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

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

Editorial.

OUR ANNUAL MEETING, planned for Rawdon Cragg on 5 May, was cancelled owing to the General Strike. Some fatality overhangs our historical excursions in Yorkshire, for a similar tour from Halifax fell through some years ago from a similar cause. The report and accounts which would have been presented will be found at page 143. The committee will carry on for another year. The description which Professor Glass intended to give of the early church at Rawdon in its romantic homes, he will give to another society which hopes for better weather; and we expect to present it to our readers in October in printed form.

EXTRA PUBLICATIONS have been rare since the cost of printing rose so greatly. Yet last month we were able to distribute to our honorary members copies of the booklet telling of Baptist Association Life in Worcestershire, 1655-1926. The importance of the Associations is being gradually discerned, as also that they have been one of the distinctive features of our denominational life. Next year we shall hope to supply copies of a work on similar lines, dealing with London Baptist Associations, 1644-1926; in this case there is not the same continuity, but the ideal has seldom been absent. The book will also epitomize the story of nearly six hundred churches within Greater London, living and dead.

THE BAPTIST BUILDING FUND is having its history, before and after birth, well treated by Mr. Seymour J. Price. Another article will appear in October, and possibly even one more in January. The whole will then be issued in one pamphlet by the Committee of the Fund itself.

OUR COLLEGES are constantly adjusting themselves to the changing conditions of education. Midland has adopted the flexible policy of awarding scholarships tenable at many places. Bristol, Rawdon, Regent's Park, and Manchester work in close alliance with universities, as also do Cardiff and Bangor. Spurgeon's has become residential. The last few years have seen many changes in the headships, so that there is not much fossilism

about curricula or teachers. Those who lay down the heavy burden that rests upon principals are at leisure yet to counsel the churches and the Union; while there is quite a choice of men in the prime of life at the head of our colleges. The influence they exert is well seen from an American example: President Mullins, of Louisville, has been called to the presidency of the Baptist World Alliance, and this summer is holding regional conferences all round Europe.

CHURCHES depend largely on ministers, and ministers on colleges. It is lamentable that even to-day our colleges are so meagrely supported, they can supply only half the number of men required each year, though four times the number of applicants clamour at their gates. One of our contributors suggests that their story should be better known. Bristol has had its history written twice, by Rippon and by Swaine. Of Dr. Ward's Trust an account has appeared in these pages. Midland has also been treated, by Avery in our *Transactions,* and separately by Carter. A centenary sketch of Rawdon by Medley was published by the Kingsgate Press. Regent's Park was commemorated by Gould. Manchester, at its jubilee ten years ago, emphasised at some length and with all its might that it stood for Strict Communion, and would not compromise by entangling alliances. Spurgeon's College, entering on a new phase, may sum up its progress hitherto. The Welsh colleges deserve adequate treatment. We doubt if churches and subscribers provide £5,000 a year to assist young men to prepare for the ministry, though eighty such are needed annually.

FORTY LECTURES on "Aspects of Contemporary Theology," will be given in Trinity College, Oxford, from 16 to 26 August, by British, Swedish, French, German, and American experts, from many communions. These are open to men and women, for a fee of £1. Those interested in the Philosophy and Psychology of Religion, Biblical Study, Comparative Religion, Sociology, and Science, should welcome the opportunity. Enquiries may be sent to the Rev. Dr. Carpenter, 11 Marston Ferry Road, Oxford.

A HISTORY OF ASSOCIATIONS will be a very welcome addition to our knowledge; and we hear that such a work is in course of preparation.

The Office and Function of the Baptist Ministry.

A paper read before the Rawdon Brotherhood Conference.

IT cannot be said that writers on ecclesiastical and theological subjects have ever neglected the subject of the ministry. There is a great library of books dealing with this theme. There is no dearth of writings which examine the New Testament conception of ministry, while most of our popular and successful preachers at one time or another feel called upon to issue in book form their impressions on this subject. Again and again this very topic has been carefully treated by speakers from the Baptist Union platform: as far back as 1868 Dr. Landels gave an address on "Ministerial Failures," and we have had speeches on "Education for the Ministry," "Spiritual Life among the Ministers," "Ministerial Apprenticeship," "The Ministry of Power," "The Ministerial Life," "The Prophetic Ministry," "The Priestly Ministry," "The Minister as Theologian," and so on. This means that the topic is a continually recurring one, and there can be no doubt that this recurrence is a very healthy sign. It means that topics like Sustentation, Settlement, Annuity Funds, important though they are, are not the only subjects of interest to us. It means that we are concerned, from time to time, to examine the real meaning of our work, to estimate as truly as we can our real efficiency in the Church, and to discover once again the deep secrets of consecrated service. It is in this spirit, I hope, that the Brotherhood Committee have chosen our topic for this morning, and, as far as I am concerned, it is in this spirit that we shall proceed to consider it. When Baptist ministers meet together to think about the Office and Function of the Baptist ministry, they will echo that noble prayer of Robert Louis Stevenson:

> "Be patient still: suffer us yet awhile longer; . . . with our broken purposes of good, with our idle endeavours against evil, suffer us yet awhile longer to endure and (if it may be) help us to do better."

I think we may begin by making certain assumptions. We may presuppose a general agreement with that article in the

Constitution of the Baptist Union which was adopted by the Assembly on April 24, 1923:

> "Affirming the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the obligation resting on them to fulfil their vocation according to the gift bestowed upon them.
>
> "By the Ministry we mean an office within the Church of Christ (not a sacerdotal order) conferred through the call of the Holy Spirit and attested by a particular or local Church."

But while agreeing with this general statement, we shall feel inclined to linger over certain points in it. There is first of all that important sentence, "By the Ministry we mean an office within the Church of Christ (not a sacerdotal order)." We repudiate for our ministry all priestly claims that cannot with equal validity be applied to our laymen: if we are going to speak about priesthood at all, then we say that every believer is a priest. At least that is the usually accepted interpretation of our doctrine. But in recent years there seems to have been some attempt to modify this view. Letters have appeared in the *Baptist Times* which try to make some real and vital distinction between a minister and a layman, a special point of difference emerging, for example, in the matter of the Communion Service. It is felt by some that there should be something in the minister, as such, that fits him better than a layman, to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It is not, as far as I can judge, that our ministers want to appropriate to themselves any sacerdotal superiority: it is rather a reaction from that impoverished conception of the minister which, as Dr. Whitley once put it, hardly discriminates his position from that of a school teacher, valued for his character and ability, but liable to dismissal at three months' notice. It is, of course, a very laudable ambition to make our conception of the ministry a dignified one, to invest it with as much authority as possible. But it is surely a mistake to seek for either dignity or authority in any considerations of an external character. Dignity and authority, we hold, belong to a minister, not because we address him as the Reverend, or because he adopts a special cut in his suit or a special shape in his collars, not because a certain man may have placed hands upon him and repeated a certain formula: dignity and authority belong to him only by virtue of his spiritual consecration to the service of Christ. And if this be the qualification, there is nothing to prevent a layman, of appropriate spirituality, taking the minister's place in the administration of the Sacraments of the Church. This does not mean, of course, that we shall regard it as altogether indifferent whether a minister or a layman administer the Sacraments. It will always be acknowledged that it is in

the interests of order and effectiveness that he should preside at the Lord's Table whom special opportunities and special experience have fitted for the performance of those solemn duties. Nothing but chaos would result if we were to proceed on the principle that anybody can administer the Sacraments just as well as the minister. That is not our position. We hold that a minister is unfitted for the administration of the Sacraments if he is not spiritually fitted: the same remark applies to a layman. But we also say that both may take an honourable place at the Lord's Table if their own personal spiritual fitness is also attested by the considered judgment of the Church.

A further point which demands notice is the statement:

"the ministry is an office conferred through the call of the Holy Spirit and attested by a particular Church."

There is first of all the subjective element . . . the sense of vocation in the mind of a candidate: this, in our theory, is safeguarded by the corporate and external element . . . the voice of the Church. In this way it seems as though we had attained a really safe conception where private notions may be balanced by the more mature thought of the community. But the difficulty is, that in practice these two factors taken together do not always guarantee a valid call to the ministry. A man may honestly have felt the call, a particular Church may have signified its confirmation of that call . . . and yet both may have made a mistake. Have we not known cases of men who, at a period in their life have retired from the ministry, feeling that after all they were not really fitted? And yet these men, by our theory, seemed to be valid ministers, for according to their own solemn conclusion they had received the call of the Holy Spirit and a particular Church had attested that call. But in spite of their own view, and the view of the Church, they later found that they had made a mistake. There is, therefore, always an incalculable element in a man's entry into the ministry. Whether the call be a valid one or not can be decided only by the manner and the results of our functioning. Here, as in most places, it is the case that "by their fruits ye shall know them."

And so we may say that, from our particular point of view this morning, the more important word in the title of this paper is the word "function." Many of us prefer that word to the word "office": its connotation is at once deeper and wider. As a term it is instinct with life, with activity. We speak, for example, of the functions of the body . . . the nutritive function, by which an organism is enabled to live and grow and maintain its individuality . . . the reproductive function, by which the perpetuation of the species is maintained . . . the functions of correlation, by which the outer world is brought into relation with

the organism, and the organism is enabled to act upon the outer world. It might be valuable to take these three physical illustrations of the term "function" and apply them to our work. (1) Nutritive . . . how suggestive the thought that our business is to grow and maintain our individuality: (2) reproductive . . . how important to perpetuate a succession of men who shall be ministers of the Gospel: (3) correlative . . . how necessary to get into relations with the outer world and establish contact with life and its manifold problems. The application cannot be pressed too far, but when broadly applied, it is certainly suggestive.

The *function* of the Baptist Ministry: this is the crux of the whole matter.

Now it is around this conception of the function of the ministry that a great many problems gather. From our entry into College until our last days in the service of the Church we are concerned, or at least ought to be concerned, with this question: What are the conditions of the proper and adequate exercise of the ministerial function? Some time ago there was published an article about the ministry in a most unlikely magazine—*Cassell's Magazine of Fiction.* It was entitled, "Living up to my Halo," and the sub-title was, "An intimate view of a Minister's Private Life." And the article began as follows:

> "Have you noticed something very strange about the saints we see in pictures? They all wear conspicuous halos round their heads, and seem not to mind. It is as if it were altogether pleasant and comfortable to be marked as a saint, whereas anybody who tries it will think differently. I know, because I happen to have a halo of my own—a professional ministerial halo that bids people write 'Reverend' before my name, and respect my 'cloth.' . . .
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> "In the presence of a hushed congregation men laid their hands on my head and set me apart to be a minister of God. Ever after something sacred was to attach itself, not only to my daily business and its responsibilities, but to my very self. My arms were to welcome little children . . . my hands were to break the bread of the Sacrament. My lips were to speak the words that bind men and women in holy wedlock, that lay the dead to rest beneath the sod, and that proclaim the glories of the life everlasting. . . . I, a crude beginner in the ministry, was to wear a halo!"

Now beneath the humour of this article, a humour both of content and of language, there lay a very serious idea, namely, that the ministry is something concerned with an ideal, that it bears a relation to solemn and holy things. And the problem for the writer of the article was the problem of attaining his ideal, of living up to the high standard . . . the problem he expressed in

the semi-humorous way, "Living up to my Halo." That problem is *our* problem . . . that we may be able to function adequately and gloriously in the organic life of the Kingdom of God.

