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The
Baptist Quarterly
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History and Revelation.*

INTRODUCTION. (*a*) You are gathered here as students of history, and the badge of your great tribe might well be a dictionary displayed on a map. The *map* and the *dictionary* are the chief tools of the historian. With these he works on the documents which are his material. The map represents the fundamental conditions in which begins every part of the history of mankind upon this earth. The map shows three great factors operating in succession—the hills, the rivers and the roads, the hills which decide where the rivers shall run, and the roads which are prescribed by the hills and the rivers. To read the map aright is to know the climatic conditions, the economic characteristics, and the whole material environment. On the other hand, the dictionary represents what may be called, in the largest sense of the phrase, the spiritual conditions of history. The dictionary is a book of words, and words mean both speech and the thought behind speech. The dictionary unlocks the historic documents in which the speech and the thought of other generations are enshrined. The essential test of the historian is that he can use with accuracy and with judgment the map and the dictionary, and so deal faithfully with the material and the spiritual conditions of human history.

(*b*) Within the realm of history all *the great religions* have come into being, and their features always betray the place of their origin and the stage of spiritual culture at which they were born. The nature-worship and many gods of the Vedic hymns belong as essentially to the India of ten centuries before Christ as do the hatred of idols and the stern monotheism of Islam to the Arabia of the seventh century after Christ. The emphasis may fall on the material conditions, so that the gods represent

*Lecture to Extra-Mural Students, Summer Meeting, Oxford, August 2, 1933.

heaven and earth and sky and sun and wind and storm and fire, as in the Vedic hymns; or it may fall on the moral consciousness of man, as in the higher Semitic religions. Ultimately the two can never be wholly separated, any more than a man's body and soul; material conceptions are spiritualised, and spiritual ideas may be materialised. All through the history of religions we may trace this constant interplay of *the two factors*. However varied be the material which is presented to the human consciousness, the mind of man is always striving to make a unity of it, which is the only condition of living with it and comprehending it. Man's mind is like a kaleidoscope. The jumbled fragments of coloured glass without pattern or meaning are given beauty and significance by the mirrors of the mind.

(*c*) But can we go beyond man's mind to a greater, and believe that somehow and somewhere history can be *the revelation of God*? Is there any truth in the claim of the Time-Spirit in Goethe's *Faust*:—

> Thus on the roaring loom of time I ply,
> And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by.

Certainly the product of the loom of time is not an ordered and complete pattern, but a very tangled web. There is much in history to exalt the conception of the human race. There are fine heroisms, noble sacrifices of self, patient and passionate loyalties, creations of beauty, achievements of thought, which seem not unworthy to be regarded as revealing God. But there are dark patches, ugly blemishes, in the story both of the individual and of the race, that seem to contradict any suggestion of God. Here history resembles *nature*. What are we to make of her utter disregard of human desires, her relentless pursuit of ends beyond the individual, her heartrending catastrophes? If there be a God who has made and who upholds all this, is He handling an intractable material which He is not able to control? Has He established laws and forces with which He can no longer interfere? Well, you know what the theist would reply; he would say that God, in creating nature, has accepted certain conditions of His own devising, that He works by a multitude of secondary causes, and that nature may have ends and issues far beyond man's immediate comfort, though controlled to man's ultimate good. There is a parallel here with human *history*. There is much in both that seems to contradict any assertion of that divine activity which underlies revelation. We cannot rationalise history. But if the human will counts for anything at all, and if God, who has created it, has chosen to accept its free activity within the limits He has appointed, then we shall have an explanation of many things in history that seem to deny

God. We may still believe that the whole of history will be a full and adequate revelation of the divine purpose, but the end is not yet, and we may well find that some parts and stages of the history will reveal God more or less than others, just because another will than God's is being allowed to operate.

(*d*) But "revelation" in religion means something much more definite than such general reflection of the divine in physical nature and in the course of human history. In the great religions which have maintained their dominion over man's heart and mind, *revelation means that direct and purposive activity of God which discloses Him to man for man's good.* Beyond man's search for God in physical nature or in the moral consciousness of man, there has arisen the great conception of God seeking man, and seeking him in more special ways. Amongst the living religions, we find the doctrine of special revelation in Judaism and its historic successors, Christianity and Islam. We find it also in the religion of Zarathushtra, still alive amongst the Parsees, though much more obscurity rests on the beginnings of this religion. We find it also in the Bhakti development of Hinduism, with its thought of divine Avataras or incarnations, such as that of Krishna in the Bhagavadgita. The original Buddhism knew nothing of revelation, for the Buddha had no place for the gods in his teaching; but the subsequent development of Buddhism reached the thought of many divine revealers and saviours. It is clear that *no religion which is to retain the faith of men can dispense with the belief in divine revelation*—the activity of the divine for man's good; that is one of the plain lessons of history. No god is worth worshipping who is unable or unwilling to help his worshippers, and that help, to be effective, implies a revelation of the divine nature and purpose. But not all of these religions of revelation can be called historical religions, in the sense of finding the revelation of God in human history. The Bhakti devotion of Hinduism or of Buddhism has little or no concern with history; the exact place and teaching of Zarathushtra are too little known to yield much for our purpose, which is the relation of revelation to history. We are left, then, with *Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* as the religions which can be called historical in the full sense, that is as claiming to have received a divine revelation on the basis of history. The religions of the further East do not link history and revelation; they are *in* history, but not *of* it.

I. The Prophetic Consciousness. The first thing that must strike us when we examine these religions of revelation, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is that *they all go back to the consciousness of a prophet,* Moses, Jesus, Muhammad. They are

born within the experience of an individual man, and they illustrate some well-known words of Professor Whitehead: "Religion is what the individual does with his solitariness. . . . The great religious conceptions which haunt the imaginations of civilised mankind are scenes of solitariness: Prometheus chained to his rock, Mahomet brooding in the desert, the meditations of the Buddha, the solitary Man on the Cross." The three great founders of the three religions that concern us speak and act under the sense of a divine compulsion. They all bear the marks of their historic environment; you cannot interchange them; they belong to the human race in one particular land and at one particular time. Yet each of them claims to speak and act, not for himself, but for God, and history has so far confirmed their claim that what they thought and did still remains central in the devotion of many millions of the human race. True, much which has been ascribed to them by later generations is removed to that later date by the touch of sane and sober historical criticism. Moses was a prophet who led Israel out of Egypt, and interpreted that deliverance as the act of God; his work was continued by many later prophets, and issued at long last in a sacred book, which is an epitome of the whole development, rather than a record of the teaching of Moses. Jesus, whatever else He was or is, was known as the prophet of Nazareth, and the record of His life and work in the Synoptic Gospels is much less elaborate than the conception of Him which prevails in any of the Christian Churches. Muhammad, in the early years of the seventh century after Christ, witnessed to his sincerity as the prophet of Allah by the persecution he faced, before he became a shrewd politician and a worldly-wise statesman, whose sayings and doings themselves became an additional revelation of Allah. All these religions begin in a prophetic consciousness. What is the significance of this for revelation?

The significance is that *man has found his highest and most influential ideas of God through the highest category of human experience, which is personality,* and through personality wrought to the highest intensity of conviction. Just as, from ages immemorial, men have climbed the mountain top to build the shrines for their offerings to the gods of heaven, so in the spiritual realm, the highest point of human nature has become the most effective contact with God. By no means every religion has done this. Some religions all the time, and all religions some of the time, have resorted to *the lowest, rather than the highest.* They have tried to control God by the material means of magical spells; they have sought exaltation by the intoxication of the Soma plant or by the sensual orgies of fertility cults; they have claimed to fetter God to an institution or to an organised society. But

in origin, and at every recovery of the original breath of divine inspiration, there has been resort to the highest experience of a spiritual nature to hear what the Lord God would say unto men. This is the mark of the prophets of *Israel* denouncing idolatry and sensuality and social injustice, and implicitly claiming that God speaks through the moral consciousness of men rather than through the ritual of the living or the mutterings of the dead. How could an idol of even the costliest metal adequately represent God? how could anything but the noblest testimony of the most enlightened conscience? So spake *Jesus* in the Sermon on the Mount, which carries the great issues of morality and religion into the inner consciousness of the heart, and bids the man with hate against his brother leave his gift unoffered to God. So did Jesus, when from the Cross He made forgiveness of the most cruel wrong the divinest thing in human history. So also *Muhammad*, in spite of all his later compromises, when he denounced the idolatries of his contemporaries, and inspired men to deeds of the highest courage.

We are then faced by the fact that behind the sacred books of the three great types of monotheistic religion there is a prophetic consciousness, that is, a human will believing itself to be in such contact with God that its purposes are His, and that His will is revealed through it. This is the most important fact, and *the modus operandi of the conviction is subsidiary* to it. The intermediary may be an angel, as for Muhammad and for some of the later prophets of Israel, such as Zechariah. The condition may be an ecstatic state, as in the call of Isaiah or the abnormalities of the prophet Ezekiel. At the highest there may be the direct consciousness of fellowship with God, as in the troubled dialogues of the prophet Jeremiah, or the untroubled consciousness of the prophet of Nazareth. These differences belong to the psychology of prophecy, and though they are intensely interesting, they are secondary to the main conviction that human nature is capable of receiving the revelation of the divine. This can be true only if there is a certain kinship between God and man, so that what is true for man at his highest is also true for God, with all the necessary limitations of given historical conditions. This may be called the higher anthropomorphism, and all religion ultimately rests upon it. We have a simple example of it in the words of Jesus, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask Him?" If, in our desire to exalt God, we make Him the "altogether Other," we leave it impossible for Him to communicate with man. However transcendent God is, the point at which He reveals Himself to us must be a point at which

He becomes intelligible to us, that is a point at which there is kinship between His nature and ours. This is a principle which some theologies have ignored, notably the present-day Barthianism.

But, if we grant this kinship, how are we to conceive *the working of the divine inspiration within the prophetic consciousness*? It is not enough to think of man's discovery, we have also to think of God's revelation, that is, of God's activity in bringing the prophet into truth, or truth into the prophet. Here, as in all genuine religious experience, we must refrain from putting asunder what God has joined together. When we try to analyse the convictions of a prophet, we must not forget that we are conducting a *post-mortem,* whereas the living experience is always a unity, in which the prophet forgets himself in God. We who come after may trace this or that line of the prophet's preparation, this or that endowment of his nature, this or that relation to his fellows, all of which is implied in the ultimate word of God which issues from his lips. But the essential thing for him and for religion is that all this is *welded together into a hammer of God,* as the prophet Jeremiah calls the word given to him. One of the most significant sayings about prophecy is that of Jeremiah himself, when he is most depressed by the sense of abandonment and failure. God says to him, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." That means that the highest he knows and feels is to be God's word to him and to his fellows. We find the same *sense of unity* everywhere when religion is most intense. Within Islam, we find a Sufi poem, quoted by Söderblom, in his fine book, *The Living God* (p. 31), in which one who is tempted to doubt God like Jeremiah receives the message:—

O much-tried one,
Did I not engage thee to my service?
Did I not engage thee to call upon me?
That calling "Allah" of thine was my "here am I,"
And that pain and longing and ardour of thine, my messenger;
Thy struggles and strivings for assistance
Were my attractions and originated thy prayer.

"Be comforted," says Jesus to Pascal, "thou wouldst not seek Me, if thou hadst not found Me." But the highest word of this unity of the human consciousness with the divine is that of Jesus:—"All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Thus at the "Land's End" of human experience we have the intuition that man's conviction *is* God's revelation.

