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JULY, 1965

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## EDITORIAL

The words 'Miami Beach' invite a flood of imaginative ideas regarding summer delights, and few of us can think of anywhere better for a short holiday! Those who are privileged to attend the Baptist World Alliance Congress this year are not likely to have a great deal of time for leisure, though undoubtedly all will recall their experience with a deep sense of gratitude to God for inspiration, fellowship, and encouragement. The Editorial Board feel it right to mark the occasion of another World Congress by publishing some articles written for us by three distinguished B.W.A. leaders in different parts of the world. The authors have not been able to have access to each other's manuscripts and, quite naturally, there are occasional repetitions. We have preferred however to leave our contributors quite free to write about the Alliance as they wished and to stress those aspects of its life and work which have impressed themselves most deeply upon their minds. We are convinced that there ought to be a keener interest in the B.W.A., especially in Great Britain, and we hope that the three opening articles of this issue of *The Fraternal* will serve to stimulate a far deeper sense of involvement in, and prayer for, the work of our Baptist brethren throughout the world.

### OUR BAPTIST WORLD FELLOWSHIP

I AM GLAD to have this opportunity to tell something about our Baptist fellowship around the world. Let me speak briefly about each word of our theme.

First of all, ours is a *Baptist* fellowship. What that word calls to mind—John the Baptist; John Bunyan; John Clifford, the beloved John MacNeill, the only Canadian ever to be President thus far of the Baptist World Alliance. In 1929 he said, "Never was our witness as Baptists more needed than today. Never was our task more clearly defined. We are a New Testament people. The authority of His Holy Word, the Deity of Christ, the sufficiency of His atoning sacrifice, the need and hope of regeneration, the miracle of His resurrection, the potency of His living presence, the competency of the soul to deal directly with God through Christ, the enshrining of these great truths in the baptism He has left us, the assertion of Christ's claims in every relationship of men and nations . . . these are the cardinal notes of our witness."

Many other names, of course, are called to mind by the word "Baptist". We think of William Carey and his pioneer work in India; of Adoniram Judson and the beginning of a wonderful Baptist work in Burma; of Roger Williams who pioneered for the Baptists in North America; of J. H. Rushbrooke, Walter Lewis, and Arnold Ohrn, beloved Secretaries of the Alliance through the

years. Each of these men made his distinctive contribution to Baptist life and work.

Of course, there are many varieties of Baptists around the world. We are of different colours, and we differ in our customs and culture. We wear different types of clothing, and eat different food. There are more than twenty-five million of us in about one hundred countries—and yet, we are one in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. We do cherish “One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism—One God and Father of us all.”

Ours is a true unity with diversity as we serve—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.” John Clifford put it this way in 1908, “We have said, and we still need to say, that each church is independent of every other church, and independent of any caste of priests or ministers; that it is a perfect and complete organization and, with Christ as its ruler, fully competent to manage itself. But we organize for world-wide cooperation and complete abandonment to the spirit and purpose of the catholicity of the Gospel of Christ, encouraged in our adherence to these principles by seeing that the gravitation of the thought and conviction of the Churches of Christ is distinctly and with growing strength towards those ideas of Christ and His Gospel for which we stand.”

All of this was beautifully illustrated at the Roll Call of the Nations at the Tenth Baptist World Congress in Rio de Janeiro in 1960. (Such a Roll Call is a vital and colourful part of every Congress programme.) At that time a representative of each nation where Baptists are serving came to the platform with the flag of his country to be greeted by the President. Then—in his own tongue—he gave the Congress Theme—“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” It was a moving and unforgettable experience for all who had the privilege of sharing in it. With more feeling, perhaps, than ever before we could sing, “All hail the power of Jesus’ name, let angels prostrate fall, bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all.”

Ours is a *World* fellowship of Baptists. We are to be found literally around the world on every continent and in many lands. We serve the Lord Christ under varying conditions. Some are under totalitarian governments and others in democracies. Some serve where there are state churches and others where free churches predominate. Some are suffering hardship for Christ while others have full freedom to preach and teach the faith we cherish. Let me give you just a brief glimpse of some of these Baptists in various lands.

There are over half a million baptized believers in Baptist churches in Russia. Under severe hardship and many difficulties they continue their work of evangelism, proclaiming what they fervently call “New Testament Christianity”. They bear their witness in more than 5,000 churches scattered all over the Soviet Union.

Go with me to Burma where new restrictions have made it exceedingly difficult to carry on missionary work, but the 200,000 Baptists of Burma continue to witness for Christ regardless of government policies with reference to mission work. One of the most remarkable churches I know is the Immanuel Baptist Church in Rangoon, where every Sunday services are conducted at different hours in five different languages. It was a thrilling experience for me to worship in that church and to conduct the Lord's Supper at the English service late one Sunday afternoon, and to realize anew our oneness in Christ.

The Baptists of Nigeria are a remarkable body, carrying on an extensive work of education seeking to train Christian leaders for the new freedom they are enjoying. Tanimola Ayorinde, formerly Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lagos, has recently been elected Secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. Missionaries and nationals work together under his leadership in the new day in Nigeria.

In the Philippines it was my privilege to talk to the students at the Central Baptist College at Ilo Ilo. Students come from all over the Islands to prepare themselves for places as Christian leaders. Each year, in the spring, they have a series of evangelistic services and a baptismal service in an outdoor baptistry in front of the Administration Building on the College campus. The service of baptism could be held indoors in one of the local Baptist churches, but the students insist that this traditional service be continued as their public witness that they have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk with Him in newness of life.

If space permitted, I could go on and on telling you about Baptists in many parts of the world who share in this world fellowship, but I must remind you that it is truly only a *fellowship*—but what a fellowship of kindred minds! The Baptist World Alliance is a voluntary and fraternal organization for promoting fellowship and cooperation among Baptists. It is not an administrative body for sending missionaries, nor a legislative body, nor a judicial body. It has no authority over its Conventions or over local Baptist churches. It seeks to express and promote co-operation and fellowship among Baptists of the world, to secure and defend religious freedom, and to proclaim the great principles of our common faith as Christians.

Our fellowship is expressed in many tangible ways. We meet, ordinarily, every five years in a Baptist World Congress. The one in Miami Beach was the first on that continent since 1950, and we shall probably not meet again in North America until 1980.

The Alliance operates a fine and growing Women's Department, to which British women have meant much. The Youth Department holds a Baptist World Youth Conference every five years. We also have a growing Men's Department. All these hold special sessions at every World Congress, in addition to their own national and continental activities.

The Relief Department of the Alliance has done much to help Baptists feed and clothe the hungry, and to assist refugees to find places of security and opportunity. Who could forget the marvelous outpouring of Christian love and concern at the Copenhagen Congress when for the first time many of us met refugees face to face and gave them all we could spare of clothing and other necessities of life. This gave a new emphasis to the Relief Programme of the Alliance which still continues under the leadership of a competent Committee.