The adequate performance of our ministerial function demands the careful and constant culture of our own life. We may assume as needing no emphasis in a meeting of this kind habits of devotion, the cultivation of the inner life, the frequent and humble bending before the Holy Shrine. But the careful culture necessary for our work carries us beyond this in the direction of all-round mental equipment. On this point there is, at the present time, a difference of opinion. There are two schools of thought . . . or, perhaps, we ought to say, one school of thought, and another distinguished by the lack of it. A fairly prominent layman in London was speaking of the call of a certain young minister to a pastorate. He said: "This young man has not had a college training . . . and I think it a good thing that he hasn't." There are still, we regret to say, a number of people in our Churches who are suspicious of our college training. They talk glibly of the sufficiency of the call of the Spirit. . . . "That is what we want," they say, "a man who feels called of God . . . then he will preach the old Gospel." There is something very subtle and very sinister in that point of view. It is the point of view that confuses ready citation of texts with true knowledge of the Bible, that confuses eloquence in prayer with real devotional power, that confuses volubility with sincere preaching ability. And it is a confusion that is justified neither by the New Testament nor by the history of preaching, nor by the needs of our day. Nothing can justify it. How dare any man, who really believes that the Spirit of God has called him to this service, do anything else than place upon the altar *all* his talents and powers . . . and those talents not in state of moribund decay but in a condition of increasing development? I sometimes wish that our Calvinists would remember the deep and wide culture of Calvin, that our men who revere C. H. Spurgeon would sometimes read his lectures to his students. The evangelical stalwarts of our Church were not men who allowed the sense of Divine Call to discount the need for continual culture. The call to preach is a call to think. The call to the ministry is a call to mental and moral discipline. And surely, of all callings, ours should be the best equipped. This is not necessarily a matter of academic distinction, for every graduate knows that his real culture, the finest fruits of his mental discipline, appear generally when the day of examinations is over. But many of us will never cease to thank God that from the beginning we were encouraged to pass examinations. They never did, and never will, take the place of real consecration . . . but do you not remember how

those examinations, and the preparation for them, opened up to you avenues along which your minds have continually wandered ever since? There are very few men who can afford to dispense with the discipline of careful and guided study: there are no men who can afford to do without the wider outlook and the more richly-stored mind that such study brings. I shall not say anything about our ministry in the past: our problem is the ministry that is to be, and that part of our *own* ministry which lies before us. We must gain the respect of those who know us and listen to us. We must work for the day when of every Baptist minister it can be said, "he is a careful steward of his time," when, for example, the boys and girls of our congregations will give to us, as teachers of religious truth, a respect at least equal to that which they pay to their teachers in the schools. Is this asking too much? It is the very least we can do, if we believe that the function of the ministry is noble and dignified and sacred.

Further, the adequate performance of our ministerial function demands a straight aim for our objective. But what is our objective? Again, there is difference in the answers to this question. One man, with his eyes on Spurgeon, will say that the true aim of the minister is to preach and live for the conversion of men and women, for the saving of souls. Another, with his eyes on McLaren, will strive to become a careful and helpful expositor of Scripture. Another, with his eyes on Jowett, will devote himself purely to the gracious and winsome ministry of the Word. Yet another, with his eyes on Clifford, will range over the whole area of human problems, social, economic, and political, and will endeavour to preach and practice a social gospel. Now all these particular emphases do less than justice to the great names adduced, for if we enquire carefully into the matter we shall find that all these great preachers had other sides to their ministry than those which made them particularly famous.

There is something very attractive in the suggestion that our ministry should be as broad as possible, that we should endeavour to express the teaching of Christ in every avenue of human life and thought. It is, I think, this attraction which encourages many of the younger ministers of to-day to engage in social and political activities, or, if they do not openly so engage, to give to their public ministry a distinctively social and economic flavour. It is known to many of us how sometimes this policy has wrecked Churches. And whenever this happens, it is easy to lay the blame on the Church, and to say that Church members of a particular kind are not alive to the demands of the social gospel. But we are not so sure that all the blame lies at the door of the Church. Is it not possible that the conservatism of so many of our people arises, not from any lack of sympathy with the aims

and methods of the so-called social gospel, but rather from a sense of what is the true and vital function of the ministry? It has been suggested that ministers may have so many objectives that they may spend their time missing them all. Everybody will admit that, at the present time, we have rather an overplus of organisations. We are in danger of having too many meetings. In London, for example, a minister has not merely his own meetings within his own Church: in addition he must take some account of meetings in his own suburb, meetings within his Group, and meetings of the London Baptist Association. This is to leave out all the other organisations—League of Nations Union, Temperance organisations, societies for the Promotion of Public Morality, with all their attendant committees. Now of every one of these organisations we can say with truth, "this is a valuable thing." But the important question we have to answer is: how far can we, as ministers, engage in all these things? Some men delight in them all, and appear to flourish on them. But we can legislate only for the average minister: it is the average minister doing his duty faithfully on whom the success or failure of the work depends. What shall we say of ourselves in this connection?

May I say that the view to which I have been strongly drawn of late is this: the time seems to have come for the Church, led by her ministry, to narrow somewhat the range of her activities. This will appear to be a desertion of the modern movement, and in direct opposition to the modern trend, but it has been strongly impressed on my own mind by the fact that in all our Churches the multiplicity of attractions is making it increasingly difficult to cultivate either private or public devotion and lay the foundations of spiritual life. Our Churches would all be improved by more attention to prayer, the study of the Bible, and the private and individual cure of souls. This may sound "old fashioned," but on this point the "old-fashioned people" are surely right. This is the *specific* thing we have to do: if we as Churches do not do it, it will not be done. We do not mean in any way to disparage attention to social and economic issues: we are not blind to the broader implications of our Gospel, indeed, the full application of the Christian spirit to every sphere of social activity is one of the pressing needs of our time. But there is one thing that cannot be excused, the failure to foster the spiritual life of the people committed to our charge. In an address from the Chair of the Congregational Union, Dr. J. D. Jones made a great plea for preaching, and preaching which centred on the central things. He spoke out of a deep and mature experience, and as far as we can judge all experienced ministers say the same thing. It is a very significant thing that at the end of his life

Dr. Clifford, *the* man amongst us who more than any had fought the battles of the press and the platform, who had entered into the dusty arena of political and social reform, should counsel us to go in for what he called Personal Evangelism. And, coming from him, such counsel meant just the narrowing of our range, and at the same time, the deepening of it.

And, after all, within this narrower sphere, there is room for all our breadth. A man does not necessarily become narrow because he restricts the range of his activities. The faithful minister can say: "My sphere is primarily my own Church: my own Church means men and women eager for spiritual help as well as instruction: it means young people who need culture in *every part of their life.* And although I restrict my sphere to my Church there is not a faculty I possess that is not continually called upon." Our direct objective is the claiming of all our people, young and old, for Christ. In many cases this means a direct effort for conversion . . . and let us not be afraid either of the word, or of the thing it means. In other cases it means constant encouragement to deeper consecration. In all cases it means the constant and faithful pastoral and teaching ministry. The contest against sin in this world is fought along a far-flung battle line, but *for us, the* point of operations is the Church which has called us to its ministry. Paul told the Ephesians that Christ loved the Church. A Baptist minister should be second to none in his love for the Church. A love for the Church, a belief in the Church, a pride in the great record of her history in spite of all the blemishes . . . these seem to be essential for the inward equipment of the faithful minister.

A ministry thus conceived, in its nature and its function, has no need to be ashamed. We are on sure ground when we impose on all who perform the ministerial function the ultimate test of spirituality. We need not apologise for our orders. We need no re-ordination. Our concern is not so much ordination, as the faithful living of the long days that follow it. Bishop Barnes, preaching at Westminster some time ago, is reported to have said: "The true Christian idea is that for due order certain men should be set apart as ministers to perform the highest acts of congregational worship; yet, if a layman commissioned by the congregation should perform such acts, we should deem his conduct irregular, but certainly not spiritually void. It is then impossible in the light of the New Testament to unchurch the great Nonconformist communions of to-day" . . . a very significant admission, coming from the lips of a distinguished Anglican. Our entry into the ministerial function, as compared with that of a Roman or Anglican priest, may lack a certain stately ritual and an elaborate appeal to the eye: but it is no wise lacking in

New Testament validity. It is rich in noble precedent: it has been hallowed by the faithful following of a great and sturdy race of Free Churchmen who have laid the whole world under obligation by that heritage of spiritual freedom which they so effectively bequeathed. And in this age, an age of increasing restlessness, when so many are searching for that which has roots and touches reality, when man are more and more to be judged by their personal character rather than by their claims to authority, who shall say that there is not a great need for that witness which *we* are especially called to bear? Everything depends, humanly speaking, on our adequate equipment for our work, and upon our continued loyalty, not only to the best traditions of the past, but also to the best thought of the present, and whatever the future may have to reveal to minds that are unfettered and open to the light on every side.

F. TOWNLEY LORD.

WILBRAHAM AND MELBOURN General Baptist churches were approached in November 1654 by the Fenstanton church; Anthony Grey of Thaxfield was then Elder of the latter church, which frequently met at Royston. In 1672 Benjamin Metcalf took a licence for his house at Melbourn, and Edward Hancock was licensed to preach at John Dennis's house in Wilbraham. After 1689 there were supplies, including John Lacy, apparently of Spalding. In 1711 John Catlin certified his house in Gold Street, Wilbraham, and opening services were conducted by Jemmett, of Dunning's Alley in London. Other leaders were John Goring, Edward Elgar, Michael Harding, Simon Martin. Other centres were Melbourn, Fulbourn, Saffron Walden. The church was strongly orthodox. In 1720 Scarlet Moody and Charles Hapgood succeeded Harding and Martin as Elders. Catlin died 1723, Hapgood in 1733. James Eades came from London to Walden, and in 1740 was ordained with Benjamin Barron to the Walden-Melbourn group, while Fulbourn was cared for by Moody since 1736. Barron died 1741, but Thomas Barron succeeded in 1757, a year before Moody's death. Charles Parmen from Headingham took charge of Fulbourn till 1764, and after Eades died in 1769, the whole group re-united under Thomas Barron, assisted by Christopher Payne from Chesham. In 1805 the church had joined the New Connexion.

Paul's Salutation to the Ephesians.

IN Ephesians i. 1-2, we are given three ideas which take us to the very core of Paul's theology and religion. They are (1) his designation of himself, (2) the description of his hearers, (3) his salutation.

I.

Paul describes himself as "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God." He generally begins his letters with a personal greeting, in which he describes himself as the writer and gives some sort of personal salutation to the readers. In fact, this was the general method in the ancient world. Both the writer and the readers of a letter were defined in the first few words. But there is a note of authority to be found in some of the letters of Paul that is absent in others. Here, for example, he speaks of himself as "the apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God." That is explained by the letter to the Galatians, where he fights hard and at some length to prove the validity of his apostleship, "Paul, an apostle, not of men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." In the Epistles to the Thessalonians, the earliest of the extant epistles, his authority is not stressed. In the Epistle to the church at Philippi, with which he was on the most friendly terms, and where his authority would never be disputed, and also in the letter to Philemon, the note of authority is absent. But it is carefully mentioned in all the other epistles.

The reason for this difference is obvious. After writing the letters to the Thessalonians and before writing any others, Paul was attacked in a very sore place. He preached a very original Gospel, so original that he was not able to carry the majority of Christians along with him. He had to establish his apostleship. There was much to be said against it. He lacked the qualifications laid down in Acts i. 21-22. He had not kept company with Jesus from the day of the baptism until the day that He had been taken up, and he had not seen Jesus in His resurrection form between the day of resurrection and the day of ascension. Further, he was not reckoned by the Twelve to be on their level as an interpreter of the Christian faith. Further, the Gospel preached by Paul was so different from that preached by the rest of the apostles, that it was natural that he should be asked for pretty strong credentials. He had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He had been a relentless persecutor of the church. He had

not seen Jesus apparently during His ministry. And then, when he became a Christian, he went further than them all. He said that Jesus abolished all differences, broke down all barriers, and made the law of the Jews a thing of the past. It was only faith in Christ that mattered. It was no wonder that he was asked for his credentials.

The difficulty was that some went out of their way to annoy him. If they had kept to their own churches, things would not have reached such a pass. But they followed Paul about from place to place, endeavouring to undo what he had done. It was this most particularly which aroused his anger. His self-defence is concerned, in the main, with the following points: (1) First, he knows his apostleship is from God. He always makes this clear. "An apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God" is almost part of his name. He had not been appointed by the church. He had seen the Lord. He had his authority straight from Him. He knew from his own experience that Jesus was alive and he could speak with boldness as one of the redeemed. The journey to Damascus was the turning-point in his career. The whole of the theology of Paul is but an interpretation and an explication of that experience. (2) He had paid the price for his apostleship, just as much as the rest of the apostles. He had proved by his readiness to suffer for the Gospel that he was an accredited servant of Jesus Christ. In fact, he had suffered more than them all. He had been "in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft." (3) He had been officially recognised at Jerusalem by the other apostles and his work among the Gentiles was taken to be of God. (4) He had the same rights in the churches as the apostles. He could demand to be supported by the churches, and the fact that he worked at his own trade and renounced his rights, gave him, in his own judgment, claims to authority such as the best of the apostles could not gainsay. There is no doubt that Paul was attacked in the tenderest spots. He was accused of egotism. He worked more abundantly than the rest of the apostles, but he knew it, and the others did not take it kindly when he told them. He was humble before God, but he had no false modesty, and was always ready to defend his rights when they were attacked by men. He was a chosen messenger of God. He was part of his own work. He had been set apart by God for the evangelisation of the heathen. This was all true, and Paul knew it to be true, and it would be particularly galling for him to have it all misconstrued. He was said to be fighting for his own advantage rather than for the glory of God, to be filling his own pocket with the collection he was making for the church at Jerusalem, to be distorting the Gospel rather than acting as a messenger of God.