II. The Actuality of History as Revelation. Let me confirm this by thinking of *the teacher's work*. The best teacher does not simply or chiefly impart information to his pupils; he trains and inspires them to the art of discovery. He will direct their studies in the library or the laboratory, but certainly not by dictation. He will start them on some pursuit, and leave them free, within certain limits, to work out their own results. Somewhat in this way we may conceive God's activity to be exercised in all that leads up to revelation, though its consummation is always a disclosure of Himself. Within the little circle of our life we are free, but that circle is always part of a larger circle which overlays it, the circle of the divine purpose, directing, controlling and so creating. There is no more room for mere dictation in God's revealing activity than in the work of a true teacher, who thinks more, *far more, of the training of his pupil than of the communication of knowledge.*

If revelation is not mechanical, neither is history. It is not the mere accumulation of what we call facts; they are only its raw material. We cannot write or even comprehend history till we relate these data to one another, and trace their connections. There is something more in history than the study of cause and effect which underlies all the physical sciences. In such study we never get back to a real cause, but only to that which is an effect of some other cause. But in human history we are brought face to face with *real causes,* however limited their operation. The human will in great things or small is continually making history. We can never foresee its action in the same way as we can that of an acid upon a salt or of the sun upon a planet. The human will is continually making new beginnings. It creates something that was not there before. The spiritual world is not ruled by the laws of the physical world, though it has its own laws. Human activity is like *the creative work of the artist.* There is a whole world of difference between his vision of beauty and the actual creation out of it of some beautiful thing, whether it be a picture or sculpture or symphony or poem. Existence in thought is one thing; existence in act and fact quite another. Our wills are constantly influenced by our thoughts, yet not wholly determined by them. So long as we are human beings we have the power and the responsibility of choice. No one doubts it in normal life, however difficult it may be to explain it. Indeed, it cannot be explained, except by saying that personality has this power of taking up all motives, desires, influences into itself and making them, if it will, its own. This is the experience of that inner world, strange, mysterious, unique, which each of us has for himself. But the great world of human history, with all its

social ramifications, is the same thing writ large. You may isolate a single factor, such as the economic, and usefully show its range and influence. You may trace back the French Revolution, for example, to the misrule of generations, to the teaching of Rousseau, to the state of Europe, but you must still leave room for the personal activity of Marat and Danton and Robespierre and the rest. In the whole course of history something good or bad is being created by personal agents, never to be reduced to physical causes. This is what we may call *the actuality of history,* its quality of adding something new, or of expressing in a new way that which before existed only in idea. The time-process, in which we are all agents, and not mere puppets, is the partial and confused working out of an eternal purpose, adding to it no new idea, but giving to that purpose the quality of the actual. Our inner consciousness of being real agents is a true indication of the reality of the whole.

It is surely significant that this quality of actuality has been taken up into the three great monotheistic religions, which are all based on a *historical revelation,* that is a revelation through real agents, who give actuality to the divine thought. The Old Testament is full of this; the God of Israel is known by what He does in history, as in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. The New Testament is written round the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, which are interpreted as acts of God. Islam's creed is not simply, " There is no God but Allah," but also " Muhammad is the prophet of Allah," which brings the Moslem faith into the definite circumstances of history, and turns history into revelation. But history is revelation only if time be more than the shadow of eternity, and an actual part of it, with a specific quality and a new value with which to enrich it.

It is significant also that *the very conception of universal history, as we understand it, has been born of these great religions.* It was Christianity that first taught the western world the unity of the race, and the conception of a purpose working itself out in history. But Christianity learnt that truth from the Old Testament, from the apocalyptists such as Daniel, whose ideas go back to the prophets of Israel, who interpreted contemporary history in terms of a divine purpose. It is to Biblical religion that we owe both the modern conception of personality and the modern conception of the history in which that personality works out its destiny. We cannot reduce that history to the rational process which Hegel attempted to construe. But we can see how revelation interprets history and history becomes the actualisation of revelation. We cannot successfully and completely join up and splice together the meeting of the human and the divine, either in the individual consciousness or in the history

of the race. But we can see that *history has meaning and spiritual value only as we do succeed in discovering within it both the human and the divine,* and our discovery is made by what religion calls revelation, the high points of religious genius which catch the light of dawn whilst the valleys are yet in the twilight.

III. The Authority of Revelation in History. So far we have been considering revelation purely on the basis of history, without regard to the specific claims which it may have upon us as being truth. But we must now face this difficult and thorny question of authority in regard to a revelation through history. The very fact that we have gone behind the sacred books and the sacred societies to the history from which they sprang, compels us to ask *what authority can attach to history* when it is conceived as the medium of revelation. Lessing, it will be remembered, epitomised the movement of the German Aufklärung by saying "contingent truths of history can never be made the proof for necessary truths of reason." Yet religion is certainly never exhausted by the intellect, since it always appeals to the whole of personality, with its emotional and volitional capacities. As a matter of fact, the thoughts of religion have always been gained through some historic personality in a given environment; the actuality of history comes first, and reason comes in to confirm or disprove the rationality of what history has given.

We must distinguish *two different kinds of difficulty* which history occasions for revelation. There is the philosophical difficulty, which is indeed the great difficulty of philosophy itself —how can the relative reveal the absolute, and time become the vehicle of eternity? Then there is the historical difficulty in regard to historicity—how can we ever be sufficiently sure of alleged historic "facts" to make them the basis of religious conviction?

As to the first, all that can be said here is that if we start with *a dualism between time and eternity,* we can never hope to throw a bridge across the gulf. If the eternal is the timeless, altogether different and alien from the time-process in which we live, then there can be as little relation between them as there is between God and man, if *they* are supposed to have no spiritual kinship with each other. But it is not necessary to start with such a dualism. The very view of history with which we have been working is that it is included in the eternal, that it is one form or aspect of the eternal. We need not think of eternity as unending time, or as simultaneity in which all time is gathered up into a single moment. We can think of eternity in the light of

those moral and spiritual qualities which are our highest values in history, namely, *in terms of purpose.* We can believe that when we catch a glimpse of some true and worthy purpose being worked out here, still more when our own purpose is caught up into it, that we are in touch with the eternal world. And this we must believe, if we are not to rob history of its spiritual values. The great claim of duty upon man, for example, is never explicable on the merely human level; it must come from something or someone above time, even whilst it is experienced within time.

From this standpoint, then, there is no reason to believe that what the prophets of Israel taught about their own land and people is any the less eternal truth, and so qualified to belong to a divine revelation. Such *truth will always be relative in form to its own age;* we have no right to say that the ethics of Amos or even of Jesus are directly applicable, as they stand, to every generation. But when they are seen as the temporal application of the eternal principle of the right relation of one human personality to others, when they are taken as the illustrations of an eternal truth in process of revelation, they can claim divine authority over us, as revealing eternal truth to us. If we deny this, we are simply denying that eternity can ever have intercourse with time.

The other difficulty as to *the certainty of alleged facts of history* is more difficult to meet, and perhaps it is impossible to meet it at all in any purely intellectual fashion. The thoughtful Christian of to-day often looks back with regret to his uninstructed days, when he perhaps felt no difficulty about the historicity of the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection or the other miracles associated with Jesus. You simply cannot hope ever to prove or disprove such things by the mere rules of historical evidence, and they never really were so proved or disproved. Our attitude towards them will be decided by more general considerations, such as the ways of thinking of a generation different from our own, which saw miracles where we should find other explanations, or the possibilities of a Personality admittedly unique amongst the sons of men, and of new powers emerging in him which are not seen in men of lesser breed. But what would be the value of a religious faith which was no more than intellectual assent to the conclusion of an argument? It might still leave the will of man unmoved, still be utterly fruitless in moral or religious result. All we can ask is that there be sufficient evidence to make belief reasonable, sufficient data for the eternal truths to gleam through the muddy vesture of our documents. The very lack of complete historical proof in certain cases may constitute *a moral challenge;* are we making the intellectual

uncertainty an excuse for thrusting aside the related moral or religious appeal? This is the line of argument which Browning employed so forcefully in *A Death in the Desert,* and it is by no means outworn. The historian himself must often state a conviction which he cannot prove on the ground of precise evidence. The Christian not less may say, " I accept this death on the Cross and even this deliverance from death as essentially true, though I cannot understand its mode and manner; the influence of this faith on all subsequent history makes it impossible for me to think it historically untrue, and my own experience confirms history."

But this, someone may say, is to remove revelation from the common ground of evidence and reason, and to make its *appeal purely subjective,* a matter of individual likes and dislikes. Well, part of the truth of revelation, part of its evidence, does consist in such an appeal to the individual. In the strict sense of revelation, it has not revealed God until it has made me see Him and won me to loyal obedience and trust. Dr. Edwyn Bevan concludes his skilful and eminently just sketch of the history of Christianity with the words :—" the impulse to believe itself must come, if it comes at all, from the direct perception that a particular kind of life is the life most worth living. For those who have it the perception is a supernatural call—which, according as they will, they may follow or they may refuse." Our argument has been that this is of the very nature of religion at its highest, that it neither desires to, nor can, constrain men into an unwilling obedience, and that the training of the believer into a service which is perfect liberty is far other than a dictation of orders. If this be so, it is useless to compare the great religions as a mere spectator of them, and expect to be able to prove that any one of them has absolute authority. When Festus wished to explain the faith of his prisoner Paul to King Agrippa, he could sum it up neatly in a sentence. He said that the Jews " had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." That is what it meant to the mere spectator—" one Jesus who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." But think of what that affirmed fact meant to Paul himself, standing within the Christian faith. It is no longer a mere isolated event of history. Phrase after phrase of the apostle's burning speech leaps into mind as we try to measure what *he* meant by affirming that Christ still lives—" declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead—that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death—ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God—I live,

and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." That is how the bare formula of a faith glows and quivers with iridescent light when we know it from within.

One thing we can claim for the Christian religion amongst the faiths of history, even whilst we look on it from without. At the centre of its alleged revelation there stands *a man unique in quality, standing in a unique relation to it, and offering a unique Gospel.* We cannot compare Jesus as a mere matter of history, with Zarathushtra or Buddha or Socrates or Muhammad; none of them claims or holds the same relation to God or man. The teaching of Jesus is indeed largely parallel with that of the best of the Jewish Rabbis; but Jesus, living and dying, is far more in himself than they. The Gospel, also, which springs from his historic life on earth, is unlike any other offered to men. Its peculiar quality has been admirably summarised by Karl Holl:— "Jesus inverts, as we may say, the customary relations of religion and morality. Every other religion, at least every other religion of high ideals, bases the personal relation to God on the right conduct of man. The more moral a man is—using the term 'moral' in the widest sense, so as to include ritual duties—the nearer he stands to God. But for Jesus, God begins the other way round. It is He who creates something new with forgiveness. From this there springs a real, close and warm relation to God, and with it, at the same time, a morality which can venture to take God Himself as its pattern."

That is what is meant by the grace of God in Christ, and He actualised it in history by His whole attitude towards men. The revelation of this truth is pre-eminently the Christian revelation, and all else is subsidiary to this. The fact that *this revelation came into history at a particular point of time,* which for us lies in an ancient and remote world, casts no reflection on its eternal truth. In these days, we are not likely to claim, as did some of the Victorians, that history inevitably moves onward and upward by the constant evolution of something better, always leaving behind its own past. That is not true of civilisation, or art or music or philosophy or any of the spiritual sides of man's nature, even if it be true of the material. In all spiritual achievements, and most of all in religion, we rise above the time-process, even whilst we work through it. History itself is the tribunal by which all such claims must at last be tried, and in a wider sense than Newman's use of the words, "Securus judicat orbis terrarum," or if you like, "Weltgeschichte ist Weltgericht."

