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

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

1792 and the Ministry To-day.[1]

I.

THERE is already evident in our churches a rising tide of interest in the 150th anniversary of the B.M.S. All our hearts are stirred as we recall what was attempted and achieved by Carey and his friends, and all the consequences that have followed in the past century and a half. It is a great story—a great Baptist story—a story, as Mr. Aubrey said in his article in the *Baptist Times* at the beginning of the year, that shows Baptists stepping forward for once to the leadership of the whole Christian Church. It is right that we should want to celebrate it with flags flying and drums beating, with all the enthusiasm and ingenuity that we can command. "Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. . . . Their glory shall not be blotted out. . . . Their name liveth to all generations." (Ecclus. 44.)

There is, however, some danger in days like these, when such an occasion is presented to us, of what the psychologists call "escapism"—of our finding here a convenient retreat from reality, a diversion of our thoughts from less attractive matters, a welcome outlet for pent-up emotions. How useful it is to have a good excuse for concentrating attention on events 150 years ago, instead of being teased, and well-nigh overwhelmed, by the perplexities, anxieties, dangers and sadness of our own epoch! We are all subject to this temptation—you as well as I, and the people in our churches as well—and we must be on our guard against it.

For, in truth, we live in times of the direst peril as a nation, and in most critical days for the Church of Christ, days when luxuries have to be set aside, days much too desperate for antiquarianism, days when, it seems to me, it would be unpardonable to make this Pastoral Session a meeting of the Baptist Historical Society, or, in the coming months, to spend our energies in the churches in seeking opportunities for telling people what great men the denomination once produced, or in devices for raising money, even though it be for the B.M.S.

Only if we believe that 1792 has a message, and an urgent message, for 1942, can we afford to give much time to it to-day. Paper, time, energy—all are precious. There are so many

[1] An address delivered at Bloomsbury Baptist Church on April 29th, 1942, to the Pastoral Session of the Baptist Assembly.

problems facing the ministry to-day, so many complex issues facing the denomination, that one would hardly dare take a theme like this unless one believed it had something vital to say. And we must be very sure as ministers, with the responsibility of leadership resting upon us, before we call our people to these celebrations, that we are really justified in so doing.

II.

One must ask oneself, then, whether the past is really vital and relevant to the present. Many people find history a dull subject—stories about those who are dead, learned from drab and dusty books. Even some of our pundits tell us it is purposeless. The *Baptist Quarterly,* in October last, reproduced without comment some paragraphs from Sir Charles Oman in which he said: "History is a series of happenings, not a logical process. . . . I can only see a series of occurrences—and fail to draw any constructive moral from them." "All the philosophy of history," said Dr. Johnson in 1775, just about the time Carey had to give up gardening and was apprenticed, a boy of fourteen or fifteen, to a Piddington shoemaker—"All the philosophy of history is conjecture." "Then, sir," said the faithful Boswell, "you would reduce all history to no better than an almanac, a chronological series of remarkable events" (Boswell's *Life,* chapter x.). If that is true, if there is no lesson at all to be learned from history, then there seems nothing more to be said. We may, of course, take our entertainment by way of history, reading an old almanac instead of a modern novel, arranging a pageant of B.M.S. history in order to keep our people from going to the cinema. But even amusements have to be curtailed in war time. We cannot afford twelve months of B.M.S. celebrations, which would, moreover, be very cloying to the taste of most people.

But great as are the names of Samuel Johnson and Charles Oman (and one might add to them the names of not a few modern philosophers, and even some theologians), their view does not seem a true or adequate one. H. A. L. Fisher, who confessed that he could not discern in history a plot, a rhythm or a predetermined pattern, admitted the important part played by the contingent and the unforeseen, and was clear that the ground gained by one generation might be lost by the next, and that the thoughts of men might flow into channels leading to disaster and barbarism, or, of course, in the other direction (Preface to *A History of Europe*). The Hebrew prophets did not think of history as a calendar or almanac, a mere series of occurrences. Nor did Paul. Surely the central affirmations of the Christian faith imply that history has meaning and value, and that the past may speak powerfully and savingly to the present?

III.

It is with such a conviction (which alone justifies the celebration of 1792 in the circumstances of the hour) that I invite you to look more closely at the story of the founding of the B.M.S., with a view to discovering its message for the ministry to-day.

The eighteenth century seems at first very distant and different from the twentieth, but one soon discerns some strange parallels between the years immediately prior to 1792 and those through which we have been living. Britain had been passing then through stormy and testing times. We had had to fight France, Spain and Holland. There had been formidable discontent in Ireland and costly struggles in India. The industrial revolution had begun, bringing with it rapid and extensive economic and social changes. Most disturbing and distressing of all, colonies in America which had been linked to the mother country for a century and a half had been lost—and after a revolt in which we had been fighting our own kith and kin. Then, in 1789, came the storming of the Bastille and the letting loose of the tremendous forces of the French Revolution.

And in this environment, how were the churches faring? Badly. Spiritual life among the Baptists and Independents, as well as other bodies, was at a very low ebb. We generalise, exaggerate and foreshorten in the vague impressionist pictures of the past which we keep in our memories. We associate the late eighteenth century with the Evangelical Revival, and imagine the Spirit at work as in Ezekiel's vision—"a noise, and behold an earthquake, and the bones came together bone to his bone . . . and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (xxxvii. 7-10). It was not like that in the little Baptist chapels of the midlands. Whitefield and Wesley had little, if any, direct influence on the men who founded the B.M.S. In April 1785, Andrew Fuller, aged thirty-one—he had been minister in Kettering then for three years—set down in his diary: "Feel much dejected in viewing the state of the churches" (Ryland, *Memoirs of Mr. Fuller,* p. 166). At Whitsun, having to write the Circular Letter for the Northamptonshire Association, he chose as his subject "The Causes of the Declension of Religion." That was the year after Sutcliff had persuaded them to issue their call to prayer. And in December 1785, Fuller's friend, sensitive young John Ryland, aged thirty-two, wrote to him: "Surely there is scarcely anything worth the name of religion left upon the earth" (*ibid,* p. 180).

Take this quotation: "With regard to the deeper question of the spiritual life of the churches, the gravity of the situation should be squarely faced. . . . It would be false to suggest that

the picture is wholly dark. Some of our churches are experiencing definite blessing, but the majority see little to encourage them. The lack of conversions and baptisms, the smallness of our prayer-meetings, and, deeper than all, the apathy of so many, even of Christ's professed people, must constitute a challenge to all."[2] That is what the L.B.A. Council has recently said to the churches of London, but the substance, indeed the very phrases, might be found in many an Association letter in the 1780's and the early '90's.

It was a difficult time for Nonconformists. They still suffered certain civil disabilities and a great deal of intellectual and social ostracism. The temptations to conform, then as now, were strong and subtle, and not a few yielded to them. Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury when Carey was a boy, had been educated at a Dissenting Academy for the Nonconformist ministry; so had Maddox, Bishop of Worcester; so had the famous Joseph Butler, of Durham. They thought the day of Nonconformity had passed, as do some amongst us to-day.

IV.

There is no time further to elaborate and illustrate circumstances which suggest parallels to our own day. It is against such a background that we have to see the coming of new life and power, new zeal and confidence, the founding of the B.M.S., and then the upsurging of a mighty movement of missionary interest and enthusiasm, flowing gradually through all the churches and out to the farthest corners of the earth, giving us in a century and a half a great, world-wide Christian Church with living centres in Asia, Africa and the islands of the sea, the coming of a veritable Word of God to the Church.

As we think of this seeming miracle, let us note briefly five things :—

1. That it was an unofficial ministers' movement that began it. No one would wish to belittle the part that generous and far-sighted laymen took, but here we may well remind ourselves—we ought to remind ourselves—that it was a group of ministers who began this mighty transformation in the life of the church. The real nucleus of an eighteenth century Baptist Association was the Ministers' Meeting, held three or four times a year. The ministers spent a day together, preached to one another, prayed together, discussed some practical or doctrinal theme. There were only some twenty ministers in the whole Northampton Association, and it covered so wide an area they could not possibly all meet together regularly. Usually it meant that eight or ten

[2] See *L.B.A. Record*, March, 1942, p. 14. Cp. Northampton Letter, 1785, Kent and Sussex, 1794.

of the more active and accessible gathered. And in those meetings in the late 1780's, and at ordination services where they met also, gradually Sutcliff, Ryland, Fuller and Carey discovered one another, and became bound by the strongest ties of friendship and common concern for the state of the churches, ready as a group of ministers for God's Word. And when they heard it they passed it on to ministers in London, in Yorkshire, and in other parts.

2. Note that they were young men. I make this point with no desire to be critical of the older generation, but by way of challenge to those of my own age and those who are younger. The significant years of preparation for the formation of the B.M.S. were those from 1784 to 1792. Sutcliff, Ryland and Fuller were then in their thirties, Carey in his late twenties. Pearce, who was drawn in towards the end of the time, and who made a most important contribution of his own, was only twenty-six when the B.M.S. was founded. The older generation had had a hard fight of it during the eighteenth century. Most of them hesitated and excused themselves when the young men not only dreamed dreams and saw visions, but proceeded to organise themselves to translate them into deeds. That was not surprising, nor need we condemn them. As I read the early B.M.S. story I think with some concern, however, about how little my own generation, now middle-aged, seems to have done, and I beg those of you who are younger to seek more intently God's Word for our day and to go forward boldly in obedience to it, not paying too much attention to the caution and the fears of those of us who are older. Seventeen-ninety-two suggests (and this is surely confirmed by all Christian history and by secular history, too) that creative leadership must come from the young.

3. Note that these young men were busy wrestling with great theological issues. After Fuller's death, Ryland called him " the most judicious and able theological writer that ever belonged to the Baptist denomination." It is doubtful (though one is somewhat troubled to confess it) whether there is even yet any name from our ranks worthy to set beside his. But Fuller's decisive theological thinking was done in the years prior to 1792. It was as a young man that he wrestled with the great themes of Calvinism, and that he faced the plausibilities of the humanism of his day. Wrestled is the right word, for Fuller, like Carey, had had no technical academic training. These were honest, vigorous minds, not afraid to deal with big subjects, not afraid to argue and cross swords with one another. These friends read Jonathan Edwards together, and Joseph Priestley and Tom Paine—dare one suggest, as rough and ready parallels, Emil Brunner, W. E. Hocking and Aldous Huxley? They were not

afraid of stiff reading. They set themselves seriously to make up their minds on the great doctrinal issues, and then to build out of their convictions a bold Christian apologetic for their own day. Fuller prayed as a young man: "O let not the sleight of men, who lie in wait to deceive, nor even the pious character of good men, who yet may be under great mistakes, draw me aside." In 1785 (note the date again; he was then nearly thirty-two) he wrote in his diary: "Pretty much taken up of late in learning something of the Greek language" (*op. cit.*, p. 181). Five years later, when Carey had moved to Leicester and was increasingly insistent about the duty of carrying the gospel abroad, Fuller puts this down: "I felt this effect—a desire to rise earlier, to read more and to make the discovery of truth more a business" (*op. cit.* p. 190). Is there not a word for us all there? To rise earlier, to read more and to make the discovery of truth more a business. That passage in Fuller's diary helps to explain a sentence in Carey's *Enquiry*. He is giving an account of the good things which have come out of the special meetings for prayer—an increased membership, a deepened spiritual life, new churches formed, the beginning of the attack on the Slave Trade—a deeply interesting list from many points of view—and he includes this unexpected item: "Some controversies which have long perplexed and divided the church are more clearly stated than ever" (p. 79). We have grown frightened of theological controversy in our religious journals and in our fraternals. Are we really any the better for this?

4. This passage from the *Enquiry* leads us to note, fourthly, that the important step forward which was taken in 1792 came very certainly out of the prayer movement of the preceding years. This group of friends had learned to pray together. It had not come easily to them. Read Fuller's diary and you will see that. At first, almost unwillingly, these men, not only in their special church prayer-meetings, but among themselves, three or four together, began to pray, and gradually found themselves led to a fellowship which had ever deeper levels in it, and were thus prepared for what God wanted them to do. It was because this little group of friends had so often prayed together that they were able to venture as they did, and depend upon one another in the long years afterwards when were separated—Carey thousands of miles away in India, Ryland in Bristol, Sutcliff and Fuller still in Northamptonshire—not always agreeing, but able to speak frankly to one another, because absolutely sure of one another's sincerity and loyalty.[3] They had discovered one another in those Northamptonshire days, not only because they were of the same generation, not only because they had keen intellectual companion-

[3] See Ryland, p. viii. and *First Generation*, p. 30.

ship with one another, but because they had overcome their self-consciousness and now in this manse and now in that had prayed together—reaching the place where (as a wise and saintly man said in my hearing recently in South Wales) you "transact business with God"[4]—not just the alone with the Alone, but two or three with Someone else in the midst.

5. It was some time before this little company became clear what it was that God would have them do. They were only gradually led on, step by step. Sutcliff and Fuller met first. Then Ryland became their friend. Later, and not till after the Prayer Call had been issued, Carey—at first on the fringe of the group—advanced steadily to its centre. It was the spring of 1789 before Pearce arrived in the midlands. There was among these friends an increasing sense of something big about to happen, but though each had his special interests, they had no certainty as to the line along which the Spirit would have them move, or in what manner God would revive the churches. This uncertainty continued throughout 1791. "Towards the end of this summer," wrote Fuller, "I heard of some revival of religion about Walgrave and Guilsborough; and that the means of it were their setting apart days of fasting and prayer. From hence I thought we had long been praying for the revival of God's cause, and the spread of the gospel among the heathen, etc., and perhaps God would begin with us at home first" (Ryland, p. 192). Then came Carey's pamphlet and his sermon, and then the evening of October 2nd, 1792. Even then, long as they had hesitated and great as was their faith, they could not realise the full significance of the step they had taken, nor how Carey would have to go to Bengal, and the B.M.S. grow into a great society with four hundred missionaries in China and Africa as well as India; nor how the B.M.S. would play a decisive part in provoking the formation of the L.M.S. and the rousing of all the churches to their missionary obligations; nor how, 150 years later, in a day of darkness and storm, men would be able to take comfort from the sight of the world-wide Church, a Church planted in the Far East, as it now appears, only just in time.

All these five points seem to me relevant to our situation to-day, and to have a message for us. A little group of younger ministers, close friends, intellectually alert, earnestly praying for God's guidance, were used by God in 1792 as bearers of a message to the whole denomination, to the whole Church of Christ. And as you trace L.M.S. and C.M.S. beginnings the story is similar. As you trace the origin of all the great creative spiritual movements the pattern is the same. Therein lies the essential message of 1792 for our own day.

[4] Ambrose Hopkins at Cardiff Fraternal, March 23rd, 1942.

V.

We find ourselves in a grave situation to-day. Many are dispirited. There is much to fill us with concern. Should we not, as ministers, be seeking much more earnestly than we are to discover the will of God for ourselves, our churches and our generation? Two hundred years ago, in 1742, Philip Doddridge pleaded for better ordered ministers' meetings; but his appeal fell largely on deaf ears. But Carey and his friends, when they met in the years between 1784 and 1792, came together with high seriousness of purpose. What of our modern fraternals in the light of this old story? How many of them are thought of as opportunities for a little social relaxation with kindred spirits, or as the meeting of the local branch of a trade union, a mutual benefit society, not even a mutual improvement society. Is it not something deeper even than a Baptist Ministers' Fellowship that we need? And if younger and more enthusiastic newcomers are sometimes disappointed, what do they do? Stay away, and gradually turn in upon themselves, or seek out kindred spirits and begin on their own to share their deepest concerns? Is not that what is wanted? We express astonishment at the little group in Widow Wallis' parlour that October evening—thirteen or fourteen in all, and the really important ones only four or five—Carey, Fuller, Ryland, Sutcliff and Pearce. But in truth has not God always found it easier to speak to a little company like that, rather than to a larger number? Marvellous indeed would it be if He were to give some new creative Word to the 200 members of the Baptist Union Council or to this assembly to-day. It is to a few of you, who will pay the price of the costliest and deepest human fellowship, that God may speak a word of life and power for this needy age. It may come again from the midlands, or from the north, or from Wales, or from London, or from a group scattered all over the country but bound together by the kind of ties that knit the men of 1792.

