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EDITORIAL

Our new General Secretary is now well and truly installed at Church House. As David Russell faces his new responsibilities, we would assure him that his fellow-ministers are thinking of him and remembering him in prayer.

Recognising as we do how greatly gifted he is, and how dedicated, we also have to acknowledge that what he will be able to accomplish will depend, humanly speaking, not on him alone but on us and the support we give him. That support will be enhanced by some reflection on the job that we are asking him to do. The General Secretary carries a quite extraordinary weight and range of responsibility. In the Church House he has to be *au fait* with the work of all departments and with a good deal that has no special departmental label attached to it. However much he delegates, and delegate he must, he has to retain a clear understanding of the varied work being done and there is much that he must have absolutely at his finger tips. Again, there come to him, directly and personally, many of the serious problems, church and ministerial, which are constantly arising in the life of the denomination. Delicate yet far-reaching, and often urgent, decisions are normal fare for the General Secretary. Beyond the confines of our own denomination he has to represent us in many different types of situation and for them all he has to be, spiritually and mentally, in a state of readiness.

It will help our intercession if we remember these and other aspects of the service which David Russell will be undertaking. We ascribe infallibility to no man and that means that we may expect a General Secretary, however gifted, to make occasional mistakes. It means that like us he will have days when he is not on top form; and like us he will probably do some parts of his job better than others. But far more than ours, his performance is exposed to the comment of his fellow-ministers, whether that comment be negatively or constructively critical, petty or perceptive, mean or appreciative. He occupies "the most exposed position to which any denomination calls a man", as Rev. John Huxtable observed when he assumed the same office among the Congregationalists a few years ago. Perhaps it is a built-in feature of the position that it carries "more kicks than ha'pence", as they say in the North. Our new General Secretary is probably well aware of this and he knows, as we do, that when the divine summons comes to a man it comes with the promise of resources far beyond his own. Nevertheless, he should be able to look to his fellow-ministers, of all people, for a generous and understanding loyalty. We can be certain that we shall get only the best that David Russell can give. On behalf of the B.M.F. we should like to assure him that from us he will get the best of brotherly support.

INTRODUCING DR. DAVID S. RUSSELL

On July 28th David Russell received the keys of office from Ernest Payne and so began in fact the period of service to which he was called by the Union in 1966 and for which he was set apart by the Assembly earlier this year.

When he was preparing to move south, he and his wife were in a Manchester store to buy curtains for their new home in Sutton. The salesman enquired, "Are you going to retire?" Whatever he may think about the task ahead David Russell has no illusions about it being retirement! He has been called to serve the Denomination and he can be relied upon to do this with a single-minded and dedicated purpose.

He was born at Whitburn, West Lothian in 1916 of Presbyterian parents and his first religious training was in the Presbyterian Church and Sunday School. Later, when he was eleven years old, the family moved to Cambuslang and found fellowship for a time in a Brethren meeting. The outlook proved too narrow and confined and the Russells eventually joined the Baptist church. In his formative years, David Russell was under the ministry of D. Gunn Sunderland and was baptized by him at the age of thirteen.

At school at Rutherglen Academy and Hamilton Academy in Lanarkshire his particular bent was mathematics and science. Knowing his ability for intensive study it would be natural to think that at school he was a swot with little time for anything else, but his record in sport is surprising. He was a keen footballer, being Captain of School; was offered a trial for Scotland and for a first division team, Queen's Park. If he had done so, he might even have played for a different Manchester United from the team which has just given him a transfer! When you see his burly figure today it is even more surprising to know that at one period in his school career he was high jump champion of Scotland.

Christian commitment, academic ability, strong self-discipline and ability to share fully in the life about him marked these years and were a fitting preparation for what was to come.

He felt the call to the ministry while still at school and in 1935 applied to the Glasgow College for ministerial training. He was deferred on the grounds of youth and so proceeded to read in the University of Glasgow for a general Arts degree which he obtained in 1938. Meanwhile, in 1936, he had been accepted as a student of our Glasgow College and read theology, preparing in the period 1938-41 for the Glasgow B.D. degree specialising in Old Testament subjects. In 1939 he became minister of the church at Berwick on Tweed and combined the pastorate with his studies travelling to and from Glasgow to attend lectures. Despite this double responsibility he was awarded his degree with distinction.

He was prizeman in all subjects in the examination and was awarded the University's Gold Medal in Hebrew and Greek. At the completion of this course he intended to do further study abroad and won a place at Union Theological Seminary, New York. War conditions made it impossible to obtain an exit visa and he turned instead to Oxford where a Baptist Union Scholarship at Regent's Park College enabled him to read for a B.A. degree in oriental languages specialising this time in Hebrew and Arabic.

The period at Oxford from 1941 to 1945 was a fruitful one. He had the benefit of the closing years of Wheeler Robinson's principalship and the opening years of R. L. Child's and both men left the mark of mind and personality upon him. After he received his degree in 1943 he became pastor of the Woodstock Road Church and continued his academic work preparing a thesis for which he was later awarded the B.Litt. degree.

A mere recital of scholastic attainments gives an inadequate impression of a man and may suggest a person living in a remote academic world. This has never been true of David Russell. When in 1945 he was called to succeed W. Taylor Bowie at Church Road, Acton he welcomed the opportunity to commit himself fully to the work of the pastorate. In his eight years' ministry he sought to lead the church in practical ways to face a changing situation and helped his people to realise the part which they as Christians had to play in the full life of the community. He believed in involvement and practised it before it became current jargon.

The move to London led eventually to opportunities of service in the Baptist Union Council and the B.M.S. His special interest was youth work and he became chairman of the B.U. Young People's Committee. He took part in a number of B.M.S. Summer Schools and led Baptist Holiday Fellowship and youth parties abroad. His ability to get alongside all types of people whether young or old, his high spirits and ability to enjoy good fun made these occasions pleasurable for all sharing in them.

His career as a teacher began at Struan, the training college for deaconesses, where he gave a series of lectures during his Acton ministry. The main opportunity for this kind of work came with the call to the Principalship of Rawdon.

Early in 1953, L. H. Marshall's death left a bleak prospect for Rawdon's future. Eric Rust was on leave of absence teaching in the United States, and W. E. Hough, brought in as a temporary teacher, had to hold the reins. At this stage amalgamation or closure was unthinkable and the College Committee determined to press ahead with the appointment of a successor to Dr. Marshall. David Russell was invited to accept the post. This he did, though he admits to a feeling of complete surprise at the invitation as he was then only 36 years old. The work appealed to him and he was thrilled at the prospect of teaching and training pastors. Wheeler Robinson had encouraged him to consider the possibility of university teaching and at Rawdon he was able to use his academic

gifts in the direct service of the Church as he prepared men for the work of the ministry.