Let us recall Lessing's moving parable of the three rings in *Nathan der Weise.* In a certain family a magic ring was handed down as an heirloom from father to son. It was to be given to the best beloved, and it had the power to make its wearer

beloved of God and man. A father who had three sons could not decide which he loved best, so he had two other rings made exactly like the ring of power, and gave one to each of the three. After his death, they were inclined to quarrel as to which had the original ring, and they referred the matter to a wise judge, claiming that each had received his ring from his father's hand. The judge pointed out that the ring of power would itself decide the issue in the course of time, for the most loving and beloved would be its wearer. Lessing has in mind those three religions of revelation, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, with which we have been chiefly concerned. He does not mean that it is a matter of indifference which men choose, and that conduct is all that matters. He does mean, however, that the final proof of doctrine is in life, which is exactly what we ought to expect from a revelation made through life.

At the other extreme is the parable of Anatole France of the king who desired in his youth to possess a universal history, that he might learn its lessons. At the end of twenty years his learned men brought him a dozen camels, each bearing 500 volumes, but the busy king said, "Kindly abridge." After long periods they brought smaller and smaller editions, till at last the secretary brought a single fat volume—to find the aged king on his death-bed. The old man sighed, "I shall die without knowing the history of mankind." "Your majesty," said the scholar, "I will summarise it for you in three words: *They were born, they suffered, they died.*"

It is revelation, and the faith in revelation which makes the difference between those two views of human history.

H. WHEELER ROBINSON.

Preaching to the Times.

AN old Puritan preacher, who was once gently rebuked because he seemed studiously to avoid all reference to current events in his sermons, is reported to have justified his attitude by remarking: "While so many men are preaching to the times, at least one brother may be allowed to preach for eternity." Taken in the sense in which it was primarily intended, that reply may be regarded as setting forth a conception of the work of preaching with which no preacher with a genuine understanding of the needs and demands of his calling will quarrel. True, we need not go so far as the old Puritan and eschew in our pulpit ministrations all allusion to the events of the day. There is no valid reason why our sermons should lack what is termed "topical interest"; indeed, a very good case can be made out for topical preaching in this sense, since anything which enables us to make contact with the minds of our hearers is useful and legitimate. Nevertheless, there is a real danger lest we acquire what Prof. George Jackson describes as the habit of "suburban preaching," by which is meant "not preaching to people who live in the suburbs, but preaching that is itself suburban, which makes its home in the fringes and outskirts of Christian truth, rather than in the centre and the citadel." We miss the real essence of the Gospel and neglect the real business of our calling if we content ourselves with lecturing on the "topics of the hour," or with reading charming essays on matters of little importance. The danger of becoming "suburban" preachers is by no means a negligible one; and it was against the tendency most of us feel to succumb to the temptation to miss the central verities of our faith that the old Puritan preacher was guarding and protesting.

Yet when we come to consider closely the reply that he gave to his critic we see that it is invalidated by what may be called "the fallacy of a false antithesis." Surely it is possible for a man to preach to his own day and generation without thereby ceasing to proclaim the age-long and ageless truths of the Gospel. Surely the minister of Jesus Christ can address himself to "the times" without thereby ceasing to preach "for eternity." Indeed, what justification has he for preaching at all, unless in his preaching he is trying to relate the eternal to the temporal, the abiding to the transient, the everlasting truths of the Gospel to the needs and conditions of the age in which he lives? The business of the Gospel preacher is, in the language of Hartley Coleridge, "to bid eternal truth be present fact." He must seek to make the verities of the Gospel, which are independent of every age, effective and operative in the lives of the people of his

own age. The message of Christianity is *par excellence* the message of Eternal Life; and Eternal Life involves, as Dr. Forsyth was so fond of emphasising, "the conquest of time by eternity." And if it means this, it also most certainly means that the truths of the Everlasting Gospel be related, in our preaching, to temporal facts and existing conditions. The preacher must preach to "the times" as well as "for eternity"; and he has no mandate to do either unless he is doing both as integral parts of one supreme function or service.

Now this fact has an obvious bearing upon the work of the preacher in whatever age he lives. But the thing that concerns us is this: what is its meaning for us who are preaching to-day?

(*a*) Well, the first thing it means is just this, that we remember always in our preaching that we are living at the present time. If it is the duty of the minister of Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel to his own age, then it is our duty, living as we are in the twentieth century, to preach to our own day, and not to any preceding age. That means we must be modern (which does not necessarily mean "modernist") in our presentation of the eternal truths of the Gospel. We must translate those truths into the language of to-day, if we would make ourselves intelligible to the men and women of to-day. While we recognise that the great moral and spiritual principles revealed in the Gospel cannot be bound down to any particular age, we must also recognise that it is our duty to interpret these principles to the time in which we live. Of course, there is a danger in attempting to do this—the danger lest the minister become a sort of "religious weathercock," altering his message with every change of the winds that blow from the regions of modern science and philosophy. But we shall successfully guard ourselves against this danger, if we have laid firm hold on the unchanging Gospel in thought and experience. At the same time we must recognise that while the truth of God is immutable, the form in which that truth is expressed must be determined by the conditions of the age in which the preacher lives and does his work. The sane preacher does not alter his Gospel, but neither does he refuse to alter the presentation of the Gospel for the purpose of meeting the needs of his hearers. If he is wise, he will not speak in the antiquated language of by-gone generations, but will speak in the language of the people to whom he seeks to deliver his message. He will face the necessity—more than once stressed by Dr. Alexander Maclaren—of reminting the religious vocabulary of former days, so that the great words of the Gospel may once more be put into circulation in men's lives with the Divine image and superscription clearly stamped upon them. And that surely is the way of wisdom! We cannot fight an up-to-date

Devil with out-of-date weapons; we cannot hope to win the modern man for Jesus Christ, if our message is presented in language that he does not understand, for the simple reason that it is the unfamiliar and worn-out language of a previous generation.

(*b*) But it is not simply a matter of language; it goes much deeper than that. It is really a matter of understanding the conditions of the age in which we live and of trying to meet those conditions with sympathy, yet with conviction. And it is just here that those of us who are called upon to preach the Christian message to-day find most difficulty. It has never been easy to proclaim the Gospel; to-day it seems harder than ever. In the days when St. Paul spoke of the "offence of the Cross" men had to be won from heathenism to Christianity, i.e., from one form of religion to another and higher form. But at the present time we are faced with a very different situation. There are so many people—and they are an increasing number—who have no religion worth speaking of. They have renounced all allegiance to organised Christianity (and, for most of them, that means Christianity *per se*) and have lapsed into a state of non-religion. Several factors have contributed to this deplorable state of affairs.

For one thing, we are living in the backwash of the greatest war in the history of the race. Despite the glib talk about war being a precursor of religious revival, we are now far enough away from that tremendous social and moral upheaval to realise that the works of the Devil can never, of themselves, help forward the Kingdom of God. One definite outcome of the War is the uprush of a subtle practical materialism with which the Church is faced at the present time. Many people now-a-days seem to regard "the life that now is" as the only life that counts; with the result that they are entirely unconcerned about spiritual values. They have so camouflaged their fundamental spiritual needs that they do not recognise them; and so they have come to regard Christianity, not so much as untrue (about the truth or untruth of the Gospel they are not usually concerned), but as unnecessary. To them religion is an impertinence. It is entirely irrelevant to the kind of life they wish to lead; and the Church is an effete institution for which they have no further use.

Yet it is also true that there is a widespread feeling that modern scholarship has undermined the foundations of the Christian faith. People are aware, in a general sort of way, that the Christian documents have been subjected to the keenest scrutiny by the foremost scholars of the day; they have seen in newspaper and magazine articles references, none too happy, and

often quite erroneous, to the "findings" of various kinds of critics; they have read the religious "confessions" of leading novelists and scientists. The upshot of all this is that they have gained the impression that there is no longer anything to be said in favour of the Christian message.

Closely connected with this is the fact that so many people to-day do not know what Christianity really is. In their minds it is usually associated, or even identified, with antiquated views of the Bible and religion that have long since been exploded by Christian scholars themselves; and because they can no longer accept these antiquated views they think that it is Christianity itself they are rejecting. They confuse mistaken interpretations, and even caricatures, of the Gospel with the Gospel as Jesus gave it.

Now it is these intellectual and practical difficulties that we have both to understand and to meet, though it is usually easier to do the former than the latter. But there is no need to be unduly depressed by these conditions. They present the preacher with both a challenge and an opportunity; and he must not decline the challenge nor refuse to take advantage of the opportunity.

(*c*) But to do this work effectively and successfully there are certain qualities of heart and mind demanded. For one thing, the preacher must possess the power to sympathise with the intellectual and practical difficulties of his contemporaries, even when he can see how crude, or how unnecessary, these difficulties are. There is a good deal of genuine religious perplexity in the world, even though much that passes for "honest doubt" has its roots in moral delinquency and moral impotence; and we must try to meet this perplexity in a sympathetic and understanding spirit, never failing to exhibit what Matthew Arnold spoke of as "the sweet reasonableness of Jesus." Otherwise, with all the good intentions in the world, we shall fail to help those who need our aid, and may even drive them further into the wilderness of doubt and perplexity. It is said that when Lord Chief Justice Coleridge once confessed to Keble that he was sorely puzzled by the problem of inspiration, he received a most astounding reply. "Most people," said Keble, "who have difficulties on the question of inspiration are too wicked to be reasoned with." We may not be so foolish as to make such a wicked retort to people who are unsettled in their minds about religion, but it is quite easy for us to be impatient and unsympathetic. Against such a temper we must ever be on our guard. Nothing distresses discerning members of our congregation more than the cheap and easy dismissal of people's religious difficulties by the man in the pulpit; unless it be the

vulgar abuse of "modern knowledge" by a preacher who has obviously made no attempt to understand (which does not necessarily mean to accept) the various movements of thought in his own age.

From this it follows that the preacher must be able to present the Gospel against the intellectual background of to-day. The fact that the essence of the Gospel consists of eternal elements which time can never antiquate does not relieve the Christian messenger of the duty of interpreting the Gospel in the terms of his own age; indeed, it is this very fact that imposes this duty upon him. We cannot expect to win the twentieth-century man to Christ by the exposition of a theology that was shaped in a previous age. However sufficient such a theology may have been for the age in which it was formulated, it is inadequate for the spiritual needs of to-day. True religion is a form of life-experience; theology is the attempt to explicate and explain the specific experiences in which religion consists. The essential elements in religion are "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"; theologies are temporary and transient forms of thinking which, to be vital and effective, must be relevant to the life of the age to which they are offered and for which they are formulated.

It further follows that the preacher must be able to distinguish between the essential and the unessential aspects of his message. There is much that is associated with present-day Christianity that is not really integral to the Gospel. Some things belong to the circumference of the faith, and others are quite outside the circle of genuine Christian thought altogether. It is disastrous, as well as absurd, to bring them into the centre and to regard them as belonging to the very heart of the Gospel. We may be able to make out a good case for the reliability of the patriarchal records of the Old Testament, and it may be that the story of the run-away prophet who found himself involved in a strange encounter with a great fish is literal history. But after all, the eternal validity of the Gospel does not depend either upon the credibility of Genesis or upon the edibility of Jonah; and we do not help men if we insist that these things are the very "bone and marrow" of the Christian Gospel. The "all or nothing" policy does not help us to make men into earnest Christians, as the history of the early years of the Oxford Movement proves. Newman, Keble, Pusey, Froude, and the others, demanded that men should either believe or disbelieve everything that was subsumed under the heading of Christianity as they understood it. They made no distinction between the accidentals and the fundamentals of the faith; they urged upon men the false antithesis "all or nothing"; and while they made

many converts, they also made more sceptics in Oxford than the whole of anti-Christian propaganda of the time put together. Preaching to the times certainly calls for the ability to distinguish between what is essential and what is merely accidental to the Gospel.