When the word comes it will be a new word—a word for the Baptists of the twentieth century, for the Church of the twentieth century, not the mere echo of something said before. Perhaps already there is in our midst another Carey with the flame alight in his heart, seeking companions with whom he may share his secret and try out his strength. Perhaps the word will be a theological one, or perhaps, as some in other branches of the Church think, it will be a sociological one, pointing us to a more broadly conceived and boldly applied Christian ethic. Perhaps we shall be shown a new technique and vocabulary of evangelism for the many no longer in direct touch with the Christian tradition. Perhaps we shall be led in a crusade for a new Baptist polity.

Perhaps we have to be called to entirely new relationships to other Christian bodies. Who knows?

VI.

Are we really seeking the Word of God for our generation? Are we ready to respond to it? Mr. Griffith showed in his Presidential address that the phrase "great things" goes back behind Carey's famous sermon to the first of Andrew Fuller's publications. But that being so, it becomes clearer that the first part of Carey's sermon was a recalling of what was already agreed among them. Expect great things. Yes, said Carey; but what we need to do is to attempt great things.

Let me close with three brief glimpses from the period of which we have been thinking. (1) One of the most attractive of the younger figures of that first B.M.S. generation was Christopher Anderson of Scotland. He should have succeeded Fuller as secretary, and much trouble might have been avoided thereby, but that is another story. There is a letter of his to two Bristol College students, written in 1822, which emphasises one of the main points I have tried to make. For much good to be done it is necessary, he says, for there to be the closest co-operation between a little band of men, sincerely attached to one another, of the highest personal integrity and of the deepest religion. He tells the students about Carey, Fuller, Sutcliff, Pearce and Ryland, and what seem to him to be the reasons for their achievement, and he begs his friends to set before themselves some such joint ideal. (2) There is on record a revealing account of a ministerial meeting in Northampton, when the following question was broached: To what causes in ministers may much of their want of success be imputed? Three main suggestions, Fuller says, were made: (i) want of personal religion, particularly the neglect of close dealing with God in prayer, (ii) want of reading and studying the Bible more as *Christians,* for the edification of our own souls, and (iii) want of being emptied of self-sufficiency (Ryland, p. 173f). What different causes, if any, should we suggest to-day? (3) At the Northamptonshire Association in 1785, the year after the Call to Prayer, it was resolved, "without any hesitation," to continue the special meetings on a Monday evening. "May God give us all hearts to persevere," so ran the announcement at the end of the annual Letter. "If our petitions are not answered by any remarkable outpourings of the Spirit, they may by a more gradual work; or if not in our own time they may in time to come; or if not at all, there is profit enough in the exercise itself to be its own reward. But God hath never yet said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye My face in vain."

If we can rediscover these truths, the celebration of 1792 will indeed be worth while.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

William Staughton.

WILLIAM STAUGHTON deserves to be rescued from anonymity. He had a share in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in England, and was one of the leaders in organising a similar society in America. He was the first principal of a university in the City of Washington. When he died his name was honoured all over the United States. Surely he deserves more than a mere passing notice.

According to his son-in-law, Dr. S. W. Lynd,[1] who was himself a famous Baptist minister in Cincinatti, Ohio, the Staughtons were an honourable Baptist family in Warwickshire. Our William Staughton's grandparents on his father's side were William and Anna Staughton. Anna Staughton died in 1810 at the age of ninety. His parents were Sutton and Kezia Staughton. His father was a deacon in the Baptist Church of Coventry. The pastor of the church at the time was John Butterworth, who was the author of a concordance. In later life Sutton Staughton moved to London, where he attended Rippon's church.

William Staughton was the oldest of seven children. He was born in Coventry, January 4, 1770. At the age of twelve he wrote poetry which relatives and friends thought indicated he was a very gifted child. He received a plain education in Coventry. At the age of fourteen he was placed with the family of a Mr. Claybrooke in Birmingham to be trained as a silversmith. While living with the Claybrookes he sometimes wrote light and silly stuff which he afterwards regretted. During his apprenticeship in Birmingham he was convicted of sin by a sermon on "Prepare to meet thy God." For eight or nine months he was in great distress. He found comfort and peace in contemplating Isaiah I. 18. He was about seventeen when converted. Soon afterwards he felt called to preach, and went to Bristol to prepare for the ministry.

In the autumn of 1792, Staughton was preaching in various churches in Northamptonshire. He was at the meeting in Kettering on October 2nd when the Baptist Missionary Society was organised. According to Lynd, Staughton's name was on the list of those who founded the Society, though it was later omitted from the printed list. The esteem in which he was held by his brethren is indicated by the fact that though only twenty-two years of age he was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the Society. He was also present at Carey's farewell meeting in Leicester, March 20th, 1793.

During that year he preached for a while in the church at

[1] *Memoir of the Rev. William Staughton, D.D.*, by Rev. S. W. Lynd, A.M., published in Boston 1834.

Northampton. Staughton was invited to succeed John Ryland as pastor of the church. Ryland had just resigned to become principal of the college in Bristol. But Staughton was already planning to go to America. Richard Furman of Charleston, South Carolina, had written to certain Baptist leaders in England asking for a preacher for Georgetown in that state. Staughton was recommended for the place. Lynd publishes some of the letters written from England introducing Staughton. Rippon, Hinton and Hughes, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, wrote warmly commending Staughton to American Baptists. Rippon said in his letter, written July 18th, 1793, that Staughton was not a fair sample of English ministers—he was above par.

After a slow and disagreeable voyage, Staughton arrived in Charleston, S.C., in the autumn of 1793. Soon afterwards he married Maria Hanson, whom he had known in England. She had been a school teacher, and was a great help to him in all his later school work. Of this union two sons and two daughters were born. The older of the two daughters became the wife of Dr. S. W. Lynd.

Soon after Staughton began to preach in Georgetown, north of Charleston on the Atlantic coast, a church was organised. The church grew rapidly, but after seventeen months Staughton decided to leave South Carolina. The climate did not agree with him, and he disliked the slavery he saw all around him. His church was greatly surprised when he resigned, and offered to increase his salary if he would stay.

Staughton first went to New York. Yellow fever appeared there about that time; Staughton took the fever and came near to dying. Soon after recovering he went across the Hudson River and preached for a while in Bordentown, New Jersey. It was here that he was ordained on June 17th, 1797. While in Bordentown he often went to Philadelphia, which was not far away. About this time he met and had a long conversation with Tom Payne. Afterwards, when invited by the Philadelphia Association to prepare a circular letter, he wrote on Infidelity in answer to some of the things Payne was saying. In 1798, Staughton settled in Burlington, N.J., just across the river from Philadelphia. While here, he and his wife kept an academy. Also here, his first child died.

In 1805, Staughton was called to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, then the largest city in the United States. Staughton's ministry in Philadelphia was the most important of his life. The First Church was one of the smallest and poorest in the city when Staughton became its pastor. But it grew rapidly, and the building had to be enlarged. Out of this church were formed the Third Church of Philadelphia

and the First African Baptist Church. In his early ministry in Philadelphia, Staughton usually preached four times on Sunday, and he was also a faithful pastor, visiting the sick and the poor and comforting those in distress. In the summer of 1807 there was an epidemic of influenza in Philadelphia, and ten thousand people were sick. Staughton also gave much time while at the First Church to teaching privately young men who were preparing for the ministry. And he was often invited to preach in other churches.

In 1811 there arose a certain discontent with Staughton in the First Church. He resigned to become the pastor of the Sanson Street Church, which had been organised at the beginning of that year with ninety-one members. His letter of resignation would indicate that he had been accused of trying to make his church too English. It will be remembered that a second war broke out between England and the States in 1812. The trouble was not serious, but Staughton feared that if he stayed there might be a division in the church. In accepting the pastorate of Sanson Street Church he stipulated that, as his health was not robust, and as he had many other duties, he should preach only twice on Sunday. This new church grew and soon had to put up a building costing $40,000 (about £8,000), which was a large sum of money for that time. Although a Calvinist in theology, he strove earnestly to persuade sinners to accept Christ. He was greatly loved by young people. It was his custom to preach a special sermon to them once a year. Many students in the schools in Philadelphia, and especially medical students, came to hear him preach.

Let us look at some of the things he was doing besides preaching. He was active in promoting Sunday Schools. He organised a society among women to supply Bibles to poor families. Once more we find him and his wife running a school, this time for young women. In 1812 he helped organise a Baptist Education Society to help train young men for the ministry.

Leaving England did not diminish his interest in missions. Some of the missionaries going to and coming from Serampore passed through Philadelphia. Staughton entertained these missionaries and introduced them to others. He was instrumental in collecting from Baptists and others $18,000 (about £3,600) for Carey's work. And when, after the conversion of the Judsons and Rice to Baptist views, the Baptists of America organised in 1814 "The General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States" to support the work in Burma, Staughton was the first secretary of the Convention. He was to that organisation what Fuller was to the B.M.S. Although there were not many missionaries to correspond with, many letters had to be

written to the churches at home. In 1817 there was an attack on him and his committee. An investigation was held, and Staughton and the committee were completely exonerated.

That same year a plan was submitted to the Convention for the founding of a College to be under the control of the denomination. The school was to provide a general education for its students, whether lay or ministerial. But it was felt that such a school was especially needed to furnish educated pastors and missionaries. The Baptist Education Society of Philadelphia having declared its willingness to co-operate, and as it was felt the capital of the country was the most suitable place for such a school, it was decided to open the institution in Washington. It began in January, 1822, with Staughton as its first president, and was called Columbian College. Staughton moved to Washington in the autumn of 1822. His church sought to persuade him to remain in Philadelphia. On January 10th, 1823, his wife died.

In spite of the fact that Staughton soon won a position of honour in Washington, that period of his life was the saddest and most trying. He was often depressed. He was very sad because of the loss of his companion of thirty years. The school was attacked from time to time by Baptists who did not believe the denomination should have a school, or who found something to criticise in the teaching or management. It was difficult to find the money to keep the College going. But there were a few lights as well as many shadows. When Lafayette was in Washington he visited the College and listened to an address by Staughton. He was invited to deliver a memorial address upon the deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. And he was invited to preach at the dedication of a church in Trenton, N.J. After a few years he decided to give up the struggle, and resigned as head of the College. The school closed for a short time, but later opened again.[2]

On August 27th, 1829, he married Miss Anna C. Peale, of Philadelphia. That same year he accepted a call to become the president of Georgetown College, in the State of Kentucky. He fell ill soon afterwards and never reached his new post. He died in Washington on December 12th, 1829, being a little less than sixty years old. Former students and friends in Philadelphia felt he belonged to that city, and his body was taken there for interment. In 1834 the Rev. James Welch and others who knew him and loved him erected a suitable monument at his final resting-place.

[2] On account of failing Baptist support after the division of American Baptists into two conventions, Columbian College passed out of hands of the Baptists. It later changed its name to George Washington University. It still exists in Washington as an independent university.

Staughton was one of the greatest Baptist leaders in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He made a deep impression upon the Baptists of America. But the influences that made him what he was were those that played upon him in his formative years in England. The men who formed the Baptist Missionary Society in Kettering contributed most to the formation of William Staughton. And the confidence placed in him by those who recommended him to America was abundantly justified.

WALTER O. LEWIS.

Narrative of Andrew Leslie, 1823.

ON Tuesday, October 14th, 1823, at Coventry, Andrew Leslie, a student from Bristol College, was designated for work in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society. The service was lengthy and evidently deeply impressive. Those taking part included W. Hardcastle of Dudley, Francis Franklin of Coventry, and Dr. John Ryland. John Dyer, the junior Secretary of the B.M.S., asked questions of the candidate, as was usual in those days, and received in reply "a most interesting narrative of his early life, together with the confession of his faith." This narrative has been preserved in Bristol College Library, and through the courtesy of the Principal, Dr. Arthur Dakin, we are able to print it in full.

It may be well to precede it by stating that Andrew Leslie married the fourth daughter of Francis Franklin, and that on October 30th he and his wife embarked for India. The journey round the Cape of Good Hope occupied seven months, and they acquired the language on the long voyage. Andrew Leslie first laboured at Monghyr for seventeen years, and, following an extended furlough in England, arrived again in India in December, 1842, to undertake the pastorate of Circular Road Church, Calcutta, which he retained until his retirement in June, 1865. In writing of him after his death, the *Friend of India* said, "he was known as the ablest preacher among the Baptists in India, and as one of their most zealous missionaries. To the fervid spirit of his country [Scotland] he added the grace of a masterly English style, and the ability of an elegant scholarship." He died on July 24th, 1870.

S. J. P.

QUESTIONS.

1. *What grounds have you for thinking you are a Christian?*

In considering the various events of my life, I do not know that I can mention any one particular circumstance as the means in the hand of God of my conversion. From my earliest years I had been much accustomed to reading, having been sent to School when I should suppose I was little more than three years of age, the consequence of which was, that I gained very early, a knowledge of many of the principal truths of revelation.

Nothing however like a religious impression was produced on my mind till after my ninth or tenth year when I entered as a scholar for religious instruction in one of our Sabbath Evening Schools in Edinburgh. In that School my knowledge of the doctrines of revelation was greatly increased and altho I do not believe that any thing like the work of conversion was effected in me during the period of my attendance there yet I have no hesitation in saying that I firmly believe that the foundation of all I may have experienced in the divine life was laid whilst I was in the capacity of a Sabbath Evening School Scholar. As, Sir, I consider my admission into the Sabbath Evening School to have constituted a new era in my life you will bear with me whilst I state to you circumstances connected with that evening upon which I never can think without mingled feelings of wonder and gratitude. One Sabbath evening along with some others of my youthful companions I had gone into the Street in order no doubt to amuse myself in profaning the Sacred day. Whilst so engaged our attention was suddenly attracted by the singing of the Scholars in one of these Schools. Being curious to know who and what was going on within I drew near to the door, whilst, I think my companions stood at a distance.

Busily engaged listening to the youthful voices, some unknown but friendly individual happening to go into the School, took hold of my hand and drew me in along with him, whilst the others who were with me were left without—and some of them, persons dear to me, are till this day still without, being far from God and far from righteousness. Never shall I forget what I saw and heard at that time. I was struck with the appearance of both Teachers and Scholars—and was greatly surprised at what I heard the latter repeat and the former explain. What was called the task for the evening was part of the xxviith Chapter of Matthew—and the subject explained and illustrated was, of course, the Saviour and his sufferings. Well I remember how deeply my attention was rivetted. I had often read and heard of this Jesus, but strange as it may appear, of his sufferings and the cause of them I was entirely ignorant. Pleased with the scene of

the Evening I committed to memory in the course of the week the task appointed for the following Sabbath night, went to the School, stood up unsolicited, and repeated the task with the other Scholars, asked that my name might be enrolled amongst their number, and for a considerable time afterwards became a regular attendant. Here it was, Sir, as I have already stated to you, that the basis of all I may have felt in Christianity was laid. The habits of reading and repeating the Scriptures, of perusing religious Books, and of attending regularly at the House of God, and I may add of praying, were principally observed. When I think of this, Sir, I wonder at the peculiar and distinguishing grace of God to me a Sinner, and this especially when I think of those that were with me on that memorable Sabbath Evening when I first entered the School, how that I have been taken and they are as yet left, and never I think shall I fail to remember whilst recollection remains, the affectionate manner, and some of the earnest addresses of our beloved Teacher. There were none of us who could doubt of the importance of religion whilst he talked to us. His heart was always full on the subject, and his endeavours to make us understand the Scriptures were many, and condescending and ardent. And I am glad to be able to say, that, under the blessing of God, his addresses won their way to the hearts of many of my School fellows as well as my own, some of whom I believe have gone to heaven to wait his arrival there, and some I yet know are walking with Christ upon the earth.

