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The
Baptist Quarterly
incorporating the Transactions of the
Baptist Historical Society.

Editorial.

In 1937 the names of forty-seven new members of the Baptist Historical Society were printed. The following have joined recently:

Societies:

Baptist Union of Wales and Monmouthshire.
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Texas.

Personal Members:

Rev. J. O. Barrett, M.A.
Dr. Frank Mott Harrison
Rev. A. S. Herbert, B.A., B.D.
Rev. F. J. H. Humphrey, D.S.O.
Dr. Percy Stocks

Life Member:

Mr. Kenneth S. Price.

Still more members are needed in order that the Society may publish further reprints of rare Baptist documents, and take other steps to promote the study of Baptist history and principles. Members are invited to co-operate in securing accessions to the roll. The subscription for Ordinary membership is 10s. per annum; for Honorary membership £1 1s. 0d. per annum; for Life membership, a single payment of £10 10s.; while a Church can secure Permanent membership on payment of £15 15s. The Treasurer will be glad to receive remittance for 1938 on the accompanying form.

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Several writers were welcomed to the *Baptist Quarterly* for the first time in 1937. We are indebted to them and to others whose writings have enriched our pages. Contributions, archaeo-

logical or modern, are invited, and should be sent to the Editor, *Baptist Quarterly*, 19, Creswick Road, Acton, W.3. The service of all contributors, like that of the officers, is honorary.

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The annual meeting of the Society will be held during the Spring Assembly on Thursday, 28th April. By generous permission of His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, we shall be privileged to visit Lambeth Palace for a conducted tour of part of the building and particularly the Library. Subsequently we shall visit our own Church at "Upton," Lambeth, where the meeting will be held and tea served.

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At the last meeting of the Society's Committee, the members heard with gratitude that a third volume of Dr. Whitley's *Baptist Bibliography* is in contemplation. The value of the present volumes cannot be exaggerated; they are indispensable to all students of our history. Dr. Whitley estimates that the new volume may cover another fifty years, that is from 1837, when Volume II. finished, to 1887, and that he may need twelve months to complete his researches. He was assured of the Society's hearty co-operation.

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The American Baptist Historical Society, under the leadership of Professor R. E. E. Harkness, Ph.D., are launching an important new quarterly publication, *The Chronicle*, which is to be a periodical devoted to an appreciation of Baptist history and the recording of current events of historical interest and significance to Baptists. The first issue is to appear in January, 1938. In association with the American Editorial Staff there are to be Corresponding Editors in various parts of the world, and, with the cordial goodwill of our own Society, the Rev. E. A. Payne, B.A., B.D., B.Litt., has accepted an invitation to act for this country. British readers will be welcomed and will surely find in the new periodical an interesting and valuable introduction to American Baptist life. The foreign subscription rate is to be $1.00 a year, that is, at present rates, 4s. 1d. Requests for the magazine may be sent either to the American Baptist Historical Society, Upland Avenue, Chester, Pennsylvania, or to the Carey Press, 19, Furnival Street, London, E.C.4.

Thirty Years in the Sermon Class.*

THE Sermon Class is the most venerable feature of the College Curriculum. On Monday, April 8th, 1811, the three students with whom the College began were given a text by William Newman, the first Principal and the whole staff, almost as soon as they had crossed the doorstep of "The Baptist Academical Institution at Stepney," and were told to produce a sermon on it by the end of the week. Other elements of the curriculum have varied from generation to generation, but the Sermon Class goes on for ever.

What is the Sermon Class? The painful memories of some who are present might suggest that it corresponds with the dissecting-room of a medical school; indeed, it has been said to a student who had preached a depressing sermon on the Parable of the Prodigal Son and had unfortunately called his divisions "sections," that he had really given us a post-mortem of the subject. It is not an easy task for the young student to preach, without the conditions of regular worship, to the critical ears of his fellow-students and College Principal; that is why he so often looks at the ceiling instead of his class-room congregation, as though invoking supernatural aid. But it is a good thing for him that his rhetorical exuberance and sentimental stories should be stripped off by unsparing criticism, in order that the residue of truth may be made the more apparent—whether truth of Biblical interpretation, truth of expression, or truth of contact with the realities of human life. He has to exercise his imagination in order to see his fellow-students as aged deacons or bright young people of the worldly kind. He has to learn patience whilst his critics express their feelings, so far as words avail. If the Sermon Class is made, as it ought to be made, more constructive than destructive, and is carried on, as I have always found it to be, in a proper attitude of sympathy—for will not the critics themselves eventually stand in the dock?—it is a most valuable feature in a College course. Incidentally, it may be said that the sermons of these young men throw some light on the kind of preaching which they have been accustomed to hear, and open a window to characteristic features of our Baptist Church life of to-day.

At such a meeting as this our usual practice has been to invite some distinguished preacher, that he may impart his secret to the students. But alas! he never does. So, for once, we are making a change, and allowing the students of the Sermon Class

* Address delivered at the Closing Meeting of the Session of Regent's Park College on June 10th, 1937.

to speak by the record of their utterances through the last thirty years. As I look at the six volumes of notes in which the experience of those utterances is enshrined, I might perhaps be forgiven for recalling the classical story of the verger of St. Mary's, Oxford, who had heard all the Bampton Lectures and thanked God he was still a Christian. But I do not want to say that; I would rather record the difference between a bad and a good sermon suggested by those notes. The bad sermon was one which was cold and lifeless, because it lacked the warmth of personal conviction, or dealt with trivialities to show how much the preacher could make of a very little, or one which, however good in substance, was not translated into the language and thought of the hearers, or one which, however interesting, important and popular, would have been out of harmony with the setting of Christian worship. The good sermon was that which uttered *the personal conviction of a great truth, intelligibly expressed and applied, and imparted with the dignity of a Word of God.*

1. Personal Conviction. The writer of the book called *A Parson's Job* begins it very accurately by saying, "The mainspring of the job is conviction." Before we accept that statement, however, let us be sure that we know what we mean by "conviction." It is not mere opinion, and it is not simply intellectual assent to an argument. Its best definition is given through Richard Hooker's words, when he was asking those from whom he differed to reconsider their position: "If truth do anywhere manifest itself, think it your best victory when the same doth prevail over you." In other words, "conviction" means, both etymologically and in fact, being *conquered* by someone or something greater than ourselves. It means the surrender to an authority which we cannot dispute, so that we become its instrument and expression. It means the same thing as Phillips Brooks's well-known formula, "truth through personality." There is a contagion in genuine conviction with which nothing else can compare. Carlyle has told us, in his *Reminiscences* (Vol. II., page 204), how he went to hear the Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords. It was, he writes, "speech of the most haggly, hawky, pinched and meagre kind, so far as utterance and 'eloquence' went; but potent for conviction beyond any other . . . this hitching, stunted, haggling discourse of ten or thirteen minutes had made the Duke's opinion completely mine too . . . get a true insight and belief of your own as to the matter; that is the way to get your belief into me, and it is the only way!" That is always true, though we must not forget that no man can "get" a conviction by merely

desiring it; a conviction must get him, often against his own will. All that he can do is to put himself within the grasp of the realities of life, and the truth will do the rest, finding him and conquering him.

When such a conviction stands the tests that are brought by fuller knowledge, clearer reasoning, larger experience of life, then we may know that we are indeed *convinced*—conquered—by reality. We are no longer accepting conventions of the society in which we live, or echoing the opinions of others. Conviction by reality will stand every test that the laboratory of life can devise. Sir Francis Darwin has told us that " when science began to flourish at Cambridge in the 'seventies, and the University was asked to supply money for buildings, an eminent person objected and said, ' What do they want with their laboratories? Why can't they believe their teachers, who are in most cases clergymen of the Church of England? ' "

No doubt we all must accept many things on the authority of the experts. But vital religion needs the vitamin of conviction, and most of all does the vital religion of one who would be an ambassador of Christ. Emerson, in a " Lecture to Divinity Students," recalls how he once entered a church whilst the snow was falling. " The snow-storm was real: the preacher merely spectral, and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had no one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated or chagrined. If he had ever lived or acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession—namely, to convert life into truth—he had not learned."

No doubt it will be said that the number of truths of which any one of us is thus profoundly convinced is necessarily limited, and can by no means cover the whole range of Christian truth. Why should it? Do we not sometimes forget, both as to preaching and as to service, that God has others to carry His message and do His bidding besides ourselves? Some ministers are too anxious to bring everything under their own hat. But the ancient name of our God—the Lord of hosts—still stands true. " Ye servants of the Lord, *each in his office wait.*" If I live with my mind towards the truth, the Spirit of God will surely convince me of whatever truth He would have to be preached by *me*. In fact, a minister can usually put all his genuine convictions into a dozen sermons. But he can go on usefully preaching that dozen sermons all his life, and they will convince others, because they have convinced him.

More than this, conviction is one of the necessary conditions

of being interesting. If a sermon is not "interesting" to the hearer in the deeper original meaning of the word, i.e. "important" to him, it is a failure. I am afraid many of the utterances of the Sermon Class have not been very interesting. They were honest, but there could not yet be that necessary contact with life which turns mere opinion into conviction. The preacher must be interested himself if he is to interest others, and our deepest interests are those which belong to the realm of our convictions. I have always been grateful to a fellow student to whom I confessed my uncertainty as to what I should take to preach on in a Sermon Class of long ago. He said, "What interests you most just now? Take that." It was good advice, on which I have often acted, advice which I have often passed on to others. If we have really been brought into contact with reality, and are not misled by mere fancies, then our own present interest is one of God's ways of telling us what to preach about.

II. Great Truths. In the second place, good preaching must deal with great truths, and not with mere trivialities to display the cleverness of the preacher. I am thinking of the kind of sermon which was satirised by H. B. Swete, when he wrote, "Too many sermons remind one of a certain queen, who, when the enemy was at the gate, tired her head and painted her face. We remember her end; within half an hour nothing was left of her worthy of a decent burial." Of course, the style of preaching must change with the changing generations. To-day, hearers generally expect the more conversational style, and would not respond to the oratory of Robert Hall, though in his own day his preaching could draw a considerable part of his hearers to their feet in eagerly concentrated attention. But the good preacher of to-day is not less committed to great themes than was Robert Hall. Life can be interpreted only from above, and the preacher's unchanging task is to bring great truths—the great truths of the Christian Gospel—into relation with life, as its only adequate interpretation. An after-dinner speech, enlivened by wit and humour, and moving lightly over the surface of life, is one thing; a true sermon, though it need not be less interesting, is quite another, for it must plunge into the depths of man's sin, and rise to the heights of God's grace. I think that this is more generally felt to-day, both by preachers and hearers, than it was a generation back. There is more impatience with the trivial, and more readiness for the great themes, when they are handled competently, and are presented in close relation with life. Certainly that is true of the Sermon Class, as I have known its development through these last thirty years. The exotic plants of intellectual conceits do not thrive in the critical

atmosphere of the Sermon Class to-day. Students do endeavour to keep in sight of Christian truth. On the other hand, there is too much tendency to pitch their sermonic tents on the horizon of great truths, rather than to press inwards to the central positions. For that tendency, the student has more excuse than the minister. The student is just beginning to discover through the College curriculum the unsuspected implications and the unseen foundations of his faith, and is losing some of the facility with which a local preacher will often settle the doctrinal issues of many generations.

This is one of the reasons why unthinking people sometimes say that College spoils preachers, as indeed, it often ought to do, for a season. There is the record of a student of this College in the last century who demurred to handing in a statement of his faith to Dr. Angus on the ground that he was only in his second year, and had not yet received instruction beyond the doctrine of sin. Such an attitude, of course, springs from a wrong conception of what preaching is, as distinct from teaching. But I have often wondered, when listening to those who seemed to shrink from a central handling of the great themes, how much clear teaching they had heard from the ministers at whose feet they had been sitting. I know that doctrinal preaching can easily fail to be Gospel preaching, and can repel by its aridity. But I am also sure that the Free Churches to-day are all suffering more or less from the lack of clear doctrinal preaching, which has learnt to combine the warmth of the evangelist with the lucidity of the thinker. Protestant evangelicalism has always depended on the truths it proclaims rather than on the institutions it maintains. If those truths are held hazily and vaguely, if the real difficulties in holding them are evaded because preachers lack the courage and persistence to grapple with them as did their predecessors, if well-meant generalities replace the challenging assertions of the Gospel, there can be no lasting vitality in the Free Churches, and Protestantism might easily fall into the position of Catholicism after the Reformation, before the Counter-Reformation had given to Catholicism that new lease of life which it still enjoys. More than ever we need to listen to the words of John Ryland, when preaching before this College in 1812. He said:

> Let [the student] view all truth in connection with its central point. Remember the import of those emphatic, scriptural phrases, The preaching of the *Cross,* The Truth as it is in *Jesus,* and The doctrine which is according to *Godliness.* Let every antecedent Truth be pursued till it leads your hearers to the Cross of Christ; let every conse-

quent Truth be deduced from the same point and enforced by evangelical motives.

Over against that ancient, but not superannuated exhortation, let me put some words published last year by Mr. J. B. Priestley, in which he vividly describes the hunger and thirst of this generation for something better than it is getting. It is taken from his book, *They Walk in the City*:

> They are no longer children of God and are not yet contented and unwondering big bees and ants . . . they still feel that there are mysteries, vast unfathomable gulfs in which birth, love, death are created out of darkness and inexplicable light, but now they are out of touch with any possible explanation of these mysteries, any explorations of these gulfs; the old accounts of these things they instinctively reject, the new have not arrived; and no sooner does anything of real importance happen, something that a dynamo or an internal combustion engine cannot work, than they are back in the wilderness with only the bleached bones of prophets to comfort them. (pp. 34/5.)

It is because those who are responsible for the policy of this College are so conscious of the need for fully equipped ministers to cope with these modern needs—ministers who can be thinkers as well as evangelists—that they have committed themselves to the arduous task of raising a building in Oxford that shall house this College in the years to come, a task that ought to commend itself to every Baptist who can look ahead and see the needs of to-morrow as well as those of to-day. Education can never replace conviction, but it can always make it more efficient, by bringing into clearer light the great truths to which conviction should testify. This is the justification for the long and arduous curriculum of such a College as ours, maintained even from its earliest days, and for its refusal to countenance short cuts into the Baptist ministry.