(*d*) One final thing may be said. We must meet the false philosophies of the present day with a philosophy that is definitely Christian, a philosophy that is based upon an adequate interpretation of the teaching of the New Testament and upon clear insight into the nature and meaning of that religious experience of which the New Testament is the primitive and classic record. We live in an age of false philosophies, though perhaps our age is not peculiar in that respect. On every hand, we are being offered "modern substitutes for Christianity," some of which are making a big appeal to an increasing number of people. The result is that men are bewildered; they know not where to turn. The needs of such people cannot be met unless we offer them an adequate Christian view of God and the world. It is no good simply girding at philosophers and scientists, and leaving it at that. It serves no useful purpose merely to pour scorn on men's religious perplexities, and go no further. Man is endowed with a "rational soul" (to use the language of the Schoolmen); God made him to think, as well as to feel and act; and no religion can long prove satisfactory unless it offer to men a reasonable interpretation of life. To deny that fact is to despise the work of the great thinkers of the Church—men to whom the Church owes far more than it has generally recognised, for it has often crucified its thinkers and usually canonised its ecclesiastics and evangelists. Where would the Church be to-day had it not been for the work of the great Christian apologists of the first three centuries—Aristides, Justin Martyr, Origen, and others? These men made it their business to re-state the Gospel in the language of their own day so as to win the thoughtful people of the age. And thoughtful people, let us remember, have souls to be saved, as well as those thoughtless people who never think, but who, when they think they think, are merely re-arranging their prejudices.

Every age has laid upon it the necessity of working out, in its own terms, a Christian philosophy of life; and none the less is that true of our age. It is a duty that we must perform. And only by performing it as well as we are able by God's grace and the inspiration of His Spirit can we draw the sting of the anti-Christian philosophies that abound on every hand, and succeed in our task of bidding "eternal truth be present fact." We serve our day and generation according to the will of God by "preaching to the times."

JOHN PITTS.

Baptist Work in Jamaica Before the Arrival of the Missionaries.

THE first Baptist missionary was sent from England to Jamaica in 1813, in response to an appeal for help from the leaders of small Baptist communities of slaves and coloured people. For some time men like Dr. Ryland had been concerned that something should be done in the West Indies. "I have waited for several years with great anxiety for someone to send," he wrote, as early as 1807. What manner of men were they who asked for help? How came they to turn towards England? What sort of churches were under their leadership? How had these churches come into existence? The full story of the romantic and unexpected beginnings of Baptist work in Jamaica is now lost, probably beyond recovery, but some information is available, and there has recently come to light in the Library of the Baptist Mission House, London, a copy of "*The Covenant of the Anabaptist Church, begun in America, December* 1777, *and in Jamaica, December* 1783." This church had George Liele as its minister, and he and Moses Baker were the best known of the Baptist leaders at the time that the first agent of the Baptist Missionary Society reached Jamaica. What follows has been collected from various sources, chiefly from contemporary magazines and the early records of the B.M.S., and it is intended as an introduction to the study of this interesting and important Church Covenant.

At the time of the American War of Independence there was a considerable emigration from the States to certain of the West Indian islands, and particularly to Jamaica. W. J. Gardner, in his *History of Jamaica* (London, 1873) says: "Early in January 1783, when the struggle for independence in the United States had been decided in favour of the colonists, about four hundred white families, and between four and five thousand of their negro slaves, arrived in Jamaica, preferring a colony still under imperial rule to residing under a new and untried republican government." Among those who journeyed oversea about this time was George Liele. Dr. Rippon was put in touch with him seven years later by a Baptist minister in South Carolina, and elicited from Liele himself certain facts about his strange story, which were published in the first volume of the *Baptist Register*.

Liele was a negro slave, born in Virginia. When young he

worked in several parts of America, settling finally in New Georgia. His father was said to have been a godly man, but it was in Georgia, about 1780, that Liele was converted. He was baptised by a Baptist minister, and at once began Christian work among his fellow-negroes on the plantations. His owner, Henry Sharp, was a deacon of a Baptist Church, and gave him his freedom, encouraging him in the exercise of his preaching gifts. Rippon's correspondent speaks of Liele's planting "the first Baptist Church in Savannah." It appears that he remained there until its evacuation by the British. Sharp was killed in the War of Independence, and Liele, who had remained in the service of his family although free, suffered imprisonment. A certain Colonel Kirkland befriended him, and together they left America for Jamaica. "At the evacuation of the country," wrote Liele to Rippon, in 1791, "I was partly obliged to come to Jamaica as an indented servant for money I owed him, he promising to be my friend in this country."

On his arrival in Kingston in 1783, Liele was employed for a while by the Governor of Jamaica; afterwards he supported himself by cultivating some land, and acting as a carrier. He was at the time in the early thirties. The godlessness of the place filled him with concern, and he began boldly preaching on the Kingston racecourse, forming, with a handful of other American refugees, a little Baptist Church. Almost at once he was imprisoned on a charge of teaching sedition, but when the day of the trial came no accusers appeared, and he was released. There was much opposition to be met. The life of Kingston was in general wild and dissolute. A story has been preserved of three young men riding in upon a little company celebrating the Lord's Supper and giving the bread to their horses; nor was it forgotten that one of them later became insane and another was drowned in the harbour. But so effectively did Liele proclaim his message of faith in Christ that in seven years he had baptised five hundred people, over three hundred of whom had joined his church. "At Kingston I baptise in the sea, at Spanish Town in the river, and at convenient places in the country," he wrote to Rippon. "We have, together with well-wishers and followers, in different parts of the country, about fifteen hundred people." In the same letter he spoke of "the whole island under arms"—"Several of our members and a deacon were obliged to be on duty and I, being trumpeter to the troop of horse in Kingston, am frequently called upon." Already in 1791 the need for a permanent building for the church was acute and an appeal for help was made. A number of white men, including Bryan Edwards, the Jamaica historian, responded generously, and in 1793 the first dissenting chapel in the island was built. There

remained a debt on it, however, and troubles over this led to Liele's second imprisonment. This does not seem to have been for long, and his creditors were ultimately paid in full. Inquiries were made of Rippon as to the cost of a bell which could be heard two miles off.

Of Liele's subsequent history not a great deal is known. For some years he was in correspondence with England, and Rippon sent him some books. It is reported that in 1822, that is, some years after the Baptist missionaries had arrived in Jamaica, he paid a brief visit to this country. It was some time after 1825 that he died, for William Knibb attended his funeral. The impression left by the few records we have is of a powerful and enthusiastic figure. The church covenant is a strange document in many ways, but that also bears the mark of a vigorous and devoted personality. It was Rippon's contact with Liele that drew the attention of the English denominational authorities to what was going on in Jamaica. Before long they came to know of other coloured leaders.

About 1787 Liele had baptised a certain Moses Baker, a mulatto barber, also from the States. At the evacuation of New York in 1783 he had come to Jamaica with his wife and child. Although he had had some contact with Anglicans in America, he was a worldly and intemperate man. For some time he had a small shop in Kingston, and then secured some land to cultivate about fifteen miles from the town. Under the influence of an old black man named Cupid Wilkin, Baker's wife began to read the Bible, and just about the same time her husband became seriously ill, his sight being badly affected. The estate on which Baker worked belonged to a Quaker, Isaac Lascelles Winn. There were thus various influences brought to bear upon him, leading in the end to his change of heart and baptism by George Liele. Winn, almost at once, suggested that Baker be employed to instruct the negroes on the estate "in religious and moral principles." Such an action reflects credit both on the Quaker and the ex-barber. Moses Baker commenced a vigorous attack on superstition and idolatry, and formed a "small society" on the lines laid down by Liele. He met with considerable success, on one occasion baptising in one day more than a hundred persons. When Winn died, Baker passed into the employ of Samuel Vaughan, for whose slaves he did the same kind of service. There was opposition to be met with, not only from some of the slaves, but also from unfriendly planters. Baker was often charged with sedition and was in personal danger on many occasions. His reputation grew, however, and his influence, until in 1806 the Jamaican Assembly passed a law preventing all teaching and preaching on the plantations. It remained in force

for eight years, and was a sad blow to men like Liele and Baker, and the latter seems to have appealed direct to England for help. John Rowe, the first Baptist missionary, went at once to Baker on his arrival in Jamaica in 1814, and though from the first the B.M.S. work was carried on independently, very friendly relations existed between the missionaries and the coloured leader. Rowe was instrumental in influencing Baker's son, and when the missionary died in 1816, it was Baker who sent home an account of his last days. Two descriptions of Baker are worth quoting. The first comes from 1813 from a Mr. Hill, one of a family much respected in Jamaica: "He appeared a plain, home-spun man, rugged as a honeycomb rock; his eyes were then failing; his head was bound with a handkerchief, for he had suffered torture in America, which had injured both his ears and eyes. His appearance was that of no common man. His language was direct, and his demeanour was marked with simplicity." In 1821 the missionary, James Coultart, visited Baker, who was then quite without his sight. He found a crowded chapel, and examined the negro children who were able to repeat a number of Watts's hymns and other verses. "Baker was neither superstitious nor enthusiastic," he wrote. "He possessed good, plain common-sense; he spoke like a spiritual-minded person, and with much feeling. He was decisive and firm in religious discipline; always consistent and influential."

One other of these coloured men deserves mention—Thomas Nicholas Swigle—for a number of his letters to England were printed by Rippon. Swigle was baptised by Liele and wrote in April, 1793: "Our beloved minister by consent of the church, appointed me deacon, schoolmaster, and his principal helper." Soon after he seems to have separated from Liele and to have become the leader of a second church in Kingston, which had its own meeting-house. In 1802 he reported that since becoming pastor he had baptised one hundred and eleven persons, and had about five hundred people in all. "Our church consists of people of colour and black people; some of free condition, but the greater part of them are slaves and natives from the different countries of Africa. . . . We have five trustees to our chapel and burying-ground, eight deacons and six exhorters." Later that same year he wrote to Rippon describing his new chapel and recounting a visit he had had from Moses Baker, who was in search of a helper. "I gave him Brother George Vineyard, one of our Exhorters, an old experienced professor (who has been called by grace upwards of eighteen years) to assist him. . . . Myself and brethren were at Mr. Liele's chapel a few weeks ago, at the funeral of one of his elders; he is well, and we were friendly together."

In Swigle's letters there are references to other coloured leaders—John Gilbert, George Gibbs, and James Pascall. The first was a free black man who worked in the north of Jamaica. The second, who had come from one of the Southern States of America, laboured around Spanish Town and formed a church which practised " triune immersion " ; he died in 1826, and our missionary Phillippo visited the places in which he had worked, and linked some of his converts on to the Spanish Town Baptist Church. There were other less known independent evangelists, men of few gifts, but of real consecration, whose work prepared the way for that of the Baptist missionaries. " Some of our best people," so runs an early record, " came from the churches first formed by Liele, Gibbs, and Moses Baker."

All this work owed much to the Church Covenant drawn up by George Liele. We have record that a copy was sent to Rippon in 1792, but that recently found in the Mission House Library is dated 1796. " It is read," wrote Liele, " once a month here on sacrament meetings, that our members may examine if they live according to all those laws which they professed, covenanted and agreed to." In an earlier letter he had stated that all his four children were members of the church, the youngest being but eleven years old. Before the text of the Covenant a list of twenty-four elders is given, twelve men and twelve women, and underneath it is stated : " We bind ourselves, under an affirmation, to do duty to our King, Country, and Laws, and to see that the affixed Rules are duly observed." Each article is followed by a series of Biblical references printed in full, but here only noted. There was evidently no fear of the name " Anabaptist," and in this connection it is worth recalling that the parish register of St. James' describes John Rowe as an " Anabaptist Missionary."

THE COVENANT OF THE ANABAPTIST CHURCH.

