

The Fraternal.

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Literary and other contributions for "The Fraternal" should be addressed to the Editor, Rev. F. Goldsmith French, 52, Handen Road, Lee, S.E., or Secretary, Rev. A. J. Payne, 25, The Grove, Earlsfield, Wandsworth, London, S.W. 18.

SECRETARY'S NOTES.

WE regret, that for a variety of reasons, only one number of the Fraternal was issued in 1924, but the Council hope that four numbers may be issued during 1925.

This can only be done if suitable matter is forthcoming and we strongly urge our brethren to help us in this way.

What we want is short suggestive articles on "live" matters relating to our life and ministry and work.

We hope to issue a study of some new book in each future number.

Will the ministers please note that provisional arrangements have been made for the Annual Meetings in London as follows: The Business Meeting will be held at Kingsgate Chapel, on Thursday, April 30th, at 2.30 p.m. This will be followed by a United Meeting with the British and American Fraternal Union at 3 p.m., when addresses will be delivered by Rev. Dr. H. J. Wicks, B.A. (our President) and probably Dr. Mullins of the Southern Baptist Convention. Social fellowship will follow at 4.30 p.m.

The subscriptions for 1925 are due and should be paid at once. This will greatly help us to issue the "Fraternal" regularly each quarter.

A. J. PAYNE.

AFTER CARDIFF.

WHEN our meetings are organised altogether as a series of public meetings it is difficult, sometimes impossible to prevent them sinking to the level of "crowd" meetings. The crowd emotions are awakened and rhetoric, making points, stories, and immoderate laughter become dominant. There can be no great advances along these lines. A public meeting means that the speaker must seek to keep within the accepted ideas of the greatest number. Symbols which unify must be used—phrases which mean one thing to one hearer, and another thing to another, begetting superficial, and sometimes false, unities of opinion. It is impossible thus to grow into all the truth of God.

Further, it will be said in the reports of the meetings that this year we have been at the centre—Christ, and the preaching of Christ. The writer agrees. He has been more than once profoundly moved—what an unveiling of sacrificial and redeeming love was Dr. Forbes address. Yet looking back over ten years of meetings the writer has to confess that during these ten "apocalyptic" years we have been at the centre all the time. The speeches cover practically the same ground every year. Probably we shall return to the centre again next year. In no year known to the writer have we had the courage to relate the centre to the confused, turbulent, unhappy, strife-ridden, blood-stained life around the centre. Christ our Lord thrust out His experience of the character of God to every phase of the troubled unregenerate life around Him. Because of the character of God He renounced definitely certain dominant ways of life, held in honour by the many, and wrought out new and better acceptances.

I wonder if this year we could make a beginning, if we could start from the strong and beautiful addresses of last year, and really face up to the redemptive meanings of Christ for one or more particular phases of man's life and relationships—the unredeemed areas of our age? For example: The revelation of the mind to which we have to mediate Christ, and our common and grave failures, contained in a book like "The Army and Religion"; The Life and Problems of One City—the moral consequences of this thoughtless aggregation of uprooted masses; The Spiritual Vocation of Nations societies—has Britain a Divine Vocation as sacred as that of Israel (this question put by

the writer once provoked the Free Church Council Assembly to laughter); The Group mind, loyalties, and antagonisms of Europe, and Christ's way of Redemption. . . . Manifestly if subjects of this nature are to be dealt with helpfully there will have to happen some change in procedure. There would need to be some corporate preparatory work and this would have to be published before the Assembly meetings. In some cases a city, or a county, or an association might like to undertake the responsibility of the preparatory work; in others the enquiring group would need to represent all our church. Along with the public meetings there would need to be arranged a real conference—there are two or three simple methods of shutting out bores; and possibly some sectional meetings for special subjects.

