is used only for worship or for assembly time at Sunday School. The other end of the building is used as playcentre, for creche, Brownies, meeting place, physical education, Jaycee, government immunisations, naturalisation ceremonies, socials, and Y.P. dances.

3. The attitude of the Company has been always helpful. The town is a company town and the management has recognised the advantages of having a Church working happily and in a united way in its midst. In general, the townspeople are not participants in worship, but show interest in anything of a special nature and will turn out for 'working bees', sacred concerts, films. They would not consider having functions in town before church has finished, and I believe if we closed our Sunday School or Church, they would be the first to complain.

4. The worker-priest set-up has been mostly an advantage. I am an employee of the mine. I know everyone in the town, over 1,000 population. I visit the sick, marry, bury, celebrate Communion, superintend the Sunday School, and act as liaison between the local Church, and the Denominations. The Policeman, the Doctor, and the Company seek assistance where a minister is normally needed.

We have not set the world on fire, far from it, and the going has been often uphill. Mining people are unashamed in stating that they are living in isolated communities to get rich quickly and to be successful in the mining game. However we have had the satisfaction in the last five years of knowing, by experience, that the Christian message is still relevant, that Jesus is still the answer to men's deepest needs.

We have been allowed to be part of an ecumenical programme, which has kept God's people together, and stretches out a hand in the community, a help to those in need.

REX GLASBY