For a number of years the Alliance has carried on a program of Study Commissions between World Congresses. During the past five years there have been four Commissions, made up of representative theologians and leaders from many Conventions. This provides a cross fertilization of ideas, a deepening of convictions, and is a means of strengthening our work in many areas.

The Commissions were: Religious Liberty and Human Rights, Evangelism and Missions, The Doctrine of the Church, and Bible Study and Membership Training. Each of these Commissions reported to the Congress in Miami Beach, in addition to having two sessions for discussion.

*The BAPTIST WORLD* is published by the Baptist World Alliance each month. It carries information about Baptists in many lands. We also have the Baptist World Press, an information service to supply other publications with news of interest to Baptists everywhere.

This is *our* "Baptist World Fellowship". It is ours—ours to appreciate and profit from—ours to share with others—ours to pass on to coming generations, the stronger and the better because of our contribution to it. It is ours because we are Christ's and we are one in Him who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

What is it that holds these Baptists together when we have so many differences and diversities? It is our sense of shared convictions—convictions that command our loyalty and call us to service. Let me mention just a few. We share a common conviction of the Lordship of Christ. The early Christians identified themselves to other believers with the simple statement, "Jesus Christ is Lord". Through the years that sense of fellowship in Him has been a source of strength and assurance. In Czechoslovakia some years ago I worshipped in one of our churches and shared in the Lord's Supper. There in a land dominated by Communist thought we shared the symbols of the body and blood of our Lord and sang together, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine".

We share a conviction that the Bible is God's word for our day and for every day. To us it is the sole and sufficient basis for our faith and practice, and we reject all man-made doctrines that conflict with the teaching of the Word of God. In Russia wherever I preached I presented the pastor of the church with a Bible in Russian. I pointed out that I could not read it and he could not read mine, but that we loved the same Book and cherished the

same faith. The Bible itself was a symbol of our fellowship in Christ.

We share convictions about "Believers' Baptism" by Immersion. It was my privilege once to share in a beautiful outdoor baptismal service in Limbe, Haiti, as a group of believers were buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk with Him in newness of life. This precious symbol with its deeper significance is precious to Baptists around the world.

We believe in the priesthood of all believers and in salvation by grace through faith. Because of our concern for those who are lost without this faith, we believe in evangelism and missions. As John Soren well says, "The same Christ who took from our hearts the burden of sin laid on our hearts the concern to share with others the Gospel that sets us free from the bondage of sin and death".

Baptists through the years have put increasing emphasis on social justice and righteousness. We have stressed brotherhood, under God, in our fellowship of believers in Christ. In Jamaica, for example, Baptists took the lead in trying to bring an end to human slavery. When the shackles were finally broken from the legs of the slaves and they were set free, one group formed a great procession and buried their chains in the church yard of the Brownstown Baptist Church. They had been released from both physical and spiritual bondage through the faith the church proclaimed, and they have never forgotten it.

Through the years Baptists have taken the lead in claiming and proclaiming full religious liberty. We believe in freedom of conscience—the freedom to teach and proclaim the Gospel we profess—the freedom to own property for worship and education—and with all this the right to change one's faith. Felix Manz was drowned in Zurich because of his devotion to religious liberty and believers' baptism, and because he claimed freedom of conscience. When we see all that others have suffered for our faith we cannot but proclaim full religious liberty for all mankind as an ideal toward which we strive.

This is "Our Baptist World Fellowship"—embodied in the Baptist World Alliance and expressed in varied ways around the world. It is, of course, part of the far larger fellowship of all believers in Christ as Lord, but within that larger fellowship our own Baptist ties around the world grow stronger with the years.

A few years ago I shared in the First Asian Baptist Youth Conference in Hong Kong. Young people came to that Conference from thirteen different countries. Their countries had recently been at war, and some of the young people wondered whether they could really worship and pray and have fellowship with their former enemies. After a day or two of Bible study and prayer, the whole atmosphere changed. One night Mr Denny, our Youth Secretary, suggested that we sing together "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love". He asked that we clasp our hands and hold them high that all might see that we were truly one in Jesus

Christ. The same experience will be yours at any Baptist World Congress where we always sing the simple but beloved hymn which reminds us that "the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above".

THEODORE F. ADAMS

### BRITISH BAPTISTS AND THE B.W.A.

THE KEY UNIT of all Baptist work and witness is the local Church. No super body has any right to control, no high-up ecclesiastic has any power to issue orders. The Church, and the individual Christian recognises only one head of the Church, Jesus Christ the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind. And Baptists have only one class of membership for they are anchored to the great principle of the equality and priesthood of all believers.

In this there is a danger at times of too much separation, and too little fellowship and working hand-in-hand with one another. In our own land we have largely avoided this weakness. Nearly all our Churches are in fellowship with the Baptist Union and the local Associations, and thus work and plan and pray together for the progress of the Gospel throughout the country. We all share in the glorious heritage of the Baptist Missionary Society which pioneered the modern Missionary movement. We rejoice together in the great men of our denomination: William Carey, Adoniram Judson, Timothy Richard, and George Grenfell in the Mission field abroad; Robert Hall, C. H. Spurgeon, Alexander Maclaren and John Clifford in the Mission field at home.

And then the Baptist World Alliance, formed 60 years ago to join all the Baptists of a hundred countries in fellowship, in service, and in co-operation. Do we Baptists in England realise the greatness of our communion, the great world tasks to which we are committed, and the great hope and power put in our hands? Do we know about the B.W.A.? Do we remember, in all our Churches, Alliance Sunday (the first Sunday in February) and in intercession bear one another up at the Throne of Grace?

More than 30 years ago I attended the opening of a new Baptist Church in the Midlands. The local Rector came to bring good wishes from the Church of England. He said in his address "I do not understand why you Baptists do not make much more of yourselves—you are, after all, the largest Protestant communion in the world, much larger than the Church of England in which I serve". To many it came as a new idea and a happy one—not to boast about, but to rejoice in such a great body of fellow believers called and chosen to do mighty works for the Lord.

Yes, we are members of a great family spread all over the world. Our progress has been remarkable. The B.W.A. was founded in London in 1905—the first time that a world gathering of Baptists was ever held. This meeting of some 3,000 leaders had been inspired by American brethren and was led by Dr Maclaren and Dr Clifford—what names in the memory of one, who, as a boy, saw and heard

these two famous men! In that year there were some 6,000,000 Baptists in the world. Every five years a great Congress is held and many will remember the Jubilee Congress in London in 1955. Each day, and several times a day, the Albert Hall was crowded with representatives from all round the globe, while some 40,000 gathered in Highbury Stadium for the closing rally. The 6,000,000 of 1905 had grown to nearly 20,000,000 Baptist Church Members. Since then numbers have grown at the rate of more than half a million a year and at the next Congress, at Miami Beach in June this year, some 30,000 delegates are expected and they will represent some 26,000,000 members. Do we in England sufficiently realise the significance of these vast numbers and do we see in them an inspiration and a challenge?

What a fellowship we share! How much we ought always to remember one another in prayer, help one another in need, and encourage one another in our common task of winning the world for our Lord!