1. We are of the Anabaptist persuasion because we believe it agreeable to the Scriptures.
   Proof :—(Matt. iii. 1-3; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18.)
2. We hold to keep the Lord's Day throughout the year, in a place appointed for Public Worship, in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
   (Mark xvi. 2, 5, 6; Col. iii. 16.)
3. We hold to be Baptised in a river, or in a place where there is much water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
   (Matt. iii. 13, 16, 17; Mark xvi. 15, 16; Matt. xxviii. 19.)

4. We hold to receiving the Lord's Supper in obedience according to His commands.
(Mark xiv. 22-24; John vi. 53-57.)

5. We hold to the ordinance of washing one another's feet.
(John xiii. 2-17.)

6. We hold to receive and admit young children into the Church according to the Word of God.
(Luke ii. 27-28; Mark x. 13-16.)

7. We hold to pray over the sick, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.
(James v. 14, 15.)

8. We hold to labouring one with another according to the Word of God.
(Matt. xviii. 15-18.)

9. We hold to appoint Judges and such other Officers among us, to settle any matter according to the Word of God.
(Acts vi. 1-3.)

10. We hold not to the shedding of blood.
(Genesis ix. 6; Matt. xxvi. 51-52.)

11. We are forbidden to go to law one with another before the unjust, but to settle any matter we have before the Saints.
(1 Cor. vi. 1-3.)

12. We are forbidden to swear not at all (*sic*).
(Matt. v. 33-37; Jas. v. 12.)

13. We are forbidden to eat blood, for it is the life of a creature, and from things strangled, and from meat offered to idols.
(Acts xv. 29.)

14. We are forbidden to wear any costly raiment, such as superfluity.
(1 Peter iii. 3, 4; 1 Timothy ii. 9-10.)

15. We permit no slaves to join the Church without first having a few lines from their owners of their good behaviour.
(1 Peter ii. 13-16; 1 Thess. iii. 13.)

16. To avoid Fornication, we permit none to keep each other, except they be married according to the Word of God.
(1 Cor. vii. 2; Heb. xiii. 4.)

17. If a slave or servant misbehave to their owners they are to be dealt with according to the Word of God.
(1 Tim. i. 6; Eph. vi. 5; 1 Peter ii. 18-22; Titus ii. 9-11.)

18. If any one of this Religion should transgress and walk disorderly, and not according to the Commands which we have received in this Covenant, he will be censured according to the Word of God.
(Luke xii. 47-48.)

19. We hold, if a brother or sister should transgress any of these articles written in this Covenant so as to become a swearer, a fornicator, or adulterer; a covetous person, an idolater, a railer, a drunkard, an extortioner or whoremonger; or should commit any abominable sin, and do not give satisfaction to the Church, according to the Word of God, he or she, shall be put away from among us, not to keep company, nor to eat with him.
(1 Cor. v. 11-13.)

20. We hold if a Brother or Sister should transgress, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, and he, or she, after being justly dealt with agreeable to the 8th article, and be put out of the Church, that they shall have no right or claim whatsoever to be interred into the Burying-ground during the time they are put out, should they depart life; but should they return in peace, and make a concession so as to give satisfaction, according to the word of God, they shall be received into the Church again and have all privileges as before granted.
(2 John i. 9-10; Gal. vi. 1, 2; Luke xvii. 3, 4.)

21. We hold to all the other Commandments, Articles, Covenants, and Ordinances, recorded in the Holy Scriptures as are set forth by our Lord and Master Jesus Christ and His Apostles, which are not written in this Covenant, and to live to them as nigh as we possibly can, agreeable to the Word of God.
(John xv. 7-14.)

FINIS.

In view of the sincerity and simplicity here revealed, the danger of fanaticism and heresy, the difficulties and the opportunities of work among people who had covenanted in this fashion, and the special responsibility of Englishmen for the West Indies, it is not surprising that Dr. Ryland and his friends did not rest till they were able to send missionaries to Jamaica.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

Pablo Besson of Argentina.

A Challenging Personality and a Disturbing Influence.

PABLO BESSON passes from audacious evangelical activity into passive history as the Baptist pioneer and hero of Argentina, a militant protagonist of aggressive evangelicalism and a valiant champion of religious liberty. He was born in Lods, Switzerland, on April 4th, 1848, into an atmosphere of ecclesiastical ferment caused chiefly by the leaven of Vinet's expositions of the principle of liberty of conscience. The key to the whole of Besson's career might be summed up in Vinet's teaching that "liberty is less a right than a duty"; and that he had to do "more than *claim* religious liberty, namely to *make use* of it."

The formative grace of God can be traced in his early preparation for the special work to which he was destined in Argentina. His father was an able, upright minister of the National Church of Switzerland, a stern disciplinarian who initiated his son into the meaning of the law and the consequences of disobedience. His godly mother, who was of Waldensian origin, unconsciously put iron into the blood and will of her son as she told of the sufferings and heroism of their noble ancestors. When Besson was flushed with the pride of success as a student, the recipient of honours and prizes, and of praises from parents and friends, it was a Christian in humble circumstances who quietly and affectionately revealed to him his need of something beyond himself. He told the story in later years. "I was proud of myself. I was relying on self-effort. I had not realised that I was a sinner who needed the grace of God and salvation through Christ. Our family servant told me of my self-righteousness and self-sufficiency, and that I had an inherited but not an experimental religion. She prayed with me and for me." The lad Besson was challenged and disturbed; God used that simple message to introduce him to a new experience and to give him a new but life-long viewpoint, though it was only afterwards under the tuition of Luthardt in the University of Leipsic that he gained a clear intellectual grasp of the stupendous truth of justification by faith. Under Godet in Neuchatel he assimilated the principle of liberty of conscience, which was destined so deeply to affect his career. Under Secretan his keen philosophical mind was developed, and Bovet

laid the foundations of his knowledge of Hebrew and its concomitants. In the Leipsic University Delitzsch and Tischendorf initiated him into the textual criticism of the Bible, and so prepared him to produce a Spanish version of the New Testament which will be an abiding contribution to evangelical scholarship in that language.

"By the grace of God," as he himself would insist, from the spiritual, moral and intellectual influences, there emerged a young man of challenging personality and disturbing activity. He entered the lists for "the great fight," and until body and mind were worn out he was consistently on the war-path. Error, injustice, wrong and sin received no diplomatic smiles or purring acquiescence from him. Criticism and controversy, tempered by fairness and justice, became second nature to him.

When twenty-two years of age he was ordained and then elected by communal vote to the pastorate of the National Church at Liniers. He has told us that it was very pleasing to the flesh to be a sort of lord of the parish. Once more he had to challenge himself and was so disturbed that he challenged and disturbed the National Church authorities, by resigning his charge because of the conviction that a State Church is incompatible with the true liberty of conscience. Thus it came about that he was one who, with Professor Godet and others, formed the Free Church of Neuchatel. In 1873 he became Pastor of a Presbyterian church in Lyons, France; and there challenged and disturbed the municipal authorities who had prohibited the sale of Bibles and the distribution of evangelical literature. He engaged in the forbidden colportage work and distributed tracts—and for so doing was imprisoned and fined. He was possessed of an aggressive missionary spirit, and refused to subject Christ's commission to a municipal prohibition.

Once more he had to challenge himself and then disturbed the Presbyterians of France and especially his friend the Rev. Leopold Monod, and his beloved and reverenced professor, Dr. F. Godet, by accepting baptism at the hands of the Rev. J. B. Cretin. He had become convinced that infant baptism is incompatible with liberty of conscience, and that the baptism of believers is the only baptism known to the New Testament. After working for some six years in the north of France under the auspices of the American Baptist Missionary Society, with Pastor Vincent as a colleague and Denain as his centre, he had to challenge himself again. Some members of one of his churches had emigrated to Argentina. Mathieu Floris wrote pathetic letters to his former pastor pleading with him to send someone out as teacher. Once more Besson obeyed his conscience and used his liberty by resigning from the Mission and from his

church. Without stipulating for salary or even the refund of his passage-money, he responded to the call from Argentina.

On his settlement in 1881 at Esperanza in the Province of Santa Fe, he discovered that those stalwart Baptist pioneers to whom he had come as their minister were suffering under serious civil disabilities. He first of all challenged and disturbed the local Roman Catholic clergy and the municipal authorities, then the provincial, and finally the national ecclesiastical and Governmental power.

Baptismal certificates, issued by the Roman Catholic Church for all Roman Catholics, by the Anglicans for the English, by the Presbyterians for the Scotch, by the Lutherans for the Danish and Germans, by the Methodist Episcopal Church (with State authority, if you please, as though it were the established church of the United States!) for North Americans, were the only legally valid birth certificates. The unchristened children of those hardy Baptists had no legal rights because they could produce no baptismal certificates. "The only proof of the birth of the children of Baptists is their existence," was the challenging assertion of the irate Besson, as he pressed the Government for the establishment of the civil registry of births.

He also found that in those districts there were only Roman Catholic cemeteries. Protestants were denied permission to bury their dead in these, and the ban was particularly strict as regards the burial of unchristened children. The fire of righteous indignation was set ablaze in Besson's inflammable soul after the death of Luisa Engler, whose father was one of the first he had baptised. It had already been stirred when the body of a Swiss Protestant was removed from the cemetery by order of the Roman Catholic priest and re-buried outside the wall. Others had to be buried in the street or the garden. A municipal decree now prohibited this. When Luisa died, Besson went to the mayor for a permit to have her buried in the cemetery, but was told to apply to the priest. This he refused to do, for he had gone before and been insulted. Then he disturbed the mayor by declaring that if he had the right to frame by-laws regarding the burial of the dead, it was his clear duty to grant permission to enter the cemetery.

Luisa was buried in her father's garden. With three of her brothers I was visiting her grave under the shade of a laurel tree in March, 1932. That grave will be historic. The eldest brother told me that he was a boy at the time, but he remembers Besson's impressive address and the arrival of the police to arrest his father. Besson mounted his horse and rode the twenty-seven miles to Santa Fe, sent challenging telegrams to the Buenos Aires papers and disturbed the provincial Governor by telling him:

"You will let us live in your country, but you will not let us die in it." Then began the great fight, during which he provided some of the ammunition for the legislators who carried through the measure for the municipalisation of the cemeteries.

In order to carry on this campaign more effectively, he moved to Buenos Aires. There, in addition to preaching in French, he started services in Spanish and organised the first Baptist Church in the city.

He next found that members of his church could not be legally married unless they were hypocritically converted into Roman Catholics, or pretended to be British, Germans, Danes or North Americans, and went through a marriage ceremony in a language they did not understand. He supplied the Solicitor-general, Dr. Edward Costa, and the ministers of Justice, Doctors Posse and Wilde, with several of the definite cases which, notwithstanding tremendous clerical opposition, forced the Government to establish civil registration in 1888.

He was on the first Committee in Buenos Aires of the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals," and was no passive member. He challenged and disturbed the cruel persons—very many in those days—who in the most heartless way flogged underfed and overworked horses because they were unable to pull heavily-laden carts out of deep mud. With his membership medal in his hand he would caution the offenders, and if they persisted, would hand them over to the police in the name of the S.P.C.A.

He also challenged the underworld by becoming a member of the Anti-White Slave Traffic Committee. His activities were not confined to talk at the committee meetings. He rescued and helped some victims of that most nefarious combination of "vested interests." He told the writer of one poor girl who had been trapped and enslaved. Somehow her broken-hearted mother in Switzerland got to know of her whereabouts and wrote a pathetic letter to Besson. Without calculating what the consequences might be to his own good name, he unhesitatingly went to the "house," and asked to be shown to the room of the girl. Once there, he gave her her mother's letter, and it broke her down. She confessed that she wanted to leave and get home if only she could. "There is no time like the present," insisted Besson, and suggested that she leave with him right away, never to return. He took her to an understanding Christian woman who mothered her for a few days. He secured a passage for her and commended her to the care of the captain of the steamer, and she arrived safely home. Grateful letters came from mother and daughter. She told him of her happy marriage, and that she owed her salvation, her self-respect, and her happiness to him. Great

tear-drops rolled down the furrowed cheeks of the old warrior as we read that letter together.

