one church. It is rather a series of peripatetic teams of fluid membership involving many of the LPA members.

In some instances, as happens now, a man might do a series on an individual—church basis. He will no doubt find himself increasingly committed to a local cause even though he may not accept a responsibility within a team ministry. This may involve him in pastoral counselling on an ad hoc basis—again this happens now when there is little or no pastoral oversight. Such a role is analogous to that of a preaching elder, but the latter would be a *member* of the fellowship he so served, rather than a *visitor,* however frequent. The involvement at a level below that of lay pastor in our current understanding of the term often arises because factors of time and geography do not allow the acceptance of a call to that situation.

The outcome of closing buildings is, one hopes, a move to someone's front room where the church probably began. A preaching service in such circumstances whilst not impossible, is likely to be replaced by a talk followed by discussion, or perhaps a discussion group proper. Some LP already lead such groups and some churches are using their buildings for this kind of activity. This is not a typical preaching assignment, but its close affinity is such that the LP is probably as well equipped as anyone to take it on.

To fulfil the roles outlined above will involve a degree of commitment to the LPA somewhat larger than that of the average member at present, but it is hoped that he will rise to meet the challenge. The LPA will have to arrange opportunities for its members to meet and group themselves into teams, perhaps after a conference (weekend or half day) on the theme to be followed. It ought to arrange classes (probably of the tutorial type) to allow men to acquire some pastoral wisdom. The ministers' fraternal could also provide a helpful environment.

Post-membership training of LPs is a virtually untouched sphere. At best the LPAs sponsor lectures and conferences, but these are frequently on an ad hoc basis with little long-term planning. (The LPF conference and annual meeting are again unrelated.) It would be beneficial if regional conferences and local meetings were geared to a common syllabus (cf. BMM), preferably a practical rather than a theoretical one. Many LPAs require members to pass all or part of the BU Diploma, but this could do with a thorough revision to make it more utilitarian; e.g. the single subject Worship and Preaching could be expanded into several, worship, public prayer, sermon construction, illustrations and quotations, etc. The current method of examining candidates is too restricting on syllabus content; the open university, among others, can teach us a lot in the field of educational testing. The BU have a group working on this.

Table VI *The Changing role of the LPA*

(1) Increasingly co-ordinate the preachers' work preferably in conjunction with churches, moving towards but not adopting a connexional system.
(2) Increasingly provide opportunities for preachers to meet each other for training, etc.
(3) Increasingly bring leaders of churches and preachers together to work out strategy at local levels.
(4) Find itself doing much organisational work, for which in some areas LPA are at present inadequate.

In the short term the LP role will be much as it has been; the LPA will have the new look (Table VI). In the long term, where there are many fewer full-time ministers and local churches depend mainly on supplementary ministers and lay preachers for their continuance, the practices outlined above will be increasingly valid, especially the quasi-pastoral role of the visiting preaching elder. It seems probable however that the overall number of preaching services will have declined, and the local witness via home meetings will have increased.

Even though many village churches may have closed—an assumption I am reluctant to grant in view of the tenacity with which they hold on in spite of the odds—the LP will have a role to play as part of the plan of the continuing church. His role will be preaching as part of the local team or as part of an independent visiting team.

The secular and pastoral demands on the supplementary minister will mean that he will require the kind of support that the visiting preaching elder and the LP team can give. The occasional preacher, not part of a team, will have little contribution to make. This would of course be a spiritual rationalisation of the present situation in many churches with Lay Pastors who generally have one or two Sundays a month free.

Most LP and LPA conceive it their privilege and duty to preach the Gospel wherever they are asked to do so, and do not see it as their prerogative to refuse any cause (although they may make their personal views known to the church meeting). Thus the LP and the LPA will be unwilling to co-operate in any 'running down' of the smaller churches, but rather will be working against such a process. However within the kind of close affiliation of churches and preachers envisaged above, the LP and the LPA will no doubt endeavour to implement rather than undermine the agreed strategy.