The writer hopes that he has not been ungracious in anything he has said. Beneath the criticism there is no more deeply grateful and appreciative listener in the Assembly. For many years he has wanted to say these and kindred things, and has deferred, hoping that someone else would say them better. This year however "a concern in the mind" urges to expression. The writer may be alone in thinking these things. It may be simpler to lose him than to make any change. And yet again if it is too much to hope that the Council will consider what is here written, it may be, that because of this article a few individuals of similar mind will somehow find each other, and make a beginning towards another or rather complementary, method of discovering and mediating the redemptive meanings of Christ to this—the fifth turning point in Christian history.

GEORGE EVANS.



“THIS MINISTRY” THINGS FOR THINKING OUT.

PROLOGUE—*Editor*—“Years should speak, etc.” Forty-three years in the ministry should have taught something, and something to be passed on.

Correspondent—Yes—should—but————

Editor—Tell us of some things you would have done differently if——

Correspondent—The things which at first glance I would have done differently, I see to be the very things which brought enrichment and satisfaction. Like the patriarchs, I have sometimes said “All these things are against me,” but later, and on review, have returned a different verdict. “The angel who hath redeemed me from all evil.” To say “I would alter” would be (for the writer) to say to the great over-ruler “I am wiser than Thou”—a thing unthinkable.

Let the fore-going introduce and explain the after-coming.

What have the years taught with regard to “this ministry” —this great ministry, concerning which the greatest have sometimes to say. “It is too high, I cannot attain to it,” and for which all preparation must always appear incomplete and inadequate? It is proposed to set down, in four sections, some of the things which appear to be worth thinking about, and thinking out. These sections will relate to:—1. The Years of Preparation. 2. The Early Years of Actual Service. 3. The Great Years of Productivity. 4. The Years when Strength is less but experience more. So

1. CONCERNING THE YEARS OF PREPARATION.

For most readers of “The Fraternal” these years are all past—a memory only—albeit a gracious and beneficent memory. But concern about, and responsibility for, years of preparation should surely still be ours. There must be continual recruiting in order to the upkeep of the great succession. As soon as we pass in to the ranks of the “actives” we must begin to think about the others coming up behind. Timothy was only in his early years when Paul wrote him, “The things which thou hast heard commit them to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.” Ministers are needed for every generation, and the work of keeping up the succession rests, first of all, upon

those who are in it. This word we put in, in the hope that more ministers will think about more ministers, that they will be on the alert to find "fit" men, and then to help fit them for their work. This will, of course, involve more than a little, for if there is one thing concerning which our Churches are more apathetic than another it is just this question of the supply and equipment of ministers. When is the matter mentioned in the prayer meeting? And when do the deacons ever discuss the question of financial help for our Colleges? But is not the blame ours? It is vain to look to Churches, or Church officers for the lead which we ourselves should give. But that by the way—we pass on to our theme. "The years of preparation," the years when fit men having been found, they are now fitting themselves, and being fitted for their great life-work. We tread warily lest we should be "up against" the "dons" of our seats of learning, but we believe they would welcome, and heartily welcome, any and every sign of increased interest in the great and splendid task which is theirs. Also we speak with uttermost sympathy with them. They are entrusted with greatest responsibilities and generally without anything like adequate support or supplies, and perhaps, that which I want to say will call for something more of both sympathetic support and substantial help ere it can be realised. Concerning the "Years of Preparation," I would like to say, 1. Lessen the number of "Student pastorates." 2. Institute pastoral apprenticeships.

1. *Lessen the number of student pastorates.* At first one is inclined to say *abolish* them. One's own early experience was poignant. Eight months of student-pastorate with all its demands. Eight months! And *the* eight months in which the advantages and privileges of college life should have been the most abounding. Strenuous work in the years following. desperate efforts through long hours of daily and nightly toil can never enable a man to gain what he has thus lost. But now endeavouring to eliminate the personal quantity, one would modify the suggestion and say *not abolish, but severely limit.* Roughly we may classify students as "bookish" and "non-bookish." There are more who never will be "students" in the full sense of the term, their gifts lie in other directions, and there are others for whom books are the very "wine of life." Now the first-named may be permitted the student-pastorate. They will not perhaps suffer greatly, indeed, they may soon derive benefit.

