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EDITORIAL

WE salute J. B. Middlebrook, our fellow-member and the incoming Vice-President of the Baptist Union, and offer him our warm congratulations and good wishes. He is already an outstanding figure among British Baptists. We rejoice in the service he is giving as General Home Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society and the success that has attended his efforts to match missionary income with ever increasing costs.

We are particularly glad that he is coming into a position of leadership in the Union at the time when preparations are being made to celebrate its Ter-Jubilee. The spiritual significance of the Union as the focal point of the family life and solidarity of the churches and the organ through which they can do together things they could not do separately, such things as caring for the Ministry as a whole and the planting of new churches, is still all too little understood. We need a renewed emphasis upon the fact that the Union exists to strengthen the churches in their fellowship with one another and to encourage and help them in their evangelistic task of "Winning the Homeland for Christ".

No man among us could more effectively lead the churches into a new understanding of the meaning of the Union which they themselves have created than "J.B." and his advent to this new leadership will be greeted with high hopes.

He himself, in acknowledging his election as Vice-President, suggested that some had in mind the relationship between the Union and the B.M.S. and that his election was "an indication of things to come". To many of our younger ministers in particular these will be welcome words. Even though the supporting constituencies of the Union and the B.M.S. are somewhat different and the idea of a common budget may present difficulties there is a widespread feeling that the relationship of the two branches of our common evangelistic task should be much closer than it is. The finest fruit of the Presidency of "J.B." would be the achievement of this new unity among British Baptists.

THE WHITLEY LECTURES

This year the Whitley Lectures will be delivered by Dr. E. A. Payne at the Baptist Church House, London, under the title "THE HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST UNION".

October 10th.	The Changing Basis and Functions.
October 24th.	The First 70 years.
November 7th.	The Down-Grade Controversy.
November 21st.	Widening Horizons.

Tea will be served at 6 p.m. and the Lecture will commence at 6.30.

A VISIT TO THE HOLY LAND

ON 25th March, my wife and I, and a party of fourteen, set off on a thirty-three day visit to the Holy Land. The tour included visits to Italy, Athens, Rhodes, and Alexandria, together with several days in the beautiful, but now tragically divided, Republic of Lebanon. In this article I must confine myself to a description of impressions of the Holy Land.

On landing at Haifa from the Jewish ship *Aliya*, and proceeding along the northern side of the Carmel range into Galilee, we were at once impressed by the beauty of the land. In the springtime, Galilee is singularly beautiful; the rocky hills, the brown-red soil, the vivid greens, the deep blue of the Lake, and the carpets of brilliant wild flowers, especially the scarlet anemones and poppies stand out in memory. As we stood early one morning on a hill overlooking the southern tip of the Lake of Galilee, and the upper reaches of the Jordan valley with its numerous fishponds gleaming in the sun, with a flock of storks wheeling above, and flowers of brilliant colours at our feet, we realised the truth of the words "the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land". Second only to Galilee in beauty is the Plain of Esdraelon, a wide expanse of fertile land, now dotted with new Jewish towns and settlements. Not only the Mountains of Galilee to the north and the Mountains of Gilboa and Ephraim to the south, but the avenues and groves on the plain—the banana and orange, the fig and almond trees, the eucalyptus and the tall cypress—all contributed to the beauty of the scene. It is true, of course, that Samaria and Judea lack both the fertility and colour of the northern and western parts of the land; but they are not without a beauty of their own. We were impressed with the terraced hills and beautiful valleys of Samaria, especially the Valley of Lebonah, where the wine was produced for the temple at Jerusalem. Even the barren mountains of Eastern Judea, together with the Dead Sea and the Mountains of Moab beyond, had an abundance of brown, gold, blue and purple colourings.

The visitor to the Holy Land must not expect to find the kind of scenic beauty with which he is familiar in the British Isles or Europe, but it has a rare charm of its own. Everywhere we went we were struck by the juxtaposition of the old and the new—sometimes incongruous and humorous. As we stopped at the well of Cana in the early evening, the maidens were coming down to draw water—in petrol tins! As we gathered flowers at the foot of Mount Tabor, an Arab in flowing robes passed by on a donkey, followed by a young Israeli in overalls on a motor-cycle! On Esdraelon a farmer was ploughing with an ox and an ass yoked to an old wooden plough as in Bible times. A mile down the road another farmer was turning over the soil with a Massey-Harris tractor. Water is transported in jars on the heads of the women—and by steel irrigation pipes and whirling sprays among the crops. Transport along the streets of

Jerusalem may be by ass—or by taxi. Everywhere one had the impression of an old order being invaded by a new, and gradually giving place to the new. Our western civilization is undoubtedly conferring many benefits, but there is much in the old way of life, especially dirt, disease and poverty, the abolition of which is long overdue. One felt, however, a certain regret that the old, picturesque, eastern way of life was being gradually ousted and may disappear.

The most fertile parts of the land—Galilee, Esdraelon, Sharon, are occupied by the Jews or Israelis, and we arrived as preparations were being made for the tenth anniversary of the State of Israel. We had ample opportunity to talk to Jews, as we spent six days from Marseilles to Haifa on board an Israeli ship, crowded with European Jews going to settle in the Holy Land, with Israelis returning from holidays or studies abroad, and many joining their families for Passover and anniversary celebrations. We were subjected to Jewish food laws, and on enquiring why I could not have milk in my tea at a meal at which meat had been served, I was told “thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother’s milk”! But the Jewish people were most friendly, although very few had any piety or even interest in the religion of their fathers. We were, however, greatly impressed with the achievements of the Jews in Israel itself. The transformation in the last ten years—not forgetting that which was begun under the mandate—is truly amazing, and indeed almost incredible. The new towns with attractive houses and modern streets, the numerous new villages and settlements, the long lines of newly-planted trees and wide areas of re-afforestation, the tracts of barren land reclaimed by irrigation, the bountiful crops and fruitful groves—these are some of the evidences of new life. Indeed everywhere in Israel one is impressed by the spirit of the people—the sense of enterprise, drive and dynamic purpose. The houses of Israel Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem to the west and north of the old city, are pleasing and attractive because all are built of the same local stone which has a warm colourful appearance. Here we visited the new Hebrew University, a modern structure still in process of erection, and saw the famous Dead Sea Scrolls.