III. Intelligible Expression. The third feature of a good sermon is intelligible expression—in which I include three things, viz. the *translation* of the preacher's thought into the vernacular of the congregation, the precise *application* of it to their actual circumstances, and those qualities of *delivery* which enhance the spoken word. Probably the most frequent cause of failure in preaching is to be found in one or more of these points. The preacher may have genuine convictions of great truths, but unless he has learnt by a good deal of trial and hard work how to "put it across" (as our slang has it) to his congregation, he will largely fail. Inexperienced speakers, like inexperienced

writers, hardly ever realise how much work has to be done simply in the translation of what they want to say into the thought and language of the hearer or reader. Stopford Brooke, writing to one of his children with literary ambitions, said, "What you children need to learn is that when you have an idea you must shape it, shape it, SHAPE IT." When we listen to a wireless talk by Sir James Jeans on astronomy, or by Sir William Bragg on physics, we may easily forget that the apparent simplicity is a work of great art, partly in the selection of illustration, partly in the choice of language. How the great masters have toiled over their language to get the exact expression of what they would give to others! Mendelssohn had in his possession Beethoven's original score of the "Emperor" Concerto. In one passage, Beethoven had pasted one alteration on another up to the number of thirteen. When Mendelssohn separated the slips, he found that the thirteenth and last was the same as the first. But those alterations were not wasted labour, for they eliminated the inferior expressions and left the composer confident that his intuition had found the right phrasing for the music heard by the inner ear. J. H. Jowett, who had the great quality of lucid simplicity in his sermons, was once called on to speak without preparation, and contented himself with a few words. His audience cried "Go on!" He said, "I cannot go on. God has not given me the gift of extemporaneous utterance. All I do is done with the most laborious preparation." I am inclined to think that, when people say of their minister that he is preaching "over their heads," what they really mean, or ought to mean, is that he has not learnt how to speak their language. It is not that his intellect is too great—I have yet to meet the minister with an intellect too great for his job—but that his sympathetic toil has been too small. I have often commended to the Sermon Class the study of Gustav Frenssen's *Village Sermons*, as an example of consummate art in this respect. Here was a preacher, who afterwards became one of Germany's leading novelists, taking constant pains to study his little congregation of a score or so. This is what he tells us about his sermon-making. "I take the text out of its ancient setting and plant it in our own life, and in our own time. My text, so to speak, saunters up and down the village street once or twice, with thoughtful eyes and meditative mind. It becomes accustomed to the village, learns to feel at home in it . . . as I write, I deliberately address certain definite people, Farmer L., Doctor M., P. the workman, and so forth . . . so I feel that my sermons are firmly rooted in actual life."

This quotation also illustrates the second feature of

intelligible expression, viz. application to the concrete circumstances of life. People do not really know what the preacher means, indeed, I do not think that he really knows himself, until the actual bearing of his words on life are indicated. Here I would like to quote again, and this time from J. M. Keynes's pungent words about President Wilson and his famous "Fourteen Points":

> "The President had thought out nothing; when it came to practice his ideas were nebulous and incomplete. He had no plan, no scheme, no constructive ideas whatever for clothing with the flesh of life the commandments which he had thundered forth from the White House. He could have preached a sermon on any one of them, or have addressed a stately prayer to the Almighty for their fulfilment, but he could not frame their concrete application to the actual state of Europe."

That is a rather deadly indictment of much of our preaching, but it is justified. Whenever I hear vehement declamations about the world or the Church, which are by no means confined to young and inexperienced preachers, declamations which suggest that the preacher's own dictatorship would soon set the world and the Church in order, I think of that devastating description of Wilson.

As the third feature of intelligible expression, we must certainly put delivery. I am not thinking only of the minimum requirement of audibility. Some of the criticism about this comes from those who forget that speech cannot be adjusted to the needs of the deaf without becoming unpleasantly loud to the majority of hearers. But preachers ought to be audible without effort by the ordinary hearer, however difficult the task is made by the bad acoustics of so many of our churches. Beyond this minimum requirement, however, there is all that the living voice and manner can add to the thought by way of expression. The wireless is constantly bringing this out, and incidentally setting a standard of speech through the best exponents of wireless speaking, which is a new challenge to the pulpit. I am afraid that the majority of students do not take enough pains with the instruction in elocution which they receive. It seems to lie outside of the curriculum, and its value largely depends on daily and assiduous practice in the correction of faults. Then, well-meaning laymen do not help things by telling students to "be natural," as if naturalness in public speech were not itself the product of the highest art or the rare instinctive gift. The very conditions of the platform or the pulpit are themselves quite unnatural, and that unnaturalness has to be overcome by taking

thought and taking pains. How well worth while all this is! For here lies the particular power of the pulpit as compared with all printed words—that the man's personality is added in every intonation and look. This is what distinguishes the preacher's work from that of the journalist and the essayist. Even when television is added to the wireless audition, the combination will never be able to compete with the intensive influence of one whose living presence with us becomes a new channel of conviction.

IV. The Unity of Worship. The fourth and last point to be made is one which lies indeed in the background of the Sermon Class, yet ought never to be forgotten—that the sermon belongs to that unity we call worship and must have the fitness and dignity which characterise true worship. Neither preachers nor hearers always sufficiently remember what worship really is. It is "worth-ship," the humble and grateful recognition of God's worth. It depends, therefore, on what we give rather than on what we get. If the thoughts of the congregation as it individually bows the head on entering a church could be flashed on a great screen, we should have a test of the worship-value of that congregation. All the elements of the religious service ought to be subdued to the one central fact—that something is being offered to God. When we bring our petitions in prayer, we are recognising His power and His will to grant all that is good for us. When we sing His praise in our hymns, we are acknowledging that power and that will in the divine providence. When we listen to the Scriptures we hear of the mighty acts of God in the past and the declaration of His power and will to save and to bless at this present time. Where, then, does the sermon come in? What is its right to the prominent and regular place it has acquired in our Free Church worship? Let me find the answer in the words of one at whose feet I sat in my youth—A. M. Fairbairn. "Worship in its fundamental idea may be said to be the speech of God to man and of man to God. . . . The man who speaks to God in the name of the people ought also to be able to speak to the people in the name of God. It is here where the awful and solemn function of the sermon appears; it ought to come as the response of God to the cry of man." That is a very high ideal to set for the sermon; yet does not the custom of taking a text from Scripture endorse it? The sermon is professedly based on Scripture, either as exposition or application. It continues, under the professed guidance of the Holy Spirit, that dynamic quality of Biblical truth which refuses to be bound to particular generations and *their* needs. The Christian sermon declares Jesus Christ, the same yesterday,

to-day and for ever. In that declaration the preacher's humanity is offered to God as an instrument of the Spirit. The word of God becomes the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces, the rock of which the lines of cleavage have already been fashioned by the Providence of God. If such a conception of the sermon exalts the office, it ought to humble the man. It ought to banish that miserable vanity that too often creeps out, that display of the preacher's knowledge (too often of knowledge falsely so-called), that self-complacent reference to the successes of his work or the importance of his personality. It ought to banish those offences against good taste which jar on the true worshipper —the cheap jest, the anecdote told chiefly to raise a laugh, the pompous language, the exaggerations of prejudice. It would exclude not a few of the subjects taken, however legitimate and necessary elsewhere. Preachers are like Churches—they are always being tempted to exercise functions beyond their true realm, and both preachers and Churches cross their proper boundaries at the cost of their peculiar power and influence. The properly severe standards of the Sermon Class hold these tendencies easily in check, but when they are removed the preacher may easily yield to the temptation. The safeguard is that both preacher and hearers should judge each sermon by its fulfilment of the place it claims in *worship*, and its right to be regarded as the message of God in response to the prayer and praise of His people.

Some of you may be inclined to say that, after all, the usefulness of a minister depends on many other things besides preaching, and that except for the rare pulpit genius, these other things may more than atone for limitations in preaching. I quite agree; if it were not so, thirty years in the Sermon Class might have made me a confirmed pessimist as to the future of Baptist Churches. It may also be said, with perfect truth, that the effectiveness of the minister in his own pulpit is never to be measured by the stranger, who knows nothing of the many over-tones and under-tones which faithful pastoral work lends to the spoken words. Preaching to a congregation is, after all, subsidiary to that individual relation of personal contact through which the profoundest influence can be exercised. The sermon itself will always depend on the *man* and on qualities beyond analysis. Yet the Free Church emphasis on the sermon is not wrong, if the sermon itself be right, and the severe discipline of the Sermon Class is justified, as an attempt to bring the sermon nearer to its ideal. It is worth while to concentrate on the intellectual side of the sermon under the abstract conditions of the class-room, in the hope that the very different conditions of worship may bring new warmth of emotion without loss of

what has been already learnt. There is miracle and mystery in the spoken word, when it is made sacramental by the Spirit of God, that should inspire us with reverence and with devotion for language itself, and should make men faithful students of the grammar and the dictionary, that they may be the more efficient ambassadors of the living Word. Preaching is not played out in our modern world. It never will be whilst the sermon is the personal conviction of a great truth, intelligibly expressed and applied, and imparted with the dignity of a Word of God.

H. WHEELER ROBINSON.

LONDON has always grown, and to provide places of worship has always been a trouble. The great fire of 1666 led to the seizing of all dissenters' meeting-houses for parish worship. When these were restored in 1687, dissenters dealt in earnest with the great population outside the city walls. Within twenty years they had eighty-eight meeting-houses there, while the Established Church had only twenty-eight parishes, with eighteen more chapels of ease. Convocation asked Queen Anne to help; she sent a message to Parliament, which in 1711 voted £350,000 to build new churches. St. Martin's-in-the-Fields is a fine specimen of one which replaced a poor place; James Gibbs had the spending of the coal duties which provided the money, and in the end about twenty-five fresh parish churches did arise. The problem is as great as ever. To-day Londoners sleep at Guildford, Southend, Clacton. Bishops and Free Churchmen cannot raise money fast enough to provide for Dagenham, Hornchurch and other new towns, which are soon stocked with public-houses and cinemas.

W.T.W.

"We Preach . . ."

IT is customary to emphasise the latter part of this text, yet the first two words are also significant. They are a revelation of a large part of early Christian life, they suggest the secret, on the human plane, of much of Christianity's progress in the world, and they bring a very necessary reminder to us in this modern world.

The subject of this article, then, is preaching; and the article is written because preaching, which has been the glory and the power particularly of the Free Churches, is subject to much criticism and doubt to-day. Are we justified in giving the sermon such a central place? Is it right to demand so much of the minister's time and strength for the preparation of preaching? Or must we, as Free Churches, reorientate all our conceptions of worship?

We should surely think of this problem in the light of history, so we turn first to the New Testament. We can no longer claim that the injunctions of the New Testament are authoritative for every detail of our Church organisation, regardless of changing habits of thought and differing circumstances. But we cannot afford to neglect the emphasis of the early Church and the results which issued therefrom. And the emphasis of the early Church was on preaching.

The "Formgeschichte" method of approach to the New Testament has done us good service in making this emphasis clear. In his book, *From Tradition to Gospel,* M. Dibelius traces the preservation of many of our Gospel narratives to this widespread preaching. He quotes the opening verses of Luke's Gospel and then stresses the phrase, "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word." These were the people who had delivered the stories of Jesus, and they formed one group. The eyewitnesses were the ministers of the word, i.e., "they were missionaries, preachers and teachers who carried the Gospel of Christ abroad in order to win the world" (p. 12). Dibelius adds, "missionary purpose was the cause and preaching was the means of spreading abroad that which the disciples of Jesus possessed as recollections" (p. 23). This is printed in italics, and thus is emphasised.

This is perhaps one of the least disputed and disputable parts of the method of "Formgeschichte." It means that the Gospels themselves are evidence of the immense preaching activity in the early Church. The picture which it gives is in thorough agreement with the picture drawn by Luke in Acts. Luke will tell the story of the disciples as they fulfil the com-

mand, "ye shall be *witnesses* of Me . . . " Then throughout Acts we see what a large place preaching had in Christian life. Luke takes the trouble to give long speeches, e.g. Peter on the day of Pentecost (ii. 14-36), Peter after the healing of the lame man (iii. 12-26), Stephen (vii. 2-53), Paul at Antioch in Pisidia (xiii. 16-41). Several shorter speeches are also recorded, and together these examples of preaching occupy a comparatively large part of the story of Acts. Luke surely gives the feeling of the early Church in the answer of Peter to the council, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (iv. 20). Is Luke exaggerating or writing sober history when he states, "And daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (v. 42)? The apostles refused to let the burden of a growing organisation distract them from preaching. "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables" (vi. 2). Persecution gave the opportunity of more extensive preaching. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (viii. 4 cf. viii. 5, xi. 20). Immediately after his conversion, Paul "preached Christ in the synagogues" (ix. 20), and after that Paul is always the preacher. So Luke leads on to his triumphant conclusion—Paul in Rome, "preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

It may be argued that in the letters of Paul, which are our earliest Christian documents, this picture is not so clear, that there we see a greater concern about affairs of Church organisation and discipline, about sacraments, about conduct and beliefs. But against that we have to remember that the epistles themselves are a substantiation of the emphasis on preaching. For the epistles are the addresses of the absent Paul to the Churches. They bear all the marks of preaching. They were dictated and all the passion and tenderness, the love for Christ and the love for men which must have thrilled in Paul's preaching, shows itself even in the written word. Is not the conclusion of Romans viii. great preaching? There is no doubt at all about the emphasis in Paul's ministry. It was upon preaching. "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 16). "We are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us" (2 Cor. v. 20). Sacraments were subordinate to preaching. Paul says "Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. i. 17). And it is not without significance that Paul can speak of the Lord's Table as a proclamation of His death (1 Cor. xi. 26). He uses the word καταγγέλλω which is a common word for preaching, c.f. Acts iv. 2, xiii. 5, xv. 36, xvi. 7, 1 Cor. ii. 1, ix. 14.

This emphasis was, of course, not peculiar to Paul. Even when preaching ceased to be entirely missionary and was devoted also to the instruction of the increasing number of converts, it still held its central place. Scholarship has now recovered from the disease occasioned by the increased knowledge of the Mystery Religions and it is recognising again the quieter and healthier elements which were the chief elements in early Christian life. These quieter, and therefore little mentioned, elements centred in what the Germans call the "Wortgottesdienst," which is usually inaccurately translated, "Word-of-God service" and possibly means no more—and no less!—than "preaching service." This was modelled on the synagogue worship where the chief place was given to prayer, Scripture and preaching.

So from all sides we get a consistent picture. The early Christian Church was a preaching Church, gaining its successes by preaching, and to a large extent maintaining its faith through preaching. In this, as in so much else, the Church caught the prophetic note of the Old Testament and followed the example of Jesus Himself, who came "preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God."

There is no space here to deal with the history of the Church adequately, but the thesis could well be argued that the chief power of the Church, humanly speaking, has been the power of preaching, and that where this power has been emphasised and developed the Church has made abiding contributions to our humanity and has extended the Kingdom of God most rapidly. In saying that, of course, one naturally refers to preaching which is something more than eloquence and learning. The preaching which is the power of the Church is that preaching which is created when men fulfil the highest vocation of the preacher, feeling themselves to be indeed the messengers of God charged with the universally valid, necessary and unique message of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ. Where this conviction has been a burning and shining light in the souls of men, whether they have been learned or not, there the Church has possessed a tremendous power.

We take a rapid glance through some sections of the Church's history. At the opening of the Middle Ages it was missionary preaching that to a large extent gave the Church its power. "There is no more striking proof of the vitality of the Church in the collapsing Empire and the opening Middle Age than the vigour and success with which it undertook the extension of Christianity." (W. Walker, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 195.) It is at this period that we read of the glorious work of the Irish and Scottish monks in spreading the Gospel in these Islands and also on the Continent. Columba, Columbanus

and with them Boniface are names which stand out. This period witnessed, too, missionary work from Rome, extending even to this country. At a later date were constant revolts against the deadness and laxity of ecclesiastical religion, and all expressed themselves in fervent preaching. Their climax is perhaps to be seen in Bernard of Clairvaux. "The first preacher of his age and one of the greatest of all ages, he moved his fellows profoundly from whatever social class they might come." (W. Walker, p. 247.)