In those days the Principal of Rawdon was expected to be as much at home with accounts as with a Hebrew grammar; as skilled with machinery as he was with ideas; as successful in programming the work of the domestic staff from cook to porter as in drawing up the lecture time-tables. All this David Russell tackled with zest and cheerfulness. Working closely with him at the time it was remarkable to see the speed with which he accustomed himself to administration, accepted the responsibilities of leadership and gradually built up the morale of the College and brought it to a greater place of honour and affection in the life of the churches in the north.

His work in Yorkshire brought a variety of experiences, many differing from what he had been led to expect. He enjoyed the natural beauty of the northern counties which he found were not one arid, industrial desert as many people supposed. He was warmed by the hospitable spirit of the people but distressed to find church life often at low ebb and ministers working with few encouragements, though their devotion in such situations filled him with admiration.

His experience in training men for the ministry has deepened the conviction that there is a greater need than ever for well-trained ministers. He readily agrees that "practical" subjects should have a place in the curriculum but he will not concede that these should have precedence at the cost of neglecting the study of the Scriptures and theology. At a time when the shortage of ministers and candidates provides a temptation to lower standards he looks for a raising of the standard required of men wishing to enter the ministry even if this means a reduction in the number accepted for the work.

He holds the view that men should not prepare for the ministry in isolation from their fellows and from the world in which they will have to work. The fellowship of a college in which there are students who are following other academic disciplines is invaluable and every opportunity must be given to bring men into contact with the society they are to serve.

By no means the least important factor in training is the culture and discipline of the spiritual life, and looking back over his teaching period he sees this as one of the areas in which much more should be done.

Soon after settlement at Rawdon the practical difficulties of maintaining an institution remote from any centre of population and from the University of which it was an affiliated College became apparent. At various times in the past, amalgamation with Manchester had been considered but old prejudices had won the day and it needed a brave man to suggest again that the way ahead might possibly lie in the closure of Rawdon and the concentration of the work at Manchester. When he was convinced that this was

the course to be followed he had no hesitation in putting a reasoned case before the Committee and won support for the discussions and negotiations which, carried out in the utmost unanimity, led to the amalgamation being achieved. Perhaps the idea which made it easier for the Yorkshire side to accept was the conception of a new college building in which both Manchester and Rawdon would be merged to form the Northern Baptist College. David Russell was concerned that the new College would have an experimental approach to ministerial training and would also play a larger part in the training of laymen. The new building and the combined assets and good will of Manchester and Rawdon provide a good opportunity for work on these lines.

In denominational life he believes firmly in the place of the local church and has used every opportunity to help churches strengthen their individual life and witness. The position of pastorless churches prompted experiments to provide oversight by teams of students; led to the re-constitution of a committee in the Association charged with the care of the churches, and to the provision of courses of lectures on Christian Doctrine at various centres designed to help lay-preachers and others. This emphasis on the local church is balanced by a strong sense of the value of Association life and of the mutual enrichment which comes when churches move out of isolation and share fully in the witness and fellowship of the Denomination. He himself has taken an active part in Association life, serving on council and committees in Yorkshire and in 1962 was called to the Presidency. He so identified himself with our people that he was sometimes known as a Yorkshireman with a Scottish accent.

In writing his interest has been the inter-testamental period and apocalyptic literature. His first book, "Between the Testaments" was published in 1960 and has since appeared in German and Dutch editions, "Two Refugees"—a study in Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah followed in 1962. For his next work, "The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, 200 B.C.—100 A.D." he was awarded the D.Litt. degree of Glasgow University. His last book, "The Jews from Alexander to Herod" is due to be published in September 1967 and forms volume 5 in the New Clarendon Bible.

In his home life he has been greatly blessed. As a boy in Scotland he had the care and example of godly parents who gave their children loving care and a godly example. Later, in his marriage to Marion Hamilton Campbell of Cambuslang, he found a partner whose first concern was to make the home and who shared his difficulties and disappointments as well as his achievements, providing in quiet and unobtrusive ways the encouragement the minister so often needs. They have two children, Douglas now in training for medicine at Charing Cross Hospital and Helen who hopes to commence reading zoology this year.

The Secretaryship will involve a great deal of travelling both in this country and abroad but David Russell is seasoned in this

respect. Besides numerous visits to the Continent his travels have taken him to Canada and the United States on a preaching tour and to Tokyo to lecture to Bible translators. On the return journey from the Far East he visited Hong Kong, Burma and various B.M.S. stations in India and Ceylon. These visits arose out of his concern to see B.M.S. work at first hand and from his belief in the close affinity of the work of the Union and the Society.

In the wider field of church relationships he has always played a full part in inter-church affairs sharing in the work of local Councils of Churches and meeting in fellowship those of all denominations. He attended the Amsterdam World Youth Congress in 1939 when Dr. Visser t'Hooft was one of the main speakers and remembers this sharing of Christian faith and experience as an exciting occasion. He is a convinced Baptist but remains ready to listen to what other Christians have to say whatever shade of opinion they may hold.

The office of General Secretary of the Union is one of such responsibility that no man at any time can take up the work without trembling at the demands it will make upon him. The normal requirements make a forbidding total—profound spiritual conviction, intellectual ability, wise administration, skill in diplomacy, courageous leadership etc., etc. But see the work in the setting of present day tensions in the world, in our society and in the Denomination and we are tempted to look for a genius, a prodigy, a superman endowed with gifts and abilities to meet every situation.

David Russell will be the first to say he is none of these, but he brings what gifts he has to this high task with the confidence that humbly and freely offered what he is and what he does may, under Christ, be for the blessing of the churches.

J. G. HOBBS

GREETINGS FROM THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY

As I sit down to write this brief word of greeting to my brethren in the ministry I have spent exactly one week in the chair so recently vacated by Dr. Payne. It has been described to me more than once as "a hot seat". So far I haven't detected any rise in temperature and can but hope that things will remain as they are! As I begin my work I am deeply conscious of the high standard set by my predecessor who has proved himself over the years to be a Christian leader and statesman of the very first order. His name is known far and wide, not only among Baptist brethren but also among Christians of many varied Church affiliations. I shall not try to emulate Dr. Payne; but I hope God may enable me to render as loyal service as he has done. All of us have been given different gifts. Such gifts as I may possess are in many respects different gifts from those of Dr. Payne. I can but offer them un-

reservedly in the service of Christ's Church and pray that they may be of some use in the work of the Kingdom.