The anger of Paul is reasonable, and in his defence he speaks with the scorn and passion of a great man, even if he does not reveal the patience and forbearance of a great saint.

By the time that the letter to the Ephesians was written the fight was over. His position was secure, and his apostleship was recognised by all. But the scar is there. Paul will make no more mistakes. To the very end of his life, he is "*an apostle of Christ through the will of God.*"

But he was more than a fighter for his rights: he was a humble servant of God. He had the heart to which the secrets of the Kingdom are revealed. He was not an apostle through any rights of his own. He was too conscious of his black past to make such an assertion. It was no self-sought task, this of preaching the Gospel. It was the will of God. He had been a blasphemer. Last of all to him had the Lord appeared, as unto an abortion, one born out of due time. He was the least of all the saints. It was no insight, no ability, no claims he had upon God that gave him the right to speak: it was all the expression of the sheer grace of God. Paul can never grasp the fact of God's goodness to him. He murders language and drags up words by the roots in his efforts to show how good God has been. It was God's will that set him apart as a preacher. It was God's will that led to his conversion. It was God's will that had mastered him. It was God's will that gave him authority to speak to the churches. It was the certainty of being always open to the influence of the Spirit that gave Paul such power. His whole theology is super-naturalistic. The will of God is supreme in the life of man.

II.

Paul uses two suggestive words to designate his readers. One is "saints," and the other is "faithful." We will take the word "saint" first.

First of all we must guard ourselves against misconception. The associations of the word in the mind of Paul are Jewish and not Greek. Quite a new turn has been given to the study of Paul by the endeavour to see the sources of his thought in the current phraseology of Greek thought and the mystery religions. Our attitude to this question affects vitally our interpretation of some of his teaching. But we can say without any prejudice on this larger question, that his view of saintliness is, in general, based upon his study of the Old Testament rather than upon his acquaintance with Hellenistic religion. For one thing, he uses a different term. He speaks of the saint as *hagios,* which is the regular LXX word for *qadosh.* But the technical word for the initiated in the mystery religions is *hosios.*

In ancient religion generally, the conception of holiness is frankly magical. That is holy upon which rests the taboo of the Gods. Religion cannot exist without the conception of holiness. Holiness is that which is divine or which belongs to the divine. At first, this is purely physical or formal. But later on, men began to think ethically, and holiness came to have a semi-religious and ethical character. That is holy which belongs to the gods and which shares in the nature of the gods.

In the Old Testament it is Yahweh who is holy. In much of the Old Testament, we find traces of a magical element in the idea of holiness, but the final outcome of the religion of the Old Testament is of a far higher order. At first, the people of Israel were considered to be holy because they belonged specifically to Yahweh, and their holiness did not depend upon any moral quality they themselves possessed, but the final outcome of the thought of the Old Testament is that the nation is holy because it has received a special revelation from God, of His gracious love and His purpose for the world, and that it reveals its holiness by being faithful to its high calling and by handing on to others the revelation it has itself been privileged to receive. At first, the Sabbath is holy because it is a taboo day, and for some reason it is dangerous to work on it, but the best thought of the Old Testament regards the Sabbath as holy because on it the people remember with gratitude the way in which God delivered them from Egypt, and the chance is given to all the working classes to rest. But though an ethical content begins to fill the idea of holiness, the thought of consecration to God is still uppermost. The Temple is holy because it has been set apart for God. He watched over all its building, and made orders concerning the most minute details, even down to the door-posts and the nails. The priests are holy because they are set aside for the service of Yahweh. The altar is holy because the sacrifices on it belong to Him. The Sabbath is holy because He has set His seal on it.

In the New Testament the primary meaning of the word is preserved. The saints are not those who live a cloistered existence, but those who engage in the normal occupations of life, going about their business as men and women, husbands and wives, masters and servants, tradesmen and preachers, in all things trying to live as those who belong to God. The term does not imply any extraordinary ethical attainment. All the early Christians were saints or were called to be saints. They were consecrated members of the consecrated body, called by the will of God into the service of His holy Church, and set apart for His service. They did not lay claim to any special merit. They had not made themselves into saints. It was by no endeavours of their

own that they had attained to holiness, although all the New Testament urges upon the Christians to live worthily of their calling. They were saints because God had called them to Himself, set His seal upon them, manifested His love to them. Man can consecrate nothing: it is God who consecrates all things. The priests are holy, not because men appoint them, but because God elects them. And Christians are holy, not because they voluntarily dedicate themselves to the cause of God, but rather because God has chosen them out of the world for Himself.

But Paul is influenced by some other considerations.

(1) In any case, apart from any origin of his conceptions, he is, in some moods, an unqualified pre-destinarian. I say, "in some moods," because Paul is a man of more than one idea. He is a universalist. The Gospel is for everyone. That is the great force at the back of his missionary preaching. But he is a pre-destinarian, for all that. He knows that God has His elect, and he can give no proper interpretation of the election. It is something He cannot understand, but he knows it to be true. But election is ethically conditioned. Those whom God knew beforehand He also pre-destinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. Those who were pre-destinated were called, and those who were called were justified, and those who were justified were also glorified. God would carry through His work to the end. He might call men and women into His church before they were worthy, but before He had finished with them, He would make them worthy. The Christians were saints first because they belonged to God, but before God had done with them, they would be saints because they were God-like.

(2) In some sense, Paul believed in the essential purity of everyone. He made no mistake in reading life. He did not go through the world with his eyes closed. But he learned how to look for virtue in unexpected places. He believed in the universalism of Christianity, because there was something in all to which it could appeal.

(3) Paul shares with the early Christians the habit of looking upon the Christian life as fully made all at once, even though salvation has to be worked out by the grace of God through the whole personality. He can call himself an apostle of God and yet confess that he has to beat his body black and blue to make it go in the right way. He can speak of the Christians at Ephesus as "saints" and as "in Christ," and yet warn them against some of the grossest sins. He sees the end always. He may have to plough through the Slough Despond and climb Hill Difficulty, but the Shining City is always there.

(4) Paul shows he is giving an ethical meaning to the idea of the saints by saying that they are the "faithful in Christ

Jesus." It is doubtful what "faithful" means. It may mean "trustworthy," or it may mean "trusting." Probably the second is meant. A Christian church is composed of men and women who put their trust in the Lord Jesus. But to Paul, faith meant far more than the acceptance of a creed, or the assent to a historical fact: it meant the outgoing of the whole personality to love and adore and serve the One who is accepted as Saviour and Lord.

The conception of the believer being "in Christ" takes us to the very core of Paul's thought.

Since the publication of Deissmann's monograph on this phrase, it has generally been interpreted in a local sense. The Christian is in Christ in the sense that Christ is the surrounding atmosphere of the Christian. Christ or the Spirit is in the form of an extended supersensuous substance, into which the Christian enters, and which he is privileged to share. But for many reasons, we should pause before accepting this theory. (1) First of all, *en* does not always have the same meaning. Thus, in several cases, it probably means "through." Such is the case in Rom. vi. 11, "Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus," and in Col. i. 13-14, "who delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." Sometimes, again, *en* seems to imply "in fellowship with." Such is the case in Rom. xvi. 7, "Salute Andronicus and Junias—who also have been in Christ before me." Then again, it may quite conceivably mean "under the power of," as in Rom. viii. 9, "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit." In any case, if the particular meanings suggested here are not sound, the term "in Christ" is capable of such a wide interpretation that Deissmann's theory must fall to the ground for linguistic reasons alone. (2) Paul is capable of expressing the same thought by exactly the opposite words. He can speak of the believer being in Christ, but he can equally well speak of Christ being in the believer. It is surely impossible to regard the Christian as the surrounding atmosphere of Christ!

The term is very elastic and capable of more than one interpretation. The really important fact is that Paul was trying to explain the close intimacy of Christ and the Christian. Christ had renewed the personality of the believer from its very centre.

Several points in this need to be carefully examined.

(1) Paul, together with all the early Christians, believed in a risen and glorified Lord, who was alive in their midst and whose power they could test in their daily experience. Christ had lifted the Christians into the realm of the eternal and invisible.

Historical considerations had, for the time being, been forgotten. The Christian was in living contact with Christ in the unseen world. This was the distinctively Christian feeling. Jesus was Saviour, not only in the sense that by one historic event in the past, He had purchased their freedom, but also because even now, by the imparting of His Spirit, He was leading them on to greater and ever greater spiritual and moral victories. He was their Lord, their King, their Life, their Head, growing up within them, renewing and perfecting the whole life.

(2) By the "Christ in you" conception, Paul meant something ethical. The Christian gave obedience to Christ, loved His law, did His will, and accepted Him as moral authority. But he meant more than that. The union was more than one of mind and will: it was *unio mystica.* Christ was the real substance of the soul of the Christian. The language of Paul needs that interpretation. He pleaded for the absorption of one personality in the other, and the finding of one in the other. But though he was teaching frank mysticism, he preserved his ethical sanity. He demanded earnest prayer to God, and prayer can be directed only to one who is outside of us and above us. Then also the Christian must not take too close an interest in his own mystical experiences. Paul might have visions and ecstasies, but he did not think that his religious life depended upon them. Confident hope in Jesus Christ was required. The Christian must do his work, study to be quiet, gain strength by prayer, and carry out his social obligations. The emphasis of Paul on social ethics was a counter-blast to his mysticism.

(3) The source of Paul's mysticism is to be found in Hellenism. It is foreign to Judaism. The union of the godly man and God in the Old Testament and in the teaching of Jesus is one of purpose and will. There is no such thing as a *unio mystica.* The only Jewish writers who teach it are those like Philo, who have already been influenced by Hellenism. The conception is not Paul's creation. He does not apologise for it or explain it. He goes upon the assumption that his readers will accept it. We have to look to the Greek cults as the source of this idea. Already, men had been told that they could enter into the supersensible world by ecstatic experiences. Already they had heard that the divine indwelling could be the permanent possession of the believer. When Paul spoke about the indwelling Christ, he could rely upon a certain amount of sympathy, because his readers had already heard about the indwelling Attis and Osiris. The fact that Paul's mysticism was charged with Hebrew ethic, while it safeguarded him from the excesses of the devotees of the cults, did not prevent him learning from any teacher who had anything good to teach.

III.

The salutation of Paul is expressed very beautifully in the words, "*grace and peace in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Here he binds together the customary Greek and Hebrew salutations. But these words are more than an expression of courtesy: they are at once a prayer and a benediction.

Grace and peace are great Pauline words. Grace refers to the free and absolutely unmerited kindness of God which flows out to men through the medium of Jesus Christ, and peace is the consequent sense of fellowship and sonship of man to God and fellowship and brotherhood of man to man.

What is important in this salutation is that Jesus is coupled with God as the bestower of grace and peace. Except in one or two disputed texts, Paul never speaks of Jesus as God. Moreover, he is extremely careful to show that in all things, Christ is subordinate to the Father. He is Saviour, but His saving grace is the expression of the love of God. He is not the Creator: He is the creative agent of God. When He has completed His work of redemption, He will hand over everything to God, in order that God may be all in all. The disciple, in his praying, trusts to the mercy of Christ, but he never prays to Christ. But, in spite of all that, Jesus, most assuredly, in the thought of Paul, stands on the divine side of reality. He is associated with God in essentially divine acts. He is far above men and angels. No other name can stand beside His name.

Paul speaks of Jesus as Lord. That title has displaced both "Messiah" and "Son of Man." The reasons for this are not hard to seek. These titles are essentially Jewish, and have little meaning to Greeks. Further, they are not wide enough. They are bound up with Apocalyptic, and are not capable of that broad interpretation which the gradually widening message of Christ demands.

What is the meaning of "Lord"? There is no doubt that it has a moral reference. It defines Jesus as the Lord of the moral life, the One who has the right to make commands and to receive obedience. That much is certain. The Christian was the slave of Christ. But there was more than that in it. The term implies worship and divinity. We need to ask two questions. How did the Christ-cult come into the church? What is the origin of the title "Lord"?

