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

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

Editorial.

NEW MEMBERS.

The following have joined the Baptist Historical Society during the past quarter:

Rev. L. H. Brockington, M.A., B.D.
Principal Henry S. Curr, M.A.
Rev. G. Henton Davies, M.A., B.D.
Mr. C. R. Dickens.
Dr. A. R. Johnson.
Herr Hans Oddestad.
Rev. Douglas Stewart, M.A.
Rev. H. J. White, M.M.
Mr. Alfred R. Woollacott.

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ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the Society will be held at one of the historic Baptist Churches of London, "Upton," Lambeth Road, on Thursday, 28th April, at 4-15 p.m., followed at 4-30 by tea generously provided by the Church.

At the meeting the secretary's report and treasurer's statement for 1937 will be submitted, and officers and committee elected for the ensuing year. The present officers and committee, whose names are printed on the back cover, have been nominated. Any additional nominations should reach the secretary not later than Thursday, 21st April.

By gracious permission of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a visit to Lambeth Palace will precede the meeting. For over seven hundred years Lambeth has been the London address of the Archbishops of Canterbury, and a conducted tour of the present Palace, which was rebuilt about 1490, and the Library of over 30,000 volumes, should prove of great interest. Admission tickets are essential, and, to expedite arrangements, members are asked to return the accompanying card as early as possible.

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LAMBETH CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS.

We have received from the Student Christian Movement Press three documents issued under the auspices of the Joint Conference of Anglicans and Free Churchmen which has met at Lambeth Palace during recent years, and we cordially commend them to the careful study of our readers.

1662 and To-day (Twopence)

The Practice of Inter-Communion and the Doctrine of the Church (Twopence)

Outline of a Reunion Scheme for the Church of England and the Evangelical Free Churches of England
(Sixpence)

They were prepared by the Committee of the Joint Conference; and, after being received by the Conference, were generally commended to the careful consideration of the Churches represented in the Joint Conference. It is unfortunate that the names of the drafting committee are not starred, as many will jump to the conclusion, as, indeed, some have done already, that the whole of the Joint Conference whose names are printed have equal responsibility. The Baptist representatives are the Revs. M. E. Aubrey, Charles Brown, Gilbert Laws and Hugh Martin, and it is certain they would not unanimously agree that "Baptism may be administered in infancy or upon profession of faith."

The drafting committee frankly state they do not expect the Reunion Scheme to be carried into effect in its present form, but they hope it may prove a useful basis for further work towards the attainment of reunion. The present proposals cut right across some of the most cherished beliefs of Baptists, and they raise again the question whether discussions which proceed from "Episcopacy to Creed, from Creed to Sacraments, from Sacraments to Episcopacy," are really worth the time that is being devoted to them.

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OUR SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS.

Two years ago, all our publications were offered to members at specially reduced prices. Several, both in this country and across the Atlantic, availed themselves of the opportunity thus given to complete their sets of the *Transactions* and the *Quarterly*. Except that some numbers of the magazines are now out of print, the full offer remains open, and the secretary will be pleased to send a list of the volumes to any member on receipt of a post-card.

The Baptist World Alliance.

ORIGIN : CONSTITUTION : ACHIEVEMENTS OBJECTS.

I.

FOUNDED IN LONDON, 1905.

IT is surprising that the Baptist World Alliance came into existence so late in our history. There are explanations, of course; our churches throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were comparatively few and poor, subject to manifold disabilities and even at times to persecution. The great period of expansion was yet to come. Nevertheless, as early as the year 1790, as Dr. W. T. Whitley has pointed out, John Rippon had a vision. He started in London a publication called *The Baptist Register,* and he dedicated it "to all the baptised ministers and people" in the various lands of the earth, "in serious expectation that before many years elapse (in imitation of other wise men) a deputation from all these climes will meet, probably in London, to consult the ecclesiastical good of the whole." Nothing came of the suggestion. True, Rippon did forecast the meeting-place of our first World Congress, London, but "before many years" proved too optimistic; the actual interval was 115 years.

Nevertheless, the forgotten idea re-emerged; as the nineteenth century was passing into the twentieth it was "in the air." Dr. R. H. Pitt, of Virginia, editor of the *Religious Herald,* printed an article suggesting a Pan-Baptist Congress; but a few years had still to pass before definite action was taken. In 1904 the late Professor A. T. Robertson, of Louisville, wrote a short article in the *Baptist Argus,* proposing a gathering of Baptists from all parts of the earth. The editor, J. N. Prestridge, a man of immense energy, took up the idea. He sent out marked copies, and wrote letters to all countries. L. A. Crandall, R. H. Pitt and others co-operated in America. The proposal "caught on" overseas; it captured, among others, J. H. Shakespeare and John Clifford in England. The driving force of Prestridge, and the organising powers of Shakespeare, brought about the meeting of the first Baptist World Congress.

That historic assembly was convened in London in July 1905, when twenty-three countries responded to the roll call. I must not linger on that first great world-gathering of Baptists—though I am strongly tempted to do so, for I was present all through, and the memory of the sessions is still vivid. In my mind resound the echoes of a masterly speech in

which Dr. Mullins first revealed to the whole Baptist world his unique powers. John MacNeill, of Canada, was another who stirred the assembly. Both these men were destined to become in later years Presidents of the Alliance. Outstanding missionary leaders and missionaries attended—such as H. C. Mabie, of North America, and Timothy Richard, of China; eminent scholars, such as A. T. Robertson and A. H. Newman; leading public men, among them Mr. Lloyd George. Spurgeon had passed away, but during the Congress a statue was unveiled to his memory. Alexander Maclaren, prince of expositors, was still with us, and acted as president of the Congress. The outstanding fact of that first world assembly was the definite organisation of the Baptist World Alliance. It is not too much to say that the founding of that body is the most significant fact in the history of our Baptist communion during the present century. Its birthday is July 17th, 1905. It may be worth while to quote the preamble of the constitution in its original form:

> "Whereas in the providence of God, the time has come when it seems fitting more fully to manifest the essential oneness in the Lord Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour of the churches of the Baptist order and faith throughout the world, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service, and co-operation among them, while recognising the independence of each particular church and not assuming the functions of any existing organisation, it is agreed to form a Baptist Alliance, extending over every part of the world."

The venerable and beloved John Clifford was elected with enthusiasm as first president of the Baptist World Alliance, and no man could have been chosen who more fitly and worthily incorporated the spirit of brotherly love manifested in that truly pentecostal season.

II.

Voluntary and Fraternal Throughout.

The Alliance sometimes needs to be explained to our own people as well as to those outside our ranks. Many at the beginning displayed concern lest it should threaten or actually impair their liberty in the Gospel. It is well that all Baptists should understand both what the Alliance is not, and what it is. It is not an additional missionary organisation, administering mission funds or appointing missionaries. It is not a legislative body, making regulations that must be obeyed. It has no judicial powers, and cannot hand down decisions to govern churches or any other Baptist bodies. It is not a ruling or authoritative body; its rights of control are entirely confined to its own activities.

So far the negatives: the positives are yet more significant. The Alliance is voluntary and fraternal through and through: its aims are purely moral and spiritual. It is the instrument of all the Baptists of the world for three great purposes: (1) to express and to promote unity and fellowship among them; (2) to secure and defend religious freedom; and (3) to proclaim the great principles of our common faith.

III.

WORLD CONGRESSES: REGIONAL CONGRESSES: WORLD-WIDE VISITATION.

Such a union of Baptists is not only in principle true to the spirit of the New Testament; it is effective in practice.

First of all, it has promoted *a series of world congresses.* Perhaps it is through these that it is most widely known in all lands. Great assemblies may easily be overvalued. We might even have too many, and they might involve an enormous machinery for wasting material resources, time, and energy. (I am disposed to regard the multiplication of conferences as a characteristic evil of our time.) But when the question was definitely raised a few years ago in respect of our World Congress, the general judgement of Baptists in every continent was decisive. They stood by the idea of a Congress every five years, and declared that experience has shown that the interval is precisely right—neither too long nor too short. The testimony to the inspirational value of these gatherings is overwhelming. The list may be given here: London, 1905; Philadelphia, 1911[1]; then an interruption owing to the War; Stockholm, 1923—a joyous and thankful meeting after the long interval; Toronto, 1928; Berlin, 1934.[1]

These World Congresses are not merely occasions for the election of officers and committees and the delivery of speeches. They have furnished opportunities for a remarkable and intimate drawing together of Baptists from all parts of the world. Links of personal friendship now unite our people around the globe. I resist the temptation to enlarge upon the events of the four World Congresses which followed that of London. Philadelphia initiated a fund for the establishment of a Russian Training College for evangelists and preachers—a project which, though not yet carried out, has never been dropped. At Stockholm a large number of Baptists from Soviet Russia were permitted to attend. A few were also present at Toronto, but before the close of 1928 the Soviet policy of repression was applied in full vigour. The meeting at Berlin was preceded by a period of

[1] For special reasons each of these two congresses had to be postponed a year.

hesitation and even controversy. The resolution to hold the Fifth World Congress in that city had been taken in 1928, but doubts were expressed as to whether the Nazi Government, which had seized power in 1933, would permit genuine freedom of speech. Official assurances were obtained on this point, and the Congress (the largest assembly of Baptists ever known in the Eastern Hemisphere) was held without interference. Indeed, it is not too much to claim that the whole world was astonished at the liberty of speech permitted and exercised. Resolutions on such issues as the relations of Church and State, nationalism, racialism, and world peace, though fully understood to be opposed to the policy of the German Government, were adopted and published, and the circulation of these produced a deep impression upon the public mind, both within and without Germany. Several months after its close the German political authorities paid an unwilling tribute to the influence of the Congress by suppressing the further circulation of its reports! Unquestionably, our ecumenical assemblies have proved of high value not only as occasions of fellowship and inspiration, but of Baptist and Christian propaganda.

In addition to World Congresses, which however large the actual attendance cannot directly touch the masses of our people, the Alliance has organised other conferences through which a more intimate fellowship has been developed than is possible in a general assembly. Before the War, European "Continental Congresses" met in Germany (1908) and in Sweden (1913). After the War I offered a suggestion, based upon my experience as an officer of these continental gatherings, that much more effective work could be accomplished through a number of "Regional Conferences," held in leading continental cities and attended by delegates from a limited number of countries closely connected with one another. The suggestion was endorsed by the Executive Committee, and three series of such "Regional Conferences" have justified its decision. The first series took place in September and October, 1926, when Dr. Mullins was president; the second in August-October, 1930, during the presidency of Dr. MacNeill; and the third in July-August, 1937, when Dr. George W. Truett undertook a presidential tour. Each of these seasons of visitation has furnished opportunity for many thousands of Baptists in several great cities to be brought directly under the influence of the Alliance. Not only has the sense of a world-fellowship been deepened, but strong ties of friendship have been formed between the Baptists of related lands, e.g., the Latin-speaking countries of south-western Europe, the Scandinavian lands, and the south-eastern countries, where national and political antagonism is strong, but has been overcome

by the sense of fellowship in the Gospel. I count it among the highest privileges of my life to have been associated with the eminent men who have served as presidents in this systematic visitation of the European churches. It is impossible to exaggerate the strengthening and inspiring effects of their contact with the "rank and file" of the churches.

A yet wider activity of the Alliance, serving similar ends, may here be recorded as a development of recent years. In 1930 the First Latin-American Congress was held at Rio de Janeiro, and in addition to myself as General Secretary, Dr. Truett (who four years later became president) and Dr. T. B. Ray represented the Alliance. Associated with this was a wider tour of South American countries. Three journeys round the world have brought home to the Baptist people, in most remote parts of the earth, the sense of community in faith and service with all their fellow-believers. The first of these was in 1931-2, when Dr. John MacNeill, as president, devoted nearly six months (September-February) to a journey round the globe in the Northern Hemisphere, visiting Japan, China, Burma, India and Palestine, as well as Europe. In 1932 it fell to the writer, as General Secretary, to undertake a journey (June-December) mainly in the Southern Hemisphere, touching South Africa and visiting all the chief cities of Australia and New Zealand, and returning across the Pacific to visit several centres in the United States and Canada. In 1935-6 (November-June) the President and General Secretary, who were accompanied by Mrs. Truett, journeyed round the world visiting countries which had previously been reached by Dr. MacNeill and taking part in centennial celebrations of American missions in India and China. These prolonged tours have not only drawn more closely the links between those who are widely separated by distance and belong to many different races, but the contact of the Alliance with missions founded by Northerners and Southerners of the U.S.A., British, Australian, Canadian and European societies has strengthened, in the indigenous Churches, the consciousness that they are linked not merely with a particular society or country, but with one another in an ecumenical fellowship.

IV.

We pass on to notice two enterprises, in connection with which the Alliance played a significant and important rôle.

The Alliance and European Relief.

The first, the provision of relief on a wide scale, arose out of the abnormal condition of Europe after the Great War. Intercourse between Baptists of various lands was impossible during hostilities; and for more than a year after November

1918 travel was most difficult, and some countries could scarcely be reached, much less explored. Not until the opening of 1920 was it possible for the state of Europe as a whole (apart from Russia) to be fully examined. The Baptist World Alliance then undertook to invite a representative group of American, British, Canadian, Australian, European and other Baptists —about seventy in all—to meet at London in July, in order to hear the testimony of those who came from continental Europe and to consider the reports of Dr. C. A. Brooks of the U.S.A. and myself regarding the appalling conditions we had discovered—our people without clothing or food, in some countries unable to obtain hymnbooks or even Bibles, their enterprises suspended because of bitter poverty, and suffering in many other ways. That conference in London in 1920 also made history; one who was present called it "the most significant missionary meeting that Baptists have held in modern times." It initiated a scheme of material relief which operated for three years, and in a few countries longer—the largest united relief effort the denomination ever undertook. Far the greater part of the money came from the United States; but in a lesser degree other countries contributed. That help was the means of saving the lives and health of thousands, and not of Baptists alone. No strict denominational frontier was drawn, and the fund became a practical expression of human brotherhood.[2] The writer was called from his pastorate to serve as Baptist Commissioner for Europe in administering the fund of a million dollars on behalf of the Mission Boards and Unions through which it was raised.

A Co-operative Mission Policy Formulated.

Still more significant for the coming years were other decisions of the London conference of 1920. These had to do with the spiritual needs of Europe, and their effect has been to link the stronger mission boards of the U.S.A., Canada, Britain, and some other lands, with the needier countries of Europe, marking out fields of co-operation so as to avoid overlapping. The results exceeded all hopes. The struggling communities were heartened and encouraged. It was no surprise to those who understood the changed morale in the poorer lands of the continent that a great increase of membership was reported within a few years—in most lands fifty per cent. or more, whilst in some countries, Rumania being the most conspicuous example, the numerical strength of the Baptist communion multiplied

[2] The writer can never forget the gratitude of a group of starving and shivering students—Roman Catholics who had never heard of Baptists. Their characteristic expression of surprise and delight was reported to him in the words: "Who are these Baptists to take an interest in such poor God-forsaken devils as we?"

several times over. The scheme of co-operation initiated in London emphasised the need of adequate training for preachers; and since the year 1920, thanks to the aid of American, Canadian, and British Baptists, no fewer than ten new preachers' schools have been set up in as many countries.[3]

These new relations of co-operation and material assistance are as already noted sustained by the mission boards, but it was the union of these in the Alliance which enabled the conference of 1920 to be summoned. Indeed, the contacts already made by the Alliance before the War counted as a powerful influence in healing the wounds of Europe.