Some years ago I received an invitation to take up another kind of post and I well remember the agonies I passed through in trying to be sure of God's leading. Most of my brethren in the ministry will have had somewhat the same experience, I am sure. Some situations are like that. Others are quite the reverse, for in them we can see from the beginning the clear guidance of the Spirit. For me the call to this office has been of the latter kind. I have not sought it and indeed should have been quite content to pursue my academic work for the rest of my days; but I have been convinced of God's sure leading and am grateful that this is so.

Looking back now over the years I can see even more clearly than before God's preparation of me for this task. I owe much to my godly parents (happily still alive and well) who transferred their allegiance from the Presbyterians to the Baptists when I was about eleven years of age. So I am an "incomer" with no Baptist pedigree! My minister in those formative years was D. Gunn Sutherland, a Manchester College man of the "conservative" school, who left his deep imprint on me. It was under his influence that, as a lad, I confessed Christ as Lord and first sensed the call of God to the work of the ministry. The Scottish Baptist College, Trinity (Presbyterian) College and Regent's Park College brought me under the influence of such men as W. Holmes Coates, A. J. Gossip and H. Wheeler Robinson to each of whom I owe so much. The churches and Colleges where I have been privileged to minister have brought an enrichment to my soul out of all proportion to the service I may have given in return. One name, from that period of my life, stands out above all others—that of my predecessor at Acton, W. Taylor Bowie, whose deep devotion and wise counsel left their indelible mark upon me. A choice soul! My Baptist pedigree, then, may be very limited indeed; but I thank God for this company of his saints and all those others with whom it has been my privilege to serve.

I am greatly indebted also to so many of my ministerial brethren who have written to me in recent months assuring me of their support and pledging their prayers as I begin my new work. Let us continue to remember one another in this way, especially on Sunday morning before entering the pulpit to lead our people in worship. Of course there are many shades of theological belief among us; but there is surely a loyalty undergirding all our differences. I would urge that loyalty to our Lord show itself in loyalty to one another within the ranks of the ministry. There are those, maybe, who sit rather lightly by their local ministers' Fraternal for this reason and seldom if ever put in an appearance. Let them please think again and be prepared to share with their brethren the spiritual insights which God by his Spirit has given to them. Ours is a loosely-knit community, a fellowship which could all-too-easily be disrupted and for whose wholeness and health

much restraint and much Christian charity are necessary. In any community worth its salt (and not least in the fellowship of Christ's people) liberty and self-discipline must be held in balance—the right to express our beliefs and convictions and the requirement to limit even our rights for the good of others. Within Christ's Church we must be willing to accept one another in the knowledge that we ourselves have been accepted by him.

You have appointed me to serve this great fellowship we call Baptists and to represent it to others as and when opportunity offers. I shall do so to the best of my ability remembering that, like yourselves, I too am a minister whose privilege it is to make known the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The well-being of the ministry will continue to have a big place in my heart and I trust that, with the passing of the years, many of you who are known to me only as names on the accredited list will become tried and trusted colleagues. May God prosper you in all your work for him.

D. S. RUSSELL

THE PARTICULAR BAPTIST FUND

1717—1967

On Monday 5th June 1967, the Particular Baptist Fund celebrated its 250th Anniversary with a banquet at the Connaught Rooms, London, attended by a unique representative gathering of "all kinds" of Baptists. The administration and application of the Fund does form one of the few bridges between the Strict Baptists and those associated with the Baptist Union. In the early Minute Books and correspondence the fund is called the Baptist Fund, it was in every sense comprehensive. In letters which have been sent with cheques towards the Celebration Appeal for £10,000 several have suggested that the name should be changed—if it is ever decided to make a change it would be both historical and "functional" to revert to the Baptist Fund.

The founding date was 4th June 1717 and on 5th June 1967 all Baptist Churches were invited to pray for the Fund and donate a gift or the Communion Offering of that day to the Appeal. We are grateful for the response so far but we are nowhere near £10,000 and anticipate that many gifts have to be sent in.

Most ministers first hear of the P.B.F. in connection with the Book Grant and having received their requested books ask no further questions. It is partly because of this that we have attempted a short history of the fund under the title *Concern for the Ministry*, and as it is priced at only 5/-. we shall not refer very much to it here. The copy is available from me at Teddington or the Baptist Union.

Dr. Payne, one of the speakers at the Celebration Banquet, contended that this Fund has been the continuous stream from which almost all the main branches of our denominational life have flowed—it is hard to conceive what would have happened had it failed. It has survived wonderfully through 250 years serving with great distinction both Ministers and Churches.

In this brief article we intend to discuss one or two of the problems the Managers (Messengers) of the Fund had to face early on and conclude with a short statement in the way the Fund operates today.

The six founding churches had the greatest difficulty in persuading other Churches to join them in raising money, in encouraging others to support the Fund and in sharing in the actual management of the Fund. Time and again letters were written to other influential churches, the leading officers visited ministers and deacons, but with little or no response. Appeals for help came in from all over the country—but few were found to shoulder the heavy responsibility of administration and propaganda. So it is this fund has always been managed by the few-leading churches and laymen “in and about London”. That so much was donated, so large a capital sum raised, is another illustration of deep dedication.

Another problem, greater than the other, was that having a central fund seemed to destroy local initiative, at least led some local churches “to ease up” in the care of their Minister. Must central funds always blunt local responsibility? Grants have, as we have already implied, been made over a very wide field, very few churches over 50 years old have not at one time or another received help from the fund, some over a long period received an annual grant. Appeals in cases of real hardship have received a generous response. The Managers were, have always been, generous men. Even so great care had to be taken for they were entrusted with other people’s gifts for a clearly defined purpose.

We will now quote from the Minute Books how this care was exercised and quote at length correspondence with the “Baptist Association of the Counties of York and Lancaster”—not in any way criticising the latter but because we have this more fully recorded and it is of great interest and historical value.

“September 5 1721

The case of Mr Wiggins was presented and rejected, because of the ability and neglect of his church” (Church not named).

There is the case of the Western Fund—better known as the Bristol Fund—and the fact that appeals were being received in London from that area. There was frequent correspondence between the “officers” of the two funds.

“October 1st 1723

Ordered the Ministers of this Fund should draw up a letter to be sent to those concerned with the Western Fund to encourage them to make annual collections in their churches as is done in London”.