The central range, the Samaria and Judea of the Bible, is occupied by the Arabs, and we found them an attractive and likeable people. Life in Jordan appeared to be more leisurely than in Israel, and one sometimes had the impression that the people were enjoying a perpetual holiday. This was no doubt partly due to the fact that in a population swollen by several hundred thousands of refugees, many people had little or no work. The Arab children and the boys in particular seemed to enjoy life tremendously, the perpetual grin suggesting that it was all a huge joke! Taking into consideration the cramped living accommodation and low food ration of most of them, we admired this spirit. During walks around Jerusalem, I had many conversations with Arab students and workers, all of whom I found to be most friendly, courteous and hospitable. I was

entertained at supper in an Arab home at Silwan (Siloam, the other side of the Kidron Valley) where, squatting on the floor, we ate out of a common dish. None of the Moslems showed intolerance, and generally, took the view that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were the three true religions, and it did not matter greatly to which of them one adhered. Disapproval of our action at Suez made no difference to the warmth of their friendship. As Stewart Perowne says in one of his books, the Arabs, like a few other sensible people, have learnt to distinguish between people and their governments! There were many sad evidences of the refugee problem, and their camps, especially the large one on the site of the Jericho of Christ's time, were squalid and horrible. An interesting description of Jerusalem today, in particular of the refugee problem and the efforts of some Christians and Moslems to alleviate it, can be found in Perowne's book "The One Remains".

It is impossible to describe my emotions on first catching sight of the walls and gates of the old city of Jerusalem on the eve of Good Friday. The next morning, with the hot sun shining from a cloudless blue sky, we passed through Herod's Gate into the narrow terraced streets, overarched at frequent intervals. The streets were thronged with a motley crowd—dark-skinned Arab boys, women veiled in black, friars and nuns, priests and monks of the Eastern and Western Churches, policemen, soldiers of the Arab legion, ebony-like Ethiopians, women dressed in brilliant colours, sheiks in white robes and turbans. We made our way to the site of the Praetorium, where crowds began to gather for the Good Friday procession along the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Each national group, headed by a full sized cross, started separately, singing the tune "Stabat mater". The call to prayer from the minaret overlooking the square mingled with the chanting of the Christians. The atmosphere was that of an English bank-holiday crowd rather than a solemn remembrance of Christ's passion; and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the goal of the processions, appeared to us a grim and repulsive symbol of a divided and degenerate Christianity.

Were we then disappointed with the Holy Places? There is no general answer to this question. Many churches and shrines are ugly, ornate and, to me at least, repulsive: others are simple and beautiful. Some of the identifications are impossible, others entirely without evidence; some are quite likely, others certain. Among the last group are the ruined synagogue at Capernaum, the well at Sychar, the great stones of the wailing wall, part of Herod's Temple, and the pavement of the Fortress of Antonia. On this pavement, Pilate set his seat for the judgment of Jesus, and here may be seen the lines and marks of the games played by Roman soldiers while on duty. It was also a thrill to see Hezekiah's tunnel, leading from the spring Gihon to the pool of Siloam. Only my wife's zeal to retain the Persil-whiteness of my shirt, prevented me from walking through it! The waters of Shiloah still flow gently.

It is not, however, inside places of human construction, but out in the open country that one is reminded most vividly of the Master. Sailing on the Lake of Galilee, walking down the deep valley of the Kidron, climbing to the summit of the Mount of Olives, kneeling at sunset on the Hill of the Skull—one is aware of His presence. Visiting these places is rather like looking through the personal possessions of a departed friend. Every sight and scene reminds you of Him, or of some event associated with Him. In England one has to "practise the presence of God"; in the Holy Land it is impossible to forget Him. The associations are all around. I found myself subject to an overwhelming impulse to touch all the things associated with Him—the soil, the walls, the water, the ruins—in order to have a more direct contact with Him. In this respect the Holy Land is like the gospel sacraments: the outward and visible signs of His presence satisfy and yet fail to satisfy. They point beyond themselves to the day when we shall see Him face to face, and no longer beneath a veil. The Jerusalem which is below is a symbol of the Jerusalem which is above and, like all good symbols, it points beyond itself. In so far as it can be described at all, I think that is the awareness one has on first seeing old Jerusalem. The past and the present and the future are all here, and are all one.

STEPHEN F. WINWARD.

WEST AFRICA

TWO world conferences made it possible for a number of people to visit Ghana and Nigeria. Much has been written about these conferences. One was the regular Assembly of the International Missionary Council. The other was far more important for the study of Africa: it was the All Africa Church Conference held at Ibadan, Nigeria, in January.

