Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:

https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology

https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb

PayPal https://paypal.me/robbradshaw

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

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

Baptist Quarterly 14.3 (July 1951)

Editorial Notes.

THE annual meeting of the Baptist Historical Society was held at Bloomsbury Central Church, on 23rd April, under the chairmanship of Mr. Seymour J. Price. After tea, guests from Canada and New Zealand were welcomed. The secretary reported another year of quiet but useful service, expressed regret at Mr. Payne's resignation from the editorial board, but congratulated him upon his accession to the General Secretaryship of the Union and the forthcoming conferment upon him of a doctorate by St. Andrew's. The plan to gain new members was outlined. Deep regret was expressed at the loss sustained by the Society through the death of Dr. P. W. Evans, one of its vice-presidents. In his treasurer's report, Mr. Calder stated that expenditure in 1950 totalled £197 while income was £155, leaving a serious total deficit of £106. All the officers were re-elected. Dr. Hugh Martin accepted a cordial invitation to become a vice-president. Members then heard a scholarly and witty paper, read by Rev. Gordon Rupp, of the Richmond Methodist College, on "Erasmus and Luther, 1525" which was greatly appreciated. Prayer by the President closed another interesting and enjoyable annual meeting. By the time these notes are in print, a historical session will have been held during the Baptist Commonwealth Congress in June, of which a report will be given in our next issue.

* * * * *

The passing of Dr. John William Ewing at the age of eighty-six has been widely mourned. Born in Bythorn, Huntingdonshire, he was brought up in Kenninghall, Norfolk, where his father was part-time pastor of the Baptist church. Educated at Bishop's Stortford and Spurgeon's College, he was minister at East Hill, Wandsworth and Rye Lane, Peckham. Upon the setting up of the General Superintendency he was appointed to the Metropolitan area, retiring in 1934. One of the youngest ever to fill the office, Dr. Ewing was President of the Baptist Union as far back as 1912. To most of the younger generation Dr. Ewing was an old, gracious and rather remote figure seen each year on the Assembly platform. But there are those who recall his eloquence and power in the pulpit, his literary gifts and administrative abilities. He addressed each of the first five Congresses of the Baptist World Alliance, was a former Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council and an active supporter of the World's Evangelical Alliance. The General Committee of the Baptist Missionary

Society and the Council of the Baptist Union knew him as a loyal and trusted member and leader over a long period of years. His death breaks one of the remaining links with the days of Spurgeon and Samuel Harris Booth and that age of Nonconformist prosperity in which flourished the ministries of Silvester Horne, J. H. Jowett, John Clifford and others who are becoming only names to the present generation. Few have so ably and devotedly given themselves to the Denomination as this faithful, kindly servant of Christ.

* * * * *

Two documents in Dr. Williams's Library which are frequently in demand by research students are now available on loan in microfilm form. They are (*i*) (Dr. Williams's Library MS. 35.4.), a list written by Dr. John Evans (1680-1730) and bearing the date 1715 (with corrections and additions down to 1729), giving lists of Dissenting congregations in England and Wales by counties with the names of ministers and some additional information. (*ii*) (Dr. Williams's Library MS. 35.5), compiled by Josiah Thompson and giving similar lists of congregations by counties for the years 1715 and 1773. That these lists are now available without a visit to London may be of interest to some of our readers, if they have access to the apparatus needed for microfilm reading. If these prove useful to students a number of other MSS will probably be made available in the same form.

* * * * *

Both the *Twentieth Century* and the *Manchester Guardian* have sympathetically drawn attention to the plight in which many learned societies are now finding themselves. In no other land have they found so congenial and fruitful a soil as in Britain. But today, their resources failing to keep pace with ever rising costs, these indispensable institutions are facing critical problems of which increased membership charges would provide no solution. It is said that government assistance is to be given to those concerned with the physical sciences. What is to happen to those which serve the humanities? "There seems to be a case for an inquiry into the whole position," says a *Manchester Guardian* leader, "and without such delay as may result in some valuable learned societies coming to shipwreck before a remedy has been found." Government aid, which in some circles is now seized upon as the panacea for all ills, might not be accepted by some of these societies without considerable and understandable hesitation. Assistance from some source would, however, appear to be essential if many of these valuable media of knowledge and culture are not to be driven out of existence by economic pressure.

* * * * *

The Bible and Social Justice is the title of a useful booklet of some forty pages (published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, 2s.) recently written by the Historical Society's new vice-president, Dr. Hugh Martin. While admitting that the record of the Christian Church in relation to social justice is somewhat chequered the author claims that the Church is the mother of prophets and pioneers who have roused the consciences of men and crusaded against evils and abuses. Since the Bible never ceases to cry for social justice this, states Dr. Martin, could hardly be otherwise and, choosing examples ranging from Clement of Alexandria to Charles Kingsley, he shows how fidelity to "God's Book of Justice" has inspired men of different lands and ages with a passionate concern for the rule of righteousness in every realm of life including business and politics. Written with that clarity, knowledge and skill which characterise all Dr. Martin's publications, this is a small but useful contribution to the literature of this subject. Baptists will be especially interested in the chapter on William Carey.

* * * * *

Some months before the Baptist World Congress in Cleveland last year, a Commission on the Doctrine of Baptism was appointed, with Rev. E. A. Payne, then of Oxford, and Rev. Johannes Norgaard, of Denmark, as co-chairmen. A preliminary report, a bibliography and questionnaire were prepared and, on presenting the report to the Congress, Mr. Payne delivered an address on "Baptism in Present-Day Theology." These have now been printed in a small but valuable booklet, *The Doctrine of Baptism,* published by the Baptist World Alliance (obtainable from the Carey Kingsgate Press, 6d. plus postage). The report notes the wide and vigorous discussions now taking place on Baptism, welcomes the recognition by theologians of certain truths for which Baptists have contended and invites individuals, groups, churches, unions etc. to submit answers to the questionaire with a view to issuing a fuller report on the basis of the information received. It is to be hoped that this booklet will have a wide circulation, be carefully studied and discussed, and call forth answers from many quarters, thus providing the Commission with ample material for the purpose of the extended report it has in view.

The Baptist Mission Press of Calcutta.

PRINTING was probably first introduced into India by Jesuit missionaries sometime in the sixteenth century. But of the establishment they set up and of those founded later in the time of the East India Company little is known and none exist today. One printing press, however, which was started as early as 1800 is still in active operation. This Press, established and still owned by the Baptist Missionary Society, may therefore rightly be said to have played a part in the introduction of printing in India. It may equally claim to have exerted an influence on the whole printing industry in India.

The Baptist Mission Press of Calcutta is now known throughout the length and breadth of India for the quality of its work, for dependable service, and for a sense of craftsmanship and pride in work well done: all the more so, because India is a country where, generally speaking, the labour is very ignorant—being more than ninety per cent illiterate—and having very little idea of craftsmanship or of pride in the production of first-class work. This Press has one other claim to fame in that it does work in more languages than any other firm in the east, if not in the world: it prints in over forty different languages, and can print in any of the 225 languages of India. The Mission Press at present employs a staff of 150 or more, all of whom are Indian, excepting only the European superintending missionary and his assistant. For this is still a Mission Press although it now does work for anybody on a strictly commercial basis alongside its commitments for missionary bodies to whom it offers special terms.

When William Carey arrived in India in 1793, his first task was to learn Bengali and translate the Scriptures. Such was his energy that his task was accomplished in seven years or less. Then he was faced with the question of printing his translation. The first Bengali types ever used in India were those employed in 1778 in printing Halhed's Bengali Grammar at a press in Hooghly of which no record now remains. The punches for this fount were cut by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Charles Wilkins who went out to India at the age of twenty as a writer for the East India Company. He rapidly mastered Persian and Bengali and actually cut the punches for this first Bengali fount with his own hands. Later he trained an Indian blacksmith named Panchanon,

through whose skill the art of punch-making became domesticated in Bengal. Sir Charles Wilkins has been spoken of as India's Caxton.

All this had been done under the aegis of the East India Company. Carey, however, had been compelled to take refuge in the Danish settlement of Serampore, sixteen miles north of Calcutta, because the Company most definitely disapproved of all efforts to evangelise or educate the Indian people. For this reason, if for no other Carey could not arrange for the printing of his translation of the Bible in any press in Calcutta even if there were any presses capable of undertaking the work. Accordingly the Missionary Society sent out its first trained printer, William Ward, and the first Baptist Mission Press was founded at Serampore, where the New Testament was completed in 1801.

This was printed on a wooden press purchased in Calcutta for £40. When it was first set up crowds of Indians flocked to see it, and hearing Carey's description of its wonderful power, decided it must be a European idol. Carey had originally planned to obtain punches for the type from Caslon "the eminent letter-founder of London" but as each punch would have cost one guinea he was relieved to find, just at that time, that a type foundry had been recently established in Calcutta. Of this foundry nothing is now known.

Despite the handicaps of such primitive equipment and methods and the fact that only one of those engaged in the work was a trained printer, the printing of the first edition of the New Testament in Bengali was completed in nine months. Some of the special difficulties of the task are mentioned in a letter written by Carey at this time :—"The labour is tenfold what it would be in England—printing, writing and spelling in Bengali being all such a new thing. We have in a manner to fix the orthography and my pandit changes his opinion so frequently."

But this first translation was only the beginning. During his lifetime, William Carey personally supervised the following translation work : The whole Bible into Bengali, Hindi, Oriya Marathi, Sanskrit and Assamese; The New Testament and other portions into five other languages; the New Testament only into nineteen other languages; and one or more Gospels into five other languages, a total of thirty-five languages. All these translations were printed by the Press.

The following is a brief extract from a history of the Mission's earliest years published in two volumes in 1859:

"The progress which had been made in the preparation of founts of types in the Oriental languages was also very

satisfactory. In the middle of 1807, the missionaries had completed four founts, which, with the Persian fount received from England, enabled them to print the Scriptures in seven languages. On the ground of economy alone, the importance of the foundry they had established at Serampore will be apparent from a reference to the expense of Oriental founts in London; and at this distance of time it may not be without interest. The Persian fount, which Mr. Fuller had sent out, cost £500. The missionaries had also desired him to ascertain whether Telinga and Nagree founts might not be obtained more cheaply and expeditiously in London, where Fry and Figgins, the eminent founders, had been employed in preparing Oriental punches for the East India Company. Their reply satisfied the missionaries of the wisdom of having made the establishment of a foundry and the training of native artists one of the first objects of their attention at Serampore. Mr. Figgins offered to supply them with 407 matrices for the Telinga, he retaining the punches, for £641. Regarding the Nagree, a consultation was held with Dr. Charles Wilkins, the great Orientalist, who had cut the first Indian types with his own hands thirty years before, and it was found that the punches required for printing in that character might, by various contrivances, be reduced to 300; but the expense of preparing even this contracted fount was estimated at £700. At Serampore the missionaries had been able to obtain from their native workmen a complete fount of Nagree, consisting of 700 characters, for about £100. In the course of the first ten years of their labours the difference between the expense of their own foundry, and the sum which would have been required for the preparation of the founts in London, fell little short of £2,000."[1]

Near Serampore there is still a village called Johnnagar (John's Town) which was originally inhabited by the Christians employed in the cutting of steel punches for all the languages used in the Press. Many of the punches prepared there in the early days are still in the possession of the Calcutta Press.

During this period Joshua Marshman, another of Dr. Carey's Colleagues at Serampore, was engaged in learning Chinese. We are told that the art of printing had been known in China for ten or twelve centuries, but up to the time of which we write the practice had always been to print from hand-cut wooden blocks. It was in India, at the Baptist Mission Press, that the

[1] *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman & Ward,* Vol. 1., p. 420, by J. C. Marshman. Published in 1859 by Longman, Green, Longmans, & Roberts.

first moveable metal types were cast for the Chinese language. Here in 1822, after fourteen years of unremitting toil, Marshman completed the translation and printing of the first complete edition of the Bible in Chinese, which was also the first Chinese work ever to be printed from moveable metal types. It was not until some years later that workers in China realised what had been achieved for them at Serampore.