They were determined to play fair about this because a minute of August 18 1730 reads
"Ordered that no Church be applied to collect for this Fund that collects for the Bristol Funds".

Even so grants have through the years been made to men and churches in the Western Area

August 2 1737

"After some time was spent in debate upon the cases of the Bristol list in general, it was concluded most proper to consider every case in particular as it came into the Fund"

April 4th 1732

"Mr Chairman and the rest of the Gentlemen requested Mr Gifford, Mr Wilson, Mr Arnold to draw up a letter and send to the Elders and Deacons of the Church at Tottlebank now under the care of Mr Sedgfield in order to excite the church to the discharge of their duty towards the Minister"

August 2 1737

"It was agreed to desire the Ministers to draw up a letter in order to send to Tewkesbury to stir up the people to the discharge of their duty to the Minister"

A similar motion was passed regarding Prescott and Colebrook.

November 3 1760 we have a slightly varied form of words

"Agreed that the case of the church at Plymouth be rejected it appearing to us that they do not exert themselves according to their abilities for the support of their pastor"

The Managers of this fund were deeply concerned for the well being of the Ministry.

We will now quote the correspondence with York and Lancaster and commend a careful study of its phrasing
March 3, 1829.

"To the Ministers and Messengers of the Baptist Association of the Counties of York and Lancaster, holding their Annual Association at Halifax on the Wednesday and Thursday in Whitsun week 1829.

The Managers of the Particular Baptist Fund established in London in 1717 send Christian Salutation.

Dear Brethren,

It has long afforded us sincere pleasure to hear of your ardent and steady attachment to the cause of Christ's Kingdom; and we trust that he who has called you to labour in his church will continue to pour out his divine influences upon you in rich abundance for the furtherance of your joy and faith in prosecuting the work of the Lord Jesus. Almost from the first establishment of the Particular Baptist Fund a very great pleasure has been felt on the part of the Fundees, in giving assistance according to their power to the Ministers and Churches in your Neighbourhood, who have solicited their aid. But we are very desirous brethren, that the poor Churches in the Northern part of the Kingdom, should, in pecuniary matters, come more directly under your own Notice.

At a distance of two hundred miles from you, we are not always able to obtain a knowledge sufficiently accurate of the state of your

churches, so necessary to govern our own conduct in giving annual assistance to them. And could any plan be devised by which you might directly minister to the wants of the churches around you, they would be relieved with much more discrimination.

Moreover—since the establishment of the Fund, the list of poor country churches has been much enlarged; while the number of churches who annually collect for the Fund has not borne a proportionate increase. The whole number of churches furnishing free annual contributions is only nine in London and one in the country; so that our means of assisting are not equal to the claims made upon us. We are also very solicitous that the Ministers now receiving small annual exhibitions, should have such donations increased; so that none whose talents are calculated to promote the prosperity of our churches, may be compelled to enter into secular engagements while they have to watch over the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

For those, and similar reasons, we have, after mature deliberation resolved to address this letter to you, recommending with a very affectionate concern for your welfare, that you would take into your very serious consideration, the propriety and importance of establishing a Fund amongst yourselves, for the assistance of the Ministers and Churches in your own immediate district. Many of the Churches with which you stand connected have wealthy members and friends, and others who are not of this class, would, we doubt not, be ready by an annual collection to give this object their cordial support.

We feel the greater satisfaction in recommending a measure of this kind to your Christian regard, as the funds, with the Management of which we have been entrusted, however small in their beginning, arose from an earnest desire in those who we doubt not are now with God, to promote the comfort of such of our denomination who were engaged in preaching the Gospel of Christ. And if the testimony of many, very many of the recipients of this bounty is worthy of credit, it has enabled them to keep open the doors of many places of worship that must otherwise have been closed. *There are indeed but few churches* of our denomination throughout England and Wales, *but have at one time or another been aided by our Fund*, and we have reason to be thankful that this small rivulet under the favour of our indulgent providence has been increased to a stream of benevolence of great utility, "other men have laboured and we have entered into their labours". We cannot but entertain a hope that should you feel a disposition to promote amongst yourselves a kindred institution, that it will in time become a blessing of great importance to the poor Churches in your vicinity. This business, brethren, cannot be ours more than it is your own.

Whether the noble bequests of the late Samuel Broadley Esq. could be made the basis of such a Fund, we are by no means to judge. But the Trustees who are over that matter can easily determine. We beg also affectionately to suggest that there are churches of known wealth and liberality not united in the Annual Association, who might be ready to co-operate, if invited to unite with you in this design; we only call to your recollection the first Church at Haworth, the churches at Scarborough, Hull and Lockwood, with others familiarly known to you, but in the Counties where your Annual Associations are held, and in the two or three adjoining Northern Counties.

You are perhaps, aware that such a step has already been taken by the Baptists in the city of Bristol and its vicinity, and which has very materially aided the churches in the West of England. We do not wish brethren to dictate to you what you ought to do, nor have we any desire to throw upon you a burden, that we may relax our labours. No, we only ask you to become fellow-helpers to the truth.

With much Christian esteem, and very earnest prayers for your abundant prosperity we remain, dear Brethren, affectionately yours in our Common Lord.

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3rd March 1829 | Jos. Gutteridge | Treasurers |
| | Benjm. Shaw | George Gibbs |
| | Wm. Lepard Smith | Isaac Mann |
| | John Rippon D.D. | George Pritchard |
| | Wm. Newman D.D. | William Paxon (Secr.) |
| | Thos. Griffin | 9 Grays Inn Terrace, London. |

Fen Court—10th November 1829

Mr Mann presented the Resolution of the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association in answer to the letter from the Managers of the Fund, Viz

Halifax—June 11th 1829

“A Letter from the Managers of the Particular Baptist Fund in London, being read, the object of which was to recommend to the Churches of the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association the raising of a fund for assisting in the support of their ministers it was resolved:

That this Association cordially approve of the motion suggested by their brethren in London but that owing to the extreme poverty and distress prevailing throughout this part of the Kingdom such a measure is at present wholly impracticable. They however pledge themselves to keep the object in view, and to bring it again under consideration, when they shall meet next year.”

William Steadman, Secretary

Unfortunately nothing came of this—and grants have continued to be made to men and churches in the North.

In spite of this lack of support and the failure of other similar appeals the Fund continues to be of great service and help. In the last 25 years the formation of the Baptist Union Home Work Scheme and the Strict Baptist Trust have been able to give more adequate financial support and to answer appeals growing much more rapidly than the resources of this Fund.

We will now indicate ways in which the Fund is operating today—as there are many in our ministry who could possibly be greatly helped still.