The natural excitement of many delegates going to Ghana so shortly after its achievement of independence was a little damped by the isolation of the conference. The Assembly was held in the University College ten miles out of Accra and so far as transport was concerned, it might as well have been a hundred miles out. Many delegates to the Assembly saw practically nothing of Ghana. However they were in this new country and certain public functions allowed them to meet representatives of the government and of religious life. The great hit of the Assembly was the Prime Minister, who attended the garden party and delivered a really important address. He pointed out the need for Ghana to be united and the danger of those elements that would divide it socially, politically or in religion. It was a naive speech in some ways, but it was friendly and Nkrumah showed his obvious sincerity. Personally I was a little distressed in Ghana to discover a certain hostility among missionaries to the new Prime Minister. There was a feeling that he was an upstart, that he was not doing things in the British way, and

that his movement into Government House was somewhat presumptuous. I found a strange reluctance to admit that Nkrumah's decision to live in Christiansborg where the Governor had always lived was a necessary decision. The people of Ghana needed some kind of imaginative action such as their Prime Minister moving into the castle to assure them that independence had really been achieved. Ghana still depends very much upon Europeans, and that means mostly British, for her continuance. Her broadcasting, her Press, her University, are all possible only because there are British people there to direct and to develop, and without them Ghana would remain a backward nation. The purpose of all the development in Ghana is that one day Ghana shall be independent in fact as well as in idea. There were many encouraging signs that this movement to full independence was really taking place. The Ghana News Agency, for example, was being run most efficiently by Ghanaians only. The broadcasting is almost entirely in the hands of Ghanaian producers, although many engineers and the Director, are British. The churches have largely Ghanaian leadership, but here there is distressing evidence of retarding British influence. I was to meet this again in Nigeria, but I first met it as a fact in Ghana. We have sent out our missionaries and all they had to take was their own Christianity. It was therefore natural that at the beginning they should create churches in their own image. What else could they do? They fought against paganism and in its place they put a British form of Christianity. Sometimes Methodist, sometimes Anglican, sometimes Presbyterian. The pity is that this should have remained so long. Children were brought up in schools with the idea that everything connected with paganism had to be rejected. Indeed, we heard of children who had been punished for playing with things connected with paganism, such as drums. This attitude meant that the whole of West African worship had to be without the influence of any West African culture. The worship I attended in Anglican and Methodist churches was very much the same as we would hear in the equivalent churches at home. The only difference was the language and even that was sometimes twisted to fit the pattern of the English. The words of hymns had to fit the rhythm of Ancient and Modern tunes. The words of prayers had to bear the cadences of Cranmer.

Nigeria was in many ways a much more interesting country to visit. The conference itself helped towards this. Its subject was "The Church in Africa and the Problems which it has to meet in the mid-Twentieth Century". The first thing the conference taught us was the variety of the continent of Africa. When Christians from Kenya or from Rhodesia talked about their problems they were almost unintelligible to the people of Nigeria. West Africa has not yet felt the full force of industrialism in the modern world. Both Kenya and Rhodesia have. When we had learnt this lesson well we began to see behind the variety a unifying pattern. Such a pattern made it possible for us to speak of Africa as a single entity despite

its varieties. There are three common factors in this pattern. The first is Islam, which threatens to dominate the whole continent. Some areas feel the challenge more seriously than others but none is immune from it. The aim of Islam is the whole continent. The second factor is bribery. Jobs are bought all over Africa; the greatest need of every country on the continent is the training of men of integrity. The third is the problem of land. Nothing raises the anger of the African more than the thought that some of his land is in the hands of Europeans. The African's emotional reaction to the possession of land showed itself violently at the conference. Most illogical statements were made by Africans about land-hunger and the African's right to possess all the land he wanted. The mixing of so much emotion with so few facts led to a call from the conference to the World Council of Churches to undertake a survey of land-hunger in Africa.

The conference benefited from being held in Nigeria. This land is the largest of the British possessions and is in many ways the most important country in Africa. It is not yet fully independent but one of its three regions, the Western Region, has now achieved independence. We heard of the other two that the Eastern Region was less developed but showed greater promise, and that the Northern Region was the stronghold of Islam and backwardness. The Regions mixed freely. The great market town of Ibadan, for example, is full of men from the North who are trading. It is said that Ibadan is one of the great Mohammedan towns of the world, and yet it lies not in the North but is the capital of the West.

Islam is the greatest threat to Christianity in Africa. As we met it in Nigeria it was most friendly. It is almost conciliatory with that confidence that comes from victory. All the Mohammedans that I met were confident that Christianity had only a matter of years to live. After all, they explained to me, Christianity is only a partial religion, it requires Islam for its completion. They compared Christians to men living in unfinished houses. They claimed that Islam has everything that Christianity has and more. However, its danger does not lie in its arrogant confidence but in its adaptability. Christians have been too rigid. They have been unable to take into their worship the cultural patterns of the African people. They have instead imposed upon the Africans a foreign culture. Islam comes with a confident appeal. Its missionaries—and every Moslem trader is a missionary—talk to the Africans from within their culture. They can say, You are one of us, you do not need to give up your customs or even your way of life to become a Moslem. They can accept the polygamy of Africa, they can allow Africans to keep their superstitions, even their witch-doctors. Their appeal is overwhelming and the Christians cannot compromise enough to compete with them. No Christian would expect the African church to give up its standards, but there is a need to understand more fully the difficulties that an African experiences when he becomes Christian. One of the

greatest difficulties is the problem of polygamy. No one doubts that eventually the African Christian must accept the principle of one man and one woman to form a Christian marriage. The steps towards that ideal, however, are difficult. Simply to assert monogamy is not enough. It often leaves the converted African with an insoluble problem. An African who has had five wives and a stable household is presented with an impossible situation when he is told to reduce the number to one. Some of the best of them delay becoming Christians because of this. Islam at least pretends to offer a solution by not insisting upon monogamy at once. It is possible to be a good Mohammedan and keep polygamy. The reforming sects within Islam maintain that they can reduce polygamy gradually. There is need for much more imaginative thinking about African marriage.

