

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

Editorial Notes.

WITH this issue we commence our twelfth volume, our nineteenth if one includes the *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* which preceded this *Quarterly*. We had hoped to return to regular quarterly issues, but that is unlikely to be possible during the present year. We shall, however, endeavour to provide for issues of extended size. We thank all our readers for their patience during the war years and our printers for the way they have met and overcome many difficulties. We have no hesitation in inviting increased support from the denomination for the work of the Baptist Historical Society and for this *Quarterly*. Both have important functions to fulfil in the years ahead. We are deeply grateful to the Dean of St. Paul's for the tribute to Dr. Wheeler Robinson which opens our new volume.

* * * *

In our last issue attention was drawn to recent discussions of baptism by Dr. Emil Brunner and Dr. John Baillie. An even more weighty and significant contribution to the subject has been made. There has now reached this country a remarkable pamphlet by Dr. Karl Barth. *Die Kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe* (Zurich, 1943) consists of a lecture delivered to Swiss theological students in May, 1943. In it, Dr. Barth vigorously and trenchantly attacks infant baptism on exegetical and theological grounds. He does not mince his words. He sets out five propositions regarding Christian baptism and each of them implies that the subject shall be a believing man. Barth points out how unsatisfactory are the passages in Calvin and other Reformers dealing with the baptism of children, and issues a clarion call for a return to the New Testament. Baptism should mark the personal appropriation of the grace of God by believers and their entry into the fellowship of Christ's Church. The numbers of professing Christians might, he admits, be greatly reduced if, instead of being brought to baptism by one's parents, one had always to come oneself, but the spiritual power of the Church would be greatly increased. In the first edition of his pamphlet, Dr. Barth spoke generously of the witness of Anabaptists and Baptists to the truths he now champions and suggested that there can be a "rapprochement" between ourselves and the Reformed Churches if they in the future adopt believers' baptism and we, on our part, agree not to press for the re-"baptism" of individuals who have already been "baptised" in infancy. This interesting passage has

disappeared in the second edition, and in a footnote, Dr. Barth states that he is anxious that his readers should consider not practical questions of ecclesiastical politics, but the biblical and theological issues which he has raised. We hope that Dr. Barth's pamphlet will speedily be translated and that it will secure a wide circulation, not only in Baptist circles but throughout Christendom.

Readers should also note that a number of interesting articles on the relation of baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit have appeared in *Theology*. In particular, one by the Rev. C. F. G. Moule, of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, in the issue for November, 1945, is frank and challenging. He writes: "A satisfactory biblical account can be given only of the complete experience represented (to use more modern terms) by 'Baptism plus Confirmation', as an indivisible whole. It is disingenuous (or, at best, ignorant) to transfer to infant baptism a weight of doctrine and a wealth of promises which, in the New Testament, are associated only with a responsible adult experience."

Never were Baptist apologists able to invoke more impressive testimonies from outside their own ranks.

* * * *

We offer our good wishes to the Rev. Luke H. Jenkins, B.D., on his appointment as Principal of the New Zealand Baptist College in succession to Dr. J. J. North; to the Rev. Gwenyth Hubble, B.A., B.D., the new Principal of Carey Hall, the United Missionary College for Women at Selly Oak; to the Rev. A. S. Herbert, M.A., B.D., the newly appointed Professor of Old Testament Studies in the Selly Oak Colleges; and to Professor H. H. Rowley, M.A., D.D., on his move from Bangor to the Chair of Semitic Languages and Literature in Manchester University.