DAVID F. G. PUSEY

SOTERIOLOGY OR ETHICS

We must start with definitions. One assumes that Ethics is still what it was when some of us soldiered on through MacKenzie—the study of what is right and good in conduct, and that Soteriology is still that work of God on man's behalf whereby he is freed from his evil through the work of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit, to be remade in the image of God.

Now of course it is possible to have *neither soteriology nor ethics.* There are many like this today who live in what George Steiner in his recent *Elliot Memorial lecture* called "The Great Ennui", that sorry mess of meaninglessness in which people have been landed by various forms of permissive or pessimistic humanism. It is that culture, or non-culture that starts on the road with Nietzsche in asserting that "God is Dead", then picks up with Camus and Sartre in saying there are no rules of right and wrong in a universe that is absurd anyway, there is no moral reasoning and all that matters is that you 'act' and so substantiate yourself as a 'person' whatever your action may be; and comes to the end of the journey with Bertrand Russell that man is only "a nonentity at the heart of which there is nothingness". God being in the grave it is not surprising that man soon follows Him there, and in consequence life in certain of our art-forms is no longer depicted in romantic or heroic terms, of happy souls in sunlit sylvan glades, but decrepit people crawling through sewers, gazing vacantly into empty space or, as most recently shown, sitting with their heads sticking out of a dustbin.

Then we can have *soteriology without ethics.* There are some, alas, who only seem to see the New Testament in John 3.16 and never realise there is a 1 John 3.16. Theirs is a theology like that of the new minister whom the small boy liked so much that he told his mother "He gives us such lovely children's stories, and doesn't have any morals".

I never forget as a young man, hearing an evangelical brother challenged about a shady business deal which had involved another in loss, brushing it off with the words "That's all right brother—it will all be covered by the Blood". This type of evangelicalism that cries up salvation but falls down on ethics, does more to discredit our faith than anything else. Did not Paul in *Romans* quote Isaiah about "the Name of God being blasphemed among the nations . . . because of *you*?" This is not Christianity.

There is of course *ethics without soteriology.* The contemporary scene presents a sorry picture. At the start of this century moral philosophy was idealistic. It accepted a standard and a goal under the influence of F. H. Bradley. But it has gradually made its way down through the paths of G. E. Moore's Utilitarianism, the Intuitionism of Ross and Broad, the emotivism of Ayer and Stevenson, and under the general influence of Wittgenstein, into the situation ethics of Joseph Fletcher and now into the jungle of ethical subjectivism which is the result of the existentialist schools of Camus and Sartre. At the same time modern philosophy, enmeshed in Linguistic Analysis has become ethically neutral —indeed it has handed over responsibility in this field to writers of literature who after all can only reflect and then further fashion public opinion in a kind of vicious circle. The caption of the times seems to be that the Commander-in-Chief is dead and so the troops can roam at will. If God is defunct; anything is permissible.

The result of all this is the Permissive Society—against which we are already seeing signs of a backlash on both sides of the Atlantic. The effects meanwhile are tragic especially in the realm of sex. Nirad Chaudhuri wrote some time ago in the *Daily Telegraph*: "Even I, a Hindu, to whom formerly no Englishman attributed any moral consciousness, know that in the matter of sex, moral uncertainty is equivalent to moral depravity". I would be more inclined to say moral uncertainty *leads to* moral depravity, and not only in the area of sex. Chaughuri draws an interesting parallel between moral trends in contemporary Western society with those of ancient Rome. As with Roman-Greek society we appear to have worked through all the ethical systems of Stoicism to Hedonism and found salvation in none of them. And like that decadent civilisation we too are haunted by a sense of weakness, emptiness and ultimate despair, and as Seneca wrote "need a hand let down from heaven to lift us up . . . for we look towards salvation".