In asking these questions, we are entering upon one of the most debatable points in early Christian history. But the task cannot be shirked. It is a sheer necessity for the exegete and the student of historical theology. To many, it may not seem to matter what the origin of the terms is: they are either right or

wrong, and our attitude to them depends upon their truth and not upon their origin. But that cannot satisfy the serious student for a single second. Others think that to enquire into the origin of Paul's ideas is to undermine the authority of the Christian religion, and to cast doubt upon the supreme excellence of Christ. But that again is wrong. What we ought to be out for is truth. Jesus is bigger than our theology and more important than any name that we can ever give to Him. When we are dead and our theologies are dead, He will stand. But theology moves on. The Gospel is the same for all, but the presentation of it varies with different peoples and at different times. When we are enquiring into the origins of Paul's theology, it is only that we may the more completely grasp the wealth of the religion of Jesus.

The source of this Christ-cult is not to be found in the teaching of Jesus. Jesus claimed, at the end of His life, at any rate, to be the Messiah. He spoke of Himself as the Son of Man. He called disciples to Himself. He sent them out to preach the message of the Kingdom of God. But He laid down no creed and founded no church. There is no such thing as a revealed theology. He demanded nothing approximating to a worship of Himself. Whether or not divinity is the right word to apply to Him, when we take into account all that He did and said and the whole of His influence in the world, is another matter, but the fact seems to be certain that there is no warrant for it in the teaching of Jesus as it is given to us in the Synoptic Gospels.

We cannot say that the worship of Christ came in gradually and naturally through the growing appreciation and understanding of the historical Jesus. It took a long time before the real nature of the life of Jesus was understood. At first, theology was Adoptionist. Jesus was constituted Christ by the Resurrection from the dead. Then later on, the Messiahship was carried back to the Transfiguration, and further back than that, to the Baptism. But of all theories of the Person of Christ, the Adoptionist is the most repellent to modern thought. God may become man, but men can never become God. In the early church, the cult of Jesus was always attached to the Risen and Exalted Christ, and there was a clear enough historical sense to prevent worship being carried back into the life of Jesus. If it was the growing appreciation of the greatness of the historical Jesus that led to the worship of Christ, it is hard to understand why the worship should not be made to shine occasionally through the historical framework. The doctrine of the Living Christ depended upon certain irrefutable facts of experience, but the interpretation of that doctrine depended upon the intellectual atmosphere at the time.

The worship of Christ is not the natural outcome of Messianism. The origins of Messianism in Israel are obscure, but one point is certain. The Messiah was generally conceived of as man. Sometimes he was put on the level of the angels. Never was he put on a higher level than the angels. Now angel-worship was an abhorrence to the Jews and to the early Christians. In Judaism, there was no way through from the honouring of an angel to the worship of the Messiah. And the way Paul puts the name of Jesus above all names that are named in heaven and earth and opposes the angel-worship that is beginning to creep into the church, shows that he looks upon the two as being on entirely different levels.

No one factor is big enough to explain the Christ-cult. Each of the preceding reasons may have a certain element of truth in it, but all of them together are not enough. One other fact must be taken into account. On ground purely Jewish, the worship of Christ could not possibly have arisen. In going to the Gentiles, Christians saved their religion for the world. Had they kept to Palestine, Jesus would have remained as a Jewish hero and saint. We can see the conception growing in front of us. The worship of Christ was not the mere rationalising of the experience of salvation the believer had received in Christ. It was a gradual enlargement of view which saw in Jesus a Saviour and a Lord greater than all other Saviours and Lords. But this origin of the conception does not affect in the very least the validity of it.

H. J. FLOWERS.

WISBECH CHURCHES. Josiah Thompson has preserved a few notes as to the Particular Baptists who, in 1692, bought land in Deadman's Lane. Robert Rix was their preacher, living till 1728. One Bennet was there, about 1738-1741; this may be Thomas, who was at Birmingham directly afterwards; or William, who was at St. Albans by 1752. The Baptist Board in 1742 had their application for help to build, through Captain Norris; the site was now called Church Lane, apparently. Samuel James, son of Philip James, came from Abraham Taylor's academy at Deptford, but in 1743 succeeded his father-in law, John Needham, at Hitchin. John Brown (of Ipswich?) followed, but went to Kettering in 1750. Supplies for some time. Meanwhile a new cause had been organised by Simson at Soham, where the hyper-Calvinist John Eve was pastor, of whom Andrew Fuller had something to say. He came here in 1771, but left, "unworthily," as Johnson of Liverpool said. The church now fell under the spell of that strange theologian, through Samuel Fisher; and the next phase has been detailed in our *Transactions*, III., 56.

The Centenary of the Baptist Building Fund.

III.—The Baptist Case Committee.

"THE London Society for assisting poor Baptist Churches in the Country, in building and repairing Meeting-houses," otherwise known as the "Baptist Case Committee," was formed in 1784, and functioned for a period of forty years. At first it was composed exclusively of laymen. Each of the Particular Baptist Churches in London annually appointed two of its members, usually Deacons, to serve, and at their first meeting the whole group selected "twelve gentlemen" from the various congregations to sit with them for the year. Later, when the Committee needed strengthening, this representation was altered to four from each of the churches, viz., the minister, two messengers elected by the church, and one other person, not necessarily a church member, who was elected by the contributors at the annual meeting in June. This meeting was generally held at the Committee rooms, which successively were at 22, Paternoster Row, and 18, Aldermanbury. Unfortunately, the Minute Books cannot be traced, and the historical sources available do not disclose the names of the laymen, except that for several years prior to the disbanding of the Committee, Eliezer Wilkinson, a deacon at Prescott Street, and one of the Fundees of the Particular Baptist Fund, was the Chairman, and Samuel Gale, another of the Fundees and a well-known Dissenting Deputy, was "the gratuitous Secretary and Solicitor."

The business of the Committee was "to investigate all the cases applying for help, and when approved to certify and authorise their appeal to individual donors in a regulated succession and an orderly manner."[1] In the investigation of a case, the objects stated to be chiefly in view were:

1. To prevent an improvident expenditure of money.
2. To see that the meeting-house was legally secured for the benefit of the Church.
3. To discountenance improper persons collecting money for approved cases.

[1] James Benham, treasurer of the Baptist Building Fund, in a paper read to the Lancashire and Cheshire Association at its meeting at Ogden on Wednesday, 12th June, 1867. A much-altered draft of this paper has been found in the archives at Furnival Street. In the preparation of it, the author had access to the missing Minute Books.

4. To lay down such regulations as might generally apply to the expenditure of the persons collecting, and to the safe remittance to the order of the Church of the money collected.
5. To give, as much as possible, combined facilities to those ministers who were employed in collecting for such cases as had been previously examined, approved, and recommended by their neighbouring brethren.

Determined to avoid the weaknesses that had characterised the earlier method associated with the Baptist Board, the Committee acted with vigour. Rules were formulated which, in course of time, became quite elaborate.[2] For many years, the personal attendance at a Committee meeting of a duly authorised representative of the country church, preferably the minister, was required. He was expected to answer "rigid and minute enquiries." The nature of these can be gathered from the particulars which were required in writing when subsequently the Committee found it possible to dispense with the personal attendance of the representative of the church. Among other things, the form then in use asked "the reasons for the erection, enlargement, or repair; the nature of the property, whether freehold, copyhold, or leasehold; the number of members forming the church; their profession of faith; the usual number of stated hearers; the amount of the whole expenditure, including purchase of the ground, erection, deeds, etc.; the amount collected by the church among themselves; the amount collected in other places; the balance due." Throughout its forty years, the Committee required "the recommendation of at least two ordained neighbouring ministers, in their own handwriting." And influenced by the statement in the preface to the form of Trust Deed published by the Dissenting Deputies, "that great mischief has in many churches been experienced, both from the imperfection of their Trust-Deeds, and from negligence in filling up the vacancies occasioned by the deaths of Trustees," the Committee also insisted on the production of the title deeds.[3] These deeds were scrutinised with much care, and the Committee did not hesitate to insist that imperfections be rectified. Despite its vigilance, some cases were passed for collection whose deeds in after years were found imperfect. One of the rules read:

> "That where there are not as many as five Trustees, the Committee will expect the Church to enlarge the number to at least nine persons, members of Churches, of the same faith

[2] The rules are printed in the *Baptist Magazine*, August, 1822. They formed the basis of the rules later adopted by the London Baptist Building Fund.

[3] *Baptist Magazine*, October, 1820.

and order; and that it is indispensable in all cases, that the choice of new Trustees shall not be [vested] in the surviving Trustees, but shall be vested in the men members of the Church."

In the days when the personal attendance of the representative of the church was required, it appears to have been the practice for the decision, either to recommend or to reject the case, to be made forthwith. Later, when personal attendance was abolished, the Committee was more deliberate, the following rule being adopted:

"That no case shall be dismissed or determined upon immediately upon its presentation; but on its first reading, shall be referred to the consideration of a subsequent meeting of the Committee."

It is not surprising to learn that many of the cases failed to attain the standard required by the Committee. Those which passed were placed on a rota list "to be signed and sent on circuit in due course." The rejected cases caused difficulty. Expenses had been incurred in the visit to the Committee: the minister could hardly return to his people without having attempted a collection. The result was that, much to the resentment of Londoners, the ministers called on those subscribers whose names they could ascertain, and thus arose what were known as "unauthorised country cases." In passing, it may be mentioned that some country churches refrained from sending their minister to town, and did their collecting by post. The appeals of a few arrived in unstamped envelopes.[4] Londoners protested, and more than one stated that he would not accept unstamped communications. The explanation of one church was somewhat naïve. It was, in effect: "We are collecting because we are poor, therefore we cannot afford to stamp our appeals. We are only asking for a guinea from each one to whom the communication is sent, and we quite understand that the double postage and the cost of remittance will be deducted by the sender from the guinea." Any condemnation of the morality of such an argument needs to be tempered by a remembrance of the poverty out of which the appeal arose.

When a case reached its turn for collection, the Committee's Secretary summoned the minister to town. He brought with him a certified copy of the resolution of the church authorising him to collect on its behalf, and on production of this, his case was signed and he was able to go forth with the imprimatur of the Committee. Usually the case was then taken to the ministers assembled at the Board Meeting for their signatures to be

[4] See occasional letters in the early numbers of the *Baptist Magazine*.

appended, and in common parlance, the cases were still known as "Board Cases." This practice continued with intermittence to 25th April, 1820, when the Board "Resolved that our Secretary be requested to inform the Secretary of the Committee for examining country cases that it is not considered any part of the business of this body to sign Country cases but that Ministers will always be at perfect liberty to sign such cases in this room on their individual account."

The Committee retained a Guide for the purpose of conducting the country ministers through the highways and byeways of the city, and Benham tells us that this Guide was furnished with a list of names and addresses divided into two sections. The first section, comprising the good givers, was designated "the regular list"; the second, called "the by-list," was understood to comprise those who required substantial pressure before they parted with their money. One wonders whether the donors knew of the two lists. Could a subscriber in the "regular list" obtain transfer to the "by-list"? Would one in the latter category, feeling a sense of indignity, object that he was entitled to be classified as a "good giver"? Was regularity in giving the sole qualification for entry on the "regular list," or was the amount of the donation also a factor? Did the Guide's remuneration depend on results? In the absence of the Minute Books, these and other questions must remain unanswered. The Guide's list at one time must have been a tolerably full one, for some years after its preparation strong complaints were made that by deaths and removals it had dwindled to 276. Of those, 187 were classified among the more or less cheerful givers and 89 among those who found it easy to say, "Trouble me not . . . I cannot rise and give thee," but who added their mite if the minister's importunity were sufficiently prolonged.

One of the regulations of the Committee was:

> "That the person who collects be desired once a week to deposit the money collected with the Secretary, who shall report to the Committee the amount he shall from time to time receive; and that the Church do draw upon the Secretary for the sum paid to him."

Another regulation required that the collecting be compressed into one month, at the end of which time the minister was under obligation to deliver up his book to the Committee's Secretary. Occasionally, in special circumstances and by special vote, an extended period was granted, but such extensions were not favoured by the donors, who desired "a little breathing time."

