

Daily News article on 21 May, says that my Life of him "will contain new evidence of the botanical distinction of the cobbler, whose letters are preserved at the headquarters of the great Botanical Gardens that he planned outside Calcutta." Doubtless, he meant the Horticultural Society's Garden, which Carey founded and laid out. And I *did* get rich treasure in its office. But even more in the Library of Calcutta's "Botanic" itself, where, after many days of fossicking, I discovered invaluable botanic letters of his, and the proof of his Indian life-long correspondence and co-operation with the Garden's illustrious successive superintendents, Drs. Roxburgh and Wallich. He wrote to the latter, I learned, more than 200 letters. Wallich's tribute to him was, perhaps, my most exciting Indian find.

It has not been seen nor shown before how—after months of appalling tempest—Carey's sun went down in an evening sky of serenest promise—his every chief hope realised.

And now, though I have thus raised expectation, I am more than ever conscious that he was greater than I have had power to tell. But at least I have spared no time, effort, nor money to ascertain the reliable facts and present their story. My one ambition has been to grow others of his outlook and spirit.

S. PEARCE CAREY.

26:5:23.

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

*The dates in these Minutes are recorded successively: Jan. 20th, 1723, Feb. 17, 1723/4, Feb. 29th, 1723/4, March 16th, 1724, March 23rd, 1724, March 30th, 1724, April 13, 1724. This peculiar dating is due to the fact that there were two methods in use. The older made the year begin on 25 March, so that March was the first month, September the seventh, October the eighth, November the ninth, December the tenth, January the eleventh, February the twelfth. The newer system started the year with 1 January. Therefore between 1 January and 24 March, till the year 1753, when the old style was abolished, it is always needful to read with care. The sequence of dates here, where Wilson has carefully specified that February was the ambiguous date, 1723/4, makes it certain that the date is what we should call 1724 throughout, even for the January. A reference to a calendar will show that the 20 January was Monday in 1724, not in 1723.—EDITOR.

Coffee-house in Finch Lane, London, forming what we should call a fraternal," formed on 17 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 meetings was held at Salters' Hall of all London (and a few country) ministers of the three denominations. 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! Ivimey 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." That 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 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 on 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 interests 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, A.M., 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 of 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 be a fine thing if Dr. Clifford could be 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 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. Testimony must be borne to the fine series of Presidents of recent years, viz. Revs. W. J. Fullerton, F. C. Spurr, Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, M.A., the late Principal Gould, and Dr. J. W. Ewing, whilst the quality of the discussions is being well maintained under the present leadership of the Rev. S. W. Hughes.

Surely we must all feel that though much of its former work has passed to the Baptist Union and the London Baptist Association, this ancient body must not be allowed to decline, but should rather command the active support of every London minister.

ARTHUR J. PAYNE.