A more manageable problem is that of Christian worship. In Nigeria I attended a service of worship which became almost meaningless because of its strong imprint of European culture. When I discussed this with Nigerians afterwards they said that there were Nigerian elements that could be incorporated into worship. Some experiments have already been attempted but they have not yet gone far enough. The best known of these are the Yorubu hymns. These are attempts not only to fit Nigerian tunes to traditional hymns, but also a re-writing of the words of the hymns. The Yorubu language is a tone language, that is it is a language to be sung rather than spoken. It has no accents and therefore does not fit the accented words of hymns in our language. The tone form of the language can best be illustrated by the fact that drums can be made to speak it. This is the explanation of the talking drums. The traditional music of the country therefore can take the Yorubu words where it cannot take any European language. The form of the words in such hymns is almost extempore. I heard such hymns as the 23rd Psalm and as they were translated for me I could see that they were not a simple form of Psalm in our sense of the word but rather a meditation upon the ideas in the Psalm. Such hymns are used in mission services and in villages. They have not yet found their way into the regular worship of the city churches. It is interesting that in such experiments resistance has come not so much from the missionaries as from the older Nigerian Christians. The effect of several generations of schooling cannot be undone in one generation by progressive missionaries.

The Church in West Africa faces the future without a very great confidence in itself. It uses its own culture only with hesitation and a great deal of resistance. It sees in Islam a formidable rival. It has almost lost the missionary spirit and although it has created certain outstanding leaders like Sir Francis Ibiem, it does not show much evidence of really lay initiative. The clergy is much too British in its thought forms and often out of touch with the ordinary people. These are formidable disadvantages, yet there is hope. More than one Nigerian Christian said to me, in relation to the threat of Islam,

the future is with us. What he meant was that Islam was taking the easy way of quick results. As Nigeria moves into the modern world and as she achieves equality for her women, those religions which supported polygamy would be looked upon as reactionary. The danger of adapting a religion to traditional cultures is always that the cultures themselves may have to change. Islam may be defeated because it is reactionary, but it will be defeated only by an energetic church with a sense of mission. Much remains to be done with the churches of West Africa, but it can only be done by Africans who have rediscovered their country. The Christian Church has also one other thing to offer which no other religion in the world can give: it can give to Africa the thing that it needs most—integrity. If Christian laymen can show to their fellow Africans that responsibility and integrity are natural developments of the Christian religion they will win all along the line.

E. H. ROBERTSON.

(198 delegates, consultants, observers and staff members from 22 countries, from the Cape to Ethiopia and from Sierra Leone to Madagascar, attended the conference.)

SOME BAPTISMAL PROBLEMS

IN view of the importance of issues raised at the Youth Faith and Order Consultation on Baptism and Confirmation at Hilversum, Holland, which I was privileged to attend, it has been suggested that I should select some questions there raised for discussion.

During the week, twelve questions were selected, and on the final day three groups were formed and were given four questions each. Each group presented a written statement in reply to each question.

These statements have been circulated to every participant in the Consultation. It should be remembered that the purpose of our gathering was not purely theological, but rather to consider the place of baptism and confirmation with regard to the integration of young people into the life of the church. As I now read these questions and answers, the problems tend to settle round four main issues. The comments which follow are therefore intended for ministerial thought rather than rational conclusions for public consumption.

I. IS BAPTISM NECESSARY?

Judging by the answers given, this subject came up, explicitly or implicitly, in more than one place. The Salvation Army representative expressed the view that there was actually no necessity for the material sign in baptism, but that faith in God's promises and conversion could be substituted for the sacrament. This obviously was not acceptable to others, and it therefore raised the whole

question of the relation of Christ's baptism and incarnation to the sacrament of baptism: some interpreted this simply as an image or symbol, whilst others were inclined to think of it as actually conveying in a very real sense the benefits of Christ's baptism in its administration.

For both these approaches there is apparently a practical difficulty: one group was asked to consider how we can speak to people who are intellectually puzzled about baptism and who could not see that baptism could add anything to their relationship with God. All the members admitted that this problem is found more obviously in churches where baptism is not administered to children, but they also agreed that it would prevail even among paedobaptists if baptism were to be intellectually considered. Beyond this, the group found no satisfactory answer. They simply pointed out that the answer varies according to whether it is believed that baptism is the effectual means of participating in what Christ has done, or whether it is the seal of membership in the body of Christ which is effected by repentance and faith, and they urged that churches should consider the precise value and effects of baptism, and its relation to faith. The question remained. How can you convince a person intellectually puzzled about baptism, that he ought to be baptized? And does it make any real difference to him if he is not?

Whilst some were wrestling with these practical issues, others were engaged in studying the relationship between Word and Sacrament. Here, somewhat surprisingly, it was agreed that both Word and Sacrament effect the same (i.e. forgiveness of sins), and both may justly be called "means of grace". This prompted the further question: "If grace is given alike in Word and Sacrament, is it possible to speak of initiation otherwise than by sacraments?"

A third group sought to list some reasons why the Church requires baptism of those who desire to be Christians.

Baptists generally would no doubt say baptism, though beneficial, is not necessary; that it is a symbol and seal of something which has already happened; and that it adds nothing which is not possible through the Word. Yet there is an increasing feeling, especially among ministers, that baptism should be administered to all Christians as an act of initiation, and in consultation with other branches of the Church we tend to assume for believers' baptism as large and as important a place as they do for infant baptism. Has the time come, then, when we ought to prevent ourselves from being swept along by a flood tide, and first consider whether baptism is as vital and necessary as many other parts of the Church would have us believe? If it is, ought not both sides to be able to give reasons more easily than apparently is the case?

II. IS THERE REALLY ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INFANT BAPTISM FOLLOWED BY CONFIRMATION AND INFANT DEDICATION FOLLOWED BY BELIEVERS' BAPTISM?

One group was asked to consider the place of *kerygma* and the response to *kerygma* by decision in baptism and confirmation. Its members represented three main positions:

- (a) where parents and sponsors respond on behalf of the child in baptism, who later re-affirms his baptismal vows in confirmation.
- (b) where the parents promise the Christian education of the child, who later makes his own confession of faith.
- (c) where the response of faith is present in the parents and the members of the congregation.

The question appended to their statement by this group is very telling: "What is the significance of the fact that in all churches represented there exists some initiation rite for infants as well as some confirmatory rite for grown up children in which they consciously affirm what they believe?"

