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# Editorial.

THE Baptist Historical Society congratulates Dr. Dakin on his well-deserved appointment to the Principalship of Bristol College. He is a man who unites a vital evangelical experience and message with modern scholarship on the one hand, and a vision of social applications on the other. He is young enough to make the leadership of the college his life-work, and he is old enough to have had a sufficiently varied experience of the pastorate. His gifts as a platform speaker are known to all; those personal qualities which his friends know are such as to win the confidence and esteem of young men at their most formative period. Altogether, it is an ideal appointment, and the only fly in the ointment for us is that Dr. Dakin feels it necessary to resign his work as joint-editor of *The Baptist Quarterly*. It will therefore be necessary for us to elect his successor at the Annual Meeting to be held at Cardiff.

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The Committee of the Society has provisionally asked the Rev. A. J. Klaiber, M.C., B.D., of Markyate, Dunstable, to become Assistant Secretary of the Society, with special reference to the circulation of the *Quarterly* and the extension of our membership. We have no doubt that the Annual Meeting will confirm the appointment, which Mr. Klaiber is ready to accept. Those who desire membership should forward their names at once to him, together with the (annual) subscription of ten shillings, which includes the four numbers of the *Quarterly* for the current year, with other privileges.

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The arrangement by which the denominational societies meet in the provinces every other year, gives the opportunity to make acquaintance with the historical spots in many parts of the country. Glamorgan is peculiarly rich in Baptist associations, and the difficulty is to choose the villages which shall receive attention this May. Where John Myles, Christmas Evans, John Jenkin, and others laboured, two or three days might well be spent. As it is, only Wednesday afternoon can be taken, but an attractive programme will be set forth. Those members of the Baptist Historical Society who reply promptly to the invitation they will receive will be guests of two friends of the Society for the afternoon.



Baptist Quarterly 2.2 (April 1924)

The story of Eythorne Baptist Church has been written by its pastor, the Rev. A. C. Miller. He has been telling it in all the neighbouring churches, and will shortly publish it through the Kingsgate Press. This little hamlet has had a Baptist church for more than 270 years, and its story is the key to all modern Baptist life in the neighbourhood. Moreover, it is still abreast of the times, and with a Sunday school of 458, bids fair to maintain its excellent place. Mr. Miller's historical essay has prompted a supplement, dealing with the other General Baptist churches in the district; an instalment of this appears in the present issue.

What is our gain from a knowledge of our history? The answer is on the same line as though we asked, What is the good of knowing any history at all? From the story of a nation over some centuries, can be deduced its peculiar aptitudes and its function in the world, its peculiar weaknesses, and the tasks which it had better leave to others. From the history of a manufacture can be discovered the improvements, the sources whence they arose, the influence of demand on supply, the influence of improved products on stimulating or altering demand. From the history of a science the student will gather what are the new problems that may be approached with a hope of success, and a knowledge that experiment in certain directions is doomed to failure. So any one who will ponder over the story of our own denomination will be the better equipped in many respects to play a useful part in the affairs of his own church, his association, the B.M.S., the denomination. He will see that we are absolutely grounded on the propagation of the gospel; that a Baptist church which is not evangelical has no right to exist, and is destined to die out; that a Baptist church which is not evangelistic has no purpose, no future. Such has been the experience of centuries, and is sure to repeat itself. He will note how Baptists are not exempt from the general rule, that co-operation vastly increases efficiency, and that co-operation involves mutual abridgment of absolute freedom: independent and isolated churches accomplish little, while brotherly, united fellowship intensifies activity. Our history shows that while personal evangelism is the foundation of all Christian service, yet our best work has been achieved when men and churches link for joint action, whether to evangelize or to educate or to better social conditions. Our history may show the futility of thinking we can be at ease in a society where sacramental and sacerdotal ideas are entertained and acted upon. We may be guided as to our attitude towards new proposals, if we know that these are in essence old proposals, simply modified in their presentation.

# A Few Reflections on My Presidential Experiences.

MY chief feelings are those of thankfulness and hope. Our statistics of the last two years are cheering, giving evidence of life and activity. I believe we are at the dawn of a new day. Our people are wistfully desirous of better things, conscious of past failures, and resolved to arrest the drift which has continued too long. Nothing has impressed me more than the amount of steady, faithful work which is prosecuted by that company of dependable folk in every church who are the comfort of the pastor and the salt of the whole society. It is these people who say that winter is passing and that times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord are at hand.

It is significant that work amongst the young is given a large place, and it branches out in various directions. The fine premises I have seen in small towns and villages, the growing adoption of the graded school, the progress of movements like those of the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, the Young Worshippers' League, afford abundant hope. In some places it has been painful to see how we have apparently lost our young people, but the endeavours referred to are welcome signs of the consciousness of the Church that we must put all our strength into the winning of our boys and girls. In some churches a weekly children's Bible class, conducted by the minister, is a conspicuous feature. I wish that it were more general. In my own pastoral experience, as I look back, there was no work which so amply paid for the toil spent.

I have gained a new sense of the great value to our churches of our general superintendents. The office is new, and of course it has its critics. Improvements will be made as experience grows, but I am convinced that the system has come to stay, whatever future adjustments may be made. I have not heard a suggestion that it is an office we can dispense with. Indeed, its critics have always repudiated that. Further, I have witnessed the close and friendly relations between superintendents and ministers and churches. Many grateful testimonies have been given to me. This is the more striking because, in another denomination a similar system has been strongly assailed. It has been said plainly that moderators tend to act as bishops, and betray some of the vices of sacerdotalism. That may be an unjust charge. I will, however, fearlessly assert that the good

will of our church to the system of superintendents is due largely to the fact that our brethren have eschewed all that the term bishop generally carries for us. The superintendent differs *toto cælo* from the bishop. He is not endowed with authority over the churches and pastors in his area. He does not make and ordain ministers. He is in no wise the man whose official act alone completes church membership. Our superintendents are brothers amongst our ministers, the Greathearts who bring strength, comfort, and sympathy as well as wise counsel to the churches and their leaders. They have done us immense service and they will hold a large place in our denominational life.

May I point out certain weaknesses and dangers which the year has revealed to me? (1) I am painfully impressed with the great brevity of our pastorates. We have swung to an evil extreme. What is it? The average ministry is not much over three years. A man does not stay long enough to get rooted in the trust and affection of his flock. Young people have no minister they think of as "my minister." They have so many as they grow into manhood. Hence lack of continuity in teaching and in personal influence. That is the cause of much drifting away. It is bad for church and minister. A deacon said to me recently, "We want a man who will settle." The general restlessness of the time contributes to this evil. But other causes are at work. I fear that the time limit—good enough in many ways—does sometimes work harm. It affords so easy a chance for a disgruntled faction of a church to eject a minister, or failing that to kill all prospect of any useful service from him. Sometimes a minister is prone to regard a church as a mere halting-place on the road to a better. Sometimes any difficulty is too soon viewed as a divine indication to seek another charge. Patience, tact, and grace would overcome the obstacle and enrich the conqueror. We lose much by impatience. Some churches are so notorious for constant changes that new residents in the town give them a wide berth.

(2) Some need the reminder, "Attend to the ministry you have received in the Lord; see that you fulfil it." There is a danger of allowing the supreme object of the ministry to be obscured by a number of quite secondary objects. I mean this. We are not entrusted with the care of souls in order to become zealous propagandists of new views of the Bible, nor to be perpetual scolds, railing against the evil days and the brethren who cannot rest in old traditional theories. We are not to be caterers for our young people, a sort of universal provider of recreation and amusement. This is no ruthless condemnation of all such things, but a reminder that these where used must be strictly treated as means to our first and all absorbing aim. So again we

ministers are not called to be social reformers. We shall be all that if we put the first things first. Of course, I freely allow that the gospel has its social implications about which a faithful preacher cannot be silent. Outside the pulpit we ought to be as citizens, warm supporters of practical movements for the amelioration of the common lot of the less fortunate. But the advocacy of party political programmes from the pulpit is harmful, and that on three simple grounds: (*a*) The problems call for sound knowledge, and not one in a hundred of us possesses it. Some of our hearers could better become our teachers. (*b*) Our congregations are more sharply divided than they were forty years ago, and such advocacy may produce a sad breach in a church and cripple its work for a decade. (*c*) Our task is a bigger one. We are character-builders, and as we make Christian men and women, we are doing the thing men most need and the work Jesus Christ expects. And we shall indirectly and powerfully promote the lesser ends too. John Wesley did more for the social redemption of England in the eighteenth century than any social reformers. He inspired some of them, he created the spiritual forces which rendered the reforms possible, and he produced the men and women who could profitably use them. This is simply a plea for keeping before our eyes the supreme end of the ministry. We are tempted to let it get edged out of sight by the multifarious rôles in which some people expect us to appear.

(3) We all need a higher and more heroic strain in our ideals of service. A few years back, when the Empire needed men it had them in abundance, and when men were required for adventure and perilous enterprise there were competitors for the honour of standing in the tight place. How is it in the church? There is a tendency to look after the soft job—a church not too large, with a congregation made by men who went before us, with only a few organizations, which will give ample time for the gratification of intellectual tastes. We desire a good set of deacons who can shoulder the burden of the business of the church and a well-officered Sunday school. How many on leaving college aspire to be pioneers, building on no man's foundation, but having to create (humanly speaking) everything—congregation, church, workers, and material resources? There are great historic buildings derelict. There ought to be more men ready to attempt the heroic hard. But Epaphroditus is a somewhat *rara avis*. "For the work of Christ he came nigh unto death playing the gambler with his life." There is a similar lack in the church. They say we are poorer. Probably we have fewer rich people. But wealth is being more evenly distributed. Few respond to the call for gifts or service. We have become too fond of comfort and unwilling

to take responsibility. Why, I am sometimes asked to send students at unreasonably early hours on Sunday because in a church of hundreds no one can give week-end hospitalities. It is only symptomatic of a slack sense of responsibility. The whole conception of life is changed. Our fathers lived in smaller houses, kept fewer servants, took briefer holidays, indulged in no week-ends, spent far less on pleasure and entertainment. They were restrained in these matters on principle. They lived simpler lives that they might give more to Christ and His cause.

What is the Christian ideal of life and service amongst us? It is not high enough.

These are a few reflections which have come to me as I have travelled north, south, east, and west. I wish to apply all that I have said last to myself as much as to anyone.

W. E. BLOMFIELD.

# The Place and Use of Scripture in Christian Experience.*

THE limits within which I propose to deal with this subject will best be indicated by stating briefly the circumstances of origin of my paper.

In the course of a discussion which we had a few months ago, on the work of the minister as defender of the faith, one of our members remarked that he really felt the need of a previous discussion as to the essential contents of the faith which we had to defend. He went on to explain that in particular we seemed to be at cross purposes respecting the Scriptures, some making a particular view of their inspiration and authority practically an article of the Christian faith, while others could not assent to this.

It is the purpose of this paper to take up his suggestion. It will be, in intention at least, an eirenicon. As far as possible it will seek to avoid controversial matter, and to map out a common standing-ground which both parties can occupy. Please observe that my title avoids divisive terms like "inspiration" or "revelation." It does so deliberately. It is no part of my object to combat the traditional theory of inspiration. I have not the impertinence to wish, or in a twenty minutes' address to attempt, to dislodge revered brethren from an attitude to the

* The substance of a Paper read at a recent meeting of a Baptist Ministers' Fraternal Union.

Scriptures in which they have lived and worked fruitfully for the best part of a lifetime. Neither is it any part of my plan to expound and defend the methods and conclusions of the critical school of Bible students. To do that at all adequately would demand a long series of papers and discussions. I confine myself here to the place and use of Scripture, and I limit the subject still further in a practical direction by adding "in Christian *experience*." This phrase is intended to exclude abstract or philosophical consideration of the significance of Scripture in a theological construction of the Christian religion, and to concentrate attention on the practical function of the Bible in our Christian life. And I venture to hope that on this point we shall not find a material difference between our respective positions.