When the advantage of this mode of printing began to be appreciated by the missionaries in China, one of them wrote thus to Dr. Marshman in the year 1836: "We wish to obtain further particulars about the Chinese printing at Serampore. How are your metallic types made? Have you steel punches? Who are your printers?" About the same time the son of Robert Morrison sent the MS. of his translation of the New Testament to Serampore with the request that it might be printed there for distribution in China. Towards the end of the same year the Roman Catholic vicar apostolic of Cochin China came to Serampore in person to arrange for the printing of his *Anamitic and Latin Dictionary*.[2]

In the early days the Press was engaged solely in printing the missionaries' own translations of the Scriptures, and the grammars and dictionaries they also prepared. It was not then a profit-making concern but was financed by the subscriptions of Christian people in Great Britain. It was therefore a catastrophe of the first order when, in March 1812, the Press was burnt to the ground in a night.

The value of the property destroyed was estimated at £7,000, but the loss of so many copies of the Scriptures and of many years of translation work in the form of manuscripts was incalculable. Fortunately the printing presses were in a side room and therefore escaped. It was even greater good fortune that the punches and matrices for the different languages were found intact under the debris of the fire. Had these been destroyed the work would have been put back for many years.

However, these pioneer missionary printers were no ordinary men. They immediately found new premises, paid their staff up to date and gave them all one month's leave. Then, having salvaged from the ruins the mass of melted type, of which there was about four tons, they handed it over, with the matrices, to the type casters. The number of these was increased and arangements were made for them to work in shifts day and night. They worked with such diligence that at the end of thirty days, complete founts of "the Tamul and the Hindoostanee" were ready, with which to begin work on two versions of the

[2] A copy of this Dictionary, in two volumes, is preserved in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.

New Testament. By the end of that same year, i.e. in less than nine months, the Press was fully restored and all the work which was in progress before the fire, had been restarted. At that time it was reported "Ten presses are working and nearly 200 men are employed about the printing office."

A few years after this, in 1820 to be exact, the first steam engine seen in India was erected in the Baptist Mission Press at Serampore to drive the paper mill. Paper has been made in India from time immemorial, but as it was always sized with rice paste it can readily be imagined how attractive it must have been to the innumerable and ever-hungry insects of India. It is said that, without continual care, the first sheets of work which took any length of time to print were devoured by insects before the last sheets were printed off.

These were the days of the Fourdrinier brothers, who did so much towards the invention and improvement of the paper-making machine, which was then only in its infancy. Therefore, paper made in Europe was only available in India in small quantities and at impossible prices, so for many years efforts were made in the Press at Serampore to produce a paper "impervious to the worm." At one period a treadmill, worked by relays of forty men, was erected to turn the pulping machine. This, however, had to be abandoned, not only because it was cumbrous and expensive, but finally because, after an accident in which one of the workers was killed, it became impossible to find men to operate it owing to the people's superstitious fears.

Coal-mining had very recently been started in the Burdwan district of Bengal, so, coal being available, it was decided to import a 12 h.p. steam engine from Messrs. Thwaites & Rothwell, of Bolton, to take the place of the treadmill. This first steam engine must have caused as much excitement and interest as the first steamer or the first railway engine. Great crowds came to see it at work and the Indians called it "the machine of fire." It is many years now since the Press made its own paper, but those pioneer efforts are commemorated today in a kind of paper still known as Serampore paper and made now in the large mills of the Titaghur Paper Mills Co., which by a strange coincidence are situated on the bank of the river Hooghly almost opposite to Serampore.

In 1813 the Charter, under which the directors of the East India Company ruled India, was so revised as to permit Christian missionaries to settle and to work in the Company's territory. As a result the Baptist Missionaries were able to work freely in Calcutta which even then was the first city in India, whilst Serampore was, comparatively speaking, no more than a village. For this and other reasons a second Mission Press was started

in Calcutta in 1818 and for fifteen years these two Presses, in Serampore and Calcutta, developed side by side. The Calcutta Press was started, on the same site as that on which it now stands, by W. H. Pearce, who had been trained at the Clarendon Press, Oxford. The Serampore Press was eventually closed in 1837, since when the work has continued in the Calcutta Press, which has been in continuous operation since 1818.

The Serampore Press was also responsible for the first ventures in Indian journalism. Despite the government's rigid censorship of news at that time the first newspaper ever printed in any oriental language was printed and published by the Serampore Press in 1818. This was the Bengali weekly *Samachar Darpan* (" Mirror of the News "). About the same time a monthly magazine in English was commenced, entitled *The Friend of India*. This periodical was intended to keep people informed of the progress of the work of the Baptist Mission and other similar societies, engaged in charitable and educational work, in India and elsewhere. *The Friend of India* was printed and published by the Press, first from Serampore and later from Calcutta, until 1897, when it was incorporated in *The Statesman*, which is now the leading English daily for eastern and northern India.

That is the story of the early days of the Baptist Mission Press. Of the intervening period little is known. The most probable explanation is that during the past century there have been none of the startling developments which are counted as history. Historians find it difficult to write interesting chapters about long periods of steady, unexciting growth and gradual development.

With the end of the East India Company in 1858, the year after the Mutiny, printers in Indian attained to a freedom not known before and many printing businesses were started. Other missionary agencies took a hand in translation and made their own arrangements for the printing of the Scriptures. It was also at this period that there arose an increased demand for printing for commercial houses and business firms. So it was that, as its specifically Mission printing decreased in volume, and as improved machinery and methods made a larger output possible, the Baptist Mission Press began to accept work on a commercial basis. The Press nowadays does work for anyone and makes the substantial contribution to the finances of the Baptist Missionary Society of £4,000 or £5,000 each year.

From 1818 until 1941, a period of 123 years, there have been six European missionary superintendents: 1818-1837 Rev. W. H. Pearce; 1837-58 Rev. J. Thomas; 1858-80 Rev. C. B. Lewis; 1881-1901 Rev. J. W. Thomas; 1901-25 Rev. C. H.

Harvey; 1925-41 Rev. P. Knight—all of whom served the Press and the Mission faithfully and well.

The Press is now equipped with fully automatic two-revolution printing presses, and Linotype and Monotype composing machines. Everything is as up-to-date as in an English printing office—as up-to-date as possible, that is, after six years of war. It is no longer necessary to make paper on the premises, but many founts of type for Indian languages are still cast in the Press, some of them probably from punches and matrices which were made in Serampore. The latest development is the adaptation of the Monotype machines to cast Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Hindi, Sanskrit, Marathi, Nepali, Gujerati and Tamil.

The financial contribution made annually to the B.M.S. is by no means the only contribution which the Press makes to the work of the Mission. It is still a Mission Press as much in spirit and purpose as in name, but it does its evangelistic work indirectly now. It may be said to be served by many workers and agencies in the field, or on the other hand it may be regarded as the servant of these same workers and agencies who distribute the printed message prepared by the Press.

One of these co-workers of the Press has a history of almost as many years of service, though in India it has recently been "nationalised" and changed its name. The British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in 1804 and its first work in India was to provide funds to enable Carey, Marshman and Ward to proceed without financial embarrassment, and, therefore, more quickly, with the printing of their translations at the Serampore Press. In 1944 this body changed its name to The Bible Society of India and since then has been controlled in India by a committee, composed largely of Indian Christian leaders of all denominations. The work of the Society is carried on by several "Auxiliaries" or district headquarters in different parts of India, each of which is usually served for its printing by the printers of the immediate neighbourhood. The Calcutta auxiliary of the Society serves a very large area which includes Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Bihar and many language groups in the eastern hills bordering on Burma. In all, this auxiliary alone is responsible for producing and distributing the Scriptures in forty-eight languages. The Baptist Mission Press could print Bibles or Testaments in any of these languages and in 1944 actually had in hand, at one time, orders from the Bible Society for Testaments and Gospels in five different languages.

The Bengali Bible has never been printed elsewhere than at the Baptist Mission Press. The translation now used is no doubt very different from Carey's first translation, but ever since his day the most acceptable version has been the work of Baptists.

Because of this the Bible Society usually arranges to print an edition at the same time as the B.M.S., which results in a considerable economy for both societies. The Bengali Bible in the large type used for the last edition comprises 1,800 pages and 10,000 is the usual edition. The fact that it takes ten years to sell this number, in what is one of the largest provinces in India with a population of 60,000,000 reveals how difficult the work has been, in this province in particular, and how much scope there still is for the Christian evangelist.

The Scripture Gift Mission of London is another of the fellow-workers of the Press. This Mission specialises in the production and distribution of small booklets which consist wholly of Scripture passages without note or comment, except for the addition of headings and well-known hymns. The S.G.M. has depots all over India and circulates these books in forty-one different languages. During 1944-45 the Mission distributed 644,570 Scripture portions in India alone and during the following year printed 411,850 portions in India in eighteen different languages, for six or eight of which the B.M.P. was responsible. The Press also occasionally helps by translating booklets into Bengali, and aids the work of distribution by stocking some of these booklets in its book shop.

The agency through which the Press makes its largest and most direct contribution, however, is the Calcutta Christian Tract and Book Society. This Society, founded in 1823, is representative of all Protestant mission organisations working in Bengal, and is recognised as the Literature Committee of the Bengal Christian Council. The object for which the Society was established is "To supply in various languages tracts for distribution among the Heathen, Mohammedans and others and books of Christian instruction for Schools and for the spiritual good of professing Christians." In this way the Society makes an invaluable contribution to the cause of Christ in Bengal; producing tracts, biographies, commentaries, Sunday school lesson notes, theological books of all kinds, children's Scripture story books, hymn books for Church and School worship, books of prayers and other aids to devotion—all in Bengali and the peculiar form of that language used by Muslims, known as Musalmani Bengali. For this Society the Baptist Mission Press has for many years been the chief printer. Several Press Superintendents have acted as the honorary secretary of the Calcutta Tract Society in their spare time, and there has been some connection between the Press and the Society ever since the foundation of the latter.

Besides being the chief printer for the Tract Society—or the C.T.S., as it is familiarly known—the Press has also for the last twenty years or so been its sole wholesale distributing

agency. On the Press premises is a bookshop where the publications of the C.T.S. and kindred organisations, such as the S.G.M. are on view. To this bookshop may come as many as twenty or thirty Christian workers in a day to buy books for presents or prizes, books for their scholars, or tracts for free distribution. But the largest sales are by post and railway parcels to missionaries in the country districts all over Bengal. One missionary may order books to the value of Rs. 150 at a time—and that represents a large number of copies when the average price of a book is two or three annas only.

Since 1939 the consistent increase in annual production and sales which was evident before the war, for various obvious reasons, has not been regularly maintained, but a few figures may be given which are themselves convincing proof of the value of the direct contribution made to the work of evangelisation in Bengal by this joint effort of the Press and the C.T.S.

In the five years 1937-41 (before the shortage of paper was really felt in India) the Press printed for the C.T.S. a total of 715,000 tracts and 123,000 books and during the same period sold from the bookshop 546,525 tracts and 130,103 books to a total value of Rs. 12,214. These books go to schools and colleges all over Bengal. They are sold in the fields, on the railway stations, on the river steamers of East Bengal, in the great *melas* or religious festivals of Hindus and Muslims. Wherever men are willing to receive instruction there are books for them bearing the imprint of the Baptist Mission Press.

So the Press is still an influential force in the work for Christ and His Kingdom. Although it works indirectly it is nevertheless as potent an evangelistic agency as any other institution. The workers in the munition factories rarely win great honours, but without their efforts the war could not be won. The Press prepares the munitions for this Holy War and more and more munitions will be required. Everywhere adults are learning to read, and great plans are afoot for the education of the four hundred millions of India. How shall they read unless they have books, and how shall they learn from their reading unless they have books of the right type? Here, truly, "a great door and effectual is opened unto us," through which the Christian Gospel may be preached to India. Apart from that, the need of the Christian community for more books and good periodicals in their own language is greater than can be described.

GEO. E. BINGHAM.

Rev. Micah Thomas, Abergavenny, 1778-1853.

THE references to Micah Thomas in the *Baptist Quarterly* of October 1950, and January 1951, suggest that some account of his eminently useful life may be timely.