On the surface it would appear as if basically we are all doing the same things but calling them by different names. All, except for the Orthodox Church. They do not have any place for the idea of a ceremony connected with personal decision, and it was largely on their account that a challenging question was added by another group to one of their answers: "Do the churches not having a rite sealing a personal decision feel that one would serve any useful purpose?"

The wording of that question is significant. The practical issues here were to the fore. And it is very difficult to convince paedobaptists that the main point is not whether such a rite is useful but whether it is Biblical. Some of them had already hinted that confirmation was not Biblical, and did not apparently think of believers' baptism as in any way different. Were they right in this? And are we right to think of infant baptism as nothing more than our service of infant dedication? Some thought that at this point we were all closer together than at any other time.

III. WHAT IS THE PLACE OF CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH?

To some, children cannot be members of the Church because membership implies baptism, and baptism implies a responsible decision. To others, membership is possible for children through the baptism of their parents, which is effective for them until they reach the time when they are able to make a decision for themselves. Beyond these two positions, agreement did not seem possible, except to say that the issue turned on one's conception of the Church. It is obviously against the conviction of many people to argue, as indeed we do, that children nurtured in Christian homes and Church have no standing in the church. At the same time, it offends those upholders of responsible membership to admit that infants, because baptized, are part of the Church. This is at any rate a matter where the paedobaptist is fairly clear what he believes. Those of us who stand for a converted membership, need to give serious thought to the place of children in the Church. It is a question that is not

relevant only here; it is relevant also in discussions on church union in such places as North India and Pakistan.

IV. IS BAPTISM REALLY RELATED TO INTEGRATION?

Most members of one group were agreed that obligatory confirmation was not to be commended, whilst another group devoted one whole statement to this subject.

In the case of churches practising infant baptism, it was urged that confirmation classes should be more differentiated as to age and general background (religious, social and educational), and that young people should be helped to appreciate what had been done for them in baptism, the ceremony being interpreted in the context of the whole teaching of the Church. But this teaching must not be purely doctrinal. Young people must be helped to see what baptism means in daily living; that it imposes upon them an obligation to lead a life of love such as Christ Himself led, so that they see themselves as sharing, not only in the baptism of Christ, but also in the whole of His life. This, in turn, imposes upon the Church an obligation to pastoral care: "to know what they (i.e. candidates for baptism) are actually saying and asking about their baptism and not only what they ought to ask". This ministry of listening has often been neglected by the Church, and could be considerably improved if laymen could in some way assist in baptismal education.

It is admitted that churches that practise believers' baptism have a somewhat better approach on this line, but it is still true that a good many of the suggestions made regarding paedobaptists could be considered and applied to our churches with profit.

These, and other, baptismal issues are going to be before us for a long time. The day has gone when we could rest content because Barth and Brunner saw some good in believers' baptism; since then, both sides have re-investigated their position and endeavoured to strengthen it. So that the only thing which is really certain is that these issues will not be simply settled, one way or the other.

The interest in church union among the younger churches only serves to complicate the matter and to make the clarification of our position still more vital. The closer we get to each other in the W.C.C., when discussing matters of Faith and Order, the more cautious everybody feels he ought to be. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we should be able to state a case for believers' baptism, and to ensure that Baptists speak on this subject with a common mind—a fact by no means certain at the moment.

The Youth Section of the W.C.C. is now considering these problems, from the point of view of Faith and Order, and also of Life and Work. This Consultation at Hilversum was really a preparation for a European Youth Conference at Lausanne in 1959. Before delegates go to that meeting, it would be a good thing if these matters could have been debated in our churches and in our fraternal, so that Lausanne might learn the real mind of British Baptists, and not just the opinions of the representatives.

A. GILMORE.

THE MINISTER AND THE COMMUNION SERVICE

WE are not thinking here of the minister as administering the Communion, but rather as receiving it. This he does, of course, while administering it to his people; but we are thinking more particularly of the minister, perhaps in retreat with his brethren, sharing with them in a Communion Service, and of what that Communion may say to him.

Like his people, the minister needs the Communion Service so that from time to time he may see his Saviour "face to face". In a sense he is always doing this as he ponders or preaches on some part of the gospel story or on the risen and glorified Saviour behind all the story of the Church; but in the Cross and at the Communion Service which celebrates it he is especially face to face with his Lord. Here the love of Jesus is most fully revealed: here is made known the redeeming purpose of the Saviour which lies behind all the separate acts of His ministry.

The Communion Service is the inspiration of both minister and people; but its message comes with special emphasis to us as ministers. We are singled out as our Saviour's special representatives to the world. It is expected of us that in some measure we, like Paul, bear in ourselves the marks of the Lord Jesus. In the recent discussions on Ordination the suggestion has been made that the Ordination Service should always end and find its completion in a Communion Service. There is something very fitting in this if it symbolises that at the very beginning of our ministry we are ordained to share in the loving, redeeming service of our Master. It would express our desire, indeed the very purpose of our coming ministry, to "fill up" as Paul says "the afflictions of Christ", to share with our Master, so far as we can be said to share, in His redeeming work. It is because we are so identified with our Master, that the Communion speaks to us specially as ministers.

1. The greatest lesson of the Communion Service will be its message of sacrifice and its call for the giving up of ourselves. But we may put that message aside for the moment. Sacrifice in itself and for itself is nothing. Its glory consists in its being accepted for some great purpose. The Communion may therefore well speak to us first of our high calling, and remind us of the task to which the Master has appointed us. That is, we may come to the Communion thinking of it under its name of the Sacrament, reminding ourselves of the soldier's oath, the sacramentum—his pledge of loyal service. We have pledged ourselves to the high warfare of our Divine Master. We may well believe that our Saviour Himself as He sat at supper with His disciples was thinking much of His own dedication to the work of God's Kingdom. Had He not but recently spoken to them about giving His life a ransom for many? He would set men free that they might enter into the blessings of the Kingdom. So the Communion Service may stir up in our minds afresh the great task

to which we are called as His fellow-workers. What a privilege that we are given a part in this age-long war against the powers of evil. Or, to change the metaphor, what a privilege to help plant in the hearts of men that which will bring forth the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering. We shall want, then, in the Communion, to dedicate ourselves afresh, resolving to improve every power of heart and mind that we may share in the great purposes of our Master for the world.