Let me begin by asking the question, What is a Christian? It will perhaps be answer sufficient for our purpose, and one, too, which we can all accept, if I reply that a Christian is one who is "in Christ": that he is one who walks in the line of God's will by the light and strength derived from a fellowship of faith with the living Christ. He does not simply follow the traditional precepts and example of a dead leader, with whom there is no present communication. By prayer he has direct access to a living Head, and he follows leadings which he believes he receives from Him. More than that, he has a direct acquaintance in his own experience with that Head: he believes that he, too, has "the mind of Christ." When he reads the Scriptures he seeks this guidance, and he understands what he reads by its light. The Scripture itself then, is not his final authority; it is referred to, and tested by, the Spirit of Christ. He does not necessarily understand a given passage as does another Christian; but this fact does not disconcert him, because he is conscious—as indeed is the other also—that his own reading has a higher sanction. This means, of course, that he is *interpreting*, and he interprets in virtue of of the light within him; it is this which both guides and authorizes his interpretation.

But if the Christian is one who lives in and by fellowship with the living Christ, then theoretically at least—and please note, I say no more than this—theoretically the Scriptures are not indispensable to the Christian life. And actually, we should remember—we are far too apt to forget it—that there were once Christian people, and Christian churches, without Christian Scriptures. The Christians of the first generations had no New Testament, i.e., no collection of Christian books recognized as having canonical authority. The apostle Paul—perhaps the most gigantic saint begotten of the Lord Jesus Christ—had no New Testament: he himself produced a great

part of our New Testament, and became thereby, after the Master, incomparably the most influential exponent of the faith in Christian history. It is true that the primitive Christians had the Old Testament. But it was no final authority for them. It could not be. It was that only for Jews. The Christians, indeed, read the Old Testament: but they read it with a sovereign freedom. They used without reserve their right of interpretation. With an even sublime audacity they read their Christianity, or rather, their Christ, into the Old Testament. In proof of this I need only remind you of the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and how their author unhesitatingly applies directly to Christ passages from the Psalms which not only the Jews, but sober-minded Christians of the present day also, recognize as referring to God the Father. As for the earthly life of Jesus Himself, they owed their knowledge of it to an oral and fluid tradition. They heard tell of his words and deeds, his death and resurrection, from those who were in the Lord before them, and who had known Him in the flesh. But in the writings of Paul the life and teaching of the earthly Jesus occupy quite a minor place. It is the risen and ever-living Christ that is in the forefront. And it is the apostle's communion with Him that is the decisive thing. In virtue of this he insists that he is no whit behind the chiefest apostles; he has seen the Lord, and he knows that he has the mind of Christ.

Now it is at least conceivable that this state of things might have continued for an indefinite period—I mean, that there should have been merely an oral and fluid tradition about the life and words of Jesus, and that present experience of the living Christ should have kept the foremost place and emphasis. (Perhaps there is an organic relation between the two factors; it is possible that the Church of later days has paid for its fuller and exacter knowledge of the earthly Jesus by a proportionate loss of spontaneity and immediacy in the spiritual life.) I recognize, of course, that sooner or later the preservation in writing of the tradition about Jesus, and of the first disciples' experience of him was practically inevitable. Inevitable, perhaps, also, was it that in course of time these writings should attain to canonical authority. But this we need not now discuss. The point at the moment is this—that at first, in the very nature of the case, there were no Christian Scriptures, although there were Christians in the fullest sense of the term. And the next point is, that even when the books had come into existence, it was only after the lapse of a considerable time, and by a gradual process, that they came ultimately to be recognized as authoritative Scriptures. Some of the books finally included in the canon continued indeed to

be questioned or even rejected by sections of the Church after others had obtained general recognition.

Before leaving this part of the subject it may be well to remind ourselves also that the erection of an authoritative New Testament canon was part of that stiffening and externalizing process which resulted in the emergence of the Old Catholic church, with its insistence on authoritative forms, alike in doctrine (the creed), in organization (the bishop), and in practice (sacraments and liturgy). That was a process involving consequences which free churchmen most sincerely and wholeheartedly deplore.

But how, then, did the Bible come to hold for evangelical Christians the position of final authority which it eventually obtained? We all know that it did so. Those of us who today adopt a freer attitude towards it are well aware that our fathers did not share this attitude. And most likely we ourselves were brought up in their ideas, and only through a period of great difficulty, uncertainty and distress have fought our way to a different view. Well, we know that the old view was really the consequence, by reaction, of the extreme development and corruption of the Catholic church. That church finally arrogated to itself a position of supreme authority over the faith and life of Christian people. It took possession of the Bible, and decided how far it should be communicated to layfolk, and in what sense they were to understand it. Virtually it even took possession of Christ, for it taught that fundamentally the mind of Christ was imparted, not to Christian people at large, not even to the clergy in general, but to the individual head of the Roman Catholic Church, on whom the clergy were dependent for the spiritual gift which empowered them to teach and direct God's people. Hence the revolt of Luther was necessarily a revolt against this arrogated authority of the church. But it was impossible then to overthrow this authority except by setting up an alternative. There must be another authority, similarly visible, ancient and venerable, to set over against the Church's authority. Protestantism found such an authority in the Scriptures. The time had not yet come for the acceptance of the mind of Christ as manifested in the collective Christian consciousness. Progress advances slowly, a step at a time. That is God's wise way. Individualism indeed brought itself into evil odour by its excesses. All sorts of divergent and extreme views were advocated. The very men who claimed to read Scripture for themselves by the inner light discredited their contention by the extravagance, in some cases even by the immorality, of their views. Some of them were, no doubt, possessed but very imperfectly by the Spirit of Christ. Hence arose the cry "Back to the Scriptures,"

and for Protestants this was necessarily accompanied by the fond belief and sanguine assertion that the meaning of the Scriptures was all plain to the plain man. And yet even their learned theologians could not agree in its interpretation. They disputed, they abused and excommunicated one another, and where they could they persecuted those who differed from them. It was long before the truth dawned on Protestants that a "final" authority which seemed to different readers to mean different things could not occupy, and could not be intended to occupy, that magisterial position which they would fain have assigned to it.

But it is time to leave this historical sketch, and come to its bearing upon our own problem of to-day.

It ought to have become apparent to us all that the particular presentation of Scripture truth for which any of us contends, is perforce an *interpretation* of Scripture. There is not, nor can there be, one central interpretation which is of divine authority, so that all the views which diverge from it more or less, are more or less illegitimate. There is no uniform interpretation of the Scriptures which has been held by the genuine Christian saints of all countries and centuries. In point of fact the theory of plenary inspiration in its current form is not nearly so ancient, nor of such widespread acceptance, as many people perhaps imagine. In this form it goes back only to the theologians of the old Protestantism of the seventeenth century—those men who reduced the utterances of the living faith of the Reformers to an ossifying and barren scholasticism comparable to that of the mediaeval schoolmen themselves.

It would make this paper far too long if I took space to show in detail that inevitably, whatever sense we assign to the words of Scripture, we are interpreting. I remember once getting into an animated discussion with one of the clergy of the Catholic Apostolic Church. He pelted me with quotations of the *ipsissima verba* of Scripture, and whenever I ventured to hint that more than one view of their meaning was entertainable—that it was a question of interpretation, he adopted an air of superior sanctity, and said, "Oh well, my dear sir, if you are not prepared to accept the verdicts of Scripture, I have no more to say to you. If you are going behind the plain words of Scripture, I confess I cannot follow you." Some of his "plain words" were apocalyptic utterances from Zechariah or the Revelation of John, for which he seemed to have a greater relish than for pellucid utterances of the Master. I remember in particular that he argued confidently for a material heaven, adducing, among other passages, Paul's affirmation of a spiritual *body*, which drew from me the rejoinder, "I have as much right to emphasize the 'spiritual' as you have

to emphasize the 'body.'" This passage alone is enough to convince us of the absolute inevitability of interpretation. The phrase "spiritual body" has no definite and unmistakable meaning that it carries in its face. We all inevitably put a meaning on it as we read, and we by no means all put the same meaning. In this connection I will only remind you further that Luther called the Epistle of James an "epistle of straw," and plainly regretted its inclusion in the canon of the New Testament. Why? Because he interpreted the whole Bible in the light of his doctrine of justification by faith, which he found to be emphatically absent from that epistle.

It would be a gain of incalculable magnitude if we could agree to recognize that the views of Scripture which we personally represent are just so many interpretations of it, and to allow the right of others to hold diverse views without denying, by word or behaviour, the genuineness of their discipleship. It ought to be a case of live and let live. I believe I can speak for those who bring critical methods to the study of Scripture when I say that they are quite prepared to respect the right of their brethren who adhere to older methods. I know at least that I am. Is it too much to ask that these on their side would acknowledge similarly that we can read the Scriptures in our way, without thereby forfeiting our discipleship, or imperilling the evangelical character of our witness; and that they would refrain from denouncing us as "traitors," or "wolves in sheep's clothing"? I can only say this for myself—every hope I have of holiness here, or of heaven hereafter, hangs upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and His mediatorial work for me on earth and in heaven.

If we could agree to recognize that we are all interpreting Scripture in our several ways, then we should also be able without difficulty to advance to this further admission—that no particular theory about Scripture is vital to Christian faith.

And in making this further admission, we need not fear to be unfaithful to any teaching of the New Testament. It is true that its writers claim inspiration, now for themselves, and now for other Bible writers. But none of them sets forth or implies any specific and exclusive theory of their inspiration. Again I must content myself with an apparently dogmatic assertion. I cannot here examine all the passages which bear, directly or indirectly, on this subject. Apart from our Lord Himself, the authors of the New Testament do claim or imply a measure of divine inspiration for themselves, but nowhere formulate any specific theory of their inspiration. It is noteworthy that Paul will speak at one time as the mouthpiece of the Lord, and then again with a clear consciousness that he cannot claim the Lord's authority for his dictum; also

that Luke expressly states in the preface to his gospel that he depends for his facts not on divine inspiration, but on the ordinary methods of historical investigation. Apart from these data, there are two New Testament passages which bear more directly on the question of inspiration, and are commonly adduced in discussions of the subject.

One is 2 Peter i. 21. This verse follows on a passage in which the writer claims that in his case the word of ancient prophecy is confirmed by his personal experience, for he himself heard the witness of the Divine voice to the beloved Son. He proceeds to bid his readers take heed to the word of prophecy, remembering at the same time that no prophecy is a matter of a man's own interpretation (meaning that the individual cannot rightly interpret it without the aid of that Spirit who originally inspired the prophecy): "for not by man's will was prophecy ever brought, but under impulse of a holy spirit men spake from God." Clearly the statement is entirely general, and does not favour any particular theory of inspiration.

The other passage is 2 Timothy iii. 15, 16. This speaks of "sacred Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (Note the statement here as to the function of Scripture, and its limitations. Its business is not to teach history, or science, or even religion in the abstract, but to guide the individual into saving fellowship with God.) "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for rectification, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be fit, thoroughly fitted for every good work." It makes no material difference if we adhere to the rendering in the Authorized Version, "Every Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable" . . . There is still no specific theory of inspiration. Let us remember also that the reference is of course to the Old Testament Scriptures. In this passage it is perfectly clear, and it comes out indeed most strikingly, that the quality and proof of Scripture inspiration lies in its practical utility for the nurture of the Christian life. From the New Testament we can further gather, as I have already pointed out, that this was the principle on which the Old Testament Scriptures were actually used by the Christians of the first generations. They selected those passages which served to confirm and encourage them in their Christian faith and practice, and they interpreted them freely in the light of Christ's revelation to them.

May I now venture a step further, and assert that practically this is our own attitude to the Scriptures, whether we belong to the older or the newer school of Bible study? Do we not all in practice select those parts of the Old Testament

most akin to the evangelical teaching of the new dispensation, and are there not considerable tracts of the Old Testament from which we seldom if ever take our public readings or the texts of our sermons, e.g., much of Leviticus, and the books of Ecclesiastes and Esther? Again, do we not interpret the portions that we do select by the light of the Christian evangel, i.e. do we not freely read into them a deeper and fuller meaning than their immediate historical sense? Isaiah xxxv. 10, for example, we refer not merely to the return of the Jews from captivity, but to the ultimate coming of God's people to the celestial city. The fact is that we all show a practical preference for those passages which, in Coleridge's suggestive phrase, "find us" most intimately—those which have a spiritual deep in them to which answers a deep in our own spiritual experience. Even in the New Testament all is not on the same level for us. There are passages here also which we seldom or never handle—the warnings of eternal fire, the bulk of Jude's epistle, and the central portions of the Apocalypse.