The next particular event in my life connected with my religious history, was my being sent to learn the printing business at the early period of between 11 and 12 years of age, an event big with the most disasterous circumstances to me, in a moral point of view. And here, Sir, I cannot refrain from saying that if I do not recollect the event of my going to a Sabbath School without wonder and gratitude, I cannot think of the period to which I now refer without shame and confusion of face. Before I went to my business, if I might not have been called a religious youth, yet, I think, I might have been called a moral one. I was particularly distinguished for good behaviour and correctness at School. I was diligent and regular in my attendance at meeting and I think I prayed often. But alas, the very reverse of all this took place before I completed my 13th year. The workmen in the printing office where I was placed were men of no religious principle, and I soon found by woeful experience that I could not remain amongst them unpolluted, and that "evil communications corrupt good manners." I think that there was very little that was bad that I did not soon learn. I can remember often going home to my father's house from amongst them in a state of intoxication, walking the streets with them where my conduct was

too bad to be described to this audience, and I remember once being sunk so low in deplorable wickedness that I actually in the presence of many of them took up the Bible, read passages from it, and then held them to ridicule as absurdities and nonsense. I was indeed awfully depraved. I engaged in Gaming—I remember uttering Oaths tho I did this but seldom. I forsook wholly every place of worship. In a word, I was on the broad road of destruction. O had not the Almighty rescued me from the depths of wickedness into which I had fallen he alone can tell where I should at this moment have been. So very far was I from the ways of righteousness that I have been frequently reminded by various individuals since I began to think of religion, of what I formerly was. I was an unjust and an ungovernable apprentice, so much so that I remember my master once threatening to put me in prison, and another time his calling me before him and reading to me my indentures in presence of two witnesses and justly charging me with flagrant breaches of them. And I was yet more wicked than all this and wicked too in a way which now grieves me more than all the other acts of my life. I was a disobedient and cruel Son.

I lost all respect for an affectionate mother, a mother who had been kind to me beyond what I can tell, and remember more than once grieving her with the most insulting and unbecoming language. O could I bring her back I would mourn before her again and weeping ask her full forgiveness. But she is gone to return no more. During this period, too, I was twice within a step of death, once of being drowned whilst bathing, and another time of being killed by a coach. But I thought not of the goodness of God, nor of the deliverances wrought by his hand—so hardened was I in sin. Still, however, while thus so deeply immersed in such awful depravity, a depravity which lasted from before my 12th to nearly my 16th year, I was often the subject of the most acute pangs of spirit. The instructions received at the Sabbath School could not be obliterated from my mind, and never did they come in such vivid recollections before me, as at the close of a Sabbath day which may have been violated with wicked companions, a sin which I was prone to commit. Frequently have I sat down when the shades of the sacred evening had drawn themselves around me and been ready to cry as if mourning the departure of a beloved friend, whom I could never bring back. Willingly would I have given anything that I might live it over again; and my resolutions were strong that if spared till another Sabbath my conduct would be different. But alas! my vows were like the morning cloud and like the early dew which soon passeth away. When the next Sabbath arrived I was the same if not worse than before.

One circumstance occurred which made me think very seriously about my conduct in this respect, and that was a fall which I had when wickedly violating one of those sacred days—which displaced a bone in one of my arms and which caused me much pain as well as galling reflections.

The accusations of my conscience were sometimes beyond description and I knew indeed the truth of that Scripture "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity but a wounded Spirit who can bear!" Thus I continued pained, and resolving and re-resolving and sinning as wickedly as ever, till about my 15th year when a circumstance occurred which led me once more to enter after a long absence—a place of worship.

I had been informed a private soldier in the Norfolk Militia, a regiment which was at that time stationed in Edinburgh Castle, would preach in his regimentals in the Methodist Chapel. The circumstance was entirely novel and interesting to me and operated once more to hear the word of God proclaimed. The words of his text were "As I live saith the Lord God I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die." The only part of the sermon that affected me was a very pathetic exclamation concerning what would be the awful doom of Edinburgh because of her blessings and because of her great wickedness. I felt the force of the exclamation and was so impressed that on going home, I retired into a field although the night was very dark, and began to pour out anew my heart in prayer to God—and I believe I prayed till I was overcome with fear owing to the darkness of the night and the state of my own mind.

This event again constituted a third era in my religious history. And although I do not think it was the means of my conversion to God, for I continued some time after this doing very wickedly, yet it laid me again to attend regularly the preaching of the Gospel and consequently to think more on the wickedness of my life. I had no stated place of worship at which I attended, indeed I made it a point with myself to hear all the varieties of Christian Sects in Edinburgh. And among the many places at which I attended I went very often to hear the Sabbath Evening Lecture at what was called the Magdalene Chapel and which was preached by the Ministers of the different denominations in that City. But being one evening rather late and being very near the Chapel of Christopher Anderson, an eminent Baptist Minister there, I went to hear him. After the opening Services were finished he read as his text the solemn words "And the fearful shall have their part in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." The discourse though very affecting yet affected

me not, and the only thing which attracted me was the peculiarly interesting manner of the preacher. This, however, so fixed itself upon my mind that it operated in leading me to hear him again and again, till I became a regular attendant upon his ministry on the Sabbath evenings. And such was the nature of his ministry and such were its effects upon my mind, that, though I was attracted only with his manner at first, yet when the novelty of that had passed away his discourses came home with such power to my heart that I have often trembled when hearing him.

I was now completing my 16th year and now also commenced under the preaching of Mr. Anderson a series of feelings painful in the extreme, but which ended I believe in my conversion to God for so deeply was I, at times, affected that I remember ceasing for almost days together speaking to my own friends. My impressions, however, though deeper than ever before, were often transitory. After hearing Mr. Anderson they would almost invariably have continued almost all the Monday and the Tuesday, and often times till the Wednesday, yet it was as invariably the case that the last three days of the week were spent in my former habits of wickedness. Never, perhaps, could there be a greater contrast, than there was between my conduct in the former and latter parts of the week. But this could not continue always. The impressions received under Mr. Anderson's ministry were too strong and acute to allow for any length of time these extremes of reformation and depravation. My crimes and my punishment began to have greater command over my heart and the horrors of spirit that were the consequence began to be insupportable. Nothing I saw would do but decision in Religion: and I was therefore compelled to give up my evil practices and attend to the commands of God. In consequence of this decision, there began a seriousness in religion that was carried to an extreme, as much, if not more so, than I had been extremely wicked. I was early and late at religion, for often did I retire in the dark night into the fields and other retired places to pray to God. I rose very early in the morning and went away to similar spots in order to read the Bible and engage in devotional acts.

I was sincerely sorry if ever I found myself at any time very joyful. I could endure nothing like innocent pleasantry. I gave away almost every fraction of money I at any time possessed for religious purposes. In a word I was strict, austere and gloomy. Wrapt up in myself I communicated my feelings to none. I had formed no religious acquaintance and actually knew not a pious soul to whom I could tell the impressions of my mind. But in all this I knew not Christ. I indeed knew myself to be a sinner, but him I knew not as the Saviour of sinners. Burdens heavy to be borne did I lay upon myself but instead of becoming more happy

I became more melancholy and my health being then very much on the decline I was often very miserable. Gloom seemed to have taken up a continual abode in my soul. However in the midst of all this God had mercy upon me by raising up a young man, a member then of Mr. Innes's Church of Edinburgh but now a preacher in America, who observing my circumstances began to speak kindly unto me. He took me to his home with him, introduced me to several religious friends and dealt most affectionately and tenderly with me. Had he not been raised up at this time in my behalf I know not what would have been the consequences of my melancholy state of mind. Amongst others to whom he introduced me, he pointed me out to Mr. Innes, and got him to ask me to come and converse with him which I did. Mr. Innes entered very feelingly into my circumstances, and as I had for some time attended his ministry perhaps principally through my attachment to this young man and others of his members to whom I had been introduced, he asked me if I had any desire to join the Church. I immediately shrunk from the question, and told him that I thought myself very unfit to become a member of a Church owing to my ignorance and sinfulness. He immediately replied to me, that all the knowledge and fitness requisite for this was that we saw ourselves to be lost sinners and Christ to be the only Saviour. I made no reply but on rising to leave him, he made me kneel down with him and prayed for me in a manner which deeply affected my heart and drew my affections towards him. Never shall I forget the way in which he noticed my circumstances as it regarded the difficulties with which I had to contend in following Christ. Taking into consideration what Mr. Innes said to me concerning the qualifications of Church membership, and wishing to enjoy more intimately the fellowship of Christians, and believing it to be a duty to make a profession of attachment to Christ, and thinking that I both saw and knew myself to be a Sinner and Jesus Christ to be the only Saviour I, in a very short time afterwards, made known to him my wish to join his Church. With much kindly feeling I was received in amongst them and truly enjoyed their fellowship.

This took place about a month after I had completed my 17th year. But notwithstanding all this I had not as yet received peace to my wounded mind. I knew and felt myself to be a great sinner, and I knew Christ to be the only Saviour, but my views of the plan of mercy were as yet dark and confused and my soul was as yet in consequence in trouble and in sorrow. Never could I sit down at the Lord's Table without great fear and great gloom. To me it was always a place of dispeace and not of consolation. My religion was as yet to me the cause of great unhappiness of mind and I could tell my distress to none. But the Lord looked

with compassion upon me, and helped me out of my distresses. By little and little I was led, first under the preaching of Mr. Innes and afterwards under the preaching of Dr. Wardlaw of Glasgow (to which place I was removed in consequence of business) to understand the Gospel and to feel its suitableness to my circumstances. I was always looking at my conduct and into my own heart for evidences of my Christianity, but the more I looked the more wickedness I saw and the farther I felt myself removed from peace, and it was not until my attention was turned off from myself and fixed upon Christ through the ministry of these two good and able men, especially that of Dr. Wardlaw that I understood what was meant by peace and joy in believing. Their Churches were indeed nurseries to me—places which I shall remember till Life's latest hour.

And now, my dear Sir, my soul rests upon the finish'd work of Christ. I have had many dark and gloomy periods since I first entered upon the Christian journey, and many declensions in heart from God, but I think I can safely say that no grace of the Spirit ever was in exercise in my breast which is not in exercise there now. And I therefore wish to go forth and make known to the perishing heathen the riches of the grace of him who had mercy upon me a miserable sinner, and redeemed me from the Pit of destruction.

II. *What reasons have you for thinking that you are called to preach the Gospel to the Heathen?*

With regard to any peculiar qualifications or any thing like an internal monitor telling me that it is my duty to go to the Heathens I can make no pretensions. Indeed I hardly understand what is meant by a Call and I have not been without many doubts whether I were not running without being sent. However I can at times think and do fondly hope that God has sent me into his vineyard. A few circumstances however I think it right to state in answer to your question as connected with my coming into the ministry and especially as connected with the work to which I hope now to be designated, but I do not wish you to think Sir, that I place any dependence upon them as constituting what is styled a Call to preach the Gospel. And I do this for the following reason, viz., that I have known the same circumstances connected with other individuals, excepting that their applications to be brought into the ministry were rejected and mine was received. And when I call to recollection the many instances of individuals whose applications have been received but who have shown afterwards by their conduct that their vocation was not to preach Christ I cannot place the least dependance upon the circumstance of my being thought by others a person fitted to preach the Gospel.

I believe Sir that it is the case with most young persons when they first see the value of the Gospel to wish to be the instruments of making it known to others. And such was the case with me: only it was with me as it is not with all, that the first desire which I can recollect having with regard to preaching the Gospel was to preach it to the Heathens. Sometime, I think before my 16th year when I had just begun to be so deeply impressed with religion, I went to hear Dr. Waugh of London and Mr. Slalterie of Chatham preach, who had come to Edinburgh to plead the cause of the London Missionary Society. When I entered the Chapel I lifted up one of a number of printed papers which were distributed in the seats and which contained an account of the deplorable state of the inhabitants of the different Countries in the world, specifying the various numbers of Jews, Christians, Mahammedans and Pagans.

The information to me was totally new, and feeling surprised at, and impressed with what I read, the desire almost immediately or shortly after sprung up within my breast—Could I do something for the benefit of this overpowering number of men? Thinking what I could do it occurred to me that as I was a printer I could go and help to print the Bibles and other religious books that were translating into the various languages of the world. From that day the desire never was extinguished in my breast although many circumstances occurred to quench it.

Almost a year after I had joined the Church I mentioned to Mr. Innes my earnest wish to make known the Gospel to the heathens and also to help in printing the Bible for them. He, however, although he encouraged me in my desires did not see fit to take any speedy steps to get me engaged in such a cause. No doubt he had his reasons for doing so. Perhaps he thought me too young and unexperienced and, if he did so, I think now that he was right in so thinking. About a year after I had express'd my wish to Mr. Innes my business rendered it necessary that I should go and reside in Glasgow and, as I was totally unknown there, and as Mr. Innes had not done anything to bring me forward, my hopes of ever being permitted to preach the Gospel to the heathens were almost destroy'd. Providence, however, having quite unexpectedly directed my way to a circle of the excellent of the Earth and to the ministry of Dr. Wardlaw, I found myself under a preacher I enjoyed and amongst friends whom I loved. My desire began to revive and I ventured to express it to an individual who approved of it and who introduced me to Dr. Steadman and Mr. Kinghorn when they came to Glasgow in the year 1818 to preach in behalf of this Mission. They however said nothing to encourage or discouragе me in my proposal, yet I hoped they would mention my application when they returned to England.

Whether they did or not I cannot tell, but I waited patiently for almost another twelvemonth and nothing was done. I began almost to despair again. Amongst other friends with whom I became acquainted almost immediately after I went to Glasgow was the Rev. Mr. Wadrow, Independent Minister in Carlisle, but who was studying at that time at the University here. We became very intimately acquainted with each other and even agreed to live with each other which we did as long as either of us lived in Glasgow. Of course I mentioned my desire to him and he repeated it again to Dr. Wardlaw who immediately interested himself in the circumstance and wrote in my behalf to Dr. Ryland, and I believe, Sir, [Mr. Dyer] you answered the letter. You know the result. I was called to England to spend some time in preparation at Bristol Academy. Since I have been here, you know, Sir, I have been the subject of many doubts as to whether it was my duty to go as a missionary or stay at home. In moments of depression my spirits have sunk in the prospect; and in the contemplation of leaving all in this Country I have had many painful feelings. But I think I may venture to say that here my shrinking has been but momentary, and they have only been when I have lost sight of the millions of my perishing fellow men and the Glory of my Redeemer. I feel, Sir, that if I were to desist from going to the Heathen I should be unhappy. It is a path which approves itself to my own conscience. I believe it is to be the Will of God concerning me, and I do with the greatest willingness determine to spend and be spent for Christ. I am grieved now that ever I should have felt the least reluctance to go far hence to the Gentiles but reluctant feelings now no longer exist, and I will go if you will send me, for my spirit indeed is willing though in the prospect of bidding you all farewell my flesh is weak.

III. *What are those Doctrines you believe and intend to Preach?*

To give a lengthened detail of the doctrines which I believe and intend to preach would be tedious and unnecessary especially when I know that if I give you a few of what I believe to be the essential truths of the Bible you will be satisfied as to a knowledge of my sentiments in general. As I stated to you in answering your first question that it was not till after a long period and after suffering much depression that I attained clear views of the way of Salvation—at least views which brought peace to my Soul—so it has been thro a number of painful exercises of mind that I have been brought to see the correctness of many other Truths revealed in the Bible. That you may be satisfied that my opinions are founded on conviction I will in stating them recall a few circumstances connected with my being brought to embrace them.

Being accustomed at the Sabbath evening School to an exercise which is common in Scotland that of proving the Different Doctrines by passages of Scripture the habit of receiving no Doctrine but on evidence was very early engendered in my mind, a habit good in itself but very often painful in its exercises.