But there is the danger of *equating ethics with soteriology* as though the one were automatically the other. There is the modern view that sees Jesus as a dedicated man in whom God was more active than in most, the "man for others". It sees the Cross as Love absorbing evil, the resurrection as man set free to conquer environment and human ills even by his technology. Man is now come of age and God is at the centre of all life. So evangelism is finding God in the neighbour, participating with a God who is already in the world bringing in "shalom". This I find is "a social happening involving the realisation of the full potentialities of creation". Now in this jungle of words there is an emphasis which, while true in the ultimate, has meanwhile lost the priority of that simple, essential and personal salvation which lies at the heart of the New Testament, and has replaced it by the ethics of the prophets. It has in effect put the New Testament back in the arms of the Old. Consider the following quotation for instance from "The Church for others" . . . "Each time a man is a true neighbour, each time men live for others, the life-giving saving action of God is to be discerned . . . the signs of the Kingdom and the establishing of "shalom". Here salvation is equated with ethics. The horizontal relation of man to man, if beneficient, has become the vertical saving action of God, and this arises from a false and unscriptural identification of God with man, from an undue immanence taking insufficient account of the separation of the Holy One from the sinner and the Creator from the creature. It fails to see that humanitarianism, however effective in alleviating the ills of mankind, in fact does nothing *in itself* to bring them to the knowledge of God. Savages, atheists, criminals, haters of God and Christ can all be good neighbours to one another when it suits them and I have no doubt the demons themselves have some kind of dedication to one another, else is their kingdom divided.

What then is the right order? It is that, in the framework of a moral universe, soteriology is necessary because man is a fallen being, but *right soteriology embraces and in* turn

produces right ethics. The Bible begins with moral order, with God looking at His creation and pronouncing it "good", because it both reflects, and exists for, that highest good which is the Glory and Will of God. Yet against this the Bible depicts rebellion against the Divine order both in the realm of angels and men. It is therefore concerned with men as fallen beings, separated from God, morally incapable of doing the Divine Will and so needing salvation in order to be restored and made whole.

Consider then the *Old Testament emphasis on salvation and ethic.* The ethic is there, from the beginning. Something more than vegetation made Eden a paradise and something more than nudity made Adam and Eve ashamed. Something fastened on Cain his guilt, marked Noah as righteous and Enoch as one who walked with God. Something made the king of Gerar hand back Abraham his wife, and it wasn't the Ten Commandments. It was, as C. S. Lewis reminds us in his *Christian Reflections,* something that was there from the beginning, found in Egypt, China, Babylon and the book of Job—that original moral law, the elemental 'ought' built-in to man as a part of the image of God, the "Tao" as the Chinese called it—"the Way the Universe goes, the Way things everlastingly emerge" (Abolition of Man) found in the Voluspa as well as the Decalogue. And any new ethic taught by Judaism or Christianity is not new but there from the beginning, the "agape" that was in the Holy Trinity, that original Beam in which the worlds were made, Love, eternally in God and breathed into the being of the first man—filled out later in Jewish law and made workable in the Gospel.

It is against this ethic of a moral universe in which the Glory and Will of God is the ultimate Good, that the Bible sets the Mosaic Law crystalised in perfect love to God and man. "Do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God". There is nothing higher than this. But because man is sinful, the soteriology must be there too, keeping pace, overarching and undergirding the ethic all the while. So Adam stands in naked shame before the Divine glory, but already Abel has brought a perfect offering. Before ever the Law was given at Sinai the Lamb was slain in Egypt, and with all the elaborate details of moral law that exemplify and fasten home the universal ethic, there are equally elaborate provisions of sacrifice for the pardon and renewal of those who consistently fail to keep those laws. You see, Israel learned great things about her God. First that He was a *mighty* God, a God of power, creator of all things, conqueror of Pharoah and Lord of Hosts. Then that He was a *moral* God, a God of Law who demanded holiness and brooked no transgression. That was more significant. But when Moses in his deepest moment asked God to show him his glory—the inner essence of his being—he was shown a *merciful* God, a God of grace who pardoned sinners because he loved them. Mercy was, as the Puritans used to say, "his darling attribute". He had always been this kind of God. Indeed before there was law he had shown grace. Paul, in Galatians,

says the law came 430 years after. After what? Why, after the covenant of grace made with Abraham and Israel and all men, on the basis of mercy from God's side and faith from man's. And the people to whom the law came in flaming fire were a people saved by the Lord not on grounds of moral fitness but of Divine mercy, compassion and purposes of love.