V.

The Defence of Religious Freedom: A Continuous Task.

A supreme service of the Alliance has been its advocacy and defence of religious freedom. This is a continuous task, and covers much more than the special cases to which attention is drawn in the public press. Over a large part of the world there is no religious equality, and even toleration is by no means assured. It is disappointing to recall that whilst on the whole there was a general enlargement of religious freedom in Europe during the years immediately following the War, the last four or five years have witnessed not a few definite setbacks. The tendency of the State to put forward "totalitarian" claims is by no means confined to the two or three outstanding examples which have monopolised the attention of the world. All through its existence our world organisation has stood for the defence of our people's liberty. Apart from the exceptional cases of Rumania and Soviet Russia, to which extended reference will be made in later paragraphs, much has been done. Before the War there were informal approaches to the Czarist Government in the interests of Russian Baptists. From 1920 onwards the writer, as Commissioner for Europe and as General Secretary of the Alliance, has maintained a continuous watch upon conditions which menaced or violated religious liberty, and apart from the U.S.S.R. and Rumania, has had to protest and appeal to Ministers of State in some half-dozen other lands. In most instances there was no need to initiate public agitation. The fact that the Alliance was in existence, and that its representatives voiced the mind of a Christian world-communion, gave moral weight to our plea, and usually brought prompt redress. Three

[3] A tentative effort was made in Russia with assistance from the fund initiated at Philadelphia in 1911 to establish a preachers' school in Moscow (1925), but the life of this institution was short. The Soviet authorities brought it to an end by the simple method of arresting and exiling the teachers.

examples may be given. The Baptists of Czechoslovakia were, in the early "twenties," subjected to unequal treatment in certain matters of taxation as compared with Roman Catholics. An interview with President Masaryk led to an immediate change and the abandonment of an attitude which was quite opposed to his spirit and that of his Government. In Hungary, proceedings were taken against an active Baptist preacher; a judge issued an order for his expulsion from the country on the technical ground that he had not acquired Hungarian nationality. I record to the honour of the Hungarian Minister of Cults (who was in fact a Roman Catholic priest) that he at once accepted a protest which in the name of the Alliance I personally made to him, and the order was annulled. It is also worthy of record that in the case of an Italian pastor sentenced to some years' banishment on charges whose real basis was religious prejudice (he had spoken rashly, though not criminally, and had thus given an opportunity to his theological opponents), an appeal to Signor Mussolini through the Italian Minister in London led to the quashing of the sentence within a few days. In general, we may assert that where Baptists are few, poor, and weak, and administrators are inclined to ride roughshod over them, it makes all the difference when Governments realise that the handful of feeble folk represents a fellowship of millions throughout the earth. Nor should it be ignored that when we put forward our historic demand for religious liberty we are not asking advantages for our denomination. It is the proud boast of the present writer that he never addresed to any Minister of State a plea for freedom of conscience without pointing out that Baptists seek for themselves nothing which they do not seek for their fellow-citizens, and value as the God-given right of all men.

RUSSIA: RELIGIOUS LIBERTY EXTINGUISHED.

In this connection a heavy burden rests upon Christian hearts and minds as we think of Russia. In no country had our evangelical message found wider welcome: during and after the War Baptist communities increased rapidly. A corrupt and superstitious Church, linked with the old Czarist tyranny, had long held men in bondage, and the decay and breakdown of that *ancien régime* aroused new hopes. Unhappily these were doomed to disappointment. The Church's failure had made men too ready to turn in undiscriminating hate against all religion. For a time hatred was directed chiefly against the old privileged Church; but as the Communist party, which has a monopoly of political power in Russia, felt itself firm in the saddle, it gave rein to its fierce anti-God prejudice and set about eliminating religious teaching and organisation. We cannot trace in detail

the painful story. Through the last nine years especially there has been exercised a relentless pressure with the object of suffocating every form of faith. No school or class for the religious teaching of children is allowed in the land; no Bible-study class, even for adults, can be formed in any church; the right of propaganda for religion was, in 1929, struck out of the constitution of the U.S.S.R., but the right of propaganda against religion retained; churches and meeting-halls are seized and arbitrarily closed; seminaries for preachers have been made impossible; the preachers themselves are harassed by specially heavy taxes, arbitrary imprisonment, and in other ways, in order to drive them out of the ministry; and for years past the bravest and the most influential of them have languished in exile. No Russian Bibles may be printed or imported. Higher education has been denied to children who have not renounced their parents' faith; and anything like a professional career is closed to those who are loyal to conscience and to God. On the other hand, the State-schools, which alone are permitted to exist, are not neutral in religion; they are forcing-beds and hot-houses of militant atheism. The writer, who has paid six visits to Russia since the Revolution, has in past years discussed these questions face to face with the authorities in Moscow, but in vain. Atheism is practically the State-religion of Russia; and the promulgation of atheism by administrative repression is the State policy.[4]

Some illusive hopes of a change for the better were aroused in 1936 by the promulgation of a new constitution for Russia. Certain paragraphs seemed to imply a measure of religious freedom, or at least a widened field of activity for religious people. From the first it was evident to those who studied the terms of the Constitution that it offered no guarantees either of democratic self-government or religious liberty; and the sequel has justified their fears. Leaving aside such facts as the policy of terrorism and the "election" at which none but Government supporters could be candidates, we need only note the recent widespread arrests of Orthodox ecclesiastics and of so-called "sectarians" (who would be chiefly Baptists), as well as the intensified activity of the Government-favoured "anti-God" organisation. The aim of the political authorities, to destroy religion, is steadily pursued. Unhappily there is very little expression of Christian feeling on the subject throughout the world. The story has ceased to have "news value" because of its unvarying character; and the mind of the democratic peoples, even including the active members of churches, has become almost indifferent. It appears

[4] Of course many churches—thousands of them in the vast area of Russia—still exist. The Government has not ventured on a "clean sweep," but the purpose and tendency of its policy are as here described.

as if nothing could dispel the mood of almost fatalistic acceptance of appalling conditions. Soviet Russia has made substantial advances on the material side. The overthrow of Czarism was an essential pre-condition of advance. The old Church bears a heavy responsibility for the tragic developments of the post-Revolution years. But when these facts are recognised, the rigid suppression of soul-freedom remains to shock the conscience of the world. One of the resolutions unanimously adopted in Berlin may be cited, with the comment that it describes all too exactly the present situation :—

> " This World Congress of Baptists, representing sixty countries, makes its strong protest against the increasingly severe repression of religion in Russia. We express our deep sympathy with all those who are suffering for their faith, and especially with our Baptist brethren, many of whom are in exile or in prison, and we commend them and all others who, at great cost, are standing true to their convictions, to the help of our churches, and to the blessing and deliverance of God."

RUMANIA : PERSECUTION AND DENIAL OF RIGHTS.

Our World Alliance has also been closely occupied for the past eighteen years with the situation of Baptists in Rumania, and has had on many occasions to exercise its utmost influence on their behalf. The story can here be told but briefly.

For ten years after the War the authorities harassed and oppressed the Baptists, denying them recognition before the law. It was a most difficult and delicate task to negotiate with the Ministers of State, and it involved many a disappointment. Promises of alleviation were again and again broken owing to ecclesiastical pressure upon the Government, until at last the Executive of the Alliance decided to promote in all countries a protest to be submitted, if necessary, to the League of Nations. This projected action brought the first change for the better : the Government realised that such a statement emanating from a world-wide religious fellowship would be disastrous to its credit as a civilised European power in the twentieth Christian century. Persecution in its earlier forms diminished. The Parliament, by the law of 1928, acknowledged the status of Baptists over a large part of the land,[5] and by the same law gave the Ministry powers to extend this status throughout the whole country by administrative decree. Unfortunately, these powers have not been used, and from 1928 onwards the legal position of Baptists in the larger part of the country has remained undefined. Preju-

[5] i.e., in the territory transferred from Hungary at the close of the War. (Transylvania and neighbouring provinces.)

diced officials and priests have been able to take advantage of the lack of definition; and the arbitrary closing of churches, the silencing of preachers, disabilities imposed on children of Baptists in public schools, fines and arrests, are among the many forms of annoyance and persecution to which our people have been compelled to submit. In the latter part of 1935, the writer made a strong protest in Bukarest against the overriding in Transylvania of established rights and the delay in granting definite legal security elsewhere. A circular instruction was in consequence issued by the Minister of Cults in October, 1935, a brief quotation from which will serve to indicate the exact position :—

> "The Baptists of Transylvania and the neighbouring provinces are, according to the Law of Cults, Art. 53, a legally recognised cult, and are to be treated as such.
>
> "The Baptists of the Old Kingdom, of Bessarabia, and of Bukowina, remain until the final regulation of their order (i.e., assimilation with the Baptists of Transylvania through a special law) under the conditions of Art. 24 of the Law of Cults, 1928, applying to Religious Associations. Since, however, their organisation as a Church, their teaching, and their rites, are the same as those of the Transylvanian Baptists, we would request you to permit them to enjoy the some treatment as the Transylvanian Baptists, pending the unification of the Baptist order by a law of the House and the Senate."

ORTHODOX CLERICAL INFLUENCE ANTAGONISTIC TO FREEDOM.

At the time that this circular was issued, the Rumanian Prime Minister pledged himself to the policy of assimilating the legal position everywhere to that in Transylvania. Unhappily, reactionary clerical influences have, during the last two years, secured control in the Department of Cults, with the result that in April, 1937, an administrative decree was issued cancelling all existing registration of Baptist Churches,[6] and requiring them to apply within three months for re-registration. The conditions of this re-registration were, however, inacceptable in principle and impossible in practice. The intention of the edict was evidently to close all Baptist churches. At the end of six months, i.e., in October, 1937, all that had not registered under the decree were to be dissolved. The Baptist World Alliance formally protested in the name of the entire communion. The Rumanian Baptist Union held a national assembly in Bukarest, and with unfaltering courage announced by unanimous vote its rejection of the decree. Instructions were actually issued to the police throughout the land to close the churches; but protests and

[6] Some other evangelical bodies were also affected.

appeals from abroad led to the withdrawal of these instructions a few days before the appointed date. The position now (January, 1938) is that, although the decree has not been cancelled, its application is postponed "pending the report of an official commission." The situation has also been complicated by a change of administration in Rumania. The Ministry in power in October, 1937, promised, when postponing the application of the decree, to promote a law in the new Parliament establishing the rights of Baptists on a satisfactory basis. That Ministry, having failed to win the elections, has resigned. The new Government is strongly nationalistic and anti-Semitic, but during its first weeks of office it appears to have taken no action and issued no declarations implying repudiation of its predecessor's pledges. The Alliance has made a formal approach to the new Prime Minister and to the Minister of Cults, citing these pledges and asking that they shall be respected.

All who know the story of Rumania, and above all our brethren in the land, realize that the cause of religious freedom would already have been lost but for the existence and activity of our ecumenical Alliance.

It is almost superfluous to add that the prevalent tendency of States to assert "totalitarian" claims has increased the difficulties and confirmed the need of alert and constant watchfulness on the part of the Alliance. "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

VI.

Officers of the Alliance: Young People's Work.

To the minor "routine" services of the Alliance—the collection and publication of statistics, the circulation of information, and so forth—we need not refer in detail. Nor need more than a few words be devoted to its organisation. Its Presidents (John Clifford, 1905-11; R. S. MacArthur, 1911-23; E. Y. Mullins, 1923-28; John MacNeill, 1928-34; and George W. Truett, from 1934) have all been men of distinction, who have justified the confidence of their brethren. Eighteen countries are represented in its Committee. At the outset two honorary secretaries were chosen, one for the Eastern Hemisphere and one for the Western. By 1928 it had become evident that efficiency demanded the whole time of a responsible executive officer, and therefore the writer, who had served as Commissioner for Europe from 1920, and had succeeded J. H. Shakespeare as Eastern Secretary in 1926, was appointed as the first General Secretary of the Alliance. His valued colleague as honorary associate secretary is Dr. Clifton D. Cray, President of Bates College.

An encouraging feature of recent years is the expansion and enlarged importance of the Young People's work. From 1928 the B.W.A. Young People's Committee, of which Dr. T. G. Dunning, of London, is chairman, and Dr. Frank H. Leavell, of Louisville, secretary, has been very effective in multiplying international contacts, especially in Europe; and under its auspices two international Baptist Youth Congresses have assembled, the first in Prague and the second—a remarkably successful gathering—in Zürich. The latter came at the close of the Regional Conferences of 1937, and was attended by the President and General Secretary of the Alliance.

J. H. RUSHBROOKE.

ALFRED UNIVERSITY, in the State of New York, has begun its second hundred years well. There are 278 men and women studying the liberal arts, 331 at ceramics, for which there is a high reputation both in research and in design. Ten are studying theology, for the University belongs to the Seventh-Day Baptists. Yet there are only 25 of that body pursuing other courses, with 50 ordinary Baptists, 54 Episcopalians, 60 Jews, 81 Presbyterians, 111 Roman Catholics, 114 Methodists. Evidently it is to be compared with our Nottingham and Southampton, for 549 of the students are New Yorkers. It is unique in buying for £2,000 a carillon of 35 bells from Belgium, whose tenor was cast in 1674, as a memorial to the president emeritus.

W.T.W.

The Making of a Capital.

The Story of Canberra: Australia's Capital City.

IT is not given to every generation to witness the building of a Capital City or take part in its creation, and, perhaps, no City was ever built quite like the Capital of the Australian Commonwealth. Most Cities grow spontaneously, or as the result of certain conditions that compel them into being. Canberra did not grow like that; Canberra was deliberately created, and its population lifted out of the nurseries of other cities and just transplanted into the new soil, where, at present, it is in process of taking root. This article is an attempt to introduce this latest civic infant to the older members of the British family.

THE PAST.

It sounds strange to talk of an infant's past, but to get a true idea of Canberra as an achievement of modern town building it is necessary to know out of what this beautiful city has been created in something like a decade. Dim ages ago, before the advent of the white man, Canberra lay sleeping. Until the Ngarua tribe settled there, no human disturbed the dreaming stillness. Then some hundreds of aborigines roamed the countryside, made bark canoes, sailed the Cotter and Murrumbidgee Rivers; speared fish, hunted and practised their quaint tribal customs, and Corroboree Park to-day is a reminder of the corroborees of the past. Then the white man came. All that remains of the old tribe are occasional stone axes and other primitive weapons found on the hillsides, and the smoke stains from their fires in sheltered caves. Charles Throsby, an English surgeon, and a bushman named Joseph Wild, were probably the first whites to discover Canberra. In 1820 they camped at Duntroon, where, to-day, the Royal Military College stands. Then more settlers came, those heroic pioneers who, enduring many hardships, made life a big and wonderful adventure. And so the years passed, while flocks of sheep roamed on the grass-covered plains, and comfortable homesteads were built, one of them—"Yarralumla"—to become the official residence of the Governor-general of the Commonwealth.

THE PRESENT.