Grants today

1. Ministerial.

(a) To men fully occupied in the active pastorate.

i. The Fund can and does make grants to men “whose Churches and Congregations are unable to pay an adequate stipend”; this normally means less than the Baptist Union Home Work Scheme minimum stipend.

The men here would be unaccredited or ministers of churches unable to qualify for a Home Work Scheme grant. This is a working arrangement rather than a binding rule. The application form advises the church applying that:

“The Managers hold it to be improper that when a man is invited to be Pastor of a Church, any grant from this Fund should be included in the amount of stipend offered; the Fund allowance, depending as it does upon circumstances, ought never to be considered as permanent income.”

The Church whose minister received a grant is required to make an annual Sunday collection for the Fund and informs the church of the objects of the Fund.

ii. Special grants are made to men in the full-time ministry who have urgent and special problems and difficulties involving exceptional expenditure, such as illness, accident, lengthy hospitalisation.

iii. Fuller Grants.—William Fuller of Lombard Street gave sums of money in 1798-1799, the income from which was to be paid annually to “12 Ministers who should stand in need of relief in sums of £5 each, six of such Ministers to be “men of education”.”

(b) Retired Ministers.

i. Retired Ministers whose total income from all sources, including all pensions, is inadequate, can also be considered for grants. These are usually sent just before Christmas.

ii. Taylor, Cox and Tomkins Grants.—The Fund has from time to time received special gifts, and the above grants are made to retired ministers who have served the Baptist cause with special distinction and merit.

N.B. In no circumstances is the Fund able to assist or make grants to the widows or dependents of Baptist ministers.

2. Educational.

(a) Colleges

Substantial annual grants are made to Regent's Park College (formerly the “Baptist Academical Institution” at Stepney) and Spurgeon's College.

This Fund has a long association with Regent's Park College, in fact from before its actual foundation, because there can be little doubt that it was through the Fund—or the Officers and Benefactors of the Fund—that Stepney Academy came into existence. Money was donated to the Fund for the support of the Academy. This support has continued through the years. It was in 1921, after careful

discussion, in which those associated with Regent's Park College shared, that a smaller grant was made to Spurgeon's College, and a grant has been made annually since then. From time to time, small grants have also been made to assist with the training of men for the Strict Baptist ministry.

(b) Further Education.

Educational Grants of £30 in two annual instalments of £15, the second to follow a favourable progress report, are made to men involved in special expenditure—viz, examination or lecture fees—who are studying to gain recognition by the Baptist Union Ministerial Recognition Committee, or to qualify for their first degree as part of probation studies, while at the same time being fully occupied in the pastorate. In special circumstances a grant can be made to a man studying for a further degree, providing he is fully engaged in the pastoral ministry and has not previously received this particular grant.

(c) Books.

i. All Ministers of Baptist Churches who have completed a course of study at one of the Baptist Colleges or the Strict Baptist Training Institute, or other Ministers of Baptist Churches who have been fully engaged in the pastorate for at least two years, are eligible for a Book Grant. The amount was raised in 1964 to £10 per grant.

ii. A grant not exceeding One Hundred Pounds (£100) has also for some years been made to the Librarian of the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship for the purchase of books to be circulated among Baptist Ministers.

3. Special Funds Account.

In the past, many churches in all parts of the country nominated the Fund in their Trust Deeds as the resulting or ultimate beneficiary should the cause fail. Where such a church has closed and money has been received by the Fund from the sale of its premises, this has been placed in a "Special Fund Account". Should a new cause be started in the same general area as the closed one, an application for a grant out of the "Special Fund Account" may be considered by the Managers, who have absolute discretion in every case. If a grant to the new cause is made, the Managers have always thought it right that satisfactory arrangements should be made to ensure that in the event of the redundancy of the new cause the grant shall be repaid to the Fund. This is the only ground upon which the Fund considers itself able to make grants for new causes.

THEO. F. VALENTINE

**DAVID ALLEN CLAXTON,
BAPTIST MINISTER IN KISANGANI**

This brief tribute, written as it is over a month since David lost his life at the hands of armed bandits, is already rather late. But the fighting which has once more troubled the Kisangani area of Congo and caused a delay in communications with the outside world makes it all the more relevant to present-day conditions in this Mission Field. Missionary work in this harassed land is indeed done, as it was in St. Paul's day, amidst "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and the sword".

It was a shock to the Christian community in Kisangani, as indeed to the whole population, when the news quickly spread that, in the early hours of Tuesday morning, June 27th., a gang of armed bandits tried to force their way into our BMS bungalow, next door to the Central Baptist Church, and fired through the window of David's office when he bravely refused to let the burglars in and began to telephone for help. Janet, his wife, had first of all to free the night sentry, whom the burglars had tied up in an outhouse and then, leaving her two small sons (Martin 4 years and Owen nearly two) in the empty house, get her husband—by now unconscious—into the Mission car and drive to a doctor's house. David had passed away by the time the doctor could attend to him.

I heard the news on the other side of the city at 6 o'clock that morning and hurried off, unbelieving, to find the BMS house under military guard. The soldiers and some Africans near-by told me that the story was only too true. Representatives of all the Protestant Churches came to a meeting in the Christian Bookshop later that day—our BMS pastor, the Unevangelised Fields Mission leaders, Salvation Army, the Army chaplain. . . . I was one of the last to arrive and, under the impression that they were waiting for me, invited them to join together in prayer and then asked what were their suggestions about funeral arrangements. But my African colleagues very soon made it clear that this was *their* palaver! They had been thinking out all the arrangements that needed to be made. "Pastor Claxton was our missionary", they explained, "we shall make preparations in our African way; he belongs to us."

After a group of us had gone to the hospital to prepare David for burial, the coffin was taken to the Church where Christians came in relays all through the afternoon, evening and night to sing hymns, to read the Scriptures and to pray together. At the funeral service in the Church the following afternoon there were folk from every group in the city—government officials, army representatives, Roman Catholic priests and sisters, members of the Greek community, the Israelis, the Pakistanis, the Portuguese. . . . Our Yakusu colleagues—from 16 miles down-river—were able to get up in time and we were glad that we had managed to contact Pastor Samuel Koli, away on a trip to our Upper River Stations, so that he could hurry back and lead the service at the grave-side.

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To the Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal

Dear Friends,

An Image

Tennyson wrote in the *Idylls of the King*

". his face lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and colour of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at his best
And fullest"

Whenever I recall those lines I also recall a day in 1950 when a report of Beaverbrook Newspapers came to our office. That year Graham Sutherland had been commissioned to paint Lord Beaverbrook's portrait and the report included a colour print, before me as I write, of the portrait at the half-finished stage still disclosing on the canvas the basic lines on which the painting was built.