The passage of time served only to show the fallenness of human nature in the breakdown of the Jewish nation's ability to keep the moral law. This is the lament of the prophets—"which my covenant they brake, though I was a husband to them saith the Lord". The Jewish ethic remained as a powerful framework in which the people lived on a higher level of life than did those of other nations and yet which had, by the time of Christ, shrivelled into the dry and petty prohibitionism of the Pharisees who knew nothing of the love of God. Saul of Tarsus, child of the strictest Jewish ethic, echoes the cry of the honest Pharisee when he says "The good I want to do, I fail to do, and what I do is wrong. Miserable creature that I am, who is there to rescue me?"

This breakdown of the Jewish ethic is pinpointed in the words *"The law could not* in that it was weak in the flesh". There was nothing wrong with the ethic itself. It was perfect. What *was* wrong was that men were incapable, even in the most ideal conditions, to fulfil it, and so the ethic itself was unable to bring men to God, apart from the action of grace. Here we have the Old Testament pointer to where the accent must lie.

The light begins to break on an otherwise hopeless scene in the promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 where the ethical is seen emerging from the Soteriological. "I will cleanse you and I will deliver you. A new heart I will give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will cause you to walk in my statutes. I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts". Notice how God is here taking the initiative in saving action which in turn produces ethical conduct.

When therefore we turn to the *New Testament* it is not surprising to find the ethical coming to meet us in finer garments than before. The eternal ethic, the elemental 'ought' is there, embodied now in Christ and his teaching. Nothing is loftier in any moral system than the Sermon on the Mount in which is emphasised not only the practice but the spirit of God's law, the quintessence of which is in the words "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength and mind and thy neighbour as thyself". The last four words alone epitomise the perfect ethic. The trouble is again how can anyone do it? Man needs not merely an ethical philosopher but a saviour.

Any understanding of the New Testament reveals two things:

First that CHRISTIAN *SALVATION MUST PRECEDE CHRISTIAN ETHIC* if that ethic is to be capable of realisation. The Gospel while given in an ethical situation (and it was, else sin and repentance have nothing against which to

be measured) is given to those needing to be saved in that situation. I mention four things here.

1. *The prime purpose of Christ's coming* was to save sinners who by their moral inability had failed to keep God's law. He could have been given any name, but he was called "Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins". This purpose was stated again and again. "I came to call sinners to repentance, I am come that they might have life". "He came to seek and to save that which was lost, came to give his life as a ransom for many, came into the world to save sinners, was manifested to take away our sins; was sent to proclaim good news . . . and deliverance". And so on and so on. Soteriology first.
2. *The preaching of the apostles* was first, salvation. The early Christians did not go out and confront the Roman world with a new ethic much as it was needed, but with the Gospel of salvation—that simple message of Jesus crucified for sins, risen again to be Lord of all, who now commands repentance, offers forgiveness through faith in his name and gives men the power of new life through the Holy Spirit. *The accent was always on the Gospel,* the power of God to salvation. The implications were, a new ethic.
3. *The message of the New Testament* is primarily salvation. Like a great peal of bells there sound throughout Gospel and epistles, the great Gospel words . . . save, deliver, set free, cleanse, renew, translate, transform, Atonement, redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness, adoption, new birth, offering, sacrifice, blood. Newness of life, fullness of life, the gift of eternal life; and if I might suggest the whole message of the New Testament in one phrase it is this—"By grace are ye saved, through faith, not of works. Created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God before ordained that we should walk in them". Cut the New Testament anywhere and it bleeds with the life-blood of salvation.
4. *The balance of Epistolary teaching* is salvation proceeding to ethic. In Romans for instance there is an initial appeal to universal ethic in order to reduce the world to sinnership, then there is presented salvation through faith in Christ's death alone. This leads to freedom from guilt and so to an entirely new life in the power of the Spirit. All this is pure soteriology. Christian ethic only begins to appear in the latter part of chapter 8 and is only fully taken up from chapter 12 onwards "There by the mercies of God, present your bodies, etc." and so on to the ethical life.