When I began after a long absence to attend places of Worship again, I made it a point tho only 15 or 16 years of age to hear as I have already stated to you nearly every denomination of Ministers in Edinburgh and as far as I could to ascertain the various points on which they differed. Amongst others on whom I attended I went very often to an Universalist and Socinian place of worship where I drank deep of the former doctrine the arguments for which appearing to me to be in unison with the best feelings of my nature—to render the character of the Divine Being amiable and lovely and to accord with the statements given in the Bible. I listened to the greater part of a course of Lectures on the subject.

I examined I think every passage of which I had any knowledge that bore upon the doctrines and conversed and disputed with whomsoever I could find who would converse or dispute with me on the topic—and the result was that I became as far as I could be a confirmed believer in the doctrine of Universal restoration. Shortly after this I began to attend Mr. Anderson's ministry and consequently to feel the bitterness of Sin. Having felt this and knowing that there was nothing of what I knew amongst the Universalists that would alleviate the sorrows of my wounded mind—and knowing also that I had never seen anything among them like repentance and walking holily with God (for I was acquainted with some of them) I began to doubt the truth of their system and indeed felt almost persuaded that it must be wrong. Mr. Anderson's preaching too led me to read my Bible in a different way to what they had done and I consequently saw things in a different light. Nevertheless the struggles of mind I experienced before I could part with my former notions were very very severe. Some of the arguments for Universal Restoration gave way almost as soon as I began to doubt and tho I became convinced of the error of the system yet others of its arguments troubled me much, and would come in at times like a flood upon my soul.

A Sermon however preached by Mr. Simmons (a Baptist Minister somewhere in England at this time but who was studying at that time in Edinburgh) from John iii. 36 did much to set my mind at rest on this point. Since then I have examined afresh the Lectures I heard preached on the subject in Edinburgh and which were afterwards published, and tho I should be sincerely glad if the Doctrine were true (for the thought to me is truly awful of

millions of my fellow creatures being tormented eternally) yet, Sir, I feel that I must bend to the overwhelming evidence of Scripture on this topic. I calmly acquiesce in the decision and judgment of God.

A few months after I joined the Church I was seriously led to entertain doubts of the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible and was brought into such a state of mind that I could hardly pray. I had doubted before of the correctness of the opinions of men respecting what were the truths of Scripture but I had never before doubted the truth of the Bible itself. This to me was a new mental trial. I sat down to examine the subject and after much pondering and much writing my doubts thro the mercy of God gave way to what I then considered to be irresistible evidence for the truth of the Scriptures as a whole, and peace was again ushered to my mind. From that time till some time after I went to study at Bristol I do not remember ever having had any doubts of the truth of Revelation. But whilst there being led to think more closely on different subjects and becoming more conversant with the arguments for infidelity my faith gave way again and my mind was brought into such a state that I thought I must give up having anything to do with the Ministry, and leave the Academy. I remember once, while in this state having had to preach; when I preached not because I believed what I was preaching was true, but because I tho't such sentiments constituted the religion of the people and I might as well occupy their time in telling them what they tho't they believed as otherwise, and likewise because I could get no one at that time to preach for me.

However the effect of such a state of mind was, that I was led to sit down afresh and thoroughly to examine the evidence of Christianity. And, Sir, my conviction now is, not only that a necessity for revelation exists, but that a revelation actually does exist, and that it is no other than that book in our possession called the Bible. I have to some degree examined the claims of other books to inspiration, such as the Koran and the Hindoo writings and my firm conviction is, that all the evidence adduced for their inspiration is weak, unsatisfactory, and erroneous, and that the Bible is the only book which I know that I can admit to be the book of God.

Regarding what I deem to be the essential doctrines of that book I will state to you in the words of the confession of the late Mr. Ward; a confession which he delivered when he was ordained as a missionary in the year 1799 at Olney.

> "The being and attributes of God, The total depravity of Man, free and full Salvation by the Grace of God thro' a Mediator, the deity of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit

in regeneration, and the final Salvation of Believers, are Doctrines which I believe and consider as inclusive of all others. It is the Doctrine of the Cross to which I look for success in the Conversion of the Heathen."

To this confession I can subscribe with the greatest readiness as what I firmly believe, and on no article of which do I ever recollect entertaining serious doubts; excepting it be the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ; and I mention this, both because I conceive it to be important that you should be satisfied with my views on this subject, as it is my firm belief that if this point be given up every other Article of my Confession will fall to the ground, and likewise because I know that some persons have expressed fear on my account, lest I should ultimately slide into Socinianism.

Before I went to Bristol I had thought very little of the Socinian controversy, indeed I felt somewhat afraid of the subject; for if at any time I happened to take up any of the Socinian writings (which was sometimes the case) my peace of mind instantly departed and I began to doubt. However, I did bring myself to read and think on the subject and in order to understand the controversy as well as I could, I went and heard one or two special lectures in defence of the Doctrine, delivered by one of their learned and most eminent Preachers. Now I know not if the arguments he adduced had any weight with my mind, being such as had previously suggested themselves to my own reflections. And altho in the reasonings of my own breast I have sometimes felt puzzled on the subject, yet I have felt it to be invariably the case, that when I have taken up the Scriptures unattended with comments, or any thing else, and read them in their simple state with a wish to be instructed, that my doubts have all been dispersed.

At one time I felt so overpower'd with the mysteriousness and contradictoriness of what is called a Trinity in Unity—if it be proper to use such terms—that I endeavoured for some time to prove Sabellianism to be true, but this too the evidence in the Scriptures for the opposite opinion compelled me to give up, and I may add likewise that in confirming me in the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ.

The preaching and instructions of my esteemed tutor Dr. Ryland have been peculiarly useful to me. I have often listened to his remarks on this subject with the greatest satisfaction; as remarks which were at once judicious, founded on correct reasoning and calculated to remove every doubt from my mind. And I take this opportunity of thanking him not only for these instructions, instructions truly valuable to me, but for all the instructions he has given me. I deem it one of the happiest

events of my life that I was placed under the care of such a man —a man whom I shall never forget, I use no vain or flattering words when I say that he has acted to me as a Father, and has loved me as a Son. May the Lord be with him now he descends the declivity of life and when he ascends on high, may his mantle fall on me and all his other Sons in the ministry that we may with the same diligence and perseverance prosecute that work which has been so dear to his heart.

And now, my Dear Sir, I have endeavoured to answer your questions; whether to your satisfaction or not I leave you to determine. The Glory of Christ and the efficacy of his atonement I intend to make the grand theme of my ministration and whilst I shall deem it my duty when occasion demands to endeavour to deprive the Hindoo writings of the claims of inspiration which they assume—by producing the irrefragable and diversified evidences of Christianity, and whilst by processes of reasoning I will endeavour to show them the absurdities of Polytheism and Idolatry and that their sacrifices and works from their polluted nature cannot be pleasing to the God who made all things, yet it will be my grand aim to lead them to the Cross of Christ. Pray therefore for me, that this may ever be the case, that I may be kept from falling and that the word of the Lord thro' my ministration may run, have free course and be Glorified. Amen.

The Earliest Chapters of Genesis and the Modern Mind.

IF we met in any other than the Hebrew literature these stories of the making of woman, the talking serpent, the cherubim-sentry, the flame of the sword turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life, that tree of life itself and its sister-tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we should intuitively know that we were in the realm, not of the strictly historic, but of the spiritual imagination of men. It is strange that, just we because we find them in this Hebrew literature, we feel constrained to regard them as literally and fixedly historic.

We forget that no race of men has ever started its literature with the severely historic, but always with either the purely or the partly imaginative; just as every child, reproducing, as the biologists assure us, in its development the history of the race, demands first a sheer story, and only later asks, "Is it true?" and, later again still, begins to press its "hows" and "whys," its scientific enquiries. So why should we expect the earliest Hebrew literature violently to contrast with and to contradict all the rest? If it did, that surely should disturb and distress us far more than aught we meet.

For it is not that the imaginative is an unfruitful literary type. Far from it. It is an acknowledged fount of further literature and art. So, understood in their true literary form, we should give a ready welcome to these earliest Hebrew pages.

Only, seeing that they are the prelude to a library of remarkable records of the acts and ways of God amongst men, we may lawfully expect that they will enshrine profounder suggestions of the mutual relations of God and man than are to be found in the earliest literary records of any other race: which is precisely what they do.

Their basic affirmation is that "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became living soul." Dust of the ground: no evolutionist could start lower: and breath of the divine, a duality which all our experience confirms.

Then the poet of these pages proceeds to illustrate man's living soul, first, in his passion for the vast, the limitless, the beautiful. He represents him as set by the Lord God—not in a little garden walled around—but in some very lofty mountain-range that might be conceived as the watershed of four mighty rivers, such as the Indus, the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates. It is obvious that the inclusion of the second forbids our finding such a region on our maps. It is ideal geography. But the truth it embodies is that the

soul of man is such that he cannot but seek the spacious and the majestic, and the lovely. So he adds that the trees in this vast garden were "*pleasant to the sight* and good for food," as though there was an appetite of the eyes before the craving of the stomach, all of which was to say that man was essentially *artist*. Further to stress this, he takes occasion to speak of gold, fine gold; of bdellium, apparently the pearl; and of the onyx or beryl: as if to say that man had such ardour for the beautiful that the ever-changing loveliness of mountain-landscape and of trees that delighted the eyes could not suffice him, but that he was destined, at the cost of infinite labour, to seek and secure it in these most enduring forms. This passion for the boundless and the beauteous was the fundamental expression of man's soul.

But he was more than Nature's admirer and lover: he was her yoke-fellow and *husbandman*; set in her garden, as no other, "to dress it and to keep it," to guard it from tempest, from trampling of wild beast and from weed; to be its custodian and friend; to find things beautiful and fruitful and to cherish them into richer beauty and bounty; to develop sloes into plums, and thin wild grasses into nutritious oats and barleys and wheats. This keenness for the guarding and the bettering of things was another indication of man's soul.

And not less his zeal for knowledge, his insatiable powers of observation, exercising itself first, as was only natural, on the close watching of beasts of the fields and birds; for on noting and studying every movement of these depended so greatly his security and food. But these were only the first to absorb his critical attention. From thence he advanced, like no other being on this planet, to observe every least thing that lay or came within his ken, till nothing was omitted nor hidden from his rivetted scrutiny. May we not fairly describe this as the spirit of *the scientist?* Moreover, to everything he found and observed he gave a name, according to its character and ways. He became the coiner of fitting, fact-registering names, the supreme linguist. Nor did man pause till he had made an appropriate name for both every objective and every imagined thing; nor till he had fashioned written as well as oral language, whereby he might pass on to sequent generations the precious store of his accumulated experience. The beginning of all this is hinted in this Hebrew poem, as a further token of man's living soul. It was, indeed, the opening process of what was to become his tireless search for fact and truth.

But there was more. All creatures God had made, even plants, were gregarious, social, sexual. But man needs and asks far more than all the rest. He cannot be content with *a* woman. His personality, his soul, is such that, when faithful to himself, he craves a wife, who shall not so much be found by him as be brought to

him, as it were in his sleep, by very God; who shall be his completing self, his real counterpart; the sweetest romance and choicest blessing of his life, for abiding fellowship with whom he will gladly leave even his father and mother and make his new home. That is to say that man has it in him to be *the supreme lover.*

Yet even so, with grandeur and beauty to admire and to revere, with exhaustless work to do for the enhancement of his heritage, with things and thoughts and imaginations of enthralling interest to study, with wife to love and children to nurture, man is so living a soul that far more than even all this is needed to secure his satisfaction and peace.

In the gardens of all other creatures on this planet there were only trees physical, material, but in man's there are twin spiritual trees, which are always central, "in the midst of his garden," the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life; i.e. the trees of conscience and the tree of the eternal hope. He thinks he was not made to die. To the dust, from and of which his body came, it will return, but he believes that the breath of the divine within him, which is his real self, will survive and abide. He knows that nothing is of such moment as that he be faithful to the biddings of his inmost conscience; for, if soever he be disloyal to this regal monitor, the best that is in him begins to languish and to die.

So the last word concerning man is that beyond all else he is *the mystic,* and that he cannot be at peace unless the Lord God walks with him in his garden in the cool of the day. He is so unique that he can *sin* against God's bounty and love, but, if sin comes in at his door, peace flies out of his window, and he exiles himself from his God-given paradise. All this is subtilly suggested in these ancient Hebrew pages, and abides profoundly unchallengeable, no matter what the final historic and scientific findings of man's earliest experience and development may be. We may justly claim that it is a not unworthy prelude to a library that men have long been persuaded contains a unique and widening disclosure of the mind and heart of God.

S. Pearce Carey.

The Cultivation of the Spiritual Life.

IT must be reckoned as one of the few benefits of the present state of world affairs, that the Church has been shaken out of the last vestiges of complacency and with a shock brought up against hard facts. Many of us are for the first time viewing the world situation and the position of the Church with our blinkers off, and the prospect is not very encouraging. We are justified in ignoring a great deal of the cheap clap-trap in the popular Press about the dying Church, but no one who has the cause of the Kingdom of God at heart can regard the position with complacency. Moreover, the cessation of hostilities will increase rather than decrease our problems. The time of reconstruction and rebuilding after the war will be a crucial one, for the brave new world which is to emerge may either be one which will see the death and burial of institutional Christianity, or one which will see a great step forward towards the coming of the Kingdom of God.

This period of post-war reconstruction will, then, be a critical one for the Church, and talk about it is already in the air. It is, therefore, timely that we should remind ourselves not to be duped by a great deal of talk about a "Christian Social Order," a "Christian International Order," "Christian Economics" and so on, when a moment's thought will convince us that you cannot have Christian anything without Christians. Moreover, to reconstruct our national or international affairs along more enlightened, humanitarian lines is not necessarily to be Christian. It is so easy to forget that much of our social service may be a sop to an uneasy conscience, and merely a method of evading our Christian duty. It is easy to give a man better conditions, but hard to give him God, and much of the social and relief work upon which we have been engaged, although necessary and excellent in its own way, brings uncomfortably to my own mind the words of Studdert Kennedy. As he thought about the nick-name of "Woodbine Willie" which Tommy Atkins gave him in the last war, he said:

> "Their name, let me hear it,
> The symbol of unpaid, unpayable debt—
> For the men to whom I owed God's peace
> I put off with a cigarette!"

It does not require too much imagination to be haunted by the dread that the Christian Church and the post-war world may fail by giving new homes and new conditions to men and women whose souls are dying for the need of God.

Madame Guyon, in her *Short and Easy Method of Prayer,* said, "We often apply a remedy to the body while the disease is at the heart. The reason why we succeed so little in reforming mankind

is that we deal with the outside, and the effect of all that we can do there very soon passes away, but if we gave them first the key to the inner life, the outside would be reformed as a perfectly easy and natural consequence."

This quotation, although applied here to social reconstruction, was originally intended to apply to the interior life, and if it is true that the Churches, although rising nobly to the social challenge, find it extremely difficult to meet the spiritual challenge, it would be well to consider whether these words do not hold the key to our troubles. The fact that the Church is so often spiritually impotent is because the interior life of its members is so pitiably poor, and as Evelyn Underhill says, "The periods of Christian decadence have always been periods when this costly interior life of personal devotion has been dim."

There are some people in our Churches who are desperately keen on reconstruction and who are eager to reconstruct anything, except the one thing that matters—their own interior life. On the other hand, it would be quite false to say that the problem is to get people to pray. The truth is that they do not know *how* to pray, and the further and shameful truth is that many of them have never been taught. It is quite useless to ask a man to play a musical instrument, to paint a picture, or to do anything else which he has not been taught to do, and we must face the fact that most of our young people have never been taught to pray, but have been left to get together such information about prayer and the inner life as they might pick up in odd places. We have, in fact, encouraged spiritual Peter Pan-ism by leaving them to a completely undeveloped prayer life. In *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life,* William Law cites the cause of Mundanus, who had improved every business method and every utensil that came his way in order to make them more effective and useful, but still prayed in the out-worn form of prayer which he had learned at his mother's knee. In consequence it was not surprising that prayer to him did not seem vital or interesting.