Before concluding I must try to meet an objection which has been haunting my mind, and probably yours also, through a great part of this paper. It may be stated thus: We all alike recognize that our only authentic source of information about Jesus, His character, example and teaching, is found in the New Testament Scriptures. It is easy to talk about the mind of Christ; but the mind of Christ derives positive and definite content only from the New Testament, and primarily from its gospels. They are our indispensable means of checking the excesses of subjectivism. But if the records are unreliable in some details, and if, moreover, we are not agreed as to the details that are unreliable, what becomes of our confident appeal to these writings?

Now it can be shown that in some points the record is uncertain. Leaving aside the fact that readings in the best manuscripts of the New Testament differ, and sometimes materially, it is clear that (for example) the Synoptic Gospels do not always give the same account of the same event, or of the same utterance of Christ. The call of the first disciples has a quite different setting in Luke from what it has in Mark: and the utterance about divorce in Mark lacks the exception of fornication which it has in Matthew. Even if we manage to explain away these discrepancies, the fact of *uncertainty* remains; and uncertainty is enough to create the difficulty to which I now refer. Let us frankly face this difficulty. Surely it is not fatal. Take, to help dispassionate consideration, a parallel from secular history. We have decidedly diverse presentations of Socrates in the writings of Xenophon and Plato.

Further, it is doubtful whether Plato was really the author of all the dialogues attributed to him. And the dialogues generally ascribed to him differ materially in their representations on some important points: often we cannot be sure when Plato is giving us the undiluted Socrates, and when it is Socrates more or less transmuted in the active and original intellect of his greatest disciple. Yet in spite of all this, we by no means despair of obtaining a picture of Socrates and what he stood for, sufficiently clear and specific for practical purposes. Similar considerations could be applied, and with like result, to the picture of Jesus as transmitted to us by the records which embody the reminiscences of His disciples.

Besides, we may easily attach too great importance to the possession of accurate details. Does not the objection we are considering really imply a false and unevangelical notion of Christian faith, namely, that it is a matter of correct belief about the life and death and teaching of Christ? But it is no such thing! We Baptists are in the forefront in maintaining that this is a false, and a perniciously false, conception of Christian faith. Christian faith, we affirm, is a personal trust in a living Christ. It is true that this is mediated by knowledge of the written word. We are prepared to go further, and to assert that Christian faith is sound and energetic and fruitful just in proportion as it is constantly nourished upon the written word. But it is not essenial that that word should be a complete and irrefragable record. You can get through to the mind of Christ by reading the existing records: it is only necessary that they should be honest transcripts of the memories and impressions of the witnesses. You can allow for the "personal equation" of a Peter, a John, a Paul. You can gather such a convincing conception of the mind and spirit of Jesus that instinctively you will come to use it in checking, not merely other Christians' interpretations of the records, but details of the record itself. It is long now since devout Christian souls began to feel that the cursing of the fig-tree was something foreign to the justice and gentleness of Jesus, and found relief in the supposition that this narrative arose through transformation of a parabolic utterance into a literal incident.

Let me add that this view of the adequacy of the records is no mere armchair speculation. Our missionaries can tell us of heathen people who, with no instruction from Christians, and no knowledge of any theory of inspiration, but simply with the New Testament in their hands, and reading it precisely as they would read any ordinary book, have seen Christ for themselves, and surrendered heart and life to Him.

This paper is already too long. I will content myself

with making, very briefly, one further practical suggestion. Could we not agree to keep our theories of biblical inspiration in the background of our teaching? It would be another immense gain if we could. Ought we not indeed to do this? Is not the proper business of the pulpit the positive exposition of the content of Scripture, and not the investigation of such secondary matters as its origin, nature and authority? These can be discussed in a special class, or with individual enquirers. I am not of course asking that any of us should suppress or disguise his honest conviction. I am only pleading now that we should "put first things first." In our teaching generally let us avoid giving such large and prominent place to the Bible-question as to create the impression that faith in the Bible, or in anything of human origin, is the condition of men's salvation. Let us be very jealous for the honour of our Lord. Salvation is not through the Bible, but through Christ. Recently I heard—and heard with pain—a Baptist minister declare, "I regard the Bible as the one perfect thing we have on earth." That, though he did not intend it, was to detract something from the unique honour and glory of the Lord. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Surely there has never been on earth aught perfect save the person and life and death of Him who did no sin! Let us beware of making of even the Bible a fetish. Let us not exalt a means into an end. The Bible is but the finger-post that points us to the Saviour. Let us not even seem to put it in His place, so as to convert it, for some at least, into a stumbling-block which prevents their ever coming to Him.

A. J. D. FARRER.

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**The Scottish History Society** has just issued its first Journal. It contains an account of the Cameronian organization, with its division in 1753, and the fortunes of each party. More generally interesting is an essay on the Scottish Reformation Psalmody. Most humorous is the story of a memorial volume of sermons; the dead minister left many, which his friends could not print; but he also left sixteen children and a widow, for whom 1,700 people offered to buy copies: so the friends scraped together ten sermons by themselves, and published them in the name of the dead man! Members of our Society will be supplied through our Secretary with this Journal at 2s. 6d. a copy. The Presbyterian Historical Society of England hopes soon to issue a monograph on the Westminster Confession, which may be obtained similarly on special terms.

# Soul-Winning.

(Address delivered to students in two theological colleges.)

IT is impossible to feel any interest in this subject, unless the soul is living in constant enjoyment of Christ's saving grace. A young minister, disappointed in his work, consulted another brother. He was asked, "Are you daily going back to the cross for the assurance of forgiven sin for yourself?" He confessed he was not. He discovered that this was to be the first step upon the road to useful service. If we are successfully to echo the Baptist's message, "Behold the Lamb of God!" we ourselves must retain the vision of redeeming love, as though we had just left Calvary forgiven. This preliminary preparation for evangelism is likely to be undervalued, just because it is so exceedingly evident.

The *urgency* of the work we are considering is strangely illustrated by the use of a certain word in the New Testament. When Peter fell upon his knees before Christ in the boat, after the great draught of fishes, Christ calmed His disciple with the words, "Fear not, for from henceforth thou shalt catch men." The word translated "catch"—more literally "take alive"—(R.V. margin)—is only once again used in the New Testament. Paul, writing to Timothy, speaks of those who are "taken captive" by the devil "at his will." "Taken captive" is another translation of the same word Christ used to Peter. The striking and terrible lesson for us is, that if we do not take "souls alive" for Christ and God, the Evil One will take them "alive" for himself. Surely the Holy Spirit has confined the use of the word to these two instances in Sacred Writ, that we may have this awful lesson impressed upon our souls.

If we are to become successful soul-winners in private or public, *holiness of life* is an essential qualification. How strangely this is brought out in that frequently misused sixth chapter of Isaiah! The prophet sees the Lord "sitting upon a throne." "Above it stood the seraphim." At the sight, the prophet is reminded of his sin; "Woe is me! for . . . I am a man of unclean lips." A seraph brings to him a live coal from off the altar and, with it, touches Isaiah's lips. How frequently we hear the prayer in public, that the preacher's lips may be touched with a live coal, that he may preach acceptably. How different was the use, as explained in the story! "This hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." This is

the divine preparation for acceptable service. When the iniquity was purged—but not till then—the prophet could respond to the question, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" with the accents of consecration, "Here am I; send me." Just before his last earthly journey from England to Mentone, the late C. H. Spurgeon was staying at Eastbourne. It was the privilege of the writer to have a drive with him one afternoon. Never will he forget the great preacher's description of Paul's parable to Timothy concerning the different vessels upon the Master's shelves. Spurgeon pictured the good man of the house going from shelf to shelf to find a clean vessel for His use, and putting one after another back with a tear, a frown, or a sigh—they were not clean—and how, when he reached the bottom shelf, where the cheap earthenware vessels were, he found at last one that he could use. Spurgeon's voice sounded, as one of the old prophets might, when he added, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use." Is it not ofttimes that the reason of the ill success of Christian workers is to be found, not in their lack of Bible knowledge, or of diligent preparation for their work, but in the ill tempers in the home, or the lack of strict truthfulness in the business.

A late Principal of one of our theological colleges used to say to his students, "Gentlemen, *you* can never win souls." At first it seemed a reflection upon the "batch" of men before him, but a little thought showed the words to express what is a deep underlying principle in soul-winning, i.e. *total abandonment of self-confidence.* Just so long as there is any lingering thought of leaning on anything in ourselves—natural abilities, culture, temperament, experience, mental or spiritual qualifications—for accomplishing the work we desire to do, in that measure our usefulness will be hindered. Down the long centuries Joseph is our teacher still: "*It is not in me;* God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

But when the Blessed Spirit accomplishes in the messenger of Christ this emptying of self, He is graciously willing to take possession of each humble soul. Thus, all may be equipped for the work of God. The filling of the Spirit is a blood-bought gift for each believer. Galatians iii. 13-14, has produced a crisis in the experience of many a Christian worker. To accept it as true for ourselves turns our weakness into strength, and feeble finiteness into omnipotence. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that we might receive the *promise of the Spirit by faith.*" As we stood on the blood-stained grass at Calvary, and received the first-fruit of Christ's redeeming death, even the forgiveness of sin, so we must return to the same sacred spot and

take from the same tree the equally blessed purchase, the gift of the filling of the Spirit. As the writer passed over Westminster Bridge one evening, when the lamps on the Embankment had just been lit, the broad silver bosom of the river reflected the twinkling lights. There flashed into his soul the remembrance of Christ's invitation and promise, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me . . . out of him shall flow rivers of living water." The vision then given of the Divine streams of influence flowing from the soul, which would rest upon Christ for the blessing, in mighty Amazons, Mississippis, Seines, Rhines, and Elbes of power, has never faded from his remembrance. This blessed entire possession of the Spirit is, at times, a distinct initial experience. It was so with Christmas Evans, C. G. Finney, D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey, and many others. But with many another one, used in the service of God, no such crisis in their lives is recorded. It was for them, and can be for us, the reward of quiet confidence in the Divine promises, which make no conditions. But faith *must receive the gift* if soul-winning is to be achieved.

This holy warfare cannot be engaged in successfully unless the hand of faith holds firmly the *Sword of the Spirit.* Destructive Bible criticism breaks the weapon, which alone God has chosen to conquer man's prejudice and pride. "A mutilated Bible is a broken sword." Dr. Griffith Thomas has wisely pointed out the undeniable fact that Modernism—understood as the extreme conclusions of High Critics, questioning the truthfulness of Scripture and of our Lord—has never received, what is ever the Divine seal to all revealed truth, the Spirit's work in the regenerating of the human heart. Rev. Lionel Fletcher, in his *The Effective Evangelist,* writes: "The preacher of the future must be a man of *conviction* and passion." There must be no doubt left in the mind concerning our possession of a divine communication, and of its priceless value.

Conviction of scriptural truth must go hand in hand with *extraordinary prayer,* if souls are to be won in public preaching of personal evangelism. The Master Himself is our example here. If He needed whole nights in prayer, that He might be equipped for His task, how much more must we need to pray! Soul-winners have always been men of prayer. George Whitefield records, in his diary, "days and weeks"—these are his words—"spent upon the ground pleading for souls." Brainerd perspired, in the midst of Indian snows, with the intensity of his travailing for souls. We may well stop in our study sadly to confess that failure in soul-winning, so generally mourned, is easily explained by the Church's modern activities being allowed to thrust out the time for prayer. It was Jehovah Himself who condescended to

say of old, " Concerning the work of My hands, *command ye Me.*"

The work of soul-winning will be coldly engaged in, unless a sense of heavy *responsibility* weighs upon us. " Am I my brother's keeper? " The question has been answered throughout the Divine Word. God requires each faithful servant of His to seek the lost. A powerful parable, in modern literature, upon the subject, is that of a girl, belonging to a Bible class, passing away. The minister met—a few hours afterwards—first the mother, secondly the teacher, and thirdly a Christian girl in the same class. To all he put the same question, " Was Annie ready? " and from all he received a remorseful acknowledgment that, though a personal appeal was intended, it was put off, and could not then be given.