I did not know Sutherland's name then (as I later knew of him in connection with the Churchill portrait and the Coventry tapestry) but I was arrested by the power and the draughtsmanship of the artist.

I trust our own Company image in the Denomination is as arresting—letters of appreciation reach us both for our help in planning church insurances and for our claim settlements and they make pleasant reading.

Sometimes a letter of criticism is received which we are glad to have. It affords us the opportunity of seeking a remedy because we endeavour to plan in depth and with flexibility so that the image we present to the Denomination remains acceptable

If you have a bouquet to hand to us then let us have it. But above all if you have a criticism tell us. It was Cromwell who wanted the wart painted in, not out, and so do we!

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN, *General Manager.*

David and Janet were just completing their first term of service with our Society. Indeed, the previous Sunday had been the last united communion service that they would have attended before their departure on furlough. Our senior pastor in the city—Francis Mokili—gave them a special farewell message as they stood in front of us on the platform. Replying to this David told us how much their term of service had been full of upheavals—work on five different stations, teaching in seven different schools, occupying fifteen different houses—and being burgled six times so that almost all the things they had brought with them from Britain three years before had by then disappeared! It sounded to more than one of us like Paul's list of troubles in 2 Corinthians 11.

It was a pleasure to me personally when I learned that our Society had appointed David and Janet to work in Congo. They were both graduates from Nottingham University where I studied a generation before them. They had met one another at our William Carey Society there. After graduating from Nottingham, David read theology in the Manchester Baptist College and they both came out to Congo, with their small son Martin, just as the Basimba rebellion broke out in the Kisangani and Yakusu area. Unable to take up their appointed work just then, they went to Upoto. But the rebels attacked the Upoto area too and our missionaries had to be evacuated to Kinshasa. When conditions in the Eastern Province calmed down a year later, David and Janet came up to Kisangani where he took over the position of "chef-de-poste", missionary-in-charge. Some of us older missionaries doubted the wisdom of putting a white man in such a position; we felt that Congolese brethren ought to be tackling these jobs in Independent Congo. But there was trouble imminent within the Church here at that time; serious divisions had been growing up for some years and the Congolese Church itself invited David to undertake this work for them. It was a source of satisfaction to him and his wife and a cause of real gratitude among his missionary colleagues that David felt able some months ago to hand over his responsibility as "chef-de-poste" to a Congolese Pastor—Francis Mokili—trained at our Yalamba Theological School. Very few missionaries have been able to say, "Task accomplished" as David and Janet un-missionary term in Congo. Possibly the fact that David was a new-comer to the area and therefore more readily accepted by the various groups in the Church, helped to bring about the needed reconciliation. But far greater factors in the situation were David's mature wisdom, his patient understanding of all the people involved and his utter sincerity.

There is one paragraph in the BMS "Manual for Missionaries" that always causes a smile among Congo workers—the same is probably true on some other Fields also. We are told that missionaries in their first term should not be expected to engage in work outside their prescribed course of language study! David

and Janet were first-termers. Indeed a secret shared only by David and myself (plus our respective wives) during that united communion service with its crowd bordering on 2,000 people, was that David was undergoing his second Lingala language examination! As examiner in Lingala, it was my duty to report on his proficiency with the language to the committee of our Upper Congo Baptist Church! He had, of course, been fluent in the language for a long time but his duties in the Church and as Director of the United Protestant Secondary School in Kisangani had made it well-nigh impossible for him to find a convenient time to be examined in. This school-work took up an enormous amount of his time but he managed to fit in also a weekly Bible Study Prayer Meeting, the oversight of our Sunday Evening Service in English, classes for local preachers and also encouraging contacts with some of the village churches outside the Kisangani area—churches struggling to get back to working order after the “simba” rebellion.

Son of a Baptist Minister in Britain (Kenneth Claxton is now at Uppingham Road, Leicester), it is not surprising that David was a Pastor in every sense of the word. He had a living message for all the members of his congregation—fisher people from the Stanley Falls villages, carpenters, masons, mechanics, office-workers, bank-clerks, teachers, government officials, policemen and soldiers, university students and professors, fellow-missionaries. . . . Whether the language he used was Lingala, French or English, he spoke to us with power and authority, comforting us in our troubles and stimulating us to further service. All of us were especially impressed by a sermon he gave some weeks ago in which he quoted these words:

God whispers to us through our pleasures,
He talks with us while we are at work,
but He cries aloud to us in the midst of our
troubles and sorrow.

And as his words rang out from the Kisangani pulpit, some of us could hear coming over the legendary fervour of preachers from his native Wales. It was a thrilling moment we shall not forget. And we need to remember it especially *now*. Kisangani has been sorely troubled again since David passed on. Our Yakusu missionary colleagues have all been evacuated, advised to leave by their Christian friends there; most of the missionaries in Kisangani have gone away; the future of the University is once more jeopardised. . . . But God’s work goes on and we can take comfort from this conviction that He is specially near to guide and comfort when the sorrow and the danger are greatest.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his wife, whose quiet courage at the passing of her husband and father of her two small sons amazed and stirred all of us, to David’s parents who mourn a gifted son who was surely “about his Father’s business” and to the African Church of Kisangani, bereft of a loved and wise counsellor.

J. F. CARRINGTON

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'BAPTISTS AND UNITY'

Three Baptist Ministers Comment on the Report

This report gives a very fair and balanced picture of the position of Baptists and the ecumenical movement at present. The section on the theological basis of unity is extremely valuable and will be received as such by other denominations. This is the first statement of its kind by any Church since Nottingham. The facts presented, the doctrines outlined in the report all pose questions from which different sections of the denomination will draw different conclusions regarding the ecumenical movement. Those of us who were present at Nottingham, and felt the enthusiasm, which many of us believed to be truly a movement of the Holy Spirit will feel impatient with some of the conclusions drawn by the report. At the same time we sympathize with the difficulties of those who prepared the report.