The same of course is true of Ephesians where the most thorough scheme of salvation is set out in the first three chapters which again leads to the word "therefore . . . I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling". It is exactly the same in Galatians and Colossians. In the New Testament salvation emerges against the background of an ethic in which man fails, but gives birth to one in which he is given the ability to succeed.

Thus not only must *Christian salvation* PRECEDE Christian ethic BUT *IT MUST ALSO PRODUCE CHRISTIAN ETHIC.*

Now we must never lose the *eternal* nature of our salvation. We need to recover the reality of Hell and Heaven in this earth-bound age. We are saved with an eternal salvation. But what in regard to this life? Does the Gospel in any way provide the answer to the moral mess of our present situation? Does it work ethically as well as save eternally? The answer is a thousand times YES! And here I mention seven things:

1. New Testament salvation is *election unto holiness.* It is to eternal salvation and security, but notice how again and again where election is mentioned it has a *moral* end in view. We are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. We are chosen to be holy and without blame before Him. We are chosen and sanctified for obedience. (Rom. 8.30. Eph. 1.4 1 Peter 1.2.) Spurgeon once said that whilst the elect may not find their names written in Scripture they certainly find their characters there. Like the redeemed of the Old Testament, we are called and chosen to show the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

2. New Testament salvation is *salvation from the power of sin.* It is salvation from eternal death and loss, because it is salvation from *guilt,* which is the basic power of sin. When a man is cleansed through Jesus' blood he is freed from guilt. That is justification. But when guilt, the basic power is loosened and the sinner is freed through forgiveness, then he can be liberated from every form of bondage.

To be clean is to be free, and this is the great message of *Romans* which speaks of salvation as being "not under law but under grace", and so "sin shall not have dominion over us". Our guilt has been dealt with in Christ's death and once this is removed then sin's power in habit, attitude, character and relationships can be broken. The Gospel is God's power for salvation to deliver us from the power of darkness and translate us into the kingdom of God's Son. Men can be totally free from the reign of sin.

3. New Testament salvation is *continual salvation.* It is once-and-for-all. It is deliverance from past guilt and future judgment, but also from present daily sin. You know how the continuous tense is used again and again . . . "Those being saved" "the blood of Jesus Christ continuously cleanses from all sin" God is one who "delivered and doth deliver". The New Testament shows the Christian life as one of continual repentance and confession of sin and changing from glory to glory as we receive grace upon grace. This involves our being dealt with by God in ever new areas of life and being saved in all kinds of situations. Oswald Chambers once put it very well when he said the Christian life was one of "conscious repentance leading to unconscious holiness". When I was in East Africa, I found those in the revival were called "the saved ones", but when I spoke of myself as being saved they at once asked me what Jesus had been saving me from *lately.* They believed in *daily* salvation.

4. New Testament salvation *involves the gift of the Holy Spirit.* It is not just an eternal insurance policy against hell, but the coming into us of a mighty person who implements in us the salvation Christ has obtained for us. This gift of the Holy Spirit is an indispensable element in true conversion in the New Testament. "Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost". It was this they looked for as they did in the case of the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19.2. "Did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed?" And the Spirit's effect is not only charismatic but karpos . . . *fruit,* which as we see in Galatians 5.22 are *ethical* qualities, *character* qualities but also *relationship* qualities, for love must be toward others, and so with all the rest. We can all be saints in a vacuum, but we find ourselves sinners and learn holiness in fellowship with other people. And it is the Spirit alone who can produce these fruits and make possible the ability to fulfil the moral law of God. The flesh cannot do it. Paul found that out and he was an expert in these matters.

