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## THE EVANGELICAL LIBRARY

*Many of our readers will be glad to have information about this Library, recently opened to the public. We are indebted for the following notes to the Rev. E. F. Kevan:*

### I. CONTENTS

The distinctive features of the contents of the Library may be summarised by a survey of the following principal sections.

*Puritan Writings.* With the exception of the British Museum, the Evangelical Library probably possesses the greatest collection of Puritan writings in the country, and it is these Puritan volumes which constitute the outstanding characteristic of the Library. This section contains the works of over two hundred and fifty authors.

*The Reformers.* These are well represented, and the section includes the writings of Luther, Calvin (including works extra to the Calvin Translation Society's 52-volume set), Zwingli, Melancthon, Farel, Oecolampadius, Latimer, Ridley and many more. Scarcely a Reformer, who is of outstanding importance, is absent from the shelves.

*Pre-Reformation Evangelicalism.* In this section there is a remarkable collection of works dealing with such men as Patrick, Columba, and Bernard of Clairvaux, the complete works and various biographies of whom are now very scarce.

*Hymnology.* The hymns of almost every known evangelical writer are to be found in this section, and there are many first editions both of individual hymns and of collections.

*Biography.* The Library is particularly comprehensive in relation to biographies. All the great Biographical Dictionaries are here, including hundreds of other biographical volumes.

*Revivals.* The Founder of the Library had a particular interest in the subject of revival, and has gathered together a remarkable selection of books on this theme. This section can claim to be of special merit, both as to range and for a number of rare and invaluable items.

*General.* In addition to the above particularly valuable sections, there are hundreds of volumes of Commentaries, works

on Biblical Criticism, Archaeology, Systematic Theology, Doctrine and Practice, Church History and the History of Christian Missions. In the reference room are all the great Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias. The Library is not so specialist that the student will not be able to find the usual theological books that he may require: these are here also, and the Library is constantly receiving additions of recently published volumes. The writings, for example, of Kierkegaard, Barth, and Brunner are on the shelves.

Earlier catalogues of the Library are now completely out of date, and the task of re-cataloguing is immense. The co-operation of any who can offer assistance in this respect will be most gratefully accepted.

## II. MOTIVE

The distinctiveness of the Evangelical Library, however, lies not so much in its actual contents though there are very many volumes that are not easily to be found elsewhere, but rather in its motive. This motive is to make the rich stores of the great evangelical literature of the past four centuries available to all. By tedious formalities a student may sometimes be able to secure some of these volumes in other well-established libraries, but most of the libraries that would be likely to contain such books are not open to the public. The purpose of the Evangelical Library, therefore, is threefold: firstly, to provide additional facilities by which the great evangelical writings may be read; secondly, to bring the very existence of this vast field of literature to the notice of those to whom it is almost unknown; and thirdly, to promote the doctrines which that distinctive literature contains.

## III. AVAILABILITY

The Library is for the use of all upon the payment of a membership fee of 7s. 6d. per annum. Those desiring to take advantage of the Library are requested to complete a Form of Application (which may be obtained from the Librarian), and must be recommended by two responsible people.

The Reading Room is open every week-day (except Saturday, at present) from 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. The borrowing of books may be done either by a personal visit to the Library or through the post. Borrowers are expected to pay the cost of

carriage both ways. Three books may be taken out at a time, if desired, and the usual time for which a book may be borrowed is three weeks. If a volume is required for a longer period an extension of time may be granted.

#### IV. LOCATION

The Library is at present housed at 55, Gloucester Road, Kensington, London, S.W.7, and all enquiries and applications for membership should be sent to the Librarian at this address. The building is easily accessible from all parts of London, and the nearest railway station is Gloucester Road Underground on both the Metropolitan and the Piccadilly lines. Number 55 is two minutes' walk from the station.

#### V. MANAGEMENT

The Library is under the management of a body of trustees, of whom the chairman is the Rev. Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the co-treasurers are F. D. Bacon, Esq. and S. E. Denning, Esq., F.C.I.S., and the Hon. Librarian and Organising Secretary is Mr. Geoffrey Williams, the Founder of the Library. A rota of voluntary helpers has been arranged, so that visitors to the Library may always find someone in attendance who can help them. It is the desire of the Trustees: (1) That the Library shall be used as widely as possible; (2) That the Library may be the means of preserving in circulation much valuable literature which might otherwise pass into oblivion; and (3) That the Library shall be kept up-to-date by the continual addition of new books which have a bearing on the Evangelical Faith.