This responsibility will be felt *the more the value of immortal souls is recognized.* That value can be learnt alone at Calvary. " Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame." What joy?—the joy of winning souls. One has said, " Count the purple drops upon the cheeks of Christ, as they flow from the crown of thorns, if you would learn what a soul is worth." The value of souls will teach us how to love men to Christ. There is no time to be lost. " The King's business requireth haste."

In this most blessed service, *submission to the Divine leading* is all-important. Sometimes the impression given by the Holy Spirit to the Christian worker seems unreasonable, instance the call of Philip recorded in Acts viii. He was directed to leave his successful work in Samaria to go down by the way to Gaza, " which is desert." But He who directed the preacher's steps knew the homeward road which the Ethiopian statesman—an earnest inquirer—must take, and Philip's success in leading him to the Saviour was, perhaps, of greater importance to the cause of God in the world than the salvation of the whole Samaritan township. An American pastor tells how, after he had settled by the fireside, at the close of a hard day's work, he was impressed to visit a certain hearer. He fought against the impression, but vainly. Yielding to what he concluded was the call of God, he found the man sitting up late, anxious about his soul, and longing for direction. Had the impression been altogether resisted, the will of God in the winning of this soul would not have been accomplished. He of whom Christ said, " He will guide you into all truth," will guide us also in the path of successful service. Unquestioning obedience to the Divine guidance is one of the secrets of soul-saving.

If we would win souls, great stress must be laid upon the *central truths of revelation, and especially upon the Atoning Cross.* " I, if I be lifted up," is still the magnet to draw the

hearts of men to God. Miss Frances Ridley Havergal once told her clergyman that she wished he would sometimes preach to his congregation " as if they were Zulus." Her meaning is clear. We too often take for granted that they are known, and so omit from our talks with souls the very truths and facts which are God's means of convicting of sin and leading to Christ. We need to tell the story of Calvary as though it were new to the ears of the listeners. Certainly, this was the apostolic method: " Before whose eyes," writes Paul to the Galatians, " Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you." The cross never loses its charm and power.

It may be that, both in private and in public, the people of God have shrunk, of late years, from making a direct *appeal* for decision, to the world. The increase of education, and the levelling of society have both, perhaps, been elements in promoting a reluctance to consider the hearer as a lost soul. But sin has not changed its character. Unbelief, as much as ever, receives the Divine sentence of condemnation. Men must be *doers* of the Word, as well as hearers. We must press home our message, " Repent, and believe the gospel." Without Christ is to be without hope concerning the future. There is the fulcrum upon which we must base the lever of our appeals. We have already referred to a useful book, *The Effective Evangelist,* by Rev. Lionel Fletcher. He recounts noteworthy instances of ministerial success when some method of evangelistic appeal has been introduced into the Sunday evening service by the regular pastor. The writer has found it wise to base the appeal upon the immediate acceptance of Christ. But there must be an appeal! " Flee from the wrath to come "; " Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish "; " As though God did beseech you by us; we pray you . . . be ye reconciled to God."

There can be no great success in winning souls unless there is so large a faith in the sure promises and certain presence of the Holy Spirit, as may be translated—*expectancy.* " Christ has power to give, to the feeblest of His servants, the strength of Almighty God." The largest harvests in this field have always been reaped by those who were sure of the blessing of God upon their labours. The Apostle Paul illustrates this again and again in his epistles. Witness such sentences as these: " I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." " Now thanks be to God, . . . who maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place." Down the ages there has been the same bright, sure hope expressed by all successful soul-winners. The writer was in Pastor C. H. Spurgeon's vestry with the great soul-winner evangelist, D. L. Moody, before the commencement of the first service

of his mission in the Metropolitan Tabernacle. As the clock struck three the evangelist rose from his chair, and walking towards the door which led into the Tabernacle, he said, "There is going to be a mighty smash in this place." The Americanism was peculiar, but the faith was evident. There must be assurance of success if we are to fulfil faithfully our commission to "catch" men for our Lord.

There is a picture parable which seems to contain all the thought of soul-winning. A woman, evidently just rescued from the raging sea, is kneeling upon a rock, with her left arm round the cross which crowns it. Her right hand is holding on to another woman, still in the waves, whom she is seeking to rescue. This embodies all that we have been trying to say. There must be no selfish contentment with a mere personal salvation. A true love to Christ begets the passion for souls. The Moravian motto was, "To win for the Lamb that was slain, the reward of His sufferings." The perishing are around us everywhere. The time of rescue is short. The value of each soul is beyond price. "If I might by all means save some" was the motto burnt into the soul of the great apostle. God write it upon our hearts also! It was said of Duncan Matheson, who won so many for Jesus in the great revival of 1859, that eternity seemed to be imprinted on his eyeballs. The writer frequently heard Spurgeon, with tears in his eyes, give out the hymn:

My God! I feel the mournful scene;
My feelings yearn o'er dying men;
And fain my pity would reclaim,
And snatch the firebrand from the flame.

But feeble my compassion proves,
And can but weep where most she loves;
Thine own all-saving arm employ,
And turn these drops of grief to joy.

"Let us work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh in which no man can work." It is said of the American home missionary, Vassor—called "Uncle John Vassor"—that he spoke of the matter of salvation to individuals as though it were the business of his life. God made it our aim, above all and beyond all our secular callings or educational pursuits. "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

W. OLNEY.

# The Baptists in South Africa.

AN English Baptist, familiar with the recent glowing reports of Baptist progress in Eastern Europe and in the United States of America, will probably be disappointed when confronted with the figures pertaining to the growth of his church in South Africa. In the four provinces of the Union (Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State, and the Transvaal) there are thirty-nine European churches with thirty-six European ministers in charge. These churches, according to the 1923 Handbook, have a membership of 5,105. In addition there are ten European missionaries and fourteen native and Indian helpers ministering to a membership of 5,391. This gives a total membership (European, coloured, and native) of nearly 10,500. But before he begins to express his disappointment, the English Baptist should consider the conditions which obtain in the country, and the difficulties which have to be overcome in the progress of the work. There are conditions peculiar to colonial life which do not affect the growth of religious work in older and more settled countries; also, over and above the conditions and difficulties which affect the work of the Christian churches in general, there are those which affect the Baptist church in particular. These will be pointed out in the course of this article, and unless they are kept in mind, the position of the Baptists in South Africa will be misunderstood.

A leading Wesleyan, who had spent many years in the Transvaal, once remarked that people in the Homeland are not sufficiently aware of the "pioneer" nature of the religious work done in South Africa. And even after a hundred years the work is still "pioneer" work. It will probably continue to be such for a long time to come. However, the conditions which make growth possible on any large scale have not yet emerged into view; and those who have the interests of the Kingdom of Heaven at heart will have to be content with few returns, and live and work in the certainty that they are laying the foundations of an edifice whose more imposing aspects will be seen by the men and women of the future.

We shall first give a brief account of the beginnings and growth of the work in the various Provinces. Then the difficulties which have been encountered, and have retarded its growth,

will be pointed out. Finally a few words must be said about the problems and tasks which confront the South African Baptist Church to-day.

It was in the year 1820 that the first Baptist Church was founded in South Africa, its members consisting of some seven or eight persons who had arrived in that year at Algoa Bay, in the ship *Brilliant*. The movement of settlers to South Africa had been brought about by the condition of economic depression which existed in England after the Napoleonic wars; conditions which in some important respects resemble those obtaining to-day. To relieve the congestion, emigration schemes were instituted by the government of the day, and suitable emigrants were selected and granted facilities to settle, and farm lands in various parts of the Eastern Province of the Cape Colony. Naturally a halo of romance surrounds the beginnings of the Baptist Church in South Africa, as in other parts of the world, and there is a sufficiency of material not only for the historian who describes "hard facts," but also for the novelist who appeals more directly to the imagination. There is the story of the early settlers meeting for their first religious service under a tree in the Lower Albany District. There are tales of Kaffir raids, and of resulting "treks" by the settlers to pastures new. There were Kaffir wars; and the settlers, many of whom were old soldiers who had fought against Napoleon, were often called upon to shoulder the rifle once more, and go out "on commando" in defence of hearth and home. Such occurrences were frequent enough in those days in South Africa; but here we are not concerned with the romantic aspects of church history, and we must restrict ourselves to a bare statement of the progress of events.

The honour of being the founder of the Baptist Church in South Africa goes to a man named William Millar, one of the settlers, who gathered his first congregation in a place called Salem. Soon he began in Grahamstown as well, and formed a church there; the mother church of the Baptist denomination in the sub-continent. For many years, and for reasons obvious to all who are acquainted with work in the colonies, progress was very slow; but we are supplied with illustrations of the splendid resourcefulness and initiative of some of the Baptist leaders in the way in which opportunities were seized for starting new causes and forming new churches in different parts of the colony. Thus the Port Elizabeth Church was founded in 1855; the Alice Church in 1874; the Cape Town Church in 1877; the King Williamstown Church in 1882, and that at East London in 1884.

Two important and determining factors which call for notice in this connection are the coming of the German Legion in 1857, and the formation of the South African Baptist Union in 1877.

The German Legion had fought in the Crimean War with the British Forces, and on being disbanded they were granted facilities to settle in South Africa, lands being allotted them in the district surrounding East London, known then as British Kaffraria. Among them were some Baptists, and one of their number, Carsten Langheim, was set apart and ordained as minister. Later, however, in 1867, there came to South Africa the Rev. Hugo Gutsche, a man who had come under the influence of the famous Pastor Oncken of Hamburg. He soon became a leader, not only among his German brethren, but among British colonists as well. It was he who was the first among South African Baptists to attempt missionary work among the natives. This led subsequently to the formation of the South African Baptist Missionary Society. Other important aspects of Baptist work are due to his vision and initiative; and it is to his qualities of leadership that we must ascribe the fact that more than a fifth of the membership of the Baptist Church in South Africa are Germans. The presence of the German element has led to some important consequences in the past. It has introduced a cosmopolitanism into the Baptist outlook, and has established a contact between the Baptist Churches and the Dutch community which would probably never be realized if the British Baptists in the sub-continent were left to themselves. As far as we know there is only one Dutch Baptist Church in the country (with a membership of 160). But here and there in all the provinces are found little groups of people with their attention turned toward the Baptist Church, while Baptist principles are being considered by them with an eagerness and sincerity surpassing anything inspired by their own church.

The other important event was the formation of the South African Baptist Union in 1877, in Grahamstown. This was brought about mainly through the instrumentality of the Rev. G. W. Cross, who had arrived that year to take charge of the Grahamstown church. Prior to this there had been no attempt to organize Baptist work in South Africa. The progress that had taken place was of a haphazard kind, and churches had sprung into existence in different parts without aid or guidance from any central body. The Wesleyan Church had made great strides, and had kept pace with the growth of population by starting new causes in the main centres. The Dutch Reformed Church was also well organized, and had a firm grip over the Dutch people. It was now felt that the Baptist forces also should be marshalled into order, and that an attempt should be made to join the various churches together with a view to more aggressive work among the Europeans and natives. The leading spirit was Cross. But there were others, some of them laymen, who came afterwards to take

a foremost place in South African commerce and politics. The foundations were firmly and truly laid, and a new chapter in the history of the South African Baptist Church was begun on that occasion. Meanwhile, churches were being founded in the other provinces, far away from the base in the Eastern Province, where Baptist operations had begun. In 1864 a few Baptists began to meet in a private house in Durban, among them being Mr. Isaac Cowley, who was soon chosen to be the minister, and a church was formed. Later came the formation of the church in Pietermaritzburg, with the various missionary ramifications of the work among Indians and Zulus. Then, in 1891, Revs. Cross and Batts started the work in Bloemfontein. But most important and interesting of all—since the formation of the Grahamstown church in 1820—was the movement northward which took place in 1889, when Revs. Cross and Batts started work in Kimberley; while about the same time the Rev. W. Kelly began work in Johannesburg, and Revs. R. H. Brotherton and H. T. Cousins in Pretoria. The lure of the South African gold-fields was by this time felt all over the world, and the leading brethren in the churches had heard the call to go north and provide for the spiritual needs of Baptists and others in the great centres that were growing so rapidly in those parts. Travelling to Johannesburg and Pretoria in those days was by no means an easy matter, since the railway did not penetrate farther north than Kimberley. The distances that had to be covered were great, and travelling by ox-wagon was difficult and slow. But already the Baptist Union had made a beginning of grappling with the problems of South African life, and here were fresh problems constituted by the crowding together in mining camps and quickly-growing cities, of men from all kindreds and tribes and countries under the sun. The resources at the disposal of the Baptist brethren were few, and the difficulties confronting them immense; but they had heard the call of God, and they went forth on a venture of faith which has been abundantly vindicated by the events that have transpired during the intervening years.