2. But always in the Communion Service we are brought again to the inescapable lesson of sacrifice. It is of our Saviour's offering of Himself that we inevitably think when we gather at His table. "This is My body broken for you", "This cup is the new covenant in My Blood". As we are called to share in the Master's high purposes, so we are called to share in the Master's way of the Cross. We cannot do the one without the other. Our effective service for the world will be that in which there is in some measure a bearing of the cross. Bishop Selwyn was once preaching an ordination sermon to several young clergy setting out on their ministry. He spoke of the various characteristics which should mark a priest of God. He spoke of several general qualities a priest must have—a quiet mind, a resolute will, a broad back—and then he went on to say that a priest must also have in him something of a broken heart—what Paul meant by filling up the afflictions of Christ. He must be ready when the disappointments and the trials come in his ministry. An illustration of the lack of this spirit may show what is meant, by contrast. When Montaigne was invited to be Mayor of Bordeaux, he consented, but with a reservation. "I am willing" he said "to take the city's affairs on my hands, but not on my heart". He was prepared to do something for them, perhaps to do much for them, but not to strain himself or make himself ill for them. But our ministry may ask us to share in the sufferings of our Master. We realise this, and indeed may be eager and anxious to share more fully in the sacrifice of Christian service. We are deeply troubled sometimes when we think of the mission field, or of saints nearer home who are giving up so much for the Master. Are we, we ask ourselves, sufficiently bearing our cross? But we need not anxiously ask this question for its own sake, for our cross will come to us, not by special seeking, but in the way of our duty. When we first set out on our work there may seem little of hardship about it, and it is good that we should set out with the highest hopes and the fairest prospects; but as time goes on we see that our work involves demands which we did not realise at first, demands for patience, for love and the giving of time and strength. Through the faithful continuing in our duty there will come the privilege of bearing the cross.

The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God.

3. But the Communion Service is more than a reminder of the costliness of our service for the Master. It is a service of grace. It speaks not only the word of challenge but also the word of comfort. It tells of all that Christ has done for us and is still doing. It is a banquet. When Jesus sat at supper with His disciples He spoke to them of the Vine, and how that abiding in Him they would bear fruit and that His joy would be in them. The Cross speaks not only of the hardness of the way but of the blessings that come as we journey on. Deissmann tells of a stained glass window in the church of Erbach in Germany. It is a picture of the Saviour on the Cross. But the artist depicts the Cross as having struck root in the earth. The dead tree of pain has become a living vine; bright green leaves shoot out from it and it bears clusters of grapes. So the Communion reminds us of the more abundant life we have through the sufferings of our Saviour. Part of that abundant life we find it hard to express in words, the sense of being brought near to God, the work of the Spirit in our hearts and minds, and the hope that is before us. But there are human joys too we owe to the Saviour. The fellowship we enjoy in the ministry is one of these blessings of the Gospel. So, too, the privilege we have as ministers of entering into the experiences of others and of helping some to better things. We have the joy of being able to look out over the work of God's Kingdom and of rejoicing in its triumphs. Ours is a privileged life and our hearts will be humbly grateful to the Master who has called us into His service.

W. B. WILSON.

THE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE Baptist Historical Society was founded on 30th April, 1908. Its first President was Principal G. P. Gould and its first Secretary Dr. W. T. Whitley. Its objects were declared as follows:—

- (1) Investigating all records of British and Irish Baptists.
- (2) Holding Meetings to present and discuss results.
- (3) Publishing "Transactions" at these Meetings and other Papers.
- (4) Promoting County and other Histories.
- (5) Providing safe custody for Ancient Documents.
- (6) Encouraging young students of History.

This year the Society celebrates its Jubilee. It is not the purpose of this article to list the achievements of the past fifty years, however, but rather to re-interpret the aims in the light of the present day.

The objects set out above may be summarised roughly under three heads: to collect and preserve existing Baptist records; to publish and discuss material relevant to the Denomination; to stimulate further research into the life and faith of Baptists. This is what we seek to do today and in each object we ask your interest and co-operation.

Quite recently I was invited to go and examine a library connected with one of our older churches. It was not a large church in a city, but a small village cause. I was shown the library which was a remarkable collection of all kinds of books, mainly non-theological. Undoubtedly a valuable collection but not of particular interest to the Baptist Historical Society. I turned my attention, therefore, to a corner cupboard. It was full of nineteenth century periodicals. I brought them out into the light of day—a large pile of musty magazines. But they were not all periodicals, for out of that pile I extracted about a dozen pamphlets relating to controversies over baptism and dating from the early days of the Baptists. These pamphlets are of the utmost value and it is possible that one of them may prove to be the only surviving copy. Greatly encouraged I returned to the cupboard! My next object was to discover the contents of an old box. It turned out to be full of sermon-notes! These remain to be examined in greater detail but there must be several hundred sermons all dating from the early and mid-eighteenth century. They are written in a relatively neat handwriting and will undoubtedly prove to be of considerable interest. I returned to the cupboard yet again. There was not much left apart from the usual bric-a-brac of the years, invitations to long-past anniversary teas, and the inevitable relics of missionary plays. Then I saw an old envelope. After all that I had found so far I did not dare to hope that this could contain anything else of value. But it did. Out of that envelope tumbled several small bundles of letters, most of them dating from the early eighteenth century and a few from the seventeenth. These letters, too, remain for closer examination, but a cursory glance indicated that amongst them were greetings and news letters from other churches in the Association and letters concerning ministerial settlements. In addition, there was a copy of an application to the authorities for a licence for the founding of a Baptist church at a place at which today there is no trace of such a cause. The cupboard had now yielded up all its treasures. It is the task of the Historical Society to examine in detail and record the existence of all that was found in that cupboard. The result will be that further light will be shed upon the pages of Baptist history.