By the present, I mean those years which cover the story of Canberra during the past thirty-seven years, for it was on the 17th September, 1900, that Queen Victoria signed the Proclamation declaring that from January 1st, 1901, the people

of Australia should be united under the name of The Commonwealth of Australia. The first Federal Parliament was opened in Melbourne by the late King George V., the same year. Seven years after, in the year 1908, Canberra was chosen as the site of the future Capital, and at a little gathering of distinguished citizens from various States of the Commonwealth, standing on the virgin soil, Lady Denman announced the name on March 12th, 1913. Ten years passed, and in 1923 the first sod was turned for the House of Parliament. The first Parliament in the new Capital was opened by our present King, then Duke of York, on the 9th May, 1927, and that same year, on the 17th October, the first meeting of Baptists took place to consider the question of establishing a Baptist Church. The chair was taken by the writer, as Chairman of the Australian Home Mission Board, and there were fourteen Baptists present. Thus the history of our Church in Canberra begins with the history of the city itself.

At the inaugural meetings of the Australian Baptist Union, which came into being in September 1926, it was resolved to initiate a movement to raise funds, select a site, prepare plans for a church and manse, and make arrangements for the formation of a Baptist Church in Canberra. The task of carrying out these proposals was committed to the Home Mission Board, and no time was lost in embarking on the great venture.

In the meantime, the city itself was beginning to assume definite shape. A world-wide competition for a design for the lay-out of the Capital was conducted, and won by Mr. Walter Burley Griffin, a Chicago architect, and his ideas to-day find expression in Canberra's magnificent planning. Certain sites were set apart for the various Churches and they were invited to make a selection. The Baptists were early in the field and chose a site comprising four acres, in a very central position, and this was granted to them on a perpetual lease of a peppercorn rental. All States joined enthusiastically in the campaign to raise funds for building purposes, over £10,000 being subscribed. The foundation stones of the church and manse were laid by the President of the Baptist Union of Australia (Rev. J. H. Goble) and the Vice-President (myself) on the 21st March 1928, in the presence of a large company of people gathered from the four quarters of the Commonwealth. While the buildings were in course of erection, the question of the first Minister for the new church was considered, every State Union being invited to make a nomination. The church was opened on Saturday, 23rd February, 1929, and on the following day the induction of myself, the first Minister, was held, and the Church formed with thirteen members.

Baptists thus had the honour of erecting the first church

in the new city. Since then both city and Church have grown. Canberra is the seat of government for the Commonwealth of Australia. The official residence of the Governor-General is there, and the administrative offices of the Public Service. It is becoming the centre of national life and culture. The University College has been established. The Institute of Anatomy, the Forestry School, and the Royal Military College are among its national institutions. Important businesses have been established and modern homes, and the building is still going forward. More than three million trees and shrubs have been planted, and already Canberra has developed into a garden city that promises to be one of the most beautiful cities of the world. We feel some pride in the knowledge that the Baptists are taking no mean part in the development of the city's life. Already some of the highest officials of the Commonwealth are officers of the Church. The young life of the city has been captured. Many of them have been converted and baptised and joined to the Church, and as the majority of them enter the public service it promises well for the future of the Commonwealth that its high affairs will be in the hands of Christian men.

THE FUTURE.

It is always a risky thing to speak of the future, and one can only express hopes that have been encouraged by the past. The growth of the capital cities of Australia is in the nature of a romance. Sydney is just about to celebrate its 150th anniversary, not a long period as we count time, yet in this century-and-a-half Sydney has grown from nothing into a city that ranks second among the cities of the Empire, with a population of over a million and a quarter. Melbourne has recently celebrated its centenary, and its population numbers over one million. Canberra is the Capital of the Commonwealth, and its importance will increase with the years. Australia itself is young, but is destined to occupy an important place in this Eastern world, upholding the traditions and ideals of the British race. Canberra will grow as Australia grows, and it is our aim and fervent prayer that the Baptist Church will grow as Canberra grows.

A. J. WALDOCK.

The Bible as Literature.

A WRITER in a daily paper welcomed the edition of the Bible "designed to be read as literature," on the ground that in these days, when the reading of the Bible is so much less practised and encouraged in the homes of the people, children are growing up in ignorance of this great literary treasure of the English-speaking peoples.

Alongside his comment we may set the fact that twenty years ago the Professor of English Literature at the University of Cambridge was making a plea that no attachment to the Bible for its spiritual significance should stand in the way of its being a subject of study for the English tripos.

We are accustomed to study the Bible because of its importance for our religion. It is for us the Word of God, the rule of our faith, the fountain of our inspiration. It is one of the staple supports of our devotional life, one of the great avenues to knowledge of and personal relationship with God Himself. The primary significance of the Bible for us is its spiritual significance, but that is no reason why we should neglect the fact that the Bible is a great work of literature. In this respect it has a claim upon our attention in at least two directions. In the first place, a great part of the Bible is the literature of a people whose significance in world history is infinitely greater than either their numerical strength or their geographical importance. In the second place, the Bible in its English translation is a great classic of the English language, a book that has a unique place in the history of English literature. It has made its influence felt both directly by its effect in shaping the style of other writers and indirectly by the part it has played in moulding the thought and culture of the English mind. The significance of the Bible for the spiritual life is enhanced by the fact that the medium through which the greatest of all messages comes to us is in itself supremely great. In the Bible we are not only dealing with a unique message, we are receiving it expressed in surprisingly beautiful and moving language.

I.

The Bible is a library that enshrines a rich variety of literary forms. It presents us with history, such history as was then known and written. It is not history with the objective accuracy that we are accustomed to expect from a modern historian. The record of events as we have it is very often a compilation by the scissors and paste method, with extracts from legal documents, court and temple records, narrative accounts by writers of different schools, all strung together on an editorial thread.

At times it is fitted into the framework of a particular theory, as when the Book of Judges illustrates the recurring cycle of national sin, disaster, repentance, and deliverance by the strong hand of God through His chosen warrior. It is history often written out of proportion to the passage of time and to what we would consider the relative importance of events. It is history written as all history must in some measure be, selectively, and for the Jew the factor determining his selection was his insight into, and his desire to record, God's providential dealing with his nation. The Old Testament historian is concerned with more than events on the human plane. He gives an interpretation of these events as far as his mind can grasp that which God is doing through them.

There is again a rich vein of biographical material. Thos. Carlyle says that the history of what man has accomplished in this world is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked in it. Canon Streeter endorses that judgment when he describes the history of humanity as the roll-call of its famous men. Our earliest memories of the Bible are often centred in such peak figures in the unfolding purposes of God, the dramatic story of Joseph, the tales of the shepherd king, and the loveliness and wonder of the Biography of biographies. Later, we learn to set beside these, character studies which we snatch in fragments from other material, or miniatures of those who pass momentarily across the stage, like Paul's skilfully etched portrait of Demas.

We have the literature of Israel's law, the codified law of various stages in her history which so many of us are tempted to skip in our reading of the Bible, as though "passing through a dry and thirsty land where no water is." In contrast we have dramatic narrative and poetry ranging from great hymns of devotion to the sagas in which national history was handed on from generation to generation. There are sermons and speeches and those political-economic-social tracts which set down the volcanic utterances of the prophets as they spoke the word of the Lord for the situation that confronted them. There are echoes of the philosophic mind, though the Jew turned philosopher laboured under a double handicap; on the one hand because his mind was cast in a mould of practical things, and on the other because the ultimate unquestioned fact of God in his universe prevented his asking ultimate questions.

The New Testament gives us its own distinct contribution. The Gospels are a literary innovation, brief memoirs written with a purpose. Although there are parallels to them in Jewish and Greek literature, they are really, as Dr. Moffatt indicates, a new thing in literature, new in subject, and new essentially in form. The other substantial contribution is made by the

epistles. The letter as a literary form is an ancient device and is familiar to this day. It may be anything from a letter intended for private use, which afterwards was committed to "the dreadful perpetuity of print," to a letter ostensibly written for one person, but used as a vehicle to express in public form the mind or message of the writer. The New Testament letters fall somewhere between these extremes, varying from the more private letter to Philemon to the general address of the letter to the Romans, which is something more in the nature of a tract. Such, then, is the range of the literature enclosed within the covers of our Bible.

II.

The Old Testament is the literature of a people, the people of the Hebrew race. It does not exhaust that literature. It makes reference to books which are now lost (Joshua x. 13, II Kings x. 34, Numbers xxi. 41 ff), and there may be other writings of which we have no knowledge. But it adequately represents that literature because, as far as we can judge, it includes the major part of what was written. It gives us examples of the varying forms of literature the Hebrew produced. It reveals to us the highest and finest flowering of the literary art of his nation. It mirrors the Hebrew spirit. To be steeped in it is to understand the mind and spirit of the Hebrew race. It reveals the intensity of feeling of a people of oriental passion. It shows the sensitiveness they developed to their significance as a race, the growing flame of nationalism, and their attachment to all that was symbolic of it. With what beauty they have expressed the nobler side of their pride in the national and religious heritage they enjoyed:

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down;
Yea, we wept when we remembered Sion.
We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
For they that carried us away captive required of us a song;
And they that wasted us required of us mirth,
Saying, Sing us one of the songs of Sion.
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."
(Psalm cxxxvii. 1-6.)

The Old Testament is also significant as literature, because it represents one of the foundation literatures of our European civilisation. Along with the ancient classical literature, it has moulded and affected the mental climate of Europe and of our Anglo-Saxon thinking. Behind the Puritanism and the strength of moral sanctions that the Puritan spirit wrought into English character is the old root of moral discipline that grows out of the Hebrew religion and is mirrored in its literature. If there are times when the Greek strain in our make-up responds to the verve and vivacity symbolised by the thought of "Merrie England," there are times no less when the prophet gains a hearing and a response to his words about personal discipline and social righteousness that draws its strength from a spirit fed by people who heard the solemn injunction, "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy."

Like all great literature, the Bible reflects and mirrors human life, human sin, human nature, in its most universal aspects and characteristics. Nothing human is alien to it. All the great motives of life are found in its pages. All the great subjects of literature are there. Across its pages moves the pageantry of human types. Its heroes are men of flesh and blood, and not mere puppets. Their greatness and their goodness are touched with human frailty and even human shame. Life is portrayed in its joys and sorrows, its loves and hates, its hopes and fears. We see unrolled familiar facets of human experience, the life of home, the world, of business, of toil and markets, the affairs of State, the clash of nations. We are introduced to heroes and fellows of the baser sort, kings and counsellors and common folk. We see the throbbing life of the city and hear the quiet voice of nature in the country. The range of interest in this literature is infinite. It is as wide as life itself, and it keeps pace with all that is essential in the onward march of life and time.

III.

The Bible is a treasure house of stories. They repay study not only because they present "truth embodied in a tale," but because they reveal the skill with which this literary medium is employed by the sacred writers. Jesus Himself has given us some of the most perfect examples of the short story that the world knows.

The characteristic thing about this form of literature is that it seizes some brief moment of life, some complete sequence of action, and gives us an impressionistic picture of it. There are, of course, exceptions to this generalisation, stories that belong to the literature of emotion rather than of action, but in the

main the short story is built up around a situation, a plot, that presents a unified picture of some transcript from life.

The Hebrews were born story-tellers. Their language lends itself to graphic narrative. It responds with peculiar aptness to the demands of the folk tale, the colourful picture, the swift-moving scene, the dramatic event, or the steady sequence of happenings.

The stories of the Bible answer to the conditions that a good story must fulfil. We feel about them that simplicity and naturalness that come from clear thinking and well-disciplined use of language. They have the effectiveness that is secured by the economy, especially in adjectives, that marks the true artist. It is an economy that strengthens the story by engaging the imagination of the reader to supply what has been left out. How easily a story may be ruined by digressions into the unessential, so that by the time we come to the really important point of the narrative it is submerged in a mountainous wave of triviality and loses its power to excite us. Think how the story of the prodigal son would have been spoilt by a prolonged account of the kind of life he lived before the day when the wanderlust laid hold of him.

The story-tellers of the Bible had an eye for colour and pictorial clarity. We see Joseph as he moves from stage to stage in the unfolding of his story against the background of changing sights and scenes; the familiar encampment, the pasture grounds, the dank, muddy pit, the broad Nile across which he travels into the rich, unfamiliar land of Egypt, the slave market, the prison, the splendour of the court, the rich colours of his own official residence.

The Hebrew love of the concrete word and imagery helps us here. It gives us the vivid, swift, narrative of Mark, the earliest gospel. The scenes and characters of Jesus' parables are as real and alive for us as most of the events and living figures in the gospel story itself.

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We have become increasingly sensitive to the disservice done to us by the way in which the printed Bible is presented to us. This is especially true with regard to those sections of it that are in poetic form. The printing of the Bible has hidden from us the grandeur and the beauty of its poetry and the aptness with which, not infrequently, solid prose melts unexpectedly into poetic cadences.

Poetry is the oldest form of literature. Folk poetry exists in all races and is handed down by oral tradition before any form of literary activity takes place. Memory is the original book of a nation. In the case of a primitive people, all discourse that

is intended for publicity or for memorial purposes will be found clothed in poetic form, and will include such things as records of history in odes, wedding songs, lamentations for the dead, significant religious poems. These things survive for us in the Old Testament, as for instance in the song of Deborah, which records a memorable tribal victory (Judges v.), or in the "Song of the well" (Numbers xxi. 18), which gives us a glimpse of the ritual of dedication for such an occasion.

It is never easy to translate literary excellence from one language to another, and nowhere is this difficulty more felt than with poetry. To attempt to translate poetry into poetry and preserve the rhyme is to put an additional strain on translation. It is to our great gain that Hebrew poetry does not depend upon rhyme, and that the parallelism which is its fundamental feature can be preserved in translation. We can still read in our English version with understanding and appreciation the Hebrew poetic forms. They achieve their effect by a certain symmetry of thought and expression. The Psalms that move us deeply gain something of this rich impressiveness from the varying forms of this parallelism, with its underscoring of an idea, or its power to make it live in the light of some contrasting, or qualifying, or complementary phrase. We can find a new delight in many a familiar passage when we have learned to trace out the skilled architecture with which it has been built up.

Dr. Moulton has shown us how effective this basic principle of Hebrew poetry is, by the interesting device of re-writing a passage from Psalm cv. with the omission of the parallels.

> "He hath remembered his covenant for ever.
> The covenant which he made with Abraham
> And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute.
> Saying, unto them will I give the land of Canaan.
> When they were but few men in number
> And they went about from nation to nation.
> He suffered no man to do them wrong, saying,
> Touch not mine anointed ones."

Compared with the poetic form, this is tame and emasculated.

It is of great moment that Jesus Himself speaks as a poet. He not only looked out on the world with a poet's eyes and saw and expressed the truth He came to teach, with the insight and instinct of a poet; His aphorisms, so memorable, so easily transmitted by oral tradition before they were written down, are themselves examples of Hebrew poetry. He used the most sublime heights of language to express divinest truths, and in that knowledge we have an added key to the understanding of His teaching.

IV.

There is a manifest Providence in the timing of the translation of the most widely accepted version of our English Bible. The Elizabethan period in the history of literature represents a fine flowering of literary expression. The Renaissance and the Reformation had stirred the spirit of man, deepened the channels of his life, enriched his experience, liberated his greatest possibilities. It was a period that produced explorers, adventurers, writers, dramatists, scientific pioneers, inventors, in rich profusion. It was one of the great ages of our history. The Authorised Version was a product of the culmination of this age. Its English is the English of Shakespeare's day, a well-sharpened instrument, widely used. Actually, of course, much of the beauty of the Authorised Version was embodied in other versions on which it was based, with particular indebtedness to William Tyndale, who himself had a command of noble English.