What, you may ask, does the B.W.A. do apart from expressing the unity in spirit of so many believers of the same faith and order? It has no coercive power, no bribe to come in, and no penalty if we go out; it recognises fully the independence of each particular Church and symbolises our unity in diversity. It brings together in one family all the Baptists everywhere. It has all colours and all languages in this vast Christian family, joined together and held together by no tie stronger than that of love. In all countries and in all languages we sing our international anthem—in modern words our 'signature tune'—given to us by Dr Maclaren in 1905.

Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love,  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.

The President today (Dr Soren) is from Brazil and Vice-Presidents include leaders from U.S.A., China (Hong Kong), Burma, Argentine, Australia. Liberia (who is also Vice-President of the State of Liberia), France, and Russia. A truly catholic list! England has supplied three Presidents: Dr Clifford 1905-1911; Dr Rushbrooke 1939-1947; and Dr Townley Lord 1950-1955. At the moment England has only one officer (Treasurer) but a number of representatives on the Executive and, while at Miami, the Rev. Ronald Goulding will begin his duties as the European Secretary. Let us see that we all support him eagerly and not forget that England is part of Europe.

The B.W.A. has set up Commissions to study and give advice and help on many problems. Reports will be given at Miami from these commissions on Baptist Doctrine, Religious Liberty and Human Rights, Evangelism and Missions, and Bible Study and Membership Training.

One big task under the skilled guidance of Adolf Klaupcks which the B.W.A. has carried out for many years and still much needed,

is Relief. Many of our fellow Baptists are very poor, some are refugees; some would have died of starvation without B.W.A. relief and aid. Where war, famine, or political upheaval have threatened disaster to our friends, the B.W.A. relief workers have gone to the aid of the needy, and thousands in India, Korea, and Russia, and refugees from Communist China and Hungary, owe their lives to Baptist gifts through that Relief scheme.

Many of our fellow Baptists are few in number in their own land and weak in resources. Many face persecution and ill-treatment and many are denied religious liberty. The B.W.A. works valiantly, and with some success, in gaining for our people the elementary right to worship God and to proclaim the Gospel. Much still remains to be done that the truth of God may have free course. The B.W.A. raises high the banner of religious liberty.

The B.W.A. makes it possible for the powerful to help the weak, the rich to succour the poor and needy, all to encourage and inspire one another. Are you in your Church alive to this need and opportunity? Do you ministers tell your people of the work and need of this world-wide family and of the part the B.W.A. is playing? Does your Church realise that it is itself enrolled in the World Alliance and so called to share in its work and witness?

May I make one or two practical suggestions?

1. Take an offering sometimes to help your weaker brethren in their need. Send it for the special Relief Fund if you wish.
2. Tell your Church the news on the Baptist World front; it is often full of encouragement.
3. Get the "Baptist World". This is the cheapest and best Christian Magazine that I know. For ten shillings a year you can have this monthly magazine sent to you post free. It is well printed and illustrated, with news of Baptists everywhere. There will be many incidents to illustrate sermons and many stories the people of our Churches ought to know. If you order 10 copies the cost is only seven shillings instead of ten shillings. You send to Dr Ruden, B.W.A., Baptist Church House, 4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

Dare I add one other point? At Oslo some two years ago at the Executive meeting, one brother—from Poland, I think—asked the question: "Why is it that with Baptists increasing all over the world, Britain reports year by year a decline?" Yes, perhaps to you and me, the B.W.A. may be a challenge, a disturbing challenge too.

DONALD FINNEMORE

### BAPTISTS WILL ARGUE

SOME YEARS AGO I had a B.W.A. emblem attached to the lapel of my jacket. At a Ministers' meeting we got into quite a heated argument about certain theological questions. After the meeting a priest belonging to another faith came to me and, pointing to the

emblem, asked me: "Do these initials stand for the words: 'Baptists Will Argue?'" I had to tell him the truth about these initials and said that they stood for "Baptist World Alliance"—a worldwide fellowship of christians to whom Christ is the central figure in life, preaching and teaching, and therefore they are also as one in the practice of the believer's baptism in churches which are founded on the pattern of the New Testament.

The Baptist World Alliance is not a worldwide church, but a worldwide fellowship of individual congregations. The Alliance is not headed by Archbishops or Bishops but by men and women elected from the midst of the people. It is a democracy. Without doubt this has been the strength of the alliance, even though we must acknowledge that democracy can also have its weak points.

Here in Europe we meet the argument now and then that B.W.A. is an American phenomenon, but this is not true. Naturally the American influence is strongly noticeable, first and foremost because there are many Baptists in the U.S.A., and secondly, because these fellow believers have, time and time again, in a most generous manner given a helping hand to fellow Baptists living under difficult conditions in various parts of the world.

B.W.A.'s Congresses which are normally held every five years in various parts of the World, are a source of inspiration. It can be said that there are comparatively few Baptists who manage to take part in these Congresses because, as a rule, they are expensive to attend, due to the cost of travel and other expenses. Perhaps more Baptists could attend if they travelled less in the intervening years and then made the trip to the World Congress in the spirit and expectation of a pilgrimage.

When you come from a comparatively small Baptist Union such as the Danish one which only has a little over 7,000 members, one is tempted to feel rather inferior in B.W.A.'s large Baptist family and perhaps, especially so, with regard to the large numbers of American Baptists. However, if you look back in history, it should not be a feeling of inferiority which fills our hearts but thankfulness and joy.

Through B.W.A. you not only build up a fellowship but also something which is even stronger, namely brotherhood. Over a number of years the Baptists in the U.S.A. have helped many of the small Baptist Unions in Europe to build schools and theological seminaries, so that the young people can be educated in a proper manner as preachers and leaders of the church. Many young people travelled to the U.S.A. on scholarships for either all or part of their theological education. This has been a valuable aid, but cannot be compared to the value of having our own theological seminary in our own country, because there is, of course, a great difference in American culture, theology and church life and the corresponding factors in many places in Europe.

It was not the B.W.A. who raised the funds to help the small Unions, but it was often through this fellowship that the necessary contacts were made and the need made known.

For many years the contact between the Baptist Union in Europe and B.W.A. was maintained through our highly esteemed and, we dare say, greatly beloved Dr W. O. Lewis. He was untiring in his travels all over Europe. He always came with encouragement and gave us fresh hope. Where there was want or some special problem which had to be solved, he would always find a way. He was always humble and large-hearted in his encounters with fellow believers and christians of other faiths, but at the same time he had an air of dignity and authority when it was necessary to plead with the authorities on behalf of suffering Baptists. When the European Baptist Federation was established in 1949 some of B.W.A.'s leaders were perhaps a bit apprehensive that we in Europe would lose touch with B.W.A. to a certain extent. That was never the idea. Through the years E.B.F. has also shown that the growing fellowship between Baptists in Europe has helped to unite the individual countries with even stronger ties to the World Fellowship in B.W.A.