Now I am not asking that you should all immediately turn to and enthusiastically turn out all the cupboards in your churches in the hope of finding some of your predecessors' sermon notes! But I am suggesting that you should do two things, First, to take the greatest care to make certain that the documents and records of your church are carefully preserved and maintained. This means minute books, annual reports by the church secretary, important letters, etc. This may seem obvious but it does not always happen. Recently I heard of the minute books of an old church which, on the removal of one secretary, came to a sudden end in a dustbin before his successor thought of asking for them. Recently, too, I heard of a collection of old Baptist books mouldering away in a damp outbuilding. We owe

it to ourselves and to the future to make certain, not only that no records are lost in our generation, but also that we keep a close and accurate record of our own experiences. It is just as important for the considerable number of newly-founded churches to keep full and accurate records of their early days as it is for the older churches to maintain the account of their on-going history.

Then, secondly, the Historical Society will hope, in the not-too-distant future, to compile a catalogue of what records and libraries do exist in various Associations and churches. This will mean that many will be asked to supply certain information. It may take an hour or so—perhaps even half a day. But it will be of immeasurable service.

The Historical Society does not only collect and preserve, it also publishes. In the past, much valuable historical material has appeared under the Society's auspices, both in special volumes, and also in the *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*. The *Transactions* have now grown into the *Baptist Quarterly*. In the pages of the *Quarterly* we seek to hold the balance between articles which deal entirely with Baptist history and articles which discuss and interpret Baptist theological thought today. It is good to report that the *Quarterly* has a fast-growing circulation, but it still goes to all too few Baptists. As a denomination, we are fortunate to have three Baptist publications, all of them important and all of them dealing with quite different aspects of our life. The *Baptist Times* brings to us news of various activities within the denomination and comments upon the world in which we serve. Then, secondly, we have this magazine which is the visible link holding together Baptist ministers the world over in a fellowship and which publishes articles designed to help and encourage the Minister in his work. Finally, there is the *Baptist Quarterly* which is designed to reflect the denomination, recording its history and thinking theologically of the problems of the day. We would suggest that each of these publications should be known in every church. So far as is possible every member should see the *Baptist Times* and surely no minister will ever want to be without the *Fraternal*. But should there not also be at least one copy of the *Baptist Quarterly* available in every church? In this ecumenical age when we are being challenged to give a reason for our Baptist faith it is necessary for us to think through our history and the theological reasons for our separate existence as Baptists. Several churches are now taking the *Quarterly*, as churches, the copy being sent in the first instance to the minister for circulation amongst those who are interested. May I invite those of you who do not feel able to take out a personal subscription, to consider the possibility of bringing the *Quarterly* into your church in this way? I shall be glad to supply you with details.

Finally, the Historical Society seeks to encourage further research into the life and thought of the denomination. All of us who heard Professor E. G. Rupp's scintillating address on "The importance of

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To the Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship.

Dear Friends,

I have been re-reading *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Tom Pinch had called at the house in which his sister was the governess and had spoken to the footman. "The footman, being a lively young man, happened to have his attention caught at that moment by the flight of a pigeon in which he took so warm an interest, that his gaze was riveted on the bird until it was quite out of sight." As I read I felt that this might well have described the shopkeeper in a Midland town who was looking out of his shop doorway during a lull in business when his attention was caught by a blackbird swooping towards the utmost pinnacle of a Baptist Church on the opposite side of the road. The bird alighted, sunned itself for a few moments and then flew off. The shopkeeper had taken a "warm interest" in the bird and he was astonished when the top of the pinnacle fell off—apparently dislodged by the thrust of the bird as it took to flight. The piece of masonry crashed into the street but fortunately no harm was done, although the consequences might well have been serious for a passer-by and serious, too, for the Church authorities had a third party claim developed.

Before 1939 a Public Liability (or Third Party) Policy which gave protection to a Church up to £500 any one claim was quite usual but since then three important things have happened:—

1. the £ has fallen in value;
2. the public has become increasingly claims minded;
3. the Occupiers Liability Act, 1957 has been passed.

The present position, therefore, is that a £500 indemnity is quite out of date. For the past year we have been affixing to renewal notices, slips emphasising the need to increase an indemnity. An absolute minimum should be £10,000 but preferably £25,000 or £50,000 should apply. The increase in premiums for these higher indemnities is relatively small. Many deacons have increased Public Liability indemnities but there are still some Churches which need to give close attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN,

General Manager.

P.S. One of our shorthand-typists, after ten years with us, is leaving us to get married. If you are the Minister of one of the Churches in the London suburbs possibly one of your young people would like to serve with us here.

denominational history" at the recent Assembly must surely have been convinced, perhaps to our own surprise, that the speaker proved his point! Those who heard Dr. Thomas Richards speaking on "Some disregarded sources of Baptist History" at our Annual Meeting will also have come away convinced of the vast amount of research that still remains to be done. It is our intention to draw up a list of the more important areas of Baptist history which remain unexamined. There are also certain records in different parts of the country which will need some examination. When we start work upon the compilation of the list, and seek people to share in the work to be done, we hope we may count on your interest and support in putting forward projects, but more especially in suggesting people whom we might possibly approach with a view to sharing in the work. Such research is not an end in itself, its purpose is to enable the true story of the Baptists to be written and assessed.

We celebrate the Jubilee of the Society, then, not only by recalling the past and paying tribute to all those who served the denomination through the Society in the days that are gone, but also by planning for the future. In this we ask for your co-operation and your prayers as we seek to serve the people called Baptists.