He challenged and disturbed more than one meeting of Socialists when they were discussing religion, but especially one. "The existence of God," and "Marriage," were the subjects advertised. Besson attended. The lecturer denied the existence of God, and advocated "free love," a sort of communism of women, or rather that all women should be the common property of men. When he had finished, Don Pablo asked permission to say something. He was introduced by the lecturer as a friend and a champion of liberty. After telling why he believed in God, he took up the other very delicate matter, and made a rather improper suggestion concerning the lecturer's beautiful daughter, whom he knew to be her father's idol. The father became furious, and declared that Besson had insulted his daughter and himself. The Baptist admitted that he had insulted the Socialist, but silenced him, and carried most of the audience with him, as he told the irate lecturer that by the logic of his own theory he was making precisely this proposal with regard to every other father's daughter. That settled it; candour and courage won, and they remained good friends.

Don Pablo challenged and disturbed newly-arrived missionaries in many ways. In the early days he wanted to find out whether they would make good, and so invited them to luncheon with him at a cheap restaurant. The table-cloth had wine and soup stains; the spoons and forks were greasy; the soup had been the rendezvous of many flies; perhaps the remains of a slug would be discovered in the boiled cabbage; the people around looked unwashed and some of them were even malodorous; the floor was the common spittoon; and each course cost only five centavos, about one English penny in those days. Now, if a raw recruit could go through the menu without signs of squeamishness, Besson reckoned he would make good. The writer stood the test, perhaps because a friend had prepared him for it!

He loved to test the theology of the new arrival or the student. He would pose as a heretic at times in order to draw out the unsuspecting novice. He had some posers which he delighted to use to the confusion of a visitor. If he discovered what he considered heresy he would be unsparing in his criticism and untiring in his efforts to get the erring person to accept his point of view.

He was a prolific but fragmentary writer in newspapers and periodicals, mostly in the early days, on civil registration, religious liberty and kindred subjects, and in later years on disestablishment, ecclesiastical patronage, and a variety of historical

subjects. No one knew the National Library better than he, and no reader spent more time there. Students and politicians were in the habit of consulting him when engaged in research, and he never failed them. He had a remarkable grasp of history and a prodigious memory for dates. Besson was the earliest evangelical preacher in many of the provincial towns of Argentina. Known by his writings, he was invited by Liberals and Freemasons as well as by isolated Protestants to give addresses in public halls. His fiery denunciations of error and wrong-doing; his keen, unsparing criticism of what he considered mistaken policies and systems; the resistless logic of his arguments; and his impassioned appeal for civil reforms and especially for unconditional surrender to Christ were challenging and disturbing wherever he spoke. In his own church many of his sermons were polemic. At one time or another he has exposed most of the errors of Rome and of materialistic philosophy. He knew the origins of all the heresies and could use his knowledge to purpose; nevertheless he was anything but a "heresy hunter." His was a positive life, certain of its own moorings and therefore not easily swept away by any false doctrines, no matter how attractive and plausible their first appearance.

His preaching was at its best when he dealt with the grace of God, the atonement of Christ, justification by faith, and the new birth. Two of his spiritual sons, four spiritual grandsons, and one spiritual great-grandson are pastors of Baptist churches.

For years he was a weekly visitor to the leper hospital. Armed with newspapers, illustrated magazines and evangelical literature, dressed in the white tunic provided by the hospital to avoid contagion, he would bear his message of salvation and comfort to these most hopeless of living mortals.

In 1905 he married the widow of the late Rev. George Graham, the first English Baptist missionary in Argentina. She was a consecrated, missionary-hearted, home-loving lady who exercised a calming and restraining influence on the impassioned controversialist, and she surrounded him with the home comforts and attentions so sadly lacking in his bachelor years. Although Don Pablo was parsimonious as regards his personal needs and comfort, he was generous to the needy and the work of the Lord. "I save in order to have more to give," he remonstrated when expostulated with for not attending better to his own comfort. He left by will to the Baptist Mission a substantial sum of money which had come to him by inheritance, and this is to form the "Pablo Besson Building Loan Fund."

When on July 26th, 1931, the jubilee of his arrival in Buenos Aires on July 25th, 1881, was celebrated by a great demonstration of love and esteem in the Swiss Hall, his reply was uniquely

characteristic. "Thank you, thank you and thank you," he exclaimed with a trembling voice. "I am afraid you have been saying too much about the man and not enough about His Saviour Jesus Christ. I am just a poor sinner—a miserable sinner, saved by the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ."

As age crept on and every organ of his vigorous system was wearing out, when even his brilliant mind became at times clouded, he still challenged weakness and death. But this was a losing battle, and he knew it. "The Apostle Paul dreaded that he might get where I am, a useless tool cast away on the rubbish heap. I am useless. I am not worth anything. What a good thing that salvation is not by works! What kind of works could I do now that would bring me salvation? What a blessing it is that all is by grace." Such were the sentiments he expressed in one of his last conversations with the writer.

On December 30th, 1932, his soul passed on, and the body it had left behind was reverently laid to rest by a large company of his brethren and friends, in a shady nook of the British Cemetery, Buenos Aires, on the evening of the last day of the year.

Yes, Don Pablo Besson, an apostle of and fearless fighter for liberty, truth and righteousness, preacher of the kernel of the Gospel, friend of missionaries, helper of the needy, comforter of the afflicted, was a challenging personality and a disturbing influence! Surely he was Christ-like in these two characteristics, for Christ's life and teaching were, and are, challenging and disturbing.

ROBERT F. ELDER.

"PROVIDED ALWAYS that no form of worldly amusement such as Billiards Chess Draughts Dominoes or Dice nor games of chance such as Card playing shall be allowed on the said premises."—*Extract from the trust deed of a Baptist Church sealed only twenty years ago!*

Ashford in Kent.

THE Baptist church at Ashford claims to have originated in 1653, and Ivimey heard that records of that date showed that in that year members at Wye, Nackholt, and neighbouring places, organized and adopted eleven articles of faith and practice. This was probably due to the evangelistic tours of Henry Denne from Eltisley and Fenstanton, which certainly had good effects at Eythorne and Canterbury. On 25 May, 1653, a letter was sent hence to Cromwell, one of nineteen from Gathered Churches in Kent to nominate for his new Parliament, signed by Ralph Fremley and M. Savory; but these names are not familiar in Baptist circles, and these may be the ancestors of a Pædobaptist church, though most of these churches and members are well known in the General Baptist Association of Kent. Sixteen years later, the vicar reported that the regular teachers of the Baptists here were Benjamin Bowyer and Smallwood.

Information by themselves begins in 1672, when the following licences were taken: Thomas Glover for the house of John Searle, at Wye, John Jarman for the house of Michael Hadlow at Wye, Thomas Jarman for the house of Thomas Heritage at Mersham, Daniel Kingsnoth for the house of Thomas Hills at Charing, Norton Munden for the house of George Wadlow at Wye: in Ashford, the houses of George Hadloe and Agnus Young. And a deed of that date is still in the church archives, their oldest document, showing that they used copyhold stables.

With 1689 liberty was secured, and the church opened a Register Booke. There were four Elders, John Searle senior, Thomas Jarman, George Eless, Henry Longley; two Deacons, Thomas Quested and John Searle junior, with 26 men and 25 women. The list was kept up, and annotated, so that abundant information is available as to the members. It was soon agreed to supply at Stelling, and at Quested's house—which may perhaps have been in the direction of Hythe.

Grave doctrinal trouble broke out among the General Baptists soon afterwards. In May, 1700, Longley with Sampson Pearce and Christopher Cooper went to the General Association at White's Alley in London to take a firm Trinitarian stand. They reported that Norton Jarman was unsound and had with-

drawn; and they were supported by the Association. But at that meeting they heard that Benjamin Bowyer had become Calvinist, and was preaching along these lines in the midlands; also that the same change was evident in Buckinghamshire, and at Covent Garden. They evidently took this very seriously, and examined the question, coming to the same conclusion.

In 1700, several churches in Kent divided, and Calvinistic churches were organized. George Ellis of Ashford and Thomas Petter of Sandhurst ordained Thomas Gilham at Smarden; and a Particular Baptist Association was formed, which soon embraced Ashford, Biddenden, Canterbury, Hawkhurst, Rolvenden (or Sandhurst) and Smarden. In May 1706 Ashford entertained the Association, and entered the minutes in the church book. Three troubles had arisen; they could not afford to pay Longley more, so agreed that he was free to go if he wished; the Norton Jarman difficulty was settled by all his friends joining that church at Canterbury which was under Searles Jarman and Samuel Ongley (the Blackfriars, which died as a Unitarian church); on the other hand, the doctrine that God caused men to sin was wrong, and members who on consideration held it, were to be expelled.

Ashford was manifestly the centre, and in 1699 Cooper had helped secure better premises; but monthly meetings were held also at Wye, Nackholt and Mersham, though Lydd was discontinued by 1709. Next year Thomas Franklin of Wye was baptised, who was the senior member when a new roll was opened in 1769. In 1715, Ellis and Longley were still joint pastors. A register of births was opened in 1729 and continued for fifty years. In 1731 Mary Taylor left her property, free and copyhold, to Henry Longley for the use of him and his successors; he enjoyed it till 1732/3, when he closed a fine long pastorate.

This precipitated various changes, Folkestone being involved. The old General Baptist church at Hythe-and-Folkestone had not changed in 1700, but twenty years later a group of Calvinists became uneasy, often travelling to Canterbury for worship. With 1728 they definitely left, and next year John Stace built them a Particular Baptist meeting, where John Howe from Portsmouth ministered. Another prominent member was George Green, and Ashford invited him. The Folkestone church reluctantly gave him leave to go if he wished, and on 2 April, 1735, he was ordained pastor at Ashford; the G.B. custom of joint-elders was not maintained. But as Howe had all Thanet to look after, Green helped at Folkestone.

His pastorate at Ashford saw the work stabilized and centralized by the erection of a new meeting-house, on copyhold land at 2/4 a year. It was opened 14 September, 1746, and was

promptly registered as having a yard and two stables. Next year, Gill of Southwark commended the case to his brethren, and the London benefactors aided in June 1748. When Green went to London to collect, he was evidently advised on some points of organization and management. For in 1753 there was a general overhaul; new trustees took possession by copy of the court roll, they found a debt of £60; the minutes were kept far more fully, and next year deacons were ordained.

Green died in 1761. The erection of a central meeting-house seems to have led, as usual, to the gradual abandonment of the outlying stations, and by further consequence, to the shrinkage and disappearance of local preachers, "ministers." Smarden P. B. helped in the vacancy, and after Rist had asked whether they would choose him as pastor, and had been told no, after Philip Hawkins had also been found wanting, appeal was made to London for advice. Now in March, 1760, the church at College Lane, Northampton, had "called to the ministry" Samuel Brooks, directly after it had called to the pastorate John Collett Ryland. He was invited, approved, received as member by the laying on of hands—a survival from the old G.B. days—and was ordained on 15 May, 1763 by Thomas Burch, who the year before had ordained Copping at Sandhurst.