Humbler movements, too, can be traced, bringing a simple non-ecclesiastical faith to men. So we find a genuine Christianity in the movements of the Cathari and Waldenses, movements which were increased almost entirely by earnest preaching. The power of this popular preaching was far from negligible. "The Cathari and Waldenses profoundly affected the mediæval Church. Out of an attempt to meet them by preachers of equal devotion, asceticism and zeal, and of greater learning, grew the order of the Dominicans." It was the aim of the Dominicans to win the world by preaching. The earlier days of this order illustrate the power of preaching and the order produced some illustrious names, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas among the theologians, Eckhart and Tauler among mystics, and Savonarola, of whom it has been said, "at the end of the fifteenth century the angry voice of the Old Testament prophets sounds again the Dominican Savonarola of Florence, the stern champion of God and freedom, whom God had set in grand antithesis to the most reprobate of all popes, Alexander the Sixth." (H. v. Schubert, *Outlines of Church History*, p. 242.) With the Dominicans we associate the Franciscans and we think especially of "that greatest and most lovable saint of the Middle Age, St. Francis of Assisi." Here again is the emphasis on preaching and so on missionary work, Francis himself setting the example by his missionary tour in Egypt. Out of these two orders came the preaching friars, who exerted a great influence during the age preceding the Reformation, not the least being "a great strengthening of religion among the laity." As the Reformation draws nearer this popular preaching becomes more widespread, e.g. Wiclif and the Lollards in England, John Huss in Prague. The influences of this preaching are probably incalculable. Throughout Europe also the Anabaptist movement, which included many fiery and strange fanatics, but also many sincere and genuine disciples of Christ, was spreading. This was essentially a popular movement, and its increase was due in large measure to the humble preachers who spread its ideas.

But all this popular and spontaneous emphasis on preaching reached a climax in the new conception of worship which the

Reformation brought. Luther himself was a fine preacher and he put preaching now in the centre of worship. Worship in the evangelical Church was growing chaotic, so in 1523 Luther issued his "Ordering of Worship." In this he emphasised the central place of preaching. "Luther held that great freedom was permissible in details of worship so long as the 'Word of God' was kept central" (W. Walker, p. 352). This emphasis on preaching was shared by the other reformers, Zwingli and Calvin. Geneva, of course, became a centre for the training of ministers and in 1559 Calvin founded the "Genevan Academy," a Seminary from which ministers were sent throughout Europe. The fresh revitalising experiences, the rediscovery of a personal faith in Christ and of New Testament teaching inevitably led to and found its expression in preaching. A new centre was thus given to worship, and over against the former centrality of sacrament and priest, the Reformation brought this new emphasis on preaching.

From this time onwards in England preaching plays a great and dominant part in religious life. The strength of the Independents was in their preaching, which showed strong fundamental thinking, and a personal grasp of a great message. The reality of faith, which ritual and sacraments had failed to impart, was given through preaching. The Methodist revival is, of course, an outstanding example in this country's history and indeed in all history of the power of preaching. And in spite of all modern criticism of Victorian religion, we have still to acknowledge the greatness of many of its preachers, to whose labours much that is permanent in our Christian life to-day must be attributed. The strength of the remarkable Group Movement to-day lies in the fact that so many of its adherents are willing to bear their testimony—and that is preaching! It is surely significant of the power of preaching that those Churches and times in which it has been emphasised, have witnessed great missionary activity. The preaching Churches are the missionary Churches. And in all missionary work obviously the proclamation and teaching of the Gospel plays a dominant part, together with the practical demonstration of the message in medical and other work.

Now to sum up this brief survey of history, it may, I think, rightly be claimed that effective preaching has been a mark of vital Christianity. The best periods of the Church have been those times when preaching has taken a central place; and preaching has been in itself a great power in further kindling true Christian life. Preaching demands personal experience, strong thinking and genuine conduct; thus it has held a commanding position in the life of the Church. Christianity has

been strongest when Christ's disciples have striven to fulfil their Lord's command, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

Finally, we think again of our own age. No one, I think, would dare to claim that this age is in every respect unique. We may have our peculiar problems and difficulties, but the motives and responses of human hearts are the same to-day as they have ever been. We can still read the tragedies of Greece, the Book of Job and the plays of Shakespeare and find ourselves reflected therein. It is a common fallacy to talk of the modern world as if it had no connection with preceding ages. Therefore, it is the argument of this article that the real power of the Church to-day is still in sincere and vital preaching. In view of the essential likeness of human nature in all generations, we may surely claim that the strong living proclamation of the great Christian message, personally experienced and related to pressing problems, will still exercise all its power in human life. This has been the distinctive feature and contribution of our Free Church worship, and we need to preserve it!

Now if this principle of the centrality of preaching in our Church life is accepted, it will obviously influence many of our activities.

(*a*) It is a principle upon which the elaboration of worship can proceed. The bare worship of former Independency was perhaps nearer true worship than the curious jumble of nice customs, which is sometimes and not infrequently presented to the worshipper in the modern Free Church; for that bare service was the clear, however inadequate, expression of a definite conception of worship. Poverty of worship no one desires, but elaboration must be based on firm principle.

(*b*) It provides a standard by which to estimate the various activities of the Church, of the individual members within the Church, and especially of the minister himself.

(*c*) It will determine the structure of our buildings. If preaching is to have a permanent home it must be an auditorium, a place where listeners can both see and hear easily. The old Baptist Bethel was ugly but its simplicity and the central position of its pulpit did symbolise its inner conception of worship. Symbolism is not elaborate ornament, but the expression of spiritual conceptions in visible things. We should express our conception of worship in simple, dignified chapels, in the centrality of the pulpit, and that means Scripture and preacher. There is no lack of beauty here, and we need not be afraid of being out of touch with modern life. Indeed, modern buildings themselves are

notable for simplicity and strength of design, and that is true dignity.

We have a great heritage of preaching and of Church life centred upon preaching. In this we are building upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets. A firm foundation.

L. G. CHAMPION.

Some Baptist Hymnists from the Seventeenth Century to Modern Times, by Carey Bonner (Kingsgate Press, 3s. 6d.).

Here is an admirable gift book for ministers, choirmasters and others. In part it consists of the four articles contributed to our pages in 1937, but there is much new material, including chapters on American hymn writers. In addition, in place of the first lines of many hymns, full texts are now given. Our readers appreciated the four articles; this volume will give them even greater pleasure.

Heroes of the Baptist Church, by Ronald W. Thomson (Kingsgate Press, 2s.).

Mr. Thomson believes that the story of the growth of the Baptist Church in this land is one of absorbing interest, and that it is more interesting still when seen through the great personalities concerned. He possesses an attractive style, and his sketches of the pioneers, of the men who suffered persecution, of the men who led the advance, of those who bore the torch, and of others, will fascinate the young people for whom the volume has been written. It is sound historically, and can be commended without reserve.

The Edinburgh Conference:

What Was the Good of it?

THE Second World Conference on Faith and Order met in Edinburgh, August 3—18, 1937. Since the First Conference at Lausanne in 1927 the movement has been kept in being by the labours of an appointed Continuation Committee, and by the work of various Commissions charged with the duty of preparing Reports as material for information and discussion when the Conference should assemble. During the decade intervening between the First and Second Conferences a vast amount of work has been done by a number of scholars and divines in Britain, on the Continent, among the Eastern Orthodox, and in America.

In the space at my disposal I cannot possibly give a full account of the proceedings of the Edinburgh Conference. But what is here set down shall be as accurate as I can make it. Moreover, as is natural in a denominational journal, I shall give prominence to the features especially significant or interesting to us as Baptists. Within these necessary limits I can only do my best, and refer those who desire a fuller account to the Report of the Conference (Document No. 90) and to a popular account of the proceedings under the title "Edinburgh 1937" by the Rev. Hugh Martin, M.A. (Student Christian Movement Press, 2s.).

I.

The Baptist Union formally appointed five delegates to the Conference: Rev. M. E. Aubrey, Rev. Hugh Martin, Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, Mr. C. T. Le Quesne, K.C., and Rev. Gilbert Laws. Dr. W. T. Whitley, on account of special services rendered to the movement, had another qualification, but closely associated himself with the Baptist delegates. The Scottish Baptists were also represented, as were American Baptists, both of the Northern Convention and of the Southern Convention, and the Canadian Baptists. At some points all the Baptists were able to confer together, though this ought to have been done still more effectively, in which case both the genuine mind of the Baptists and the proper weight of their enormous numbers would have been more adequately felt.

The numbers and distribution of the delegates were impressive. It is stated that the delegates numbered four hundred and fourteen, that they came from forty-three countries, and that they represented one hundred and twenty-two of the denominations, sects, or communions of Christendom. The

Roman Catholic Church, of course, did not co-operate officially in any way. Nevertheless, among the preliminary papers was one from a Roman Catholic theologian setting forth the belief of Romanists on specified points on which accurate information had been desired. A courteous letter was also received from a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic in Scotland declining, on grounds given, an invitation to attend.

Officially the Conference opened with a service in St. Giles Cathedral, at which the Archbishop of York preached, other parts of this great act of worship being taken by representatives of the Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, and Presbyterian communions. Dr. Temple asked in his sermon:

> "How can the Church claim to bridge the divisions in human society, divisions between Greek and barbarian, bond and free, between black and white, Aryan and non-Aryan, employer and employed, if when men are drawn into the Church they find that another division has been added to the old ones, a division of Catholic from Evangelical, or Episcopalian from Presbyterian or Independent?"

He maintained that our divisions obscure our witness to the Gospel, which is one; and occasion the loss to each communion of some part of the full truth and full fellowship which can only come to a united Church. He made the point (which received impressive confirmation later from Bishop Azariah of India), that Christians on mission fields are impatient of our denominational differences, and are more ready to come together than their denominations are to let them do so. As helps to the attainment of unity he urged a larger faith in waiting upon God.

> "It is not we who can heal the wounds in the body of Christ. We confer and deliberate in this Conference, and this is right, but it is not by contrivance or adjustment that we can unite the Church of God. It is only by coming closer to Him that we can come nearer to one another. When God has drawn us closer to Himself we shall be truly united together. Then our task will not be to consummate our endeavour, but to register His achievement."

The Conference, after a preliminary full gathering or two, broke up into Sections, and these again into sub-Sections, meeting in private and discussing points of agreement and difference on the subjects committed to each Section respectively. These Sections were: *I. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; II. The Church of Christ and the Word of God; III. The Church of*

Christ: The Ministry and Sacraments; and *IV. The Church's Unity in Life and Worship.*

Our available resources for work in these Sections were divided thus: Dr. Whitley to the Section I, on which subject he had previously prepared an important composite volume entitled *The Doctrine of Grace.* For the Section II we had no one available. To Section III were assigned Mr. Le Quesne and Mr. Laws. In this Section came the matters most difficult for Baptists, as indeed also for others. For questions of church, ministry and sacraments are beyond all other questions those upon which Christians are divided. To Section IV went Mr. Aubrey, who was appointed Chairman of it, and with him Mr. Hugh Martin. Dr. Rushbrooke, who had been on the continent with the President of the Baptist World Alliance, was not able to arrive in time for work on the Sections, but took part in the last days when the whole Conference met together to revise finally and then approve the reports of the Sections.

The first two Sections, viz. those dealing with "Grace," and the "Word of God," were occupied with matters that occasion more differences on the Continent than amongst ourselves. And here may be the place to express regret that the German delegates from the State Church in that country were not able to attend, passports not being obtainable. German Free-churchmen, however, did attend. The loss of distinguished German theologians was a serious one in those Sections which dealt with matters upon which they have meditated far more deeply than ourselves. Nevertheless, other Lutherans, from Scandinavia, for instance, were present and represented broadly speaking the same point of view.

In the reports from those Sections there are many things I should like to extract, but space will not permit. I believe there is nothing in them that would cause any difficulty to an average Baptist. There are many things, however, about which I could wish that Baptists thought more deeply. Especially on the high matters of divine revelation, which are comprehended under the title "The Word of God," would it be well for us to be better instructed. The Baptist emphasis on the authority of Scripture would find a desirable reinforcement through a deeper knowledge of the way continental Protestantism approaches the matter of the self-disclosure of God in revelation. The report of Section II contains this:

> "The function of the Church is to glorify God in adoration and sacrificial service and to be God's missionary to the world. She is to bear witness to God's redeeming

grace in Christ in her corporate life, to proclaim the good news to every creature and to make disciples of all nations, bringing Christ's commandments to communities as well as to individuals. In relation to those who belong to her fellowship or who are placed under her influence, the function of the Church is through the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments, and through Christian education, to make them into convinced Christians conscious of the reality of salvation. The needs of individual souls call for pastoral care and for a fellowship in the things of the Spirit through which the members provoke one another to good works, and to walk worthily of their calling, by true friendship, mutual help and consolation, and the exercise of loving discipline. She is to intercede for all her members, especially for those who suffer for their faith, and for all mankind."

The discussions in Section III were of special interest to Baptists, for there came up prominently the differences which divide. Nevertheless, when the discussions were concluded and the report presented, it was felt that an advance had been made. Concerning baptism the report said:

"The re-united Church will observe the rule that all members of the visible Church are admitted by baptism; which is a gift of God's redeeming love to the Church; and administered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is a sign and seal of Christian discipleship in obedience to our Lord's command."

To this the Baptists secured a note in these words:

"As regards the above statement which has been passed by their brethren who practise infant baptism, the Baptists could accept it as applying to the baptism of believers, i.e., of those who are capable of making a personal confession of faith. In practising the baptism of believers only they hold that they are maintaining the practice of baptism as it is found in the New Testament in the apostolic Church, and also the principle which is laid down on page 27 of the Report of Commission III" [one of the preliminary documents prepared for the Conference] "to this effect, viz.: 'The necessary condition of receiving the grace of a sacrament is the faith of the recipient.' They believe that children belong to God and that no rite is needed to assure His grace for them. This statement of the Baptists was accepted also by a representative of the Disciples of Christ on behalf of that body."

This note may prove of the utmost importance later on.

There had been expressed the hope that notes and qualifications would not often be added to reports, and there was indeed a minimum of such addenda. Nevertheless, the Baptist position had to be asserted sometime and in some place if other Churches were not to be misled, and we may well be thankful to those who represented us at Edinburgh for their persistence and insistence. This note, secured in Section III, was ultimately allowed to stand when the whole findings were finally approved by the full Conference.

The part of the Report dealing with baptism ends:

> "In the course of the discussion it appeared that there were further elements of faith and practice in relation to baptism about which disagreement existed. Since the time available precluded the extended discussion of such points as baptismal regeneration, the admission of unbaptised persons to Holy Communion, and the relation of Confirmation to baptism, we are unable to express an opinion how far they would constitute obstacles to proposals for a united Church."

To the foregoing paragraph on the admission of unbaptised persons to Holy Communion there is a note: "For most Churches this is not an open question, since baptism is regarded as the only and necessary means of admission to the Church." On this note I may remark in passing that other Churches are puzzled by the fact that some Baptist Churches receive members without any kind of baptism whatever. It is difficult to refute the gibe that "Baptists are the people who are so strong on baptism that they dispense with it!"

Perhaps the greatest expressed divergence of belief was occasioned by what was submitted on the Ministry. Every variety of view was registered, from that of the Eastern Orthodox which was consistent in unvarying rigidity, down through Anglicans of more than one school, Presbyterians of all shades, to Independents and Quakers. No amount of adjustment of words could give even the semblance of agreement here. Nevertheless, there was a wonderful patience on the part of many who must have found patience no easy matter, and a truly humble desire to appreciate and to learn from one another. I have no space to copy out the actual words of the Report (and they are carefully used words which admit of no summary) I can only say that pages 23-27 of the Report (No. 90) contain the most succinct and authoritative account known to me of what is believed by various Churches on Apostolic Succession and the sanctions that are held to give validity to the ministry of

the Church. These pages might well be discussed in Fraternals, and should certainly be lectured upon in college classes.