Their gifts lie in the direction of intuition, knowledge of human life, and ready and racy speech. Of course even these must study the book, and as many others as they can be induced to explore, but bookish study is not for them what it is for the others, and it is for these others I hold a brief. No pleadings of Churches, nor even the pleadings of the students themselves should avail. The students may need, and sorely need, the few shillings they would obtain, and the Churches may greatly desire to hear the man but the cost in efficiency for these men and in loss to the Churches in after years, should compel our principals to meet requests for these men as student-pastors with an inexorable "no." A "no" which will in the after years most certainly evoke thanksgiving, at any rate from the men, but also from any in the Churches who think about these things.

2. Institute Pastoral Apprenticeships. Here again one would like to advocate something less than a rigid and indiscriminate rule. Some men would not need such training, they have served their apprenticeship. Quite a number of those who pass through our Colleges come from active pastoral care of little Churches, which have discovered them, recognised their gifts, and been blessed by their ministry. Such have no need of that which the writer has in view. It is another class altogether—men who have in Christian Endeavour Meeting, in open-air gatherings, and in occasional speaking in some Mission Hall or Village Chapel, obtained all the experience they have of the varied tasks of "this ministry." Some men know nothing of the "ins and outs" and "ups and downs," of the situations that arise, and the opportunities that are presented for careful, tactful leading and dealing, together with all the pitfalls and perils attached. Should not some better way be found than the pitch-forking of these men into their great work without preparation? What the writer has in view is this. 1. Let the college course be extended for a year. 2. Let that year be spent in touch with both College and Church, the principal of the College and the pastor of the Church agreeing as to the sharing, and ordering of the student-apprentices work, his studies the care of the principal, his activities arranged by the pastor. Such a year, in which there would be a keeping-up of study, together with an insight into all the varied details of Church life and the pastoral position, would surely prove an unspeakable gain to any man. At the end of the year thus spent he would go back to College

for the purpose of "settling" from the College. This, of course, would require the kindly co-operation of a number of our strong, living Churches, but surely that is a possible thing, and if on mature thought it is seen to be a desirable thing, then, though it may require some wise and careful planning, should we not attempt it so that our young men may have a chance to avoid the sad disasters that have overtaken many as they have entered upon "this ministry" which is so gracious, and at the same time so grave a thing.

CHAS. INGREM

THE TACTICS OF SECULARISM.

WE are sometimes assured nowadays 'on very good authority' that what G. J. Holyoake used to describe as "pot-house atheism" is dead and buried. The militant unbelief of the Charles Bradlaugh type has, so it is said, completely disappeared and its place taken by a wistful agnosticism which hides what 'light' it possesses under a bushel and seldom comes out into the open. These statements, made no doubt in all good faith, are only partially true. In some quarters the 'howlers' are still active and even increasing their activities. Amongst a certain section of the community dogmatic atheism is not yet dead or if it is dead, like the headless chicken on the roadside which an Irishman noticed was still kicking, "it is not aware of the fact yet." Incredible though it may seem, there are still some people who think that Feuerback's amazing assertion: "It is as clear as the day and as evident as the sun that there is no God," is a dictum of the highest wisdom. This is the cardinal article of their creed. Upon it they base a number of tenets which they consider constitute the truest and profoundest philosophy of life that can be formulated by the human mind. They ever band themselves together into associations for the propagation of the "truth" and run special "evangelistic missions" for the benefit of the "unsaved."

Quite recently a mission of this kind was held in the writers locality. Every evening for a fortnight, an official lecturer of the National Secular Society mounted his platform on a modern "Mar's Hill" and descanted to the unsophisticated crowd on the emancipating power and life giving properties of the secularist