But those who are not acquainted with the conditions of life in the colonies are wont to ask questions about the numerical weakness of the Baptist Union in South Africa. The Wesleyans and Baptists began their work together in 1820. The growth of the Wesleyan churches has been phenomenal, while the Baptist churches, after a hundred years of work, have a membership of only 10,500! What is the explanation of this?

It is impossible in an article such as this to give a fair idea of the conditions in colonial life which work against Christian progress. These conditions have to be seen and lived under before they can be felt and realized. The tardy growth of the

Baptists in South Africa, however, must be seen in the light of the possibilities which the country offers. The total European population of the four provinces is only a million and a half. About one half of these belong to the Dutch Reformed Church; with the result that the sphere of work for the Baptist and other churches is relatively a small one. We must not expect too much! True that Wesleyans, Presbyterians, and Anglicans have made rapid strides, while the Baptists seem to have been standing still. But this, as we shall presently show, is due to conditions affecting the Baptists which do not affect the other churches. Then there are all the difficulties to be encountered which are suggested by the word "colonial." The ancient "colonist" leaving Greece for his new home took with him the sacred fire from the temple, together with the laws, traditions, and customs of his native land. The modern colonial goes forth with a similar equipment; but the new environment quickly tells a tale, and much of what is deemed precious in the life of the mother-country soon begins, in many cases, to lose its appeal. Old restraints are cast aside, and what colonials call "freedom" is found to be congenial. There is a looseness of living and thinking; and so many of our young people, from the best homes and churches, and often with fine records of Christian service behind them, find their ideals and purposes swamped by the surrounding materialism, and suffer themselves to be carried away by the stream. Also one must remember that South Africa has been the home of the adventurer and the rendezvous of people whose standard of judgment is materialistic, while undoubtedly the fact of being surrounded by an inferior civilization has to be considered in any analysis of the atmosphere of the country. But these considerations—and many others might be added—refer to other churches as well, and what we are seeking is an explanation of the slow growth of the Baptist church.

This explanation may be summed up in the word "independence," together with the lack of organization mainly due to the isolation of the churches from one another. It is, of course, admitted that the principle of independency has been a retarding force in other places than South Africa, and our generation is witnessing its failure to meet the needs of our modern church life. It has completely failed in South Africa, and the more thoughtful people in the churches are asking for some organization of the Baptist denomination in the sub-continent similar to what has come to pass in the Homeland during the past few years.

The Church with the finest record of progress in South Africa is the Wesleyan. But this is explained by the fact that in the Transvaal it is worked as a mission from England, and until a few years ago similar conditions obtained in the other

provinces. The lesson for the Baptists is obvious: organized effort is necessary, for the problems of South Africa are such that only concerted action can grapple with them. But beyond this is the fact that our South African churches are not only isolated from one another, but also from churches of the Homeland; and the feeling has grown in force during the past few years that stronger links should be forged between them. For instance, some system of interchange in the ministry would be an inestimable boon to men who are at present facing great loneliness, and enduring mental isolation, with little prospect of relief, and without such stimulus as is felt by our missionaries who are connected with a strong home organization. Recently one or two Baptist leaders have visited South Africa, and hopes have been raised that this may lead to a deeper and more sympathetic interest on the part of the home churches. Can the South African Baptist Union be worked as a southern association of the Baptist Union of Great Britain? This is being seriously discussed by those who realize the present inadequacy of the Baptist *status quo* in South Africa. At any rate we are sure that the Baptist Church in the sub-continent needs to be fortified by a closer union with the Baptist Churches of England, whatever the nature of the link may be.

We have more than once in this article referred to the problems of South Africa, and to the fact that the Baptist Churches are developing a sense of responsibility regarding their solution. In the main these problems gather around the conflict that is going on between British and Dutch ideals; the attitude of South Africans towards the native races and their future development; the vast changes that are coming over South African life industrially and socially; and the new national conditions that are quickly coming to view and constituting a challenge to Christian internationalism. These problems offer a great opportunity to the Baptist Church.

The conflict that is going on between the various racial element makes it impossible to forecast even approximately the future religious developments of South Africa. Which element will predominate in the end? Will it be British or Dutch? Or some other element that is neither? Much is heard about the emergence of a new South African nation which will be neither Dutch nor British, but which will conserve the best ideals and traditions of both races, as well as of other peoples who may influence future developments in the country. This is the view held by General Smuts, and it is the meeting-ground of the finer spirits among both Dutch and British. But whatever the future may hold in store, and whichever racial element may predominate in the national consciousness that is emerging, we need have no

fear lest Baptist principles and ideals should fail to prove their adaptability to the conditions and needs that will arise. A church that is distinctively English will fail; and so will a church that is distinctively Dutch. But the Baptist Church is possessed of a witness that is universal in its appeal; and the cosmopolitanism that has shown itself in the history of our denomination in other parts of the world will be seen again in South Africa, and with a richness of life not surpassed in our previous history.

D. DAVIES.

Pantygog, Pontycymmer, Glam.

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# Andrew Fuller, 1754–1815.

*Real development is not leaving things behind, as on a road, but drawing life from them, as from a root.*

G. K. CHESTERTON.

AS a raw student there came into my hands the volume of Andrew Fuller's works which Mr. Henry G. Bohn, that firm friend of good literature, had included in his famous *Standard Library*. Ever since reading the short memoir of the author, by his son Andrew Gunton Fuller, which the old green-bound book contains, I have felt an admiration for Fuller's character and work which all further knowledge of that remarkable man has increased. I have no claim to speak of Fuller on any ground of having special sources of knowledge not open to all; my right to speak is based only on the repeated perusal of all his published works and on some knowledge of the biographies of Fuller and his contemporaries.

Two things combine to make Andrew Fuller a person of unusual interest to all who respect human achievement. First, here is a man, with no education worth speaking of in youth, and without a spark of genius, who yet manages by dint of unremitting use of ordinary gifts, to write works in strong, serviceable English, which are immediately received with applause wherever theology is read at all, and which are reprinted fifty years afterwards, both on their merits as literature and as still effective pieces of Christian apologetic. If this should seem unimpressive to any of us, let us ask ourselves, fellow dribblers, how many

works of ours will be deemed essential to the completion of "Standard Libraries" fifty years hence!

The second thing that makes Fuller a man to be noted and admired is that without outside assistance, patronage, or adventitious aid of any kind, he raised himself from the plough-tail to a position where he moved with distinction among great people of church and state, and became the chief agent (after Carey) in launching Evangelical Christendom upon the enterprise of missions to the heathen world.

Fuller is the average man raised to the highest power by the full employment of every talent. Look at his grave face in the well-known group portrait of the Baptist ministers of his period. He sits at a table, a little in the background from John Foster, whose pensive form fills an easy chair on his left (Fuller never sat in an easy chair in his life!). Towering above him and well to the fore is Robert Hall's herculean frame and massive head. In natural genius Fuller is nowhere in comparison with those two. He has not the magic pen of Foster, nor the eloquent tongue of Hall, but if judgment be limited to service to the cause of evangelical religion, I am not sure that the self-educated ploughman did not excel the pair of them.

## I.—Pastor.

Andrew Fuller's life lies between the 6th February, 1754, when he was born under his father's little farmhouse roof at Wicken, near Soham, on the flat lands of Cambridgeshire, and the 17th May, 1815, when he died, sitting up in bed in his room adjoining his chapel in Kettering, the last earthly sounds that fell upon his closing ear being the voices of his people praising God in their Sunday morning worship.

Of his sixty-one years of mortal life, the first twenty were spent on the Cambridgeshire farm. Nothing is said of his education—probably it did not amount to much. The sturdy youth was early inured to toil. His hands held the stilts of the plough as his steaming horses dragged the tearing ploughshare through the fat soil which had once been a lake bottom in the fenland. He ate his luncheon from a handkerchief at eleven, seated under the hedge, while the horses rested, as small farmers' sons do in those wide fields to this day.

In an autobiographical letter he tells of his conversion at the age of sixteen. Hyper-Calvinism reigned in the circle in which the Fullers moved; the preachers had little or nothing to say to the unconverted, and it was a dark and devious way the poor boy traversed in his silent brooding mind before he gained any assurance of his interest in Christ. He was baptized in the year 1770, and united with the Church at Soham. Through a doctrinal dispute on "human inability" the pastor resigned, the pulpit fell

vacant, the duty of supply devolved upon the members, and young Fuller was one day called upon to take his turn. His pulpit gifts, to his own surprise, meeting with acceptance, he was called to the pastorate, and ordained in 1775, Robert Hall's father, from Arnesby, taking the leading part in the solemn services of the ordination day.

The chief hinge on which the gates of opportunity turned for Fuller was his removal to Kettering in October, 1782. Mr. Beeby Wallis, senior deacon of the church at Kettering, seeking for some one to lead forward the Baptist cause in that rising industrial town, had fixed upon the young Soham pastor, of seven years' experience in his first charge, and worthy of better things, as the right man for the work. When the call came and was urged upon him through a whole year of hesitation, Fuller was reduced to the deepest distress of mind and his people went about the village in tears. The pastor was married, had a young family, had tried first a business and then a school as secondary means of income in augmentation of a stipend which never reached *thirteen pounds a year;* yet it took the scrupulous man a twelvemonth to decide whether it was right to leave his few sheep in the wilderness for the more extended and responsible field of labour Kettering could offer. Many men, Dr. Ryland said, would have risked the welfare of a nation with fewer searchings of heart than it cost this man to determine whether he should leave a little dissenting church, scarcely consisting of forty members beside himself and his wife.

Once at Kettering a new world opened out before Fuller. Ryland junior, at Northampton, and Sutcliff, at Olney, he already knew, but they had been inaccessibly remote from the fens in those not only pre-railway but pre-mail-coach days. Now they could meet. Pearce was near enough, at Birmingham, to be visited occasionally. That seraphic soul, too good for this hard world, and destined not long to remain in it, had a strange fascination for rough and gruff Andrew Fuller, whose private prayers contained thereafter a line of unusual character: "God of Samuel Pearce, be my God!" Soon young Carey came into their circle, and the yeasty ferment in that visionary's mind communicated itself to the group of brave hearts who were destined to lead a reluctant church forward with the gospel into the heathen world.

Fuller had no other pastorate. For thirty-two years he presided over the Kettering church, growing in power, in varied usefulness, and in honour from year to year. Of his many employments we can conveniently speak under subsequent headings, but a special note may be made of his tenth year at Kettering. The year 1792 was a memorable one to Fuller on many accounts.

In April of that year Beeby Wallis died, and over the tomb the pastor placed his tribute to his deacon and friend:

Active and generous in virtue's cause,
With solid wisdom, strict integrity,
And unaffected piety, he lived
Beloved among us, and beloved he died.

During the bright days of that summer the Kettering manse covered a tragedy of the direst kind. Mrs. Fuller's mind became disordered. Her affliction is described in a letter of pathetic and poignant character to her father by her husband. That noble soul was nurse for three months wherein his anxious watch was only broken by two hours' release out of each twenty-four. Mrs. Fuller died in August, 1792. During the crushing afflictions of that year Fuller was occupied in maturing plans for the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society. When the brethren met on 2 October, 1792, Beeby Wallis's widow, in her mourning weeds, gave them the hospitality of her parlour, and Fuller, fresh from his own terrible vigil and painful release, helped to do the honours. The story of this famous meeting is too well known to need recounting here.

Fuller's second wife, who survived him, was the daughter of a ministerial friend, Rev. W. Coles, of Maulden, near Ampthill. She was an exemplary companion, and did much for Fuller's comfort in the period of his incessant labours and travels which followed the founding of the Mission.