Section IV: "The Church's Unity in Life and Worship" was humorously dubbed the "Practical Section." Its report reviewed the several conceptions of unity—as co-operative action; inter-communion; corporate union. It reviewed the possible bases of unity—as Likeness in Faith or Confession; Likeness in non-Sacramental worship; Likeness in Sacramental Faith and Practice; Likeness of Orders; Likeness in polity. It further reviewed the obstacles to Church Unity, and asked, What can we do to move toward the unity we should seek? The answers are set forth in the Report of the Conference.

It was after eleven o'clock on the night of Tuesday, August 17th, when the last section of the Report was passed, and the labours of a weary but still good-tempered assembly were finished except for the final session.

II.

An Affirmation of Unity was passed at the closing session with entire unanimity. It may become very important, and must be included here.

> "We are one in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. We are one in allegiance to Him as Head of the Church, and as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We are one in acknowledging that this allegiance takes precedence of any other allegiance that may make claims upon us.
>
> "This unity does not consist in the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills. It is founded in Jesus Christ Himself, Who lived, died and rose again to bring us to the Father, and Who through the Holy Spirit dwells in His Church. We are one because we are all the objects of the love and grace of God, and called by Him to witness in all the world to His glorious gospel.
>
> "Our unity is of heart and spirit. We are divided in the outward forms of our life in Christ, because we understand differently His will for His Church. We believe, however, that a deeper understanding will lead us towards a united apprehension of the truth as it is in Jesus.
>
> "We humbly acknowledge that our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ, and we pray God in His mercy to shorten the days of our separation and to guide us by His Spirit into fulness of unity.
>
> "We are thankful that during recent years we have been drawn together; prejudices have been overcome, mis-

understandings removed, and real, if limited, progress has been made towards our goal of a common mind.

"In this Conference we may gratefully claim that the Spirit of God has made us willing to learn from one another, and has given us a fuller vision of the truth and enriched our spiritual experience.

"We have lifted up our hearts together in prayer; we have sung the same hymns; together we have read the same Holy Scriptures. We recognise in one another, across the barriers of our separation, a common Christian outlook and a common standard of values. We are therefore assured of a unity deeper than our divisions.

"We are convinced that our unity of spirit and aim must be embodied in a way that will make it manifest to the world, though we do not yet clearly see what outward form it should take.

"We believe that every sincere attempt to co-operate in the concerns of the Kingdom of God draws the severed communions together in increased mutual understanding and goodwill. We call upon our fellow-Christians of all communions to practise such co-operation; to consider patiently occasions of disunion that they may be overcome; to be ready to learn from those who differ from them; to seek to remove those obstacles to the furtherance of the gospel in the non-Christian world which arise from our divisions; and constantly to pray for that unity which we believe to be our Lord's will for His Church.

"We desire also to declare to all men everywhere our assurance that Christ is the one hope of unity for the world in face of the distractions and dissensions of this present time. We know that our witness is weakened by our divisions. Yet we are one in Christ and in the fellowship of His Spirit. We pray that everywhere, in a world divided and perplexed, men may turn to Jesus Christ our Lord, Who makes us one in spite of our divisions; that He may bind in one those who by many worldly claims are set at variance; and that the world may at last find peace and unity in Him; to Whom be glory for ever."

III.

If it be asked, What was the good of a great Conference of this order, I would answer:

(1) A great deal of information was given and received. Men from different lands, and from different Churches, plainly told one another how they regarded Christianity, its doctrinal

content, its necessary order, its practical duty. In public discussion, in private conversation, in group talks, and in other ways it became manifest that more people than one had supposed dwelt in enclosures of the mind. But have they not been wont to read each other's books? It may be so, but there is a vast difference between reading a treatise and talking face to face with a man.

I suppose all of us are in the way of expounding our own views to those who in the main agree with us, or at least have the same point of view, and big areas of thought in common. But to try to make these views appreciated to those who have for centuries worked in quite other categories is another matter. It is not meant as a joke when I say that never did I so sympathise with missionaries as at Edinburgh. For if it be difficult to make oneself understood to fellow Christians of another tradition, what must it be to put before the heathen the truths of the New Testament! At Edinburgh, if one worked seriously, one just had to try to understand others with patience; and bear, with the best equanimity one could summon, the wide-eyed wonder of those to whom one was almost "as an heathen man and a publican"!

(2) A great deal of true Christian appreciation was put into circulation. This follows from what has been before said. It was bound to be so. When you have made demands on the attention of those who differ from you, and received it in full measure, your heart is sure to be won, whatever may have been the effect or non-effect of your arguments on them. It can truly be said, so far as my experience goes, and so far as I heard, that at Edinburgh there was no difference except in opinion—no division in heart, no wish merely to score points, only to understand and to appreciate. Sacerdotalism is the antipodes for me in religion, yet it was very charming to find a deep and tender humility of soul, and a passionate love for Christ in Orthodox and Anglican priests. Indeed, though this is scarcely the place to say it, I personally felt that if I had to choose between the cold rationalism that has done duty for Protestantism in some quarters and the reverent and adoring worship of Christ to be felt in the soul of the priest, I should find more to share with the latter. But this is a mere personal remark in passing.

We may hope that on the other hand those who had such a slight acquaintance with the views and spirit of Christians of our type might also feel that they had something to gain. I believe this was actually the case, and it is all to the good. Whatever continues to divide Churches, it ought not to be ignorance, prejudice, a closed mind, a sealed heart. If division there must

be till we see eye to eye on more points than at present, let it be only the necessary effect of sacred conviction in the mind, not insensitiveness in the heart.

(3) I felt that not every point of difference between the Churches as they stand need be a cause of division. In other words, there are differences which could be overcome, surrenders of portions of traditional assertion and practice which might be made without injury to truth, and with a great gain to the Kingdom of God at home and in the non-Christian world. Even so there would only be the uniting of Churches near in sentiment and faith already. Only a very great weight of feeling, far to seek at present, in the body of Church-members would raise a spiritual tide high enough to carry us over these bars; and even then it would be but a stage on the way to a distant and dimly seen goal.

(4) But when all has been said it remains, as the Report itself shows, that there are difficulties at present insuperable. In my judgement these difficulties lie mostly between the so-called Catholic, and so-called Protestant, or Evangelical Churches. The conceptions of church, ministry and sacrament are so different that it is hard to see how any union can ever be looked for while opinion remains as it is. One candid sacerdotalist in my hearing said, "There is no possibility of our coming together. If you are right we are wrong, and you must convert us. If we are right you are wrong, and we must convert you. Nothing else is any good." This outburst was deprecated, but its candour was as refreshing as its logic was consistent.

For us as Baptists the difficulties are enormous. There is no getting away from that. On the question of baptism our position is so distinct, and to the many so unacceptable, that I see no way of overcoming the difficulty short of equating believer's baptism with infant baptism. This would seem to me to make infant baptism the standard and believer's baptism a sort of tolerated exception. It is not likely that more than a very few Baptists would ever think of consenting to such an equation. It is a very painful thing to have to say to those who set store by infant baptism that we regard it as a perversion of an ordinance of Christ, a substitution of man's devising for a positive institution of the Lord. Yet nothing less than this is the true Baptist position, and as one who holds it I see no way, except at the cost of truth, of organic union with other Churches.

GILBERT LAWS.

The Problem of Suffering.

THE problem of suffering is one of the most difficult which the human mind can face, and it is doubtful if there is any adequate theoretical solution. The heart of the problem is really here. How can we reconcile the world as we know it, containing as it does such a vast amount of pain, with a God who is good and almighty? The challenge to theism is direct and must be met. Epicurus expressed it centuries ago and men still feel it. "If God wishes to prevent evil but cannot, then He is not omnipotent; if He could but will not, He is malevolent, if He has both the power and the will, whence then is evil?" Unless we come to terms with this problem and arrive at some conclusion which really helps us we shall not be able to hold our faith with assurance, or be of service to others. If we can come to no adequate theoretical solution we must at least come to a partial and working one, which equips us to deal with the untoward facts of life with courage and conviction of ultimate victory.

The problem is agelong and many are the attempted solutions. The Hebrew answer was sin. The tide of the world's misery was due to disobedience to the law of Yahweh, and since the unit in the sight of Yahweh was the community, the innocent suffered alike with the guilty. Thinking in terms of "corporate personality" to a degree which the modern mind often fails to appreciate, the innocent were regarded as not only legally responsible for the guilt of one of their number, but actually contaminated by it. The story of Achan is a good example.[1] The clan shares in the guilt of the head. With the development of the conception of individual personality, with its own moral responsibility and rights in the sight of God and men, such as is expressed in prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the belief in "corporate personality" was of necessity modified and the problem of the suffering of the innocent presented itself acutely. The Book of Job is one long debate on the reason and justice of it. It is a book full of the interrogation mark, and Job never has an answer given him, save that his sufferings must be accepted as a mystery on the basis of faith. The scene beyond the veil of the prologue is hidden from his eyes. He must be content that God is well pleased with him.

The greatest contribution in the Old Testament to the problem of suffering is that given in the Songs of the Suffering Servant by Deutero-Isaiah. Without discussing the vexed question as to who the sufferer is in the writer's mind, we see

[1] Joshua vii. 24-26.

one afflicted not for his own sins, but for the sins of others. His sufferings are not fruitless. They evoke astonishment, penitence, and confession on the part of the beholders. They have redemptive value and bring the penitent unto allegiance and service of Yahweh. "He was wounded for our transgressions," they cry. "He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."[2] There is justification in the suffering because it served God's redemptive purpose.

The New Testament directly carries on the higher teaching of the Old with regard to suffering which is not due to personal sin. In the figure of the Christ we have One who is sinless yet afflicted. He loves men with a love which is utterly self-giving. He identifies Himself with the world just as it is. In this loving identification He bears the full force of the world's sin on Himself that He may break its power, reveal God and mediate His forgiveness, and reconcile the penitent unto the Father. He becomes to Paul the pledge of God's final victory over sin, sorrow, and death in all His creation, since in Christ it has once been realised. Though creation may "groan and travail in pain together until now" it shall be liberated. It looks forward with eager longing to the manifestation of the sons of God in whom God's victory is completely achieved, and through whom the time of blessing shall come for all life, even that of the beast. The last word in the story of redemption is, "Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away."[3] The scope of redemption is cosmic.

To the Hebrew mind the crux of the problem is sin. It is somehow involved in this travail of creation. I do not think we can doubt this is the point of view, even in the New Testament. Certainly it was Paul's. "Man, 'the roof and crown of things,' broke away from God, and his rebellion sent a dislocation through the whole system of Nature; so that Nature, while retaining much of its Divine origin, is, in its decay and suffering, a great mirror in which man may see the image of his own evil."[4] This view would not commend itself to all Christians to-day; yet, despite its real difficulties, it contains an immense truth. For if we could abstract from the world's life all the suffering which has its origin in the sin of the past and the present, how much less the world's suffering would be! A residium would remain, perhaps a considerable one, but it would be insignificant in comparison with what now exists. There are

[2] Isaiah liii. 5.
[3] Rev. xxi. 4.
[4] Dr. I. S. Carroll, *Motherhood of God*, p. 10.

factors in our world-view which did not pertain in Paul's day. They have their bearing on the problem of suffering and must be reckoned with in any treatment of it. They arise from our living in an era of scientific enquiry and achievement. Reference will be made to them later.

Whilst the Hebrew feels the problem is sin, and began there, the Eastern mind, as represented in Buddhism, puts its finger on suffering. "The fact that life as we know it," says Mrs. Rhys Davids, "is largely made up of painful and sorrowful experiences is the foundation from which Buddhism as religion, ethics, philosophy, takes its start. It claims as the supreme merit in the Dhamma, that it has recognised this fact, understood it causally, and surmounted its effects."[5] Existence to the Buddhist is suffering and, though it is denied by Mrs. Davids, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Buddhism is pessimistic in its judgement on life. Its salvation is in the provision of a discipline and a way from the intolerable burden of earth-life into the selfless bliss of Nirvana. So long as "thirst," or desire, persists there will be a succession of re-incarnations, therefore he who faithfully follows the way will be freed at long last from all desire and the burden of existence. Fundamentally Buddhism denies a permanent self or soul, there is but a succession of states of consciousness. The standpoint is that of Hume, whose philosophy has been criticised and discarded. We have not only states of consciousness, but also the consciousness of succession. We are bound to posit a permanent self, an ego, to experience them. The Buddhist psychology is out of date and untenable. Though it holds its sway over millions still, it has no future. The point for us just now is its judgement that life is misery because of its suffering. This is partly due to the vast amount of misery, largely remediable, which exists in the East, and because man is at heart a hedonist to a far greater extent than he realises. But the world was not framed for pleasure as its highest good.

The Buddhist would find a way from the burden of life, the Stoic would stand up to it as a soldier. In its day Stoicism attracted some of the finest souls of the ancient world, and none can resist responding to many of the lofty and manly utterances of Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations*. Stoicism was a philosophy of life and an attitude towards it. But, philosophy apart, its great weakness was that it ministered to a too cold self-sufficiency. Pain is real and might be acute, nevertheless it is one of the indifferent things which the wise and strong man must bear unmoved. "As for pain, if it is intolerable it will

[5] *Buddhism*, by Mrs. Rhys Davids, p. 92.

quickly dispatch you. If it stays long it is bearable. Your mind in the meantime preserves herself calm by the strength of the opining faculty, and suffers nothing. And for your limbs that are hurt by the pain, if they can complain, let them do it."[6] One must stand up nobly and be unmoved by the hard facts of existence. Even to sorrow over the loss of a beloved wife or child is unworthy. Some of the injunctions found in Epictetus are almost inhuman. The gentler and affectionate elements of personality are to be crushed and denied. The attitude of the Stoic is really that of defiance, and required a measure of self-sufficiency which proved impossible, and ministered to spiritual pride. In spite of the brotherhood the system enjoined, the loftiness of many of its counsels, and the real nobility of many of its disciples, Stoicism failed to maintain its hold; for it did not relate its good to the manifold experiences of life, of which suffering is one of the most common, obvious, and perplexing. Its emphasis on courage and manliness must find their counterpart in any creed that is worthy and equips men for the stern battle of life, but it would leave man unfeeling. It strives to win its victory by robbing personality of some of its chiefest charms, and the sensitiveness which is essential for fulness of life and true brotherhood.