In the early days the Committee aimed at approving four cases yearly, and by the end of 1790, twenty-one cases had been sanctioned. This number was, however, inadequate. Rejuvena-

tion was taking place in the country, the fruits of the revival were being gathered, and many a country Nehemiah echoed the words of the old writer, "The God of Heaven, He will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build." The appeals reached London in growing numbers and within a year of the formation of the Committee it became needful to institute a waiting list. Particulars of the first twenty-one cases are not available, but the following statement printed in Rippon's Annual Register for 1791 is illuminating:

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FOUR COUNTRY CASES
which were patronised in London, 1791.

Case. No.	Church at	Presented	Recommended	Wanted. £ s. d.	Collected. £ s. d.
22	Carmarthen	Dec. 1, 1786	Mar. 4, 1791	100 0 0	86 1 0
23	Hooknorton	May 1, 1787	Jun. 3, 1791	150 0 0	75 0 0
24	Cranbrook	Jun. 1, 1787	Aug. 5, 1791	146 12 0	77 3 6
25	Spalding & Horbling	Oct. 5, 1787	Oct. 7, 1791	200 12 0	75 12 6

We observe at once the wide area from which the cases came—Wales, Oxford, Kent, and Lincoln—a reflection of the self-denying resolution passed by the subscribers that "all churches within five miles of the Standard on Cornhill shall be rigorously excluded and sternly discouraged." It is also worthy of notice that the waiting list had become so long that Carmarthen, although making application within two years of the formation of the Committee, was not recommended for a further period of over four years. Against this enforced delay the country churches were loud in their complaints. Some churches, doubting whether the Committee's authorisation was worth the severe scrutiny to which the cases were subjected and the protracted period of waiting that ensued, demanded the return of their papers and sent their collectors to London on their own responsibility. These added to the number of "unauthorised country cases," and caused controversy. In 1787 and again in 1798, earnest remonstrances were addressed by the Committee to the London ministers against their "encouragement of irregular cases by inviting their advocates to preach in their own pulpits." We have no information to enlighten us; it is therefore an interesting speculation as to how far the grave and reverend fathers of that day gave heed to the earnest expostulations of "the deacons and private Christians" who dared thus to address them.

In the succeeding five years, twenty-one cases were collected,[5]

[5] See Rippon's *Registers*.

viz., 1792, Ogden £79; Moulton[6] £88 8s. 0d.; Manchester £122 9s. 6d.; Beckington £81 14s. 0d.; 1793, Roe £89 15s. 6d.; Wootton-under-Edge £94 3s. 8d.; Moleston (amount not stated); Shipley £66 7s. 0d. 1794, Hertford £80; Bramley (amount not stated); Uckfield £60 7s. 0d.; Coseley £82 18s. 6d. 1795, Great Driffield £58; Bottesford £71 19s. 0d.; Dudley £79 0s. 6d.; Kingston £65 6s. 6d. 1796, Weston-by-Weedon £70; Collingham £36; Ebenezer (Anglesea) £45 7s. 6d.; Slaithwaite £76 5s. 6d.; Shrewsbury £172. In 1792, the Committee reported that Colne was to have followed Manchester, but it had cleared its debt during the period of waiting; a similar report was made of Bridgwater in 1796, of Capel Sion in 1797, and of Downton in 1799. By this year the period of waiting had risen to six years. Masbro' having applied in November 1791, collected £105 0s. 5d. in June 1797, Rhydfelen and Bedford obtained £76 9s. 0d. and £98 15s. 9d. respectively in 1797, the total for that year being £280 5s. 2d. This sum was exceeded in 1798, when the figure reached £518 8s. 0d. (Claxton £92, Coventry £160, Diss £150, Bolton-le-Moor £116 8s. 0d.), and in 1799, when it was £514 8s. 6d. (Barnoldswick £100 1s. 6d., Gildersome £142 17s. 6d., Ipswich £150, Rushden £121 9s. 6d.). Possibly the Napoleonic wars had an influence on the giving power of the subscribers, since with the turn of the century, the amounts somewhat declined, £440 8s. 0d. only being collected in 1800 (Braunston £107, Aberystwyth £106 19s. 0d., Newcastle-on-Tyne £116 7s. 6d., Reading £110 1s. 6d.). A recovery took place in 1801, £487 17s. 0d. (Swanwick £101 18s. 0d., Goodshaw Chapel, Rossendale, £95 6s. 6d., King Stanley £130, Wolverhampton £150 12s. 6d.), and 1802 showed further advance, £499 11s. 6d. (Pendle Hill £127 13s. 0d., Bradford (Wilts.) £121, Merthyr Tydvil £116 2s. 0d., Chapmanslade £134 16s. 6d.). The waiting period now showed a welcome reduction to about three years. In connection with the last case of Chapmanslade, Rippon, in writing[7] of the ordination of the pastor, William Clift, gives information which enables us to visualise the hopes and expectations of the country

[6] The Moulton case was presented on 7th December, 1787, four months after William Carey's settlement. "Beginning with a little 'meeting-room,' his ministry was so successful that it became necessary to build a church, and he worked hard to collect the necessary money, often walking long distances for the purpose" (*William Carey*, by F. Deaville Walker, p. 70). By their slowness, the Londoners lost the opportunity of meeting this great man in the intimacies of their homes. Carey left Moulton three years before the church representative was called to London; and when the collecting was being done Carey was at Leicester, quietly maturing plans for the forthcoming Association Meetings at which the Baptist Missionary Society was founded.

[7] *Register*, vol. iv. p, 983.

friends. After stating that they had " erected a neat, unadorned place of worship " on which there was a debt of £250, and that the members could do no more than pay the interest, he goes on to say, " The case, however, has been admitted by the Committee in London; and it is hoped that it will meet with all encouragement in the great city, if the rich and generous people in the several neighbouring churches do not, by early exertions, make it unnecessary to apply for contributions in the metropolis."

Information as to the churches assisted and the amounts raised during the ensuing fifteen years is lacking, but Benham's Paper sheds light on some of the activities of the Committee. Shortly after the commencement of the century, the number of cases recommended was increased to six per annum, and a year or two later the number was again increased to eight. The increases did not, however, enable the Committee to keep pace with the applications, and more unauthorised appeals resulted. These included not only cases rejected by the Committee and cases withdrawn owing to the delay, but cases which were not good enough to place before the Committee, usually because of defective title deeds or unnecessary expenditure. The conflicting claims of authorised and unauthorised cases caused such confusion that in 1811 a special committee was appointed to investigate the position. This Committee recommended the discontinuance of personal appeals by the country ministers, and the formation in London of a general fund to which the donors on the regular and by-lists, and others whose interest could be awakened, would be asked to subscribe. Applications for assistance were to be made in writing to the Case Committee, who would then consider each case on its own merits and make an appropriate grant from the general fund. This report was altogether too radical for the orthodox; diehards maintained the fundamentalism of ancient methods and landmarks, and, " after months of discussion and repeated adjournments," by a decisive majority the sane proposals were rejected. Thirteen years later, at the meeting at the Kings' Head, they were revived and accepted with enthusiasm.

One result of the agitation was the election of a more vigorous Committee, and a year or two later, the number of cases per year was increased to twelve. The collectors now followed close on one another, the guide had a full time appointment, and the donors experienced some of the joys of regular and frequent giving. In 1818 it was resolved that no new cases be accepted for twelve months, so that an effort could be made materially to reduce the thirty-five cases already on the rota. In June, 1819, the Committee reported that since the last annual meeting, it had " recommended eleven cases from the following churches, viz., Earl's Colne, Halstead, Hay, Ivinghoe, Deal,

Whitborn, Idle, Swanbourne, Mile Town, (Sheerness) York and Mildenhall, on which rather more than £1,000 has been collected in London and its neighbourhood." [8] Twelve months later the Committee recorded that it had " recommended eleven cases for collection, viz., Newhall Street Birmingham, Gowar, Darkhouse, Coseley Newtown, Chipping-Norton, Wells, Chepstow, Thaxted, Poole, Brentford, and Sible Hedingham, on which cases between £900 and £1,000 had been collected in London and its vicinity." [9] The report[10] presented at the annual meeting on 22nd June, 1821, showed an increasingly generous response, for the collections amounted to £1,123 8s. 6d., viz., Sible Hedingham £84 9s. 6d., Blackwater £70 4s. 0d., Counter Slip, Bristol, £119 3s. 6d., Thorpe £62 10s. 6d., Lewes £116 8s. 6d., Cheltenham £93 18s. 0d., Burford £85, Keighley £89, Sandy Lane £90 19s. 0d., Oldham £103 4s. 0d., Steep Lane £105 19s. 0d., and Southampton £102 12s. 6d. The *Baptist Magazine* for August, 1822, contains the annual report to the preceding June, and from it we learn that the amounts subscribed showed further increase and reached the fine total of £1,250 2s. 0d. The widespread nature of the appeal to London continues noteworthy, and is evidenced by the following list: Halesworth £104 11s. 0d., Redruth £148 7s. 6d., Brentford £104 19s. 0d., Haslingden £83 17s. 6d., Framlingham £81 17s. 6d., Harwich £64 7s. 6d., Battle £127 15s. 6d., Rayleigh £116 10s. 0d., Steventon £87 6s. 0d., Hunmanby £113 19s. 0d., Clare £78 17s. 6d., and Loughborough £117 14s. 0d.

At the end of this year no case for which a collection had not been made had been on the books more than eight months. The next annual report,[11] presented in June, 1823, discloses that, twelve years before, the Maidstone representative had collected upwards of £150. The amount raised in the year was £1,145 5s. 0d., and eleven churches shared in this, viz. Cardiff Welsh Church £110 12s. 0d., Blaby £87 9s. 0d., Earby £105 2s. 6d., Ridgmount £82 0s. 6d., Kilham £105 10s. 0d., Crayford £87 19s. 6d., Wellow £93 12s. 6d., Southwold £97 0s. 0d., Wallingford £104 19s. 0d., Lincoln £117 0s. 0d., and St. Albans £154 0s. 0d. The figures for the final year of the Committee's activities are not available.

For a period of exactly one hundred years, successive generations of London Baptists had thus helped country chapel building. What had they achieved? A conservative estimate would place the amount collected during the sixty years' supervision by the

[8] *Baptist Magazine,* September, 1819.

[9] *Baptist Magazine,* October, 1820.

[10] *Baptist Magazine,* October, 1821.

[11] *Baptist Magazine,* August, 1823.

Board at from three to four thousand pounds. Based on the figures before us, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the amount collected on cases recommended by the Committee exceeded twenty-five thousand pounds. If to these figures we add two thousand pounds for unrecorded Board cases and the unauthorised cases of the Committee's régime, we have a total of at least thirty thousand pounds as the approximate amount subscribed by Londoners in the century 1724—1824. A great record! One that has not perhaps been fully appreciated by Baptist historians when dealing with the contribution of London, "amorphous London," to our denominational story. There is not a county in England but benefited by such generosity, not a county whose witness to-day is not finer because of the help given in the far-off days of which we have been thinking. The boldness of this chapel building policy is seen in stronger relief if we recall the condition of Dissenters in the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth. The iniquitous Test and Corporation Acts were still "a great bulwark of the Constitution," to quote a peer of the realm; the Conventicle and Five Mile Acts, although for many years inoperative, had not been repealed, and the Burial and other Acts served effectively to remind Dissenters of their inferior status in the eyes of the law. The national universities were closed to their sons; and to be a Dissenter was a certain disqualification for the holding of any public office. Their rates went to the support of an Establishment to which they were conscientiously opposed, while their own conventicles had to be specially licensed. In an age of reaction, they were denounced as Jacobites, Nihilists, and revolutionaries, "the enemies of law and order, and the subverters of monarchy and religion." Such a condition of things might well have led them to give up their cause in despair and to abandon all thought of erecting additional meeting houses. They were men of stern stuff, however, who believed, with the pious Doddridge, that the cause of Nonconformity was, in a great measure, the cause of serious religion also; and therefore, undaunted by oppression, they went forward, accounting "all nothing in comparison to liberty of conscience for the profession of Christ."