The Hebrews had used words that were vivid, pictorial and swift. Their imagery dealt with the concrete. Our English version is in that noble tradition, free from any fondness for abstract words, and delivered from so many of them that have come into popular use since the time when it was produced. How different the Bible would have been had it substituted "the omnipotence of God" for such telling phraseology as—

> "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment;
> Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain;
> Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters;
> Who maketh the clouds his chariots;
> Who walketh upon the wings of the wind";

or had it been sprinkled with such cold abstractions as "scientific," "humanitarian," "analytical," or the jargon of our psychological vocabulary, instead of with the magnetic quality and stirring power of concrete words.

We may prefer for some purposes to use a modern translation. Just as the writer of a cookery book achieves his purpose by giving us exact information, simply and intelligibly conveyed, to enable us to produce adequate results, so the Scriptures, which are intended to make us wise unto salvation, must be understood; and neither literary grace nor poetic beauty compensates for the obscuring of the primary purpose. Nevertheless, it is a true instinct that turns continually to the enrichment of that "well of English undefiled," where precious truths are clothed in stately and time-honoured beauty of expression. No wonder Faber said of the Bible, "It lives on the ear like music that can never be forgotten."

No one can understand our English literature unless he is

aware of the influence of the Authorised Version of the Bible upon it. Like the mythical schoolboy who was shocked when he first read Hamlet to discover how full of quotations it was, anyone going to the Bible for the first time might be forgiven for raising his eyebrows in surprise at the number of familiar expressions, the amount of common currency of speech he would trace there.

The influence of the Authorised Version haunts our English speech and writing. Sir Arthur Quiller Couch says, "The Authorised Version sets a seal on our national style." From Bunyan to Thomas Hardy, from Milton to Browning, its impress can be traced in the literature that has survival value. Professor McNeile Dixon estimates that that influence can be traced in every English author for the past three hundred years.

But we have to reckon with something more extensive than the part the Bible has played in moulding our literary heritage. Its influence began long before people could read it. It was read to them, explained, interpreted to them. It became the staple food of much of their thought, as well as the pillar on which character was built. No book has been more known and read in the history of the nation. Even to-day, when we deplore its neglect, the number of Bibles published and circulated is immense. But in the days when books were few, the Bible provided the mental food of generation upon generation. It was the source of poetry and romance, biography and adventure, instruction and delight. It has been described as "The people's story book." Its message became the food for the imagination through the early Miracle Plays. To quote Professor McNeile Dixon again, "A book which has been read by millions where other books have been read only by hundreds or thousands of readers, a book which for generations was almost the only book possessed by innumerable households, which was read aloud in churches throughout the whole country week after week for centuries, necessarily sank deep into the national mind, saturated and coloured all its thoughts, wove itself into daily conversation, and shaped in every region of activity the country's history."

We have reason for great thanksgiving in our English Bible and for this place that it has in our heritage of national culture. The Bible has been translated into other languages and makes its impact on the mind of other nations, but in other countries it has often been an obscure book; or it has been the book of the Church, of the hierarchy, the sacred literature. Its place in our nation's life is unique because it is so essentially an English book. an English classic of the English people. It is to be hoped that the new stimulus given to its literary study may open fresh doors to its immortal message.

W. Taylor Bowie.

The Preaching of the Atonement.

DURING the past half-century there has arisen in Protestant circles what may be described as a "cross-less" Christianity, a type of Christianity which does not seem to centre consciously and willingly upon the Cross of Christ, and which refuses to sing, with any genuine feeling and conviction, such classic hymns as "In the Cross of Christ I glory," "When I survey the wondrous Cross," and "There is a fountain filled with blood." In the preaching of the Primitive Church there was one dominating noun—Christ; that preaching linked to the dominating noun one overmastering adjective—it spoke of Christ *crucified*. We recall such mighty affirmations as those of Paul: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." We remind ourselves of such pregnant sayings as those of Peter: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." "Who His own Self bare our sins in His own body *right up to* the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." Paul and Peter between them represent the major emphasis of the thinking and preaching of the Apostolic Church. Not that they always agreed; far from it. On one important occasion, and with reference to one important issue, Paul "withstood Peter to his face." But not on the question of Christ crucified. There was no conflict of conviction on this great matter. The two great Apostles are typical of the whole of the Primitive Church in regarding the Cross and its meaning as the very heart of the Gospel. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" was the cutting edge of their message, and they could not conceive of any form of Christianity that did not centre on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But how different it is to-day, save in certain circles which label themselves "Fundamentalist." There is a type of "evangelism to the modern mind" which is quite sure that a careful and appealing presentation of the so-called "Synoptic Jesus" is powerful enough to bring men to God. It anchors its faith quite sincerely to the life and character and teaching of Jesus; it finds its message of uplift in the "Christ of the Mount" and the "flaming Mystic of the Galilean hills" rather than in a soteriological interpretation of that crude and cruel event whereby He passed from this earthly scene. Let us, says the New Evangelism, set forth the mighty power of Christ as revealed in the most memorable incidents in His career, and in

His most memorable sayings—the healing of the paralysed man, the words spoken to the "woman of the city" in the house of Simon the Pharisee, above all the story of the prodigal who found his way back to the father's home, though he had never really been away from the father's heart—let scenes like these be presented warmly and sincerely, and they will never fail to bring sinful men and women face to face with God. On this view men can find God the Father independently of any and every theory of the Atonement and without reference even to the fact that Christ died on Calvary.

Of course, the most thorough-going and extreme manifestations of this tendency to regard the Cross as an irrelevance, even as an impertinence, are to be found outside specifically Christian circles. One of the most tender and beautiful of our modern poets, William Watson, has devoted a sonnet to this very theme, in which he urges that to-day it were more wise

> In His immortal greatness to forget
> The mortal agony and the bloody sweat,

and expresses his own deep conviction in the statement,

> To me His death is nought—His life is all.

Another modern writer, an American, quotes with approval this challenging verse from an unknown poet:

> I fight alone, and win or sink,
> I need no one to make me free;
> I want no Jesus Christ to think
> That He could ever die for me.

George Bernard Shaw has expressed the view with his usual forthrightness. "The central superstition of Christianity," he asserts, "is the salvation of the world by the gibbet." He does not like the superstition, and he will not accept the proffered way of salvation. He says quite emphatically that he does not glory in the Cross, that he considers the use of the Cross made by the Church as a deplorable and thoroughly objectionable proceeding, that had he been present in Jerusalem on the day of the crucifixion he would have done his utmost to have prevented such a stupid blunder, and that in his opinion "nothing has done more to hinder the spread of Christian doctrine than the substitution of a morbid interest in the sensational execution of Jesus for an intelligent comprehension of His views." I do not think that within the Church we could find this point of view so baldly and so vigorously stated. But the point of view is well expressed in present-day preaching and theology. Many of us have taken the Apostolic phrase, "Christ crucified," and have set the adjective at war with the noun. Christ, the supreme Fact of Christian history and experience! Yes, we agree. As Christians we know

that Christ is essential to our return to God, to our redemption from sin in this world and our "hope of glory" in the next. But "Christ *crucified*"! There's the rub. That's where we lose ourselves. We feel quite sure of the dominating noun. We are far from sure about the over-mastering adjective.

Yet one thing seems quite certain, viz. that in the book which is both the textbook of our faith and the charter of our commission the death of Christ is presented as the very heart of the Gospel. Both fact and meaning are there, both the plain print of history and interpretation in the light of experience. The New Testament writers did not make the distinction between fact and meaning to the extent of saying (as some modern preachers do): "Well, we can preach the fact of Christ's death without bothering to work out a theory of it." They knew that such a distinction cannot be made. They knew that a bare fact does not exist, that a meaningless fact is a sheer physical and psychological impossibility. They might not have been able to express this in philosophical terms. They were not at all familiar with the "implicative system" or "inferential whole" of the modern logician, who assures us that even so simple a judgement as "This is a flower "is not so simple as it looks, but implies a whole system of meaningful relations. But they felt that it was impossible to separate the fact of Christ's death from the meaning of it; and although they knew the categories of human thinking (whether derived from ancient sacrifices or from contemporary speculation) were inadequate to express what they themselves had found in the Cross, they were none the less convinced that some attempt ought to be made to find and convey the treasure of its immense significance in the earthenware vessels of human speech and language. Whether or not they were right in their attempts to explain the death of Christ in its relation to human need, whether or not there really was any relation between that death and man's spiritual necessities, is not the point here. The point is that in the New Testament the Cross is represented as being the heart of the Gospel, and that all the way through fact and theory are closely linked up as the essential message of God's redeeming love for the world.

The Gospel records, as we know, make much of the last week in the life of our Lord. The story of the events leading up to the crucifixion, and the crucifixion itself, occupies at least two-fifths of the evangelical material (and we need not exclude the Fourth Gospel in making that estimate). In fact the actual space given in the four Gospels to relating what happened to Jesus during those six momentous days from the cry of the multitude: "Hosanna to the Son of David," to the cry of the Crucified: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," is out

of all proportion both to the rest of the Gospel narrative and to the time the events occupied. Of course, it is quite natural that the tragedy which ended the life of the Master should have produced an ineffaceable impression on the minds of those who loved and reverenced Him; and that fact may partly account for the large amount of space devoted to the tragedy in the Gospels. But is that the only explanation? Is it the physical horror, rather than the spiritual value, of that death which led them to linger so long and painfully on the details of the passion ? Or, further, if the spiritual value which they attached to the crucifixion was the thing which drove them to give the death of their Master such prominence, were they mistaken in attaching their soteriological theories to the plain print of history? Or were they reflecting what they themselves had learnt of the mind of Christ Himself ?

There are some who are quite certain that in devoting so much space to the story of the crucifixion the Gospel writers were expressing merely their own opinions (or rather the opinions of the Apostle Paul, who somehow seems to have mentally dragooned and bludgeoned the rest of the disciples to accept his " strange " doctrines), and not the mind of Christ at all. They tell us that Jesus spoke very little about His own death, that the New Testament writers gave it in their preaching a prominence not warranted by Christ's own conception of His message to the world, and that even the large amount of space accorded in the evangelical records to the events of the Passion Week are a reflection of the " theologising " tendencies of the Evangelists rather than an expression of Christ's own thought on the matter. But that contention can be met by pointing out that if Christ was reticent about His own death (and remember He was reticent about other things as well), then it was not without good reasons. For one thing, as James Denney says, Christ came " not so much to preach the Gospel as that there might be a Gospel to preach." For another, the death of Christ in all its spiritual value and significance was one of those things the disciples were unable to bear until it had been accomplished and the Holy Spirit given to lead the disciples into the truth of Christ. But, we may further ask, was our Lord quite so reticent as some of the critics would have us believe ? Did He not endeavour to familiarise the minds of the disciples with the thought of Calvary as soon as it was practicable ? To ask these questions is to answer them, for if we are at all familiar with the Gospel narrative we shall be reminded of the fact that (to quote Denney again) " that which, according to the Gospels themselves, characterised the last months of our Lord's life was a deliberate and thrice repeated attempt to teach His disciples

something about His own death." And more, on the night in which He was betrayed, in the borrowed upper room, with His eleven chosen friends around Him, He instituted what we now call the "Lord's Supper." And—making all allowances for Pauline influences in the reports of the institution of the Supper—I think that we can see here a reflection of the thought of Christ with regard to His own death. Whether or not the Cross was present to the consciousness of Jesus when He set out on His public ministry is not clear from the Gospel records (though they who would say "yes" here are not without some foundation in the strange story of the Temptation), but no one who believes the New Testament to possess a sound historical basis can really dispute the fact that when it had presented itself to His mind it soon came to occupy the central and determining place in His thought. Unless the New Testament writers are guilty of having falsified, either deliberately or unwittingly, the story of Christ, we must believe that the Master came, before the end of His ministry, to make His death central to His message of the Good News of God. Both the Lord's Supper and the Lord's sayings are a revelation of the Lord's thought about His own death; and if that be so, then such great affirmations of the Primitive Church as "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins" and "He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" must express the most fundamental article of Christian conviction.

Of course, in suggesting that the Cross is the heart of the Gospel we do not mean that the New Testament is all about the crucifixion, that there is nothing else in the New Testament save the death of Christ and its interpretation. Neither do we mean that the work of Christ is more important than the Person of Christ. The work reveals the person, but the person gives value to the work. One critic said of James Denney's great book on the Atonement that Denney was concerned with the *death* of Christ rather than with the death of *Christ*—a criticism that may be justly brought against more than one treatment of this theme and may partly explain the modern revolt against some of the older theories of the Atonement. We must recognise the comprehensiveness of New Testament teaching, and we must avoid dissociating Christ's achievement upon Calvary from His character as expressed in His life and doctrine. "But"—and here I quote Dr. H. R. Mackintosh—"if we have read the Gospels, and noted the extraordinary proportion of space given to the Passion; if we have read the Epistles, on the outlook for their main drift and interest, we are obliged to say that apostolic Christianity without Atonement is as inept as the sentence without a verb. The verb is the *word,* telling what is done; and the

Cross of Jesus is the great universal word of God proclaiming what He does to reach and win the sinful." To Thomas Carlyle's despairing complaint against the Almighty that " He does nothing," to Goethe's daring assertion, " If I were God, the sin of the world would break my heart," we can reply by pointing to Christ crucified. We can say that the sin of the world broke the heart of God in Christ upon Calvary. We can affirm that the Almighty Father did do something for man, something that man could not do for himself, when in the Lord of all good life He was cruelly done to death. Thus the Cross of Jesus both reveals God and evaluates man. It discloses, as no other event in history, the lengths to which sacrificial love will go in order to redeem the sinful; and it shows too that man, though utterly unworthy of that love which " stooped to share our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear," is nevertheless worth the Divine outpouring in the Cross. We sometimes sing: " In Christ I feel the heart of God." Yes, the *heart* of God! But where? In Christ on the mount, when " He opened His mouth and taught " the disciple-multitude? In Christ, when He had climbed the slopes of Hermon and in the presence of His three favourite disciples was transfigured with heavenly glory? In Christ, in His controversies with the Sadducees, or as He hurls his bitter invectives against the Pharisees? All revelations of the Divine character, no doubt! But it is in Christ as He hangs from that bitter tree that we feel the great throbbing heart of the Almighty Father—throbbing with a love which loves to the uttermost and gives of its best because it gives of itself.

But what God did for us in Christ upon the Cross was not an isolated event in that time-series which we call human history. The Cross is not just something that happened once and for all and was done with. It is much more than a fact, a moment, even a crisis, in history; it is the revelation of an eternal principle. " You cannot," says William Adams Brown, " crowd all of God into a moment of time, though a moment of time may be sufficient to give you an insight into what God is always doing. After that moment has come, you will see Him where you had not known He was at work and discover divine meanings in things that happen to you every day. The crucifixion of Jesus was such a moment. It was a revelation of the heart of God." Is not that the suggestion of the New Testament description of Christ as a " Lamb slain from the foundation of the world "? The best illustration I know of this truth is to be found in Leslie Weatherhead's very popular book, *The Transforming Friendship*. He speaks of Calvary as the revelation of Love Everlasting, as the projection on to the plane of history of God's ageless sacrifice for His children. And he uses this very fine

illustration from his own experience. He was on a cruise in the Mediterranean, and one night the ship passed quite close to Stromboli, known as "the lighthouse of the Mediterranean," an island-volcano which rises sheer out of the sea. It was almost dark and suddenly there was a great burst of flame from the crater at the summit. Huge tongues of fire shot up, hundreds of feet high, lighting up the ocean for miles around. Tons of molten rock were thrown up into the air: red-hot boulders raced down the mountain-side; and gradually a stream of lava forced its way almost to the sea. For many hours as the ship slipped away towards the horizon, that red-hot stream of lava, like some awful gaping wound, gashed the darkness. What did it mean? It meant that for a few hours there had been revealed those great fires which had been burning in the heart of the mountain since the foundation of the world. The point of that apt illustration as applied to the Cross of Christ—the lengths of sacrifice to which His endless Friendship goes—is obvious.