The conclusions open by insisting that Christian unity is 'of great importance, urgency and complexity'. But this sense of urgency seems to have been lost in the reply to the possibility of covenanting together. "Patient exploration and discussion of the issue set out in previous pages both within the denomination and with those of other denominations is likely to be more possible and profitable for Baptists than any immediate attempt to state conditions under which it might be possible for the Baptist Union to enter into a covenant to work and pray for the inauguration of union with other Churches by a particular date." This appears to me to be so vague that it gives us all, and particularly those not entirely sold on the ecumenical movement, the chance to drag our feet and do nothing. I would have wished for a more positive statement which kept the urgency of the opening paragraph before us. This surely was the whole point of the date 1980 in the resolution from Nottingham. It was put there to give point and purpose and this sense of urgency and so prevent Churches from dragging their feet. It is true of all corporate bodies and institutions, and the church is no exception, that again and again, given half a chance, it will put off till tomorrow, or better the day after tomorrow, what ought in all conscience to have been done yesterday. And this is how I feel this report handles the whole question of covenanting.

Then again, I would have wished that the report instead of just acknowledging the other resolutions and making brief comments, had urged us on to action on the local level with more practical suggestions. For example paragraph 8 (2) suggests sharing "wherever possible, in co-operation with local Baptists in the designation of 'areas of ecumenical experiment' ". Could not the report have defined more closely who is to make the decision whether a new town, for example, should be such an area. If it is the local churches in the surrounding district then one is laid open to the situation, as happened with the new town of Thamesmead, that clashes of personality and differences in theology between people who will not necessarily be working in the new area, lead to the ideas of ecumenical experiment being rejected. Here surely the Association, if not the Union itself, must have more

authority delegated to it, because one would hope that they would be able to see a wider picture, and appreciate the wider strategy.

When paragraph 8 (4) expresses doubt 'as to whether the time is ripe for the undertaking by the British Council of Churches of work among children up to the age of 15', I believe it is misunderstanding the resolution from Nottingham and the discussion that led to it. The feeling was expressed that the material provided for the teaching of the 12-15 age group from whatever source, British Lessons Council, denominational presses, etc., was almost entirely inadequate. In view of this it was hoped that the British Council of Churches, in consultation with the other bodies concerned might undertake the preparation of such material. It is from this point of view that the Nottingham resolution is to be understood, and despite the new syllabus from the British Lessons Council, I would have thought that here was still a great need which the British Council of Churches might meet.

I would question, too, the doubts on an 'ecumenical college' for the training of the ministry. The work of the Selly Oak Colleges of St Andrews and Carey Hall in the training of missionaries has been done, and with the re-organisation even more so, on ecumenical lines. If it is possible to train missionaries on this basis, I cannot see why the training of ministers cannot be undertaken on the same lines. Some provision obviously must be made at the present for specific denominational training, but in the matters of theology, pastoralia, homiletics, etc., these surely would be capable of being taught ecumenically.

To sum up, one accepts the basic tenets of this report, Its outline of the history of the ecumenical movement and the biblical and theological basis of unity could hardly have been bettered in such short space. But one would have hoped and wished for a greater sense of urgency. We are a divided denomination on this as on many questions. In trying to preserve what may well be a false sense of denominational unity we must be on our guard lest we find ourselves drifting into an ecclesiastical backwater and cut off from the main stream of the Church, the Body of Christ.

T. S. H. ELWYN

What is ecumenism? It is fundamentally a conversation requiring honesty and willingness to speak and listen. Whether such conversation is in the nature of theological debate, shared worship, or associating together in the common mission of the Church, it requires the expression of personally held views with the utmost clarity, and the ability to listen in such a way that the truth presented is perceived, and a response made.

Is the Report under review a "conversation piece" in this sense? I am sure it is, because basic to all meaningful conversation is some knowledge of who is talking and an adequate understanding of their experience. The Report sets Baptists within the context of ecumenicity and highlights some of the major obstacles which Baptists have to

unity. It provides a useful background for intelligent discussion in church and association, and helps others to understand us.

What does this Report say to Baptists? First, it asks if we are justified in the rigid maintenance of believers' baptism as a continuing ground of separation from other Christian traditions? If so, we must state the reasons for this; if not, then our position must be made clear. This is no easy question, and I regret that the Report did not direct the denomination to recent publications by Alec Gilmore and G. R. Beasley-Murray. I hope that Fraternalists will not overlook this fruitful source in their discussions.

Second, how far is our present church organisation an essential expression of the Gospel and to what degree is it based on custom and prejudice; and how far might some of our traditional freedoms be sacrificed for the sake of a wider fellowship with other Christians? As I have argued in two previous articles in this magazine (July '65 and April '66) I believe that at present we maintain a position which is neither New Testament, historically Baptist, nor even rational. If this is the case, then we need to give considerable time in our church meetings to discussing the nature of the local church, and how it is related to the Church national and universal. Perhaps we shall have to begin by looking again at the Report on Associations.

Third, are the modifications and safeguards of episcopal government which are now suggested by episcopal churches sufficient to allay the hesitations felt by such as ourselves? This is a very thorny question and there are many in the episcopally governed churches who are looking to Free Churchmen to question the whole system. We must state carefully and clearly not only our objection to the Apostolic Succession which is inherent in Episcopal government, but also a carefully argued and valid alternative. Our Congregational and Presbyterian brethren might have something useful to say on this aspect.

Fourth, this Report says that we can no longer prevaricate on this vital issue. The Council has given a firm lead, and has thrown the ball firmly into the court of each local church and Association. It is now up to us to say our piece. During the next 18 months, it is to be hoped that every church in the country will discuss this theme and make its reply to the Church Relations Committee by November 1968.

What does the Report say to other Christians? First it makes it clear that although we are not as enthusiastic as some on unity we have been involved in the issue for a very long time. It sets the scene adequately, even if it does reveal us warts and all; better that than a falsely optimistic picture of ourselves.

Second it is to be hoped that other Christians will ask themselves **why** it is that the vast majority of Baptists are not in the World Council, and are NOT prepared to talk, in the same way that they have been very concerned to discover why it is that Rome is not a member church.

Third, in the most significant chapter of the whole Report, that which deals with the Biblical basis of unity, we have made our position clear. It would be helpful if other denominations, when replying to the

Nottingham Resolution, could be as equally explicit about their own view of the essence of unity. It might clear up a lot of misunderstanding.

Fourth, we hope that as Baptists have been the first, as far as I can tell, to issue a full reply to the Nottingham Resolution of 1964, and to have its reply discussed by **all** its members, that others will soon do likewise. Baptists will look forward to hearing that every parish church in England will be asked to discuss whether Anglicans are justified in the rigid maintenance of government by Bishops in Apostolic Succession as a continuing ground of separation from other Christian traditions!