Too little is known of his boyhood and early manhood, but the following facts have been ascertained. He was born in the parish of Whitson, Monmouthshire, on February 19th, 1778, the son of a respected farmer who was a member of New Inn Independent Church on the outskirts of Pontypool. Later on, while he was still young, his parents removed to a farm in the parish of Llangibby and the boy was sent to a school at Tredunnock. He remained there for several years and it seems that he did so well and evinced such bookish tastes that he was sent on to another school, at Trosnant, Pontypool. The master of his first, and perhaps of his second, school was an Anglican clergyman.

When Micah Thomas was seventeen years of age (1795) he was baptised and received into membership at Penygarn Welsh Baptist Church, Pontypool, and in the following year he began to preach. We cannot but wish that we knew the workings of his mind at this decisive period of his life—just how and why he was led to become a Baptist and then a preacher of the Gospel. He was certainly a debtor to the piety and consideration of his parents. We are also ignorant of what he did for a livelihood after he left school and before he entered Bristol Baptist College. It is possible, even probable, that he helped his father on the farm.

Dr. E. J. Tongue has kindly copied for the present writer the following extract from the Bristol Baptist College minutes for August 5th, 1801: "Mr. Micah Thomas from the Church at Pen-y-garn was admitted into the Academy at Christmas (1800) under the patronage of the London Fund." He was there, under Dr. John Ryland, for less than two years, but the College has good reason to rank him with the more distinguished of its alumni.

On September 29th, 1802, he was ordained to the ministry at Ryeford, near Ross, Herefordshire, where he had often preached during his College course. Bristol and Ryeford proved to be real, but as yet unrealised, preparations for his life work in Abergavenny.

The need of a better educated and trained ministry had long been apparent to some of the more judicious and far-seeing Welsh Baptists. In this matter the Presbyterians and Independents were ahead of us, and it was not until some time between 1732 and 1736 (say, 1734) that action was taken. An Academy was set up at Trosnant, Pontypool, by Miles Harry, minister of Penygarn, and his devout and capable brother-in-law, Mr. John Griffiths, who was the manager of Pontypool Iron Works. John Griffiths was probably the prime mover in the enterprise. This Academy did good service for several years and some of its students became eminent. Many of them proceeded to Bristol for further and fuller instruction under Bernard Foskett and, perhaps Hugh Evans. Just when it was closed is extremely doubtful. The commonly accepted date is 1770, but it was probably much earlier. John Griffiths emigrated to America in 1759, and it is unlikely that it survived for more than a few years after his departure. Joshua Thomas, the Welsh Baptist historian, suggests 1761, and he estimates the number of students as twenty-five in all. Another estimate is forty. Even so, Trosnant is to be remembered with no little gratitude. Among its students were Evan Jenkins, Wrexham (father of Dr. Joseph Jenkins, Walworth), Timothy Thomas, Aberduar, Dr. Thomas Llewelyn London, Morgan Edwards, historian of American Bapists and one of the founders of Brown University, Rhode Island, and Benjamin Francis, Horsley.

Thereafter, until 1807, such Baptists as sought ministerial education mostly went to Bristol. They were drawn thither, presumably, not only by its educational standing, but by its proximity to Wales and by the Welsh sympathies of Hugh and Caleb Evans. But Welshmen at Bristol were apt to settle in England, and it was increasingly felt that Wales required a college of its own. "Undoubtedly the question was discussed by many at divers times and places," wrote the late Dr. E. K. Jones, "but the first mention of doing something practical was at the house of John Harris, Abergavenny. Mrs. Harris was the daughter of Caleb Harris, once minister of Llanwenarth. She and her daughters, while talking the matter over, were joined by Mr. Isaac Wyke, a surgeon . . . Mr Wyke suggested an academy. Another account credits Micah Thomas with making the suggestion to Mrs. Harris. The matter was discussed at length and brought the following day before the Association at Penygarn, and approved of. Mrs. Harris journeyed to Bristol to collect towards this new academy and received, amongst others, a donation of £10 from the widow of Dr. Caleb Evans. Great preparations were being made in 1805 and 1806. A committee was appointed; the Rev. Micah Thomas was elected tutor; the

location was fixed at Abergavenny; and the academy was opened with one student, Jonathan Davies, of Capel Iwan, Carmarthenshire, on January 1st, 1807. Two others entered in February." [1]

So, Micah Thomas left Ryeford in order to become tutor of the Abergavenny Academy—conceived and planned but barely established. But he also became minister of a new English Baptist Church now, and long since, known as Frogmore Street. This church, founded in that year, 1807, worshipped in Tudor Street Welsh Baptist Chapel (built in 1769 as an offshoot of Llanwenarth) until its chapel was opened in Frogmore Street in 1816. The present building is a much later structure, but the old chapel, renovated, is in regular use for the Sunday school and weekday activities. The church prospered under his ministry, notwithstanding the regrettable secession (probably on doctrinal grounds) of those who founded Bethany, Abergavenny in 1827 or 1828. With increasing honour and a commanding influence he retained its pastorate until his death on November 28th, 1853, and his body was laid to rest in its burial-ground.

It is not clear whether the idea of an English church was conceived before Micah Thomas actually went to Abergavenny or whether he was one of its founders after he had settled in the town as tutor of the Academy. Perhaps the situation was similar to the one at Pontypool, when the Rev. (later Dr.) Thomas Thomas, London, was invited to become President of the proposed new College in 1836 and also minister of an English Baptist church (now known as Crane Street) which was to be formed after his arrival.

Under Micah Thomas's capable rule the Academy grew in strength, usefulness and influence. It was never a large institution and its curriculum was necessarily modest, but it fully justified its existence. More than that, it marked an important stage in the development of Baptist ministerial education in Wales. The over-all number of its students was 103 (perhaps 106)—in twenty-nine years—but many of them were men of outstanding ability and future leaders of the denomination. Three of them subsequently became Principals (or Presidents as they were then called) of the three new colleges of Pontypool, Haverfordwest and Llangollen: Dr. Thomas Thomas, David Davies and Dr. John Pritchard. Some Abergavenny students pursued further studies at an English college, e.g. Dr. Thomas proceeded to Stepney.

The students lived in rented rooms in the town and went to Micah Thomas's home, Aenon House, for lectures etc. Pontypool was a residential college and one is glad that its

[1] *The Baptists of Wales and Ministerial Education*, pp. 14, 15.

successor in Cardiff has decided "longo intervallo" to follow its good example.

Inevitably Micah Thomas had his recurring difficulties, some of them trivial and others more serious. There were criticisms of his administration and discipline, but most serious were the charges against his doctrinal teaching. It was declared, quite wrongly, that he was an "Arminian," than which few "heresies" were so obnoxious to contemporary Welsh Baptists—not least in some Monmouthshire churches. Matters came to a head in the early thirties, when several students left and were put under the care of William Jones, minister of Bethany, Cardiff. But Micah Thomas was not the man to be deterred by difficulties or to be diverted from his cherished ideals of truth and duty, and he continued his work. When he resigned, early in 1836, it was chiefly because of ill-health. In 1828 he had undergone an operation in London, and at last the exacting demands of his two offices of tutor and minister proved too much for his strength.

On March 9th, 1836, a committee, convened for consideration of the future of the Academy, decided to transfer to Pontypool and to house it in a worthy building. This was done, and on a scale and with a success which probably exceeded the best hopes of its original promoters. Nevertheless the subsequent achievements of Pontypool owed much to the hard pioneer work at Abergavenny.

Micah Thomas's portrait hangs in Cardiff Baptist College. It gives a clear indication of size and quality. Physically tall (six feet) and upright of carriage, carefully but not fastidiously dressed, his features (high forehead and firm mouth) reveal a man of alert intelligence and of resolute, even masterful, will. Obviously he had that "decision of character" which John Foster, whom he must have known, commended so eloquently in his once-celebrated essay.

What of his scholarship and of his ability as tutor and preacher? The evidence is too meagre for confident judgment. He had a competent working knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew and we are told that he was a man of "wide reading." His contemporaries adjudged him "an able theologian, a cultured and independent thinker, and an erudite and accurate scholar." Theologically he was a qualified Calvinist, more or less of the school of Andrew Fuller. As a tutor, "he knew how to rule without taking on him to be severe." As a preacher, he was scriptural and expository, working out his theme with logical precision and thoroughness, but in language rather above the understanding of the rank and file of his congregation. His preaching is described as "excellent" and varied. As a pastor, he was kind and sympathetic, and generous to the poor and needy.

Also, he could be forthright and straight, as occasion required. He was a convinced Baptist, ever ready to affirm and defend our distinctive principles, but he was no sectarian. One of his close friends was William Powell, Vicar of St. Mary's, Abergavenny, who attended his funeral. Above all, he was a devout and earnest Christian, who sought the spread of the Gospel at home and overseas. He was a staunch promoter of the missionary interest.

Micah Thomas's political and social sympathies have been made evident in a letter which he wrote to the Marquis of Normanby after the Chartist riots. This letter is to be found among the Chartist papers in Newport Public Library, but it was published (for the first time) by Professor David Williams, Aberystwyth, in the *Transactions of the Welsh Baptist Historical Society* for 1950. The rioting at Newport on November 4th, 1839 had resulted in a sentence of death being passed at Monmouth Assizes upon John Frost and two other Chartist leaders. Micah Thomas pleaded strongly for mercy. His plea was partly, but not wholly, succesful and Lord Normanby was at pains to inform him that the government had decided to commute the sentence to one of transportation for life. This episode, whilst revealing his sensitiveness to social issues, serves also to suggest his standing and influence in the public life of Monmouthshire.

Micah Thomas was married twice :—to Sarah Wall, of Ross, and then to Rachel Harries, daughter of John Harries of Govilon, son of Morgan Harries, minister of Blaenau Gwent.

So far as the present writer is aware, Micah Thomas published nothing except three sermons, copies of which are in Newport Public Library: (1) *The Error and the Delusion and Destructive Tendency of Infant Sprinkling practised as Christian Baptism* (1841); (2) *Infant Christening falsely called Baptism Explained in its Nature and Basis, chiefly in its Evil Workings* (1842); (3) *The Important Claims of Ministerial and Pastoral Conduct*—addressed to the students at the annual meeting of Pontypool Baptist Theological Institution, July 26th, 1843. Bristol Baptist College library possesses five of his MS. sermons, presented by S. R. Young, minister of Bethany, Abergavenny, in 1893. He preached to the students of his old college at a service held in Old King Street Chapel on June 24th, 1846. His text was 2 *Cor. v.* 18-20. Micah Thomas, it seems to the present writer, would wish for no other office, and no other remembrance, than that of an ambassador for Christ, seeking to exercise an entrusted ministry of reconciliation.

E. W. PRICE EVANS.

William Knibb to Charles Stovel.

A HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED LETTER.

KETTERING, TRELAWNEY,
JAMAICA.
May 31st, 1843.

MY dear Brother,

Your sympathetic letter was truly welcome though it opened afresh the yet bleeding wounds inflicted in the sudden removal of my fourth and only son. He was a lovely child, and bade fair to be a useful man, but he is gone, and I dare not repine. His sweet tones when he sang the praises of God still are music in my ears, while his manly enquiries I still think on with fond affection. Though not six years of age, in all that concerned liberty or the Mission or the family he took the deepest interest, while his little heart bounded with joy whenever he could alleviate woe. But he is gone and for the present deeply do we feel his loss. But while I thus feel, I know it is right, nor would I have it otherwise, contrary to the will of God, for 10,000 worlds. My dear wife, with an impaired constitution and my youngest child suffering from the effects of scarlet fever, have left for England, so that I am quite alone as far as my domestic arrangements are concerned. For nineteen years has she lived on behalf of the down-trodden slave, and I hope that amidst the sympathies of Christian friends she will by the blessing of God receive that renovation of strength which will enable her to return and again with me pursue the labour of love in which we are engaged. I scarcely know how to account for the feeling, but in the last 6 months or more I have had an impression that my heavenly father is inviting me to some other sphere of labour at least for a season; and that he has taken my children to himself that I might follow where he leads. Should the call of providence be plain I shall follow it, though it will be the heaviest trial I have ever borne as a Missionary, as I shall have to sever from a Church entwined around my heart and disposed to impart every comfort they can give. I think I owe to my God any sacrifice I can make, and I pray for grace cheerfully to make it. The following are my ideas. I think that it is almost essential to the wellbeing and extension of our Mission in the neighbouring Islands, on the Spanish Main, and in Africa for someone to spend his time in visiting them, going for instance to the islands, and to Africa and if necessary now and then to England

so that the most efficient plans and co-operation may be carried on, and I have never wished for the means of doing good by hav[g] money at my disposal, until this scheme suggested itself to my mind. I shall wait the dispensations of providence, and if the Cloud arises I shall follow it; if not, cheerfully I remain here. Each journey round to the stations including Africa would occupy about 3 years, it would be a self-denying dangerous enterprise, but with these matters we have nothing to do but to obey. Thus saith the Lord is quite enough or ought to be for every Christian.