philosophy. Much of what was said consisted entirely of cheap sneers and vulgar abuse and confirms Prof. Welsh's estimate of the stock-in-trade of the average sceptic of this sort. "A few atrocities called from Judges or Chronicles, a few inconsistencies from the Churches, a few pungent sayings from Huxley, a few crumbs of science and philosophy—these will start them in the business." On the last evening of the "mission" the writer sought and obtained permission to reply, on the same platform, to the lecturer's wild assertion and effete philosophy. But since owing to the lateness of the hour, he was allowed only five minutes, and realising the impossibility of answering in so short a time a speech that had taken an hour to deliver, he contented himself with challenging the lecturer to a public debate on "Is it reasonable to believe in God?" The lecturer's reply was a torrent of abuse and misrepresentation, together with the assertion that he had been waiting for such a challenge for a fortnight, but could not now accept it as he was off to the Provinces in the morning. But the writer pressed his point and urged him to appoint a substitute for the debate, with the result that the challenge was accepted and the time and date fixed. The debate was announced in "The Freethinker" (or ought it not to be re-christened "The Loosethinker?") and from the writer's pulpit.

On the evening of the debate (it was in the open air) an enormous crowd gathered. The atmosphere was electric with suppressed excitement, everybody was on the tip-toe of expectation; indeed, so keen was the interest that no other platform got a 'ghost of a chance.' The local branch of the National Secular Society was there in full force: the Church also was well represented as well as a large number of neutrals. The former had secured as its champion one of its national lecturers—an ex-Roman Catholic divinity student—with fifteen years experience as a secularist speaker. It was arranged that the writer should open the case for Theism against Atheism with a forty minutes speech, to which his opponent would reply in the same time, each having a further fifteen minutes for a concluding statement, and the exact terms of the debate were: "Is it reasonable to believe in the existence of a powerful and intelligent being distinct from the material universe?"

In opening the discussion, the writer kept to some of the main lines of the istic proof. He endeavoured to show the

reasonableness of belief in God by arguing from the necessity of postulating an Ultimate Cause for the Universe as it now is, from the fact that Universe being rational testifies to a rational ground and source and from the fact that the numberless marks of purpose and design in Nature bear eloquent witness to a personal causative agency as its origin. These arguments, it is believed were stated in the way that is in harmony with the modern point of view, so that the objections raised against the old way of stating them were anticipated. At the conclusion of the speech, the positions maintained by the writer were crystallised into a series of questions which he presented to his opponent with a polite request that he should endeavour to deal with them.

In his reply, the secularist lecturer gave ample proof of his having been trained in the Ingersoll-Bradlaugh-Foote school of Atheism. He began to be abusive at the very commencement of his speech, so much so that a large section of the audience protested and his own secularist chairman had to beckon to him to leave personalities alone. But the protests of the crowd and the suggestion of the chairman were effective only to a point. The speaker indulged in cheap sneers whenever he felt so inclined (and that was often). He had come, so he said, to find out what his opponent got paid for saying, conveniently forgetting the fact that he himself was being paid for taking part in the debate whereas his opponent was not. As to the questions, he thought was "a dirty trick" to have them hurled at his head and so he would ignore them. Why did not his opponent send the questions to him in advance? he asked, forgetting the fact that those questions were only the main points of his opponent's speech cast into interrogatory form. Then followed a twenty minutes' speech in which the arguments put forth by his opponent were very carefully avoided. It was concerned simply with trivialities, clearly showing that a deliberate attempt was being made to dodge the issues. Never once did it get down to the real question. Much time was taken up in showing that if Charles Watts ever said that there were some primitive tribes with no idea of God then he must have given their names, that Thomas Paine was not an agnostic and that Prof. Tyndall once gave a famous address at Belfast which was uncompromisingly materialistic in tone. But the reasons given by his opponent for believing in God, were carefully avoided. Of course, some of the stock objections were

forthcoming. He did not know what was meant by God, for God could not be defined. If everything must have a cause, then who caused God? If the Universe is rational how about the Japanese earthquake? But not once did he get to grips with the points at issue. Some of his sayings are eloquent of the "wisdom" hidden in the philosophy of secularism. "If God is distinct from the material universe, how can He be related to it?" "Cause and affect are only names invented by man"—this, as a serious objection to the argument from the Law of Causation! Some statements (which one hesitates to record) even violated every canon of good taste. "If God is a person, is He male or female?" "In Old Testament times God earned his keep" and many others in like strain, some of which were made when after twenty five minutes of "wisdom while you wait" the lecturer, being at a loss as to how to fill up the remaining time, condescended to look at the questions he ought to have tackled at the very beginning. And all this is represented as serious argument by the official lecturer of a society which is never weary of insisting upon the 'stupidity,' the insincerity, and the 'dishonesty' of Christians in general and of ministers in particular. That indeed, is the essence of the tactics of Secularism.