I know someone who is an incompetent accident-prone driver. He had a terrible time on the roads, and all the traffic laws which were the blessing of others were a curse for him because he was for ever breaking them and being convicted. His simple remedy was to lose his licence and allow another to do the driving for him. It is rather like this in Christian ethics except that we are not mere passengers who do nothing. The Holy Spirit takes over and fulfils in us what was otherwise impossible. He becomes in us the Divine Power. The external Law that cursed us, now becomes the inward law that brings blessing.

5. New Testament salvation is *the creation and perfection of a new nature.* As Paul says "Christ is formed in us" by the action of the Spirit. This is a great mystery, the language of Gal. 4.19 suggests the forming of an embryo and the birth of a child. There is that which is born and formed in us spiritually. In other places it speaks of renewal of the new man in the image of God, renewal of the mind, renewal of the Holy Spirit. Again it is said "God's seed is in him" which is God's sinless nature. All this is positive soteriology with ethical content and it is significant that where these truths are stated they are followed by practical and moral exhortations.

6. New Testament Salvation *involves the Lordship of Christ,* which in turn means obedience to his commands as we live in his kingdom. When Paul was first converted he called Jesus "Lord" and then at once asked "What do you want me to do?" Salvation for him was life under the Lordship of Christ in his kingdom which is an ethical order . . . "not eating and drinking but righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." So, to be saved is to be baptised into the Body of Christ, grafted into the True Vine received into the koinonia of the church where the standard is holiness to the Lord and love is the perfect Law. I found in East Africa where in the revival conditions akin to the early church largely prevail, the Gospel produced high ethic. In homes one would find the picture of a flag flying at the top of a pile with the words over it "Highest". All conduct was tested against the one standard of the very highest. The same thing is happening among many of the converted hippies I found in the Jesus Movement in California.

7. New Testament Salvation is *a work of love* and there is no greater ethical power than love. Says John, "We love, because he first loved us". Love causes men to do things when nothing else will, and salvation by Christ, if it means anything at all, means being seized by limitless love. Love that makes us hate evil and desire good, fills us with compassion for others, impels with the purest motives, makes us endure all, suffer all, give away all. God himself is that love and when God saves a man he first rescues him from death by an act of love, and then gives him a life in which that saving love may be embodied. Again if I may refer to the "Jesus People" in America, the outstanding thing that struck me when I met them was the love that filled them and seemed to glow through them.

In conclusion I suggest that in this matter of ethics there are five great essentials. They are: 1 IDEAL, 2 ABILITY, 3 FREEDOM, 4 FULFILMENT, 5 GOAL. On these five rocks all human ethical systems come to grief somewhere. Only in the Gospel of Christ can they all be successfully chartered.

The *Biblical IDEAL* is the *Glory of God,* which is the perfection and honour of his Person and Will. Against this great ultimate all things are measured.

The *Biblical ABILITY is the Power of God* made possible and available to us by his saving action within us. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me within."

The *Biblical FREEDOM is the Emancipation of God* by his grace toward and in us whereby we act, not now by outward imposition but inward constraint to will and do the good pleasure of God.

The *Biblical FULFILMENT* is not the self-realisation that Bradley and others so vainly sought. It is not man's fulfilment in man, but in God. Here is fulfilment in perfect Love and an all-embracing Will.

The *Biblical GOAL is the final Vision of God.* There must be goal, end, ultimate reward. One of C. S. Lewis' most moving works is his *Weight of Glory.* He speaks of heaven as not only our eternal home and destiny but our great Reward. He describes the exquisite joy that can at last be ours when, like shy little children, we stand before our august Parent to receive His commendation, that sheer rapture, of being not only *with* God, merely *noticed* by Him, but *known* of Him, accepted, approved, and so eternally fulfilled. Paul felt this keenly. To see Christ and be like him was the end of soteriology, but to receive from him the divine accolade, the "crown of righteousness" the "unfading victor's wreath" was a goal worthy of all high moral endeavour. And that goal is before us here and now.

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