We are at peace here among ourselves though at war with all besides, and now that our Churches are multiplied, so that the numbers are better proportioned, while more errors are detected, more good is effected. Our Schools too are beginning to yield fruit unto God. The Church at Falmouth has recently dismissed 300 of her members to form a new church and I expect to dismiss about 200 others to form or assist another church. This will make the 8th draft in 9 years, a very fair proof of the falsity of the charge that we grasp after the multitude to obtain their money. When I came to this station I was the only miss[y] in it of our denomination, there was no chapel, no school, no Bibles. In 10 years there have been erected 8 Chapels with nearly as many schoolrooms, there are 8 churches, 9 day and Sabbath schools, 5 Missionaries and 2 who regularly preach the word of life. I have now 5 day schools and 4 Sabbath schools and at the Sabbath school at Refuge we have seldom less than 500 children present. The salaries of all fall upon me and amount to full 900 sterling per annum besides all the other expenses connected with the carrying on of the work. Hitherto the Lord has helped us, and I hope will yet evince his amazing condescension in employing us in his service. I am now erecting the rooms for the students at the Theological Institution, and tomorrow the first applicants will be examined for entrance. We have some interesting young men, and my heart yearns over them with the fondness of a parent's heart. If I do but live to see them able ministers of Christ my heart shall rejoice, even mine. One of the native Baptists a Mr. Duggan has left to be present at the Anti Slavery Convention. He is I believe a good man, and I hope will not be either slighted or made too much of in England. Some of us are desirous in uniting with the best of the native Baptists, feeling assured that they are good men and I hope we shall be able to accomplish it.

That the God of all grace may abundantly bless you is the earnest desire of

Your affectionate Brother,
WILLIAM KNIBB.

The original of this letter, now in my possession, is in an excellent state of preservation. Charles Stovel, to whom it was written, became minister of the famous Baptist church meeting in Little Prescot Street, London, in 1832. Under his leadership new premises were erected in Commercial Street in 1854-55 and there Stovel continued to minister until his death in 1883. He was twice President of the Baptist Union and a notable protagonist of Nonconformity. He took a prominent part in the agitation for slave emancipation and was one of William Knibb's closest associates in this country. Some details of their first contact in 1832 are given in the writer's *Freedom in Jamaica,* 1946 edition, pp. 376.

Knibb was in England in the spring of 1842. He shared in the celebration of the jubilee of the Baptist Missionary Society and gave evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on conditions in the West Indies. On his return to Jamaica, he found his wife in a serious state of health and in March, 1843 his little boy, Coultart, died. The child had been named after one of his colleagues. Knibb had already lost three boys. His daughters, Catherine and Ann, he had left in England. The opening part of the letter printed above is similar to one which Knibb wrote a little earlier to another English friend, Dr. James Hoby, part of which is printed in J. H. Hinton's *Memoir of William Knibb,* 1847, p. 455. Mrs. Knibb had left for England with her youngest child a few days before Knibb's letter to Stovel.

The letter is of special interest for the indications it gives of the sense of an impending change that had come over Knibb, his hints at a wider itinerating ministry which might include the projected mission to Africa, and the references to the establishment of Calabar College. A letter he wrote in July 1843 to Joseph Angus, then B.M.S. Secretary, speaks of a possible visit to America (see Hinton, *op. cit., p.* 460). But Knibb became himself seriously ill in August. At the end of the year there was the excitement of the arrival of the *Chilmark* from England and her setting out again with the party of Jamaicans destined for Fernando Po. In 1844 conditions in Jamaica were very difficult and Knibb was heavily engaged in responsibilities of various kinds in the island. Early the next year he paid his fourth visit to England. It lasted from April to July. Within four months of his return to Jamaica with his wife he was stricken down with yellow fever and on November 15th passed away, at the early age of forty-two.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

The Union Church at Launceston, Cornwall.

THE recent union of the Baptist and Congregational Churches at Launceston is really the outcome of their relations over a long period. Their history has been curiously intertwined, as might be expected in a small and isolated township, but this fact has not always been recognised. It seems, therefore, an opportune moment to give some account of their story. In general, three periods can be broadly described. The earliest of these, which deals with the origins, is predominantly Presbyterian in character; the second sees both Baptist and Congregational churches founded, but the latter cause alone thriving; the most recent period has seen a revival of the Baptists and a marked decline of the Congregational church, concluding with the present union.

The first, Presbyterian, period can be traced back with certainty to 1637, although at an earlier date there are hints of Puritan influences in the town. Gasper Hicks, the vicar of St. Mary Magdalene in 1630 was a Presbyterian, later to be ejected from the living at Landrake.[1] In 1637 William Crompton came to St. Mary's from Barnstaple, twenty-five miles to the North in Devonshire, where he had been "a lecturer." "He was much followed and admired by the puritanical people of that place and in the neighbourhood; but his doctrine being not esteemed by many orthodox, or as those of his persuasion say, that he was envied by the vicar thereof, because he was better beloved than him, he was forced thence, by the diocesan and ecclesiastical power, and thereupon receiving *a quick call* he removed to Launceston in Cornwall, where being a preacher in the church of St. Mary Magdalene, he continued in good estimation among the precise people about four years, and then to their grief he was untimely snatched away by death in the prime of his years."[2] His son followed his father's opinions, and according to Wood was afterwards an eminent Nonconformist in Devonshire, being ejected later from the church at Cullompton.

Crompton died in 1642, and for six years there was no continuing minister. A successor was appointed in 1648, when the name of Joseph Hull first appears in the parish register as clerk.

[1] A. G. Mathews; *Calamy Revised,* Oxford, p. 260.

[2] Wood, Anthony, *Athenae Oxienses* ed. Bliss 1813, Vol. III, p. 23.

Hull had been born in Crewkerne, Somerset, and was rector of Northleigh, Devonshire from 1621 to 1635, when he emigrated to New England with his (second?) wife and seven children. He did not settle down, and after several moves returned to England and came to Launceston.[3] The following year, on January 23rd, 1649, "was baptised Rubin son of Joseph Hull, Clarke" and a similar entry follows at almost yearly intervals until 1654, when the birth (not the baptism), of John Hull is recorded on November 25th. Soon after this Hull left Launceston, because of his growing family; John Tingecombe wrote of him: "'Tis hoped the man is godly. He has a very greate charge of children neare twenty. Some say more." A later hand has tampered with the name of his son born in 1651, and other entries directed against Puritans in the same hand suggest that Hull was a Puritan. Other proof of this comes from the fact that the Council of State in October 30th, 1655, approved an Augmentation of £50 certified by the Trustees for the maintenance of Ministers to Jos. Hull, minister of Launceston, co. Cornwall."[4]

He was succeeded by William Oliver, another Presbyterian. Oliver, whose father was a gentleman of the county, had received a liberal education. He was a "critic in the Latin and Greek tongues, for which and his other excellencies he obtained a Fellowship in Exeter College, from which he removed to take the pastoral charge (of Launceston). He was a good scholar and an excellent preacher, for which he was valued by the gentry of Cornwall and Devon."[5] He did not escape criticism in Launceston, for in 1661 Peter Blewett gave securities for good behaviour "for having said that Mr. William Oliver, minister of this town, was a base rogue."[6] His appointment is interesting; a manuscript at Lambeth Palace gives a memorandum that on December 10th, 1656, "there was shown to the commissioner on approbation of public preachers, a nomination by the Mayor and Commonalty of Launceston of Mr. William Oliver, to the curacy of the Parish Church of Launceston."[7]

This can but reflect the influence of the Puritans in the town at the time. One local celebrity was well known for this point of view. Thomas Gewen, of Bradbridge, in the nearby parish of Boyton, a former auditor to the Duchy of Cornwall, was elected to Parliament in 1647, although later, through his frequent opposition to the military party, he was excluded in "Pride's

[3] *Calamy Revised*, 283.

[4] Domestic State Papers, 1655, p. 402 quoted Robbins *Launceston Past and Present*. Launceston, 1888, p. 195.

[5] *Edmund Calamy, Abridgement* 2nd ed. 1713, Vol. 2 p. 147.

[6] R. & O. B. Peter; *The Histories of Launceston & Dunheved*, Plymouth, 1885, p. 320.

[7] Peter, *Ibid*, 320.

Purge." He had strongly advocated a Cromwellian monarchy and a House of Lords, had sought the exclusion of the Bishops from Parliament, "a stricter observance of the Sabbath, the abolition of ceremonies unwarranted by Scripture, and the provision of able and laborious ministers of religion." He was a shrewd man, well trained in administration, and a member of various Parliamentary committees in Cornwall.[8, 9] But he shared the common prejudice against the Quakers, and must be held partly responsible for the imprisonment and suffering which George Fox endured in Launceston Castle.

Fox, with his two companions, Pyot and Salt, had been arrested at St. Ives for distributing religious tracts, and brought to Launceston to await the March assizes in nine weeks' time. Their trial proved to be a farce, and the conviction resulting in their imprisonment was the technical one of not removing their hats in court. Yet the six months they suffered in Doomsdale was the worst imprisonment Fox was to endure, his suffering being intensified by the indescribable filth of the prison. Fox describes the horror of it both in his Journal, and more fully in the pamphlet he afterwards published.[10] Fox thought the inhabitants "dark and darkened" and in vain did he protest against the vanity and love of sport in the town, seen displayed on the bowling green adjacent to the prison.

Sewel, Fox's biographer, describing the gaoler—a former criminal, writes: "It was not at all strange then, that the prisoners suffered most grievously from such a wicked crew; but it was more to be wondered at that Colonel Bennet(t), a Baptist Teacher, having purchased the gaol and the lands belonging to the Castle, had there placed this head gaoler."[11] Bennett was obviously impatient of the Quakers, although he ultimately released the three men unconditionally on September 9th, 1566, without payment of the fees to their brutal gaoler, "and so as innocently they came out of prison, as innocently they were put in."[12] Fox left behind him in Launceston a "Little remnant of friends that has been raised up here while he was in prison, whom he visited when he returned to town a very short while after his liberation." The subsequent story of the group is not known, but it seems that it did not survive for long.

[8] Robbins, *Ibid,* pps. 187, 189, 205-209.
[9] Mary Coate, *Cornwall in the Great Civil War,* pps. 29, 225.
[10] George Fox; *The West Answering to the North* . . . London 1657. A recent description is in W. C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism,* London 1912, pps. 232-240.
[11] Sewel, W. *Hist. of the Rise, Increase . . . of the . . . Quakers* . . . London 1722, p. 128 (Sewel's source is Fox's Journal, where Fox describes Bennett as a Baptist teacher, but expresses no surprise at his act.)
[12] Fox, *ibid,* 126.