JOHN PITTS.



"THE MESSIAH."

WITH regard to the subject of the Messiah my thoughts have run on it for a long time somewhat as follow:—

For some considerable time before the birth of our Lord there was the general expectation that the Messiah was at hand to found on earth His Kingdom. The *popular* notion was that He would free the Jewish nation from the domination of the Romans and restore the Kingdom to Israel—that He would also do this by force of arms if necessary; and generally usher in an era of material well-being. Schürer's "The Jewish people in the times of Jesus Christ"—Vol. II.—The Messianic Hope chapter—is very illuminating in this connection. I happen to have Schürer. The Maccabean movement would naturally be related to the subject, as being the origin of the sect of the Pharisees

who in Christ's day were the leading exponents of the popular conception of the Messiah and his Mission—a conception that was persisted in and expressed in the life of the Jewish nation until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Milman's History of the Jews, which I also have is again illuminating in this connection.

We have then the popular conception of the Messiah and His Mission.

But what was the conception of the Messiah formed by Jesus Himself? see Isaiah 53. Note, too, the wilderness temptation—All these things etc.—Get thee hence etc. He *refused* to be the kind of Messiah demanded by the popular voice. But He said He *was* the Christ—He, the Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, the lover of little children, the friend of lost women, of publicans and sinners, the Jesus of love, mercy and compassion—the Jesus who though His Father would have sent to His aid more than 12 legions of angels if He had so prayed, chose rather to *die* in pursuance of His mission. Slow at first to see, after His Resurrection, the disciples went forth and testified that *He*—the Jesus they had known so well, and *now* understood—was the Christ, and *not* some other who might answer to the popular conception, and the conception *they once* held. Whilst, on the one hand, there was a movement along the line that culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, on the other hand there was the *Christian* movement which after the death of the Apostles was continued in its purity by the Early Fathers (Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Shephard of Hemas etc., in which the Christian ethic predominates) up to the time say of Constantine the Great (was it not?), when an increasing declinature from the Christian ideals set in.

All Christians to-day would agree that Jesus was the Messiah. But that is of little value if we do not, first of all, have a clear conception of the character and aims of our Lord. For if our conception of Jesus is a wrong one, and we preach Him as we conceive Him, we are preaching a *false* Messiah, a false Deliverer. We may, after all, be preaching the Messiah of the old Jewish popular conception, whereas we should be preaching the Messiah as we see Him in the real Jesus—in His Person and doctrine; and His method of giving effect to that doctrine, and so on.

I have been resident in Epworth for over ten years, and have here made a somewhat exhaustive and minute study of the teaching of Wesley. I have read and re read, and analyzed his sermons and have been immensely struck with the wonderful way in which he combines a strong Evangelicism with an equally strong Christian ethic. Based on Evangelical doctrines, his message was practically the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount—the ethics of the Kingdom of the Messiah as seen in Jesus. It was through this message, by the blessing of God, that the England of Wesley's time was regenerated. Some one might find this a fruitful field of study, and give us the benefit of his labours I have an idea that you are specially qualified to deal with the subject of the Messiah.

Another subject that might interest your readers is "the worth of the average man."

A good many years ago I bought and read Karl Kautsky's "Communism in Central Europe in the time of the Reformation." The Ana baptists play a prominent part here. Would not a treatment of the Communism of the Middle ages throw some light upon the existence of the Continental Communism of to-day, and reveal its dangers—wherein it went astray etc.

J. O. OGILVY



THE CHRIST OR THE MESSIAH.