Finally, I hope this Report will not only reveal the great divergence of opinion among Baptists, but that it will make other denominations realise that there may be just as big divergencies in their own. Unity does not come about by an enlightened minority running on ahead and using the machinery of Convocation or the Methodist Conference to gain their own particular ends. It may not be very impressive to watch 300,000 Baptists "thinking for themselves what's what", but it is the only valid way forward for unity. Because Baptist approach work to unity is painful to watch and less obviously dramatic than in other communions it is none the less real for all that. In fact perhaps, it is only a denomination which is basically a voluntary union of churches who understands this. It may be that the Spirit is saying to the whole of English Christianity through us: You cannot hurry a process like this; it must be tackled the hard way.

This Report is a "conversation piece" in the right ecumenical sense. It says things honestly and with deep personal conviction. It speaks to us, as well as to other denominations, and pleads that we shall listen to what is being said. Gordon Rupp once said in a Cambridge sermon some years ago: "You cannot make ecumenical cement out of denominational marshmallow." This Report asks us to examine our own marshmallow, and asks others whether their so-called ecumenical cement is not in fact only their own particular brand of marshmallow.

ROGER HAYDEN

The compilers of this report are to be commended for what is undoubtedly a well produced document. Their review of past and present Baptist relationships and problems, their presentation of the Biblical basis of unity and the practical conclusions they draw, reveal knowledge and wisdom. Disappointing as the result may be to ecumenical enthusiasts, there is no doubt that having regard to the widespread uneasiness and opposition toward further ecumenical commitment within the denomination, the committee has been sensible to counsel caution and active thinking at this stage.

Since the committee was presumably appointed to reflect the whole life of the denomination it is surprising that it does not appear to contain anyone representing the considerable body of Baptists of conservative evangelical outlook who have serious reservations about ecumenical involvement. If this is so, we need to ask why such an error of judgment.

The focal point of the document is chapter five. It is here many of us locate the basic weakness of the report and bring the gravamen of our charge. The argument for church unity centres (as may be expected) in Ephesians 4 verses 4-6, with an emphasis on the seven unities. This apparently settles the case — disunity in the church is as inconceivable as a division of deities or a proliferation of Gospels! It is our duty to dispose of all mean and petty objections and pursue zealously the high goal of church unity!

It is precisely here the crunch comes. Ephesians chapter four was written to Christians already in unity, for they are being exhorted to “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. They are already imbued with a deep sense of oneness created in them by the indwelling Holy Spirit. But upon what grounds is this unity based? It is upon their acceptance and experience of the apostolic Gospel, in fact the very truths Paul has been declaring in Ephesians chapters 1 to 3. The word “therefore” in chapter 4 verse 1 connects all he has said with his exhortation to holy living and unity. In other words the church which is to know and abide in “the fellowship” has also to know and abide in the “apostles’ teaching”, and the painstaking manner in which through all his letters the apostle Paul seeks to elaborate this teaching as the undergirding basis of all else, is the evidence of its supreme importance.

Now the report recognises this in stating: “the church is the one people created by response to the good news . . . the one Gospel”. But what, we ask, if there has arisen another Gospel, if within the church itself the pure word of grace becomes so overlaid, adulterated, even perverted, that it is now in fact a different gospel? It takes but the injection of a little ‘law’ to cause grace to be ‘no more grace’. The springs are poisoned and the whole stream becomes polluted. It is precisely here the problem arises for many of us. If professing Christians are not wholly united on the foundational content and experience of the Gospel of grace, what good is it to talk of unity in the Font, at the Table or even in the Holy Trinity. It is by that Gospel we have fellowship with the Blessed Trinity. It is by the apostolic teaching the ordinances have their meaning, and the church its life. We say then that the degree in which we are united both in our acceptance and experience of Christ as He is revealed in the Gospel, determines the degree in which we realise Christian unity.

We would expect a chapter on “Theological Principles of Unity” to give prime attention to basic evangelical theology since this obviously undergirds all else. Yet we find the issue beclouded by a sacramental emphasis which can easily send us off in another direction. Surely if the Baptists of 1678 considered it less an evil to deny baptism than to deny the Divinity or Humanity of Christ, must we not also regard it as grave an evil in our day to disregard in any degree that essential and irreducible basis of the gospel which is the substitutionary atonement of the Son of God (as basic to all other aspects of his death), justification by faith alone (without meritorious works of any kind),

and regeneration by the Holy Spirit through repentance and faith in Christ. Those of us holding these to be basic truths, together with plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture as undergirding all else, cannot possibly admit these to be "party views", segments of truth to be fitted in to other equally valid segments, or outdated theological concepts requiring re-adjustment by more enlightened philosophical thought. To us these are essential truths, basic to the whole structure of New Testament Christianity, and therefore for us to pursue church unity without looking to the purity of the Gospel on which the church is built, is to rebuild an old house whose foundations are partly in decay. Our prime need is to look together at our foundations.

This of course raises the matter of theological language which receives somewhat scant treatment on pages 31 and 32. As the report says language is a limited medium, but since it is our chief means of expressing and communicating Christian truth, we cannot be too careful in defining and enunciating our doctrines in clear terms. For St Paul, language was of prime importance as we may see from his charge to Timothy and Titus to show their purity of doctrine in the "form of sound words" and by using "sound speech to show the integrity of their teaching". So too for Jude who exhorts believers to "contend earnestly for the faith (as a body of doctrine) once delivered to the saints". The suggestion of the report that ecumenical encounter requires close and sincere discussion on doctrine to clear us of ambiguity and understanding is certainly welcome. Indeed I suggest it was never more needed than now. This whole issue of unity and pure doctrine needs to be governed by the fact that where there was division amongst Christians Paul uttered appeals, but where there was false doctrine, anathemas.

The report makes it evident that for Baptists at least there will be no gadarene rush for the brink of Easter 1980, nor need we be ashamed of this. May it not however be our duty to raise the issue of church **purity** rather than church **unity** at the present, so that while others may hurry to Easter A.D. 1980, we lead the way for a pilgrimage to Easter A.D. 30, going again to our foundations to discover afresh, both for ourselves and others, the clarity of the apostolic Gospel and the dynamic of the Holy Ghost. Whatever adulterations or perversions of the Gospel may or may not exist in other quarters, our chief concern as Baptists should be to recover our New Testament purity of doctrine and church life, so that whether 1980 finds us locked in ecumenical encounter or left out on an independent limb, we shall be people clear in teaching and flowing with the power of God. We would thus make our greatest contribution in what could be our greatest day.

STANLEY VOKE

In the next issue of "The Fraternal" we hope to publish two brief articles on the Report by Ministers outside our denomination.