But new methods of giving the London help had become imperative. While no one questioned the devotion of the London Committee or the generosity of the London friends, few had a good word to say for the system. The points in its favour are perhaps best illustrated by an extract from the memoir of one of the ministers who visited the city. John Palmer, of Shrewsbury, in obtaining £172, apparently collected a larger sum than anyone else during the hundred years. His memoir contains an enlightening and valuable passage:

"After his ordination, [13th April, 1796] one of the first efforts of Mr. Palmer, on behalf of the church, was that of liquidating the debt upon their place of worship; this amounted to nearly £200. As the Committee in London had, at length, admitted their case, he was [in October, 1796] called thither, for the purpose of collecting. He also availed himself of the opportunity this visit afforded, of walking the hospitals and attending the lectures of the different professors, not knowing but he might be driven to the necessity of practising as a medical man, in order to procure a livelihood. [When fourteen he had been apprenticed to a surgeon.] This occasioned an absence from Shrewsbury of five months. He, however, happily succeeded in his application; and, on his return, the debt was fully discharged, and the meeting-house was freed from incumbrance. He had also the additional pleasure of finding that his pulpit had been well supplied during his absence, and his church kept in peace. During his stay in London, he met with great kindness and respect from the ministers and friends of the denomination. His ministry was universally acceptable, and, in a high degree, popular." [12]

The testimony on the other side was overwhelming. *The method was expensive.* It was estimated that on the average at least one-third of the amount collected was absorbed in expenses. A case in 1817 obtained £75, of which £26 15s. 6d. went in expenses. On another occasion, the church representative was such a good beggar that he obtained £146 13s. 9d., but his expenses amounted to £51 3s. 8d. "In one instance, a case was brought to London, on which £80 were collected, but when the expenses were deducted, only £30 remained. In another instance, £1 only was returned to the church, and in another, every farthing collected was expended." [13] In the *Baptist Magazine* of March, 1829, James Hargreaves wrote of "a minister in course of four years absent on begging excursions forty-three weeks, during which he travelled 2,132 miles, walking a great proportion and yet with all his extreme labour, united to frugality, reduced the debt of the place only £140." *The method was unsatisfactory.* Assistance was frequently afforded to the least necessitous cases, the amount collected depending more on the ability, the persuasiveness, and particularly the importunity, of the collector than upon the intrinsic merits of the case. "All beggars are not distinguished by meekness and modesty . . . . just as he [the Londoner] is opening his letters from the post, or preparing others to go thither—or making a purchase—or settling

[12] *Baptist Magazine*, August, 1824.

[13] London Baptist Building Fund, First Report, Appendix III.

an account—with two or three other customers waiting for their turn—an eager claimant presses forward, takes out his book without ceremony, and commences a close siege for his guinea." [14] In such circumstances there was little or no time to inquire into the merits of the case. *The method was harmful.* Many of the ministers suffered considerably in health as a result of the privations to which they were subjected during their four, five, or six weeks' absence from their families. Some of the finer spirits suffered even more as they reflected on the degrading method of obtaining money by "sending ministers about the country as *mendicants*, to beg from the religious public." The first periodical paper issued by the Building Fund in 1845 records that "The case of Beaulieu Rails, now rebuilt and enlarged, was first presented in the metropolis by personal application in 1824. The venerable and beloved minister who then came to plead for it sacrificed his life in the work, and was taken home a corpse. Many other ministers have been, in that work, so broken down in health and spirits as never to recover. . . . The minister of A——n, though worthy of high esteem, declared to the Secretary, that the trial attaching to personal application in London was more than he could bear." The archaic language of the critics is interesting. In the original prospectus of 1824, the author wrote of "the mental suffering endured by meek and modest men, many of whom have been little in the habits of communication with persons of opulence and still less accustomed to the peremptory abruptness of metropolitan intercourse," and then proceeded to "picture such a man, hurrying to and fro, struggling beneath the burden of timidity and apprehension on the one hand, and the consciousness of dire necessity on the other—sharply questioned by one, angrily repulsed by another, and hastily turned away from the door of a third, without being permitted to explain the nature of his errand. . . ." A second pointed out "the injury to ministers who are employed in collecting, especially young ministers, in preventing their studies, degrading their minds, making them idle, gossipping, etc., etc." A third critic considered that the effect was equally injurious for the country church, as "the sheep are left to wander, for want of the shepherd, and at times grievous wolves have entered in among them and devoured them."

It is small wonder that a new method was earnestly sought, and that in the spring and summer of 1824, "many friends to the cause of religion, being convinced that a more eligible plan might be devised, repeatedly met and consulted together." The leaders

[14] Prospectus, over twenty-seven folios in length, issued in 1824, on the formation of the London Baptist Building Fund. It is reprinted in full in the *Baptist Magazine*, January, 1840.

in this movement were three in number, and for the skill and devotion with which they carried through the negotiations extending over several months they deserve more than passing reference. The first, John Dyer, had held pastorates at Plymouth and Reading before coming, in 1817, to join Dr. Ryland in the secretariat of the Baptist Missionary Society. His business methods did not help in the Serampore negotiations—" his letters resemble those of a Secretary of State," wrote Carey—but those business methods, coupled with his love for his country brethren, largely determined the formation of the Building Fund. The second, John Broadley Wilson, of Clapham, was one of the most active laymen of the day, " well known and universally esteemed as an eminently devout Christian, and most liberal supporter of the cause of the Christian religion in every section of the Church." As a member for many years of the Committee of the Home Missionary Society, treasurer of the Missionary Society from 1826 to 1835, and treasurer of the Religious Tract Society, he rendered fine service. The last, James Hargreaves, was minister of Little Wild Street, then one of the leading churches in London. At Bolton and Ogden he had been the minister of churches which had benefited by London collections, and, although he had had no personal experience of collecting, he evidently knew from first-hand sources of the hardships of the system. He was a ready writer and ungrudgingly used his powers in advocacy of the proposed Society. These men invited others to join them in a provisional Committee. The plan rejected in 1811 was considered afresh, and a halo was found to surround it, for in the meantime, its practicability had been amply demonstated by the Wesleyan Methodists. Enthusiasm grew and difficulties disappeared. Subscribers to the present appeals promised to give even more generously. Thus encouraged, the provisional Committee recommended the abolition of the existing system and the formation of a central fund from which grants would be made. We have already recorded that the recommendation was accepted at the meeting at the King's Head on the 10th November, 1824, and the London Baptist Building Fund launched on its voyage. One outcome was that for all practical purposes, the method of assisting country chapel building that had been a feature of London Baptist life for a century came to an end. It had accomplished much: buildings had been erected, congregations encouraged, friendships fostered. Having paved the way, it gave place to a society whose beneficent ministry has enriched Baptist churches for one hundred years, is enriching them to-day, and will enrich them still further in the years ahead. In the next article it will be our privilege to follow this Building Fund in some of its operations. SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

Dr. Thomas Thomas, of Pontypool.

DR. THOMAS THOMAS, Pontypool, is one of the many good, even great, men whose memory is fading because no adequate memorial has been erected to them. There are at once too many and too few biographies. There ought to have been a good one of Dr. Thomas. He deserved it for his own sake, and we needed it as a denomination in order to understand better certain important phases of the development of Baptist life and work in Wales during the early and middle periods of the nineteenth century. Dr. Thomas had a great deal to do with that development.

A biography has been published, however, within the last few months which will do something to fill this recognized gap, *The Life and Work of the Rev. T. Thomas, D.D., First President of the Baptist College, Pontypool,* by the Rev. Thomas Morgan, Skewen. This work is an abridgment of a prize essay contributed to the Welsh National Eisteddfod, Pontypool, 1924. I have a special interest in the book because I was responsible for inducing the Eisteddfod Committee to include the subject as an item in the Eisteddfod programme, and because Crane Street Church provided the prize, and returned the MSS. to the author for publication.

Mr. Morgan will be the first to acknowledge the limitations of his essay, and to wish with us, I am sure, that something more adequate could have been done. The book is small because it was felt that a fair circulation could be secured only if the price was as low as possible. The result is, however, such severe compression that we have more of a skeleton than a flesh-and-blood portrait. Mr. Morgan has rather crowded his facts and has not sufficiently subordinated them to the unifying purpose of portraiture. Sympathetic and imaginative readers can possibly do that for themselves. The style is straightforward and unpretentious, but English idiom is not seldom violated, and it is clear that the author is more at home in Welsh than in English. This is not to be wondered at, however, when we realize that Mr. Morgan ministers to a Welsh congregation and probably does his thinking in Welsh. But his English is as good as that of most Englishmen, and we should be grateful to him for what he has given to us. There is plenty of evidence in his book of diligent, careful work, and students of Dr. Thomas's times will

consult him with advantage. The book is published by W. M. Evans and Son, Carmarthen, and the price is 2s. 6d.

Dr. Thomas was born at Cowbridge, Glamorgan, on January 12, 1805. His father, Thomas Thomas, a small farmer, was a man of no special quality in intelligence or character, but his mother, Mary Thomas, was a good woman, keenly anxious to do all she could for her son. The family soon removed to Leckwith Bridge, near Cardiff, and here, on a small farm, the child grew to boyhood and youth. He was an obedient, intelligent, and attractive boy, fond of solitude, and inclined to hold aloof from other boys.

The poor had few educational advantages in those days, but his parents contrived to give young Thomas a good elementary schooling, first at a school in Llandaff, kept by a Welsh clergyman named Lewis, and later at Cardiff, where he studied for a while under the guidance of the Rev. W. Jones, who had recently settled as minister of Bethany Baptist Church. The boy was thoughtful beyond his years, fond of reading, and gifted with an unusually tenacious memory.

He received early and deep religious impressions. His father, a nominal adherent of the Established Church, gave little or no help. His mother was far more sympathetic, but her influence seems to have been more general than decisive. He seems to have owed most to two poor labourers who worked on his father's farm, and who were earnest members of the newly formed Welsh Baptist Church—the Tabernacle, Cardiff. These good men exercised a deep influence over the boy and induced him to attend the services at their church. At the age of thirteen he applied for baptism at the hands of the minister, the Rev. Griffith Davies, but when the appointed day came his father intervened and forcibly carried him away. Ere long, however, the goodwill of the mother prevailed, and he was baptized on November 22, 1818, in the river Taff.

Developing gifts for service, he was invited to preach. He preached his first sermon on April 12, 1821, in the newly-built Tabernacle chapel. His text was 1 John iv. 10: "Beloved, if God so loved us we ought also to love one another"—a text which was prophetic of much that characterised his subsequent ministry. He soon became known in the district as "the boy preacher," but he was not precocious; nor was he spoilt.

The Tabernacle church, convinced that God was calling him to the holy ministry, furthered his application to Abergavenny Academy. His application was accepted, and he entered that institution on September 2, 1822. He spent two strenuous and fruitful years there, and then, on August 23, 1824, he entered Stepney College, where he studied for four years, under the

guidance of Drs. Murch and Newman and the Rev. Solomon Young. We know little of his student days beyond the fact that he worked very hard (sometimes seventeen hours a day), and that he became intimate with Charles Stovel.

He was ordained to the charge of Henrietta Street Baptist Church, Brunswick Square, on July 18, 1828. The years at this church were happy, strenuous, and unquestionably blessed of God. The membership was quadrupled and the life of the church was proportionately enriched. Prominent members and loyal helpers were Mr. Justice Lush and Jonathan Dawson, the schoolmaster father of the famous George Dawson of Birmingham.

Early in his London ministry—February 22, 1830—Thomas married a Miss David, of Cardiff, and Christmas Evans, one of the grandest men in the history of the Welsh, or any other, pulpit, was one of the guests at the wedding-breakfast. He owed a great deal to this lady, and God gave them over fifty years of happy, blessed, wedded life. Mrs. Thomas died on March 18, 1881.

The London ministry came to an end in 1836, when he answered an urgent call to return to Wales. It was a call to what proved to be his great life work.

I wish there were a competent history of our Baptist Theological Colleges. It would be fascinating and most instructive reading. He who writes such a book will render a great service. Not the least rewarding of its chapters will be that, or those, dealing with Wales.

Monmouthshire has the honour of being the home of our earliest Welsh Baptist Colleges, and the facts are briefly as follows: About 1732 a Mr. John Griffiths, superintendent of the Iron and Japan Works, Pontypool, and an earnest member of Penygarn Baptist Church, rented a house at Trosnant (Pontypool) for the purposes of (1) occasional preaching services and (2) training young men for the Baptist ministry. The Trosnant Academy, as it was called, did good service for nearly forty years, and gave an education to some distinguished men. There was no Baptist college in Wales from 1770 to 1807, and young Welshmen mostly went to Bristol College for their training. In 1807 an academy was opened at Abergavenny, supported by private benefaction (the widow of Dr. Caleb Evans, Bristol, gave £10), and the resolution of an Association conference, held at Penygarn, Pontypool. The Rev. Micah Thomas, minister of Frogmore Street Church, was elected tutor, and remained in sole charge throughout the twenty-nine years' history of the institution. Micah Thomas was a man of undoubted distinction, and he rendered unforgettable service. One hundred and six students passed through his hands. He died on November 28, 1853, full of years and full of honour.