W. M. S. WEST.

THESE FIVE AND THIRTY YEARS

TO condense five and thirty years into fifteen hundred words is obviously impossible. I have therefore chosen a few lessons, learnt from my pastoral experience, hoping they may be a help and encouragement to some. Obviously I can write only of what has happened to me. My experience is limited in that I have ministered to one church for thirty-five years, yet I suggest that it is also rich, in that I have come to know people intimately. Some have proved disappointing, but the majority have been God's noble men and women whose simple faith, loyalty and generosity have no equal outside the Church of our Lord. Often the most unlikely have turned out to be the most reliable, whilst those one thought would never fail, have proved unstable. One has compensated for the other. "Put not your trust in princes nor in the son of man" is still wise advice, but so are the words in the same Psalm, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help". One of the greatest truths that Jesus spoke was this, "Without Me, ye can do nothing" nothing worth while; nothing truly spiritual. But the converse is true also—with Me . . . everything.

We need to remember two things. It is not our work, it is His. So let Him dictate the policy and solve the problems. Hand everything over to Him and ask His help. It is better than trusting to one's own wisdom. The second is, that He wants to do His work through us. Let Him. Don't try to do His work for Him. This also I have learnt.

Every Minister is dealing with eternal truths on behalf of an Eternal Master, and yet we so often look only for short term results. Surely we should expect that much of our work will take more than a few weeks or months to reach maturity. We must not become impatient, because we cannot reap our harvests in a short period. Neither should we become complacent and console ourselves with the "long term result" truth, when there appears not even a blade of grass on the arid ground given to us to cultivate. We need to be honest with ourselves and God, and to face such a situation fairly and squarely.

Most people like their Ministers to be natural both in and out of the pulpit. Some want to put us on a pedestal; don't encourage them! Some want to dictate, don't allow them to do so. A quiet dignity is better than the "hale fellow, well met" attitude, but friendliness will gain more confidences than a superior holiness. In most departments of life the happy medium is hard to achieve; not least in the Ministry. This applies to sermons amongst other things. A balanced Ministry of the Word should be our aim. People appreciate variety not only in the themes, but also in the method of presentation. Talking of sermons, may I say that we should never preach unless we know within our innermost souls that what we are about to say, God has first said to us. We may not all agree with the verbal inspiration of Scripture, but there should be no such query in our minds when we stand before our people to deliver the sermon. Our words should be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Only such preaching will have lasting results.

Sometimes I have felt that nothing has been achieved through the message, but I have learnt that often when we think we have done the least, we have done the most good, though we may not find out till long afterwards. God wisely keeps us from knowing much of the good we have done lest we become too elated. There are not many who can achieve success and remain humble.

I learnt early in my ministry the personal application of the text, "My ways are not your ways". God has rarely worked the obvious way in answer to my prayers, but He has always done things the better way.

As one who was soundly converted at the age of eight years, I have never doubted that God can work a work of grace in the heart of a child. I have witnessed hundreds of similar cases, and have seen them reach the maturity of spiritual manhood. If we believe in conversion and regeneration, then let us preach and teach it to our children in terms they can understand. What is the main cause of the leakage between Sunday School and Church? Is it not because our boys and girls, knowing nothing of the "power of the new life" succumb to the attractions and subtleties of the World? It is possible to adopt modern methods and yet fail to bring our children to the feet of the Saviour.

I believe in miracles. That is, the intervention of God in affairs which are beyond our own efforts; but lest it be thought that I am a

sensationalist I refrain from recounting what I have seen. All I would say is, that in a lesser or greater degree, we who believe in prayer must believe in miracles, for in our very petitions we are asking God to do for us what we know we cannot do for ourselves. Every Minister should have a number of witnessed miracles stored in his mind, too sacred to display to the world, but which he can periodically recall and thereby renew his faith. I have found it good to commit the account of such Divine interventions to paper at the time they happened, though I have been careful to keep most of the MSS. from merely inquisitive eyes.

I wonder if any of my brethren has ever written a letter to God? In times of stress when it has been difficult to pray, or when confronted with some special problem, I have done this. Needless to say one approaches the task reverently. Yet in a letter it is so easy to be frank and to unburden one's soul. When it is finished, sign it, lay it open on your desk, kneel down in front of it and say, "Lord, read that." Believe that He will and wait in silence. Keep your letter safely, and when the answer comes re-read it, and praise your wonderful Friend. When I have gone, someone will find a number of such letters in my study, To me they are too sacred to burn.

It has been an advantage to be in business and earn one's living, as well as being a minister. Every day I have mixed with the non-church-goer, and have had opportunities to serve the Lord in ways that are barred to the average Minister. Then I have been financially independent, and this has given me a liberty which I wish was the privilege of every Minister. Naturally, time had to be carefully allotted, but I was always available to visit the sick and those in trouble. I felt the others did not need to be pampered, and I contended that it was their duty to be in their places on a Sunday and throughout the week. I wonder if my readers agree?

I would pay tribute to my wife, and to Minister's wives generally. We minister to the multitude. You minister to the Minister and what a selfless ministry is yours. You married your husband that he might belong to you. But you have never claimed your rights. You have waited long hours alone. You have been utterly unselfish even when you have felt a twinge of jealousy. You have been sorely wounded as you have heard some unkind word said about him, but you have borne it without a murmur. You have comforted him when he has felt himself to be a failure. There has never been an occasion when you have not stood loyally by him. You have kept him from foolish actions . . . but what else can I say? Only this: "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love."

CECIL H. RADFORD.

The writer of the foregoing, assumed in 1923 the oversight of the Thomas Cooper Memorial Church, Lincoln (founded 1652). By his long and faithful ministry he raised it to a position of influence in the City and County of Lincoln and on retiring from his Lay-Pastorate the membership stood at 389. We join with others in thanking for the great things God enabled Cecil Radford to accomplish. (ED.)