Each continent has its own special problems to fight. In Europe the different languages is a barrier for many people. Even more serious is the ideological fight between East and West—personified by the wall in Berlin. In the meantime we have experienced that believing in Christ and serving Him gives us something in common which unites us even though we are very different in our cultures, theology, traditions and social structures.

Since 1960 Dr Eric Ruden, as assistant Secretary in B.W.A., has worked as General Secretary among the Baptists in Europe. Through his service the feeling of responsibility among Baptists in Europe was increased. Many helping hands were now stretched within the boundaries of Europe from the stronger Baptist Unions to the weaker ones. Our fellow believers met on both sides of the iron curtain with just what was needed at that particular time. In Spain he pleaded with the authorities so that the Baptist churches which had been closed by the authorities for many years were reopened and working conditions for protestant missionaries were made easier.

In Europe we utilized all the abilities and strength of the General Secretary, but is it clear to us that it was B.W.A. that paid him?

As European Baptists let us all give our thanks to the B.W.A. when we meet at the Congress in Miami and Florida. Also let it be known that new missions have been started during the years. Countries which do not have their own Baptist Foreign Missions co-operate in the European Baptist Foreign Mission Society. There are some countries with thousands and thousands of migrants among whom mission work has now been started. We rejoice over the special press service we have under the leadership of Dr Allan Moore in Rüschnikon. Perhaps our mission work during these years is not characterized so much by the spirit of revival as was the case in earlier generations. More independent thought is given to theology, the teaching in the churches is on a high level in many

instances and so is the work among young people and children. May God help us that the spirit of evangelism may be found in every preacher and may every Baptist be a personal witness for Jesus Christ.

Let us express our joy to the leaders of B.W.A. for the fact that men like General Secretary Ernest A. Payne, has been an outstanding European member of the Executive Committee. We also rejoice over the expected proposal at Miami that executive members of the B.W.A. will, in future, be appointed by the individual member Unions. This will help to strengthen the fellowship even more and may it also strengthen the feeling of responsibility through extra offerings to the world wide mission of the B.W.A.

BAUNGAARD THOMSEN

## LIBERTY FOR A NEW PATTERN

"CHAOTIC MAY BE TOO strong a word to be used in describing the denominational structure of the Baptists, but there are few who will deny there is confusion and disorder. Some sort of re-organization is necessary if Baptists are to make an effective witness in the critical age in which we live. Since a major obstacle to any attempt to make sense of our denominational relationships is the rather widespread belief that the present structure is in some way derived from New Testament principles or at least from historic principles, it is important to point out that this is *not* true. Our denominational structure has not been the product of biblical, theological, or even rational considerations. It was developed on an *ad hoc* basis as an efficient money-raising technique and to serve certain sectional and partisan concerns." (*Foundations* April '58, p.44)

D. Winthrop S. Hudson wrote this as an introductory paragraph to a discussion of the current Baptist scene in America. His basic thesis, however, is relevant to English Baptist Church life in this country to-day. *Liberty in the Lord* and *The Pattern of the Church*, as well as various Union and Association commissions of the past decade, have sought to re-evaluate our present organisation as an expression of the Baptist doctrine of the Church. Both sides in this vital debate have appealed to the past: but neither group has recognised how much nineteenth century utilitarian individualism governed the thinking of our Baptist fore-fathers. In our discussion of home and foreign missions, and the organisation of the Baptist Union as it now is, we have too long regarded as New Testament, and Baptist in principle, what was in fact the Victorian addiction to an aggressive individualism, expressed in the 19th century anachronism, the "voluntary" principle.

## II.

The Baptist Missionary Society was founded in the prayer-call of John Sutcliff and the Northamptonshire Association; in the

theology of Andrew Fuller expressed in his book *The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation*; and in the burden on Carey's heart for the unevangelised millions of his day, which found expression in *The Enquiry*. The prayer-call was taken up by the Particular (Calvinistic) Baptist Churches, and the expectation of revival was uppermost in the minds of the ordinary church members, as month by month they sought it from God in prayer. The high Calvinism of John Gill, which resulted in arid, dry, "non-invitation", preaching, was superseded by the neo-Calvinism of Fuller, which clearly laid the responsibility for taking the Gospel to spiritually destitute men and women upon Christ's disciples. The willingness of Carey to translate his vision into a reality by sailing with Thomas in 1793, was the third factor which assured the successful launching of the BMS. So far the whole venture centred in a Biblical and theological understanding of the Church's task. Only one thing needed attention—the financing of the object in view.

The *Periodical Accounts* of the BMS makes the position quite clear. "As such an undertaking must needs be attended with expense, we agree immediately to open a subscription list for the above purpose, and to recommend it to others. Every person who shall subscribe ten pounds at once, or ten shillings and sixpence annually, shall be considered a member of the society." The reason for this method was that it was impossible to raise support from the whole Church of Christ, or even from the churches of their own denomination. Clearly finance had to be raised upon the voluntary principle. It was a matter of expediency, and not their desire to do it in this way. The second resolution passed in October 1792 reads: "As in the present divided state of Christendom it seems likely that each denomination, by exerting itself separately, is most likely to accomplish the great end of a mission, it is agreed that this society be called, The Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen". It was now for the individual Churches, and their members, to decide whether they would support the mission or not. Thank God many supported the work generously, and it succeeded. But it is quite clear that fund raising was on the "voluntary" principle, which was then widely used by most philanthropic organisations, and did not arise from any overall theological conviction about the Church's mission, or its responsibilities in terms of stewardship. This is the seed from which many of our present organisational difficulties arise, not only for the BMS but also for the Baptist Union. The "voluntary" principle was not a vital theological, or even an historically Baptist principle. It was simply the most convenient expedient for the financial support of the venture. There is another aspect of the voluntary method which has had unfortunate repercussions for the work of the missionary society. Those who provided the money for the mission were, very wisely, concerned to see that it was used for the proper purposes. But in Carey's own lifetime it meant that the Society's Home Committee were at considerable variance with

missionaries on the field about the use and disposal of mission funds and property. One cannot help but wonder whether some of the Home Committee were chosen, not because of their understanding of the needs of the Mission, but because they were generous givers. The voluntary principle had serious limitations.

In the so-called Serampore controversy there was this vital point of missionary policy at stake: whether or not the missionaries in managing the affairs of the Mission in India were subordinate to the wishes of the Home Committee. It has been argued that it was the stubborn attitude of the Home Committee which caused Carey to change his views about missionaries being self-supporting, and led to his adoption of the idea that "control originates in contribution" "The agreement of 1827 between Carey and the Baptist Missionary Society" whereby the BMS and the Serampore Mission were to operate as distinct and separate missionary organisations, "brought to an end a bitter controversy. However it also marked the abandonment of Carey's policy concerning the financial support and control of missionary work, a policy which, had it received the encouragement it deserved might have resulted in something not yet achieved in Bengal 127 years after the death of Carey—a self-supporting, self-propagating Bengali Church" (*Foundations*, Jan. 62, pp. 2-16). This still affects our missionary work. The story of our missionary work in China, and that of the work in Congo during the last decade both need to be examined from this point of view. It is perhaps significant that no Union of Baptist Churches which has originated upon any of the BMS fields has yet come into full membership with the World Council of Churches (or the I.C.C.C.) The voluntary principle for financing the mission has meant that it is possible for Baptist Churches not to support the BMS. If the Church is mission, then all Baptist churches have an obligation to support the Society. Such an authoritarian approach will create difficulties: but at least let us recognise that the "voluntary" principle is a nineteenth century expediency which is neither theological nor particularly Baptist. It is an anachronism from a past age, which while it has proved very useful, is in no way binding upon us now.