Colonel Robert Bennett, to whom they referred, was a local man of considerable prominence. He was born at Hexworthy, in the adjacent parish of Lawhitton, and his father, Richard Bennett, who died when Robert was only fifteen, had been a Counsellor-at-Law. Robert Bennett was named in 1643 as commanding 1,200 foot and 300 horsemen from Cromwell at Torrington, but his effort there to surprise Colonel Digby was defeated. In 1646 Cromwell is reputed to have spent three days with Bennett at Hexworthy—which is quite possible, since Bennett was one of Cromwell's trusted advisers. 1649 sees him defending the trial of the king, justifying it before Truro Quarter Session by "an appeal to scripture, law, history and reason." In 1653 he was a member of the Council of State of thirteen, and the next year he was one of Cornwall's Members of Parliament. In local life he was an Alderman and a Justice of the Peace. While his civil and military career is fairly well known, nothing has yet been discovered to shed any light on Fox's description of him as a Baptist. Hitherto there is no trace of Baptist influence in this part of Cornwall. "Possibly there were a few Anabaptists and Brownists in Cornwall, but there is no evidence of an Anabaptist Congregation in Cornwall such as the community in Tiverton in 1626."[13] On the other hand the Civil War had brought many new influences in its train. Dr. Whitley emphasised the part the Army played in spreading Baptist Doctrine. "Many a garrison town heard preaching by Baptist officers, to the scandal of the clergy and even of their own commanders . . . The Army was mobile, and it is instructive to study the rise of Baptist Churches where regiments were quartered."[14]

But in Launceston, in spite of Bennett no church seemed to have been formed, and it would seem that in this small community there was but little scope for Baptists where the Presbyterian forces were strongly entrenched. The Restoration deprived Bennett of his seat in Parliament. He retired to Hexworthy until his death on July 6th, 1683, at the age of seventy-nine. His finely carved slate tomb-stone was found in recent years in a neglected part of Lawhitton Churchyard, and is now fixed to the South Wall of the Church interior. Gewen on the other hand was in favour, and was replaced in his office under the Duchy of Cornwall, but shortly afterwards died.

With the Restoration came other changes. William Oliver, the minister of St. Mary's Parish Church, had been outstanding in Presbyterian circles, as the frequency of his name in the minutes

[13] Mary Coates, *ibid*, 325.
[14] W. T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists;* London, 1932, p. 74.

of the Cornwall "Classic" suggests.[15] But with the Act of Uniformity Oliver was ejected, though he remained active in the district. It seems as if he continued to gather a congregation around him, preaching in unlicensed places. In an isolated community such as Launceston the penalties for this might be defied if the local authorities were sympathetic, as indeed they might have been. The Secretary of State to Charles II was Sir William Morrice, another Presbyterian, who lived in the near-by parish of Werrington, and through his influence a pension was secured for the support of Oliver and his family.[16] Yet there is a hint of their suffering given in the parish records, for William, son of William Oliver, (born on July 31, 1658), was buried on April 29, 1664 "in the little yard." Oliver is still described in the entry as "Clarke" although afterwards this was partly deleted.

A few years later, on 22nd April, 1672, John Hicks, who was a Puritan Mayor during the time of the Commonwealth, applied for a license for "William Oliver, of Dutson, near Launceston, Presbyterian" and an indulgence had already been granted to him. Oliver had in fact taken the "Oxford Oath" in 1666,[17] and thus escaped the penalties of the Five Mile Act which fell on those unwilling to declare that they abhorred resistance to the King and would not seek an alteration in the government of Church or State. Soon after this a census showed that there were thirteen Nonconformists in the town, as well as some Quakers who had been in the town gaol for many years.[18] Oliver kept a school in the town, bred many good scholars, and died a Lay Conformist.

Subsequently a tablet was placed in the South-East corner of the Church from which he had been ejected to commemorate him.

GULIEMUS OLIVARIUS
ART^UM MAG^R
COLLEG. EXONIENS OXON ALI —
QUANDON SOCIUS HUIUS ECCLESIAE
NON ITA PRIDUM PASTOR.
DEMUM AUTEM
REGIAE HEIC LOCI SCHOLAE LIBERAE
RECTR CUJUS IN PULVERI DESUDANS
PTHISI EST EXTINCTUS
NATUS 27° 9 ris ANO DOM 1627
DENATUS 6° JULIJ ANO DOM 1681.

[15] Printed in Chetham Society new series vol. lxli. 1896. Part II.
[16] Mathews *Calamy Revised* 373.
[17] *ibid* 375.
[18] Robbins, reported in the *Launceston Weekly News* 30.11.1912.

("William Oliver, Master of Arts, Sometime fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and not long since Pastor of this church, but recently Master of the Royal Free School in this place, sweating in the dust of which he died of consumption.")

The death of Oliver did not mean the end of Puritan influence. The Parish Register of St. Thomas the Apostle, Launceston (an adjacent parish not half a mile from St. Mary's) has some entries concerning a Robert Gill. In January 1695, he buried his wife Jane, but remarried in October of the following year, and on January 12th, 1697, "Robert Gill and Mary, his wife, has a daughter baptised Mary by a dissenting minister"—the last four words in a later hand. A similar entry on January 22, 1699, records the baptism of their son, Robert, "by a dissenting minister." Who this minister was is not known, although recently the records of the Cockermouth Church have shown that in 1694, thirteen years after Oliver's death, there was a church in Launceston whose minister was Deliverance Larkham. Deliverance Larkham was grandson of Thomas Larkham, vicar of the neighbouring town of Tavistock (from 1648 until ejected in 1660) and first minister of the Tavistock Congregational Church. George, Thomas Larkham's son, was first minister of the Congregational Church at Cockermouth which Thomas Larkham had founded while still holding the living at Tavistock. Deliverance, George Larkham's son, was born there in 1658. Sent to London for better education in 1667, he was received into the Cockermouth church in 1681 which in 1694 called him as assistant for his now ageing father. But on July 22 "The Pastor received a letter from the people at Launceston which manifested they had chosen him called by them namely, Mr. Deliverance Larkham, for their pastor. Wherefore they desired to keep him with them." The following year Larkham promised to come to Cockermouth, but finally changed his plans, and left Launceston for Lancaster.

The Presbyterian church at Launceston was again without a minister in 1705, for a copy of a letter dated Nov. 5th of that year is recorded in the Church Book (begun in 1790). The copy appears to have been made about 1830.

> "Revd. Sir,
> We whose names are underwritten, knowing that you are not ignorant of our cause, And how calamitous it is like to be upon the removal of the Rev. M. Berry, unless some other suitable supply may be obtained, do hereby make it our earnest request to you that you would be pleased to favour us with your presence and Ministerial Labours. . . ."

It is not known whether the un-named recipient accepted the invitation. M. Berry who was leaving may have been related to either Harry, Benjamin, or Henry Berry—all ejected ministers

and active Nonconformists in the West. Henry Berry had in fact lived not far away at Torrington, in Devon, from 1690 to 1744, where he died and was buried, having "ministered to a numerous people, but very poor." The authenticity of the letter, which was signed by forty men, is guaranteed by a number of their names appearing in the local parish registers of the period. The list includes Robert Gill, Edward Bennett and Thomas Oliver.

Edward Bennett was the grandson of Robert Bennett. His father, William, who died in 1704, left £120 to erect "a convenient meeting-house for the ordinary and most common use of entertaining a Congregation of Dissenters from the Church of England, as were commonly called Presbyterian." The land was purchased for this in 1707, and the church built and opened in 1712.[19] The present Union church stands on this site, and its main structure is substantially that erected in 1712.

Once the meeting-house was built, the church grew under the ministry of Rev. Michael Martin, who had been ordained by the Exeter Presbyterian Assembly[20] on June 28th, 1694 and was financially assisted while in Launceston by an annual grant of £6 from the Presbyterian Fund in London. Within a few years the Congregation included 130 "hearers" amongst whom were five county and five borough voters, while the actual membership of the church consisted of three gentlemen, fourteen tradesmen, five yeomen and ten labourers. Yet the life of the church could not have been easy, even though there were neighbouring churches at Tavistock, Okehampton, and Holsworthy. The town was strongly Tory, and Nonconformists did not flourish in such an atmosphere. There was much to harden and coarsen the inhabitants of the town; criminals were still publicly hung on Castle Green, only 100 yards from the church, while for lesser offences women as well as men were flogged through the streets behind a cart.

Martin, who later left for Lympstone, was succeeded by Rev. William Tucker. He, however, removed to St. Ives in 1728, and Martin then returned to Launceston, remaining there until his death in 1745. In his will he left £50 for the church, and a further £10 for a neighbouring church at Hatherleigh. But the cause was declining; no minister was appointed to succeed him, although a Mr. George Castle occasionally preached. Eventually the meeting-house was closed, and Richard Coffin—heir of Edward Bennett, sold the property to a local clothier.

So it was that the early Presbyterian Church, whose roots

[19] Most of the legal documents are reproduced in R. & O. Peter; *Histories of Launceston and Dunheved, p.* 332.

[20] The Evans List; Dr. Williams Library.

are to be sought in the Puritanism active in Cornwall in the early 17th century, and which from this obscure beginning became a separate reality by the leadership of William Oliver after the events of 1662, found strength to survive the first hazards of its career, securing its own building, partly because of the help of the Bennett family with its Baptist sympathies. Yet, once the first perils had been passed, decline set in. Was Oliver, the founder, at fault, for having courage, yet not courage sufficient to go on striving for reforms as others did? Or was the church too prone after all to follow the fashions of the day? Did some wooing voice succeed in undermining their dissent? Or were the church leaders led to conform by hope of their securing public office in this ancient borough, then the capital town of Cornwall? All we know is the church suffered the fate of others at this time, and its life seemed ingloriously to have ended.

But by now a fresh wind was blowing in the religious life of the land. In 1743 Wesley was evangelising in Cornwall and George Whitefield in Devonshire. Wesley's first visit to Launceston was in 1747, and he paid a number of visits subsequently. By the time of his last visit in 1789 a chapel had been built which on that particular day was too small to accommodate the congregation which came to hear him. Yet despite the astonishing growth of Methodism in Cornwall, it did not completely take the place of the lapsed Presbyterian churches, and in Launceston itself the heritage of the earlier Dissenters was not to be lost to their more direct heirs.

KENNETH E. HYDE.

(To be continued.)

Christianity and Nationalism.

NATIONALISM the Little Oxford Dictionary defines as patriotic feeling or efforts on behalf of one's country, and in that broader sense, there is nothing new about the phenomenon of nationalism. There can hardly have been a time in recorded history when man has not taken a special pride in his own particular tribe or territory and exerted himself on its behalf.

Perhaps the most moving book inspired by the spirit of nationalism is the Old Testament, with its record of a small and intensely self-conscious nation surrounded by hostile tribes and aggressive empires. Sometimes the nationalist spirit in Israel inspired men to deeds of the most sublime courage and words of the utmost beauty; Sometimes it dragged them down to the basest cruelty and selfishness. But there are just two things which it is important to remember in connection with the nationalism of Israel. Although at the outset God was envisaged as the particular Deity of the tribe and although men frequently reverted to that belief even during later stages of the nation's development, never once do we find the nation identified with God in such a way that the nation or state is itself regarded as God, with the power of life and death over its members. The idea that the nation was itself divine was a refinement of the nationalist spirit which was to come much later in the history of mankind. Secondly, because Israel's discovery of God was a progressive one, certain Jews came gradually to see that their love of their country and their allegiance to their country's God did not necessarily exclude other nations from coming to know the same God. The discovery of the universal sovereignty of God was a momentous event in the religious life of the Jew which set up a tension which the nation as a whole was never able to resolve. The majority clung to the earlier conception of God as their own peculiar Deity known only to His chosen people, and dismissed the rest of mankind as pagans to whom they had no peculiar responsibility. In spite of the pleadings of the Prophets that Israel had been chosen for responsibility and not privilege, to preach to the Gentiles that they too might come to know God, the nation slipped back into its rigid self-centredness, concentrating upon the fulfilment of a legal code in which its conception of religious and patriotic duty had become fossilised. Hence on the one hand, the pathos of the story of Jonah and his reluctance to preach to the people of

Nineveh, and on the other, the tragedy of the rejection of Jesus by His own people. This is the outcome of nationalism gone astray.