Of the modern attempts at solution of the problem Meliorism and Christian Science are certainly to be regarded as among the outstanding. The Great War, which so immensely increased the world's suffering, thrust the old problem of pain and moral evil acutely into the foreground. Hence the doctrine of the limited God of Meliorism, the theme of Mr. H. G. Wells' *God the Invisible King* and *Mr. Britling sees it through,* which G. K. Chesterton so wittily described as "Mr. Britling sees it half through." Evil was not to be explained, but fought. Suffering abounds and is to be met by love, sympathy, and service of all kinds. God is the Commander-in-Chief of the army of good men in the battle. He is a finite being, with a future before him which he has to make good. He is even described as "young" in the *Invisible King.* He needs men to help him, the issue is uncertain, but every victory gives ground for hope. The God of Meliorism is not the God of orthodox theism, and one cannot read *God the Invisible King* without feeling that the real God is not the Finite Being of the foreground, but the Veiled Being in the background. "The error of both Stoicism and Meliorism lies in trying to turn what is partial into an absolute. Because a man is summoned to oppose the evil that is in the world with all his might, it is supposed that he can 'carry on' till the

[6] *Meditations,* Book VII., 33.

victory is his. Suppose, however, that this rough dualism between the good man and the wicked world does not represent the real situation. Suppose that the real source of evil is not without, but within, and that the conflict that is being waged in the world is the image and the outcome of a more devouring strife that rages in man's own soul. Then the result will be, as happened in the history of Stoicism, that the self must give up its self-sufficiency and must seek the true and the good, not by self-assertion, but by self-surrender, and see in its attainment of virtue and knowledge the disclosure and communication of One who includes the universe in His consciousness and His control."[7] The fighter can "carry on," then, without anxiety, because the victory has been won by a Power which is also working in him. The end is gained through co-operation and sacrificial ministry.

Christian Science meets the problem of pain by denying its reality. Pain exists in the mind, but only there. Heal the mind and it ceases to be. But if pain be illusion, why not pleasure? And if evil is illusion because finite, so may good also be. We are asked to rise to the height of the Absolute, which is impossible for man. The philosophy which treats the material world as unreal—however difficult it may be to define matter—will never be able to hold the field indefinitely, for it does not do justice to the facts of experience. We would not deny that some of the cures claimed by Christian Science have really happened, but present-day psychological research and treatment have shown that much disease is not physical but psychical in its nature, and without the denial of the material world it can be dissipated. "It has been left to Mrs. Eddy to deduce the unreality of matter and all evil as a necessary consequence from the premiss that God is infinite, and God is Spirit,"[8] says Christian Science. But this has been the language of pantheism all down the ages, and we do not get over the reality of anything by refusing to acknowledge it. Within our finite existence, life as we know it in this world, pain is certainly a reality.

Without dealing any more with various attempts to meet the problem of pain, let us look at the world as it is and then ask how Christian theism endeavours to meet it.

First we see that we live in a world where physical calamity may overwhelm us at any time. Earthquake, flood, and storm smite down alike the evil and the good. In the days of the Hebrew prophets these would be looked upon as the direct

[7] Article on "Suffering," E.R.E., p. 3b.
[8] Article, *Christian Science*, E.R.E., p. 577b.

judgements of God. We to-day know them to be due to the operation of natural law, which has no regard for man. "An earthquake in India," says Stanley Jones, "shook down a mission building and left a brothel standing nearby."[9] Terrible as may be the things that happen, we realise that it is better to live in a universe of law than caprice. The same world which brings upon us the earthquake also enables us to sow seed and reap a harvest. We are able to plan and fashion, and to some extent predict the future, just because we live in a universe of law. There is a problem for theism raised which we have to face. But I am prepared to believe that the world in which we have to live is best designed to fulfil the purposes of its Creator, and that in its fashioning it must needs pass through the physical changes we know. Those purposes include far more than the comfort and security of man. We cannot read all the dark riddle which Nature offers us, and it is well for us to confess it. Again, in the development of our personality in all its wide significance and our adaptation to environment, with all which that includes, it seems inevitable and inescapable we should pass through some measure of suffering. And although we may greatly exaggerate the amount and consciousness of pain in the animal creation, one cannot but conclude it is there. "From the point where, in the evolutionary process, a brain is developed, upward through all ranks of being, suffering is an unvarying element in experience." It seems to belong to the very weft and warp of terrestial existence. Up to a point we see it has beneficial ministry. It has played its part in the education and preservation of the race. On the physical level it warns us that something is wrong with the body and must, if possible, be removed. The biological approach to the problem of pain does help to justify its place to a real extent. But for us men it is always something more than a biological problem. It afflicts mind and spirit, and can reach even to such a degree as to dethrone reason itself.

What has Christianity to say? It cannot be said that it has a solution which is intellectually satisfying and complete or attempts it. What it does do is to give us a revelation of God in Jesus Christ and make possible an experience of fellowship wherein pain is made endurable, or surmounted, and used for the highest spiritual good, which is Christlike character.

It is the great strength and merit of the Christian faith that it does not ignore the facts of life. It treats moral evil as a reality. It deals with the world as it is in the experience of men. Jesus went amongst men with eyes open to the facts of

[9] *Christ and Human Suffering*, p. 26.

suffering and sin, and redeemed men from both wherever possible. And Christianity believes, as its fundamental truth, that in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we have our highest and most spiritually satisfying revelation of God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The personality of Jesus, which is greater than anything He said, is for us "the Light of the world." In Him the intensest suffering made no barrier to the realisation of the highest good, and out of the heart of it comes the affirmation that God is love. The suffering that He endured was made to serve the redemptive purposes of God. It was transmuted to highest gain to Christ and all mankind.

There are considerations often not sufficiently recognised even by many Christians in dealing with the problem of suffering. They do not relate the almightiness of God to the reality of a universe of law and the fact of human freedom. It is a false conception of almightiness which is expressed in the famous dilemma of Epicurus and others on similar lines. It cannot mean the mere exercise of arbitrary will regardless of the situation. It means power to realise purpose finally despite the reality of human freedom and the constitution of the universe which God Himself has created, and wherein He has placed man. Christian thinking must recognise this and always have it in mind when speaking of God as Almighty; difficult as it may be to give a satisfactory statement of the relation of God to His world. We can never know fully the resources which are in God, but we may reverently say there are limitations of His power due to human freedom, which may thwart and delay but which will not make impossible His final victory. They will be made to serve His ends, as the permitted suffering of the Cross issued in victory, not defeat, and has drawn men unto the very Christ they rejected and slew. With this conception of omnipotence we must approach the problem of moral evil as Christians.

The God revealed in Christ is one whom we can love, for He is no spectator, coldly aloof and indifferent to the suffering of man. He is transcendent, yet immanent and implicated in our experience. If the prophet could say of Jehovah "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them,"[10] still more may we say it of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This truth of the Divine presence and pity needs to be accepted by our hearts. No longer can we believe that suffering is inconsistent with the supremacy of Divine love, since we see it taken into the experience of God

[10] Isaiah lxiii. 9.

Himself. An obstacle to faith is lifted when we know that God as revealed in Christ shares in the travail of creation. And this we must hold to be part of the joy of the Divine.[11]

The Christian Gospel is one of reconciliation. It reconciles us to God and life, and in that reconciliation there is healing. The pain that might be an obstacle to faith becomes an element of experience which drives us closer to God, as did Paul's thorn in the flesh. Though we may still pray for its removal, and take all means to end it, we refuse to let it make us rebel and become bitter. We bear it with God. And all of us could tell of many a fine soul who through the open secret of fellowship with God through Jesus Christ has become ennobled, even amid a crucible of pain. And this witness has been of high value for others. In his novel, *The Caxtons,* Lord Lytton tells of the old colonel whose heart is almost broken over a wayward son, but when his grief is greatest he reads again the story of Robert Hall, a dissenting minister, and his Christian bearing of a load of pain, and says, "I haven't complained, have I?"

In the fellowship of Christ pain is taken as a challenge to ministry of all kinds. Man cannot be indifferent to the suffering of his fellows. The love of Christ and the compassion of Christ will move us to prayer for the sufferer, and every possible ministry of comfort and alleviation. Individually and corporately Christians must be at this work, and the record of Christianity shows the variety of ways in which Christians have been moved to service. The work of God within the soul has led to co-operation with God in the world without, and thus other men have been brought into the fellowship of Divine love, which has enabled them to transmute their ills to highest gain. All things, pain included, can be made to work together for good to them that love God. In a word, the Christian solution to the problem of suffering consists in showing us how to deal with it. There is a progressive triumph as we get deeper into the Divine fellowship. The achievements of the saints point the path along which we must go. They realised that moral good, not pleasure, was the end of life, and they wrought it out in fellowship with a God of love despite the martyrdom and pain which was often their lot. They believed the end was spiritual victory because their hope was in Christ.

Yet when we have said all, suffering does oft remain for us a dark shadow on the face of God. We are prepared to believe this world, in Keats' fine phrase, is "a vale of soul-making" and the spiritual universe is on the side of those that

[11] Heb. xii. 2.

take it thus. We know it is true for ourselves, however unworthily at times we seem to live upon that truth. But we know it still better in some it has been our privilege to meet and try to serve. Out of their pain they have won a rare beauty of character which has made us humble. The secret has been in a life "hid with Christ in God." The dark shadow remains when, for reasons beyond our understanding, mind and spirit seem so overwhelmed as to be incapable of laying hold of the sources of spiritual relief. Yet as Charles Lamb was the good angel to Mary we must believe that the Divine Father must be that and more to His suffering children, who live in the realms from which we would fain lift them if we could.

"Is there another life?" asks Keats in one of his letters. "Shall I awaken and find all this a dream? There must be, we cannot be created for this sort of suffering."[12] We have often said this as we have stood by a bed of pain. Not because we have despairingly flung back on immortality as a hope to help us out of a difficulty, but because we have felt it belongs to the Christian faith. Its ground of assurance has been the Christ.

Spiritual defeat in the experience of suffering is what we must chiefly fear, and that defeat is often seen in the cynicism, bitterness, and defiance which we sometimes meet in literature and life; and men falsely think it victory.

> We must play the game with a careless smile
> Tho' there's nothing in the hand;
> We must toil as if were worth our while
> Spinning our ropes of sand;
> And laugh and cry, and live and die
> At the waft of an Unseen Hand.

It was a finer spirit that said, "Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory."

The sunshine of life is greater than its shadows. In thinking of its pain we must not forget its manifold delights, and remember that, given a nature sensitive to the beauty of the sunset, the light upon the sea and the joys of fellowship, we must also be susceptible to ugliness and ill. There is a penalty attached to every nobler gift. It carries with it the possibility of its opposite. We cannot justify all the suffering we see. Our finite mind comes up against the Veil again and again, but we can still believe in a light beyond the Veil because of our faith in a God who is known to us in Christ. And in His hands are the final issue of all things. If there be any answer to this great problem of suffering it is to be found only in His fellowship. It is to the worth of that fellowship we must witness in testimony

[12] Lord Houghton's *Keats*, Introduction, p. xiii.

of all kinds, the chief of which being what it makes of us and what it compels us to do in loving service on behalf of the world. The victory of God over moral evil does seem to await the co-operation of our will, and as we offer it there is healing for ourselves and a ministry which in its range and effectiveness may be far greater than we dream or know. The souls of the past who have lived by the higher values and "overcome evil with good" have often inspired the victories of to-day. Their example or their writings have been used by the Spirit of God for the quickening and comfort of souls they never knew. Christians of to-day do not live by the higher values in vain, even though they do it amid the experience of untoward ills which seem most unjust. "What makes this foreign doctor tend to the sick and wounded when these very men destroyed his hospital?" His wife, who was a Christian, replied, "It is Christianity." Said General Chiang very thoughtfully, "Then I must be a Christian. This was one of the three influences that made the General (Chiang Kai Shek), then President of China, decide to become a Christian at a time when the Anti-Christian Movement was sweeping China."[13] The Christian solution is a challenge to faith and a challenge to service in the assurance that God's purpose for ourselves and the world, which is good, is worked out to a triumphant end as Christ dwells in us and we in Him.

F. T. Bloice Smith.

[13] *Christ and Human Suffering*, p. 109.

Baptists in Bridgwater, by H. J. Hamlin and A. J. Whitby (Kingsgate Press, 1s.).

A feature of Rev. A. W. Gummer Butt's superintendency of the Western Area has been the interest in Baptist history that he has fostered. In the late summer of 1937, he arranged a tour for Dr. Whitley, during which our Vice-President took part in several celebrations and lectured on local history. West country churches have also been encouraged to publish their records. This volume tells of "Three Centuries of Witness" in Bridgwater, and the authors, who are past Presidents of the Western Baptist Association, possess an intimate knowledge of the Churches in the West, and have thus secured a fine background for their story. This is told with pride, for they are proud of their forefathers and the notable record of their Church. The volume is one of the best of its kind, and at one shilling is remarkably cheap.

Early Education in New England, as Valued by Baptists.

THE settlers on Massachusetts Bay included many Cambridge graduates. They were picked men, with good advice and good supplies. In 1636, when their earliest difficulties were over, they not only founded grammar schools, but voted money to establish "a schoale or colledge."

The Separatists who had begun the Old Colony in 1620, and the Baptists who started at Rhode Island in 1638, were not highly educated. Yet two Baptist settlers, John Miles and Benjamin Harris, with two settlers who became Baptist, Henry Dunster and Peter Folger, did value education and make contributions to it. These were in school, college, publishing; and they contemplated natives as well as settlers.

The settlers on Massachusetts Bay had definite ideals of education. Fifty years earlier, Cambridge had been a Puritan paradise. Perkins and Whitgift in their different ways were hyper-Calvinist champions; Mildmay had established Emmanuel College as a forcing-house. But into Paradise had entered the Arminian Laud. The Puritans, therefore, looked to Holland, where the Synod of Dort had entrenched Calvinism. They projected an English College at Rotterdam, under William Ames; much as the Catholics had founded an English College at Douai. But Laud persuaded the Dutch authorities to insist on all English residents who did not join the Dutch Reformed Churches conforming to Anglicanism as he was moulding it. Therefore, in 1633, the Puritans decided to get out of his reach, and establish their College in New England. It began modestly three years later, and for fourteen years boys were sent to the new Cambridge, not only from Maryland, Virginia and Bermuda, but from England.

A large party arrived at Boston in 1638, with a complete printing outfit and a Cambridge printer. Next year he issued *The whole Book of Psalmes Translated into English Metre,* perhaps the most uncouth version ever published. The owner of the press, a widow, married Henry Dunster, who arrived in 1640; he managed all the business for many years. He was also appointed head of the new College; his first two pupils were appointed tutors, and by 1650 the General Court gave a charter to Harvard College, under which the great University is still governed. A lodge was built for the president, who moved the press into its outbuildings. On the death of the first printer, he engaged Samuel Green, who in his forty-three years did well for Dunster's step-children, the Glovers. Dunster was asked to

refine the Psalm-Book, and by 1651 the revised edition was printed in a form that made it acceptable for over a century in England as in New England, so that it ran to at least twenty-seven editions. In the revision he was helped by an attendant on one of his pupils, a fact suggestive of the good quality of the colonists. The pupil was son of Sir Henry Mildmay, who had been one of the king's judges; that he should send his son to be trained at Harvard rather than in the college his family had founded at Cambridge, Emmanuel, shows the reputation of Dunster. The fact is that Cambridge showed signs of narrowing into the mere training of ministers; whereas Harvard was chartered for "the advancement of all good literature, artes and Sciences . . . and all other necessary provisions that may conduce to the education of the English and Indian youth of this Country in knowledge: and godliness." Ministers are not mentioned; and from the beginning the college turned out more men for ordinary life.

Dunster appreciated literature; his own 1611 copy of Spenser is now at Yale. He asked for money to get books on law, physicke, philosophy and mathematics; he did get a Euclid, and a more modern geometry, and was practical enough to send a student surveying land in the back blocks. The senior fellow, another minister, aimed at chairs of history, languages, law, mathematics and medicine, expressly to prepare men for keeping school, becoming physicians, acting as magistrates. These ambitions were not fulfilled then; but a good start was made with George Starkey from Bermuda, who graduated in 1646, and after four years went to England, where he practised medicine with success till he died in 1665 from dissecting a plague patient.