Now College Lane was an open-membership church, and the advent of Brooks implied a sweetening of doctrine and practice. This was intensified the same year by his fellow member, Thomas Whitehead, coming to Folkestone. A new roll was begun in 1769; it showed not only Franklin of 1710, but John Longley senior, Stephen Austin, and Thomas Knott aged 70, destined to live another 26 years. As there was another Thomas Knott, son of John, born 1740, the old families were still well represented. Two years later, as Brooks had run into debt, the church disowned him. There was a strong leader in the person of Benjamin Harrison, and under his guidance the church chose James Brown as minister, with a view to the pastorate, but did not like the view. Daniel Gillibrand came in 1773, perhaps again on trial; he did sign that year the petition to Parliament for repeal of the persecuting laws, at Ashford. But in 1776 he went to Folkestone, which he served for seven years till he joined the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. Giles supplied a short time; it is not clear whether this was the Giles of Lymington, whose son afterwards came to Kent.

In 1777 the church found rest by the coming from Gamlingay of the Rev. Benjamin Morgan with his wife Agnes. He at once drew up a statement of doctrine, adopted by the church. Two years later, the churches of Rotherfield, Rye, Sandhurst, Smarden, Tenterden, and Wivelsfield sent delegates to Ashford,

where Morgan drew up a Circular Letter to notify why the Particular Baptist Association, which had been formed in 1700, was now revised. A new church was soon founded at Battle, and in 1785 Folkestone joined. This is a sign of the new life, pulsing now throughout the country. The progress in Kent has already been sketched, in volume V. at page 327; we may confine ourselves to local events in Ashford.

Morgan seems to have been "of an uncomfortable disposition," as some one told Ivimey. This may be illustrated by the birth-register ending in 1779. Morgan closed his work by 1785, when he was followed by William Brown. He took advantage of a new law, and acquired a government licence to act as registrar for burials, marriages, births and christenings. Of the last he naturally took no cognizance, but he did look back, and record five births in 1757-1766, duly stamping his certificates. This was a new departure, for a Baptist minister to hold an official post. He was succeeded, as pastor and as registrar, by Thomas Cromwell in 1786. Progress was evinced by the house of James Miller at Charing being registered for worship five years later. Then Francis Read followed in 1794 as pastor and registrar; and new trustees were appointed for the premises in St. John's Lane; while the calling out of the militia into camp gave a great opportunity for open-air work, so that forty or fifty were converted. Then "an unpleasant affair" obliged the church to depose and expel him.

Unfortunately a split occurred. William Willey from Dartmouth and Tiverton was called to serve the First church, while Read and his followers formed a Second; this was apparently small, as he was able also to help at Folkestone. The Association met here in 1801, but in its published minutes printed nothing as to local affairs. Perhaps James White, who was then pastor here, continued till he settled at Ipswich in 1810. William Broady was here also in 1801, evidently as the successor of Read at the Second church; and apparently he healed the breach. In 1815 land was given, and a school was erected.

In 1825 James Jackson settled, but he emigrated within two years. James Payne from Ipswich came in 1827, and began to set things in order. In 1829 a Particular Baptist trust was enrolled, giving a remainder to the P.B. Fund in case the church died out. More land was acquired on Marsh Lane next year, and the London Bulding Fund soon granted £80, so evidently there was a new building.

Progress is shown in another way, for as the Association of 1779 was being troubled, an East Kent Association was formed in 1836, to which Ashford adhered. Then the Bridewell on Marsh Lane was bought and added to the trust. Men came

forward for the ministry, so that Thomas Davis was spared to Bromsgrove and later on W. Clark to Tasmania.

The chapters of the past may be said to close in 1858, when the old burial-ground was officially closed. Its records are preserved from 1844, though eight years earlier the older books were surrendered to the government.

W. T. WHITLEY.

ELIZABETH the daughter of Thomas Wood (an Annabaptisticall and factious Separatist) and Eleanor his wife (the grave being ready made) was (by the companie that came with the childe) interred and layd into the ground before the minister came: and without praiers, or the righte of christian buriall according to the order of the Churche of England on Satterday: 7 May 1642: Stock in Essex. Francis Colman dyed March 3d 1695/6 but was not buried in this paresh, Thornton in Bucks, because he dyed excomunicate, and was fetch by some Anabapt. brethren to a Burying place of theirs at Stony Stratford. Mary the wife of William Lansbury the younger being dipd and dying a profess'd Anabaptist was interr'd without the office of the Burial Service a little before six o'clock in the evening: Dec 10, 1741: Spratton in Northants. John Lee the Anabaptist teacher was interr'd without the Burial Service: Feb. 10, 1741/2: Spratton in Northants.

JOHN READE (son of John Read an Anabaptist) born Dec. the 19th, 1698, was at his own request baptiz'd this 22d day of April: 1719: Bobbingworth in Essex. Jonathan Hill Physician and Chirurgion aged 66 bapt Apr. 24th: 1757: Stokesley in Yorks.

J. C. COX, Parish Registers of England.

Calendar of Letters, 1742-1831.

(*Continued from Volume VI., page* 379.)

125. 1815. Jan. 12.

From JAMES DORE (Walworth) to MR. W. BEDDOME.

A printed letter—of no importance.

126. 1815. April.

From J. FAWCETT to REV. MR. MANN (Shipley).

Fawcett has apparently been requested to give some of the facts of his early Xn. life, and does so, but states he cannot do so satisfactorily because he is reduced "to a state of weakness and insignificance beyond what you may imagine." The facts are:—

1761—gave his "thoughts on the Divine Word, but in a private way."

1762—spoke before the Church. Later, "called forth by my brethren occasionally to preach among them."

1763—on death of R. Smith he settled at Wainsgate at Christmas. Smith had been pastor there since 1750. Mr. James Hartley and Mr. Crabtree were previously members there. The ordination followed, "but I cannot point at the exact time."

[Fawcett died in 1817. A year later his son John issued a memoir, based on a diary. The Bradford Church agreed in 1763 to pass their approbation on him as a preacher; he visited Wainsgate first on 18 December. Next month both Liverpool and Wainsgate asked him to go. He moved to Wainsgate on 9 May, 1764, was called to the pastorate 22 July, was admitted a member 28 July, 1765, and was ordained pastor three days later.

The letter has another interest, for it shows how Mann was widening his acquaintance. He had just returned from Burslem to his native county, and at Shipley was near to the Academy of which he had been the first student. He was at once asked to become classical tutor, helping Steadman, though he soon made way for Jonathan Edwards Ryland. John Fawcett junior became secretary, and Mann was associated with him in 1822; he also gave the annual sermon in 1829. It is not surprising, therefore, that among these letters are some relating

to students there, such as Hunter, Kitching, Larom, Gilmore, Sample, Phillipps. Mann devoted himself to his church, and started a Sunday School. This letter betrays literary ambitions, and he presently came into touch with the Baptist Magazine, both as contributor and reviewer; these activities also are reflected in his correspondence.]

127. 1815. May 19.

From J. MARSHMAN to WM. BURLS (London).

"Capt. and Mrs. Kemp, with brother Yates and Mrs. Marshman's nephew" have arrived. Mrs. M. has been suffering from liver trouble and purposes a visit to England on Capt. K's boat. M. asks Burls to notify her son, John, at Mill Hill School, and her mother, Mrs. Tidd, at Ashwell, Rutlandshire. He has applied to the Govt. for "encouragement" by purchasing some copies of his literary works. They have responded with a gift of £1,000.

[William Burls, of Lothbury, was a fine supporter of the B.M.S., and one of its trustees; he presided next year at the important Birmingham meeting when the home management was re-organised after Fuller's death. On the new committee of 42 the other Londoners were, Joseph Gutteridge and Benjamin Shaw, M.P., with Cox of Hackney, Ivimey of Eagle Street, and Newman of Stepney. A sub-committee did most work; Burls was the London member, with eight country ministers. At Mill Hill School John would soon be joined by Carey William Rowe.]

128. 1815. June 12.

From J. LIND (Dewsbury) to MR. STEADMAN (Bradford).

He commends to Mrs. S., "whose case hath given me much concern," with considerable force and at great length, to dwell upon the *sufferings* of Xt., especially the Cross, and to commit to memory some hymns which he sends and specially prescribes for her. He asks S. to procure for him "An Essay on Scriptural Baptism," by John Gill, D.D. (he says, "I did not know that at present we have another Dr. Gill among the Baptists"). He states that "by comparing the number of Baptist Churches in Dr. Rippon's Register with that inserted in our Magazine, during the last 20 years the Baptist Churches have had an increase of more than 180."

[Lind was probably a member of Steadman's church; there was no Baptist church yet at Dewsbury. Perhaps he did not know that John Gill the younger, nephew of the Doctor, had died in 1809; no D.D. had been offered to him. Rippon had discontinued his Register in 1803. Smith, of Tiverton, began

his Baptist Magazine in 1809, and two years later revived Rippon's plan of a county list of churches and ministers.]

129. 1815. June 14.

From W. HAGUE (Scarborough) to MANN (Shipley).

Asking for copies of Crabtree's "Life."

130. 1816. Oct. 11.

From J. JARMAN (Nottingham) to B. LEPARD (Hackney).

Mentions an enquiry from Mr. Jas. Hoby as to "the religious sentiments of the Baptists at Horncastle" and refers it to Lepard. All J. knows is that Lincolnshire Baptists are hyper-Calvinists.

[Another illustration how the Particular Baptists hardly recognised the existence of the General Baptists, even while the missionary interest was leading them to view askance the hyper-Calvinists. There were at least ten churches in Lincolnshire dating from the seventeenth century, one or two perhaps before 1620; and there were eight or nine due to the New Connexion since 1770. The Particular Baptists had in all nine churches, the earliest being 1766. The second, Horncastle, 1767, was so obscure that it was not in Smith's list of 1811. That list reveals that five of the Particular churches were in the towns where General Baptists existed, so very likely they were hyper-Calvinist. The case of Barron and Killingholme is noteworthy, for the pastor was Abraham Greenwood, one of Fawcett's pupils, and one of the founders of the B.M.S. The church there had split, and Greenwood's party used the ancient meeting-house in the mornings, the original seventeenth-century Generals used it in the afternoons; but Greenwood's party prevented its use for the burial of the aged Elder. Two lads from Killingholme had been taught at Bradford by Mann.]

131. 1817. Aug. 28.

From S. KILPIN to J. IVIMEY (London).

Commending a bookseller friend for work.

132. 1817. Oct. 14.

From JOHN RYLAND to ISAAC MANN (at Steadman's, Bradford).

R. questions whether it is expedient to reprint "Dr. Carey's pamphlet *now*," because of the increased light that has been thrown on Indian problems by books of history, travel and missionary experience. Thus it may not add to Dr. C.'s reputation. But he suggests that Mann and Steadman go

through the pamphlet again with that in view. Re "late occurences in Bristol . . . what relates to a separation was occasioned by things over which I had no control. I now suppose that the resolution of my colleague to resign was formed in expectation of being brought in again triumphantly independently of me."

[These glimpses behind the scenes are not edifying. James Hinton's resignation was accepted; but whether the appointment of Dyer led to a good understanding with the heroes at Serampore may well be questioned.]

133. 1818. Jan. 28.

From J. RYLAND TO STEADMAN (Bradford).

The opening para. is re disbursement of Distress money, and mentions Mitchell of Warminster as being a deserving case. S. has submitted the "Idle case," but R. thinks "Jones of Sheffield" might claim the preference. "If we could raise £100 per week we have claimants in sufficient number to seize it all." His son, Jonathan's, address is, c/o Mr. Deakin, Glasgow. R. has just published a pamphlet on "Antinomianism." In a long para. on Missions he says: W. Pearce has reached the Ganges from L'pool: he thinks Hayti should be given up, and Wilberforce thinks "a diversity of sentiment would be puzzling to the Haytians." R. thinks it better to concentrate on Jamaica. Coultart lost his wife, and almost died himself. R. suggests a meeting on the 14th, especially re "Johns, who wants to go to India," although "Saffery and London friends are averse"—i.e., to J's going.