## II.—Theologian.

Fuller's contemporaries evidently considered that his chief title to fame would rest upon his services to the Serampore Mission, and probably they were right; but Fuller would have had a strong claim upon the grateful remembrance of posterity even though another had been secretary of the Mission. His very great service as a theologian to Evangelical religion and especially to the Baptist denomination has not been appreciated at its proper value. Fuller is one of the very few British Baptists thoroughly worthy to be called a theologian.

Fuller's revolt against that system of false Calvinism which drenched the minds of the religious people of his circle was not at first an intellectual, so much as a spiritual and experiential, protest. Hyper-Calvinism had kept his young soul in bondage and misery when he was desiring salvation with all his heart, but doubting his "warrant to come to Christ," and this drove him to prayer and to the examination of the Scriptures in independence of the dogmatic lenses through which his school customarily view them. In order to clear his own mind he began to write while still in his village pastorate. He afterwards published his conclusions under the title, *The Gospel worthy of All Acceptation:*

*or the Obligation of Men Cordially to Believe whatever God makes known.* This publication involved Fuller in controversy for twenty years. William Button and Abraham Booth were dissatisfied with it as leaning to Arminianism, and Dan Taylor, the Arminian, though rejoicing in it as freeing the gospel appeal to mankind from many hindrances, was nevertheless dissatisfied with it as retaining the Calvinistic leaven. But the more discussion proceeded, the more Fuller's modifying influence was felt in the churches. He and his pamphlet became a symbol and a name. "Fullerism" was the designation fastened on that type of doctrine which, while Calvinistic at bottom, yet held forth the gospel appeal to sinners in Scripture language and with Scripture urgency as a sincere offer on God's part to whomsoever would comply with its terms of repentance and faith. The name lasted well into the middle of the nineteenth century among the Baptist people. Young Spurgeon came up from Waterbeach to London in 1854 as a "Fullerite" confessed; at least, that was the handiest and fairest term by which his brand of Calvinism could be labelled.

The controversy, in Miltonic phrase, "of fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute" had not been, in Fuller's day, as now, relegated to metaphysics, where it belongs. On the contrary, it occupied the foreground of theology as the livest of live issues. Difference of judgment on the most inscrutable of mysteries divided churches and separated friends and families. In rural East Anglia the fine old Puritan tradition coming down from "Eastern Association" and "New Model" days, instead of yielding to the newer spirit of the Evangelical revival, got ever higher and higher in its emphasis upon Divine Decrees and associated conceptions, until in the end it had reached Antinomianism. "Antinomianism," said Fuller, "is loose and foul; is congregations have a few individuals whose hearts are right; but the fruit they bring forth in general leads unto death. Under the influence of this presumptuous system our churches in Norfolk and Suffolk and many other places are going to ruin. Nowhere does Antinomianism grow more than in London. There is not a man there who properly lifts up a standard against it."

Fuller's pamphlet was the steel point that caught the denominational train as it was going full tilt into the stop-block of a siding, and turned it safely into the main line of advance once more.

Fuller's next adventure into theological literature was destined to give him a far wider public than could be expected from his first publication, which was, by comparison, little more than a domestic tract. Soon after Carey and Thomas had departed for India, Fuller brought out under the title *The Gospel*

*its Own Witness,* a large work in which "the holy nature and divine harmony of the Christian religion" is "contrasted with the immorality and absurdity of Deism." "Andrew Fuller's work on the deistical controversy," said Henry G. Bohn, in reprinting it in his *Standard Library,* "was written at a period of our national history when the writings of Volney, Gibbon, and especially of Thomas Paine, fostered by the political effects of the French Revolution, had deteriorated the morals of the people, and infused the poison of infidelity into the disaffected portion of the public. It is no presumption to suppose that the extensive circulation which the work of Mr. Fuller obtained had some share, at least, in bringing about the present more healthy state of public feeling."

It was from the closing chapter of this work, entitled "Redemption Consistent with Creation," that Thomas Chalmers drew inspiration for those amazingly eloquent "Astronomical Discourses" that thrilled the overflowing crowds of magistrates, merchants, and other citizens who thronged the Tron Church in Glasgow on the occasion of their delivery in 1815.

Another important controversial work, which, with the last-mentioned, chiefly supports Fuller's fame as an author, was written against the Socinians, or self-styled Rational Dissenters, whose leading apostle was the eminent Dr. Priestley. The full title of this work is, *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared as to their Moral Tendency,* and the plan pursued is to compare the tenets of Evangelicalism and Unitarianism as to their influence upon heart and life. "The tempers and lives of men are books for common people to read, and they will read them, even though they should read nothing else. They are indeed warranted by the Scriptures themselves to judge of the nature of doctrines by their holy or unholy tendency. The true doctrine is to be known by its being a 'doctrine according to godliness.'" Conversion, morality, love to God, benevolence, humility, charity, veneration for the Scriptures—these are some of the touchstones by which the Unitarian system, as represented by Priestley, Belsham, and Lindsey, is tested and found wanting as compared with the Evangelical scheme of things.

Among the remaining writings making up the five thick volumes of Fuller's complete works are *Expositions of Genesis, Revelation, the Sermon on the Mount,* and some other parts of Scripture. These were delivered from the pulpit on Sunday mornings during fifteen years of ministry. Eighty-four full *Sermons,* many *Circular Letters, Dialogues, Tracts,* and *Letters* to churches and individuals, with four valuable *Letters on Preaching* are included. His *Memoir of Pearce* and his *Apology for Christian Missions,* together with many *Reviews* and *Magazine Articles,* make up an

intellectual output truly amazing in its magnitude and quality. Considering the difficulties under which the author laboured, and the variety and weight of prior claims upon his time and strength, his literary activity leaves one gasping.

III.—ROPEHOLDER.

Andrew Fuller was thirty-eight years of age when he commenced those labours on behalf of Carey and his helpers which form, in many minds, his noblest monument. The *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* had been well wrought as a theme on paper, and would continue for many years to come to do its leavening work in the churches; but Fuller was destined to work out in incessant toil, travel, and tribulation, the due result of the thesis with which he had challenged the churches.

Fuller always acknowledged, however, that it was Carey who first drew the full conclusion from his meditations, conversations, and writings. Carey it was who first saw that if the gospel was worthy of all acceptation, its acceptance ought to be pressed upon all mankind. "The origin of the Mission," Fuller nobly said, "is to be found in the workings of brother Carey's mind."

"Friends," said the secretary, soon after the missionaries had departed, "talk to me about coadjutors and assistants, but I know not how it is, I find a difficulty. Our undertaking to India really appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine which had never before been explored. We had no one to guide us, and while we were thus deliberating, Carey, as it were, said, 'Well, I will go down, if you will hold the rope!' But before he went down, he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us at the mouth of the pit, to this effect, that while we lived we should never let go the rope. You understand me. There was great responsibility attached to us who began the business."

Fuller travelled over England, Scotland, and Ireland, preaching whenever he could get a hearing, and taking collections for the work. He personally canvassed leading Evangelicals of all churches in the principal towns and cities, sometimes meeting with delightful surprises of Christian love, and sometimes encountering the discouragement that prosaic minds invariably heap on innovators.

His first Scottish tour was but a good sample of scores of such pilgrimages. His fame as a writer, and the debates which had been held upon his doctrine by McLean, the Haldanes, and the Scotch Baptists generally, all conspired to create interest if not a welcome. Everywhere large congregations were gathered, some of which numbered four and five thousand hearers. He returned to Kettering with upwards of £900 for the mission (big

money for those days), and with earnest solicitations to repeat his visits, and promises of future help. This journey was marked by the reception of the shattering tidings of the beloved Pearce's death.

Fuller's humour, if any, was of the grim variety. It was fitting that the Scotch should have called forth for posterity a rare sample of it. A Scotch Baptist Church in Glasgow sent, offering their pulpit, if they could be satisfied that their faith and the visitor's were in harmony. Fuller cast his eye over the paper they presented, and said he objected to nothing. When asked for his own confession, he declared that he came not as a candidate for their pulpit, and had nothing to say. The messengers retired, debated the matter, and returned saying they could not receive him. "Very well,' said the deep voice, "I shall go to the tabernacle" (Haldane's). The Baptists repented, but it was too late. He preached in the tabernacle to 4,000 people, and collected £200. Eventually the Baptist Church sincerely repented and brought forth fruits meet for repentance in a £45 collection for the Mission.

Fuller did not disdain, on these journeys, to be a wayside evangelist. His journal reveals intimate conversations in inn-yards, on stage-coaches, on ferry-boats, and in hotel parlours with souls in darkness, in rebellion, or distress. Not John Wesley himself was keener on winning souls. "Saving souls is our one business," said the great Methodist, and so said the Baptist Mission secretary. Never was a man more faithful than Fuller with the souls whom providence cast in his way on his journeys up and down the land. It never occurred to this man that saving souls by deputy in India absolved him from saving souls at home by personal effort.

A story which displays his ruling passion is told of Fuller in Oxford. A friend was showing him the buildings in the world-famous High Street of the university city. "Brother," replied his pre-occupied companion, "I think there is one question which, after all that has been written on it, has not yet been answered—*What is justification?*" His friend proposed to return home to discuss it; to which Fuller readily agreed; adding: "That inquiry is far more to me than all these fine buildings." We are sorry that Fuller did not feel the beauty of "the High," but no earnestly religious mind can deny the transcendence of "What is justification?" That to Fuller was no mere wordy debate on a Pauline idea, but a matter of life, death, and destiny to himself and to every soul who heard the gospel.

Upon the secretary fell the duty of defending the interests of the mission and the rights of its agents by interviews with Cabinet Ministers. At one such interview Lord Liverpool

remarked with genuine diplomatic courtesy that he "quite approved of liberty of thought in matters of religion." A deep voice, in measured words, answered: "My lord, we do not wish for liberty to *think: that* you cannot give or take away; we ask for liberty to act." Looking around for the speaker, he met the stern eye and grave face of the secretary of the Baptist Mission.

This paper must now end, albeit with reluctant abruptness, on account of space. In labours like these, in addition to a responsible pastorate and extensive authorship, Fuller toiled for twenty-three years as leading rope-holder. He carried on his broad shoulders and in his brave, noble and God-fearing heart, the chief part of the burden of the mission; and then, before his time, at sixty-one years of age, worn out with travel and toil, this true and valiant servant of God fell asleep with his hand still upon the rope.

GILBERT LAWS.

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# Abraham Greenwood, 1749—1827.

THE Rev. Abraham Greenwood is one of the least known of those who united with William Carey, on October 2nd, 1792, at Kettering, in the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society. He was a Yorkshireman, so his eyes seemed always to be seeing the fields afar, and he proved to be a Baptist pioneer in Lancashire, Staffordshire, and Lincolnshire. He was born at Barnoldswick, January 21st, 1749, in the cottage adjoining the Baptist chapel house, which is now the property of the church. For over two centuries his forebears had been known as *Dissenters* in the parish, and their descendants have been in the Baptist fellowship of the town ever since.

In youth he attended the ministry of the Rev. Alverey Jackson, one of the leaders of the denomination in Yorkshire and Lancashire, who helped to re-organize the original Baptist Association of Lancashire and Yorkshire in 1718, being the first to lead it in prayer at the throne of grace; and also a protagonist for the ministry of song being exercised in the then songless sanctuaries. Greenwood began to preach in 1770, and became a pupil for a year and a half with his brother-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Armitage, an Independent minister at Delph, in Saddleworth. When the celebrated Dr. John Fawcett opened an academy in his own house at Wainsgate, Hebden Bridge,

Abraham Greenwood became the first student, entering July 27th, 1772, and remaining two years and a half. There he would no doubt meet John Sutcliff, a native of the district, who the same year went to be trained for the ministry at the Bristol Baptist Academy.