### III.

It is not generally recognised that the Baptist Union originated in a gathering of Baptist ministers who had just listened to sermons being preached in aid of the Baptist Mission Society, and who were concerned with "the promotion of the cause of Christ in general, and the interests of the denomination in particular: with a primary view to the encouragement and support of the Baptist Mission" (E. A. Payne: *A Short History of the Baptist Union*, p.21). It was a Union of those who accepted the doctrinal basis which was commonly received amongst the Particular (Calvinistic) Baptists. Rippon was one of those who saw within it a wider place in the life of our Churches, and hoped that its annual assembly

would consider "whatever relates to the real interests of the denomination at home or abroad". (Payne, p.22) This was in 1812. In June 1813, having listened to the annual missionary sermons, the ministers drew up a draft constitution which shows that the primary purpose was still the support of "our missions". It is significant that the first treasurer of the Union was Mr Burls, who was co-treasurer for the BMS from 1819-21 (Payne, p.26). The Union recommended the forming of "Auxiliary Societies in aid of the Mission", as well as collections for other Baptist philanthropic and educational interests (Payne, p.24). In origin the Union was primarily a voluntary fund-raising organisation of the Mission, and "... superiority and superintendence over the Churches; or any authority or power to impose anything upon their faith and practice..." (Payne, p.25) was definitely disclaimed.

It has been suggested that this draft constitution bore a close resemblance to Particular Baptist Confessions of Faith, which were used by the Associations. Doctrinally this is true. But there the resemblance ends. As far as I am aware no Association had made the support of Missions at home, or abroad, a basis for associating together. Their fellowship was upon the basis of a common doctrine, ministry, and polity among the Churches. The Union was not originally an Association of the Associations: it was the organisation which collected the funds for the Mission, which were given by the Churches on a voluntary basis.

The voluntary principle, linked with Victorian individualism meant there was continual resistance to the Union throughout the nineteenth century. There were several attempts to re-define the purposes and basis on which the Union existed, all of which met with opposition whenever it was suggested that the Union was more than a money-raising organisation.

At the height of the Anglo-Catholic Tractarian Movement in 1832 the doctrinal basis was reduced in such a way that all Baptist Churches "who agree in the sentiments usually denominated evangelical" were able to join the Union. This opened the door to General as well as Particular Baptists, especially those of the former known as the "New Connexion". Many objected at the time to this vagueness, but unsuccessfully. By 1873, the growth of Biblical and historical criticism created a theological division amongst the so-called "Evangelicals". In this year the basis of the Union was "that each Church has liberty to interpret and administer the laws of Christ, and that immersion of believers is the only Christian Baptism." This was the final victory of the voluntary principle as it was expressed in terms of Victorian individualism. It was this vagueness of doctrinal basis, linked with a fear of the new liberal approach to the Scriptures, which led C. H. Spurgeon to withdraw himself and his church from the Union in 1888. Spurgeon's method was in no way creditable to that great man, but his understanding that the basis of fellowship is upon a common doctrine, ministry, and polity among the Churches was certainly

the historic Baptist position, and has New Testament support. Surprisingly the Union survived the Down-Grade controversy, and in 1891 the New Connexion Churches came fully into the Union, though it was not until 1904, and then only after lengthy discussion, that it was possible to have any vital doctrinal basis for the Union. (Payne, 5) In this statement, which is basically unaltered today, voluntarism and individualism have a high place, which is why we can be justifiably accused of living in a "theological slum".

#### IV.

Like the BMS, the Union's financial position has been subject to the voluntary principle, and not without similar dangerous results. When personal membership of the Union was introduced in 1873 after a very hotly contested debate, *The Freeman* commented "The fact that such had long been informally permitted by the executive, and would be carefully controlled by the committee, secured its hearty adoption." (Payne, 100) One of the results of this was that the Union became "able to undertake further tasks on its own." And no doubt those who gave most, used their membership to see that their money was used to good ends. But as with the BMS it would be difficult to establish that this type of personal membership was always in the best interest of the Churches. My purpose is not to minimise the work done by our 19th century fore-fathers; it is rather to show that they were victims of their environment, and that we are not bound to their nineteenth century "voluntary" expediency as a principle, when we seek to give organisational expression to our doctrine of stewardship.

#### V.

The present organisational shape of the Union was created by John Howard Shakespeare, who was its leading light from 1898 until 1924. Townley Lord once described him as "the architect of the Union", but more important is the motivation of the man in bringing to the Union the structure it now possesses. Shakespeare's dying wish was that no biography should be written of him, which makes it difficult to arrive at a true understanding of his motives. If the following is inadequate, perhaps it will provoke someone to give us the biography we badly need, despite his wishes.

Shakespeare was a man of his age, and caught the vision of a united Church in England meeting the spiritual needs of twentieth century man. It first came to him in Norwich, when he took part in a united Free Church Evangelistic campaign. Thus by the time he came to the Union in 1898, he was already working towards this end. There is no need here to list his great achievements for the Union; his evangelistic fervour and organisational ability are well known.

In 1905 he published the first of two books which he wrote,

entitled *Early Baptist and Congregational Pioneers*, in which he seeks to establish a close relation historically between the two denominations. In 1906 he asked Dr Wheeler Robinson and Dr Henderson, of Bristol, to present two papers at the Huddersfield Assembly in which they both found it possible to support his dictum that, "Congregationalism interpreted as independency was not only unequal to the solution of the problems which were before the denomination, but was also unscriptural." (Payne, *H. W. Robinson*, p.51) In 1914 with the completion of the Sustentation Fund, Shakespeare made a significant contribution to Baptist church polity, with the introduction of the accredited list, and the General Superintendents. John C. Carlile writes of this period: "The Secretary had set his heart upon having the country covered by Area Superintendents whose duties would correspond to that of Bishops in the State Church . . . The old guard was afraid. Could they have read all that was in Shakespeare's mind, they would have been more afraid". (*My Life's Little Day* p.162) Carlile himself understood it as an "attempt to combine Presbyterianism and Independency. He visualised a United Free Church of England, a counter part of the State Church" (p.162)

In 1916 Shakespeare was President of the National Free Church Council, and in his inaugural address made detailed proposals for an organic Free Church Union. As a result of this, the present doctrinal basis of the Free Church Federal Council was hammered out by 1919.