As Baptists we have witnessed faithfully to the need for personal experience and individual responsibility. Evelyn Underhill says of us, "No other Church has insisted as the Baptists have done on the centrality of the New Testament connection between baptism and personal faith, the importance of this great symbolic act of surrender to God; and on a realistic conversion of the whole life, inward and outward, as the condition of entrance into the Divine Society."

But against this quotation we must set another, this time by B. C. Plowright, who says, "Complete spiritual mastery does not come easily, it has to be won. Growth in spiritual insight and freshness is the prize of right living resting on steady discipline, and up to a certain point we have to row against the stream.

"Has not the gravest failure of Protestantism, at all events in

its later years, been that it has failed to provide such spiritual discipline and guidance? It has made conversion the main aim of its preaching and witness, and has quite forgotten that what happens after conversion is quite as important as what happens before it."

For many young people, the day of their baptism has been the day of the supreme tragedy of their spiritual life. There are few young people who come to us and ask for baptism who are not utterly sincere, but we sometimes fail to recognise the great step it is for them and how they have steeled themselves to this public witness to the faith that is in them. So often, however, their reaction after baptism is to feel that everything necessary has been done, and in consequence to relax. Often, from the very day of baptism, a gradual spiritual decline sets in. The watchword of the spiritual life is, "He must increase, but I must decrease," but so often we have not taught them that the spiritual life must be progressive and that their experience of God must be an increasing intimacy of love and communion. It is surely through lack of this kind of training that we have not built up that core of mature Christians which is necessary to make any Church a real spiritual power. No doubt all of us could cite puzzling cases of young Church members who seemed keen enough, who were "in everything" and regular attenders, who suddenly fell away. They ceased to come, and no amount of visiting and trying to get hold of them brought them back. The reason is that these young people had never built up a real devotional life of their own. They had joined the Church as they might join a Club, but their allegiance to our Lord had never deepened or strengthened. There was no interior life to hold them. It is vital that we should train all our young people to build up this inner life and to get to know God for themselves.

There are certain elementary lessons about the interior life which must be taught as soon as these young Christians launch the frail barque of their own spiritual experience on the limitless seas of the inner life.

I would regard the following principles as the necessary foundations:

First, it must be understood that the Christian life is a life of growth.

Secondly, that devotion is a definite attitude of mind and will, and not a vague, emotional feeling. I have never yet been able to better the definition of devotion given by St. Francis de Sales: "Devotion is really nothing more nor less than a general inclination and readiness to do that which we know to be acceptable to God." It seems to me to be extremely unfortunate that when John Wesley was converted in Aldersgate Street his heart was "strangely warmed," for since that epoch-making conversion every evangelical has considered that he ought to feel strangely warmed whenever he has a real experience of God. Hence the worship of "good times"

in our Churches, when we lose ourselves in an upsurge of the emotions, or become temporarily elated over the hearty singing of our favourite hymn. This may be valuable if it hardens into a resolve to do God's will, but if it is allowed to evaporate without being captured for the service of God, it may be positively harmful. Surely the story of the Pharisee and the Publican warns us against taking our feelings as guides.

Thirdly, they must know that God's gifts are for all, and that if we hold out empty hands in faith and hope, God will fill them. One of the most tragic things that I have ever read in any spiritual work is the following quotation from de Caussade:

"What are called extraordinary and privileged graces are so called solely because there are few souls faithful enough to be worthy to receive them."

Fourthly, as devotion and emotion are not synonyms, we must train our young people not to become enslaved to their feelings. "I pray when I feel like it" is an attitude which must be outgrown, for if God is worthy of praise and adoration He is not less so because we do not feel like it, and if it is our duty and privilege to pray for others it does not follow that they need our prayers less because we are suffering from depression, or a feeling of the morning after the night before.

Fifthly, we must help them to combat that fashionable modern disease which might be described as hecticity. For many, life is so crowded, and they live in such a prevailing state of hectic rush, that it is terribly easy to develop the "must-catch-the-bus-if-I-die-in-the-attempt" attitude to life. We infect each other with this sense of hurry and worry, and in its later stages the disease prevents our settling with a quiet mind to consider anything at all, and makes it quite impossible to quieten the mind for communion with God.

Sixthly, they must learn that prayer is governed by the same rules as the rest of life. It really is fatuous never to concentrate on anything or never to attempt to read a serious book and then to complain that concentration in prayer is so very difficult. It may, in fact, be said in sober truth that to pray well we must live well, for prayer is only the reflection of our own selves. Hence the enormous importance of forming good habits.

In the seventh and last place, we must warn them against the perils of the way, remembering that "forewarned is forearmed." Sooner or later the young people will encounter such times of spiritual aridity as have had a noble descent from the Psalmist when he said, "How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord, for ever?" through the Saints to every man and woman who has tried the inner life. If young Christians do not realise this they will tend to panic when they feel that their prayers are not rising higher than the ceiling, and that Bible reading and other devotional exercises seem completely profitless and pointless.

We must warn them against Pharisaism and any tendency to regard themselves as better than others because they are making this effort to cultivate the inner life. This will be combated successfully if we teach them never to compare their own lives with any other but that of Christ. This, to use a fine phrase of the Abbé Bremond, "disinfects from egotism" and ensures the note of humility without which any progress in spiritual knowledge is not spiritual progress.

Perhaps the most dangerous rock on which the frail barque may founder is that of despair. We are all tempted to despair at times, but *we* have that knowledge of God's boundless mercy which is born of experience. We need to tell them three things about despair:

First, that a Christian is not a man who guarantees that he will never fall, but a man who guarantees that when he does fall he will call on God to assist him to his feet again. In fact the Christian acknowledges that he is a man who does fall and must by himself inevitably fall. As St. Aloysius so beautifully put it, "He who gives way to annoyance and discouragement when he falls, proves that he does not know himself and forgets that he is made of a soil which can only bring forth thorns and thistles."

Secondly, that no lull in the battle can be expected for one moment. They must count the cost before setting out on the journey. They can expect peace: no facile feeling, but the only peace worthy of the name—the deep peace that comes of doing God's will.

Thirdly, that they may learn from mistakes and falls how to avoid occasions of sin in the future, and may learn, too, through their falls, dependence upon God and to make their surrender to our Lord more complete.

In short, "God shall forgive thee all, but thy despair."

It has been noted that good habit is of primary importance, and it is certainly the best shield against these attacks of the enemy. It is the backbone of the devotional life, and I firmly believe that to be healthy the inner life must be maintained by means of a Rule. Young people should be encouraged to examine their normal working day critically and to decide for themselves when they can set aside twenty minutes or half-an-hour for Bible reading, prayer and quiet.

There is no doubt that the early morning is by far the best time, for at least three reasons:

First, that the mind is fresh.

Secondly, that the whole of the day lies in front of us, with its duties and opportunities which can be thought through and dedicated to God. This must be done in the spirit of the hymn, "At Thy feet, O Christ, we lay Thine own gift of this new day." This hymn alone, thought through prayerfully in the early morning, will be a real means of grace, and I greatly regret that the revisers of our hymnal have left it out of the revised edition.

Thirdly, it is for many of us the only time of day when we have no duties to perform and no calls upon our time. Moreover,

getting up early is in itself a salutary discipline for most young people, and largely depends upon getting to bed early at night—another and equally salutary form of discipline.

It may be, however, that owing to working on shifts, living in an overcrowded home, or some other circumstance, it is quite impossible to have this time of quiet early in the morning. In such a case, the minister must come to the rescue and try to help plan some other time or place. An open Church near home or near the place of work will often afford opportunity for quiet, especially during the lunch hour, and sometimes the few moments between the evening meal and going out may provide the natural pause in which to come to God.

The Rule should be exacting but not impossible, and once it is made it should be looked upon as a definite service to God to keep it.

Whether or not a particular spot is kept for quiet and prayer, it is certain that there should be a quiet place in the mind where we can retire to be alone with God. To quote St. Francis of Assisi: "For wherever we go or stay we have with us a cell. Brother Body is our cell, and the soul sits in it like a hermit and thinks of God and prays to Him, and if the soul does not remain in quiet in this cell other cells which are built will be of little profit." We must teach our young people that they can retire to the quiet place in their own minds during bus or train journeys or even long walks. Here it will be found that a simple set form of prayer will be of great assistance. When we cannot concentrate sufficiently to make mental prayer, to repeat a known and dear form of words, which can be filled out with our own thoughts and prayers, is an incalculable help.

There are a great number of methods of prayer which cannot be explored here. We must help our young people to find the method of prayer which suits them best, and this involves knowing them well, their individual outlook and make-up. It is said of Father Faber, the well-known hymn writer, that he discoursed for an hour on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, of whom he was a great admirer. His closing words were: "This, then, my dear brethren, is St. Ignatius' way to heaven; and, thank God, it is not the only way." In the same spirit we must be ready to believe that our favourite method may not suit everyone. There is, moreover, no salvation in any method, and we must guard against worshipping the method rather than worshipping God. In parenthesis, it may be noted that the tragedy of many a young Sunday School teacher has been that he or she has felt that by adopting modern methods of Sunday School technique, good teaching would come inevitably. It does not, of course, for no method can take the place of the consecrated and loving heart, and we need to be on our guard that the means do not become the end. There must be no enslavement to method in any sense. Crutches are to help the lame to walk, but when we are able to walk by ourselves, it is sheer folly to retain the

crutches. The method is to help us to pray, but if at any point our spirit catches fire and we find that the spirit of prayer is there, the method has done its work and should be discarded.

Devotional reading books and prayer books should be used in the same way—to be our guide and not our chain.

It is easy for a boy to strain himself by an over-zealous effort to become " tough " by physical exercise. That danger also exists in the spiritual sphere. There may well be an initial strain in turning over from one devotional method to another, but there should be no lasting strain. If this develops, or a bad bout of introspection comes on, it is well to drop all except the simplest and most objective prayers for a short time. Adolescents are naturally inclined to be introspective, and exacting self-examination should be avoided unless there is real need for it. The subjective note will appeal to them most strongly and most of the deepest spiritual work will probably be done along that line, but a constant look-out is necessary. Their gaze must often be diverted from themselves and directed towards the mighty acts of God in the birth, life and death of our Lord.

It is necessary to teach young people very simply about the various kinds of prayer. It is here, perhaps, that the long prayer, so dear in some of our churches, has been a great offender. It has strung together adoration, thanksgiving, confession, intercession and petition in one long, rambling discourse, which has made it difficult for the hearer constantly to adjust his mind from one attitude to another. We must also teach them how to be quiet before God, listening for Him to speak, in the spirit of " Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." We must guard against the modern tendency to reverse that prayer into " Hear, Lord, for Thy servant speaketh." It is an enormous help to teach them how to give thanks and what to give thanks about, how to pray for themselves and for others, and how to compare their own lives with that of our Lord as a basis for confession.

Perhaps the most important thing of all, and to me the most difficult, is to give some teaching on adoration. Adoration is a realisation of creatureliness and a consequent acknowledgment that God is wholly other. Thus it not only produces an awed sense of the numinous, but it has a much more immediate and practical result: it is a dethroning of the idol of self, and a setting of God in the centre of things. This puts everything in proper perspective and prevents introspection.

You will not have got very far with this kind of instruction before you will have come up against a difficulty: the young people will ask in what words they are to pray. Frankly, at the beginning, I do not think that words matter very much, as long as the pictures are right. Here, however, we come across the sad fact that we have neglected above all to teach the old and beautiful art of meditation. To meditate is not only to pray well, but to read the Bible by the

most fruitful method. Moreover, it has the advantage of being a picture method, making the scripture live and the prayer flow naturally from the great scenes in the life of our Lord. There are, of course, many methods of meditation, and here again it will be necessary to cast about to find the right one. There is a very effective method of prayer by meditation which was taught by Studdert Kennedy, contained in the book, *When We Pray,* by Ronald Sinclair. Personally, I always teach a modified form of the Sulpician method as being the easiest and simplest to learn.

But although one may recommend meditation and the use of set forms of prayer in certain circumstances, it is obviously necessary that the learner should become accustomed to making mental prayer in his own words, and here we have to remember the simple truth that prayer is being with God. When we are with a friend whom we really know and love, we can be silent without embarrassment and talk without considering the topic or the words which we choose.

There is a story about Dr. Watts Ditchfield, the first bishop of Chelmsford, that he was one morning working in his study upon some very important work and hoping against hope that he would not be disturbed. Soon, however, the door opened and his little girl sidled in. He went on working, but pulled open one of the drawers of his desk and said, "There are some sweets in there." To his surprise, she replied, "But I don't want a sweet." Feeling that all hope of quiet was lost he laid down his pen, turned round his chair and said, "Well, what do you want?" To which she replied, "I don't want anything. I only want to be with you." That joy in being in the presence of one dear and understood is the essence of prayer, and while we must always check any tendency to gossip to God in a disrespectful way, naturalness and spontaneity are of the essence of prayer, especially for young people.

What young people probably need most are the practical hints, such as that one can only pray well if one can pray intelligently. To pray for missionaries is bound to be a pretty lukewarm prayer. To pray for missionaries in Africa is far better, but if one knows individual missionaries and their needs, and still more if one has taken the trouble to read up the African background and the particular problems which missionaries are now facing in Africa, together with something of the history and general background of the country, the prayer tends to become alive and vital. Again, young people need to be told that resolutions are no good when they are of the vague "I must be different" variety, but that they need to be practical things which they can go out and do immediately. They also need to be told to guard against wool gathering in prayer and quiet, and that it is a good thing always to have a devotional reading book and a prayer book at hand when the spirit flags. They need to be told of the value of a pencil and notebook in concentrating the attention and crystallizing one's thoughts.

Possibly, however, many of you are now wondering where on earth I imagine that all this teaching is to be done. That, I think, must depend upon the individual Church. I suppose that nearly all of us have some spiritual meeting where instruction of this kind can be given. It may be a young people's fellowship, or a study group, or a Bible Class, but in many cases it will be something that grows out of the Church Membership Class or class for baptism. I may be a heretic, but I prefer to have Church Membership Classes after rather than before baptism, for the reason which I have outlined above; young people rarely ask for baptism without being desperately in earnest and sincere, and if I am sure of that fact before baptism I am satisfied, but I am acutely aware of the danger of the steady decline commencing immediately after baptism. It is then that it is so important to capture the young people and instruct them, commencing with the reminder that the Christian life must be progressive, and that they have just started on a journey rather than having arrived at any destination. My own experience is that one can make quite meaty doctrine intelligible and attractive by taking sufficient time to think out simple words instead of the technical terms which we throw about so easily, and by taking the time to think out analogies and allegories which help them to understand.

It is well at the end of the course of Church Membership Classes to suggest an occasional class, and indeed my last two Church Membership Classes made the suggestion for themselves. They come about once a month to clear up any difficulties that have arisen, ask for replies to questions which have been raised at work or elsewhere, and to check up on the general direction things are taking.

It is well to remember that with young people, fellowship and community are their natural forms of expression, and to get a real sense of community amongst young people is to go most of the way to making prayer real. May I illustrate what I mean by a story about our own Scout Troop. At a Scout meeting one night the usual concentrated uproar was going on when Skipper called for a pause to give the notices. He then said that he had read in the Headquarters' *Bulletin* a story of the heroism of a Chinese Scout which he thought the troop would like to hear. He then read out a most striking and appealing story of a Chinese Scout who lost his life trying to help others during an air raid on a Chinese city. The effect was magical. There was a deep sense of community and fellowship between those boys in the East End and an unknown Chinese boy who wore the same uniform and had taken the same promise. In the eloquent silence which followed, Skipper very wisely said, "Let us pray." That prayer was one of the most real things I have ever taken part in. It was backed by every boy in the hall and there was a feeling of real community. They were in fellowship with the boy who had made the great sacrifice.

But fellowship is a by-product and nothing is more pathetic

than some of the young people's fellowships who come together to seek fellowship by playing badminton or ping-pong. Fellowship is something which is realised when we are thrown together in some common cause, and the greater the cause the deeper the fellowship. If I wanted to produce a sense of fellowship among young people I would attempt it by giving them some job to do which I knew was too big for them, which would tax every ounce of spiritual strength which they possessed and would drive them back on to each other and far more vitally on to God.