But it is sharpened by the lines which Leslie Weatherhead quotes:

I sometimes think about the cross,
And shut my eyes and try to see
The cruel nails and crown of thorns,
And Jesus, crucified for me.
But even could I see Him die,
I could but see a little part
Of that great love, which like a fire,
Is *always* burning in His heart.

And he adds: "The friendship of Jesus, which the Cross could not end, speaks of the Friendship of the Father, which began with the dawn of human consciousness in the world, and which will never end. . . . Here is love revealed to our wondering eyes which, long before Christ came, was loving and suffering for men in a manner which only Christ could reveal, and which will go on loving and suffering until the last soul is voluntarily brought into harmony with Himself in the final perfection of the ultimate heaven."

But let us shift our ground a little, and ask the question: What are the elements in the death of Christ which justify us in calling Him our Saviour? What are the factors in the Cross which gave it value for God and gives it saving efficacy for man? It is to answer this important question for theology that the various theories of the Atonement have been propounded in the history of Christian thought. We may remind ourselves of the most important of these theories in order to realise afresh the difficulty of the problem of the Atonement and the earnestness with which the Church has grappled with it. For ten centuries the Ransom Theory had held the field of Christian thought, in

which the death of Christ was regarded as a ransom paid to the devil for the release of the elect. This view was given its quietus by Anselm's epoch-making little book, *Cur Deus Homo,* whose "Commercial Theory" (as it is called) regarded Christ's death as an infinite satisfaction made to God by Christ for the infinite wrong done to God by man's sin. At the Reformation Anselm's "Superfluous Merit" theory (to give it its other name) was modified by the introduction of analogies derived from criminal law. The Penal Satisfaction theory of the Reformers maintained that the satisfaction rendered to God by Christ in His death consisted in the fact that Christ endured the punishment which, in the ordinary course of events, must have fallen upon the "hell-deserving sinner." Calvin, for example, does not hesitate to say that on the Cross Christ endured the very torments of the damned, and interprets the "Descent into Hades" as a literal suffering of the pains of hell. The next great attempt to explain the Death of Christ as our Saviour was made by the famous Dutch jurist, Grotius, in his Governmental theory. Grotius rejected altogether the ideas of legal substitution and mathematical equivalence and held that Christ was not actually punished for the sins of men, but that He endured suffering which God—as the vindicator of the moral order of the universe—could accept as a substitute for punishment. Through the death of Christ God remained just, while at the same time He became the justifier of the unjust. Finally we have the various Moral Influence theories which stress the fact that the death of Christ was the revelation of the heart of God designed to bring sinful men back to their Heavenly Father and to win their love for Himself. For example, Dr. McLeod Campbell held that an *adequate* repentance would be sufficient satisfaction for sin, and maintained that Christ in His death offered to God, on behalf of man, this adequate repentance and so fulfilled the conditions of forgiveness. Again, Horace Bushnell taught that the death of Christ was an expression of the *vicarious nature of love,* which identifies itself with its object, even to the bearing of the object's sins, and so proves the strongest influence leading men to repentance. Probably Protestant theology to-day is split between the Penal Satisfaction theory on the one hand and some form of Moral Influence theory on the other. There is considerable vitality in the older view, a vitality which springs from the important element of truth which I feel the theory contains; but it cannot be denied that the later theory is more in line with the modern psychological approach to the problem of human sin and salvation. Sin estranges men from God and the death of Christ, by helping men to realise what is their true attitude to God, induces them to turn aside from the pride and selfishness

which separates them from their Heavenly Father. In the Cross of Jesus the moral qualities of faith and love are revealed at their highest, and it is these qualities which give the death of Christ its value for God and its saving efficacy for men; but this saving efficacy is possible only because in Christ we have the revelation in human form of that redemptive love which has been in God from the beginning.

What can we say to these—at points—conflicting theories? Two things. One is that not one of them contains the whole truth, and every one of them conveys some of the truth about the saving efficacy of the death of Christ. The other thing is that there is an important truth which is common to all these theories of the Atonement. It is this. *Christ went freely to the Cross.* When we have noted the historical circumstances which attended His end and have endeavoured to assess them, we have not reached the heart of the matter unless we also mark the faith and love, the devotion and loyalty, which characterised every step of the way until He reached Golgotha's crown. It was the attitude of mind which Jesus exhibited, the moral quality of a perfect and whole-hearted obedience, that makes the Cross of Christ acceptable in the eyes of God. He went to His death willingly, in order that men should live; and hence He fulfilled the divine ideal of sacrifice. Dr. P. T. Forsyth, in his thought-provoking volume *The Cruciality of the Cross,* discusses the old phrase, "the blood of Christ" and endeavours to express the truth it contains in such ethicised terms as will appeal to the modern mind. He urges that it would not have mattered one whit if no single drop of Christ's blood had been shed, that it would have made no real difference if Christ had come to His end by some other form of execution than that of crucifixion. There would have been no change of essential truth—only of the imagery by means of which we set forth the truth. But he goes on to say, "it would have mattered a whole world if Jesus had met his death by disease or accident. Everything turns, not on His life having been taken from Him, but on its having been laid down. Everything, for His purpose, turns on the will to die." It was His faith in God, His love for man, and His utter devotion to His cause, which led Him to go freely to His death. It is this free surrender of His life that gives the Cross value for God and saving efficacy for man; and it is this recognition of this truth that constitutes the common element underlying all the various theories of the Atonement.

Quite a number of pertinent questions arise at this point. For one thing, the insistence upon the fact that Christ went freely to the Cross suggests the enquiry, Did He commit suicide? The questions sounds irreverent to us, but it has been asked and

answered with a decided affirmative by some. Again, it may be asked, Was Jesus done to death because His pacifism would not allow Him to adopt a policy of self-defence? But to answer this question in the affirmative is to raise other problems not easily solved; for example, Why did He not seek safety in flight? Or was it that He could not escape? If that is so, then it must follow that He died because He could not help it? Or if we suppose that He might have escaped but would not, does it follow that His followers must also refuse to escape death by flight? Again, it may be asked, Was the death of Christ merely that of a martyr? If we say "yes" to this does it not make Christ's death less than that of a martyr? We have only to compare Socrates in the prison cell in Athens drinking the cup of poison without a tremor, greeting the unseen with a cheer, and dying with a jest upon his lips, with Jesus in Gethsemane, with His soul exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, and praying that the cup might pass from Him—we have only to make this comparison to see that if Christ died a martyr's death and nothing more, then He was (and I say it quite reverently) a pretty poor specimen of a martyr. Yet further, we might ask, How does the death of Christ prove the love of God? How does the death of one person (Christ) prove the love of a third person (God)? Or does it mean that we cannot really speak of a third person but rather must identify Christ and God so that what Christ does for us is really what God is doing for us in and through Him? And yet once more, we may ask, How can the death of Christ prove God's love to us unless men were in some spiritual danger from which only such an event as the Cross could save them? In other words, do such phrases as "the wrath of God" and "the terror of the Lord" express anything more than a warped or inadequate view of the Deity?

All these questions have a bearing upon the problem of the Atonement from the point of view of its preachableness, but I cannot stop to deal with them here. Two points only will I deal with briefly in closing. The first is this: The conviction that Christ in some way died for, or on behalf of, men dignifies and enhances the value of human personality. We see that expressed as an ethical first principle in the New Testament. "Destroy not him with thy meat, *for whom Christ died,*" exclaims the great Apostle, and it is the fact that Christ died for men that lifts them up out of the miry clay, sets their feet upon a rock, establishes their goings, and puts a new song in their mouth. Dr. T. R. Glover has given several instances of the way in which the sacrifice of Christ has conferred a new dignity on men. In the fifth century there was a bishop in North Africa who remonstrated with a governor for ill-treating the natives. He said:

"You are treating men as if they were cheap, but man is a thing of price, for Christ died for him." There is the case of the scholar Muretus in the sixteenth century, who was journeying on foot through Italy. He became ill and was carried to a hospital in a strange town. As he was laid on the operating table he heard one of the doctors say to another in Latin, "Try your experiment on this cheap life"; and he himself called out, also in Latin: "Do you call a life cheap for which Christ did not disdain to die?" But probably the best expression of this is to be found in that masterpiece of early English literature, *The Vision of Piers Ploughman,* by William Langland. Langland has been referring to Calvary, and then says:

> Blood-brothers did we all become there
> And gentlemen each one.

Thus the Cross not only binds us to God, it binds us also to one another. It is because Christ died that we have the assurance that man is "better than a sheep" and that his life is not simply that of the gnat that dies in the summer's sun.

The second point is this. A Jew and a Christian were once arguing about the Virgin Birth, and at last the Jew flung down this challenge: "If a woman were to tell you the story which Mary is supposed to have told, would you believe her?" "Yes," replied the Christian, "*if her Son were Jesus.*" He meant that so incredible a happening as the Virgin Birth became more easily believable when considered in relation to the uniqueness of the person who is alleged to have come into the world in that strange and unusual way. We may apply the same principle in speaking of the death of Christ. We must not separate the Cross from the Crucified, we must not separate the death of Christ from the Person who died. It is not merely the circumstances of His death that makes it different from every other death; it is the fact that it was He who died. In a sense, it is not the Cross that saves, it is the Christ of the Cross who is the Saviour of the world. We cannot understand that Cross, we cannot understand His own attitude towards it and His recognition of its necessity, unless we are prepared to believe that Christ was a unique Person with a unique mission. As W. E. Orchard puts it, "the full explanation of Christ's acceptance of the Cross can only be found in the complete doctrine of His Person as human and divine, and in His death as being the only means of redeeming the world." The Early Church proclaimed the good news of Christ crucified. We live in a different age. Yet men's fundamental needs are just the same in the twentieth century as in the first, however much they may be camouflaged. And we can preach—yea, not merely can, but must preach—the same message Christ *crucified, Christ* crucified.

JOHN PITTS.

The Voice of God.

THE term "voice of God" has become a familiar metaphor for the vehicle of revelation, whatever be the contents of the revelation, whether it concerns the nature and character of God or His will and purpose. The media of revelation are manifold, and are conditioned by race and geographical situation as well as by religious tradition and the mental and moral make-up of the individual, and they may all be included in the term "voice of God." It is possible, too, to speak of the voice of the Risen Christ, as Francis Thompson does in "The Hound of Heaven." We do not, however, expect that voice to be audible, and are naturally suspicious of those who claim to hear it outwardly. Our sympathies would rather be with the prayer attributed to St. Ambrose: "Let Thy good Spirit enter my heart and there be heard without utterance, and without the sound of words speak all truth." When we speak of the voice of God we know, if we stop to reflect, that we are using a metaphor, and that the voice is audible only with the inner sense.

But men have not always interpreted their religious experience in this indirect way. Metaphorical usage has grown out of what was accepted as actual experience, however remote such experience may seem from our own. We bring to our experience the results of centuries of reflection and analysis of the nature of physical and mental life. The ancient Hebrew was unable to penetrate into the complexities of cause and effect as we do, and would jump from the immediate perception to its ultimate or primary cause. Hence a sound that could not readily be ascribed to a visible cause would be thought to come direct from God (or some other supernatural first cause), and to be the sound of His activity and movement, or the sound of His speaking. Were not men made in God's image, and might they not expect that His ways would resemble theirs, and His speech resemble their speech? It was not *as though* they heard God speak, it was for them His voice itself that they heard in a very real way. That is not to say that whenever He spoke they would naturally hear Him; they would not be for ever in His presence, though it might happen that they would find themselves unexpectedly listening to God and then be overawed by the sense of fear and danger (Dt. iv. 33), or of high privilege (Is. vi.). The contrast between the ancient and the modern is expressed in these lines:

> Of old our fathers heard thee when the roll
> Of midnight thunder crashed across the sky;
> I hear thee in the silence of the soul—

Its very stillness is the majesty
Of thy mysterious voice, that moves me more
Than wrath of tempest as it rushes by,
Or booming thunder, or the surging roar
Of seas that storm a never-trodden shore.
(E. G. A. Holmes.)

In the Old Testament we meet with both the direct and the metaphorical conception of the voice of God.

I. Hebrew has but one word for both *sound* and *voice* (Qol), and we are not always quite certain whether voice or sound is meant. Sometimes the approach of God to man is audible; they hear the sound of His coming. "And they heard the voice (R.V. mg. sound) of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of (the Hebrew may simply mean "from") the Lord God . . ." "And it shall be when thou hearest the sound (qol) of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then is the Lord gone out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines" (II Sam. v. 24). It is the sound of God's approach that is heard when the wind rustles the tree tops. The wind was recognised to be a vehicle of God's approach:

And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly:
Yea, He flew swiftly upon the wings of the wind.
Ps. xviii. 10.

In the same psalm His advent for the discomfiture of Israel's foes is described in terms of the thunderstorm:

Yahweh also thundered in the heavens,
And the Most High uttered His voice:
Hailstones and coals of fire.
And He sent out His arrows and scattered them;
Yea, lightnings manifold, and discomfited them. 13, 14.

If He came thus, in earlier times, to deliver His people, was it not to be expected that He would come again in like manner if need arose? "She shall be visited of Yahweh of Hosts with thunder (ra'am), and with earthquake, and great noise (qol), with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel . . . shall be as a dream, a vision of the night" (Is. xxix. 6, 7). (cf. xxx. 30, 31: Hab. iii. 16.)

Here is something more than the mere sound of His approach, it is a sound that is known, the sound of thunder; but what else is thunder but the voice of God? It is a mighty and a powerful voice.

Hearken unto the rumbling of his voice,
And to the muttering that goeth out of his mouth.
He letteth it go under the whole heaven,
And his light(ning) to the ends of the earth.
After it a voice roareth;
He thundereth with his majestic voice;
And he delayeth not his lightnings,
From his mouth his voice is heard. . . . Job xxxvii. 1-4.
(Gray's translation.)

The twenty-ninth psalm will come to mind in this connection, the psalm in which the "recurrent phrase, Qol Yahweh, runs through the verses like clap after clap of thunder. . . . Before this tremendous manifestation of the divine power, the sea, the mountains, the desert—all those things which . . . men cannot subdue—are forced to tremble. Nothing in the world can resist the Lord in His majesty" (Welch, *The Psalter*, p. 16).

Sound and activity are here closely associated. That was always so. If God's voice was heard, then He was at work in the world, though He might also be at work and not be heard by mortal men. For the Israelites thought, word, and action were parts of a single whole, and not successive processes taking place more or less independently of each other; they were activities of the soul, which was a dynamic unit. Thought was incomplete until it came to fruition in utterance, which in turn carried in it the germs of its fulfilment (cf. the power of spoken blessings and curses: cf. also Is. lv. 10, 11). The God whose voice they heard was the "living God," the Creator, the God of Sinai, and the uttering of His voice was neither meaningless nor arbitrary, but had purpose, whether creative, redemptive, or judicial.