The individual identity of smaller nations like Israel was intensified by the threat to their autonomy of successive empires pressing upon them. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, all constituted a danger to the liberty of smaller states. Especially was this so of Rome which, more than the others, sought not only to subdue new territories but to convert their subjects into Roman citizens, with a consequent ironing out of national differences. When these could contribute something of value to the common pool of resources, they were assimilated; otherwise they were suppressed. And so during the centuries preceding the birth of Christ and during His lifetime, there was one vast civilisation, outwardly unified to an extent previously unknown. True, there continued subterranean currents of nationalist pride and individualism ready to erupt into the seething hatred of revolt, as in the Gaul of Vercingetorix or the Judea of the Zealots. But in contrast to the pride of separate kingdoms and principalities was set the ideal of the single, universal sovereign state which, during the later years of its dominion began, as a result of the breakdown of traditional religion and the failure of the philosophers to influence the lives of the masses, to make claims of divinity for its rulers, thus anticipating the modern expression of nationalism in which State and God are identified, and the head of the State subsequently raised to the godhead.

In spite of its obvious limitations, the Roman Empire was perhaps the first large-scale experiment in international government in human history. The framework provided by the *Pax Romana* was to become the body into which was infused the spirit of early Christianity. From the fusion of the Roman Empire and the Church officially recognised by the State, as it was from the time of Constantine, came the Catholic Church which during the Middle Ages created the second large-scale example of internationalism. Although its authority was only gradually accepted by the various local and national Churches which had been working in Ireland, Britain, France and other parts of Europe, by the Twelfth Century the Roman hierarchy had imposed its pattern, not only upon the religious practices of individual countries but upon the whole course of national life. By their common allegiance to a single super-national ideal and the synthesis of the spiritual and the material in a religion which emphasised the sacramental nature of the whole of life, men were able to rise above differences of nationality, and, ideally, of class.

But the mediaeval synthesis did not last. The hardening of what had been a living organism into a mere organisation pro-

voked the inevitable reaction, resulting in the breakdown of Catholic universality, and the assertion of national and religious independence. For the former ideal of corporate cohesion and solidarity was substituted the new concern with the individual conscience. But the Protestant spirit was not confined to issues of religious principle. It influenced too, the outlook of the nations who before had been bound together within the unity of Catholic Christendom. No longer was each nation answerable to a supernational authority vested in the Pope at Rome; each was responsible for its own destiny. Its members no longer owned a twofold allegiance inspired by St. Augustine's vision of the two cities—the City of Earth in which the natural man dwells and is answerable to the temporal ruler, and the City of God, of which the Christian is by grace a member and of which the Pope is God's representative in the world. They had only one head, the King or Emperor, whose conduct was influenced to a large extent by Machiavelli's *The Prince*. To him the individual state was supreme in its own right, the sole judge of its own ethics, and endowed with complete and final control over the actions of its members.

Thrilled by its new-found liberty and inflated by the sense of its own high destiny, each state now sought to become more powerful than its neighbours. Thus began the modern conception of nationalism which may be called "Militant" nationalism, the pride of Elizabethan England pitted against the might of Spain, the growing naval prestige of Holland, the grandeur of the French monarchy, its imperialist aspirations taking precedence over its allegiance to the Catholic faith. The new self-consciousness of the nation as the unit brought with it a new interest in the national history, a pride in the exploits both of the heroes of old and of the men of their own day who were themselves making history by their courage and love of adventure. The revival of learning and the rediscovery of the literary treasures of the past not only gave men a fresh interest in earlier civilisations, but inspired them to seek to emulate their example in creating for their own times and peoples works of a comparable character. But the pride of national art and literature grew out of the military successes, the expansion of trade, the geographical discoveries of the age, not *vice versa*.

To an age of expansion there succeeded, however, an era of concentration; with the organising of the new scientific resources to which the discoveries and inventions of the previous epoch had introduced men, a more uniform culture began to evolve in the different countries of Europe. The art and literature of the Renaissance had expressed what was peculiar to the life and history of each nation; now the scientist was beginning to ex-

pound laws that were universally valid. Men of learning were being drawn together intellectually, if in no other way, into an international confederation of the sciences and cognate studies. From this issued the Enlightenment, similar in its effects upon the different European countries. In art and literature, the spontaneity of local inspiration yielded to obedience to a code of rigid laws borrowed from antiquity. But with pseudo-classicism, as with Catholicism, the hardening system was the prelude to revolt. Upon a Europe marked by that uniformity of convention which comes from an outward subscription to a common canon burst the strange and wild excesses of the Romantic spirit, exalting the distinctions and idiosyncracies of nations and individuals alike even more than the Renaissance had done. Whereas at the time of the Renaissance, action inspired art, what was done stimulated what was thought and felt and said, at the time of the Romantic Revolt, what was thought and felt and said inspired what was done. The imperialism of a Napoleon had its roots in the dreams of a Rousseau. Indeed the whole movement drew its sustenance from two sources, the Celtic and the Gothic.

The Celtic countries were even then the homes of lost causes, nations which had themselves been conquered by stronger neighbours and had to hand on to mankind only the splendour of their broken hopes and dreams. The very paradox of Celtic sensibility was its sense of triumph in defeat, of pride in despair. Their warriors "went forth to war," said Ossian, "*but they always fell.*" From brooding upon the past with its legends and ancient traditions came the melancholy and introspective emotion of Celtic art, especially of its music and poetry, and the fervour of its religious genius. To people acutely aware that their inheritance was not of this world, it was a natural transference to look for an abiding city in another world, and to hold in derision the merely transient glories of earth. Such an absorption in a future world was hardly likely to fit a man for the practical affairs of the present, hence the apparent justice of Arnold's description of the Celt as ineffectual, "always ready to react against the despotism of fact," defiant of the material conditions of life. As long as the Celt dwelt apart in his remote Highlands, the mountains of Wales or Ireland, the *landes* of Brittany, it was possible for him to nurse his memories in splendid isolation, but with improved systems of transport and communication and the spread of industry, he found himself in danger of becoming involved in the economic machinery of the stronger power which had conquered his country. His language and his way of life, even his religious observances, were threatened. It was no longer possible to react against the despotism of fact. He had to fight

facts with facts. Hence the changing face of Celtic nationalism from what may be called "Mystical Nationalism" to a mood approximating to what we have termed "Militant Nationalism." In Ireland, this mood of Militant nationalism was carried to its logical conclusion in the demand for self-government and the readiness to use those methods of force which were employed by the great sovereign states in the past to establish their own supremacy. The main difference was that Ireland was using them not to gain an empire, but to effect her own emancipation, as has been the case more recently with India and Burma. In these instances, Militant and Mystical nationalism have merged, and such a merging, as we shall see, holds particular dangers.

These dangers can best be seen in the development of the other type of Romantic or Mystical nationalism amongst the Germanic peoples. At the time of the Romantic Revival, Germany was a loose agglomeration of states, as yet unwelded into the unity of nationhood, but here too, an awareness of the legendary past and of the Titanic passions of the Goths, fanned by the wild fervours of Wagnerian music, lent to the various states a sense of their common heritage and their peculiar destiny in the world of nations. One man more than all others served to exalt this mood into an actual philosophy of life, the philosopher Nietzsche, extolling the type of the Superman who repudiates all gentleness in favour of a ruthless self-assertion. The Germany he longed to see emerging from the torpor of the nineteenth century would be a nation of Supermen which would trample underfoot its enemies and irresistably, because of its innate superiority, become master of the world, the *Herren-volken*. Such a philosophy only needed the appearance of a single dynamic leader to spring to life and with diabolic cruelty to unleash upon a Europe sapped by a decadent sentimentality the horrors of total war. In the life and teaching of Hitler we have the most complete identification of the Militant and Mystical phases of nationalism. Not only was the German people superior to other nations by its achievements in history; it was so because it was itself divine. A whole philosophy of biology and ethnology was involved in Nazism making it a form of a yet more primitive cult, Racialism, concerned primarily with the physical rather than the mental and spiritual resources of a people. The cult of blood and soil enters to a certain extent into every expression of Mystical nationalism, but rarely in so fanatical a way. Ironically enough, the narrow and vindictive nationalism of Hitler finds its counterpart in the earlier stages of the development of the one nation the Germans were to persecute most relentlessly, the Jews. There is little to choose between the mood of the Song of Deborah and some of the speeches of Hitler. Nevertheless there is one substantial

difference between the rabid nationalists of Israel and those of modern Germany, and to a lesser degree of Italy and Japan. The former were the more fanatical because they believed themselves the chosen vessels of God, but God, as we have previously seen, was still distinct from and above the nation. By the time of the Nazi and the Fascist, the State itself is envisaged as divine, and God as an active, living Power in human affairs has dropped out all together or evaporated into a mere hazy abstraction. The whole trend of Post-Renaissance thought has been to lessen the influence of religion upon individuals and society, whilst, because man instinctively hungers after gods, he has tended to substitute for the God of Christianity the idea of the nation regarded as divine, as a god to whom its members owe absolute obedience and loyalty. We may well say that nationalism is one of the alternative ways of life offered modern man. Man needs must have an object greater than himself to which to devote his efforts. In nationalism, he finds that object in the service of the nation.

The other alternatives are Communism and Secularism. Whereas the dividing line of nationalism is vertical, cutting off nation from nation, the dividing line of Communism runs horizontally, regardless of national frontiers, linking the workers of the world in a universal brotherhood, but excluding all those who are on the opposite side of the dividing line. How far Russian Communism remains true to this international character or how far it becomes itself infected by a mood of mystical imperialism and ultimately merges with the spirit of nationalism is open to discussion. The other alternative is the creed now prevailing in America and fast becoming the unofficial religion of Europe, which is centred in man in his purely biological context. This vitalism recognises no supernatural Power, nothing peculiarly sacred, and for that reason may be called Secularism; but it has a god, a god made in its own image; in the words of the title of a modern French novel, the God of the Body, to be worshipped in sport, physical culture, Freudian psychology, and the whole of the modern obsession, in films, advertisements, literature, art, with the question of sex. Nationalism, Communism, Secularism seem to be the three alternatives offered by modern life. Now where does Christianity come in? Is it essentially opposed to all three, or are there elements in all three of which it can approve? Christianity has never despised the body as certain other religions of the East have done, nor has it denied the importance of man's physical needs. Neither would a Christ who wept over the impending doom of Jerusalem and who called, among His Disciples one who was a Zealot, condemn the love of country which is the mainspring of nationalism. The trouble is that all these things, the body, the class, the nation,

become ends in themselves, they assume the wrong proportion, they usurp the place which is rightly due to God alone, and because of this, they invariably spoil the very thing they are seeking to attain. The principle laid down by Christ, "He who would save his life must lose it, and he who would lose his life shall save it" is true of classes and nations, as well as of individuals.

"Man," says Edward Shillito in his book, *Nationalism,* "must not make nationalism into a religion if he would keep the glory of patriotism. Nationalism and patriotism are contrary one to the other. If Nationalism becomes a religion it is a false religion. If it remains a passion within the spiritual order, and a man loves his country well because he loves that other order more, then it has a place no less enduring in human life than the love of kindred. Those who set their nation first lose their nation; to them who seek first the kingdom of God this also is added—the love of Fatherland."

To seek first the kingdom of God does not mean to suppress all that is individual in the life of the nation in order to achieve an anaemic and nondescript uniformity. To be international, a society even though it be the kingdom of God, must first be national. Among those who desire unity amongst the nations there are two sections; those who would claim the nation for God and those who, in the name of God, would end the nation as a unit. The first seeks an international, the second, a denationalised, order. The one believes that the nation also can be delivered out of what is false and imperfect in its life into the glorious liberty of the City of God; the other thinks that, whatever purpose it may have served, the nation, if it is prolonged, is only a menace to the true life of humanity. The prophet of the one order is Mazzini, of the other Tolstoi. But just as in the family group, the insipid and spineless individual is no more likely to get on well with the other members than the lively and strong-minded individual who has a definite contribution to make to the corporate life, so, in the comity of nations, the nation which has submerged its own personality into a vague universal dream of humanity viewed as an abstract entity is no more likely to agree with its fellow-nations than the people which brings its various interests and talents to bear upon the common task. The great patriots of the ages, people like Goethe and Madame Roland, Abraham Lincoln and Henry Richard and Edith Cavell, although they realised that patriotism was not enough and built for a posterity beyond the frontiers of their own countries, believed passionately in the role of their own nations in the international brotherhood of man.