When Micah Thomas resigned his charge in 1836, a special committee was convened to consider the whole situation. The result was that it was decided to transfer the institution from Abergavenny to Pontypool, and to invite the Rev. T. Thomas, London, to undertake its oversight. The funds did not allow of a whole-time president, so that office was held jointly with the pastorate of an English Baptist church, which was needed, and was to be founded, in the town. Crane Street Church was formally established, with sixteen members, on August 2, 1836, and Mr. Thomas was recognised as minister. Henrietta Street Church, recognising the hand of God in these movements, though loath to lose a beloved minister, sent a letter of cordial greeting. The young church grew rapidly, and in 1847 an attractive chapel was built and opened. The church has never been large, but its influence has always been wide and deep, out of all proportion to its numerical strength. It has stood for, and illustrated, a generous interpretation of the Christian faith in the town of Pontypool and in the county of Monmouth. Dr. Thomas is now little more than a fine tradition. Very few survive who remember him, but his name is revered, and the church knows that, under God, it owes an incalculable debt to him, its first minister. Origins and early tendencies are of first-class importance in a church's developing life.

Dr. Thomas was at Pontypool for forty-one years, retiring from the college and from Crane Street Church in 1876. I wish it were possible to appraise the work of those years, but it is impossible. Some 500—600 students passed through his hands, and most of them carried the fine marks of his stamp as they separated for their life work in Wales, England, and abroad.

Personally, Dr. Thomas was one of the handsomest men of his time, tall, stately, gracious, impressive. The Rev. J. Meredith, Hereford, one of his last students, writes of "his handsome presence, his dignified bearing, his old-world courtesy," as "among the outward signs of a manhood at once strong and gracious, commanding and yet winsome." His portrait hangs on one of the walls of Regent's Park College. Gracious as he was, he was also a man of strong will, knowing what he wanted and getting it done. He could be stern on occasion, and he was a strict disciplinarian. He was never afraid of speaking what he thought was the truth, and he early became a leader in the district as well as in the counsels of his denomination. An instance of his courage (one of many) was his sermon (at Trosnant, Pontypool) on "The civil duties of Christians" (based on Matthew xxii. 21), preached when the county was disturbed by Chartist riots in Newport. He was not a first-rate scholar, in the technical sense,

but he was a man of broad culture, fairly versed in the ancient classics, and well-read in the fields of theology and philosophy. He seems to have had a great love for English literature, and had absorbed much of the spirit of its greater writers. He had "culture" as well as "knowledge." He was a preacher, too. Popular and fiery in his early years, he mellowed with time and it was a great gain to have in our Welsh college a man who could show how, for deep, real, permanent influence, preaching must have body, substance, scholarship, and that these features were wholly compatible with an impressive eloquence.

The years brought growing influence, and many honours were conferred upon him. He was elected President of the Baptist Union in 1872, and did distinguished service, I gather. His first Presidential address was on "The Kingdom of Christ in relation to the Aspects of the Present Times," and his second, delivered at the autumnal session, in Manchester, was on "The Baptists and Christian Union." Both subjects suggest the spirit of one who was both prophet and church-statesman.

When Dr. Thomas came to Pontypool in 1836 a house was hired for him and his first seven students—five of whom came on from his old Abergavenny Academy. One of the two new men was Evan Edwards, widely known for his subsequent ministry at Upton Vale, Torquay. A splendid site was secured, near to the old historic Penygarn chapel, overlooking Pontypool, and the foundation-stone of the new college was laid on August 3, 1836. The building was completed within a year, at a cost of nearly £2,000. At least two extensions of the building were made in subsequent years. By 1841, the number of students had so increased that the authorities felt it right to appoint a second tutor. The Rev. George Thomas, M.A., Newtown, proved to be a most loyal and efficient colleague for twenty-eight years. We are told that "the students simply idolized him." 1857 was the college jubilee, and a special fund, exceeding £2,000, was collected. The college was further enlarged; the course of study was extended from three to four and, in cases of special merit, five years; and the number of students was increased from twenty to twenty-five. These students all "lived-in"—to their permanent gain.

By 1869 the work of the college had so grown that a third tutor was required. The committee appointed Mr. James Sully, M.A., London, whose later work in Psychology made him known wherever that science is studied. He did signal service for two years, and was succeeded in 1871 by the Rev. W. Mortimer Lewis, M.A. Mr. Lewis, a man of great charm and ability, was a graduate of Glasgow, and an old Regent's Park student. In 1877 he was appointed to succeed Dr. Thomas as President, but,

unhappily, he held that office for three years only. He died suddenly in Switzerland, aged forty.

Dr. Thomas resigned in September, 1876, pleading "the pressure of advancing years and the deep consciousness of inability to do justice to the institution with its increasing demands." The resignation was reluctantly accepted, and took effect at the end of that year.

It was widely felt that a national testimonial should be made to him in recognition of his long and eminent services. The idea was eagerly and successfully taken up, and a largely attended meeting was held at the Tabernacle, Cardiff, on September 20, 1876, for that purpose. The Right Hon. Sir Robert Lush presided, and he, with such others as Drs. Todd and Green, of London, Revs. Jenkyn Brown of Birmingham, Nathaniel Thomas and Alfred Tilly of Cardiff, spoke gratefully of those services. C. H. Spurgeon sent a letter, in the course of which he said that he had "always considered Dr. Thomas a pillar of our temple, and a noble one." A purse of two thousand guineas was presented to him, and an illuminated address. The following extracts from the address will show the character of enlightened contemporary judgment, and will fittingly conclude this notice:

Rev. and Dear Sir,—Forty years since, at the earnest solicitation of the committee of that institution, which must ever owe you more than can be adequately acknowledged, you quitted a pastorate of eminent promise in the metropolis, and entered upon the responsibilities of that office which you have so long and honourably filled as President and Professor of Theology. . . . The college has, under your wise and able management, risen from a condition of utter disorganisation to one of recognised efficiency and great prosperity. By your native endowments and various attainments and Christian culture, as well as by your unswerving faithfulness to duty and unobtrusive devotion unto God, alike in spirit and in life, you have inspired and moulded the characters of hundreds who have accounted it their joy to sit at your feet, elevated the tone and character of the Baptist ministers in Wales, and places the churches of our denomination in wider regions under lasting indebtedness for the pastors you have educated and matured. . . . You have ever been found amongst the foremost and ablest advocates of Temperance, political and ecclesiastical equality, peace on earth, and all that is adapted to elevated, ennoble, and edify the family of mankind. In the name of the thousands whom we are here to represent, we devoutly and lovingly thank the Great Father of all who has given you and spared you so long to us as a section of the Saviour's one church, and on their behalf we tender that imperfect tribute of unfeigned admiration and fond affection which is

presented to you to-day. It has been contributed by those in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Africa, and India, who have longest known you, as well as by hundreds who have never seen your face or listened to your eloquent utterances, but have heard your name and love you for your work's sake. . . ."

Shortly afterwards, Dr. Thomas retired to Cardiff, and spent the evening of his life in quiet service to the churches as opportunity and strength permitted. He died peacefully and rather unexpectedly, on Wednesday morning, December 7, 1881, and was buried at Penygarn, Pontypool, on Monday, December 12. The saintly Rev. Nathaniel Thomas, Cardiff, testified that he was the most perfect man he had ever known, and that he never saw a man who lived nearer God. He was a great gift of God to the Baptist denomination and to Wales, and his memory is blessed.

E. W. PRICE EVANS.

Pontypool.

EXETER church was founded by Colonel Abraham Holmes, and worshipped in the Deanery bought by Carew. At the Restoration the people scattered to Topsham, Thorverton, Honiton's Clift, where Thomas Delaune wrote his Plea for the Nonconformists. He was one of several who came from Ireland, Kitterell becoming deacon. In 1672 the house of Adam Pearce was licensed in the city. The church book begins ten years later, and shows William Phips chosen pastor in 1685, till his death in 1690. A brother of Abraham Holmes helped till his death in 1709, nearly a hundred years old. But Richard Sampson, trained at Bristol, came as pastor in 1692, and they fitted up an old chapel in Katharine's Gate, then built on Gandy's Lane in 1712. After Lucas, Ingram, Caleb Jope, had supplied, Joseph Stennett settled, and was presently helped by Brooks and German, till he left in 1737. They built a new home in 1724/5, on South Street. Edmund Jones came from the Bristol Academy in 1741, induced them to sing in 1760, and died five years later. Thomas Lewis followed at once, assisted by Thomas Twining, but died in 1776, and was succeeded by Enoch Francis. When he resigned in 1789, William Clark, M.A., came from Unicorn Yard. This was the church to which Josiah Thompson had ministered, the man who gathered this information; it is the more welcome as the Exeter church book was deliberately destroyed in 1766.

Three Hundred Years of Baptist Life in Coventry.

A VERY readable little book with the above title has been written by Miss Irene Morris, so well known to members of the Home Preparation Union, and has been produced by the Kingsgate Press. It is embellished with pictures of the chapels at Jordan Well, 1724, Cow Lane, 1793, St. Michael's, 1858, Gosford Street, 1868, Queen's Road, 1884, Foleshill, 1924, with portraits of Butterworth, Franklin, Henderson, Blomfield, and an anniversary group of 1914. It is well worth the half-crown asked.

Its appearance is timed for the ter-centenary. Eleven years ago we published correspondence from Holland relating to the five churches at Lincoln, Coventry, Salisbury, Tiverton, and London, in 1626. We shall make our contribution partly by re-telling the story at this one city, with the advantage of the local records explored by the author. It is the more timely as one editor of this QUARTERLY has just settled at Coventry.

I.—THE OLD GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCH.

In 1611 Thomas "Helwys published a book setting forth the Baptist programme, dedicating it to Isobel, wife of Sir William Bowes" of Coventry, son of "Queen Elizabeth's ambassador to Russia first, and afterwards to Scotland." In her house, Helwys and Smyth had had an all-night conference with Puritan leaders five years earlier, and from such local ties there evidently arose the Baptist church revealed in the Amsterdam letters.

The correspondence turns on some peculiar views held by the Dutch Mennonites, and shows that the English declined to split hairs on the question whether our Lord derived His body from Mary; that they were ready to give evidence on oath; that they observed the Lord's Supper every week; that they declined to restrict presiding to some one ordained by laying on a bishop's hands; and that they both obeyed the magistrate as God's officer, and were prepared to act as magistrates if appointed, even to using the sword. The messengers who carried the letter replied to oral questions, whereby we learn that not all the five churches had ministers. But no Coventry name is mentioned. The inner history of this Coventry church is unknown. Any

records it may have kept, have perished; we can but weave together allusions from the outside, after this first disclosure.

In 1646 the church enjoyed for a while the help of Hugh Evans and of Jeremy Ives. The former, however, was concerned chiefly with Worcester and Wales, the latter with London. Joseph Davis, who had been apprenticed in Coventry at that time, returned about 1660 and was baptized; but his work was done chiefly round Oxford and in the Minories, London. To him, however, we owe this account of how they spent Sunday: "Upon the weekly day of public worship, I was accustomed with several others to rise early in the morning, and meet together to pray and confer about the things of God, in order to help each other forward in our Christian race. Thus we did, till church worship began. The same improvement of our time we made in the interval after dinner, till the beginning of the afternoon worship; and at the end thereof, we repeated the same exercise, and continued it until seven or eight o'clock."

At the conference of 1651 for Midland General Baptists, the representatives from this district were John Onely and Will Perkins of Easonhall, Richard Wills and Thomas Jeffes of Marston; Coventry itself is not named. This "Leicestershire Association," as it came to be called, met till 1776 at least; but its records have perished, so that we cannot gain information from them. Yet from the records of the General Baptist Assembly, of which it was a constituent, and of sister churches, we do gather a few gleanings, which are what we chiefly rely upon. Thus, in 1709, its elder was Francis Clayton, who signed a letter dismissing William Mitchell to London.

Yet it is from the enquiries of John Evans in 1715 that we learn the church then had two hundred adherents, quite large for that day, and that its leader was Samuel Essex. The Association at this period met chiefly at Leicester, the Assembly at Stony Stratford. William Essex had been reported in 1669 from Long Lawford; Ebenezer Essex was prominent in the district 1754. Local enquiries might tell more of such a family. We do know, from another source that Ebenezer Essex in 1730 married Rebecca Pratt of Netherton, who was dismissed to the church in the West Orchard at Coventry. This is the only hint as to the place where this first church met. Half a century later, the Congregationalists settled here.