(i.) God's voice was the instrument of creative activity. This need not seem so strange to us when we remember that the Israelite could not conceive of thought which was not essentially articulate (the Hebrew for "to think" is "to say in one's heart," but thoughts that were not uttered and acted on would be "vain" ones), or of words and speech which did not involve action or effect. The story of creation in Gen. i. tells how God gave commands which were immediately fulfilled. The same thought comes in Psalm xxxiii.:

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made;
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

The voice was but the word made audible, hence we also read of the creative power of God's voice (thunder):

Who laid the foundations of the earth,
That it should not be moved for ever.
Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a vesture;
The waters stood above the mountains.
At thy rebuke they fled;
At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. Ps. civ. 5-7.

"He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding hath he stretched out the heavens: when he uttereth his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain . . ." Jer. x. 12, 13.

(ii.) God's activity was not only creative, it was redemptive, and a very real part of redemptive activity is revelation. Now the signal act, both of redemption and of revelation, which Yahweh performed for Israel, culminated in the vision and audition on Mount Sinai. There was His dwelling, and there He had already made Himself known to Moses from the burning bush by calling to him, that is, by uttering His voice. The people had now been brought there by Moses, and they became aware of God's presence there. Moses himself ascended the Mount, but the people stayed below, hearing the sounds which they could not understand till Moses came down to interpret. "And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. And when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered by a voice." It was a complex experience, physical and spiritual elements being inextricably woven together, so that it is no longer possible to say how much each contributed to the whole experience. That power of God which had wrought deliverance from the house of bondage was now *seen and heard* by the people through the medium of the volcano or the thunderstorm, whichever it was which took place then. That being so, the storm became a very natural concrete expression of God's majesty. It was a vivid experience, and it lived on in the memory and in the literature of the nation:

"And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire into the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form; only ye heard a voice." Dt. iv. 11, 12. cf, vv. 33, 36.

"Ye saw no form." God's majesty was too brilliant to be seen by mortal eyes, unless the privilege was granted by Him, as it was, we are told, to Moses (Ex. xxxiii.), and to the elders

"from afar" (Ex. xxiv.). To Isaiah He appeared in vision, and the prophet was filled with alarm that such a man as he should *see* the King, the Lord of Hosts. They did not think of God as formless, He had a form which had features similar to that of men, but it was as different from theirs as spirit is different from flesh. They were not, however, so greatly concerned with what God looked like as with how He acted towards them and on their behalf. His activity they knew, they could see it, and they could hear God, as it were, at work, but they could not see Him, and therefore, though they were surrounded by people who made images of their gods, they developed an imageless religion.

There is an interesting poetic echo of the deliverance from Egypt and of God's activity in it, in Psalm lxxvii., showing Yahweh as a warrior taking the field against His foes:

> The waters saw thee, O God;
> The waters saw thee, they were afraid:
> The depths also trembled,
> The clouds poured out water;
> The skies sent out a sound (qol):
> Thine arrows also went abroad.
> The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind;
> The lightnings lightened the world:
> The earth trembled and shook.
> Thy way was in the sea,
> And thy paths in great waters,
> And thy footsteps were not known. (16-19.)

(iii.) Another reason why God's voice should be heard is that God was supreme judge of His people, and when cases were referred to Him He would not simply pronounce judgment, but in giving utterance to it would begin the process of events which would re-establish the "righteous" man, or would lead to the ensnaring of the "wicked" man in the pit he himself had dug. This being the sincere belief of the worshipper, there is nothing surprising in the claim that God's voice, or His utterances in pronouncing sentence and in carrying it out, were heard by men (cf. Ps. l., and for the idea of God as Judge Ps. vii., and elsewhere). The Book of Amos opens (v. 2) with:

> The Lord shall roar from Zion,
> And utter his voice from Jerusalem:
> And the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn,
> And the top of Carmel shall wither,

which depicts, probably figuratively, a thunderstorm sweeping over the land bringing to effect the judgment of Yahweh (cf. also Jer. xxv. 30; Joel ii. 11; iii. 16).

II. It was mentioned at the outset that present metaphorical and figurative use is a development of early actual experience, but it is almost impossible to say where the one ends and the other begins; to say, in other words, how soon speech became consciously symbolical and sacramental. It was the natural accompaniment of the growth of religion in Israel from a stage of simple, almost materialistic, anthropomorphism to the relatively high degree of spirituality it had attained by post-exilic times. In spite of the development in the linguistic use from the real and actual to the metaphor, two features of the earlier stages have survived; first, that the thunder (and even the wind to a less degree) may be closely associated with the voice of God, and secondly, the reality of God's speech to men, even through indirect means.

The thunderstorm may seem to the more spiritually-minded man to be but the outskirts of the ways of God, but it remains at least as impressive as ever in its power and majesty, and makes a fitting symbol of these things even when consciously used as such. We find it, almost in disguise, in Ezekiel's vision: "And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the noise of a tumult, like the noise of an host" (i. 24. cf. x. 5; xliii. 2). The psalmist, singing the praise of God as King, speaks of Him coming to take His seat on the throne:

> To Him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens, which are of old,
> Lo, He uttereth His voice, a mighty voice.—lxviii. 32.

Whatever words they used to describe their experience, and often words were inadequate, the experience was a real one, they *did hear* God. One could not always be sure how He would speak. This uncertainty seems to lie behind the story of Elijah on Mount Horeb, where we find a dramatic rehearsal of all the time-honoured ways of God's approach to man, and then when all was quiet again, and the prophet was, as it were, brought to the "edge of dynamic silence," God was there speaking to him. He might be heard anyhere, in the sanctuary (Num. vii. 89), or in one's own room:

> Now a thing was secretly brought to me,
> And mine ear received a whisper thereof.
> In thoughts from the visions of the night,
> When deep sleep falleth on men,
> Fear came upon me and trembling,
> Which made all my bones to shake.
> Then a spirit passed before my face;

The hair of my flesh stood up.
It stood still, but I could not discern the
appearance thereof;
A form was before mine eyes:
I heard stillness and a voice. Job iv. 12-16.

With all this, we have to remember that when men heard God's voice it was not a case of the wish being father to the thought, neither was it subsidiary or incidental to their religious experience; it was something that concerned the very heart of life, there was something dynamic and creative in it, it was the voice of the living God that they heard. It meant that God was in the world, at work there, ever creating, or renewing, or redeeming men, and therein revealing His nature and His judgment on the world. It is in the light of this that we must understand the voice from heaven in John xii. 28-30: "Father, glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven saying, I have glorified it and will glorify it. The multitude that stood by and heard it said that it thundered: others said: an Angel hath spoken to him. Jesus answered and said; this voice hath not come for my sake but for your sakes."

L. H. Brockington.

London Strict Baptist Association, 1846-1853.

IN his *Baptists of London,* Dr. Whitley humorously remarks that "in 1851 there was the Great Exhibition of London Baptists in three groups of Particulars, two groups of Generals, and most outside every group. It seemed to some a hopeless situation." Hopeless it was, for, even had the Churches been ready for a forward movement, this disintegration would have effectively prevented the carrying out of any scheme inspired by a big vision. Of the five Associations thus pilloried by Dr. Whitley one survives, the Berks and West London Association, founded 1825, now the Berks Baptist Association. Little is known concerning the others, and practically nothing has been written. The minute book of one of the Particulars has recently been presented to the Baptist Historical Society, and the modest story of the *London Association of Strict Baptist Ministers and Churches,* which survived from 1846 to 1853, can now be told.

The formation of the Association was proposed at a meeting of several ministers and one layman, held at Joseph Rothery's house, 71, Aldermanbury, on Friday, April 3rd, 1846, at half-past-three precisely. The layman, James Oliver, a deacon of Trinity Street, Borough, issued the circular calling the meeting "to consider the propriety of adopting immediate measures for the better organisation of the Strict Baptist Churches in London," which at that time had no organisation. The ministers who attended were William Williams of Grafton Street; Philip Dickerson of Little Alie Street; Joseph Rothery of Buttesland Street, Hoxton; G. H. Orchard of Southwood Lane, Highgate; Hugh Killen of Cumberland Street, Shoreditch; William Ward of Enon, Stratford; James Woodard of Ilford; George Wyard of Soho Chapel, Oxford Street; Charles Box of Enon, Woolwich; Christopher Woollacott of Little Wild Street; E. R. Hammond of Great Smith Street, Westminster; and William Norton, the Editor of the Baptist Tract Society publications. Five other ministers were invited: William Blackwell Bowes of Blandford Street; Daniel Curtis of Homerton Row; Robert William Overbury of Eagle Street; John Peacock of Spencer Place; and John Cox of Shacklewell; but they and their churches held aloof.

After a long explanatory address by the layman, and words of approval by all the ministers, it was unanimously resolved to recommend the following plan to the Churches:

That it is desirable to form an Association of Strict Baptist Ministers and Churches in and about London.

I. That Ministers and Churches in and about London, holding the following sentiments, be eligible, on application, for admission to the Association:—

1. Three equal persons in the Godhead.
2. Eternal and personal election unto salvation.
3. The fall of all mankind in Adam; their guilt and condemnation; together with their entire and universal depravity, by which they are utterly alienated from God, and are unable, in and of themselves, to turn to Him.
4. Particular Redemption.
5. Justification by grace, through faith, by the imputed righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.
6. Regeneration and sanctification by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the truth.
7. The absolute necessity of a holy life, as the fruit of faith and the evidence of regeneration.
8. The final perseverance of the saints.
9. The resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.
10. The everlasting punishment of the wicked, and the everlasting happiness of the righteous.
11. The duty of preaching the gospel to every creature.
12. The necessity of immersion on a profession of faith, in order to church fellowship, and admission to the Lord's table.

And that any Minister or Church departing from these sentiments be no longer considered as connected with this Association.

II. That the Association shall specially seek to extend the Redeemer's kingdom by opening new places of worship, and assisting infant causes, either by providing the services of preaching brethren and missionaries, or by granting pecuniary aid.

III. That each church appoint annually any two brethren, whose views and practice harmonise with those of the Association, to form, with the ministers, a committee for conducting its affairs.

IV. That the Association hold a meeting quarterly or oftener, at the places of worship of the several Churches so associated, in succession; tea at five; a familiar discussion

at six, among the brethren, on a subject or text proposed by the brother presiding; and a public service at seven o'clock, when a lecture shall be delivered by one of the associated ministers. The committee to meet on these occasions at three, for business.

V. That there be an annual meeting in October, for reading letters from the churches in association, reporting the progress of the work of God during the year, and for mutual exhortation and encouragement.

VI. That each church in association be expected to make an annual contribution, for the objects contemplated and to defray necessary expenses.

VII. That the committee be empowered to make bye laws for their own government, but that no alteration of the above rules be made without the concurrence of a majority of the churches in association.

At the next meeting, held at Cumberland Street Chapel on 17th April, 1846, four churches, Trinity Street, Little Alie Street, Grafton Street, and Stratford, and eleven ministers, Dickerson, Killen, Williams, Woollacott, Wyard, Orchard, Ward, Hammond, Rothery, Box and Benjamin Lewis of Trinity Street, who had "communicated their approbation of and adhesion to the proposed plan, were formed into the new Association." A sub-committee of four was appointed to draw up by-laws, and, a month later, at Little Wild Street, they produced an elaborate set of fifteen. The most interesting of these by-laws provided that a treasurer and two secretaries (one to be a minister) should be appointed annually; that the public meetings should be held monthly; that care should be taken that no minister or place should receive a second appointment until all in association had had their turn; and (evidently fearing the staying powers of some of their oratorical brethren) that those who took part in the after-tea discussion should be limited to ten minutes each, and that the evening lecture timed for seven o'clock should "close as nearly as possible by a quarter-to-nine." At this meeting, William Norton and two churches, Great Smith Street, Westminster, and Little Wild Street, joined the Association.

William Stiles was elected treasurer, and Benjamin Lewis and John Christopher Woollacott joint-secretaries. Stiles and Woollacott were messengers from Little Wild Street. The secretaries remained in office throughout; but, for various reasons, which did not include the weight of the financial responsibility, for while the annual income rarely exceeded £20 there was always a balance in hand, the treasurers changed frequently. Stiles, being unable to attend the meetings, resigned in December,

1846, when he was succeeded by Kevan, a messenger from Cumberland Street. This church had joined in the preceding October, but two years later it withdrew, and Kevan's membership of the Association therefore ceased. James Oliver was appointed in his stead, and held office for twelve months, when he was succeeded by William Bowser,[1] a messenger from Stratford, who managed to survive to the end.

The first public meeting was held at Little Wild Street on 16th June, 1846. The presence of William Chappell, Secretary of the Kent and Sussex New Association of Baptist Churches, gave pleasure, for he brought a letter stating that his Association felt "gratified in hearing of, and do most cordially and unanimously congratulate you on, the formation of an Association founded on the great doctrines of Sovereign and Distinguishing Grace with Strict or Primitive Communion, and do hereby express our united approval of your endeavours for the maintainance and dissemination of the above principles." About sixty took tea together, and at the evening public meeting, Wyard delivered an address on the *Advantages of Union in promoting the cause of Christ,* in which, we are told, "he took occasion to defend the formation and explain the objects of this new association." The Secretary completed the minutes of the day's proceedings by saying that "the attendance was highly encouraging, and the spirit pervading the whole assembly, apparently,

> Resembling that above
> Where streams of endless pleasures flow
> And every heart is love."

On 18th August, 1846, it was resolved that an annual circular letter be issued, and that Lewis should prepare the first on "The Scriptural Constitution of the Christian Church." Two months later, on 20th October, 1846, he read a draft to the committee, "after which he retired, that the meeting unfettered by his presence might express their views thereon." It was resolved "to omit those passages that were open to controversy among ourselves," and, on grounds of expense, to shorten it. The statistics of the seven churches then in fellowship revealed a total membership of 961, with 85 Sunday School teachers and 819 scholars.

The Association made little progress. Romney Street was elected in December, 1847, Phillips Street, Kingsland Road, in April, 1848, and Bridgefield, Wandsworth, in October, 1850, but the majority of the Churches remained outside. Five other

[1] Of Baptist Building Fund fame. For further details see *A Popular History of the Baptist Building Fund.*

ministers joined at various times: Henry John Betts of Romney Street and later of Trinity Street, Thomas Pepper of Kingsland Road, William Ball of Wandsworth, William Harding Bonner of Unicorn Yard (father of the Rev. Carey Bonner), and James Henry Blake, assistant at Trinity Street.

Until the close of 1852, meetings were held bi-monthly. Their appeal varied considerably. High-water mark in attendance was reached at the annual meetings at Little Alie Street in October, 1848, when 136 were present at the tea between the afternoon and evening engagements. Usually the attendance was less than half this number, and it was found difficult to maintain the early interest. Moreover, as we shall see, theological suspicions arose. The complete list of the meetings follows, and a comparison of the subjects of the sermons with, say, the last volume of the *Christian World Pulpit* would reveal how far the general preaching of to-day is removed from that of these Strict Baptists.