About this time the Baptist interest had been begun at Rochdale, through the influence of the Rev. John Hirst, Pastor of the Bacup church, with which Greenwood was now in membership. The work developed from cottage meetings, begun in 1756, when weather or accident prevented the Baptists journeying to Bacup or Wainsgate. Hirst found a ready helper in Dr. Fawcett, and naturally, the young student tried his prentice hand in these little gatherings. By 1773 the Bacup members at Rochdale felt strong enough to secure a room, attached to the Bull Inn, in Yorkshire Street, the mother church agreeing that the contributions of the Rochdale members should be spent locally. On October 12th, the same year, Hirst, Greenwood, Bamford (of Accrington) and Crabtree (of Bradford) held a great open-air service, and the first-named baptized, in the Roach, nine people, who certified to the crowd that they were not paying five shillings each for the ceremony. In 1775 a church was formed, with a meeting-house in Town Meadows. Both Bacup and Wainsgate dismissed Rochdale members to the new cause. How cordial was the feeling between the brethren may be inferred from the fact that Bacup made a liberal contribution towards building the meeting-house, and that the first pastor of this new church, Abraham Greenwood, was dismissed at the same time, serving the church with devotion for nearly six years. On February 14th, 1775, he married Susanna, the daughter of Mr. Jackson, his former pastor; she singularly had been born in the house of his birth, and only eighteen months later than himself.

At this time the Midland Baptists were most remarkably indebted to Lancashire. At Birmingham it was James Turner, of Bacup, who came in 1775 to a tiny church of fourteen members, and built it up for twenty-five years. Four sons of Henry Butterworth, a blacksmith of Goodshaw in Rossendale, were exercising remarkable ministries. John settled at Coventry in 1753; James at Bromsgrove in 1755; Henry in 1768 succeeded John Macgowan (of Warrington) at Bridgnorth; while Lawrence, who became an M.A., had settled at Evesham in 1764. Now in 1754 application had been made through Mr. Cartwright to the Baptist Board in London, for help to build at Dudley, and in 1765 a church there had been welcomed into the Midland Association, of which Lawrence Butterworth was Secretary for forty years. Is it not possible that when they were thinking of a settled pastor one of the

Butterworths should introduce the name of Greenwood? Every precedent suggested that a Lancashire man would be most suitable. At any rate, Abraham Greenwood is settled there in 1780. He found that some of his members, along with others belonging to the Brettel Lane church, met for worship every Sabbath at the Darkhouse, Coseley. The name originated from the fact that the place was a house surrounded by trees, and therefore, dark. In 1783 these decided to form themselves into a separate church, but the Dudley church objected, notwithstanding that the new cause desired to share in their pastor's services, and were willing to contribute towards his support six guineas a year. Under this arrangement, on November 9th, 1783, Greenwood preached at Darkhouse, but his sermon, from the text 1 Tim. v. 18, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox," roused the dissatisfaction of all the local members, and brought a disruption between the two churches. However, early in 1784 a better feeling prevailed, and Greenwood was again preaching and baptizing for the Coseley Church. In 1786 he left Dudley for Oakham, in Rutland. Afterwards the Dudley cause declined so that the church died out, but later, in 1809, was revived through the help of the Coseley friends, who thus heaped coals of fire upon her head.

The Midlands were originally evangelized by General Baptists, Coventry dating from 1626 at least; a conference of representatives of thirty congregations met in 1651, and issued a confession entitled "The Faith and Practise." They came from churches reaching from North Willingham in Lincolnshire, through Burley, Thorpe and Tixover in Rutland, to Marston in Warwickshire. They had planted a church at Netherton, near Dudley, in 1654. It is remarkable that Greenwood's pastoral work took him through their district, where their churches were either joining the New Connexion, or were stagnating in independence, or were stiffened with Calvinism. Thus the 1651 church at Burley, which had done good service in that century, was growing languid in the eighteenth; there was no building, and no arrangement to train ministers. In 1715 we find that two ministers were working over a circuit including Oakham, Uppingham, Braunston and Empingham. A building, appropriated for worship, did exist at Harringworth, just across the Welland, in Northants. The minister there in 1745, Matthew Stanger, moved nearer to Morcot, so that the Burley Baptists placed themselves under his care. At his death, in 1770, there was a double reorganization. The Oakham group decided to organize separately again, and they did so on a Calvinistic basis. In 1764 a new and strong Association, called Northants., had been formed, with Olney and Kettering as its foci; Notting-

ham had joined 1768, Leicester in 1770. So in 1773 Oakham threw in its lot there. Two years later John Sutcliff settled at Olney, and when Oakham wanted a pastor, once again private friendship paved the way. Greenwood, after preaching a year on trial, was invited to become the pastor at Oakham, and for some time his settlement proved eminently satisfactory.

In 1791 the Northamptonshire Association held its annual meetings at Oakham, Greenwood became the Moderator, and wrote the circular letter. It was printed and sent to the churches of the Association, which really covered ten counties, and not simply Northants. This letter on "Holy Peace, Described and Recommended," is characterized by choice language and emphatic declarations of the necessity of holy living. His directions for gaining peace were, viz:

1. Cultivate a spirit of trust in God.
2. Preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.
3. Repent of every day's sins and go anew to Christ.
4. Strive for the things which make for peace among your fellow men and fellow Christians.

These were the motives for seeking it, viz:

1. Peace is so important that we cannot do without it.
2. Consider the advantages which we have for obtaining this blessing.
3. Honour and happiness accompany peace.
4. The success of the Gospel is generally connected with peace.
5. Heaven requires peace as a preparation for it.

The letter concludes with the Hebrew Benediction.

The next year he is at Kettering, in Widow Wallis's back parlour, when, though Europe was convulsed with war and revolution, he and twelve like-minded men formed the first society to send Messengers of Peace to every nation. He not only signed the resolutions, but promised his guinea, and helped to make the collection £13 2s. 6d. The gifts were generous, yet they seemed inadequate, but God was with them. They expected great things from God, and were attempting great things for God. Their hopes for the future were as bright as the promises of God.

Sutcliff shares with Carey the honours that belong to the founders and pioneers of modern missions. It was on his motion, in 1784, that the proposal was adopted by the Association, to set apart an hour on the evening of every first Monday in the month to pray in concert for the success of the Gospel, and to invite Christians of other denominations to unite with them in prayer that it "may spread to the most distant parts of the habitable globe." He too was at Kettering

at that memorable meeting, and wrote his signature, along with Greenwood's, to the resolutions adopted. Sutcliff and Greenwood were making such an impression that the Northants. men saw the wisdom of impregnating the mountain spring at its source; Carey was deliberately sent to win the interest of Fawcett, and the second printed list of subscribers to the the B.M.S. shows a Yorkshire Greenwood.

Soon afterwards, Abraham Greenwood got into trouble with the friends at Oakham, and in 1796 the dissatisfaction came to such a crisis that the church requested him to leave. It must be confessed, however, that the Oakham church—from the story told in its minute books—either had extraordinary misfortune in its dealings with ministers, or, what is equally likely, was exceedingly difficult to please. The church book contains the following entry:

"In the year 1796 we agreed to give the Rev. Mr. Greenwood notice of our desire that he should withdraw from us, and we generally felt dissatisfied with his manner of preaching, and the prevailing spirit he discovered, he being in the habit of indulging himself in low vulgarity in the pulpit, till it became disgusting to us and offensive to others who occasionally heard him, and wch we thot below the dignity and importance of a Xtian minister. And too often dealt out personal invective from the pulpit."

All which may simply mean that he was too vigorous in his pulpit denunciations to suit the staid Puritanism of his congregation.

His next move may again be the result of personal influence, this time of a George Greenwood of Hull; for the Oakham pastor had received a call to the pastorate of the Baptist church at South Killingholme, near to the Lincolnshire creek from which the Pilgrim Fathers sailed to Holland in 1608. This church dated back to 1686, and its pastor, John Hannath, who had served for 53 years, was feeling the infirmities of age, and therefore had resigned, being 83 years old. It was an ancient General Baptist church, but when Hannath joined the New Connexion he did not carry the majority of the church with him. These now asserted themselves, and by 47 votes to 30 the call was given to Greenwood. Then a strange thing happened. You have two churches, each with its own minister, sharing the building and also endowments for over fifty years at Killingholme. When Greenwood settled, Hannath resumed his ministry, which he continued until his death in 1799. One church met in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. The G.B.'s had four preaching stations, the P.B.'s eight.

For over thirty years Greenwood affectionately and zea-

lously preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and exercised a widespread ministry, not only at Killingholme but at Immingham, Stallingborough (the birthplace of Anne Askew), Brigg, Caistor, and Binbrook. North-east Lincolnshire everywhere felt his power. In 1817 the "Aged and Infirm Baptist Ministers Society" was founded at Bath. Greenwood was not infirm, but at sixty-seven might call himself aged. He joined at once, along with another Greenwood marked as junior. In 1822 he preached the first sermon for the new Baptist cause at Grimsby, and can be looked upon by his services to that cause as a founder of our Grimsby and Cleethorpes churches. The chapel he preached in at Killingholme was built in 1792, and he was buried in the adjoining burial ground, where the inscription upon his stone commemorates the fact that he was one of the founders of the Baptist Missionary Society. He died 25th June, 1827, aged 78 years, at Immingham. His widow, Susanna—who had been a true helpmeet during 52 years—survived until July 6th, 1828. Their son Abraham, who was an Independent Minister at Barton-on-Humber, a few miles away, placed a monument in his chapel as an act of filial duty, to their memory.

In the British Museum can be found a pamphlet of 41 pages, printed at the Brearley Hall Press by Dr. Fawcett, entitled "An affectionate address to young people, published with a design of engaging their attention to those subjects which most affect their present and eternal welfare." The author is Abraham Greenwood, of Killingholme. It is dated 1796.

The year 1808 was remarkable for the change of sentiment, on the subject of Baptism, that took place in the minds of James Alexander Haldane, and several Independent ministers in Scotland. Was this helped by the publication that year at Colne, near Greenwood's birthplace, of "A catechism, or, more serious questions and answers on baptism"? It was said to be by Abraham Greenwood, of Hawkshead. This was translated and published in Welsh the next year by John Johns at Croesoswallt. Was this the work of our Abraham Greenwood, or his son, or some one else of the same name? For about this time there was an Abraham Greenwood, Baptist minister at Bingley, in Yorkshire.

At any rate we can say of our hero he was a good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost.

ARTHUR S. LANGLEY.

Coseley, Staffs.

# Baptists in East Kent.

THE churches here were both early and numerous; their history was closely interwoven, so that each sheds light on others. This is fortunate, as no minute-books survive till the Hanoverian period, and fragments of information have to be collected from diverse sources and pieced together. A number of documents from 1689 are at Ashford, but have not been laid under contribution for the following sketch. At Dr. Williams' Library are six volumes which give (a) Minutes of Canterbury, 1711-1721, (b) Minutes of East Kent Association, 1717-1734, 1780-1787, 1798-1809, (c) Minutes of the Kent and Sussex Association, 1708-1760 (compilation for the early years), 1768-1819, 1832-1845. All these relate to General Baptists only. Particular Baptist Association minutes begin only in 1779. A sketch is attempted here in six sections, omitting Eythorne, which has received separate attention from its present pastor:—

The inchoate period till 1681;
Contact with wider General Baptist life till 1719;
The Canterbury church till its death;
The Thanet district till its death;
The Dover church;
The Particular Baptists till 1835.

## I. THE INCHOATE PERIOD.

The Rev. Walter Holyoak states, presumably from early Dover records, that in 1643 Anne Stevens and Nicholas Woodman were baptized at Canterbury; that in February 1643-4 Luke Howard of Dover went to London to be baptized by Kiffin; that Daniel Coxe of Canterbury and Mark Elfreth of Dover were baptized about the same time; that Howard married Stevens; that all except Coxe became General Baptist.

Towards the end of 1645, Henry Denne came on an evangelistic tour in Kent, preaching and baptizing at Rochester, Chatham, and Canterbury.* He was in episcopal orders, but had been won to Baptist views by Thomas Lamb, a London soap-boiler, Elder of a General Baptist church. While Denne took a commission in the cavalry of the Regular Army, Lamb came on a tour in the country, and so did Kiffin the Particular Baptist in 1649.

At this time the old Episcopal system was broken down. Some parish churches were occupied by clergy of a Puritan type, placed there under authority of the Houses of Parliament.*

* Fenstanton Records, page 101.
† C.H.S., Trans., VII., 181.