When fellowship is achieved, however, its natural expression will come through corporate ways, and it is within the community so formed that prayer will become vital. For example, the strong sense of community in the Scout Troop reaches its deepest expression and reality at camp and at other events where the group comes together exclusively as a group. There is something very real and vital about the way our Scouts' Own prays for Scouts in the Forces. When community is achieved such things as week-end camps, study groups, and, above all, retreats, will become experiences where real prayer is found. May I urge with all the emphasis that I can command the desperate need for Retreats. I cannot understand why the Free Churches do not feel their need more vitally. I know that conditions are difficult, but if it is possible to get the young people together in a house, or on the Church premises, to spend even a full half-day, or, better still, a week-end, in retreat, incalculable good will be done. A retreat need not be grim, and it is not a thing only to be attempted by a company of contemplatives. At a Retreat which we held at West Ham, a boy of twenty who worked at Billingsgate took eagerly to 2½ hour periods of quiet, and urged that we should do it again. Perhaps we have never realised the desperate need some of our people have for these periods of retirement from the everyday hustle of the world, to be quiet with God. May I emphasize, too, that a Retreat is not a Conference, and that I have yet to find a successful effort to combine the two.

All this work cannot be attempted in a mechanical way. In the selection of devotional books, the arrangement of the quiet time, and the general spiritual direction of young people, there is one golden rule, which is to remember that they are individuals. Their capabilities, temperaments and difficulties must be studied individually, and this will require considerable spiritual insight, and that, in turn, only comes through prayer. So often we say to people, "I can only pray for you," as if in a tone of apology. I am convinced that to pray for people is the greatest thing we can do for them.

I have just been reading Forbes Robinson's *Letters to His Friends*, and have been humbled by the realisation of the fervour of his prayer for his friends, and of the many times when he quotes St. Paul as expressing his own experience, "My little children for whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Do

we pray for our young people like that and are we as concerned about them? Forbes Robinson said: "You must at all costs *make* quiet time. Give up work if need be. Your influence finally depends upon your own first-hand knowledge of the unseen world, and on your experience of prayer. Love and sympathy and tact and insight are born of prayer."

I very much doubt whether any of us know how much influence we have among our own young people. Perhaps we can best estimate it by looking back at the influence which good men and women have had in our lives. There is only one safe way of wielding that influence, and that is with much prayer.

If we feel a concern about the spiritual life in our Churches and especially about the spiritual life of our young people, it must surely appeal to us as a call, not to organise more meetings—which may be a sop to an uneasy conscience—but to deepen our own spiritual lives. It is a humiliating truth that we cannot see others' spiritual needs when we ourselves are spiritually impoverished. It is when we rise far enough Godward that God permits us to overflow manward.

It is the man who is living close enough to Christ who has the quick eye to see those signs which mean so much for good or ill in the life of a young person. When you see the dreaded signs of inner decay; the easy excuse, the insensitiveness to spiritual things, the falling moral standard, then it may or may not be the time to speak, but it is the time to pray. God can then win back those young people only through the man who knows the secret of prayer which costs. That man will then retire to the secret place and in silent suffering will unite himself with his suffering Lord. God permits us to suffer in some faint image of His suffering for them and in His great mercy uses our suffering for their redemption.

It is this costing prayer which is so often under God the instrument of redemption, and I therefore address these admonitions on prayer, not only to the beginner in the Christian life, but to you and to myself, lest that by any means when we have preached to others we ourselves may be castaways.

DENIS LANT.

Religion and Russia.

I.

IT is difficult to discover the truth about the events of the last twenty years in Russia. The country is so vast, the situation is so complex and events have moved so swiftly. There is some justification for saying that almost anything that is reported about Russia is probably true, though not the whole truth. And so to present a balanced picture of any aspect of life there is an ambitious task. The writer claims no first-hand knowledge. He claims only to have read some of the best available books, written from a variety of viewpoints, on the religious situation there. And he ventures to write only because of a strong feeling that a right appraisement of that situation is of first importance for a closer mutual understanding.

Communist doctrine is admittedly atheistic. It is not merely a revolt from the superstition and obscurantism of a great deal that has passed for religion, but is a definite philosophy of life. Communists believe that life has a materialistic basis, and that the idea of God is susceptible of a scientific explanation. They claim that the idea has been exploited by priests and tyrants to subjugate men's minds and make them more amenable to the will of their masters; and that religion has in the main proved reactionary, hostile to science and inert in the face of human exploitation. That it is, in fact, the opium of the people. They therefore not only reject religion, they oppose it.

The philosophic theory upon which their teaching is based is commonly known as dialectical materialism. The name is perhaps unfortunate in that it is apt to create a misleading impression. To many people materialism means sensualism, a belief in the reality and value of material things only as they are experienced by the senses—the life of the flesh, the love of money and the comforts and pleasures money will buy. And they suppose that dialectical materialism is some variant of that belief; which is far from being the case. Indeed, no one opposed this view more resolutely than did Lenin himself. "The process of life is creative, and calls for purposeful activity of man." His belief in personality as something alive and creative is worlds apart from a sensual and self-indulgent materialism. No, the dialectical materialist regards all forms of life as rooted in, evolved from, and conditioned by a material universe in process of perpetual change. Matter is the womb out of which all things, even consciousness, reason and religion, ultimately come. An

inner necessity (or nature of things) governs the particular motions or changes in matter that result in the evolution of life in ever higher and more complex forms, including the evolution of man and of human society. According to this theory the idea of God corresponds to no objective spiritual reality, but is man's mental reaction to his sense of helplessness in face of nature or a tyrannical governing class. His inferiority feeling is compensated by the idea of a Heavenly Father, a Mighty Deliverer, who, while He needs to be propitiated for sin, yet can and will bring succour if He be rightly approached. In this way religion is regarded as a by-product of natural and economic factors which has been exploited by the classes of reaction and autocracy; and the belief arises that if nature be conquered by man, and economic security with social justice in a classless society be attained, religion will die. The cause producing it will have been removed.

Well, the Communists have done service in calling attention to a factor that has undoubtedly operated, and an exploitation of religion that has taken place. But that there is something in true religion that cannot be explained along these lines many people most firmly believe. On the scientific ground, they see the evolution of life as response to environment, and hold that the emergence of the spiritual in man postulates a spiritual factor in his environment, in other words, a God who is Spirit, in whom he lives and moves and has his being. On the historical ground, they hold that there is a stream of pure religion running in part through and in part outside of the great religious communions, which simply is not the reactionary, unscientific exploiting influence of communist theory, and simply is not susceptible to the explanation of it that is offered. This, however, is not the place to argue the issue. The point at the moment is simply that here is an issue to be settled, not by abuse or repression, but by free, frank and friendly discussion. To vilify, to distort, to be violently partisan, to raise bogeys, to persecute, either on the one side or the other, is to do grave disservice to truth, and to copy a gross and characteristic evil of Nazidom which we are fighting to destroy. Let each be free to commend his view of the universe to the judgment and conscience of men, without let or hindrance; and let the truth prevail.

If the Communist really believes that, with the advance of science and the deliverance of the masses from exploitation, religion will disappear, because the need for it will have gone, why should he attempt to suppress it? Why refuse it the right of a condemned man to say what it has to say for itself before it dies? On the other hand, if the Christian is convinced of the essential truth of his religion, there is no need for him to be shocked or scandalised by those who challenge it, much less to

make the unwarrantable assertion that an honest atheist cannot be a good man.

In the matter of morality, as a matter of fact, the Governments of "Christian" Britain and "Atheistic" Russia have things they can profitably learn of each other. We have hitherto been loud in our mutual abuse of each other's immoralities, and there is no need to dwell further on them here. It is with no desire to whitewash what is wrong and ought to be condemned, one pleads the importance of appreciating also what is right and ought to be commended. So shall we make progress in understanding.

From his first-hand experience of Russia the Dean of Canterbury lists a number of the ways in which Soviet Russia seems more Christian to him than the Christendom of the West. He finds a greater zest for life, as if there had been for multitudes a real release of spirit. The sickness of an acquisitive society, from which we suffer in the West, has been largely cured. Mammon is no longer worshipped as it has been for generations here. All work is regarded as honourable. No idle class is tolerated. And none may make personal profits from the labour of another. The work of each enriches all.

Further, the Dean maintains that the fear that haunts and harasses the workers of other lands has largely disappeared. The individual trusts himself to the community. He has not only lost the dread of sickness, unemployment and old age, he no longer fears to have children, lest he be unable to support and educate them. Corroboration of this impression is to be found in the high and rising birth rate; and in the vast and loving provision that has been made for the well-being of childhood. Not possessions, but people, and especially little people, are reckoned the nation's true wealth. They are treasured accordingly.

It does not appear true that, by and large, the sanctity of marriage and the home has been undermined. It is true that divorce is more easily obtained. But prostitution is disappearing. Abortion, after being for a time permitted, is now prohibited. And, according to Sir Bernard Pares' observation, "the amount of crime and moral licentiousness has not increased." The Dean is sure it has diminished.

There is much to be said, of course, on the other side. Much that both in theory and practice is not Christian. The O.G.P.U. is a sinister institution and an undoubted source of terror still. The blood purges, the strict governmental control of the Press, the attempt to stamp out religion, all these are sinister features of the present régime that must not be minimised, and cannot be just explained away. Moreover, Christian leaders who have had access to Russia and have been able to move freely among the

people, miss a certain quality of life in even the best of the Communists and the new order they are setting up. Here, for example, is an American minister, Thomas Harris, who writes after an extensive lecture tour, that what he missed was that rare quality of life called "holiness." "I saw no saints among the Communists. There was no desire to reach out beyond the human." Communism will never produce a St. Francis or a Father Damien or a David Livingstone. The fairer division of the good things of this life is certainly a matter of social justice, about which many Christians have been all too lamentably apathetic, in spite of the thunderings of Amos and the rest of the prophets, and the clear teaching of Jesus Christ. But if and when that is achieved, and all men live in freedom from want and fear, well-housed, well-fed, well-doctored, well-educated, what then? What is to prevent a comfortable, complacent community from becoming a prey to the corruption of all things mortal? In the worship and service of the High and Holy One, who allows no man to be content with the level of his moral attainment, but sets before mankind the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, there is a salt in the earth purifying it from this corruption. But apart from that what else is there? The Communist may well reply, "But where is the evidence of this salt of the earth? Do you mean the Church? Because, if so, I'm afraid the salt has lost its savour." And we must confess that, as our Lord warned us, it is all too easy for that to happen, and that all too often it *has* happened. But not always, and not everywhere.

II.

The Orthodox Church before the revolution was virtually a Department of State. It accepted state privileges in return for services rendered. Its fate and fortune were largely bound up with that of the Tzar. Its hierarchy supported the Tzarist régime even in its most repressive measures. And its priests were not infrequently in league with the secret police. Resistance was regularly offered to popular education, religious liberty and social reform. There was little living preaching. The liturgy was in old Slavonic, and unintelligible to the masses, who were ignorant and superstitious. Their credulity has been fair game for the Bolsheviks, who have been diligent in exposing the many pious frauds practised on the people, and in exploiting them to discredit religion itself. The genesis of such deplorable parodies as "The blight of the world is Jesus" is not difficult to detect. It appears, however, that the League of Militant Atheists have overdone this negative propaganda through pamphlets and museums. Sir Bernard Pares declares that people are getting bored with it.

Young people are saying, "If there is no God, why bother so much about the subject?"

In the early days of the revolution it was less this aspect of established religion that aroused the hostility of the new government than the relentless opposition of the hierarchy and many of the priests. "No social group was so consistently and uncompromisingly their enemy" (Hecker). It is not surprising that drastic action against the Church was taken, and that many bishops and priests perished. The violence and murder were indeed deplorable. And yet if the pressure of necessary social changes is too long resisted, it seems inevitable that, when the dam at last gives way, the passionate demand for social justice sweeping over a country with angry waves should involve much loss of life. And it may be that, as Sir Bernard Pares says, and I have heard Orthodox Churchmen admit, the best medicine the Church could have had to purge her was a strong dose of persecution.

But this story of reaction and corruption is not the whole truth about the Orthodox Church. There was a group within it, little known to the outside world, that embraced its most creative thinkers and some true saints, "whose sound learning, humility and love gave them an understanding of others and a singular gift of relieving spiritual need" (Zernov). Dostoievsky was among them. It claimed freedom and rejected the way of violence, and its influence was out of all proportion to its numbers. It is said that at the time of the revolution a considerable number of priests, deeply dissatisfied with the subservience of the Church to the State, were leaning towards this position.

Here, then, is a stream of vital spiritual life in a church widely and sadly corrupted, and its influence has been felt of recent years in the creative thinking and writing that has emanated from exiles in Paris and London, many of whom, while deploring its godlessness and violence, are in other ways friendly to the new order in Russia. They see in the Communist faith a burning desire to create what Christians would call "the Kingdom of Heaven on earth." "And we may hope that this will for the future is not displeasing to God, and will not be turned to shame" (Bulgakov).

The Russian Church has been isolated from the rest of Christendom, and has lacked what a wider fellowship might have helped to supply. Her approach to religion has been predominantly through beauty, and her main interest worship. She has found her supreme religious expression through the art of music. The rendering of the liturgy to the accompaniment of a Russian Choir is an act of worship of most moving and haunting beauty. Doctrinal theology and social reform have made comparatively

little appeal. There has been greater emphasis on the merit of enduring suffering than on that of removing its causes. But in the longing for personal holiness, in reverence for the saint above the priest, in the search for the Christian answer to life's personal problems, and in this sense of the value of beauty in worship, the best in the Russian Church is a most precious contribution to the life of Christendom. And, be it said, the Communists have never attacked worship as such.

But alongside the Orthodox Church there have been a number of Evangelical Communions also, most conspicuous among which are the Baptists, "energetic, well-organised, and aflame with prophetic zeal" (Hecker). Theirs is a simple form of Bible Christianity, with a fundamentalist trend and a strong puritan strain, which makes them suspicious of science, but sympathetic to the appeal of social justice. They were on the side of the people in their struggle against oppression by Church and State. Much of their persecution came from the Orthodox Church, for they drew not a few of their converts from it.

In the first ten or twelve years of the revolution they enjoyed religious freedom for the first time, and their numbers increased beyond any computing. Indeed it was probably the rapid expansion of all the Evangelical Churches that led to the formation of the "Union of Militant Atheists," and later to the decree of 1929 designed to hamstring religion. The anti-God campaign was led by Yaroslavsky, a man of considerable intelligence and ability. But he found it difficult to generate and maintain a widespread atheistic enthusiasm sufficient as a counterblast to this religious revival. He complained that the Trades Unions and the Comsomol (League of Young Communists) were ready enough to pass resolutions advocating the extinction of religion, but that they didn't do much more. And by 1929 it became apparent that government action must be taken if the growth of religion was to be checked, as the Communist party ardently desires. So the new decree was promulgated. The main provisions were that while atheistic propaganda might continue, there must be no more religious propaganda, thus ruling out evangelism. While atheism might be taught to children, Christianity must not be taught them outside the family. That while registered persons over eighteen might assemble for worship, there must be no meetings for youth or for women, no prayer meetings or Bible classes, and no social activities of any kind. Nor must preachers officiate outside their own Church. It was hoped thus that, while retaining a façade of religious liberty, the roots of religious life would be cut; and that with no converts or children coming into the churches, they would in due course die. And there is no denying that the new restrictions have had a most damaging effect. A very hard few

years for these churches followed, and no religious leader from the world outside was allowed any more to come in and report what was happening. The administration of the decree varied, but in many cases was very harsh. It was dangerous to preach. Phrases removed from their context were twisted by O.G.P.U. men to have a political significance; and the preacher vanished. Orders would be issued for chapels to be put into repair according to the latest hygienic and other standards. Then a "democratic" vote would be taken of the townsmen as to the use to which this excellent building should be put. And if, as often happened, the vote decided it should become a cinema or a club, the believers lost their place of worship on which their own money had been spent. And, worst of all, there spread the same kind of atmosphere of fear and furtiveness that is characteristic of the situation in Germany under the Gestapo. The churches were not suppressed, they were gradually suffocated.