DATE.	PLACE.	PREACHER.	SUBJECT.
1846			
June 16	Wild Street	G. Wyard	Advantages of Union in promoting cause of Christ.
Aug. 18	Trinity Street	P. Dickerson	Doctrine of Justification.
Oct. 20	Grafton Street	W. Norton & J. Rothery	First General Meeting—Lewis presided.
Dec. 15	Cumberland Street	C. Woollacott	The Love of God.
1847			
Feb. 16	Alie Street	H. Killen	Adoption.
April 20	Trinity Street	C. Box	Sanctification.
June 15	Stratford	B. Lewis	Doctrine of the Resurrection as set forth in the Ordinance of Baptism.
Aug. 17	Wild Street	J. Rothery	Ministry of the Spirit.
Oct. 19	Cumberland Street	C. Woollacott & G. Wyard	Second General Meeting—Dickerson presided.
Dec. 20	Alie Street	W. Norton	The Manifestation of the Spirit's Presence.
1848			
Feb. 15	Trinity Street	E. R. Hammond	Final Perseverance of the Saints.
April 18	Romney Street	W. Ward	Discipline in the Churches.
June 20	Phillips Street, Kingsland Road	H. J. Betts	Distinction and harmony between the work of the Spirit and the work of Christ.
Aug. 15	Stratford	T. Pepper	Brotherly love an evidence of Christian character.
Oct. 17	Little Alie Street	J. Rothery & H. J. Betts	Third General Meeting—Dickerson presided.

DATE.	PLACE.	PREACHER.	SUBJECT.
1848			
Dec. 19	Little Wild Street	J. Woodard	The Character of Apostolic Preaching.
1849			
Feb. 20	Trinity Street	W. H. Bonner	Doctrine of Christian Duty.
April 17	Phillips Street	W. Ball	Divine Sovereignty, as displayed in Salvation.
June 19	Romney Street	B. Lewis	The Presence of the Spirit, the life of the Churches.
Aug. 21	Stratford	P. Dickerson	Communion with God, the secret of Soul and church prosperity.
Oct. 16	Trinity Street	P. Dickerson & W. H. Bonner	Fourth General Meeting —C. Woollacott presided.
1850			
Jan. 15	Wild Street	H. J. Betts	The Suretyship of Christ.
Feb. 19	Alie Street	C. Woollacott	Outpouring of the Spirit.
April 16	Phillips Street	W. Ward	The Prophetic Character of Christ.
June 18	Trinity Street	J. Rothery	The Intercession of Christ.
Aug. 20	Romney Street	W. Ball	Doctrine of Election.
Oct. 15	Romney Street	T. Pepper and H. J. Betts	Fifth General Meeting— Lewis presided.
Dec. 17	Wild Street	P. Dickerson	Apostolical Succession.
1851			
Feb. 18	Alie Street	W. H. Bonner	Authority of Scriptures.
April 15	Phillips Street	B. Lewis	Termination of Sacrifices in Christ's one offering.
June 17	Wandsworth	T. Pepper	Priestly Assumptions— contrary to the Christian system.
Aug. 19	Trinity Street	W. H. Bonner	The Kingly Character of Christ.
Oct. 21	Wild Street	J. Oliver & W. Ball	Sixth General Meeting— Betts presided.
Dec. 16	Romney Street	H. J. Blake	The Faith of God's Elect.
1852			
Feb. 17	Alie Street	C. Woollacott	Zion's Converts.
April 20	Stratford	P. Dickerson	The Signs which precede the Latter day.
June 15	Wandsworth	W. Ward	Distinction and harmony of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations.
Aug. 24	Trinity Street	W. Ball	Particular Redemption.
Oct. 19	Alie Street	W. H. Bonner	Seventh General Meeting —Dickerson presided.
Dec. 21	Wild Street	P. Dickerson	Jer: 15c. 19v.

The second rule spoke of opening new places of worship and assisting infant causes, but the Association was too feeble to do much. It gave small financial help to Stratford and King Street, Camden Town, and drew up a set of seven "by-laws for the regulation of the various matters connected with *Preaching Stations* established by this Association." A preaching station in Union Row, Kingsland Road, was opened on the 17th December, 1847, but the report concerning it in the following April was "highly discouraging." A year later, 17th April, 1849, it was the subject of the following interesting resolution:

> Union Row. It having been intimated that the Ordinance of the *Lord's Supper* had been administered by Mr. Orchard sent by Mr. Pepper to preach at Union Row, it was moved by Br. Woollacott, seconded by Br. Woodard and *Resolved,* That Br. Pepper be requested to desire Mr. Orchard to desist from so doing in future, it being the deliberate opinion of this Committee that, *to break bread* among the people, even altho' limited to baptized believers, unless they have been first organised and formed into a distinct Church is *highly inconsistent and unscriptural.*

Another preaching station was opened at Kingsland, near Balls Pond Road, on 22nd September, 1850, and preachers were sent to King Street, Camden Town, during 1850/51. The three stations were on a very small scale.

Once only did the Association take action on any matter outside its own theological interests. That was on the 18th June, 1850, when it was decided to send a "Petition to the King of Sweden praying his Majesty to grant Religious freedom to our brethren the Baptists now exposed to persecution and banishment on account of their Religion." But these brethren who claimed religious liberty for Baptists in Sweden, were unable to grant liberty of thought and action to their own fellowship in London. They suspected that some of their colleagues held "the sentiment commonly known as *duty faith,*" while they were shocked by the report that Rothery "had administered the Lord's supper to an open communion church at Islington." Rifts developed, and, co-incidentally, a few Strict churches which had remained outside the Association discussed the question of an Association for themselves. The outcome was that early in 1849 eleven churches united to form "The New Association of Particular Baptists in London," and among the eleven were Woolwich, Ilford and Oxford Street, with their ministers Box, Woodard and Wyard, and Cumberland Street. Box, on being challenged by his former colleagues to state the differences which existed between them, replied generally "that he believed it to be our duty to preach the gospel to every creature—to warn the ungodly—but *he did*

not believe it was the duty of every creature to believe with the faith of God's elect, but most of the brethren in the Association, he said, did so believe and so say," a statement which his former associates firmly repudiated.

Two years later, the new Association changed its title to "The Association of Baptists holding Particular Redemption and Practising Strict Communion." This called forth a fraternal letter from the old Association objecting to this "invidious change" which implied that the old Association did not hold the doctrine of Particular Redemption and practise Strict Communion. "Why by such a title lead the ignorant and uninformed to surmise that such views were not common to us both. The longer we live the more cause we find to mourn over the separation of brethren and for reasons which mock our examination: that mere trifles should have led to the formation of a new Association. . . ." The outcome of a friendly reply was the holding of a joint meeting of the two Associations at Little Alie Street on Tuesday, 9th November, 1852, when twenty-six ministers and messengers were present. It was then resolved, *inter alia,* "That notwithstanding some slight differences in the Constitutions of the two Associations, this meeting considers it is not only desirable but also quite *practicable* to unite the Associations, and recommend that immediate steps be taken for that purpose." A committee of seven was appointed to draw up rules and regulations for the united Association. Thirteen were adopted at a meeting at Union Chapel, Cumberland Street, Shoreditch, on Tuesday, 18th January, 1853, but three only interest us.

I. That this Association be known as "The Association of Baptists holding the doctrine of Particular Redemption, and maintaining Strict Communion, in London and its vicinity:" such vicinity to embrace a circuit of twelve miles from the General Post Office.

II. That the Association be composed of such accredited churches and pastors as maintain the following important principles of faith and practice:

    1. Three equal persons in the Godhead.
    2. Eternal, personal, and unconditional election.
    3. The fall of all mankind in Adam, their guilt and condemnation, and their entire alienation from God by wicked works.
    4. The essential Deity and sinless humanity of Jesus Christ.

5. Particular redemption, or the substitutionary work of Christ on behalf of the elect only.
6. Free justification, by the righteousness of Christ imputed; realised by faith, through the Spirit.
7. The Divinity and distinct personality of the Holy Ghost.
8. Regeneration and sanctification by the direct and sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit: and the perseverance of the saints unto eternal life.
9. The absolute necessity of practical obedience to the declared will of Christ, the Head of the Church, as the fruit of faith and evidence of regeneration.
10. The resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust: the final judgment: the everlasting happiness of the just and everlasting punishment of the unjust.
11. The divine authority and sole sufficiency of the sacred Scriptures, which reveal the will of God to man, and contain all that is necessary for faith and obedience: also the obligation for all to whom they come to reverence them as the word of God, and regulate their conduct by them.
12. That, while the gospel is to be preached to every creature, irrespective of class and condition, spiritual and saving faith is the gift of God.
13. The necessity of immersion in water, on a profession of faith in Christ, in order to church-fellowship, and admission to the supper of the Lord.
14. The congregational order and independence of the churches.

III. That the objects of this Association be—the promotion of brotherly union and fraternal intercourse; the defence and dissemination of the truth; opening suitable places for preaching the gospel in destitute neighbourhoods; helping forward the formation of churches; and endeavouring to advance the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

The marriage was not a success: the parties were in death-throes almost before the close of the honeymoon. Recondite points of theology did not prove the best preparation for "the promotion of brotherly union and fraternal intercourse," and within a year or two the Association passed peacefully away.

Little remains to be said. The Association's vision was limited: it felt hardly any concern or responsibility for the struggling masses of London. It failed to obtain the support of the majority of the churches of its own doctrinal standards, some holding aloof even when their ministers joined. In the course of seven years, ten churches only united in the fellowship, and the denominational influence of these churches was small. Taking them in the order in which they joined:

TRINITY STREET (No. 61 in the *Baptists of London*) existed in Trinity Street from 1835 to 1877, and during the period of which we are writing, its membership was in the neighbourhood of 150, with 200 scholars. The chapel building still stands and is used as a cinema.

LITTLE ALIE STREET (No. 52 in the *Baptists of London*) for over thirty years was ministered to by the saintly William Shenston. It had been in existence nearly one hundred years when the Association was formed, its membership was nearly 400, and it was by far the strongest associated church. Philip Dickerson was then the minister, and he became the Association's leading spirit. He was born at Newbourne, Suffolk, on the 29th January, 1795. In his 'teens he preached in cottages, and after ministries at Newbourne, Beccles and Rattlesden, was, in 1831, called to be Shenston's co-pastor. The following year he joined the Baptist Board, and, in 1833, succeeded Shenston as sole pastor, retaining the postion until 1870, when, on his retirement, he was elected a deacon. A high Calvinist, he was nevertheless a faithful gospel preacher who exercised a gracious and successful ministry. His autobiography was published in the *Gospel Herald,* January, 1880—August, 1881. He died on 22nd October, 1882, aged eighty-seven. Twenty years later the lease of the chapel expired, and the building has since been converted into a synagogue.

GRAFTON STREET (No. 98, but see also Nos. 43 and 64) was of little importance. Its origin is best told in the story of its minister, William Williams, who was born at Holyhead in 1773, and, after residence in Birmingham, moved to London, where he was baptised by John Keeble of Blandford Street in 1811. "His desires for the ministry not being encouraged by the church, he commenced preaching in his own home, and ultimately built on his premises a small chapel, which he called Achor. Five persons here united themselves in church fellowship, and he was ordained over them in 1814. Urged by the increase of the congregation, the church rented a larger chapel in Dudley-court, Soho, and afterwards (in 1816) purchased the lease of one still larger in Grafton Street. Here Mr. Williams [having in

1819 joined the Baptist Board] laboured till his death, which took place on the 27th January, 1847, in his seventy-fourth year." Shortly after, Grafton Street, then having a membership of seventy-five, united with GREAT SMITH STREET, Westminster (No. 204), under Hammond, but the amalgamated churches had difficulty in finding a suitable home. The next year Hammond left for the country, and, later, the church settled at Princes Row.

STRATFORD (No. 169) was a new cause of under forty members, struggling with financial and other difficulties, during the lifetime of the Association. It still exists at West Ham Lane, and is of some strength. It is now in fellowship with the Metropolitan Strict Baptist Association (founded 1871).

LITTLE WILD STREET (No. 40) had a fascinating history. It was told in full in the *Baptist Quarterly* when the building was closed and the church dispersed (Vol. V., No. 6). It had a membership in 1846 of 145.

CUMBERLAND STREET (No. 170) is of importance only because, in a complicated way elucidated by Dr. Whitley in the *Baptists of London,* it was a predecessor of Shoreditch Tabernacle.

PHILLIPS STREET (No. 224) was quite small, and survived a few years only.

ROMNEY STREET (No. 104), which had never been of much strength, sold its site a few years ago, and is now located in Horseferry Road. It is in membership with the London Baptist Association.

WANDSWORTH, BRIDGEFIELD (No. 122), which likewise has been of modest proportions, is now situated at West Hill, and in membership with the Metropolitan Association.

The ministers were faithful, God-fearing men, jealous for the honour and glory of the Church of Christ. Doctrinally they were narrow, but they knew where they stood, and the ground beneath their feet was firm. They claimed scriptural authority and justification for their strict Baptist beliefs, and, therefore, were not tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. On the question of their relationship to the general body of Baptists they disagreed. Some were exclusive: others, and these included leaders like Betts, Bonner and Woollacott, were willing to co-operate with all who loved their Lord. George Wyard may be selected as typical. He was born at Milton, Kent, in 1803, and, after a pastorate at Over, Cambs., settled at Soho Chapel, Oxford Street, in May, 1842 (No. 67). He

remained for fifteen years, and later held pastorates at New Cross, Tring, Blandford Street and Borough Green. In 1852 he wrote the Annual Letter for the London New Association on *The Privileges and Obligations of Church Membership.* Other publications were *Pastoral Letters,* addressed to his people at Soho in 1849, 1851 and 1859; *Reflections for every day in the year,* 1866; and *Original Poems,* 1869. He died on the 2nd December, 1873, by which time his son, named after him, had served Irthlingborough, Reading and Shrewsbury, and another son was at Swaffham, his third pastorate. The Soho Church, after moving to Shaftesbury Avenue, migrated to North Finchley, where, in splendid isolation, it holds aloof from all Associations.

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

FEOCK CHURCH BOOK.

This church book, of which a study appears on the next page, raises one or two points familiar enough to students, but evidently not familiar to many justices and to church secretaries. No licence is needed to open a place of worship; nor has one ever been needed except in the brief experiment of Charles II. What has been needed since 1689 is that the people who intend to conduct worship in a house, a barn, a chapel erected expressly for the purpose, a public hall like Exeter Hall or a Town Hall, shall signify their intention at Quarter Sessions or to the proper officer of the bishop; their certificates *must* be registered, the magistrates or the registrar having no power to refuse, and a copy of the registration must be given to the people who certify if they desire one. Secondly, as the book in question contains registers of births, it ought to have been sent to Somerset House in 1837, so that the records would be in public official custody. Even now, it would be wise to consider whether the Registrar General has not a claim on the book. In many cases a copy of entries was made and retained locally, while the original went to safe keeping. A wider question arises as to the wisdom of starting causes of the sort shown, without consulting Baptist churches in the neighbourhood; this is now even more important than then.

From an Old Cornish Church Chest.

RECENTLY there was shown to me a book that had lain for years in an old wooden chest in the Parish Church of St. Feock in Cornwall. On the front cover was printed in bold letters, "CHURCH BOOK belonging to TOWNS-END MEETING in the Village of FEOCK. 23rd July 1821," and on the back cover there was an index of contents stating that "This book contains 1 The License of the Church, 2 The Doctrines, 3 The Rules, 4 The Members' Names, 5 The Records, 6 Children's Register, 7 Church Accompts." On the fly-leaf was a note added by a former Vicar of the Parish. "This book was obtained by us from John Crowle. . . . Its chief importance consists in that it contains the only *records* of some of the Children born in this parish between 1820 and 1839. C. F. Messenger, Vicar. Jan. 18th, 1894."