In 1726 the two elders were Elde and Samuel Welton, who wrote to the sister church at White's Alley. Welton was joined five years later by Abraham Welton, and the church was prospering so that it opened in Birmingham. Of this off-shoot we know little beyond the name of Elizabeth Blackmore, who was commended from the General Baptist church at Netherton about

this time. So promising was the outlook, that Thomas Davye, a scrivener at Leicester, Messenger in the Midlands, arranged for Samuel Welton to be ordained Messenger with him, evidently to superintend extension to the west; this was done in 1733.

Some eight years later, Coventry was strong enough to spare Samuel Hands to the Park church in Southwark, as its Elder. And in 1747 it again furnished a general superintendent, in William Johnson, Messenger for the West Midlands. As late as 1763 it sent another member to become Elder at Downton in Wiltshire. But that is the last glimpse we have of it. The Association ceased to meet in 1776, and a historian who had seen its books avers that Coventry had not been represented latterly.

There is no doubt of the orthodoxy of this church; the Association had more than once taken a strong stand. But these old General Baptists had slowly lost their zeal for evangelization, and never took any serious steps to train a ministry. These defects were amply supplied in this very neighbourhood by a fervid group.

II.—The New Connexion Churches.

From Donington Park, seat of the great Countess of Huntingdon, a revival started in Ratby, Markfield, Normanton, Barton-in-the-beans, which organised a Society in 1745, and became Baptists ten years later. From Exhall an enquirer went, and brought back the flame, so that in 1760 a house at Longford was registered for preaching. Six years later a church was formed at Longford and Hinckley, with 170 members. In 1770 a meeting was held in London when the New Connexion of General Baptists was organized; Longford was represented by William Smith and George Hickling.

We can readily understand that in presence of this vigorous young community, within four miles of Coventry, the ancient General Baptist church of the Old Connexion either died out or melted into it. The two certainly overlapped, but General Baptist life in Coventry itself is not recorded between 1763 and 1820.

In that year the church of Longford, under a minister born at Exhall, opened a place of worship "at the great heath near Coventry." The Warwickshire Conference approved and supported, and the Home Missionary Society, newly reorganised, deliberately called attention to the need of occupying the large towns and cities; £10 was voted for Coventry. In 1822 it was reported that a large room had been opened in the city, and a church of fourteen members was formed and admitted to the New Connexion. By 1825 there were thirty members, with 154 scholars, housed in "a neat, comfortable chapel, measuring forty-

nine feet by thirty-four; and having three heights of school-rooms at one end and a gallery at the other." This was in White Friars Lane; the subsequent history is easy to trace, and Miss Morris gives a picture of the fine chapel erected in 1868, on Gosford Street.

So energetic were the New Connexion people when Coventry was occupied, that a second church was formed at Longford in 1826.

Technical continuity of the old 1626 church with any of these churches cannot be proved. But practically the Longford and Gosford Street churches inherit and maintain the traditions of John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, who visited the city in 1606.

III.—The Particular Baptists, till 1856.

During the Civil War, Coventry was a Parliamentary stronghold, to which gravitated all manner of refugees. Among the Baptists were Benjamin Cox from Devon and Hanserd Knollys from London, and when peace was restored, there were Calvinistic Baptists in the city, as well as the older General group. They included the Hobson family, of whom Thomas was important enough to be chosen mayor in 1660, whereby many adventures accrued. Daniel King, of Warwick, dedicated a book to them in 1650, and Manasseh King, of Whittington in 1672, did such good work here that his memory was cherished in 1712. Robert King, Robert Bryan, and Samuel Newby were in 1684 fined for absence from their parish church. But the centre of gravity of these people was not in the city, and they belonged to a wide-spread group reaching right over to Ramsey, numbering 124. The first building expressly for worship was at Arnesby in 1702. Eight years later the group at Coventry was constituted a separate church, and Evans heard in 1715 that their pastor was Robert Bryan.

The first building appropriated for them was erected in 1723-4, and stood till six years ago in Jordan Well. After approaches to Thomas Moore at Northampton and John Grant at Whitchurch, John Brine was induced to come from Kettering in 1726, when the church was re-organized. He stayed only three years, becoming the hyper-Calvinist champion in London. Fleeting visits from Thomas Stoker and Joseph Harrington caused only scandal, as was too often the case with Antinomians. George Simson spent four years, but went on to Cambridge, Norwich, and Warwick. For fourteen years they struggled on without a pastor; then Daniel Hill, of Walgrave, who had seen Arnesby dwindle under his care for exactly that period, came in 1750. They were strong enough to spare in return Joseph Edmonds, a man of such fine character that three of his grandsons became

pastors at Birmingham, Guilsboro, and Sutton-in-the-elms. Hill passed on within three years to Chalford, where he ended his course.

A new era opened in 1753, when John Butterworth came from Goodshaw in Lancashire, and entered on a pastorate of fifty years. He belonged to a gifted family, and his own descendants won eminence as law-publishers, M.P. for the city, etc. He himself benefited Bible students by a capital concordance, which is undeservedly superseded by Cruden's. In his time the deacon was Sutton Staughton, himself author of a little book, whose son William was one of the half-guinea subscribers to the Baptist Missionary Society at Kettering, and became a famous preacher in America. The church grew under Butterworth to 141, and as it needed a new home, the pastor grubbed up the trees from his beloved orchard, and gave the site for the new Cow Lane meeting, opened in 1793. He was now ageing, and needed helpers; the first experiments were unsuccessful, with James Aston and John Gadsby, but by 1799 a young student appeared from Bristol, Francis Franklin. Within four years Butterworth sang his Nunc Dimittis.

Franklin brought changes. A Sunday school was started on the chapel premises with the new century; and Richard Booth sent a guinea to the B.M.S. The church did not yet make regular collections, though Mrs. Franklin's brother was the secretary, her daughter Eliza went to Monghyr, and her son James went to Bristol to prepare. The church had the usual meagre notions of support, and Franklin was passing poor on £40 a year. So his daughters had to open a school, and to one of their pupils we owe the delightful sketch of the minister as Rufus Lyon in George Eliot's *Felix Holt*. After forty-two years' service, he in his turn needed a helper, and John Watts came till Rothesay claimed his whole time in 1849. Another Bristol student, William Rosevear, came next year, succeeded in 1852, and left to found a new church four years later.

The old times had passed. The theology of Brine was not acceptable a century later. A church which sent £20 yearly to foreign missions and gave its pastor only twice as much, evidently had discordant elements in its own bosom. And while Butterworth had brought the fine Lancashire tradition of praising the Lord with stringed instruments, so that there had been good orchestral accompaniments, the austere party succeeded in banishing the double-bass in 1852, so that a bare tuning-fork was used to pitch the note for song.

Tension in the whole denomination had grown severe in the later days of Franklin, churches were disrupting, rival societies were arising. Cow Lane felt the strain, and eased

matters in 1843 by ceasing to require members to sign articles of belief. But the old high Calvinism persisted, and reaction from it could take perilous forms. For example, even as it was presented by the daughters of Franklin, it impressed their most gifted pupil very strangely; the intellectual and moral life of "George Eliot" was at once a product and a rebound from hyper-Calvinism.

There can be no doubt as to the influence of the pastor. As a student he had accompanied Steadman on the Cornish tour which showed that the eyes of the B.M.S. were not on the ends of the earth alone. He had been trained by James Hinton to evangelize the villages round Oxford, and he brought the tradition to Coventry. Church after church in the neighbourhood was planted or watered by him; both villages and the mother-church felt the increase.

IV.—Three Separate Churches.

Peace was attained by dividing into three groups. Rosevear hived off in 1856, and his adherents soon built St. Michael's on Hay Lane. For ten years it was under other care, but otherwise he was its leader till 1891. From the outset it stood for a combination of culture and earnestness, giving to the city a new conception of Baptist life.

Yet, strange to say, the old stalwarts were not satisfied with this departure from their midst of the latitudinarian Fullerites, as they probably esteemed them. In 1858 they too withdrew to a Rehoboth of their own, now housed on Lower Ford Street. Here doubtless may still be found seventeenth-century customs and doctrine; the church is in the very strictest group supporting the Gospel Standard Societies, and seems seldom to have had a pastor. Yet the thirty-two members do keep a Sunday school with five times as many scholars.

Cow Lane must have shaken itself to find two wings thus flown away. It hesitated to join the Midland Association, though invited; but it did adopt a school fostered by some of its members. This state of indecision came to an end after immigration had brought many members with other traditions; and in 1872 a young man of thirty was called to the pastorate, W. J. Henderson. Six successive pastors, all living, have seen the church utterly transformed, and grown to be the largest and the most liberal in the county. Under its wing the church at Wolston has taken shelter, another has been planted at Foleshill, and at Hearsall another is speedily expected.

The Queen's Road church will probably take the lead in the ter-centenary celebrations. Technically it dates from 1710 only, and its traditions from 1643 at most, while Rehoboth might

repudiate it as in any sense conserving those traditions. But every other church in and near the city has realized a substantial unity of doctrine and aim; all alike support the West Midland Association, the Baptist Missionary Society, and its daughter the Baptist Union. They can echo the words that went overseas from Coventry three hundred years ago: "It becomes all of us who love the same Lord Jesus Christ and His truth, to try for unity in all matters, and to walk with all and with every one, as belonging to the same society."

It is impossible in the limits of this article to give the pleasant details which abound in the book by Miss Morris. For the touches which make the churches live again, and show the piety of humble homes, we heartily commend it to our readers, wishing that more works of the kind should be available, not only for the historian, but for all who want to see the power of the gospel.

Report of the Committee of the Baptist Historical Society, May 1926.

THE Society has continued its work on the familiar lines. Letters of enquiry come from individuals and churches, and in every case it has been possible to give the information desired.

The library which enables this service to be given is still housed by the courtesy of the church at Droitwich; but it has grown to such a size that in the near future the question of accommodation must be considered. Several duplicates have been exchanged during the year with the kindred society in America, so that we have obtained a file of reports of the great Philadelphia Association from 1707. No similar file of any Association in England exists.

We are glad to know that nearly two hundred volumes of great interest, collected by the late R. Foulkes Griffiths, have recently been presented to the Northern Baptist Education Society, and augment the valuable library now treasured at Rawdon College. All owners of denominational documents are urged to follow such an example and lodge their treasures in some denominational institution.

There are ancient repositories which amply repay investigation. At Broadmead several valuable letters have lately been

discovered and are being studied; we hope to publish some letters relating to Robert Hall. The strong-room of the Baptist Missionary Society is also yielding treasure.

A few years ago we printed some letters sent in 1626 by Baptist churches at Lincoln, Coventry, Tiverton, Salisbury, and London, to Amsterdam. Two of these churches have died out, but at Coventry it is intended this year to celebrate the tercentenary of Baptist life there, and the first-fruits have appeared in a booklet by Miss Morris. We are communicating with the churches at Lincoln and Tiverton to urge them to similar celebrations.

The *Baptist Quarterly* has appeared regularly. While on the modern side attention is paid to home problems, work on the continent and in America, and theology, on the antiquarian side articles have appeared relating to the Midlands, Surrey and Sussex, the Weald of Kent, Wales; and a sketch of the Baptist Building Fund has begun which will extend to four articles.

It will be possible this year to aid the publication of an extra, for our guinea subscribers. An index to every church in London, past and present, showing where it has ever worshipped, and in many cases who have been its pastors, is nearly ready for the press.

H. WHEELER ROBINSON, *President,*

W. T. WHITLEY, *Hon. Secretary.*

Accounts for 1925.

RECEIPTS.

	£	s.	d.
Balance from 1924	4	12	2
Arrears of Subscriptions ...	16	17	0
43 Honorary Members ...	45	1	0
111 Ordinary Members ...	55	10	0
Sales and Postages	9	6	11
	£131	7	1

PAYMENTS.

	£	s.	d.
Printing and Publishing Four Numbers	83	4	7
Officers' postages	1	10	3
Stationery	1	18	0
Subscription to Friends' Historical Society	0	5	0
Inland Revenue, Cheque Stamps	0	4	0
Balance in Hand, Dec. 1925	44	5	3
	£131	7	1