*The Churches at the Cross Roads*, Shakespeare's second book, appeared in 1918, and it was now quite clear what his intentions were. It is a call to the Free Churches and the State Church to consider seriously the possibilities of organic union. The motive behind his shaping of the Union is clear: "No one could ever regard me as an indifferent Baptist. I plan and toil for the Church of my own faith, that when the grand festival of Union comes she may be led to the altar in radiant beauty, a bride whom anyone may be proud to have." (p.82)

He discusses the many difficulties at great length. One of them is "the inherent difference between the Congregational and the Connexional order of government and administration" (p.154-6), and makes the point that the Methodist and Congregational order has close parallels to the newly instituted system of the Union.

In the closing chapters Shakespeare showed his true colours by proposing an organic union with the Anglicans, accepting that it must be on the "basis of episcopacy". (p.178, cf, p.166)

However sincere his motives, it was clear that the denomination was not behind him. At the 1919 Assembly T. R. Glover "spiked Shakespeare's guns" by having the following resolution adopted: "If the price of Ecclesiastical Re-Union be the acceptance of Episcopacy, in its historical sense or in some non-historical sense, with the implied necessity of regularizing our ministry by episcopal ordination or re-ordination, the Baptists of this country . . . elect

to stand by the Priesthood of all believers and God's right to call and consecrate whom He will and how He will." (H. G. Wood, *T. R. Glover*, p.153)

This effectively stopped any rash action on Shakespeare's part as a result of the Lambeth "Appeal to all Christian People" in 1920, but it did not prevent him from putting enthusiastic interpretation upon the reception given to the Archbishop of York when he addressed the Assembly about "The Appeal" in 1921. When Glover was proposed for the Vice-Presidency of the Union in 1923 Shakespeare suggested he should stand down, but "with characteristic independence he refused to do so. To Dr Shakespeare he replied, obviously enjoying the thrill of the contest: 'My hat is in the ring'" (H. Townsend, *Robert Wilson Black*, p.94). When he was elected, Glover interpreted it thus to a friend: "They all took the view it was a denominational pronouncement on the Lambeth issue between J.H.S. and me; also a reply to the Fundamentalists." (Wood, p.155)

Though Shakespeare lost the battle in the Assembly, he won the victory in the denomination. Even after 50 years the pattern he created is still with us, and it has enabled us to play our part in that ecumenical vision which he had, as members of the British Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. And if Free Church Unity is ever again a possibility, then we are organisationally capable of joining in Federal, if not organic, union with the other Free Churches.

Shakespeare shaped the Union's organisation with very definite ecumenical objectives in view. Once we realise that this was one man's vision, which the denomination specifically rejected, it is also obvious that we are at liberty to reject, if necessary, that pattern, and shape the Union to meet the needs of the Churches in the second half of the twentieth century.

## VI

The "voluntary" principle is a nineteenth century expediency which has drastically affected the doctrinal, financial, and organisational attitudes of the denomination today. The shadow of Victorian individualism still grips us, and has been crippling our understanding of the Church. The voluntary principle, as it found expression in the 19th century, is neither New Testament, nor historically Baptist: and the sooner we free ourselves from it, the quicker we shall be able to deal with our present denominational issues effectively.

First we must discover an adequate doctrinal basis for our associating together. This is a task we can no longer avoid, in the interests of our Churches, and their evangelistic and ecumenical tasks. We cannot exist as Churches unless we know what we believe and why. To this end our assembling together must be on a representative and deliberative basis, with inspiration as a by-

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At this point I could, I suppose, make use of a quotation or two. But I must resist the temptation to refer to the "Wee sleekit cowrin tim'rous beastie" of Burns, even though it was observed in church. To write for instance, of Strauss' "Die Fledermaus" even allowing for a very literal translation, would hardly be apt because the personified "fledermaus" was really a wolf in sheep's clothing!

What I really want to emphasise is the importance initially of slender lines of communication. Nearly twenty years ago, we began these Fraternal letters in the hope that they would prove a means of getting across to our friends in the Ministry. Since the tentative letters of 1947, I believe we have established strong ties between us.

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product of dealing with these real live issues. It will reveal our divisions, but pray God it will show us our common faith.

The next task is to work out an organisational expression of our convictions about the nature of God's Church, and its task in the world. Mission at home and abroad is the vital task of the Church. We must make this a reality so that we are a Baptist Church with a home and foreign evangelistic task which is supported by all the Churches committed to the doctrinal basis, without exception. This involves a merging of the Baptist Union and the BMS. For too long partisan and sectional interests on both sides have, for reasons of expediency, impeded this step. It is time our beliefs governed our organisation, and not our organisations our beliefs.

This uniting together in a common task at home and abroad will mean a realistic approach to Christian stewardship which will allow us to advance at every level. It means that those who support the doctrinal basis, and its organisational expression, will make this a reality by giving, not a "voluntary" basis, but as an expression of their fellowship together.

It will be tragic if out of a mistaken reverence for 19th century individualism and the voluntary principle as being either New Testament or historically Baptist, we once again refuse to face up to the doctrinal, organisational, and financial implications of associating together for the extension of Christ's kingdom at home and abroad.

ROGER HAYDEN

## THE SPIRITUAL AND THE SACRAMENTAL IN THE THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM

THE QUESTION has often been raised whether Paul was a sacramentarian in the sense that he regarded the sacraments, particularly baptism, as essential to salvation. That the question can be posed in this form shows how much our outlook upon this subject has been conditioned by the emphasis of centuries upon the sacramental or institutional side of Christianity, and the inevitable reaction to this which took place at the Reformation and resulted in the main stress being laid upon the more purely spiritual aspect of personal relationships with God understood as the essence of Christianity. An unfortunate, though inevitable, result of the cleavage between the Catholic and Reformed schools of theology was that a false antithesis was raised between the spiritual and sacramental, as if these two aspects of Christianity were mutually exclusive and could not be harmonised. The emphasis of the ancient Catholic Church tended to be one-sided, so that the belief became current that baptism was the chief means of making Christians. In the earlier period, when the majority of persons baptised were catechumens, this was perhaps no great evil; for these candidates,

examined for evidence of the regenerating activity of the Spirit in their lives, clearly fulfilled the New Testament requirements for baptism. But when baptism was given to infants it raised the problem of sacramentarianism in its grossest form. Infants were regenerate by virtue of the fact that they had been baptised into the Church or into Christ (which meant practically the same thing). The Holy Spirit was believed to work through baptism making those who were baptised children of God. Naturally, there was and is a very strong reaction to this view of baptism on the part of numerous people brought up in the Reformed tradition who would vehemently disavow any such belief in baptismal regeneration, not only as it was formulated in the ancient Church but as it is devotedly defended and re-interpreted by sections of the Church today.