Thou art the Christ, and thou alone art He,
 Though sinful men have claimed the Christ to be,
And Thou art come, as men of God foretold,
 That new things might displace the things of old.

Whilst yet the mark of youth was on Thy brow,
 Thou didst before the Holy Scriptures bow;
The Spirit of God through them illumined thee,
 And Thou therein Thyself the Christ did see.

Thou in the desert lonely, dark and drear,
 With beasts and Satan and temptation near,
The true and not the false ideal chose,
 And from the ground in prayer victorious rose.

Not he whose head the kingly crown adorned,
 And who men's freedom trampled on, and scorned;
Not he who in God's name invoked the sword,
 And of Him earthly sovereignty implored.

But He Who was of lowly heart and meek,
 And Who of suffering love came forth to seek
The men of low degree, and them exalt
 To heights where are no blind or lame or halt.

Thou art the Christ—none else is He we know;
 The living waters in us towards Thee flow;
The Christ within us witnesseth that *Thou*
 Art Christ from all Eternity, and Now.

GEORGE KENLEY.

A MORNING MEAL FOR THE MINISTER'S SOUL.

MONDAY—Mark 6, v. 30—*A quiet time with the Master.*

“And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus; and they told Him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught.”

TUESDAY—Eph. 5, v. 1-20—*A guide to Visitation.*

“Walk in love.”

“Walk as children of light.”

“Walk circumspectly” (lit “carefully”)

WEDNESDAY—II. Tim. 2, v. 14—*“As ever in my great task-master's eyes.”*

“Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling a right the word of truth.”

THURSDAY—II. Tim. 2, v 1-13—*The teaching Ministry.*

“The things which thou hast heard commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.”

FRIDAY—Acts 20—*The scope of our Service.*

“Take heed unto yourselves.”

“And to all the flock.”

“To feed the Church”

SATURDAY—Ps. 24—*The most important preparation.*

“Clean hands and a pure heart”

SUNDAY—Jer. 1—*Relying upon God.*

“Be not afraid.”

“Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.”

DAVID J. SHEPPARD.

THE BAPTIST BOARD

THE Records of the Baptist Board carry us back to other men, ways, times, and places. The Minutes date back to January 20, 1723. Dr. Whitley reminds us that "many Elders and Ministers of the Baptist Churches met weekly at the Hanover Coffee-house in Finch Lane, London, forming what we should call a fraternal," formed on 17th September, 1714. The Baptist Board, however, limited its membership from the beginning to Particular Baptist ministers only. The earliest Minutes are headed, "The Minutes of the Society of Ministers of the Baptist Particular persuasion meeting at the Gloucestershire Coffee House on Mondays at 3 o'clock, whose names are as follows." John Gill's name appears in the list, with S. Wilson as first secretary. Churches still existing, like Devonshire Square, Maze Pond, and Metropolitan Tabernacle, are thus linked up through their pastors with the earliest meeting of the Board. As Dr. Ewing wrote, "It is interesting to realize that the life of the Board links us with the days of Isaac Watts and Bishop Butler; and that when the Board was founded, John Wesley was an undergraduate at Oxford, and George Whitfield a little boy in the Bell Inn at Gloucester."

It will be noted that there was an older Fraternal, founded in 1714, to which at least four of these men belonged. That embraced ministers of the General Baptists also. But in 1717 there was a deliberate move to organize Particular Baptists separately, of which the Fund is a striking example. Two years later a series of meeting was held at Salters' Hall of all London (and a few country) ministers of the three donominations. These meetings divided each of the denominations on the question: Shall we advise subscription to certain of the Articles of Religion of the Established Church? the real objection being to one on the Trinity. All the ministers had signed these once. The point was whether they would advise others who equally had signed them to sign again. In the end, seventy-eight said Yes, seventy-three said No; and of the London Particular Baptists fourteen said Yes, two said No. Now, as only one London General Baptist said Yes, while fourteen said No, the Particular Baptists were far less willing to fraternize with the Generals, whom they suspected of being uncertain as to orthodoxy. The

Fund declined to accept subscriptions from the non-subscribers, and the old Fraternal was imperilled. The closing of the coffee-house where it met gave the needed impetus, and though it went to another, the stalwarts of the Particulars drew off and founded our "Board." They did admit the one non-subscribing Particular.