One other serious blow to religion was the institution of the six-day week. This made the keeping of Sunday by believers extremely difficult. Absence from work means loss of wages and even food, and can be punished in other ways too. The seven-day week, however, has recently been restored.

It has been a hard time. Many pastors have been exiled, many churches closed. The decree did what it was intended to do. It put a check to the visible spread and outward observance of religion. But it has not killed religion itself. The Soviet Government's estimate before the war was that two-thirds of the people in the country and one-third in the towns were still believers.

It will not do, on the basis of the original constitution, to maintain that there is religious liberty in Russia. The facts do not support it. It is true that churches are still open and worship is still carried on. The official report of the Soviet Union gives 8,338 churches and mosques as open, and 30,000 registered religious communities. But these figures cease to be impressive when one remembers that the population of Russia is approaching 200,000,000, and that there is, therefore, less than one church to 25,000 persons, and that, whereas the churches in Moscow before the war numbered (according to Baedeker) 497, there are to-day fewer than forty. This is due not to the decay of religion. It appears impossible to escape the conclusion that it is the result of religious persecution. Attempts to explain away and minimise such facts as these do not help mutual understanding and co-operation. They are better admitted and faced frankly on both sides. For religious freedom is one of the four freedoms defined by President Roosevelt for which the democracies are at war with Hitler. And it matters. That this policy of religious re-

pression is not being a complete success seems to be coming home to the Soviet Government. Lunacharsky, formerly Commissar for education, remarked that, "Religion is like a nail, the harder you hit it the deeper it goes into the wood." There certainly seems to be an easing of the policy of religious suppression of late years, partly perhaps through realisation that it is not wise, and partly because it complicates diplomatic relations with Britain and still more with America. Readers may remember a letter put out by Russian Baptists and published in the *Baptist Times* last July, obviously with the consent of the Soviet Government, and more than possibly at its instigation. It was evidence that it realises the sensitiveness of the Anglo-Saxon world in the matter of religious liberty, and that it is a factor weighing in its policy towards the churches. But if it has eased up on the harshness of administration, it has not yet rescinded the repressive decrees of 1929.

We may hope, as Russia and the Western democracies are welded ever more closely together in the fires of war, that this may eventually happen, and that we may see the day when the scales are held fairly between religion and anti-religion, so that truth, wherever it lies, may have free course and prevail. And it may be, as Dr. Hecker suggests, that eventually Communists and Christians will come to a new and deeper mutual understanding, by the rediscovery of the significance of Jesus for the new age.

FRANK C. BRYAN.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The following books, that are cheap and readable, may be recommended :—

Russia. Bernard Pares. (Penguin Special, 6d.)
Moscow, The Third Rome. Nicolas Zernov. (S.P.C.K., 1s. 6d.)
Russia and Ourselves. Victor Gollancz. (Gollancz, 2s. 6d.)
The Socialist Sixth of the World. Hewlett Johnson. (Gollancz, 3s. 6d.)

Also, rather more expensive :—

Religion and Communism. J. F. Hecker, Ph.D. (Chapman and Hall.)

Retford Baptist Church.

I.

A NOTABLE event in the annals of North Nottinghamshire Baptists was recently celebrated at Retford. It was the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the Baptist Church in this ancient borough, and the seventieth of the opening of the present chapel building. All its members and workers deem it an honour to be associated with Retford's oldest Free Church, and coupled with their pride is a feeling of humble thankfulness at the fact that through all the trials and changes of two and a half centuries, the witness originally started by a handful of humble folk has been maintained.

Closely linked with Retford in the rejoicings was the village of Gamston, three miles away. Adam Taylor's *History of the English General Baptists* shows that a man named Aaron Jeffery introduced the cause to Gamston, about 1690, during the reign of William and Mary. Jeffery appears to have been connected in his early life with churches of the denomination at Collingham, near Newark, and Misterton, near Gainsborough; these were probably formed prior to the Restoration, and shared in the persecution which followed that event.

As a young man, Aaron determined to seek a situation with the fourth and last Earl of Clare (who afterwards became Duke of Newcastle), a nobleman of Liberal sentiments, whose seat was at Haughton Hall. Asked if he had brought a character, he replied, "No, but I am a General Baptist." Apparently the Earl thought this a sufficient recommendation, for he engaged him forthwith as a footman. On Sunday mornings Aaron regularly walked from Haughton Hall to Collingham (twelve miles) to worship; in the absence of a preacher, he occupied the pulpit, wearing his gold-lace livery. After many years of service he was appointed keeper of the park, and lived at Haughton Lodge. In 1691 he took a farm at Gamston, removing there with his wife and family. He began to hold meetings for prayer and exhortation at his house. In passing it is interesting to note that, in the year when he was appointed Lord High Steward of the Borough of East Retford, Earl Clare removed to Welbeck (the seat of Duke of Portland). He was created Duke of Newcastle three years later, and died in 1711 as the result of an accident in the hunting field. After his removal to Welbeck, Haughton Hall was closed and allowed to fall into disrepair. To-day, nothing but a farmhouse marks the site of a household whose splendour was a byword throughout Notts.

Aaron Jeffery and his wife died in 1729, within a few hours of each other. Their youngest son, Joseph (twenty-seven) succeeded to the farm and continued the meetings. He sought and was granted a licence for the house under the Toleration Act, 1689. When the premises became too small for services, he obtained permission from his landlord to build a meetinghouse on his own farm. This was opened in 1741. He conducted baptisms in the River Idle at Gamston.

Gamston will always be known for its association with Dan Taylor. Hailing from Northoram, Halifax, he reached the village in 1763, when on his way (with others) to Boston, in search of members of the Denomination. After a stay at the house of Mr. Jeffery, Dan Taylor was baptised by him on Wednesday, February 12th of that year, in the Idle. The meetinghouse built in 1741 was rebuilt in 1880. Dedicated as the "Dan Taylor Memorial," it was opened by Dr. Clifford. Fifty years later a restoration scheme was carried out. A cheque for £10 was received from friends at Birchcliffe, Hebden Bridge, which was Dan Taylor's Church, and became the centre from which the greater part of his work was done.

It is apparent that there was a small community of Baptists at Retford about the year 1690. Richard Brownlow, of St. Andrew, London, bequeathed in his Will 1691 (it was proved in London in 1692) "his newest messuage, one acre of land, two beast gates and five land ends" towards the founding of a meetinghouse. He died the same year, and was buried in West Retford Parish Church. The founding of the Church, therefore, was in 1692, three years after the Toleration Act and Bill of Rights had become law. The ancient meetinghouse was on the site now occupied by three cottages in Chapel Yard and a burial ground at the rear. The building continued in use for 125 years.

The ravages of time affected the building, but though it was patched up on various occasions, it was in a very bad state by the end of the eighteenth century. In addition, the need for larger premises had become apparent by the year 1815, and zealous exertions were made to obtain one. The principal contributor was William Hill, of Upton, Retford, who gave a handsome sum of money for two years without interest, remarking, "You may pay me the interest if you can, if not, why, I must go without!" Eventually he decided that the money should be a gift instead of a loan. A commodious place of worship was completed at a cost of between £500 and £600, and opened on May 25th, 1817, by Mr. Stevenson, Loughborough. There was accommodation for 200 people. The old meetinghouse was adapted for use as a Sunday school, which was established in 1813. It is interesting to note that the generous benefactor, William Hill (who was blind)

worshipped at Gamston with his brother, George Hill; they are interred in the chapel burial ground there.

No alterations were made to the Retford Chapel until 1836. To meet the needs of an increasing congregation it was enlarged in that year to give accommodation for 100 more people. It was re-opened on August 14th, 1836, and a manse was added in 1869. In course of time even this additional accommodation was found inadequate, and a movement was set on foot for the erection of a new place of worship. The foundation stone was laid on October 11th, 1871, by the then Mayor of Retford, and the chapel was opened on June 2nd, 1872, by Professor George Rogers, of Spurgeon's College, London. The building cost £900.

In 1790 the following were permitted to be erected by certain persons on property belonging to the West Retford Meeting House: weaving shop, calendar house, brewhouse, warehouse, starching chamber, hickling shop, spinning shade.

II.

Open-air Baptisms. In the 'thirties and 'forties the "ordinance of believers' baptism" was administered in the streams and in the vicinity of Sherwood Forest. At Boughton, adherents were baptised in the River Idle, close to Whitewater Bridge (forty years ago the writer was told that on one occasion the ice had to be broken before the ceremony could take place); in the pool of water on Wellow Green (not far from the famous Maypole) near Ollerton; and in the river at Warsop, near Mansfield.

Writers in old magazines state that early on a Sunday morning in those days, it was an interesting sight to witness people flocking from all directions to the place of baptism. They came from Retford, Mansfield, Gamston, Elkesley, Tuxford, Ollerton, Kirton and many villages in the area.

At Retford the rite was performed in the Canal Locks, near the Corporation Wharf, and in the River Idle, between the Carr Bridge and the Acqueduct; baptisms at Gamston were also in the Idle, the place being close by a mill which stood on the banks of the river, and which was demolished in 1854; (the last occasion the Idle was used for baptisms was in 1881); the Canal was used for baptisms at Misterton, near Gainsborough. One William Elliott, who was a member of the Broad Street Baptist Church, Nottingham, and married in 1794 the eldest daughter of John Jeffery, Gamston Mill, was in 1786 baptised with thirty-one others in the River Trent.

Henry Snowden, at the Sloswick Hospital, a faithful supporter of Retford Baptist Church, who lived to be nearly ninety years, once told the writer that he remembered the ministry of the

Rev. Silas Stenson, and he could also recollect the time when people were conveyed in waggons from Doncaster to Retford for baptism.

There is now no Baptist Church at Misterton (the cause was founded there in 1610, and a chapel built in 1761), or at Kirton, near Ollerton (cause founded in 1840), Warsop (1859), Gainsborough (1879), Sutton-on-Trent, near Newark (1811), or at Wellow, Tuxford or Worksop.

III.

Worthy Pioneers. A large number of those who in their youthful days were associated with the cause at Retford, became prominent in different centres and occupied notable positions in Baptist history. One became a prominent Baptist minister whose son followed in his footsteps; another was one of the principal founders of a Baptist Church at Sheffield, his son, too, became a minister. Two "sons of the manse" at Retford were elected as Mayors, and some have held office as magistrates. Others, again, played a part in industry and public life. It is impossible to give the names of all, but some of the outstanding may be mentioned.

Cornelius Atkinson (1815-1895) was baptised at Retford in 1831, on the Sunday when the mortal remains of his spiritual father (Rev. Silas Stenson) lay in the Manse awaiting burial. He removed to Sheffield in 1839, and was one of the founders of the Cemetery Road Church. For fifty-five years he was a deacon, and he held the post of Superintendent of the Sunday school for thirty-five years. A memorial tablet was presented to the church by his son, Rev. J. H. Atkinson (1843-1919), who did good work at Leicester, Liverpool and Cardiff. The sculptor of the tablet was Harry Hems, an Exeter artist, and one of Cornelius Atkinson's scholars.

James Atkinson (1814-1873), brother of Cornelius, was baptised at Retford in 1823, became a deacon and treasurer of the church and secretary of the Sunday school; for many years he was regarded as the "backbone" of the Baptist cause in that area.

Joseph Foulkes Winks (1794-1866) attended the church services in the days of his apprenticeship. He was the son of Joseph Winks, Gainsborough, whose father was a farmer at Bole. Baptised in 1823, he removed to Sheffield, thence to Killingholme, near Grimsby (known in history owing to its association with the Pilgrim Fathers) to be pastor and teacher of a day school. Later he went to Melbourne, Derbyshire, and set up a printing press. He was the first man in Great Britain to make a living by writing magazines for the young. At Leicester he became editor, printer and publisher of Baptist magazines. For twenty years he was the honorary minister of Carley Street Baptist Church, Leicester. It

was at Friar Lane Chapel, Leicester, in 1859, that he baptised his personal friend, Thomas Cooper (1805-1892), the Chartist, poet and preacher. The Baptist Chapel in St. Benedict's Square, Lincoln (erected 1885) is known as the Thomas Cooper Memorial Baptist Chapel. Incidentally, the cause in that city dates back to 1652.

Mr. Winks's good work was continued by his son, the Rev. William Edward Winks (1843-1926), who commenced preaching at seventeen. After being trained at Old Chilwell College, Nottingham, he commenced his ministry at Wisbech. From 1876 to 1914 he was minister at Bethany Baptist Church, Cardiff. A keen scientist, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1898, and during his active ministry at Cardiff was hon. Curator at Cardiff Museum.

Another minister was the Rev. Silas Stenson (1827-31), uncle of Dr. Clifford, who was a frequent visitor to Gamston and Retford. Mr. Stenson married Miss Wightman, Elkesley, whose mother was a daughter of the Rev. John Dossey (1716-1788), one of the ministers at Gamston. The Dosseys and the Wightmans were related to the Fawcetts and Dixons. Names of members of these families are on memorial stones in the Gamston Baptist burial ground and in Elkesley Churchyard.

Two sons of the Rev. William Nicholson (1805-1875), Jonas and William, became Mayors of the city of Wakefield, and were prominent supporters of the Baptist cause there.

William Briggs (1839-1919), a native of Retford, received his early religious training in the Sunday school during the ministry of the Rev. William Fogg, and in after years regarded the hymn book (presented to him in 1847) as one of the most highly-prized treasures of his library. He was educated at a school conducted by Miss Salvin, Chancery Lane, and afterwards attended Miss Furnival's school in Grove Street, another in the Market Square (the headmaster being Mr. Brown), and at Mr. Allen's in West Retford. Mr. Briggs held every office a layman could occupy in the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and fitted up two libraries of books which had been presented for circulation to the National Sunday School Union of Scotland.

Mr. Briggs presided at the centenary gathering of the Retford Baptist Sunday School in 1913, and entertained the scholars and teachers. Four years later he gave £100 towards the clearance of the debt on the church property; under his will the trustees received £200 for investment for the benefit of the Sunday school, in memory of the time when he was a scholar. His father, William Camomile Briggs, drove the last coach between Retford and Newark until shortly after the opening of the Great Northern Railway in 1852.

The Rev. S. Skingle was instrumental in founding the Doncaster Baptist Church. He addressed meetings, and in 1885 baptised a number of people, one of whom became a deacon of the Doncaster Church.

Probably no episode in our history is more moving than that relating to Samuel Skidmore (1773-1854) a weaver who lived close to the old meetinghouse. He came from Wellow, where he was a member of Baptist Society. For upwards of twenty years he walked a distance of twenty-four miles every Sunday to conduct services at Misterton. As he had lost his sight, it was necessary for his wife to accompany him. It is no exaggeration to state that during the period mentioned, this faithful couple must have trudged a total of 52,000 miles, in all weathers.

It is recorded that William Bradford, one of the Pilgrim Fathers, was in 1610 the founder of the Baptist cause at Misterton in North Notts., and for ten years acted as the pastor. He frequently preached at Epworth and West Butterwick, Lincolnshire, until 1620, when he and his faithful band set sail from Plymouth in the *Mayflower* and landed in New England.

The village of Askham, four miles from Gamston, is known in history by its association with the Helwys family. Thomas Helwys, who lived at Broxtowe Hall, Notts., was one of the Pilgrim Fathers who fled from persecution to Holland, whence he returned, and set up in London the first Baptist Church in England. A hospital for old people was founded at Askham in 1659 by one of the Helwys family.

IV.