The question as framed above is, however, a misleading one, as it assumes the existence in New Testament times of an attitude and outlook possible only as a result of centuries of reflection and controversy over the position and meaning of the sacraments in Christian thought and practice. In seeking to understand the thought of Paul and the other New Testament writers one must be careful not to anticipate problems that had not arisen in those times. There is not one shred of real evidence in the New Testament to support the contention that baptism was applied to infants; hence the problem of what happened in baptism or what it meant, did not apply in the case of infants; thus the grosser features associated with the baptism of infants could not possibly have arisen to complicate the doctrine of baptism. The only baptism the New Testament recognises is the baptism of responsible subjects, those who have been brought to repentance and faith and who have committed their lives to God through Jesus Christ, people in whom the Holy Spirit works a moral and spiritual renewal through the dynamic of the Gospel. There is not the faintest hope of understanding the New Testament doctrine of baptism if this crucial fact is not borne in mind.

The fact that in the early period baptism was administered immediately upon repentance and faith is highly significant for a proper understanding of the sacrament—see the account of the baptisms at Pentecost, the baptisms of Paul, the Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius and his friends, the Philippian jailor and his household. In the light of these and kindred passages, baptism must be seen as belonging essentially to the pattern of the conversion experience; this is especially important for our understanding of some New Testament references to the intimate connection between baptism and the new life in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is only when we lose sight of the New Testament pattern of personal commitment to Jesus Christ, expressed and confirmed in baptism, that insuperable difficulties are created. The baptism of infants creates such difficulties and leads to the massive assumptions of the Catholic doctrine of baptismal regeneration with its impossible and almost magical associations when applied to infants incapable

of personal response to the grace of God working through the sacrament. Regeneration in the Biblical sense is something essentially moral and spiritual, and how this can happen in the case of infants it is impossible to determine. It is true, personal response to the grace of God implied and enshrined in the New Testament doctrine may come later. But until that event takes place it is nonsense to speak of regeneration or spiritual renewal as having already been accomplished; that is, if we are to understand these terms in the vital, dynamic sense of the New Testament.

If these facts were borne in mind in the endeavour to understand the Johannine sacramental theology it would make a tremendous difference in the interpretation of John's theology of baptism. When John reports Jesus as saying, "... no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born from water and spirit," (John iii, 5) he is not disparaging faith conceived as commitment. In point of fact, by his constant and recurring emphasis upon the idea of being "born of the Spirit" or "born anew", he is stressing the deeply ethical aspect of the experience of becoming a Christian, an experience of new life mediated by and conditioned by the Holy Spirit. To say, as many do, that John is thinking here in terms common to the sacramental theology of the later church and affirming the dogma of baptismal regeneration as understood in its application to infants is to make nonsense of this Evangelist's consistent evangelical emphasis upon belief in Christ as the basis and condition of that life which is both abundant and everlasting. If it be kept in mind that the Evangelist is thinking primarily of those who have committed themselves to Jesus Christ as a result of the Spirit's work in their lives, and have expressed this personal response to grace in baptism, then there is no difficulty whatsoever in understanding his reference to being born of water and Spirit. It is the consistent emphasis of this writer that the Spirit plays the main part in bringing men to Christian commitment and the Spirit is uniformly conceived as the instrument of spiritual renewal. (cf. John i, 12-13; vi, 44; xvi, 8-11.) To base a theory of baptismal regeneration upon the solitary and rather vague reference in St. John which links the sacrament of baptism with the experience of new birth by the power of the Spirit requires a degree of shallow dogmatism which, surprisingly enough in the circumstances, has been readily forthcoming from many interpreters of the Johannine theology. At this point close links have been discovered with the sacramental theology common in the Graeco-Roman world of that time and expressed in the mystery religions, which were primarily religions in which the devotee sought and found mystical initiation into union and fellowship with God, chiefly through sacramental means. The consistent stress which this Evangelist places upon personal response and belief, and the constant emphasis laid upon the ethical nature of the Spirit's method of working in co-operation with the responsive subject, is a sufficient disclaimer that he taught an *ex opere operato* doctrine of the sacrament. In the conversation

with Nicodemus the whole emphasis is placed upon the conception of spiritual renewal, and that this renewal is appropriated through faith is the main theme of the succeeding verses. It is not necessary to seek Greek antecedents for the link between baptism and the conception of new birth. It was a common Rabbinical interpretation of the rite of baptism administered by the Jews to proselytes. It is also to be found in Paul's distinctive view of baptism as a dying to sin and self and the beginning of a new life in fellowship with the risen Christ. The important feature of John's doctrine is that the prominent constituent part of the total work of salvation is played by the Holy Spirit through His peculiar operations in the hearts and consciences and wills of men. This is the main affirmation of the Evangelist and it is expressed and confirmed in the baptism of the believer. Baptism following almost immediately upon faith served to express this truth more vividly.

It is extremely doubtful whether Paul ever made an explicit distinction between the church visible and invisible in the sense commonly given to these concepts, namely that there are those within the church visible who are only nominally Christian and must on that score be presumed to be excluded from the church invisible, the mystical body of Christ. It should not be forgotten that this distinction is a peculiar characteristic of Independent and Nonconformist ecclesiology and belongs almost exclusively to the codification of the Reformed theology as one of its more subtle points. The Reformers naturally were much disturbed and perplexed by the existence of a purely nominal Christianity which appeared to be a direct contradiction of all the New Testament stood for. The irony of the situation consists in this, that while they recognised the danger and evils of a situation like this and tried to combat it by all means in their power, they failed to perceive that by their determination to sustain the practice of infant baptism they were going a long way towards creating the nominal Christianity they dreaded so much. To say the least, it is very doubtful indeed whether this distinction operated in New Testament times. The fact cannot be gainsaid that in Paul's estimation of it, baptism was an event closely woven into the texture of the conversion experience, intimately connected with repentance and faith, and identified with commitment to Christ as its concrete expression. Baptism was into the body of Christ. "For indeed we were all brought into one body by baptism, in the one Spirit . . ." (1 Cor. xii, 13). Dr G. G. Findlay's comment goes to the heart of the matter and gives a fair interpretation of the apostle's meaning in the light of its immediate context: "At their baptism the Corinthian believers, differing in race and rank, were consciously made one; one Spirit flooded their souls with the love and joy of a common faith in Christ." We are baptized into union with Christ (Romans vi, 3.), or into the Church, which in New Testament terminology meant exactly the same thing, because the Church was viewed as the body of Christ. In those days there was no such phenomenon as an

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unbaptized believer; there were no unattached or free-lance Christians, all on confession of faith were baptized into the body of Christ, the Church. The New Testament writers understand baptism as being into Christian discipleship and Christian fellowship. These facts serve to stress the truth lying behind the traditional view of baptism as the rite of initiation into Church membership and demonstrate the Biblical basis of this view. It should be readily admitted that the passage quoted above takes a very serious and high view of baptism; this is as it should be, and is in accord with the general New Testament attitude to baptism. On the view of Paul the act of commitment to Christ, sealed in baptism, incorporates into the fellowship of believers, the Church of Jesus Christ, and it is not open to anyone to disparage the rite or to say that as a mere external rite it is relatively unimportant and may be dispensed with as the condition of entrance into the Church. Baptism and commitment were indissolubly joined in the cultus of the primitive Church; therefore, "what God hath joined, let not man put asunder". It is clear, moreover, in the light of Paul's own specific statement that Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the Gospel, that the response of faith to the good news of God, or to put it in a more emphatic manner, commitment to Christ was, in the apostle's opinion, the most important constituent part of the total experience of salvation.