Although for a long time it was only a small society, it took itself very seriously, calling itself the "Baptist Board" probably in imitation of similar societies of Independent and Presbyterian ministers. The members of the Board met together for purposes of advice, administration, and arbitration where these things were explicitly sought, and for conference on the general welfare of the denomination. Surely it speaks well for the real fraternal spirit of the Baptist ministry that for nearly two centuries now (whilst other more ambitious associations have had their rise, decline and fall), this society has maintained its meetings and is as active as ever. It is not expedient for the Board to glory, or else we might say that the Baptist Missionary Society, the Baptist Union, and the L.B.A., are but children of yesterday in comparison with our historic body! Iviney says, "The business of these meetings at the coffee-house was conducted with great regularity." They gave their opinion and advice in any matters of difficulty in the churches that were referred to them by both parties; they received applications from country ministers to assist them from the Particular Baptist Fund, which was founded in 1717; they sanctioned and recommended the collection of money in London for the building and repairing of meeting-houses in the country; they watched rigorously over the purity of the members composing the Board, as the original minutes emphatically illustrate; they received to their friendship ministers upon their being settled as pastors in the churches; they appear to have generally acted as a body in assisting destitute churches and at the ordination of ministers, to have very strongly discouraged and to have affectionately supported one another against traducers." This is a record of which the Board may well be proud, and in the judgment of the writer of this article there is great occasion for similar fraternal vigilance, sympathy, and encouragement to-day!

The meeting places of the Board were various, viz.: The Gloucestershire Coffee-house was the meeting-place for ten years; Blackwell's for about seven years; the King's Head, St. Swithin's

Alley, for about twenty years; the Jamaica Coffee-house from 1760 till 1823. when the Board moved to the B.M.S. premises in Fen Court, Fen Church Street, that Society kindly offering the Board the use of their rooms *gratuitously*. The levy prior to this was 6s. 6d. per member, an addition being made of 16s. in 1799 in consequence of the rise in tobacco!

In 1727 was formed the General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist. "It is the privilege of this body to present addresses in person to the sovereign on important occasions, such as an Accession, Royal Marriages, Deliverances from Danger, great Victories, Restoration of Peace, and the like." This privilege has again and again been exercised. In recent times there was a visit to Windsor in connection with the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria; the Board also presented an address at the Court of St. James in connection with the accession of King George; whilst Buckingham Palace was visited when the Board presented an address in connection with the termination of the war in 1919; and also most recently with an address of loyal congratulation on the approaching marriage of H.R.H. the Duke of York.

In 1730 it was agreed that punctuality should be enforced by "the forfeiture of twopence, to be determined by the majority of the watches present, unless the person be sick or out of town. Mr. Gill excepted against it." Such self-discipline is most commendable, and many secretaries of religious societies would rejoice to-day if punctuality were thus enforced!

There are cases of applications for membership having been refused on the ground that "the ministers agreed that your company is not desirable to them."

The Board has appointed special prayer meetings on special occasions. On May 29, 1734, it was agreed to have a prayer meeting at Mr. Braithwait's on account of the removal of several honourable and useful ministers by death." On September 20, 1745, the year of the Rebellion, it was agreed to set apart a day of humiliation and prayer on account of the situation of the affairs of the nation. On October 20, 1747, it was agreed that

two meetings of prayer be set apart at two different places on account of the mortality among the cattle—the war in which the nation is engaged—and the decay of the vital power of religion. On March 27, 1750, it was agreed that a day of humiliation and prayer be recommended to be kept by our churches an account of the late alarming Providence in the two shocks of an earthquake which have lately taken place.

In the alphabetical list of members arranged from 1723 to 1817 we note with interest the names of Benjamin Beddome, Dr. Gill, Dr. Rippon, Dr. Stennett, Jas. Upton, etc.