In a few places Gathered Churches were arising, and Canterbury saw one organize on 12 February, 1645-6, whose very full records are now lodged at the Memorial Hall in London. They show that on 27 May, 1646, John Durant was chosen as pastor, with the approval of the Gathered Churches at Dover and Sandwich: that a second church was formed in Canterbury on 26 February, 1646-7; that they encouraged another to gather at Staplehurst in March; that they obtained the use of the cathedral chapter-house on 5 July, 1650; that a church had now gathered at Adisham; that in 1652 the pastor at Sandwich was taking public maintenance, and his church was divided in opinion about this; that in 1654 the errors of Arminius were troubling the district, and that a public declaration was made by several churches "that the Lord Jesus Christ came not into the world to dye for all in general, but only for those elect ones which he calls by the name of his sheep."

In the membership of this Gathered Church at this time were Kingsfords and Norwoods, some of whose families were presently to have wider views of God's mercy.

A Lancashire lad of eighteen, William Caton, who had adopted the opinions of George Fox, undertook most extensive tours in 1654.* He came to the Baptist meeting at Dover and gave his testimony to such effect that he won over a prominent member, Luke Howard, who placed his house at the disposal of the Quakers. Caton went on to Folkestone, Hythe and Lydd, actually persuading the Baptist Messenger, Samuel Fisher, and deeply grieving George Hammon. After going round Kent, to the great damage of the Baptist causes, he came again to Canterbury, and testified in both the Independent and the Baptist meetings, winning adherents from each church.

This is the first clear evidence that a Baptist meeting had been established at Canterbury. Now other "Publishers of Truth" had been in the fens, and had grievously troubled the Fenstanton Baptist church. So that it was very fortunate Henry Denne also was touring Kent this year.† He paid a second visit to Canterbury in October, and was at once asked by the Baptists to stay and help them; he referred them to his home church, to which they wrote on 13 November to say that they had been deserted by a mixed party which had turned out of the way, and needed such teaching and organizing as Denne could give. Four of the eleven men who signed were Richard and Thomas Beacham, Thomas and Daniel Jarman. Meanwhile he did such good work with his news of the grace of God for all, that the Gathered Churches put out their manifesto as to the limited grace in December.

* Sewell's *History;* 101 onwards.

† Fenstanton Records; 106.

The Fenstanton church agreed, and started him in January 1654/5, well provided: and a letter of thanks was written from Canterbury on 19 February. How long his stay lasted we are not sure; he was in London three years later. We may certainly attribute much of the Baptist cause in East Kent to these two visits. The work spread widely: from a later report to the archbishop, we find that a family called Holt at Ash was Baptist as early as 1654.* There were prominent men such as Richard Hobbs of Dover, besides the postmaster. Samuel Fisher of Ashford, like Denne in episcopal orders, was asked by his fellow-Baptists to superintend the local work, but we have seen that he became a Quaker in 1655. John Foxwell was another "Messenger," as the superintendent-evangelists were called, and in 1654 he joined with a score of other leaders in protesting against the Fifth-Monarchy views which had so perturbed Canterbury: a generation later we find a Foxwell at this city, so John may have belonged here. In 1660 we find Joseph Wright of Maidstone with John Parsons senior and junior of Faversham at a great convention in London putting out a confession of faith; but no one from East Kent.

For the next few years there was bitter persecution. The Dover people had erected a meeting-house, which was rather exceptional in these early days; so the authorities nailed it up, and there are picturesque anecdotes as to the Baptists forcibly re-opening it. Samuel Taverner, a man of a good Essex family, governor of Deal castle, was baptized by Edward Prescot of Dover, resigned his governorship, and moved to Dover, where he supported himself as a grocer, and began to preach. A temporary conventicle act ran out with the prorogation of parliament in 1668, and there was a respite in which breath could be drawn. It was taken advantage of very fully, and we are glad to see that after eight years there was quite a vigorous work being carried on. The Dover records showed 242 members grouped loosely in one fellowship, widely scattered. Fortunately we can tell rather minutely where they belonged, and who were their leaders, for Archbishop Sheldon ordered every parish minister to send a report as to the conventicles and leaders in his parish. Three years later Charles II invited applications for licenses to hold conventicles and to teach. From these data we can put together a partial picture of Baptist life in East Kent: we will begin at Hythe, go up the coast, and up the Stour.

(*To be continued.*)

*Congregational Historical Society's *Transactions*, V. 124.

# Where East meets West.

TO study a tree, an animal organism, a mine, it is most useful to have one or two sections, perhaps along and across. Any one interested in the state of Christianity in China will be much indebted to Messrs. Seeley Service & Co. for two admirable books.* The one shows progress in the north-east for fifty years, which is nearly all the period of effective work. The other shows the position now in several parts of the great empire. The former is written by an expert colleague; the latter by an English visitor. So between them a very good idea can be obtained of the present position and the needs. The books are alike in one defect; neither has a map. A serious student would gladly go without one or two pictures, especially one that has been published twelve years ago, in order to follow clearly the whereabouts of the work.

Mrs. Butler was asked by her United Methodist Church to go with her husband and the secretary round the chief stations in China and Africa. It would really seem time to consider whether several members of every missionary committee should be required to qualify for their posts by personal acquaintance. Our own mission work has in the past suffered tragically from the sheer ignorance of the English committee, their failure to appreciate conditions abroad, and their refusal to endorse the plans of those on the field. One of our great banks which has branches in Egypt and India, besides the River Plate and Brazil, takes special pains to have direct knowledge of conditions in these places.

It is a great advantage that one of this Methodist deputation was a woman, and that she is the writer of the report. If a male reader would occasionally like a little more information on some points, he gets unexpected glimpses into domestic scenes; and everything is written in a homely, colloquial fashion. Social conditions come out here rather than theological, and the reader will appreciate that Christian workers abroad have to deal with men, women and children essentially the same as at home, however striking the differences appear at first.

In three respects Mrs. Butler's book presents a state of affairs that is independent of China. For the United Methodists

* *Timothy Richard of China*, by Professor W. E. Soothill; with thirteen illustrations; 12s. 6d. net. *Missions as I Saw Them*, by Mrs. Thomas Butler; with twenty-four illustrations, 6s. net.

have a mission in East Africa, the district now so well known as Kenya. There the people are in a stage of civilization quite unlike the East; the Europeans have had to teach them much of agriculture, and have had to grapple with the question of slavery. It is good to have missions in different continents, and then every aspirant after foreign service can be suited. Our Australian Baptists at present can go under denominational auspices to Bengal only; and if for any reason that does not attract them, they have to work in China or Africa with comrades of other communions. Again, in Kenya there is an inflow of people from India, which is raising difficult political problems; so also as to Christian efforts, for methods suited to the negro are not so suitable to the immigrant. And in South America there are many signs that the mixture of non-white races can produce a blend both non-Christian and horribly savage. The most serious problem noted by Mrs. Butler was raised at the cessation of work by the Germans. This may have been inevitable during the war; but their converts sadly miss guidance. It speaks well for all concerned that when the deputation had to announce that want of funds prevented the Methodists assuming permanent responsibility, the Christians at once offered to bear all their expenses, if only one or two Europeans would guide them.

While such missions have plenty of romance, it is China that raises questions of the first importance. Here is a civilization older than ours, and now plastic. Here are religions older than ours, and people quite conscious that Confucius shirked every first-class question, so that for news as to God and sin and immortality they turn to Christ. Fortunate indeed it is that here East meets West, even if the extreme Westerners come further westwards from Vancouver and San Francisco to reach the extreme East.

While Christianity had come to China from Persia twelve centuries ago, and from Italy six centuries ago, yet the results had all but died out by the middle of last century. For practical purposes, Timothy Richard was in the first flight of modern missions when he arrived in 1870. He was guided by God's providence to Shantung, the province of Confucius, the intellectual leader of the empire: and it is noteworthy that the conditions of travel, food, climate, are less unlike ours in this province than in most. Our Baptist work developed thence.

Mrs. Butler belongs to a communion which has amalgamated several of the minor Methodist bodies, and thus in China she saw missions in widely different parts. To reach some of them from the coast is quite a serious problem; and when enhanced by the brigandage now rife, it is not surprising to find that the visitors were positively forbidden by the officials to risk

their lives in some quarters. All honour then to the steadfast workers who penetrate far and settle down.

But the student of the Chinese Church, having gained interesting local colour from the lady visitor's book, will turn to the life of Li T'i-mo-t'ai to find out how it is that within eighty years of Europeans being allowed to set foot on the mainland, a Chinese National Church has emerged, while the missionaries echo the words of John the Baptist and see that they must decrease as it increases.

Richard got his start by a famine, exactly as the American Baptists did with the Telugus. Practical philanthropy appeals now, as it did in Galilee. And Richard did not merely cope with the temporary difficulty; he urged on the Chinese that they must provide against future famines by improving roads or building railways. He was ever a far-sighted man. Like Edward Irving he saw ideals, accepted them, and sought to realize them. It was hard for him to be yoked with those who had little vision, had not imbibed the spirit of Carey; fortunately they threw off the yoke and left him free to go his own way. And fortunately the home committee had sense enough to let both parties work in the way most congenial.

Richard concentrated on two things, Education and Literature. In both respects he knew the nation would appreciate the best, and he only had to persuade it that the West was better than the East. He was statesman enough to see and approve how Ricci had obeyed literally the injunction to seek out those in each place who were worthy. While in India we have seldom aimed at the gentry, the nobles, the kings, yet in China Richard went both for those who were morally worthy like Cornelius, and for those who were influential and in office.

The Chinese have long had the rule that all posts in the civil and military services are open to all men, selection being made by competitive examination. The task here, therefore, was to see that modern subjects were prescribed. It was much the same problem as to induce Oxford and Cambridge to recognize that there were other branches of learning besides classics and mathematics. Richard killed several birds with one stone when as an expiation of the Shansi murders, he secured the foundation of the Shansi University. Of this he was made Chancellor in 1902, and the whole story is adequately set forth by Dr. Soothill. Sir John Jordan, who contributes a foreword to this biography, was one of the most successful of British ambassadors to China, and he reports that the province, once the most besotted with opium, is now educationally the most advanced, and is the best governed. All through Shansi, in schools, in government offices, in magistrates' residences, in police barracks, are graduates of this university. It has set

a model which was being deliberately imitated in every province till the war.

The Chinese are great readers. The labourer or the carter will while away a leisure half-hour with a penny dreadful; while there are books of ethics and philosophy for the most advanced. Richard decided that there must be adequate Christian literature, and he found supporters. This was his unique work, which deserves to be expanded without limit. He induced seven missionary boards to co-operate both in production and distribution: we may humbly rejoice that such men as T. M. Morris, Richard Glover, and others yet living, backed him and got the B.M.S. to lend him for this work.

The Christian Literature Society publishes artistic calendars, picture-books, tracts on hygiene, ethics, religion, magazines, books, both translated and original. Last year there were eighteen million pages printed. Books are in preparation, varying from *Lorna Doone* to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Though dead, Richard yet speaks: for an In Memoriam prize of £35 is offered for the best tale by a Chinese introducing Christianity; and about £2,700 has been subscribed as another Memorial Book Fund; while his library of seven thousand volumes is at the disposal of the Shanghai staff.

The importance of this work seems not to be appreciated by English Baptists. The Society indeed tells off Evan Morgan to the work, and supplies a secretary; but the financial support is astonishing. We spent £172,000 last year on our various fields, of which £52,545 went to China. But how much went to Christian literature? The total subscriptions and donations from all the denominations were: China, £1,650, Scotland, £420, England, £300. The committee asks for about ten thousand pounds within five years. Those who admire Timothy Richard, or see the importance of feeding the new Chinese Church with Christian literature, should send to Miss Bowser at 3, Cleveland Gardens, Ealing, W.13.

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**The Bristol Baptist Itinerant Society** was founded in 1824 at Old King Street. In a century the city has increased seven-fold, and so well has the Society worked that Baptists have kept pace. There was also energy to spare for villages near, and the lay preachers of last century did fine work in building up causes. The story of the hundred years has been fully told by Sir John Swaish, K.B.E., D.L., J.P., in a shilling booklet, to be had from E. F. Simons, Bush Street, Totterdown.