* * * *

T. R. Glover was one of the outstanding figures connected with the Baptist denomination during the past generation. He made for himself a place all his own in the academic world; he was a "personality"; and he showed a life-long loyalty to the faith and church of his father. It is to be regretted that no comprehensive memoir of him is in hand, but there were so many sides to his personality and work that a biographer would find himself faced with a very difficult task. A number of notable appreciations and impressions have, however, appeared. For a true picture of T.R.G. they need putting together, and since some may have been missed by his friends, we venture to call attention to a few of them here. Of the notices that appeared at the time of Dr. Glover's death, that by the Rev. G. W. Harte in the *Baptist Layman* deserves notice, based as it was on many years of personal friendship. But hardly less significant was the

article which Professor H. J. Laski contributed to the *New Statesman* (November 27th, 1943), entitled "On Not Having Known T. R. Glover." In it, Dr. Laski quotes the description of Glover by W. H. R. Rivers as "a fine combination of Dr. Johnson and Charles Lamb." Early in 1944 the Carey Press issued a valuable and attractive tribute by Professor Theodore Robinson, who had known Glover intimately for forty years. It appeared as No. 12 in the "Brief Biographies of Leading Laymen." Last year the Cambridge University Press brought out a volume of Glover's essays, *The Springs of Hellas*, and prefixed to it a brief but graceful characterisation of the author by Mr. S. C. Roberts, one of his closest Cambridge friends. Glover the Baptist, even Glover the religious teacher, hardly appears at all in it, however. A lengthy and much more balanced appraisal, and one obviously written by a friend who knew him well, was printed in *The Times Literary Supplement* (October 13th, 1945) as a review of the book of essays. "There are few men," said the writer, "whose passing leaves the world so obviously the poorer." No doubt other tributes have appeared. The variety and distinction of the few here referred to tempts the question whether, even now, one of the denominational presses might not try to secure, before it is too late, a worthy biographical study of a truly remarkable character and a most stimulating teacher. He represented a generation and a standpoint that is rapidly being superseded, but which deserves a sympathetic literary memorial.

* * * * *

Many of the biggest changes in human affairs take place almost unobserved. Sometimes, only too late, is it realised what has happened. Consider, for example, the changes in church government, and in the direction of denominational affairs which have taken place in the last two or three decades. We are often told that the democratically ordered Church Meeting represents the outstanding contribution of the Baptist and Congregational traditions to the Church Universal. But we know that, as a matter of fact, the Church Meeting has greatly declined in centrality and vigour of recent years. Instead the deacons' meeting has gained in authority and power. There the affairs of the local church are managed, and Church Meetings have become in many places, gatherings for the rather perfunctory ratification of what has already been arranged by the deacons. We even know of important churches where it is not thought necessary for most of the deacons to attend the Church Meetings. They are busy men, and the proceedings at gatherings open to all church members are—and are intended to be—purely formal. The matter would not perhaps be quite so serious as it is were deacons ready to regard themselves as the "elders" of the church

in a spiritual and New Testament sense. Unfortunately, with the increase of their practical power has gone a decline in their readiness to accept spiritual responsibility.

There have been parallel developments in the wider affairs of the denomination. The committees of the Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society used to be serious deliberative bodies on which there served many men and women with a real grasp of affairs. Increasingly they become bodies which receive information as to what has been decided by the permanent officials, or by very small groups associated with them at headquarters. This applies not only to the Baptist Union Council and to the General Committee of the B.M.S. There it is almost inevitable. Indeed, bodies so large should surely only have presented to them recommendations requiring formal sanction and large questions of policy. The real matter for concern lies in what happens in the sub-committees. It is there that the failure of grasp and purpose causes most concern. How long is it since the estimates or the accounts of the B.M.S. were "debated" as they used to be, with half-a-dozen members of Committee, ministerial and lay, showing an intimate knowledge of the whole range of the Society's financial affairs and policy? Both in the Union and the Missionary Society the tendency is to appoint smaller "Business" or "Policy" or "Consultative" Committees from within the sub-Committees. But then the meetings even of the sub-Committees become formal and unreal, and busy people are increasingly impatient with them. Many of these changes and developments are probably inevitable in the new pattern of society and because of the pace at which our life has now to be lived. But should these tendencies not be consciously and deliberately directed? Is it not time we asked ourselves whither we are going? Is it not time we ceased to talk so glibly about our democratic procedure?