

whose epitaph was "Faultless before the throne", was Lucy West Smeeton, mentioned above. Efforts to identify the magazine have not succeeded.

¹³ "She lives, for Jesus died" is similarly inscribed on the tombstone at Sibbertoft of Edith, daughter of William George Smeeton, who died in 1868, aged seven months.

¹⁴ I have found no trace of Day in Baptist or Congregational records: perhaps he was only a supply, and did not go on into the ordained ministry. The *Baptist Manual* gives Silas B. Stenson (a cousin of John Clifford) as pastor during 1854-6, and the *Baptist Handbook* gives a Coles as pastor in 1863, W. W. Willis 1868-70, and J. Sargent 1872-9. The church's later history comes tangentially into the unpublished Nottingham M.Phil. 1967 thesis by F. M. W. Harrison, "The Life and Thought of the Baptists of Nottinghamshire, with special reference to the period 1770-1914" (copy in the Library at Baptist Church House; for access to this and to other Baptist sources I wish to thank the Rev. Geoffrey Rusling).

GEOFFREY FILLINGHAM NUTTALL.

Reviews

Education for Ministry: Bristol Baptist College, 1679-1979. By Norman Moon. Bristol: the College, 1979. 150 pp. £3.00 (plus postage extra).

There are some subjects which are for ever being discussed in the Church, and are never, apparently, settled. Baptism, the Lord's Supper and ordination are among these. No doubt it is as well that we can never say, on such important matters, "this is the final truth", but it is sometimes a little wearisome for those who have been engaged in such discussions for several decades to hear the same points coming up again that they have heard made so often—and frequently presented as if they had just come freshly minted from an inspired mind. But times change, and new light occasionally dawns.

Closely allied to the perennial subject of ordination is that of the right way to train those who have offered themselves for it. Here also it is being said once again, "How much better it would be if we did it without taking the students away from ordinary church life", and, "Why is the training so academic and so unpractical?" And even, "Ought we to be spending so much money on so few people when the Churches are so short of money?"

Many such questions and comments, and others which suggest that things should be left exactly as they are, seem to be based on inadequate or outdated knowledge of what actually happens in a College community. Norman Moon's careful, comprehensive and quietly affectionate history of Bristol Baptist College, published on the occasion of its tercentenary, comes at a very good time, not only for the College, but for all of us in many Churches who are occupied, or vitally interested, in ministerial education. Readers of it will discover what has been tried and what has succeeded, what has lasted and what has been of only temporary value, what is at all times basic and what needs to be varied as conditions change, in an institution which has

certainly stood the test of time and seems very well equipped to face the unknown future. There may be those who claim to discover even more by reading between the lines; but those who spurn such devices will learn quite enough of the actual facts to be able to take a very intelligent part in the contemporary discussion.

Edward Terrill in 1679 set aside money "for the subsistence of a holy, learned man, well skilled in the tongues, to wit Greek and Hebrew", and for the payment of £10 a year for a maximum of four years to four Baptist students. In 1720 the training of such students got properly under way, and has continued without interruption ever since. In the eighteenth century the College ranked high among the Dissenting Academies which put Oxford and Cambridge (sometimes) to shame. In the present century the College assisted at the birth of Bristol University—a fact recently acknowledged by the conferment of an honorary doctorate on the present Principal, Morris West.

But it has never equated academic attainment with pastoral proficiency, and many students for whom the former was out of reach have been mightily helped to acquire the latter. Old and new methods of marrying theory to practice can all be evaluated from these pages. The possession and enlargement of Andrew Gifford's (1700-1789) benefaction (which includes, of course, the only surviving first edition of Tyndale's New Testament in English) have been a constant incentive to the maintenance of the best possible theological library.

The College boasts (yes, it has a right to boast) a long succession of Baptist leaders and scholars. But this Methodist reviewer naturally looks for examples of ecumenical movements and personalities in its recent history. He finds them quite easily (partly, no doubt, because he has been in Bristol all these years himself)—in the cooperation between the College and Western College (now unhappily departed), Didsbury (now Wesley) College, and the Anglican (very evangelical) Colleges; and in the work of Morris West and his predecessor, Leonard Champion, on the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

Long may the Baptist people continue to support the College with their prayers, money and personal interest! This book will certainly encourage them to do so.

RUPERT E. DAVIES.

The Turin Shroud. By Ian Wilson. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978. 283 pp. + Appendixes. £1.50.

"The Case of the Turin Shroud" has achieved great notoriety recently, and it is fitting to call it that for Ian Wilson's book reads rather like a detective novel. Indeed, the first thing to be said about the book is that it is entertaining, informative and holds the interest throughout. Not only is its author a journalist in the verve of his presentation, he is an historian in the care with which he has researched and documented his subject, and the balance with which he argues his case, a balance no less real because he himself clearly

accepts the authenticity of the Shroud.

There is no doubt that many people (mostly Christian believers already?) are being persuaded by the "evidence". I have reservations on two counts. The first is that the chain of evidence has too many missing links which have to be strung together by hypothesis. Wilson's arguments rely a great deal on the identification of the Mandylion of the Eastern Orthodox Church with the Shroud of Turin, so much so that one has to remind oneself that there is no hard evidence for this identification (a fact that Wilson does not consciously seek to deny). Again, the scientific evidence only proves that at one stage of its history the Shroud material was in Palestine.

But further, there is a grave danger in all the debate of sliding into an identification of two orders of reality. When the Shroud "proves" that the body it once encased had received a spear wound in the side, "methinks it doth prove too much". This (late) detail in the Fourth Gospel is clearly on the borderline between "history" and that interpretation of history which belongs to the realm of faith and tradition.

The bare historical facts of the Christian Faith by themselves do nothing to men. Plenty lived through them and "saw" nothing. It is the significance and meaning of these events, history as interpreted in the tradition, that bred a Church and nourished a faith. And here we are in a world of faith and value-judgements, not a laboratory with its Carbon 14 tests, its microscopic analysis of pollen-seeds and X-ray investigation of the warp and woof of cloth.

There is no instant, convenient connecting door between these two rooms. You still have to go out of one, down the corridor and into the other.

REX MASON.

NEWCOMEN SYMPOSIUM

The 250th anniversary of the death of Thomas Newcomen, the inventor of the steam engine, was marked by a commemorative symposium at Imperial College London on 23rd June 1979. The symposium, organized by the Newcomen Society for the Study of the History of Engineering, was concerned mainly with Newcomen's technical work, but his life as a Baptist pastor at Dartmouth and the importance of his Baptist contacts around the country were also mentioned.

The earliest Newcomen engine of which much is known was built near Dudley in 1712, and it is probable that the church contacts Newcomen already had with Bromsgrove led him to work in that area. Newcomen died in London at the house of his friend Edward Wallin, who was both the minister of Maze Pond Chapel and a business colleague of the inventor. One of the few surviving letters written by Newcomen was written from Wallin's house. It bears testimony to his faith and was published in the *Baptist Quarterly*, vol. 15.

BRIAN BOWERS.