Dunster valued the college system, as encouraging mutual criticism and help. So while the Old College was built of lumber for the whites, a brick college rose in the Yard for the natives.

The settlers on the Bay, however, were staunch Pedobaptists. So when Dunster was scandalised at their persecution of Baptists, studied the points at issue, and avowed himself Baptist, he found it wise to resign in 1654. This checked the progress of education, for the printing-press was transferred to the Indian college, where a student earned his living by actually pressing the lever. Apparently he was the last from his race.

Dunster retired to the Old Colony, where he died within five years, before there was time to quicken a second centre of education. It is not clear if he ever got in touch with Jonathan Brewster, son of the Pilgrim Elder, who tried chemical experiments in a private laboratory. Certainly there is no sign that

he infused any love of learning into either Pilgrims or Baptists.

Meanwhile, the military successes of the Puritans in England had liberated the printing-presses and the Universities. The need of Harvard as a Puritan university was no longer great, and English boys went again to Cambridge. After the Restoration, when New England might have attracted again, Puritan boys were sent chiefly to Holland or Scotland. Massachusetts had shown itself as intolerant as Laud had been. Harvard shrank from a live university with some sixty English from all quarters, into a local College with no more than twenty New Englanders. Among these, no Baptists were welcome.

It was 1670 before the Old Colony followed the example set on the Bay. Then it was voted that the profits from fishing at Cape Cod should be appropriated to establishing free schools for training in literature; and an elementary school was opened at New Plymouth. This was promptly bettered at Swansea, where Baptists had grudgingly been allowed to settle. That town in 1673 established a school "for the teaching of grammar, rhetoric, and arithmetic, and the tongues of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; also to read English and to write." The Baptist minister, John Miles from Swansea in Glamorgan, a graduate of Brasenose, Oxford, was the first schoolmaster.

Three years later died John Clarke, leader in Rhode Island, doctor, Baptist, an excellent Hebrew scholar. His will left an estate, valued at £530, "for the relief of the poor, or bringing up children into learning." From the very first, this was interpreted most narrowly, and the income was largely appropriated to maintain the Baptist minister.

As early as 1642, Thomas Mayhew settled at the east of Martha's Vineyard in the Old Colony; his son preached to the natives and won many. Peter Folger was employed to teach their children reading and writing, also the principles of religion by catechising; one of his pupils, Japeth, was himself teaching by 1675. By that time Peter had become well-to-do, having practised milling, weaving, blacksmithing and surveying; so that he was appointed keeper of the Nantucket records and clerk of the court, living at Sherborn. His *Looking-glass for the Times, or the Former spirit of New England revived in this generation,* was very dangerous to be printed then, for he declared:

> New-England, they are like the Jews,
> As like as like can be;
> They made large Promises to God
> At home and at the Sea:
> They did proclaim free Liberty,
> They cut the Calf in twain,
> They past between the Parts thereof,
> O, this was all in vain.

Exactly what a Baptist felt about the Bay folk; and dared to write it in the Old Colony. If it was printed in 1677 it was effectually suppressed. But his daughter's son was Benjamin Franklin, and it was issued next century.

In the Indian College, the first American edition of *Pilgrim's Progress* was printed during 1681; it does not seem that Bunyan ever heard of this, though he knew of Continental versions. The General Council did not forbid this, though it had stopped preparation for the *Imitation of Christ,* by Thomas à Kempis.

Persecution by James II. sent Benjamin Harris out of England. He was an experienced author, editor and publisher; so he opened a Coffee-House in Boston and set up a press in 1686, where he began with Tulley's *Almanack,* and soon was publishing for fifty authors. He found out how the Court had oppressed Baptists, Emblen's church still living in fear of Damocles' sword; so his coffee-house became an opposition centre, as was his English tradition. When the Revolution came about at home, he transplanted another tradition, and issued in 1690 *Public occurrences, both forreign and domestic,* Vol. I., number 1. The Governor in alarm forbade a second number, But the tyranny of the Court was at an end: the Company was adjudged to have exceeded its powers; the Old Colony and Massachusetts were combined into a Dominion of New England, and a royal governor was sent out. Harris had been a focus for opposition to the Mathers, and now was appointed Printer to his Excellency the Governor and Council. Thus the codes of laws in 1692, 1694, came from a Baptist press. He published also for Robert Calef, another Baptist, a witty attack on Cotton Mather, which led to arranging a meeting at his Coffee-House; as Mather stayed away, it was a sign that the old bigotry was fighting a losing battle.

Harris then struck a gold-mine. There was a dearth of school-books, which were so well thumbed that nothing survives before 1680, except a solitary Primer of 1669. Now Benjamin Keach had won his original fame in 1664 by writing one from a Baptist standpoint, and Harris had printed several editions in England. His latest in 1679 he had named, with reference to the Popish Plot, *The Protestant Tutor.* As there had been four years later *The New England Primer or Milk for Babes,* Harris advertised in 1691 the *Second Impression of the New England Primer enlarged.* It quickly sold 20,000 copies a year; and with many variations kept its place for 150 years, being adopted in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Ohio. While Harris thus rendered this great service to education, the expiration of the Licensing Act in England offered again a field in the land he understood better, and he returned in 1695 for another vivid

career. Boston did indeed print more books every year than Oxford and Cambridge together; but his ground was London.

Pioneer life was hard and dangerous; even to-day we do not find many schools on the frontiers of Australia. It was only by State legislation that the Bay started its college, and the Old Colony started its schools. Rhode Island never had any similar legislation, and never had any public schools till the Revolution. It was markedly backward in education. The General Baptists seldom did betray any interest in this, a coincidence that deserves study and explanation. The defect was so obvious that when the Calvinistic Baptists of Philadelphia decided to promote education, they secured a charter in Rhode Island, and in 1764 launched a college there under Baptist auspices.

Their fathers had been stimulated by a London Baptist, Thomas Hollis. He had often sent them books, but his generosity had been still more marked at Harvard. Here in the early Hanoverian days he had magnanimously overlooked their treatment of Dunster, and had endowed a chair of Divinity with £80 yearly, also another of Mathematics and Philosophy with another £80; besides books, mathematical instruments, Hebrew and Greek types. Recognising too, how backward were his fellow-believers, he founded ten scholarships of £10, primarily for Baptist students. Unhappily the atmosphere of the College was already chilling, and the only Baptist minister known to have profited thus set his face against the evangelism of Whitefield, so that his church was given up as hopeless, and a second was founded at Boston. The incident did not dispel the Baptist suspicion of humane learning; and it was only the work of James Manning from 1764 onwards which at length dispelled their New England lethargy.

W. T. Whitley.

The Passing of St. Mary's Gate, Derby.

AT the end of September, 1937, closing services were held of the St. Mary's Gate Baptist Church, Derby. And so ends a long and historic era of one the oldest causes of the aforetime General Baptists in Derbyshire. I say era, because those services did not mark the extinction of the Church. In recent years they had suffered keenly from the outflow of people to the suburbs, and the acceptance of a very substantial offer for their very central premises was wisely decided upon, with the specific purpose of continuing their cause in a more promising part of the outskirts of Derby. For the time being, while their old building comes under demolition and they set about the task of erecting a new one, they are being permitted to continue worship in the school premises which are part of the same block as the Church itself.

No other cause in the county town is older than St. Mary's Gate. Of the Church's inception the oldest minute book records: "31 May 1789. Bro. D. Taylor being come from London into the country, was solicited to preach, to which he acceded. He preached in the Willow Row, near Nunn's Green, from Luke 2 chap 10 verse, 'I bring you good tidings'." Little even did Dan Taylor realise how prophetic was his open-air text. Sufficient interest was kindled to continue these meetings under the supervision of two Castle Donington ministers, N. and T. Pickering, and soon, at the expense of several churches in the Connexion, a "place was taken to preach in." Difficulties of preaching supply, however, caused an ebbing of enthusiasm, and after being considered by the Conference at Cauldwell in Christmas week, 1790, the work was continued by a rotation of supplies from the following: Francis Smith and J. Smedley (Melbourne), N. Pickering (Kegworth), Thomas Pickering (Castle Donington), and J. Goddard (Ilkeston). Sufficient progress was made for the little cause to seek the advice of the Conference at Smalley in July, 1791, as to their either joining an already established Baptist Church or being formed into a new cause. The latter course was recommended, and after instruction and baptism a Church of nine members was duly formed on August 21st, 1791. By April of the following year another thirteen members had been added. Nearly two years later came the election of their first two deacons, by name Johnson and Etches. From 1794 until the close of the century there is a gap in the Minutes, resuming in 1800 to speak of

there now being a minister, James Taylor, who had settled the previous year, "at a salary of £20 a year."

There now arises the question of a new meeting-house, and collections were made and solicited. The new sanctuary, in Brook Street, was duly opened on July 20th, 1802. Two years later Taylor was ordained, and in 1807 a Sunday School was commenced, and the same year saw the expiration of Taylor's ministry. During all the Church's history baptisms had for the most part taken place in the River Derwent. The Minutes record that in 1809 the membership stood at sixty-three. It is at this time that the great days of the Church really dawned. John Gregory Pike, a young student from London—who himself had a personal preference for the neighbouring Duffield, but the latter were not in a position to maintain a minister—commenced his ministry on July 8th, 1810. The subsequent story of the phenomenal success of the Church weaves itself around the character and influence of Pike.

Pike was educated at Wymondley, and Derby was his first and only pastorate. Something of his serious nature may be judged from the fact that it took him seven months to reach his decision, but under his leadership the Church steadily advanced. He was keenly virile in mind, and a preacher who attracted and stimulated. He was untiringly energetic in his pastoral work, and was a born leader. Moreover, he had prophetic vision. These were the days of the Carey venture, and Pike proved to be to the General Baptists what Fuller was to the Particular Baptists. Through his persistent pleading for Christ's far-flung cause, the General Baptist Missionary Society was formed at the Association at Boston in 1816. Pike himself was unable to become a missionary, but Bampton, who with Peggs became the first missionaries of the new Society, was educated by Pike at the minister's home. Pike attained considerable notability as a literary devotionalist, his *Persuasives to Early Piety* attaining a world-wide circulation. The Derby congregations rapidly increased, so that very soon after Pike's coming a gallery was erected, and in 1814 the premises were enlarged. For many years after this, concern was felt about the restricted accommodation, and in 1841, with the membership now standing at five hundred, Pike inspired his people to the purchase of a mansion near the centre of the town, belonging to William Evans, M.P., at a price of £4,000. This was converted into the St. Mary's Gate Chapel (the actual building at the present period under demolition), and the adjoining rooms were turned into vestries and classrooms. It is an indication of the esteem in which Pike was held that as soon as the seller heard that it was Pike who was seeking purchase he immediately

reduced his figure by £500. In 1845, with £1,000 of the debt still outstanding, and with the minister and officers respectfully timid to press for more sacrifice, and suggesting that they should set themselves to raise only £200 in the next twelve months, a private member, expressing their love for their minister, roused them to aim for the total liquidation of the debt, and a year later all liability was actually cleared. Such was the spirit of St. Mary's Gate in these great days. The cause at Brook Street continued for a while, but long since passed out, and that building is to-day a Methodist church. For four years, from 1847, W. R. Stevenson was assistant minister. Pike passed away on September 4th, 1854. In the course of his ministry he had baptised 1,300 souls.

Something of the breadth of outlook and missionary temper of St. Mary's Gate can be seen from the local causes in whose inception and development it had an active interest. At Alvaston preaching was commenced by Jas. Taylor in 1800. There was fluctuation of success there, preaching being discontinued in 1805 and resumed four months later, a similar thing happening again seven years afterwards. Ultimately the oversight was forgone, and the present cause at Alvaston is a quite independent venture. In these earlier days preaching was also attempted at Findern, Allestree, Burnaston, Windley, Weston, Darley and Littleover, the last three, with Alvaston, being recorded as "divisions" of the Derby Church in the membership record of 1810. The Littleover cause grew, being recommended by the mother Church to form themselves into a Chapel in 1819, but later declined, the Derby cause having to disown financial responsibility for them in 1830. The continuity, however, was preserved through the years, and the present cause there can trace its "succession" from the old Brook Street. Preachers were supplied to Duffield as early as 1807, and a meeting-house was opened there two years later. The two Churches were constituted as a single Church, a deacon being appointed on the Duffield side, and Church meetings were frequently held for the whole Church at Duffield. Differences came about, however, the Duffield folk wishing only for preachers sanctioned by the Conference, an insistence which the Derby section regarded as a violation of the dissenting principle of independency. An orderly settlement was arranged in 1810 whereby they were constituted into two distinct Churches. At Belper and Wirksworth, Baptist preaching was also introduced from Derby, but these passed into association with Duffield. In 1826 preaching was introduced at Mackworth and Langley, with little result, the latter being given up three years later. An application in 1827 from twelve members at Crich led to their being received

as a branch of the Derby Church, with the stipulation that they meet their own expenses, but two years later they were threatened with being regarded as withdrawn for baptising independently. At Ashbourne preaching was commenced in 1823, and in 1841 the Ashbourne Church was constituted as a part of the Derby Church, having a deacon elected from Derby, but being entirely independent for baptisms and finance. Association with Willington started in 1834. Five years later they were "resigned to Burton," but came under the mother wing again, and have continued so, being the one Church at present under the control of St. Mary's Gate. At Repton preaching was also started in 1834, but little is heard of it after 1839. Chellaston and Milford also received occasional preaching, the former as a village station and the latter through a disagreement with Duffield in 1845. These are the relations of St. Mary's Gate with other local Baptist causes up to the end of Pike's time. Since then, in 1877, a work was undertaken at Boyer Street, a thickly populated area in the borough. This was continued by a loyal band of workers for over fifty years, the work finally closing down in 1930. More recently the work at Junction Street arose from St. Mary's Gate, and has for many years been an independent and active cause. Nor was Osmaston Road without its contacts, for in 1827, through a misunderstanding, twelve persons detached themselves from Brook Street, and formed another Church, which later grew into Sacheverel Street, the forerunner of Osmaston Road. In a very short time happy relations were restored, and have continued so ever since. When it is remembered that the Pear Tree Road Church is a descendant of Osmaston Road, and that Trinity Church was a Particular Baptist, it is thus a romance that nearly all the General Baptist causes in the borough can trace their ancestry back to St. Mary's Gate. Truly Derby is losing the mother of its Baptist faith!

Since Pike's day there has been a splendid succession of able ministers, many of whom are happily still with us. The earlier successors of Pike were J. Stevenson, H. Crasweller, Jos. Wilshire, and J. W. Williams. The ministry of T. R. Stevenson, who came next, was in happy line with the missionary spirit of the Church, for Shanghai and Colombo were among his other pastorates. After Abraham Mills comes a succession of men who are still actively at work: J. H. Rushbrooke, fresh from Nottingham College and Halle University; F. C. Player, still in the Association and its secretary; George Evans, later in MacLaren's succession at Manchester; G. Miller Rice, whom the present writer happily remembers in France as the most beloved Army Chaplain he ever knew; and Ishmael Jones, now at Measham. The present minister, W. Graham Hilton, has in

front of him the piloting of the voyage of transition, and he has the abilities and gifts of leadership to do it worthily. Of the line of laymen, many and genuine could be the tributes. But three must suffice. John Etches, ex-sailor, first deacon of the Church, and forty-seven years in office, whose memory is upheld by a bust in the vestry; and two of the present-day leaders whose names shall represent those many long family traditions which have characterised the Church—S. T. Hall, for many years Church Secretary, and the present Association treasurer, and President of the Derbyshire Baptist Union; and G. H. Doughty, the present Church secretary.