[William Garnett of Idle used to boast that he had never "rubbed his back against the walls of an Academy"; he resigned in 1820, and was afterwards excluded for not attending the means of grace. Over the hill, at Horton, young Charles Larom, a member of John Jones' church at Sheffield, was preparing himself in Steadman's Academy for a 44-year pastorate at his own church. Joseph Mitchell had settled at Warminster in 1816; this year he joined the Bristol Baptist Fund.

Hayti was the old Hispaniola, the first land discovered by Columbus; its natives were exterminated by the Spanish within fifty years, and from 1517 it was worked by blacks brought in slavery. Since 1810 it was under negro rulers, and Roman Catholicism was the usual religion; the idea of a Baptist mission was only momentary, though revived in 1845. Within living memory, such has been undertaken, apparently by the negroes of Jamaica.

The case of William Johns was tragic. He was a chemist and surgeon, who had in America collected £1,200 for the

Serampore Mission, and had gladdened Carey with seeds from Olney for his garden. It was his ill fate to arrive at Calcutta on an American vessel; and as the then administration of the East India Company hated missions, his action was interpreted as not straightforward; he was put aboard an English ship for England, at the expense of the mission. He believed that Marshman could have saved this, though Marshman had tried hard for his stay, and ever afterwards he poisoned minds at home, even of new recruits, leading to the sad rupture in April 1818. Thanks to Fuller, on the renewal of the Company's charter, such peremptory veto was now impossible, and Johns wanted to go out again. The committee did not send him, and he had no opportunity in India of healing the schism.]

134. 1818. Nov. 5.

From JOHN RYLAND TO KITCHIN (Kingston).

R. has not heard whether K. has arrived in Jamaica yet. "I have heard of Robinson's disgraceful conduct," and he hopes that Coultart will succeed in raising the money to get a place of worship that will be out of such hands. The Socy. have requested Dyer to be a whole time servant, and he resigns his pastorate at Xmas. R. commends a Mr. Stainsby "engaged by the Socy. for the Commission to Negro Slaves," and recommended both by a friend and by the B. & F.B.S., who is going to St. Thomas's East, Jamaica. R. will be writing to Mr. Tripp and Mr. Coultart.

135. 1818. Nov. 10.

From JOHN RYLAND TO KITCHIN (Kingston).

Glad K. has arrived. Commends a Mrs. Bowyer, of Taunton, who is coming out to Jamaica. Coultart is getting money for a new chapel, and "Jonathan sent word that they expect him at Bradford." "I went to Oxford on Tuesday to Jenkin Thomas's Ordination." R. has lost his brother, and also the same brother's son, and a student named Groves.

[Christopher Kitching had studied under Steadman and Mann, and seems to have been the first student from that Academy to volunteer for foreign service. With Jonathan Edwards Ryland succeeding Mann as tutor, Mann thus came into close relation with the B.M.S. Jenkin Thomas had joined the Bristol Baptist Fund in 1817, was at Cheltenham 1827, died 1850.]

136. 1818. Nov. 13.

From W. BUTTON (Paternoster Row) to MANN.

Sending account for £2 19s. 3d. for books.

137. 1819. Feb. 3.

From JOHN RYLAND to KITCHIN.

Commending Mr. and Mrs. Godden, who "are about to sail this week." Sutton has lost his wife, and he has been refused by the Govt. to go to Cuttack, but has now applied to go to Chittagong. Ward has visited him, and about 91 have been baptised there.

138. 1819. May 4.

From JOHN RYLAND TO KITCHING.

R. has heard from Tripp that K. has been successful in "obtaining a licence." "If you meet with reflections on account of any that are called by our name"—it is best to say that the Baptists in England have received unfavourable reports, and it is being remedied by sending only *trained* men. Meanwhile caution is needful. "Mr. Coultart is likely to get a very valuable wife, and is trying to get money for a better place of worship." "We expect Mr. Ward from Serampur this month." Refers to Mr. Sample's ordination at Newcastle.

[George Sample was baptized at Newcastle 1808, went to Bradford at his own expense, studied under Mann. He returned to Newcastle, and became pastor of the new Second Church, in New Court; in 1846 to the original church on Tuthill Stairs; died 1849.]

139. 1819. May 10.

From W. STEADMAN to CHRISTOPHER KITCHING (Kingston).

The procuring of a licence will save a rupture with the Govt. S. sympathises in the prejudice against Baptists, and says it is not surprising, and too high a standard must not be expected from those who have long been slaves. "You must do the best you can with them." "But there is a point at which you must take a stand and testify against the evil. I hope that you will have wisdom to find out that point, and firmness to take your stand." S. counsels K. in the difficult matter of disputes between black and white to be as *conciliatory* as possible. In the relations of the missionaries among themselves S. knows "what human nature is," and "have learned with extreme regret the sad effects of contention in both Ceylon and Bengal." He points out that in "the unhappy differences alluded to" one thing is apparent—i.e. *too great an intimacy at first.* This is quite natural under such circumstances, yet "I am inclined to think, that although your object is one, yet as your families are distinct, so your family

concerns should be distinct, as if you were in England." There are now 15 students at Bradford. "I am going on Sabbath Day to form a Church at Richmond. Hunter has baptised several." "Mr. Taylor has been disabled for 8 months . . . and I fear will never preach again." Ward is in England. Within the last 5 months great distress has overtaken Yorkshire, and "thousands at Leeds are out of employ."

[Christopher Hunter had been a fellow-student with Kitching; he broke new ground at Richmond, but died within two years. Taylor is obscure; he may have helped Steadman preach at Westgate. Kitching died in December 1819, and Mann issued a short memoir in 1823.]

140. 1819. Jun. 5.

From JOHN RYLAND to CHRISTOPHER KITCHING (Kingston).

Begs K. to keep a Journal of his doings. Has heard that a Packet has been wrecked and will send out more money. Hopes that next June the Committee will agree to send out Chas. Evans and Burton to Sumatra—"where Nathaniel Ward (Mr. Ward's nephew) is," who went by the desire of Sir Thos. Raffles.

[The Dutch East Indies were under the care of Britain till the Napoleon danger was over. This had opened the way in 1814 for a mission, which was reinforced this year by these two men. When Nathaniel Ward and Gottlob Brückner retired in 1850, B.M.S. work ended, leaving as a legacy the New Testament in Javanese, undertaken at the wish of Sir T. Stamford Raffles.]

141. 1819. Jun. 15.

From MOSES BAKER (Hamsted Estate, Jamaica) to KITCHIN (Kingston).

Has heard of K.'s arrival and "received a message from bro. Sam that you would like to have a line from me. He wrote to Dr. R. "two years back" for a minister, and three times subsequently, but had no answer. "I am of the Baptist perswation . . . I am old, old man and much infirm and well strictin in years, and the first planter of the gospel in these parts niy 30 years." He heartily welcomes K. "Since bro. Raw died the gentleman has bilt up a Chappel which will hold about 4 or 5 hundred people."

[Details as to Moses Baker, and as to the beginnings by white missionaries, were given in 1842 by Dr. Cox in his jubilee History of the Baptist Mission. Another study is in our present issue.]

142. 1819. Jul. 28.

From J. RYLAND TO KITCHEN (Kingston).

Re a Mrs. Bonner who bore a letter from Kitchen. (N.B. the variations of the spelling of "Kitching" in these summaries corresponds with the differences in the originals.) She sought financial help, but by interview and investigation, R. says, "I cannot but fear she is an unprincipled woman. . . . I am glad that no one but myself saw so unfavourable a specimen of the Negro Baptists." "Much patience and prudence is necessary with these poor creatures . . . but downright impostors must be discarded, and I fear this poor woman is no better." Ward "preacher for us last Lord's Day evening." "We have a very nice young man just come to our house from Scotland, with a view to the Mission, his name is Andrew Leslie." R. expects Saffery's son at Bristol next week. Coultart is probably returning by the first ship.

Aug. 4. The day of the Annual Meeting of the Education Socy. Mr. Edmonds, of Cambridge, is to preach.

143. 1819. Jul. 29.

From TIMOTHY THOMAS (Islington) to JOSEPH GUTTERIDGE.

Enquiring for information about the Socy. for Aged and Infirm ministers, on behalf of "Mr. Williams."

(*To be continued.*)

Reviews.

C. H. Spurgeon, by J. C. Carlile, C.H., D.D. (R.T.S. and Kingsgate Press. 7s. 6d. net.)

The career and influence of Spurgeon are unique in the history of the Christian pulpit, and it is fitting that the approaching centenary of his birth should be heralded by a new biography bearing the joint imprint of the R.T.S. and the Baptist Union Publication Department. Dr. Carlile brings to his task many advantages, not the least of which is his own personal indebtedness to Spurgeon and the Pastors' College. This, while it may lack the disinterested impartiality of an "outsider," supplies a warm tone of continuous appreciation which makes the book very readable. Spurgeon, in one special period of his life, was a storm centre, and Dr. Carlile's handling of the controversy is admirable.

Spurgeon in this volume is placed against the background of Victorian England, and his biographer is careful to point out facts that may appear strange to younger readers accustomed to class the great preacher among the now out-worn traditions of the Victorian era) which show Spurgeon as an innovator. By the hyper-Calvinists he was regarded as unsound; by traditional ecclesiastical standards and methods he was revealed as a daring revolutionary. The traditionalists did not hesitate to class him as a religious mountebank! Yet Spurgeon pursued his magnificent campaign on behalf of a religion centred in the Grace of God in Christ, and both by voice and pen he maintained a ministry without parallel in Christian story.

Although he was not a narrow denominationalist, the Baptist denomination owes him a great and special debt. The magnitude of this debt, for example, in his services to church extension and education, warrants a fuller treatment than Dr. Carlile allows himself. This new study of Spurgeon does not eliminate the need for monographs on such topics as Spurgeon's thought. Admittedly he was not a "systematic" theologian; yet, as Dr. Carlile points out, behind the wealth of beautiful illustration and imagery, behind the vigorous and unexcelled use of Anglo-Saxon, there lay an attitude of mind which succeeded in restoring to thousands a dynamic belief at a time when a rather materialistic science was doing its best to undermine the structure of religion.

Among the most attractive parts of this book are the sections in which Dr. Carlile takes us, stage by stage, through Spurgeon's

varied activities. This story, so well told, makes it quie clear why all "Spurgeon's men" speak so affectionately of "the Guv'nor." Dr. Carlile's own affection is clear in every chapter, and he succeeds in transferring his own enthusiasm to the reader.

Bunhill Fields. Vol. II. by Alfred W. Light. (C. J. Farncombe and Sons, Ltd. 6s. net.)

Moss soon gathers on tomb-stones. Inscriptions quickly become defaced. Little-used paths are dim with weeds in a short time. The ravages of centuries are irreparable. We would give much for a complete list of those buried in the *Campo Santo* of Bunhill Fields. We should then trace many of our spiritual ancestors, and outstanding historical questions would be nearer solution.

In the absence of that list we gladly welcome Mr. Light's second volume dealing with the crumbling stones, sinking graves and disappearing inscriptions of this citadel of the dead. Copies of his first volume, published in 1913, are still available. It contained a short history of the cemetery and of the Act of Uniformity, a plan showing over 100 interments with corresponding memoirs and various photographs. The quality of the first volume is well maintained in the second. Here are memoirs of over fifty other worthies, a chart of their tombs, sixty illustrations, three funeral orations (two are appallingly long), and historical notes by Dr. Whitley. The volume is of value to all who love their heritage, but is of particular interest to Baptists, as those dealt with include William Kiffin, Hanserd Knollys, Vavasor Powell, James Upton, and others held in warm regard among us.

JOSEPH IVIMEY, historian of the English Baptists, died on 8 February, 1834. A meeting will be held on the evening of Wednesday, 14 February, 1934, in the Kingsgate Chapel, Eagle Street, where his church worships, to honour his memory.