*At the opening ceremony Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said:*

I feel that my first duty is to extend a cordial welcome to the many visitors that have favoured us with their presence on this (to us) auspicious occasion; and I do so very sincerely. My second duty is to give some account of the truly remarkable collection of volumes by which we are now surrounded. There is a romantic side to the story and it is worth telling at a suitable time but I do not propose to dwell upon that now. It is rather my object to speak of the means by which the Library came into being, its present character, its scope, and its future prospects.

The inception of the Library was due to the vision and labours of Mr. Geoffrey Williams, the Founder, which have extended over some 20 years. During his early life after his conversion, which was of a marked character, he read widely in that form of religious literature associated with the term "Free Grace" and assiduously gathered together an unusual number of rare works of this character in his home and, its range and importance increasing, he became imbued with an irresistible desire to furnish the Christian public with a Library of their own, of which his collection should be the nucleus. With this end in view he proceeded to develop and expand it. The result you can see around you. The present Evangelical Library is comprehensive in character, but is definitely marked by the feature to which I have already referred. Here you will find an invaluable assemblage of the works of the Reformers and Puritans, dealing with a variety of theological subjects, but all magnifying the grace of God. But let me come to points. There is probably no finer collection of the works of the Evangelical divines of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than is to be found on these shelves. Again a remarkable section of the Library is that devoted to hymnology, which is extremely comprehensive, and contains not only complete editions of the Evangelical hymn-writers, but in many cases their first editions. The biographical section is scarcely less remarkable. I have confined myself to classes of Christian literature in which, beyond all dispute, the Library is exceedingly rich but let me assure you that there is scarcely a conceivable appropriate subject which is not represented.

Mr. Geoffrey Williams has no limited outlook, his vision is world-wide and he has gathered this unique library together, with a single eye to the common benefit of the nation and of lands overseas. Indeed, he has already secured the sympathetic co-operation of such men as Professor Bouma of Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, and Professor John Murray of Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, and the nucleus of Branch Libraries in America has been proposed and books sent. Even in Australasia his efforts to expand the Library's ramifications have met with success. But to return. Some years back he took steps to secure the interest and influence of others with the object of setting the library on a more solid basis; amongst whom were the Rev. Eliseus Howells and myself. At the suggestion of Mr. Howells

I went down to Beddington, in Surrey, where the Library was then housed, and was so impressed by its unique character and its potential usefulness that I at once urged that it should be transferred to some more central and accessible position, and made easily available to the Christian public. Then came the war, and it seemed that the project must be abandoned. But Mr. Williams proved to be a man neither easy to daunt nor willing to brook delay; and practised as he was in the use of the telephone, he pressed his suit with unabated zeal and, I had almost said, cried daily to me, with something of the importunity of the man in the parable. Our friend the Rev. E. J. Poole-Connor gave him yeoman support in urging the case and, as a result, the proposal to remove the Library was resumed and the present commodious premises were secured at a nominal rental through the kindness of Mr. P. W. Petter, J.P.—not that we do not hope to outgrow them; indeed, we do; and look forward to the time when the Library shall possess a dwelling which is altogether its own.

It might possibly be asked by some, Why not hand over this collection to some existing Library? Let me say at once that this point has already received the fullest consideration; but it was finally agreed that it would destroy the uniqueness of its character, as well as impair its general usefulness, if this were to be done. It might join a company of abandoned tomes and be forgotten, or be so scattered amongst works of another character as to lose its identity. It is the founder's desire, in which we fully concur, that this Library should become not a museum but a living force. And it is perhaps significant that the inception of this Library is coincident with a widespread tendency in many parts of the world to revert to the Faith of our forefathers. The almost world-wide effect of the more conservative outlook of men like Barth and Brunner is indicative of a return by many to truths which have stood the test of time. I may here mention that an outstanding feature of the Library is a section containing an extensive range of extremely important works on Revivals of Religion; especially those of the eighteenth century; and it is hoped that these, when widely circulated and studied, may by God's blessing prove a means of stirring up prayer for a revival of religion in our own land and in our day—a revival of which we stand so greatly in need.