What shall we say of the spirit of St. Mary's Gate? Foremost, it has been a homely Church, which, while having many families in its fold, has risen above domestic exclusivism. Its strong missionary temper has kept a universal breadth of vision, and its cultured ministries a catholic and tolerant outlook on Christian life. And now this fine old Church passes into a new era! Fortunately the central position of its premises made its site of great market value. When the very considerable offer came earlier this year, it is characteristic of the true outlook of the Church that they did not permit old ties, dear to many as life itself, to jeopardise the greater promise of the future. Into one of the newer and more promising districts they will now soon be going. While having a history of nearly one hundred and fifty years behind it, the Church has always had in its temper unfettered powers of vision and adaptability. Whether the old name itself will persist remains to be seen, but one thing is certain, its spirit will live on in the new venture. And may subsequent history record once again such glorious accomplishments for the Kingdom as were associated with the names of Brook Street and St. Mary's Gate.

F. G. HASTINGS.

The Baptists of Greenwich.

THE origin of the Baptist Church in Greenwich is very obscure, but we have contemporary evidence that one John Knipe, if not the founder of the Cause, at any rate helped to build the first Baptist Church in the ancient and royal borough. We learn that in 1760 the Church at Rushden, in Northamptonshire, sent him a gift of £2 17s. 4d. to help him to build. This earliest building was apparently somewhere in London Street, and there, under several leaders, the Church continued until 1823, when the old Huguenot Chapel was rented by the Baptists.

In 1827, William Belsher became pastor of the Church. He had held previous pastorates at Worcester (Silver Street, now Sansome Walk) and at Burton Street, St. Pancras, a new Church which had "split" from Keppel Street. In both places he wielded a great influence, and at Worcester built a new church in the second year of his pastorate.

It seems as though he was responsible for the new chapel in Bridge Street, for though the new building was erected in 1827, it is recorded that Mr. Belsher was recognised as minister of London Street on April 13th, 1827.

William Belsher retired from the pastorate in 1841, and in 1844 resigned from the Baptist Board "owing to age and infirmities." After this he is lost sight of.

During William Belsher's later years, a Rev. Joseph Belcher (apparently no relation and the name spelt differently), by a strange coincidence became the first pastor of a cause which, under the name of Lewisham Road Church, exists to this day. The work was started in 1835. In 1838 "Bunyan Church" was founded by Joseph Belcher, and on March 20th 1844 the stone was laid of the present building in Lewisham Road. Belcher was secretary of the Baptist Union from 1832 to 1840, and held the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He removed to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1843, just before the building of the new chapel. He died in 1859.

A succession of able ministers has maintained a strong cause at Lewisham Road until the present time. Of well-known ministers of the past might be mentioned Campbell Gray (father of Mr. Milner Gray), E. D. de Rusett, W. E. Lusty and Andrew Wright (present and first secretary of the Evangelistic Committee of the London Baptist Association). The present pastor is Rev. R. H. Philpott.

To return to Bridge Street. The building erected in 1827 still stands, and services held there are still recalled by some, and we come to a pastorate within the memory of some still

living with the settlement of Jesse Gwinnell, who came from Bethesda, Trowbridge, in 1847.

After four years at Bridge Street, he went out and formed another cause in London Street, which later removed to Stockwell Street. Meanwhile, the Bridge Street Church continued under successive ministers, until Benjamin Davies, from Bethel, Leighton Buzzard, accepted the pastorate in 1858.

There is no doubt that many of the secessions and new causes recorded in this brief outline of Greenwich Baptist history were occasioned by the rise of the Gospel Standard movement. The *Gospel Standard* is a periodical which was first published in 1835. The adherents of the movement it represented, in order to make a distinction between themselves and others of strict and particular Baptist views, afterwards adopted the name of their periodical as their denomination title. Jesse Gwinnell seems to have held *Gospel Standard* views, and the present cause in Devonshire Road, Greenwich, to which reference is made later, was established under *Gospel Standard* rules, the secession from Zion apparently resulting from this movement.

To return again to Bridge Street, less than a year after his settlement Mr. Davies, owing to a change in his views regarding the presentation of the gospel, felt it his duty to resign from the Church. He was then about to accept an invitation to a Church in Natal, when he received unmistakable proofs that his work in Greenwich was not done. At the request of a large number of people he took the Lecture Hall in Royal Hill, and there in February 1859 formed a new Church.

There prevailed at one time a very general idea that Benjamin Davies removed with his Church to Royal Hill. This notion undoubtedly grew with time as the result, after the passing of years, of a confusion between his first and second migration to Royal Hill. In his admirable history of South Street Church (1922), Mr. R. E. Kemp mentions only one removal from Bridge Street to Royal Hill. And in support of this Mr. Kemp had not only the general opinion of Greenwich Baptists, but the fact that in later years Benjamin Davies was inclined to say that it was the original 1760 Church that came out of Bridge Street with him.

That Davies started a new cause, however, is abundantly clear from his memoir which appeared in the *Sword and Trowel* of 1873, as well as by a statement of C. H. Spurgeon in 1859 to the effect that Benjamin Davies had started a new cause at Greenwich, which can only refer to Royal Hill. According to a note in a very old Bible at South Street Chapel, Benjamin Davies held the first Church meeting of his new cause in an

ante-room of the Lecture Hall, at which seven persons were present. This contrasts noticeably with a membership of two hundred a few years later, and with the building of a new church in South Street some twelve years afterwards.

While Benjamin Davies was ministering at Royal Hill, Jesse Gwinnell (who meanwhile had removed to Salford) returned to Bridge Street, where his following at Stockwell Street had apparently returned. In 1861, Benjamin Davies bought the building in Bridge Street, and Jesse Gwinnell and his Church, dispossessed of their building, united with a cause from Shooters Hill Road and built a Chapel in Devonshire Road, Greenwich, dating the united Church 1842, the date of the founding of the Shooters Hill Road cause. This united Church finally ceased in 1871, and in 1872 James Bourne acquired the lease for a secession from Zion, New Cross. This Devonshire Road Cause is still in existence. While these movements were occurring, a new Church was started at Shooters Hill Road in 1866, and has maintained a strong cause for more than seventy years.

Meanwhile, Benjamin Davies, as one gathers from a little Church manual still extant, finding that the work did not prosper in Bridge Street, removed back to Royal Hill. Here the work prospered again so markedly that before long, as already stated, there was a membership of over two hundred. A deaconess or Bible woman was engaged and a weekly offering system adopted. Is there anything new under the sun? In addition, a prayer meeting was held every Sunday morning at 7 o'clock, a feature which was maintained regularly until a few years ago, and is held occasionally to the present day.

Encouraged by his success, Benjamin Davies began raising a building fund for the erection of a new church. A site was secured in the Blackheath Road and apparently relinquished, the new building being erected in South Street and opened by Charles Haddon Spurgeon on Thursday, March 21st, 1872. The enthusiasm and ability of Benjamin Davies and his fellow-workers compels our admiration. The building has stood from then until now, with hardly any signs of the effects of time. Though old-fashioned, it is roomy and comfortable, and is far more adequately supplied with vestries, classrooms and halls than many modern buildings; in fact, the building designed and erected by Benjamin Davies to-day houses the multifarious activities of a large and busy modern Church, which has something like forty different gatherings upon the premises between one Sunday and another.

The enthusiasm of the Church, when it entered its new sanctuary, very speedily received a serious setback, the beloved Pastor being called to higher service within two months of the

opening of the Church. There followed several years of difficulty and discouragement, until on the last Sunday of May, 1879, Charles Spurgeon, the elder son of C. H. Spurgeon, then a student, occupied the pulpit for the Sunday School Anniversary. Almost immediately a call was given to this young man, and from that time until to-day the work at South Street has never flagged.

Charles Spurgeon began his ministry in July, 1879. In that month the Church membership was dissolved as a condition of the help of the London Baptist Association. This dissolution was agreed to by eleven votes against nine. On July 25th, at a succeeding Church meeting, Charles Spurgeon gave the right hand of fellowship to two members as representing the newly formed fellowship.

This incident in the Church's history has been the occasion of a very natural confusion regarding the date of the founding of the Church. The cause was founded in 1859, the present building was opened in 1872, and the present fellowship formed in 1879. Hence the appearance of the latter date in the Baptist Handbook, while the Church popularly dates its origin from 1872, the previous date of 1859 being largely lost sight of.

On April 12th, 1903, Charles Spurgeon preached his farewell sermon, after a ministry of nearly twenty-four years. He was followed by the Rev. Frank Thompson, now of Hove, who after ten years' successful ministry was succeeded, just before the outbreak of the War, by the Rev. Roland J. French, now of Bethesda, Ipswich, who carried on a great ministry for nearly fourteen years. The writer of these notes has been privileged to follow in this succession.

In the 'eighties, South Street Church started three missions. Of these, the work in Roan Street and Caletock Street was continued under other auspices, but that at Azof Street developed into the present Baptist Church in Woolwich Road, where of late years Rev. H. M. Greenwood and his wife have laboured voluntarily, removing some years ago to Blackheath in order to be of service to a cause needing guidance and help in a district where we dare not let the Baptist witness die out.

F. C. WHITE.

An Elegy on Andrew Gifford.

AMONG the papers of the late Miss Maud Gould, of Hampstead, there was recently discovered a small broadsheet, on which is printed "An Elegy on the Death of Andrew Gifford, D.D. By R. Burnham, Minister of the Gospel." As it has not formerly been known, it is reproduced in full below.

Andrew Gifford was born in Bristol in 1700 and died in London in 1784. He was the son and grandson of ministers of the Pithay Baptist Church, Bristol, and became one of the ablest and best-known ministers of his day. He settled at the Little Wild Street Church in 1730, and five years later, following a split, established a new cause at Eagle Street, of which he was the minister for nearly fifty years, and which was supported by a wealthy and influential congregation. Gifford was a gifted and learned man, well known as a collector and connoisseur, and in 1757 secured appointment as the first assistant librarian at the new British Museum. His publications included works on coins and on early English Bibles.

He played no great part in denominational affairs. The eleven London ministers who then constituted the Baptist Board refused to associate with him, "owing to a sin of his youth made known and not forgiven in his manhood." Gifford was appealing to classes who never entered their meeting-houses, gathering merchants, gentry, members of both Houses of Parliament. While they were popularly known as Antinomian, he was awake to the evangelistic gifts of George Whitefield. When that fiery spirit was in danger from bigots, it was Gifford who introduced him to the Speaker; when Tottenham Court Road saw his new chapel, Gifford went to the opening; when Whitefield's sermons were to be printed, Gifford was asked to collect and edit them.

Gifford was buried in Bunhill Fields at an early hour in the morning, in compliance with his own wish "to testify his faith in the resurrection of Christ, who came early on the first day of the week, and likewise his hope of the resurrection morning at the last day." His library and collections were bequeathed to Bristol.

There were few contemporary Baptist tributes, but he had at least one enthusiastic admirer, Richard Burnham (1749-1810), minister first at Staines and later at Soho. Burnham wrote an obituary article in the *New Spiritual Magazine* and also this elegy. He was the composer of a large number of hymns, none of which seems to have secured the approval of posterity, and in 1806 ventured on an elegy on the death of Nelson. Since

Gifford and Burnham had very different theologies, it is to the credit of both that the young hyper-Calvinist published his lines on the West End preacher.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ANDREW GIFFORD, D.D.

By R. Burnham, Minister of the Gospel.

Gifford, an honour'd servant of the Lord,
Call'd by his grace, to preach the gospel word,
Inspir'd by love, was zealous to proclaim
All the bright glories of the Saviour's name;
In the great work, his soul aspir'd above,
His theme was Jesus, and eternal love;
Strong were the passions of his heav'n-born soul,
Nor men, nor devils could his zeal controul;
Whene'er he preach'd, love stream'd thro' ev'ry text,
And all his soul was on the Saviour fix'd,
Waiting on him to bless the sacred word,
That numbers might be rais'd to know the Lord:
O how he spake of Jesu's matchless charms,
And welcom'd sinners to his tender arms,
Justly invited all the trembling throng,
To fly to him, and raise a noble song
To sov'reign love, to Jesus and his blood,
And prove the pleasures of enjoying God!
For heav'n *reveal'd,* did GIFFORD sweetly breathe,
A present Saviour—present *now* to save,
The great Salvation *now,* ev'n *now* to prove,
And feel the great Redeemer's dying love;
Love in the *heart*—love richly *shed abroad,*
Love *all divine*—the wond'rous *love of God;*
That *more* of this, and *more* might still be found,
More still enjoy'd, and *more,* still *more* abound;
Thus, thus he spake, and thus he sang aloud,
Thus breath'd his flaming soul for *more* of *God.*
And thro' his converse brilliantly appear'd
The glorious image of the God he fear'd:
He lov'd to dwell on Jesus, and his cause,
And ev'ry saint had GIFFORD's high applause.
Great were his thoughts—to parties not confin'd,
Large was his soul—lover of all mankind,
Saints of all names, he cordially embrac'd,

The weakest lamb, he tenderly caress'd;
Words of pure love in sweetest accents broke,
And something heav'nly in his ev'ry look;
Unfeign'd affection ran thro' all his heart,
And laws of love he ever did impart;
No rigid frown sat low'ring on his face,
But ev'ry look spoke godly tenderness,
Malignant words did not his lips defile,
But all he said was with a pleasing smile,
Soft—sweet, and soothing—loving, free, and kind,
The great materials of the Saviour's mind.
All, all that knew him must for ever own,
That Dr. GIFFORD was a second John.
In peace at last he breathes his final groan,
Dies in the Lord, and springs upon the throne.
Ah! GIFFORD's gone, he's took a glorious flight,
Up to the realms of infinite delight;
There with his Jesus, now he sits and sings,
See how he smiles before the King of kings;
There, there he feeds on heav'nly love alone,
Drinks the pure water from th' eternal throne,
Handles the harp with sweet seraphic skill,
And loudly sounds, "My Lord's done all things well:"
O how he tunes the instrument of praise,
Whilst all his soul's dissolv'd in heav'nly lays;
Ravish'd with love, he shouts Messiah's fame,
And ev'ry anthem swells his charming name.
Oh! how he flies all o'er th' extended plains,
Triumphs and sings in most delightful strains;
Rolls the high praises of his Lord along,
And ne'er grows weary of the joyful song:
No sin, or sorrow ever can molest,
No evil incommode his peaceful breast.
Growing delight he'll ever, ever prove,
Lost in the blaze of pure immortal love.
Hark! hark ye favour'd ministers of God,
Hear, in what strains he sings of Jesu's blood:
Catch the sweet sounds of pure celestial praise,
And be more zealous in your future days;
Go on with fervor in your Master's cause,
And grasp the honours of divine applause:
Court not the smile of the professing train,
Nor strive unduly their applause to gain;
On Jesu's glory keep a single eye,
Or you may tremble when you come to die:

Man's *mere* esteem will into nothing sink,
While the poor soul is quiv'ring on the brink
Of vast eternity—Ah, striking thought,
Shall we at last be right with God, or not!
Shall we with boldness see the Judge appear,
Or sink in darkness—horror, and despair!
Shall we behold him with a joyful heart,
Or trembling hear the dreadful word, "*depart!*"
Shall we for ever with the Saviour dwell,
Or feel *damnation* in the *lowest* hell!
Muse all ye preachers of th' incarnate Lord,
Try—try your spirits by his sacred word.
And if but conscious that you aim to spread,
The glory of your great exalted Head,
Go on, and prosper—keeping close to God,
And tell the wonders of atoning blood.
Tho' devils rage, and wicked mortals fight,
Jesus is yours, and you are surely right:
In his great cause more rapidly go on,
Till you shall hear the crowning word, "Well done:"
Urge on your way 'gainst ev'ry frowning foe,
You shall from conquering unto conquest go.
Soon shall the storms of life be overpast,
And you and I, be with the Lord at last:
Then with dear GIFFORD, we shall surely join
All the sweet music of the blissful place,
And ev'ry note rise high, to sov'reign grace.
This be the theme on which we'll ever dwell,
"The great Redeemer hath done all things well:"
There we shall meet with nothing to annoy,
But sweetest concord ever shall enjoy;
There all the realms of blessedness explore,
And love, and sing, and praise, for evermore.