Two practical consequences having a strong bearing upon Church polity follow on from these emphases of New Testament doctrine. First, it is important that the theory and practice of baptism be kept in close association with the conversion experience so that the sacrament of baptism is seen to be peculiarly appropriate to the beginning of the Christian life. Baptism should be administered as soon as it is practically possible after a person has been brought to Christian commitment and profession of faith. A certain amount of delay may inevitably be entailed while the candidate undergoes a course of necessary instruction in the rudiments of the Christian faith and is submitted to examination for evidence of the reality of his commitment to the Christian way; but baptism should not be deferred unduly, lest the meaning of the rite as an event closely associated with conversion or commitment be in danger of being obscured. All who register decisions for Jesus Christ should be instructed that baptism is the New Testament event in which faith is publicly confessed and the privileges and responsibilities of Church membership assumed. Second, further important considerations affecting the ecumenical debate follow the emphasis placed in the New Testament upon the doctrine of believer's baptism, the fundamental one being that Baptists should work strenuously and with intense conviction to secure the reformation of the Christian doctrine of baptism, so that infant baptism may be seen to be not only scripturally unsound, but theologically untenable. The most valuable contribution Baptists can make to the world-church is in the doctrine of baptism. Some Baptists feel that in the interests of

unity we should be prepared to tolerate the existence of infant baptism side by side with believer's baptism in a united church, while others feel equally strongly that this would be too high a price to pay and that in the quest for unity truth must not be sacrificed or our distinctive principles compromised in any way. One thing, however, is certain, Baptists must make their voice heard in the ecumenical debate so that a doctrine of baptism true to the spirit and practice of the New Testament church may be adopted in a new and vigorous and united church.

W. SCOTT

### PURITAN PERCEPTIONS

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, the American novelist who died on May 19th, 1864, wrote perceptively out of a Puritan background about sin and guilt, heredity and progress, puritanism and reform. With memorable and symbolic characters, he still illuminates our problems.

Typical among his short stories was "The Celestial Railroad", which was reprinted as a religious tract. It was an ironic version of "Pilgrim's Progress" in which Mr Smooth-it-away replaced Mr Greatheart, and Apollyon, breathing out smoke and flame, was engine-driver. The Slough of Despond was filled with books of morality and of sermons, together with "a few ingenious commentaries". The Hill Difficulty had been tunnelled, thus affording materials to fill up the Valley of Humiliation. The pilgrims, their burdens deposited in the baggage car, had no need of the cross.

For years Hawthorne concentrated on short stories, but made little money out of them. His first great novel, "The Scarlet Letter", was stimulated by sudden insecurity. At the turn of the political tide, he lost his post in the custom house at Salem. Afterwards he could say: "Thank God for my enemies".

"The Scarlet Letter", among the greatest American novels, showed how sin worked variously on three people. The story was worked out in a series of tableaux perfectly staged and counter-balanced to suggest profound depths for contemplation.

Hester Prynne had an illegitimate child and was condemned by the Puritan fathers to wear a scarlet A on her dress as an adulteress. By a measure of repentance, she found strength to make the letter signify her ability to serve.

Arthur Dimmesdale, an idolised Puritan minister, hid his guilt, which acted like a cancer. It brought a human quality to his preaching and a new intensity of spirit, but lacking open confession his repentance was useless.

Roger Chillingworth, the wronged husband, ferreted out his guilt and tortured him. From a useful man of medicine he was transfigured into a devil incarnate.

Hawthorne next tackled heredity in "The House of the Seven Gables". He feared that contemporary science might militate against the highest values, but he wrote this novel from the genetic point of view.

The Pyncheons' family house in its decay seemed alive with the curse against its founder and his progeny. Its portraits, furniture, and creaking beams pulsated with generations of guilt.

Hepzibah Pyncheon, the present tenant, was a withered aristocrat who doted on her brother Clifford, broken by false imprisonment. Fresh blood and hope came with Phoebe, a distant relative, who was "like a prayer, in the homeliest beauty of one's mother tongue". Over against them was the sanctimonious Judge Pyncheon, in whom Hawthorne caricatured the Rev. Charles Upham, his enemy in Salem. At every turn the mysteries of a guilty heredity were penetrated, and love's way of redemption explored.

Before he married, Hawthorne shared for six months in the Brook Farm experiment in community. Based on a simple life in which intellectuals and labourers were partners, it demonstrated a new pattern for society. Emerson was among the crowd of distinguished visitors interested in the project. With this experience in mind, Hawthorne wrote "The Blithedale Romance" in a similar setting.

The main character, Hollingsworth, was a penetrating study of a reformer. He did not really love men but causes, and was ultimately selfish. Hawthorne always hesitated about reformers. Their characters deteriorated, and they rarely achieved the good they sought. They sinned in trying to do God's work out of season.

Hawthorne entered the political field again, when his school friend, Franklin Pierce, was nominated for the Presidency. He wrote his campaign biography, and was rewarded at his election with the lucrative consulship at Liverpool. He followed this period of office with two years in Italy, before returning to England to write his last novel, "The Marble Faun".

Set in Italy, the story had dark Gothic qualities which accentuated the mystery of evil working through Miriam from her family. The corresponding character was Hilda, a Puritan too good to be true, and heartless in preserving her purity of conscience.

Donatello, a faun-like lover, hurled Miriam's persecutor from the Tarpeian Rock. They and their friends suffered the insidious effects, but with new depths of spiritual understanding. This was the most difficult and most venturesome of Hawthorne's books.

Hawthorne questioned whether there was a curse upon his family. His earliest American ancestor ordered the public whipping of a Quakeress, and his son was one of the Judges in the Salem witch trials. Hawthorne hated this cruel, persecuting aspect of Puritanism, which affected even their children's games. Yet he retained the Puritan's moral earnestness.

For him the unpardonable sin was lack of respect for the human soul, a cold philosophical curiosity which did not care. He por-

trayed it in Ethan Brand, who experimented with a woman's soul.

His own marriage was idyllic. "Had my wife been with me", he wrote during an absence from home, "I should have had a far deeper sense of beauty; for I should have looked through the medium of her spirit."

A striking figure of a man, he often showed an almost feminine tenderness to needy people. His practical care was seen when he worked at the custom house. In order that the wharf labourers should not lose time and pay, he was always at the wharf at the earliest possible hour, despite the weather.

For him "the grosser life is a dream, and the spiritual life a reality". Instead of the direct attack upon evil made by reformers, he felt that men who brought a heavenliness of spirit to the world did more good.

The craftsmanship of his writing, the comprehensiveness of his thinking, as well as his convinced Christian standpoint, make his writings worthy of closer study in this country. His greatest biographer has written: "The dangers and tensions of the modern atomic, anxious age seem reflected almost clairvoyantly in his symbolic depths".

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