

Editorial

PROFESSOR AND PASTOR

IN a review in the April issue of *Theology Today* on H. Shelton Smith's book *Changing conceptions of Original Sin* the reviewer, Winthrop S. Hudson, drew attention to the fact that "until recently serious theological discussion was carried on overwhelmingly by men who were actively engaged in the pastorate," who "far over-shadowed the occupants of professorial chairs" but that this is no longer so. It would now appear, he claims, that professors have come to dominate more and more the theological scene. This fact, unfortunately, can be verified from the pages of this Journal. It was, and is, the hope of the Editorial Committee of the Canadian Journal of Theology that the Journal would prove to be a forum for theological discussion in Canada by all those concerned for a right interpretation and proclamation of the Gospel. However it is now becoming clear that this discussion is tending to be a purely private affair among the professors. The preachers and pastors of Canada seem to be content merely to listen in. Our subscription lists indicate that they form the major part of our constituency. But like the people of England in Chesterton's poem "they have not spoken yet."

This is, as indicated above, unfortunate. The work in a congregation is the area where the theology of the Church is tested. It is the battle field where the adequacy or inadequacy of the Church's interpretation of the Word is settled. But more than that. It ought also to be the area where a major contribution to the formulation of the Church's theology is made. We need not in this matter become involved in the arid debate between the contrasting contributions of pastors and professors. They are equally ministers of the Word and Sacraments and both are in the active ministry. They are also both dependent on each other. This is so to an extent which may not always be realised by the pastor. He is aware, of course, of his debt to the men who trained him for his specialised and difficult work. He is, however, inclined to forget that the professors look to him for first-hand reports on how the theological battle is going from the field where the Christian troops are in personal contact with the enemy.

Every pastor, of course, is aware of the difficulties involved here. The battle, he finds, is so involved and demanding that he can set aside little time to sit down to write "situation reports." The task of ministering to a congregation today demands much more than it once did. The pastor soon discovers that he has to be not only a preacher of the Word and a shepherd of souls, he also has to be an administrator, organiser, educator and public relations expert. In the very multiplicity of the tasks however, there is involved not only frustration for the individual in being able to do none of

them adequately, but also serious theological loss for the Church. When theology becomes isolated from the on-going life of the Church, as that life is found both in the slums and suburbs of the cities and in the country parishes, it tends to lose the existential quality which it ought ever to possess and manifest.

This, then, is a plea that the pastor take his share in the forum of theological discussion which it is the aim of this Journal to further. Many things are happening in the life of the Church today which raise not only questions of technique but also profound theological issues. The tragedy is that too often they are viewed only on the practical level. Thus:

(a) In Canada today there is a vast amount of church building going on, much of it in "the contemporary style." Who will examine the implications of such architecture not merely on the level of a building adapted from the point of view of the multifarious activities of a modern congregation but also from the point of view of the theology that ought to underlie it? For too often the odd things which masquerade as churches today are but a revelation of the fact that they were conceived and brought to birth without benefit of a sound and adequate theology.

(b) Today there is also a developing interest in worship and the use of liturgical formulae. Far too often, however, this interest has behind it no more than a desire for more ceremonial and issues in what the minister thinks will be "nice." Does this tendency also not need theological examination?

(c) Increasingly at present ministers are becoming interested in pastoral counselling. Who is to discern here what is psychology dressed up in the garb of religion, and what is the real contribution which a true "cure of souls" has to make? No decision can be arrived at in this matter apart from a critical theological examination.

There are other interests which daily hold the attention of the pastor—preaching, education, fund-raising, administration. It is important that they all be viewed on a level other than the expedient. They all raise theological questions and demand theological answers. This Journal looks to the pastors—who are the men on the spot, literally and figuratively—to make their contribution to the essential theological conversation which must be maintained if the Church, both in college and parish, is to make an adequate witness to Christ both as Truth and Life.

W. M. K.