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Reviews.

The Philosophic Basis of Mysticism, by Dr. Thomas Hywel Hughes (T. & T. Clark, 12s. 6d.).

The author points out in his preface that we have no book dealing adequately with the philosophical implications of Mysticism. To attempt to supply the deficiency is a large undertaking, requiring wide knowledge and first-rate scholarship, but Dr. Hughes has discharged the task with manifest ability. He begins with a discussion of the meaning and characteristics of Mysticism, and then proceeds to deal in turn with its epistemological, psychological and ethical aspects in the light of modern knowledge. Though he deals fully with each aspect, he gives most space to the discussion of psychological questions. Here the treatment is particularly illuminating, as he shows himself exceptionally well versed in all the ramifications of Modern Psychology. The clear and straightforward style in which the book is written reveals an easy mastery of the material. As Mysticism is a difficult and complex subject, this is no inconsiderable achievement.

The book is to be commended as an admirable introduction to its subject, as it takes little for granted and surveys the whole field. Those who are only superficially acquainted with the study of Mysticism will find it a most useful guide to fuller knowledge in respect of both the subject itself and the literature which has grown up round it. The value of the book in this connection is largely due to the author's method of summarising the opinions of the leading authorities on each question as it arises and then subjecting them to careful examination and criticism. Extensive quotations are made from the writers cited, who are thus allowed to state their case in their own words. Whoever masters this work will learn who are the best authorities and what is the exact nature of their respective contributions. More advanced students will also find the book of value in bringing them well abreast of the most recent research. As we have no up-to-date introductions to the subject of a comprehensive kind, this book meets a real need. Those who are not specially interested in Mysticism will find it worth consulting on such wider issues as the validity of religious experience in general.

Dr. Hughes' treatment provokes one serious criticism on a major issue. He follows most English writers in taking Mysticism in the wide sense as denoting the type of religion which seeks direct intercourse with the Supernatural. Although this view has been disputed by some of our foremost thinkers,

such as Heiler, Söderblom and Oman, he does not really face the challenge. If we assume the position which he represents, we are compelled to regard as normative of first-hand religion the highly specialised experience of the classical mystics, but it is more than doubtful if genuine experimental religion should necessarily conform to the strictly mystical type. It is better to regard Mysticism as a special variety of spiritual religion. Indian Mysticism is the prototype, and probably the source, of every other species. Christian Mysticism is to be explained, not as the highest type of Christian experience, but rather as a modification of it due to the intrusion of Eastern mystical ideas into Christianity through the Neo-platonism of Augustine and the Pseudo-Dionysius. It is significant that Christian Mysticism always tends to deny the specific character of the evangelical experience by regarding divine communion more as an achievement through asceticism than as a gift mediated through Christ the Saviour. There is, of course, a mystical element in Christianity in the sense that the goal of salvation is fellowship with God. But this is far from saying that Christianity is a mystical religion. As Dr. Hughes is concerned for the most part with Western Mysticism, it is to be regretted that he has not explored its specific character in relation to the Mysticism of the East. Had his treatment followed less the traditional lines, he might have put us still further in his debt by helping us to see the true significance of the fusion in Christianity of the evangelical and mystical experiences, as this is exhibited in the great mystics of the Church. The opinion may be ventured that such an investigation would yield most profitable results.

W. E. Hough.

The Qur'an: translated, with a critical re-arrangement of the Surahs, in two volumes, by Richard Bell: Vol. I. (Surahs I.-XXIV.) (T. and T. Clark, 12s. 6d.).

This is a new translation, by the lecturer in Arabic in the University of Edinburgh. Its special feature is the "higher criticism" of the Qur'an. The complex structure of most of the Surahs is analysed into its presumed sources, which are indicated by typographical devices, and a brief introduction to each Surah states the author's conclusions. The translation is carefully and competently made, though its endeavour to keep very closely to the Arabic often leaves the result obscure. Thus the rendering of XII. 14, "Surely if the wolf eat him, and we a band, we in that case are indeed losers," is a literal version of the Arabic, in syntax and vocabulary, but does it really bring out the meaning as is done in Rodwell's translation: "Surely if the wolf devour him, and we so many, we must in that case be weak indeed"

(even better Sale, "when there are so many of us")? Some of the English expressions are not happy; why "dubitate" for "doubt" (III. 53), and "Wielder" of the Day of Judgement (I. 3), for "King" or "Controller"? However, this is pre-eminently a book for the student, rather than for the general reader, and such peculiarities of English diction may serve to call attention to the meaning of the Arabic, whilst the literary analysis will be a real help in studying the confusion of the subject matter, which makes the Qur'an a very difficult book to follow.

H. WHEELER ROBINSON.

The Forgiveness of Sins, by E. Basil Redlich, B.D., Canon Theologian of Leicester (T. & T. Clark, 10s. 6d.).

The author's thesis cannot be better stated than in his own words: "This essay is an effort to restore human forgiveness to its rightful position as a condition which must be fulfilled either separately or as an element of repentance before God's forgiveness can be granted" (126).

The plan of the book falls roughly into four sections: (i.) A summary of the teaching on Forgiveness in the Old Testament, Apocryphal and Apocalyptic writings, (ii.) An analysis of New Testament doctrine on the subject, (iii.) A resumé of the Church's teaching and practice in regard to the remission of sins, (iv.) A discussion of the rationale of Forgiveness.

It is naturally to his handling of the Gospels, in particular, that one turns for light upon the author's main contention, and here he is surely entirely right as to the importance which Jesus attached to human forgiveness.

Mr. Redlich goes so far as to claim that unforgiveness is an example of the Unforgivable Sin (Mark 3.28 ff.), but even if one hesitates to follow his exegesis here, the well-known phrase in the Lord's Prayer—to say nothing of the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant—virtually establishes his point. "God as Father gives all His created children possibilities of enjoying His gifts in Nature as well as His gifts of the Spirit. His gift of forgiveness is conditional because He as Father cannot forgive a son who is at enmity with his brother" (282).

Mr. Redlich is less convincing, however, in the use which he seeks to make of this truth. Can one speak of human forgiveness as forming, with repentance, the "two conditions of divine forgiveness" (104) without recognising that these two conditions are not on all fours with one another? To insist upon the *primacy* of forgiveness seems to postulate unwarrantably the

invariable presence within a penitent's mind of a spirit of resentment. Further, to speak, as Mr. Redlich does, of "forgivingness" rather than "forgiveness" is apt to detach the act of pardon from its root in a concrete situation and thus to rob it of moral content. Mr. Redlich says, "In forgivingness there is not only a sense of sin through the wrong committed by others on us, but also an overpowering sense of love, kindliness and charity, irrespective of offences" (278). One is tempted to ask, if this be the condition of God's pardon, who then can be forgiven? Mr. Redlich is on sounder ground when he urges that he is really advocating a worthier conception of repentance as necessarily an act which includes a man's relations with his fellows and moves him to reconciliation with them.

A more serious difficulty arises over what the author means when he says that forgiveness of others is a condition of being forgiven by God. He is rightly concerned to emphasise the freedom of God's pardon. "God's forgiveness is given not for any merit of ours, but of His gracious love" (160). But he is led at times into statements which go perilously near to rob that emphasis of its meaning. For example: "A penitent to prove worthy of being forgiven must possess something of the very nature of the great Forgiver. To deserve forgiveness, the spirit of the Forgiver must be there" (143f.). "In ourselves we are unworthy of His mercy, but in showing forgivingness to others we reveal something of the character of Him who desires us to be worthy of His forgiving. Because of our love for man through forgivingness, because of our faith and repentance, we can confidently ask that He should forgive us and be assured that He does" (311f.). One reader, at any rate, put down the book with an uneasy sense that the full evangelical position had not been successfully maintained.

R. L. CHILD.

Religious Essays: A Supplement to "The Idea of the Holy," by Rudolf Otto. Translated by Brian Lunn. 160 pp. (Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 2s. 6d.)

These essays by the late Dr. Otto, of Marburg, first appeared in English in 1931. Their re-issue in "The Oxford Bookshelf" series is to be warmly welcomed, though they recall a Germany that has largely vanished. A rich and varied fare, they develop and apply the fruitful concept of "the numinous," which Professor Otto expounded in his important and well-known book, *The Idea of the Holy* (several of the essays first appeared in the larger German Editions), attractively revealing something of the many-sidedness of the author, who was a great scholar and a great Christian gentleman. He writes here *inter alia* of

the idea of sin, of the Lord's Supper, of liturgical reform, of Darwinism and of Protestantism. Of the papers dealing with Comparative Religion, none is more important than that on "Parallels and Convergences in the History of Religion." The whole book deals with issues which will remain after much present theological and ecclesiastical controversy has been silenced.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

The Mastery of Fear, by R. S. Birch, M.A., Ph.D. (Independent Press, 1s.).

Release, by McEwan Lawson (Independent Press, 1s.).

Here are two timely books whose worth is greater than their size or price. They are both relevant to the increasing discovery of the toll that is levied on our lives by fear and other forms of bondage.

Dr. Birch, whose book consists of four lectures delivered under the Ancient Merchant Trust, gives a popular account of the function of fear, the cause of its appearance in morbid forms, and the way in which faith provides its antidote. The author has drawn freely on his clinical experience as a psychiatrist to illustrate his contentions.

Mr. Lawson covers a wider field, dealing with release from such things as doubt, habit, boredom, sex muddle, old age. He writes as a Christian minister giving pastoral counsel, as one who understands the queer complexities of the human mind and the way in which a lively Christian faith untangles them. He has some particularly valuable things to say about the plea that a man can please himself as to what he does with his life.

Both these books will enrich their readers with a robust and infectious hopefulness about Christian living.

Edinburgh, 1937. The Story of the Second World Conference on Faith and Order, by Hugh Martin, M.A. (Student Christian Movement Press, 2s.).

Mr. Martin has achieved the difficult task of giving a compact and popular account of the Edinburgh Conference and its reports with no little skill. In the short compass of this book he includes a sketch of the oecumenical movement from Edinburgh 1910; an account of the Conference and a reference to some of its leading personalities; a summary of reports and findings, and an indication of salient points in the discussion. In spite of necessary compression the book reveals the significance of the Conference, and the way in which difficulties and disagreements showed themselves, and were frankly faced, but against a

background of growing unity both in thought and practice. Even more valuable is the impression of the admirable spirit and temper in which complex and delicate issues were handled, and the quality of inspiration and fellowship that made the Conference the experience it was. Those who read the Official Report will appreciate it all the more with this book as their introduction. Those who read this book will want to go on to the study of the Report.

W. TAYLOR BOWIE.

Henry T. Hodgkin, A Memoir by H. G. Wood, D.D. (Student Christian Movement Press, 5s.).

Men and women who had contacts with the Student Movement and the Student Volunteer Missionary Union in the early years of this century will be grateful for this memoir of Henry T. Hodgkin. He lived a full life, and in the pages of this book the reader is introduced to the Student Movement leader, missionary to Chinese students, Secretary of the Friends' Foreign Missionary Society, founder of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Secretary of the National Christian Council of China. Dr. Wood has painted an attractive picture of a great and lovable man who served his generation according to the will of God, and given valuable information about the movements in which Henry Hodgkin was interested. People who have a concern about the Kingdom will profit from a study of this memoir, and it is a good book to put into the hands of young people who are realising that the problems of the world cannot be solved apart from Christ.

THOMAS POWELL.

Son to Susannah. The Private Life of John Wesley, by G. Elsie Harrison (Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 8s. 6d.).

The Bi-centenary of Methodism in May, 1938, will arouse enthusiasm and thanksgiving wherever the name of John Wesley is known, and the thoughts of many will turn to that room in Aldersgate Street where the founder felt his heart "strangely warmed," the only fact about him, said a theological examiner, known to some students whose examination papers he had read.

The Bi-centenary is calling forth a spate of books, but, when others have been forgotten, this study, brilliantly written and sparkling with wit and irony, will continue to intrigue readers. No student of the times, especially of the Evangelical Revival, can afford to ignore it. Mrs. Harrison knows Methodism intimately, both in its origins and its world-wide development. She walks with assured step through the Epworth parsonage,

introducing us to its varied personages; and then proves an entertaining and understanding guide as she unravels the tangled tale of John Wesley's relationship with the womenfolk, until Mrs. Molly Vazeille "caught him in his fall between his stirrup and the ground." But the gifted authoress does more, for she reveals John Wesley as a great human, great enough to be used by God for the awakening of England. Not all venerating Methodists will enjoy her frank disclosures and her fun at the expense of their hero, and some may question if she has been quite fair to Brother Charles. Perhaps she will reward them with a study of Methodism's foremost singer.

Roman Catholicism and Freedom, by Cecil John Cadoux, M.A., D.D. (Independent Press, 5s.).

First published in March, 1936, this timely and important book has now reached a third edition, and the author has taken advantage of this to add fourteen pages of supplementary notes, which deal, *inter alia,* with Abyssinia, Spain and the 1936 Education Act. That the Roman Catholic Church in its corporate sense is as arrogant as ever cannot be doubted, and the lover of freedom should give this volume careful thought. It is the standard work on this particular aspect of the subject.

His Part and Ours, by J. Sidlow Baxter (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 3s. 6d.).

The author is minister of Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh, a Church whose membership roll exceeds the seating capacity. He is finely maintaining its evangelical traditions, and in this volume gives a series of heart-searching expositions gathering round the Scripture usage of the possessive pronoun "My." We can well believe that those who heard them desired their publication, and we warmly commend them for devotional reading.

John Wilson of Woolwich, by Marguerite Williams (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 2s. 6d.).

Throughout his ministry, Spurgeon gave outstanding men to the London pastorate, and the names of Archibald G. Brown, of East London, William Cuff, of Shoreditch, John Wilson, of Woolwich, and others are easily remembered. They spoke to the multitude and the multitude heard them gladly. Happily the genial "Doctor" of Woolwich is still with us, and in this little volume Miss Williams, with loving skill, tells the story of his career from the obscure Scottish village to the sixty years in Woolwich.

EDITOR.