To ordinary humanity, the choice seems to lie between a fiery partisanship which so easily degenerates into the "my

country right or wrong" attitude, or a hazy undefined "un-nationalism." But for the Christian there is a third way. He has to love his country, serve her, work for her noblest interests, whilst still recognising that she is the best of this world, tainted with all the imperfections which cling to our mortality, made up of human and finite beings, and therefore fallible in her judgments, sinful in her conduct. Over against his highest hopes, the most courageous actions of the nation, he must set, as his own standard of judgment, the absolute purity, integrity, charity, graciousness, love exemplified in Christ and demanded by Him from everyone who would bear His name. In the light of the eternal and infinite goodness of God, our national life of compromise and convention, however necessary to our survival in the here--and-now, must be judged and will be found wanting. Such an attitude is bound to involve tension. One is drawn, now in one direction, now in another, until in anguish of spirit one longs for a complete and unquestioning absorption in nationalist pride, the infectious, even ecstatic, emotional thrill, impervious to the voice of reason, which comes from an uncritical surrender to nature's primitive urges. But when one pauses to consider what has been the outcome, even in recent years, of such a nationalism, one is prepared to pay the price in mental energy and spiritual costingness of bringing to bear upon one's love of country the vision of a greater love, one's personal love for God and the love of God for the world. And it is only the Christian who has at his command those spiritual resources in the corporate wisdom of the ages which enable him to hold this vision in his imagination without seeing it fade into the mere vapours of a false cosmopolitanism, for he will know himself to be one of a vast company of those who throughout the centuries have recognised man's double citizenship, of the City of Earth in which he owes allegiance to Caesar, and of the City of God in which he owes allegiance to God alone. The danger of Protestantism has been its repudiation of this twofold duty: too often it has denied man's allegiance to Caesar, and by refusing to be concerned with the City of Earth, has brought about a state of affairs where it has been possible for men to run to the other extreme and repudiate all allegiance to God. The need of our times is to get back to a vital and impelling sense of man's double inheritance; the one finite and ephemeral, limited by conditions of time and place, the other, eternal in the heavens.

JOAN N. HARDING.

The Munster Anabaptists

THE account of the Anabaptist episode in Münster, Westfalen, in 1533, does not make a very choice page of Church history and I, certainly, have no desire to revive the grim story. Since, however, I have lived in Münster for over two years as United Board Chaplain to the Control Commission for Germany, I have had an opportunity of making one or two discoveries.

Readers will be familiar with the tragic episode known as "The Siege of Münster" in which, the three leaders, Jan Van Leiden (whose real name was Jan Bockelsson); Knipperdolling, a "Tuchmacher" or weaver; and Krechting, established, what they called, "The Kingdom of God" within the walls of the city. Jan Van Leiden was the self-styled "King of Sion"; Knipperdolling became Bürgermeister, and Krechting was created Chancellor. They appointed twelve others as aldermen and gave them the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. All resistance against them was suppressed and their actions brought Anabaptists into disrepute everywhere for a long time to come. The city, after a long siege, was captured by the Bishop's forces and the three leaders were put to death by "Tongues of Fire"; their bodies afterwards being placed in three iron cages beneath the spire of the Lambertikirche in the principal thoroughfare of Münster.

A full account of the Münster episode has been given in T. M. Lindsay's *History of the Reformation* and there is a concise record of these sombre events written by the German historian Bruno Gebhardt in his *Handbuch der Deutschen Geschichte,* Vol. 2, p. 61. More recently we are indebted to Rev. Ernest A. Payne for his enlightening little book, *The Anabaptists of the 16th Century.*

I have no historical knowledge to add to this episode, but living in Münster, a little antiquarian curiosity led me to find out a few things that may be of some interest. Although the Lambertikirche was almost entirely destroyed during the war, the spire, save for being chipped in several places, remained intact. It tapers towards the sky upon an open ornamental tower, on one side of which is a large clock. As I passed by one day a ray of sunshine shone through the tower and there, clearly illuminated, I saw the three large iron cages, two together and one on top, that

had been used to display the bodies of the three dead Anabaptist leaders. It is said that the bodies remained in the cages for about a month in order that they might be an example to all and then they were taken down and burned, their ashes being strewn.

Not very far from the Lambertikirche where the cages are, there is a famous church known as the Uberwasserkirche. It stood within the old city walls when the Siege of Münster was on. It is recorded that the Anabaptist forces removed the spire from the tower so that they might use the roof to train their guns on the headquarters of the Bishop's army. The tower still stands without its spire, and this event in Münster's history, is pointed out as one of the interesting features of the city. A number of the old statues and images that were destroyed by the Anabaptists were, until recently, to be seen in Landesmuseum in Münster. They are said to have been unearthed about the early part of the present century by a Professor Geisebeg.

It would appear that before they were finally brought to trial, the three leaders were kept in prison for about six months. The imprisonment took place in a small castle at Iburg, situated just off the main road between Münster and Osnabrück. The castle itself is now used to shelter German refugees and part of it has also been turned into a school. I made my way to the castle and asked to see the cells in which the Anabaptists were imprisoned. This part of the Castle is not open to the public, but I obtained permission to get in. I followed the guide up a dark wooden staircase until we reached the first floor, about fifty feet from the ground, and found that I was in an octagonal tower. It was extremely dark, and apart from the candle carried by my guide, the only light came from very narrow slits high up in the wall of the tower. By the candle light I saw the cells were arranged round the wall and were divided into three. Each cell was about four feet in depth and about six feet in width. At one time there were, doubtless, rails in front of each. A slanting stone slab came out from the wall in each cell to about two feet at its base, and attached to the base of each stone slab were two iron rings about eighteen inches apart, to which each prisoner was chained by his two ankles. It was a most gruesome place.

The trial of the three leaders took place in the Münster "Rathaus" or Town Hall which, before the war, was considered to be one of the finest specimens of the Early Gothic Period in Germany, being built in 1335. Unfortunately, the beautiful artistic front of the building was completely destroyed when the town was bombed and the famous Council Chamber in the rear, built in 1250, was also badly damaged. The latter, however, has now been restored and amid great

celebrations it was reopened in October, 1949, the British Community sharing in the rejoicings. During the period of the war the exquisitely carved panelling at the back of the rostrum, together with the carved seats round the hall, cushions, famous chandelier, and paintings of celebrities which adorned the walls, were all removed to a safe place, but are now back in their proper setting. In this hall the Anabaptist leaders were tried and condemned. In this hall, too, the Peace Treaty, concluding the Thirty Years War was signed in 1648, and the hall afterwards became known as " The Friedensaad " or the Hall of Peace. To those who have not seen this hall, and who are interested in its Anabaptist associations, it may be worth noting that the Westfalen artist Terborch painted a picture showing the signing of the Peace Treaty, and the original picture is said to be in the British Museum, although some Germans say the National Gallery, but I have seen the replica in the Landesmuseum in Münster and it perfectly portrays the setting of the hall. As mentioned before, the Anabaptists were condemned to die by " Tongues of Fire " and this meant that, red hot embers were pulled out of a fire with long iron tongues and then applied to their bodies. There are three sets of these original tongs to be seen hanging on the wall in the Friedensaal today. Each set is about two feet long.

The Anabaptist episode is by no means forgotten by certain sections of the people of Münster and Westfalia. It may be that the people are not allowed to forget. The town of Münster is ninety-five per cent Roman Catholic and there are no German Baptists within the town. There are a few Brethren who practise baptism, but I had great difficulty in finding them. I once met officially a certain important Catholic dignity of Münster, but when he knew that I was a Baptist, the conversation ceased almost abruptly and he moved on to speak with someone else. Strange as it may seem the Anabaptist episode is kept alive by virtue of a Carnival. Germany revels in carnivals, and, in Münster, there are three Carnival Clubs, one of which is known as " Die Wiedertäufe " or " The Anabaptists' Club." The Carnival takes place on what is called " Rosenmontag," the Monday before the beginning of Lent. This year it took place on the 5th February. The members of the club on these carnival occasions adopt the attire of the Anabaptists, some impersonating the various leaders, and in the procession they carry three large wooden cages painted to look like iron, each cage having a little door. It is said that the object of the club is to cast a skit on the administration of the town if it is not liked or to place within the cages effigies of people disliked, and even to pull out of the crowd some person not very popular and keep him in the cage for five minutes, jeering

at him all the time and pinching him with imitation tongs which many carry. Sometimes, I am told, they "catch" a pretty girl and put her into the cage, a bit of fun which she enters into with great frivolity! So the great carnival goes lumbering along, in part, a playful reminder that the Anabaptist episode is not forgotten in Münster.

W. J. T. Brown.

Behold, Thy King Cometh. Ed. Brother Edward. (Canterbury Press, 5s.)

Eight writers have contributed to this symposium on the Second Coming. Though most of them are Anglo-Catholic, the biographical notes supplied by the editor show that they make a varied team, a fact indicating the widespread quickening of interest in this doctrine. There is throughout the papers a unity of treatment, the aim being, not to present "theological theses before the judgment of critics and reviewers" but to recall Christian attention to an article of the Faith which has suffered hitherto through neglect and mishandling. The quality of the papers varies, as is usually the case in a symposium, but on the whole they keep a high level. So far as this theme is concerned there has been a lack of respectable books in the devotional category. It is on that bookshelf that the present work will find its place, for, while it is only occasionally instructive, it is generally moving and challenging in tone and content.

G. W. Rusling.

Reviews.

Commentary on the Gospel of Luke. Norval Geldenhuys. (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 686 pages, 25s.)

He is a bold man who ventures to issue a full scale commentary on a Gospel in these days. There are so many notable predecessors, one has to achieve high marks to deserve rank with them, and failure to make the grade invites disparagement. Mr. Geldenhuys evidently felt emboldened for the task in virtue of his position. He is a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, by no means advanced in days, uncompromisingly conservative, yet with an extensive academic training behind him of which he has made good use. The documentation of this commentary is unusually extensive; there is little in the way of New Testament critical and expository literature on the Gospels of which mention is not made. The resulting product is a blend of conservative theology and modern scholarship, with perpetual reference to pastoral needs. While the originality of such a "pastoral" commentary as that of Kiddle on Revelation is not apparent here (it is hard to be original on the Gospels!), there is much material of solid worth which will be of value to any minister.

The method of the author is to provide a brief setting of a given passage, a longer exposition of its general import, and then a detailed consideration of the Greek text. The advantage of such a plan is that one can use the book with a minimum knowledge of Greek, or even with none.

Inevitably, an exegete with the outlook of the author is handicapped in his treatment of the text. While Luke's use of sources is frequently asserted, the author is unduly anxious not to recognise them wherever they may prove awkward. We are bidden not to look for Semitic sources in chs. 1-2; while the hypothesis of a "Q" document is acknowledged as better than Luke's use of Matthew, it is virtually ignored—the Lord's Prayer e.g. was *certainly* given first in the Sermon on the Mount and later in the context provided by Luke; the eschatological discourse in Matthew is apparently a unity of which Luke reproduced but part, though curiously enough Luke is to be our guide in the interpretation of it. One may as well not learn of Synoptic criticism if one uses it in this fashion. Similarly in matters of exegesis:

one reads that the Baptismal revelation of the opened heaven, the descent of the Dove, and the Voice from heaven was no vision, the Spirit descended literally in the shape of a dove; we learn of primary and secondary fulfilments of prophecy (the "wars and tumults" of Luke xxi. 9 are: *i*, the periods of civil war and insurrection that followed Nero's death in 68 A.D. during the Roman-Jewish war, *ii*, conditions through all the centuries since, *iii*, the last days before the End—a somewhat comprehensive prophecy!); Jesus is said to have predicted that Jerusalem would be occupied by one Gentile power after another throughout history (Luke xxi. 24). A lengthy, learned and certainly informative essay discusses the date of the Last Supper and Crucifixion, the conclusion being that Jesus was crucified on the 15th Nisan—chiefly, one suspects, because only so can John and the Synoptists be reconciled.

In matters of this kind, Mr. Geldenhuys will not always carry his readers with him, but fortunately there are more important elements than these in a Gospel. On the whole the general level of the commentary is good and its spirit deeply devotional. The publishers are to be congratulated on the excellence of the format and on their enterprise in issuing a work of this kind; it is perhaps the most scholarly work they have yet produced.