The book made most interesting reading, and furnished proof of what the writer had often heard but never been able to verify in any official Baptist records, that there was once a Baptist Church in the small village of Feock situated on the River Fal between Falmouth and Truro.

The license for worship was issued at the General Quarter Sessions at Truro, May 1st, 1821, before "John Vivian, Edward William Wynne Pendarves, Henry Prynn Andrew, Esquires," and worded: "It having been certified in writing to the Court by William Cocker the Younger of the Borough of Truro aforesaid Sadler that a certain House situate at Town End in the parish of Feock in the said County hath been appropriated and set apart for the religious worship of Protestant Dissenters called Independents and upon application to this Court for that purpose, it is ordered by this Court that the same be licensed for that purpose pursuant to the Statutes in that case made. By the Court, Goodredy Clerk of the Peace."

A Mr. Wm. Cocker was a member of the Truro Baptist Church. He was baptised at Truro, September 25th, 1814, but his name is not given as a member of the Church in a list of signatures to a call given in 1816, nor on subsequent Church Rolls, so possibly he is the first pastor of the Towns-end Meeting who died September 25th, 1821, " . . . after preaching in the New Meeting twelve weeks and three days only." The name of John Rouse appears in both Church records. Rouse is a common name in Cornwall and this may be but coincidence, but since the Truro John Rouse was baptised at Penpol, May 8th, 1802, there may be a link here between the two Churches. Penpol is situated near Feock and was once an important

smelting centre with quite a large population. There was a Baptist Church at Penpol, according to a letter sent by the Truro Baptist Church to the newly formed South Devon and Cornwall Baptist Association in May 1825. This Church was supplied by Baptist friends from the Chacewater, Redruth and Truro Churches, and lated adopted by Truro as a Village Station, and so it may be that the explanation of the rise of a Baptist Church at Feock is that it was commenced by John Rouse and friends from Penpol. This is the only possible explanation of the Towns-end Meeting, and the only link between the Church and the Baptist Churches of the County, that the writer has been able to trace, for there are no records in Association or Church Minute Books of any Baptist cause at Feock.

The Church Records begin with a statement of doctrine, "The following System of Doctrine and Discipline is received and submitted to by the Church of Jesus Christ at Towns-end Meeting in the Parish of Feock," and to this is added a paragraph to the effect that those whose names are "hereunto affixed . . . joined themselves together to be a Church of Jesus Christ, which for distinction sake we call An Independent Baptist Church, Twenty third July 1821." The signatures to this covenant were: "James Rouse Snr., Sampson Laworne, Nichols Trethowan, Samuel Cornew, Mary Trethowan, Ambrose Treganowan, Jas Crowle jnr." The Doctrine of the Church consisted of forty-two articles of faith, which cover ten pages of closely written matter, every paragraph punctuated with several Scripture indices.

The "Rules for the regular Order and Discipline of this Church" were thirty-one in number, of which the writer noted several of special interest governing membership. One of these stated "That any Individual desirous to become a member shall certify the same to the Deacons at least three months before admission." After the name had been brought before the Church the candidate for Church membership was interviewed by the Minister, and then according to rule had to "declare before the Church assembled, the particulars of his faith and experience." The Rules and questions were read to the candidate "distinctly and positively," and he was required to answer them "distinctly and positively." Then it was enjoined "That the said Individual with all his relations present be requested to withdraw, then the Church who remain shall faithfully express their thoughts of what they have heard, either for or against."

They were an open membership Church, yet while they did not insist upon Baptism as the condition of membership, they were jealous of the ordinance as a privilege, for Rule 29 expressly stated "That no Member who does not receive nor submit to Adult Baptism, shall speak contemptuously of the

same, nor lay any impediment in the way of those who are disposed to it, either directly or indirectly." A wise rule for some "Union" and "Free" Churches where our witness of Believer's Baptism is only occasionally observed and often slighted to-day.

The Public catechism must have been an ordeal, for there were twenty-two questions! The last two emphasised the personal accountability of the believer. Question 21: "Are you disposed to this of your own mind without being influenced and persuaded thereto by another?" Question 22: "Are you satisfied with the Doctrines, Ordinances and Rules of this Church so far as you understand them?" Many must have felt very grateful for that last saving clause!

Following the Statement of Doctrine, the Rules and the Catechism, is a list of the first Church members, and then for a reason not given is added in a different handwriting "A Reform Church Meeting held Dec 26th, 1836," and continuing " . . . We whose names are hereunto affixed do by this Covenant before God, Rejoin ourselves together in a regular and orderly manner to be a Church of Jesus Christ, holding and maintaining the Doctrines, Ordinances, and Laws, inserted in the former part of this Book." The Church Covenant, Rules and Questions are written in a neat clerkly hand and evidently by a person of some education, presumably John Hicks, who succeeded William Cocker as Pastor of the Church. The note of the Reform Church Meeting and all entries subsequent to 1836 are by an uneducated person in a different handwriting. Later in the Church Rules, over Rule 29 already quoted, there was pasted a roughly cut piece of paper bearing these words written in another handwriting, "That no member is to Absent themselves From the Church. wen the Doar is open For Divine Worship: but on Justifiable Grounds."

The Records were not well kept. Blank pages occur and several pages have been torn out of the book. The records of Births to the members and Adult baptisms from July 1821 until August 1836 are over the signature of John Hicks. After John Hicks' last entry of a baptism there is one recorded by Samuel Cornew in July 1838 and a Susana Lawarne reported by Cornew as having been admitted into the Church, Oct. 1838. That is the last entry given in the records of admissions into the Church. The Children's Register, which, in the opinion of the Vicar who obtained the Church book from John Crowle, is "the chief importance of the book," was kept by John Hicks until 1836, and subsequently by Samuel Cornew and John Clearke, the last entry being June, 1839. The names of John Hicks and John Clearke are not given among the members' names.

The Church "Accompts" found at the end of the book make very curious reading. They only took collections at Midsummer, Michaelmas, Christmas and Lady Day, and the largest collection, which was always at Midsummer, never totalled more than 18/-. "Sittings" were also paid quarterly, but the contributions of the members grew less and less until in 1836 the Church was in debt 14/7. No Church accounts are given after 1836 (the date of the Reform Church Meeting), perhaps both Minister and Treasurer had given up in despair!

On the debit side the chief expenditure after £20/8/11 on "Reparation the Meeting" in 1823 was on "Candles, oil, etc." They spent 8/6 on Watts' Hymn Book, and such curious recurring items as "Whites, pullys, etc." Other items of expenditure which will make the modern Church member lift his eyebrows were quantities of rum and brandy bought by the Church and bought for the Minister! These occur almost every quarter, and from the price paid it seems very questionable whether the spirits were obtained lawfully! They may have been good Baptists, but, if not smugglers themselves, they numbered smugglers among their friends. What was left over from the collections after paying expenses was handed to Mr. John Hicks, the Minister. For what purpose is not stated, but if for salary 14/- per quarter was not high remuneration, and since the Church was in debt in 1836 to the sum of 14/7, the incompleteness of the financial statement leaves us wondering if the poor man ever received any payment afterwards.

The names of the first Church members were: "James Rouse, Ambrose Treganowan, James Crowle, Nichols Trethowan, Sampson Lawarne, Jane Talick, Samuel Cornew, Elisabeth Gray, Mary Clemow, John Rouse, James Rouse, James Hicks, Elisabeth Hicks, Grace Cornew, Honnor Mitchell, Mary Laworne, Sophia Laskey, Francis Hicks." Ambrose Treganowan and James Crowle were the first deacons. The names of the members after the Reform Church Meeting were: "John Rouse, James Rouse, James Crowle, Sampson Lawarne, Nich Trethowan, Mary Trethowan, Saml Cornew, Grace Cornew, Elisath Gray, Mary Climo, Mary Richards, Agnes Crowle, Mary Green, James Hicks, Susana Lawarne, James Lilly, Honr Ford." James Crowle and John Rouse were elected deacons at the Reform Church Meeting.

L. A. Fereday.

A Forgotten Eighteenth Century Baptist Church in Leeds.

THE recent decision of the Leeds Corporation to demolish Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, has revived memories of the origin of the Methodist New Connexion, for it was in this Leeds building that the Rev. Alexander Kilham (1762-1798) began this offshoot from the Wesleyan movement in 1797. In that year the chapel had been purchased from the Baptists, and it is because hardly anything is known of the previous period of its Baptist history that I have ventured to put down what little it has been possible to glean from various sources.

Ebenezer, so named by the Baptists, was the "Second Baptist church" to be formed in Leeds. The first[1] was that which, formed in 1779, invited Thomas Langdon to come from Bristol College even before he had finished his studies there. He came on trial in June, 1779, eventually settled in May, 1781, at a salary of £30 per annum, and remained here as pastor of the "Old Stone Chapel" (begun 1780, finished the year following) all his life. But it is said that some of his original members so liked another student sent from Bristol to replace Langdon in the vacation of 1780 that they decided to create a separate Church, and invite the new student to be its pastor. This student was William Price: of him something is known, though not much, but of his Church as a building and as a body of members almost nothing is known at all.

Price was born in Pembrokeshire, South Wales, in January, 1757. At the age of fifteen he became a member of the Baptist Church "there," as the only available biographical account vaguely puts it; and it was through hearing a sermon on Romans xiii., 12, by Rev. Edmund Jones of Pontypool, that his mind was first seriously engaged "in the essential pursuits of gospel truth." Two years later he began to fill occasional preaching engagements in the neighbourhood, and in 1777 he entered the College at Bristol. Here he remained under the tutorial supervision of Hugh and Caleb Evans until he moved to Leeds in 1780. And, exactly like his contemporary and fellow-student Langdon, he was to find that the Leeds cause would provide him with his one and only pastorate. He died in Leeds on Saturday, July 26, 1794. It was an age of long, single pastorates, indeed, but Price was comparatively a young man when he died.

[1] For a full account see my articles in the *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. VI. (1932), pp. 72ff., 116ff., 166ff. On Kilham, see the *D.N.B.*, XXXI., 102-3, for a convenient summary of his life and work.

He was not a brilliant figure, we gather, but it did not follow, as might have been imagined by those who took note only of his reserve, that he was by any means an ignoramus. He made no attempt to dazzle, rather did he wish to help and to uplift his hearers, and "although unequivocally a Calvinist in sentiment," he "never profaned the hours sacred to public worship by an abstract attention to speculative opinions, nor were those hours disgraced by silly conceits or angry invectives against those whose views were not congenial with his own." His friend Parsons, an Independent minister, who preached his funeral sermon (the only contemporary account extant[2]) speaks of the many marks of the true gentleman he possessed, especially his humility and his hatred of all insincerity, his Christian charity and conscientious devotion to all a minister's duties. We may infer a certain shyness about him, perhaps even a timidity, but at any rate it is clear that the religion he preached was that which he also practised.

He wrote one small pamphlet of seventy pages: "Remarks on the Rev. Mr. Barnard's Discourse on Baptism, in three letters to a friend," whose title sufficiently indicates both subject and object of Price's thoughts. In January, 1789, William Crabtree, of Bradford, delivered a sermon in Ebenezer which was published[3] two months later "at the request of the hearers"; it would be interesting to know whether the occasion was the opening of new church premises, for it is not known when Ebenezer was built and opened.

Price was succeeded at Ebenezer by Hugh Williamson, who was ordained to its pastorate on June 24th, 1795; on that occasion "Mr. Rowland, of Cold-Rowley, read suitable scriptures and prayed, and Mr. Ashworth, of Gildersome, further engaged in prayer," whilst William Crabtree, of Bradford, and Thomas Langdon, of Leeds, preached the sermons.[4] It is not known at what date Williamson left Leeds, but he cannot have remained here long, for the church building was for sale at the latest by May, 1797, when the Methodists bought it for the use of the Rev. A. Kilham. It seems as if Ebenezer were that very tragic thing, a church built in an age of quick separations out of affection and enthusiasm for one man, else why should it cease to be Baptist so soon after his death?

[2] The particulars of Price printed in Rippon's *Baptist Annual Register*, 1794-7, pp. 112-115, consist solely of extracts from the funeral sermon mentioned. See the bibliography.

[3] Advertised in the *Leeds Intelligencer* of March 3rd, 1789, as "in the press and speedily will be published, price 6d."

[4] Rippon's *Baptist Annual Register*, 1794-7, p. 346.

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2. "The Prosperity of a Gospel Church Considered: in a Sermon delivered at the Ebenezer-Chapel, at Leeds, January 14, 1789, and published at the Request of the Hearers. By William Crabtree. . . . Bradford, printed for the Author, by George Nicholson; . . . Price Sixpence." 42 pp., 8vo.

3. "The Loss of the Righteous Lamented and Improved. A Sermon Preached August the Tenth, 1794, To a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters, at Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, on the Death of the Reverend William Price, Their late Minister. By Edward Parsons. . . . Sheffield, printed for John Smith; and sold by J. Binns, Leeds; . . . [&c.] 1794." 30 pp., 8vo. (Not in Dr. Whitley's *Baptist Bibliography*.)

FRANK BECKWITH.

Reviews.

The Theory of Religious Liberty in England, 1603-39, by T. Lyon, B.A. (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d. net.)

The idea of religious liberty in England was first fully formulated in the early years of the seventeenth century, and, in view of the world outlook to-day, it is useful to have this competent study of the first reasonings. Toleration, as the author reminds us, is not a state or a theory which, once achieved, endures for ever, like some principle of human knowledge. It is a principle which each generation has to strive for afresh; and it is quite possible that Englishmen may yet be faced with the problem of preserving their hard-won civil and religious liberties.

In the course of a long chapter on "The Birth of the Separatist idea of Religious Liberty," the author devotes thirty-five pages to the Arminian Baptists, and readers will find that these pages repay careful reading. The part played by Helwys, Busher, and others, in the fight for toleration is fully acknowledged, and their writings and pleas are subjected to critical examination.

The book was awarded the Thirlwall Prize Essay in 1937, and it will prove of value to all students of history and liberty.

The Gates of New Life, by James S. Stewart, B.D. (T. and T. Clark, 7s. net.)

This volume of sermons by the minister of North Morningside Church, Edinburgh, is a welcome addition to "The Scholar as Preacher" series. The preacher reveals an intimate knowledge of life to-day, with all its varied needs, and in the central verities of the Christian faith he finds supplies which never fail to satisfy the needs. His acquaintance with the best literature, Victorian as well as modern, and with continental thought, is obvious, and he knows how to use his illustrations to advantage. It has been good to read these twenty-five discourses, both for their thought and their inspiration.

Roade Baptist Church, 1688-1938, by Ernest A. Payne, B.A., B.D., B.Litt. (Obtainable from the Carey Press, 1s. net.)

Mr. Payne has made Northamptonshire his own, and in his researches is gradually covering the County. We are his debtors for this story of 250 years. He found the records somewhat fuller than is usually the case with village churches, and, as a result, has made the past live again and given a vivid picture of the church and its worthies against the background of history. The booklet is being presented to the honorary members of our Society.