

Ernest Barrett

Transcription of an article in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Rev. J.C. Mantripp

In the course of its history our Church has discovered that scholarship and business ability are not of necessity antagonistic. Where conspicuous success in Connexional office has been achieved the elements have been mixed, thus philosophic calm is a background to the agitations of the day – a state greatly to be desired in these days of business depression.

The Book Steward carries a great weight of responsibility. Under the proposals that determine procedure during the early years of Methodist Union our own Book Room will be continued. This because of methods of business that are peculiar to our Church, although complete amalgamation will be the goal that is kept in view. Reorganization at the Book Room will also throw more responsibility on the Book Steward. So that in addition to keeping in touch with all the ministers of the Church, and finding his way into methods of co-operation with the leaders of the other branches of Methodism that will come into the Union, the new Book Steward will have a more direct and intimate relation to the Holborn Hall staff than has been the privilege of any of his predecessors at the beginning of their term of office.



Mr Barrett during the years of his ministry has had full opportunities of entering into the life and traditions of our Church and he has made ample use of these opportunities. Not only in the sphere of scholarship, but as a Circuit minister he has commended himself to a great constituency. The Church showed its appreciation of his work by electing him Secretary of Conference in the same year that he was chosen as successor to one of the most successful of our Book Stewards - John Swinden. He comes to his new task with the confidence of his fellow ministers and of the Church in which they, with him, are leaders. If only the promised trade revival comes speedily - then, if only the mental and spiritual powers of the Church are correspondingly strengthened, he will have a happy time at Holborn Hall.

The Book Room was our first institution. Hugh Bourne had the sagacity which encouraged the harmonious progress of evangelism and intellect. He saw clearly that extension must be informed and inspired by knowledge. So the organization of the rapidly increasing Society led on to the organization of means to supply hymn books, magazines, and other literature.

The story of evolution from the "Primitive" process at Bermersley to the centre at Holborn Hall is a romance of the Church on its business side; while the honourable succession of Stewards – a longer list than that of Editors - challenges attention. The new Book Steward inherits this romance and comes into this succession. An awakened sense of the necessity of the Book Room would make his stewardship a delight.

References

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