G. R. BEASLEY-MURRAY.

Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England, by H. John McLachlan. (Oxford University Press, 25s.)

Essays and Addresses, by H. McLachlan. (Manchester University Press, 21s.)

Neither of these books should be missed by students of the seventeenth century and of our English religious heritage. Their appearance within a few weeks of one another must have been a source of mutual pride to the authors. Dr. John McLachlan is Acting-Principal of Manchester College, Oxford. His father, Dr. H. McLachlan, was for many years Principal of the Unitarian College, Manchester.

Socinianism has rarely had very fair treatment from its opponents. Though the main Christian traditions have rejected its Christology as inadequate and over-rationalistic, they have all benefitted from its consistent championship of religious freedom and its reserved and critical attitude to formulae not found in Scripture. The debt which the Church has owed to theological rebels and doubters is considerable. Dr. John McLachlan has provided a learned and illuminating study of the

way Socinian ideas reached England and of those whom they influenced. He writes with care and candour, claiming neither too much nor too little, and assembling much valuable information from the by-paths as well as the highways of his subject. The book ends with a brief reference to the views of Locke and Newton, and with some rather tantalising suggestions as to why Socinianism spread in the eighteenth century in the Dissenting academies and congregations rather than in the Church of England, of which so many of its earlier protagonists were members. We hope that the author will continue his studies on into the "Age of Reason."

In the seventeenth century Socinianism in England was not so much a sect as a movement or an ethos. The views of Faustus Socinus and his successors influenced the thinking of very varied groups and individuals. Baptists have a special interest in the subject for, though Socinus and his uncle were Italians by birth, Socinianism as a movement had its origin mainly within certain Anabaptist churches in Poland. *Anabaptista indoctus Socianus; Socinianus autem doctus Anabaptista,* said a Dutch Calvinist Professor in the mid-seventeenth century. This is a very inaccurate and misleading characterization of the varied strains within Anabaptism. But the historical links between the two movements are many. Hans de Ries, the Mennonite leader with whom John Smyth corresponded, was already in touch with Socinians exiled from Poland. From the beginning the English General Baptists shared the Socinian rejection of the main tenets of Calvinism. Elias Tookey, Paul Hobson and Matthew Caffyn find mention in Dr. McLachlan's pages, as does Jeremy Ives, who, with other Baptists, tried to secure the release from prison in 1655 of John Bidle, "the father of English Unitarianism." A detailed study of the older General Baptist churches would probably show contacts additional to those Dr. McLachlan mentions, and, though the main streams of Baptist life have recently flowed through Particular and New Connexional channels, Baptist historians need to know more about the Old Connexional churches in order to get their story into right perspective.

One of the most important chapters in Dr. McLachlan's study deals with the circulation in this country of Socinian books, and a list is given of private and public libraries containing Socinian and anti-Socinian literature. In the Angus Library of Regent's Park College, Dr. McLachlan might have found works by Faustus Socinus, V. Smalcius, J. Schlichting, John Crell and John Knowles, as well as a copy of the *Brevis disquisitio* (1633), the important pamphlet to which he devotes an appendix.

In the other volume before us a veteran scholar gathers together some nineteen essays and addresses prepared during the

past thirty years. They make a feast of good things for those interested in Nonconformist history. Many of the papers deal with Unitarianism in the north of England and with the life of the Dissenting Academies, on which Dr. McLachlan is our foremost living authority. There is a special interest in the chapter on Methodist Unitarians and the beginnings of the Co-operative Movement, in which Professor G. D. H. Cole is corrected and supplemented; and in the chapter on Daniel Mace, of Newbury, a pioneer in New Testament criticism. But for many the most important and welcome papers will be the two devoted to Alexander Gordon (1841-1931), the distinguished biographer and historian. Gordon represented the finest flowering of Unitarian culture and character; in the authors of these two books he has worthy successors.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

The Shorter Oxford Bible, Abridged and edited by G. W. Briggs, G. B. Caird and N. Micklem. (Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d. School edition, 6s.)

In this Shorter Bible, intended for private reading and for teaching in schools, the text has been arranged for the most part chronologically, to present "the record of a Community" and "the record of a definite faith." Passages have been selected from Authorised and Revised Versions and from modern renderings (although the particular source is never specifically indicated) with extracts from the Apocrypha. The selections keep rigidly to a plan and the whole work leaves a satisfying general impression. The arrangement of the teachings of Jesus under appropriate headings is particularly helpful.

The use of the term "Old Testament Church" will be questioned by some and the editors' justification for its use will not convince everyone. The notes included at each new stage in the development of the plan are concise and arresting. Those in the O.T. section look forward consistently to the fulfilment of the message in the N.T.

In view of the many good qualities and excellent production of this Shorter Bible it is a pity that its use has not been made easier by the inclusion of an index of Scripture passages. Teachers will find the suggested syllabuses helpful; a selective bibliography would have enhanced their value. The maps are unencumbered by detail better provided elsewhere and include one of the eastern Mediterranean without lines indicating Paul's journeyings—a welcome change. A second map of Palestine

would have permitted O.T. and N.T. details to be shown separately.

The enthusiastic reception accorded to this book by the interested teachers in one county secondary school suggests that it will prove to be all that the editors and publishers claim for it as a guide to the study of the complete Bible in the home and in school.

H. GORDON RENSHAW.

The Illusion of Immortality, by Corliss Lamont, with an introduction by John Dewey. Second edition. (Philosophical Library, New York, $3.95.)

The blurb of this American book is peculiarly cocksure: " 'If a man dies, shall he live again?' This book gives a frank and simple answer to this age-long question, presenting in clear and scientific terms the complete case against the idea of immortality." Dr. Lamont is a confirmed scientific humanist who argues that belief in immortality is an illusion, and, upon the whole, a harmful one. He quotes with approval George Santayana's saying that true wisdom "consists in abandoning our illusions the better to attain our ideals," and the ideal for him is, in this case, a full, free life in this world: "It is best not only to disbelieve in immortality, but to believe in mortality." The informed scholarship and the conscientious argument of the author serve to make Christians in the modern world realise anew the duty which is said to have been accomplished by believers in the early church—to outlive, out-die, and to out-think the pagans.

D. EIRWYN MORGAN.

Atoms of Thought, by George Santayana. Selected and edited by Isa D. Cardiff. (Philosophical Library, New York, $5.00.)

"The perfection of rottenness" was William James' description of George Santayana's thesis for his doctorate, and Protestants, orthodox and heretical, will feel it difficult to give unqualified approval to the flamboyant writings of the Catholic free thinker whose "pithy and worthwhile thoughts are presented in sample" form in this volume. There is something grimly suggestive in the title of the anthology, but the nature of the explosive potentialities of the Spanish-American's benign humanism is less terrifying than those of "hell-bombs." It is

good to know that even a pagan can see clearly that "the contemporary world has turned its back on the attempt and even on the desire to live reasonably. The two great wars of the twentieth century were adventures in enthusiastic unreason" (p. 258). Christians, who will find so much to exasperate them in this typical modern humanist, should be charitable, remembering Dante's concession to virtuous authors who were without faith in Christ—a place in Limbo, the first circle of hell, nearest to the sunlight. The editor's amusingly simple method of compilation deserves less credit than the philosopher's contribution of "ideas on almost every subject of general interest to humanity."

D. EIRWYN MORGAN.

Religion and the New Paganism, by John Pitts. (Independent Press, 8s. 6d.)

The Christian World State, by A. Wood. (Independent Press, 7s. 6d.)

The first of these books is an essay in Moral and Political Science from the Christian standpoint. In 1942 the MS. secured one of the awards which the Quebec Government gives annually for significant literary contributions by residents of the province. It is noteworthy that this was the first religious book by a Protestant to be thus recognised. Dr. Pitts shows how certain schools of psychological, political and philosophical thought have contributed to the contemporary drift from religion by striking, in particular, at the Christian doctrine of man. The discussion follows lines which are becoming familiar, but it is a successful piece of work. What the author describes as "the new psychology," "the new politics," and so on, are fluently and faithfully expounded, the flaws in their arguments exposed, and the Christian answer given. The essay rests on a background of wide reading that has been well digested. *The Christian World State* reveals a similar concern with things as they are, but its theme is not so much the drift from religion as the ultimate goal to which Christianity is marching. On examination it appears that "the Christian World State" is simply another title for the New Testament "Kingdom of God" and it must be confessed that any originality in this very sincere book lies in a few such phrases which the author has coined. He expresses many worthy sentiments, but the handling of the New Testament evidence is one-sided and unsatisfying—not least in the argument for equating the author's conception with the Kingdom of God in Christ's

teaching. Some of his points are legitimate, others more questionable. He is a warm friend of the ecumenical movement but is surely mistaken in speaking (p. 134) of "such a united Church as the one constituted at Amsterdam."

G. W. RUSLING.

The Bible from Within. A. G. Hebert. (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.)

This excellent little book, written primarily for sixth forms in schools and students setting out on divinity courses, will be welcomed by ministers as well. Setting the books of the Bible against their original historical background, Father Hebert shows what the sacred writers had to say to their own day, and what God is saying to us through them today. The result is a wealth of Biblical history and theology enclosed within a comparatively slender volume and presented with a refreshing sense of relevance.

One of the book's great values is that it emphasises the unity of the Bible; what is begun in the Old Testament is continued and fulfilled in the New. This is particularly well illustrated in chapters eight and eleven, dealing with the Messianic hope and its fulfilment in Christ. Thus the Bible is presented as the Book of the Church, and we are made to see the rich treasury in the Old Testament which the New Israel has inherited. Particularly helpful in this respect is the closing chapter on the Christian use of the Old Testament.

The book is attractively printed, and each chapter has a small but helpful bibliography.

IRWIN J. BARNES.

Venture in Faith: The story of the West Ham Central Mission, by Paul Rowntree Clifford. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 6s.)

A modern Baptist epic is here simply but worthily told. Few who begin this book will put it down till they have read it to the end. In 1897 Robert Rowntree Clifford left Regent's Park College and settled at the Barking Road Tabernacle, a church with a debt of nearly £1,000 and an unfortunate reputation for internal disputes. When forty-six years later, in the midst of the war, he died, he was still in pastoral charge, though he had passed his seventy-sixth birthday. In the intervening years a great work had been built up with wide ramification throughout the borough and far beyond. Imposing buildings had been

erected, and the name of the West Ham Central Mission was known throughout Britain and the Dominions. Rowntree Clifford's elder son, with whom the leadership of the varied activities now rests, has rightly called his story *Venture in Faith*. It has also been a venture in imagination and sympathy, qualities that have found their most vivid and effective personification in Mrs. Clifford; and a venture in persistence and loyalty, characteristics shown *par excellence* by Miss Clifford and the late W. S. Lord. But this is more than the record of achievements of a remarkable family and the friends they have so successfully gathered about them. It is a footnote of the social history of the period and an important episode in the life of the Baptist denomination. The last chapter with the title "Widening Horizons" and its brief account of the acquiring of Greenwoods, shows that it can and should be more than an episode in our Baptist story and that what has already been achieved may be but the prologue to new experiments in evangelism and social service. Many have forgotten the story of West Ham as it was; many more have never heard it. This book should once more focus the minds of Baptists—and many others—on the needs and possibilities of the work. The author makes no direct appeal for aid, but his pages should be regarded not only as a valuable piece of history, but as a challenge and a summons to new ventures in which many outside West Ham may have a share.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

The Lighted Path, by H. L. Hemmens. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 3s. 6d.)

Harrow has not only a famous school but also, in the midst of it large and growing population, a live Baptist community. In this informative and interesting little book the skilled pen of the editor of the Carey Kingsgate Press outlines the story of Baptist origins and witness in that area with special reference to the South Harrow Baptist Church which this year celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary as an independent church. A famous and popular author startled the reading public by writing his autobiography when he was only thirty-five; South Harrow Baptists have beaten him by ten years. As Rev. J. C. Rendall states in the foreword, the narrative is "written in words and in a style that everybody can understand and enjoy."

GRAHAM W. HUGHES.