At a special meeting on March 14, 1820, the objects of the Society were stated, viz. to afford an opportunity for mutual consultation and advice on subjects of a religious nature particularly connected with the interest of our own denomination; that this Society do consist of approved ministers of the Particular Baptist Denomination residing in and about the cities of London and Westminster; that no minister resident in London be permitted to attend the meetings of this Society more than three months without becoming a member; that a subject be discussed the first Tuesday in every month, the subjects to be selected and circulated among the members at the commencement of the year.

It may be interesting here to indicate some of the subjects selected a century ago. This list was drawn up April 25, 1820:

1. What steps can be taken to promote the interests of religion in our Denomination at large?
2. How far is it practicable to form an Association of the Baptist Ministers and Churches in London and its environs?
3. Is the practice of fasting of perpetual obligation?
4. How can we account for the differences in the theological opinions of wise and virtuous men?
5. Was Samson's death an act of suicide?
6. Is there reason to apprehend the prevalency of Popery in this country?
7. What is Hyper-Calvinism?
8. What is the province of reason in matters of religion?

An echo of a very important controversy in connection with our Baptist Missionary Society, is found in the following petition, July, 1832, to the House of Commons: "That your Petitioners fully convinced that the principles which have uniformly guided the proceedings of the Baptist Missionary Society, have strictly accorded with the pacific spirit of the gospel, and equally satisfied that their missionaries in Jamaica have acted in conformity with the instructions given them by the Society, view with indignation the attempt to criminate their missionaries as parties in the late Insurrection, and rejoice in the signally triumphant manner in which these charges have been refuted. That your Petitioners contemplate with the liveliest sympathy the violent and illegal outrages committed on the persons and families of the said Missionaries, and the serious losses sustained in the destruction of the Society's property, and earnestly implore from your Honourable House redress for the past and protection for the future; more, especially as your Petitioners humbly conceive that the proceedings of which they complain are totally at variance with the British Constitution and an insult to the dignity of the Throne. That your Petitioners are fully convinced from the decided hostility which has constantly been shown by the great body of slaveholders to the labours of Christian missionaries, that the system of slavery is irreconcilably opposed to the progress of the Gospel, and therefore do earnestly pray that your Honourable House will, without further delay, adopt such measures as to your wisdom shall seem meet for the immediate and entire abolition of that system throughout the British Dominions." A brave, notable, and dignified utterance, worthy of being rescued from the hidden minutes of our Board! Baptist and Dissenting grievances were considered at many meetings in 1833, and representations on the subject were made to the Right Hon. Earl Grey, who was First Lord of the Treasury. In October of 1833 a memorandum was inserted in the Minutes on the death of Rev. Joseph Hughes, M.A., who was thirty-seven years the faithful pastor of the Church at Battersea, and who, having been one of the first with whom originated the plan of the British and Foreign Bible Society was from the commencement of that Society one of its secretaries, and continued till the time of his death one of its most strenuous and zealous supporters.

Coming to later records it is noteworthy that after the

rescinding of the word "Particular" from one or the rules, and after much prayer, Rev. J. Clifford, M.A., of Praed Street, was admitted to the membership of the Board in 1861! It would have been a fine thing if Dr. Clifford had been persuaded to put upon record some of his own personal recollections connected with the Board. Some of us will long remember his loving tribute to former secretaries such as Revs. J. Blake, J. Hunt Cooke, W. J. Styles, and W. H. King, at the luncheon in January, 1923, when the 200th Anniversary of the Board was celebrated.

In drawing to an end, we note that during all these two hundred years the Board has kept steadily to its function of being simply and mainly a fraternal meeting of London Baptist ministers. Its object has been conference, though from its conferences important associations have arisen. Its work has been to develop love, and communicate thought, the greatest power of all for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. In 1920 it removed from the Baptist Mission House to the Church House, Southampton Row, and its meetings have never been more popular and useful than at the present time.

ARTHUR J. PAYNE.