Dates of Ministers. Aaron Jeffery officiated as pastor at Gamston for thirty-nine years (1690-1729), and his youngest son, Joseph, who succeeded him, was minister for fifty-three years (1741-1794). In 1763 John Dossey was chosen as co-pastor. He died in 1778 at the age of sixty-two. Jonathan Scott, Queenshead, Yorkshire, became the colleague of Joseph Jeffery in 1785. Both died in the same year (1794), Jeffery having attained the advanced age of ninety years. J. Scott was fifty-four.

In 1795 John Smedley removed from Melbourne, Derbyshire, to Retford, and from then until 1826, a period of thirty-one years, he had the oversight of the work at both Gamston and Retford.

Since that time the list of ministers at Retford is as follows: Silas Stenson (1827-31), William Nicholson, a native of Wakefield and founder of the well-known publishing firm of William Nicholson and Son (1832-34), William Fogg, during whose ministry the church enjoyed its greatest prosperity. There were nearly 300 members. In addition to the chapels at Retford and Gamston, there were five preaching places in the villages (1835-

53), Thomas Lee (1855-66), Thomas Mee (1868-70), John James Dalton (1871-73), who was pastor when the present church was built; James Thomas Roberts (1874-76); Robert Silby (1877-81) afterwards at Nottingham; Samuel Skingle (1881-96); John Neighbour (1897-1901), who left for Nottingham; Henry Collard, A.T.S. (1901-08), Herbert Frederick Bran (1909-12), who has just relinquished office as President of the East Midland Baptist Association; Percy George Ralph Monk (1913-15), William Francis Dart (1916-26), Wallace Vellam Pitts (1927-31), who left for Cambridge; in 1932 the Rev. Charles Frederick Darvell, C.F., was appointed pastor. He retired from the active ministry in 1937, and for several years has been responsible for carrying on the work at New Ollerton, situate in the Notts. coalfield. The Baptist Chapel at Boughton, which had been there for 100 years, was sold in 1926, and the proceeds used towards the erection of a school chapel in the new colliery village at Ollerton.

The present minister is the Rev. Edwin Exall, who came to Retford in February, 1942, from Wainsgate, Hebden Bridge, which is the "Mecca" of Yorkshire Baptists, and associated with two names famed in Baptist history—Dan Taylor, who was in 1763 the first pastor and founder of Birchcliffe Baptist Church there, and the founder, in 1797, of the Midland Baptist College; and Dr. John Fawcett, his co-worker, who in 1764 entered upon his ministry at Wainsgate (formed in 1750) and who was the writer of the hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds."

FRED. C. ATTON.

The Southern Baptist Historical Society.

ONE of the encouraging features of Baptist life during the past generation has been the growth throughout the world of interest in our history. To this the existence of the Baptist World Alliance has contributed in no small degree. Articles which it has collected and circulated have appeared in various languages and in many lands. Several have found their way into the *Baptist Quarterly*, and collections have been issued in book form in Canada and elsewhere. The Alliance continually seeks to foster interest in historical questions, and at the Atlanta Congress arranged a conference "on the preservation of Baptist history," in which Swedish, German, Polish, American (including Negro), and British Baptist speakers participated, and from which came valuable suggestions for the future action of the Alliance and the Historical Societies. Apart from the American Baptist Historical Society and our own, the widest systematic work yet accomplished has been that of the German and Swedish Baptists, some of whose books will in the future be regarded as classics. I look forward with great hope to the day when, free of the pressure of war conditions, our Baptist ecumenical contacts shall be renewed and continuous co-operation become possible. We need a comprehensive history of the Baptist communion.

My present purpose is especially to call attention to one of the youngest organisations for historical study. It is in the nature of the case certain to become one of the most important, since it is fathered by the largest body of Baptists in the world—the Southern Baptist Convention, with a church membership of approximately five millions. It has also behind it the largest ministerial training institution of any Evangelical communion—the Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky.

The Southern Baptist Historical Society was founded in May, 1938, as an agency for stimulating interest in and facilitating the study of Baptist history. It "seeks to locate, assemble, preserve, classify, catalogue, make available, publish, and otherwise utilise the facts and materials of Baptist history, especially as these relate to the churches and denomination in the South." Its materials are preserved and made accessible in the remarkable fire-proof library of the Southern Baptist Seminary, as a separate collection.

I quote (with some abbreviation) a statement issued by Dr. J. E. Dillard expounding the reasons for the founding of the new society:

1. "Baptists have a history; our people ought to know it. Baptists have not always been and are not now history-conscious. They have been more interested in making history than in recording it. Baptists have made some very definite contributions to Christian civilisation; our people ought to know them, proclaim them, and perpetuate them.

   Dr. E. Y. Mullins listed five major contributions:
   i. Baptists have been the only adequate interpreters of the Reformation. ii. Baptists have furnished to American civilisation the most spiritual interpretation of Christianity the world has seen. iii. Baptists have exhibited to American civilisation the most striking example of denominational unity. iv. Baptests gave to America the complete idea of liberty. v. Baptists have furnished the spiritual analogues of our entire political system.
2. Southern Baptists are making history now, and the records ought to be assembled and preserved. We have Baptist heroes and heroines, Baptist churches and institutions, Baptist programmes and plans, Baptist efforts and victories that should enhearten and challenge.
3. Southern Baptists expect to celebrate one hundred years of organised Christian service in 1945, the Centennial of the organisation of the Convention. There should be a great Baptist history ready by that time."

The President is Professor W. O. Carver, of the Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, and the Secretary, Dr. H. I. Hester, of Liberty, Missouri.

J. H. RUSHBROOKE.

Bessell's Green, 1667.

ON the coachroad to Hastings and Rye, a mile short of Sevenoaks, a lane runs up the Westerham valley, and about a mile west is the little Common of Bessell's Green where stand two Baptist chapels, visited by T. R. Hooper who wrote of them in our volume III. at page 228. Documents of the older church are in the Museum and at Somerset House. William Jeffery was the leader in the district from 1644, writing the *Whole Faith of Man,* signing every important document from 1653 till 1660; in this corner he was backed by John Reeve. In those days they worshipped in private houses, and it shows their pluck that when the new Conventicle Act was being enforced, they opened a register thus :—

"A booke belonging to the church or congregation of the Saintes of God in Jesus Christ Assembled in the parish of Orpington in the County of Kent. Anno Domini 1667 Sept. 29. Wee whose names are underwritten being beleevers baptized and stated upon the six principles contaned in the 6 chapter Hebrues verses 1 and 2 according to the order of the gospell do resolve to sett downe together in a church or congregationall waye with the help of the Lord takeing for our rulle to walke by the written word of God contaynde in the ould and new testament and from this Church or Congregationall waye wee doe not Intend to depart to anye other Church or congrattion to sett downe with them without the advise and consent of this Church or congration meeting at Orpington in the county of Kent. Whereby the bands of love may not be broken."

Orpington is eight miles north, over the Down; only in the security of 1716 did the church build its meeting house here in the parish of Chevening. From it descend the Sevenoaks church of 1748 and the second Bessell's Green church of 1770.

W. T. WHITLEY.

Henry Denne.

HENRY DENNE appears first as curate of Pirton. After his adoption of Baptist principles and the onslaught of 1643 against him, he was imprisoned. When released in 1645 he at once "unmasked antichrist" as upheld by Dan Featley and Stephen Marshall, who in the previous year had defended infant baptism. He travelled from Eltisley in Cambridgeshire, widely, protesting against tithes, suggesting that a minister had better support himself as a carter between London and Spalding. He was again arrested, and when given a choice of prison or enlisting, chose the latter. In November, 1647, he took part in the debates at Putney as representing his regiment, demanding the trial of Charles for violating his coronation oath, also sketching a new constitution. At the same time he was charged in church circles as a familist and antinomian, a spiritual antichrist; while next year a New Englander upheld the baptism of infants against him. By 1649 he had become a Cornet, and was a head of the Levellers at Old Sarum, challenging the authority of the Rump parliament; so on 15 May Fairfax surprised his regiment at Burford, and condemned to death Denne and three others. The Levellers believed he had betrayed them, and it is certain that within nine days he issued a pamphlet deprecating the mutiny. He was pardoned and cashiered. Next he resumed Baptist propaganda and ecclesiastical debating against priests and presbyters preaching in Rochester cathedral, founding Eythorne church. But he published nothing more till 1658, and when he died two years later, he had earned the epitaph, which to-day has no point:—

> To tell his wisdom, learning, goodness unto men,
> I need to say no more but, Here lies Henry Denne.

W. T. W.

Reviews.

The Prophets and Their Times, by J. M. Powis Smith. Second edition, revised by W. A. Irwin. (University of Chicago Press. Cambridge Press, 15s.).

The late Dr. J. M. Powis Smith, the original author of this work, which first appeared in 1925, was born in London and brought up in this country. At the age of sixteen he migrated to America alone, and seven years later he became a Baptist. His work should therefore be of particular interest to British Baptists. He was a Professor in the University of Chicago, and the author of a number of works, of which some are well known in this country. His work on the Prophets was not very widely known over here, however, where the comparable work of a British Baptist, Professor Theodore H. Robinson, has held the field. It may be hoped that in its new form it will be more widely known over here. Dr. Powis Smith died ten years ago, and his work has therefore been revised by Professor W. A. Irwin. In its new form it may be warmly commended as a competent and readable introduction to the study of the Prophets that takes into account recent work bearing on them.

In the section dealing with the book of Ezekiel the revision is drastic to a degree. This is because the book of Ezekiel has attracted so much attention to itself in recent years. The chapter which treats of it is almost wholly new, and the views of the original author are abandoned for the presentation of Professor Irwin's views. These are much influenced by the treatment of Hölscher, who denied to Ezekiel any but passages written in a particular kind of poetry. Professor Irwin does not go so far as this, though he denies a great deal of the book to Ezekiel. Few writers to-day maintain the unity of Ezekiel in the way that was common twenty-five years ago, indeed, and some considerable re-writing of this chapter was to be expected in any attempt to bring it up to date. Professor Irwin's views do not wholly coincide with those of any other writer, however, so that this chapter is an original contribution to the discussion of the problem. So much of the book does he deny to Ezekiel, that he is able to regard it as the fruit of Judaism, rather than its source—"not the father, but the child, of Judaism."

In the other chapters the revision is less drastic, though everywhere there are marks of the editor's hand. Recent archaeology is laid under contribution, but most scholars will regret that in a work of this kind, intended for general circulation, the view of Torczyner that the unnamed prophet of the Lachish letters

should be identified with Uriah is recorded, without any indication that it is almost universally rejected as quite groundless.

In treating the book of Hosea, Professor Irwin makes much use of recent lines of study, but introduces some fresh views again. Chapters i. and iii. are sometimes treated as parallel accounts of the same incidents, written in the third and first persons respectively; sometimes they are treated as successive incidents in the prophet's relations with Gomer. Here, however, they are treated as quite separate incidents, with two different women, both of whom were Temple prostitutes.

Of greater interest, perhaps, is the reaction against the "ecstatic" view of prophecy. Professor Irwin does not deny, indeed, that early prophecy was ecstatic, but he will not allow that prophecy was fundamentally ecstatic throughout its history, as some interpreters have maintained in modern times, notably since the appearance of Hölscher's work on the Prophets in 1914. In this he is in line with recent tendencies, which are away from the "ecstatic" theory, though Professor T. H. Robinson still firmly maintains it. But when Professor Irwin describes the prophets as "great religious thinkers," or "at most . . . mystics," we must again demur. The prophets themselves would have vigorously repudiated the view that their message was the fruit of their own thought, and any conception of them in such terms rests on a very inadequate understanding of the psychology of prophecy.

It must not be supposed, however, that the book deals merely with critical questions of this kind. It also unfolds the message of the prophets in the setting of their times, and here the hand of Dr. Powis Smith is more largely seen, since recent study has less affected this. Nowhere is the book written in a technical way that will be irksome to the non-specialist, and while there are many points which the specialist will want to examine, it is written primarily for the general reader, with an interest in the Bible. It should help him to get a clear and vivid picture of the times of the prophets, and to see them as religious figures of the highest significance. It should help him to understand their fundamental message, both to their own times and to all generations. It is therefore heartily to be welcomed, and it may be hoped that in its revised form it may have a fresh career of usefulness.

H. H. Rowley.

The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, by Aubrey R. Johnson (Cardiff: University of Wales Press Board, 2s.).

This is a scholar's pamphlet for scholars, and shows that meticulous care for detail which is the hall-mark of techinical scholarship. Dr. Johnson is one of the ablest of the younger men

devoting themselves to Old Testament study, and we shall look to him to uphold and to enhance the Baptist tradition in this field. All that he has so far published combines exactitude with the vision of wider horizons, without which scholarship can easily become pedantry.

In the present pamphlet, he begins with the Hebrew conception of man, on the sound principle that theology will always take its colour from the contemporary psychology. He shows that the Old Testament offers no such thing as sheer individualism in the modern sense; the single person is conceived as the member of a group to which unity is ascribed, whilst something of himself extends to the other members of the group, and even to inanimate objects associated with it. Dr. Johnson then proceeds to apply this conception of "corporate personality" to the idea of God found in the Old Testament. He points out the extension of divine activity which is suggested by the ideas of "Spirit," "Word," "Name," and is seen even in the association of the Ark with God. He reminds us of the plurality of the Hebrew word for "God" (*Elohim*), of the way in which "the Angel of the Lord" interchanges with the Lord Himself, and of the representation of God through a prophet who speaks on God's behalf. The heavenly council of "the sons of God," and the apparent identification of it with God in His deliberations and utterances support this corporate extensiveness. Of course, the writer is not attributing polytheism to prophetic religion, whatever may have been true of some phases of the popular or even official religion. But he is preparing us to see that a hard-cut "monotheism" patterned on modern ideas may miss the fluidity of the ancient conceptions, and may make the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation unnecessarily difficult.

In greater or less degree, all ancient ways of thinking differ from our own, and we are generally wrong when we believe them to be identical. The work of the scholar will always be needed, even in practical interests, to remind us of these differences and to open up new possibilities in our vision of ultimate truth. Dr. Johnson has here given us a good example of fresh and independent thinking built on a basis of exact data.

H. Wheeler Robinson.

John Henry Muirhead. Edited by John W. Harvey. 215 pp. (George Allen and Unwin, 15s. net.)

Muirhead was Professor of Philosophy at Birmingham University from 1897 till his retirement in 1921, and he is perhaps best known to many readers by his *Elements of Ethics.* He edited the Library of Philosophy series, wrote several books and

innumerable articles in educational and philosophical journals, and at the end of his life was regarded with affectionate veneration by those who knew him. An unfinished autobiography was found among his papers, and this has now been completed and published by J. W. Harvey, Professor of Philosophy at Leeds, with the sub-title "Reflections by a Journeyman in Philosophy on the Movements of Thought and Practice in his time."

Muirhead was a Scotsman trained at Glasgow (where he came under the influence of Edward Caird) and then at Balliol (where Jowett was still Master, and T. H. Green was the chief philosophical light). After a spell as Assistant in Latin at Glasgow University, he entered Manchester College to train for the Unitarian Ministry. The College was then at Gordon Square, London, with Martineau as its head and James Drummond and Estlin Carpenter as the other tutors. In London he was the intimate of people like Graham Wallas (whose sister he married), Bosanquet, Sidgwick and F. H. Bradley. He helped to found the Ethical Society and later became a lecturer at Royal Holloway and Bedford Colleges. Then in 1897 he entered on his chief work as the first Professor of Philosophy at the newly-constituted University of Birmingham, where he had among his close friends Joseph Chamberlain, Sir Oliver Lodge and Bishop Gore.

Muirhead was thus linked up with a distinguished circle, and he introduces us to many of his intimates. He did a useful work, but, gifted though he was, he is justly described as a "Journeyman in Philosophy." He never reached the dignity of the Gifford Lectureship, and his work never attained the thought-quality of say F. H. Bradley, or Samuel Alexander, nor did it have the stylistic charm of, say, Henry Jones.

"Green is the tree of life, grey all theory," he quotes from Goethe, and yet, as his own record proves, a teacher of Philosophy need not be a recluse, and it was his aim all along to bring his ideas into living contact with life.

HENRY COOK.