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aim is to show that through prayer we come into contact with reality, that the instinctive needs of our souls, as they are expressed in genuine worship, form a criterion of truth in the religious sphere, and that supplication is the secret of victory. The discussion is maintained throughout on a high level; and though there may be little that is positively new, there is much that is freshly put and helpful. A notable feature of the book is the variety and aptness of the quotations with which the theme is illustrated.

*Beyond the Sunset*, by the Rev. H. B. Smith, D.D. (Revell; \$1.50), is 'just a sheaf of sermons tied together, picked up from the pulpit of Immanuel Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles.' Coming from such a city, they might be described, fitly enough, as a series of moving pictures, so full are they of illustration and anecdote. But they give evidence of wide reading and are packed with sound sense and Scriptural teaching. They deal with the subject of the Resurrection and the conditions of the future life. Perhaps in matters of detail the writer speaks with more assurance than the evidence warrants, but he has a real message of comfort and of hope.

The Student Christian Movement has published a short study of factory life in India. The title is *From Field to Factory*, and the author Miss Margaret Read (1s. 6d. net). The scope is not sufficient to make this more than an introductory study, but the picture drawn is an arresting one. It should help in the formation of a public conscience as to the conditions under which industrial work is carried on in India.

A small book has been written by Sir Charles Marston to put the Employers' case in Industry. Sir Charles Marston is the head of a well-known firm of Motor Cycle Manufacturers. He is a member of the Church of England—indeed, he is a member of the house of Laity—and it is partly because he feels that the Church of England has been, to some extent at least, identified with other views than those which he holds that he has written *The Christian Faith and Industry* (S.P.C.K.; 2s. 6d.). Some of his points are that modern industry is not an affair merely of capital and labour; industries must have heads and the Employer also is needed; human beings are not equal, but unequal, and so require unequal remuneration; that workers are wrong in assuming that a man helps his fellow-workers by a 'ca' canny' policy; that low costs and high wages are an outstanding feature of American industry and might be an outstanding feature of our industry here; that Trade Unions have not been entirely beneficial to the country.

Several chapters are devoted to a consideration of Christ's attitude to the industrial system prevalent in Palestine and to the attitude of the early Church. While there is very much in what Sir Charles Marston says, it would be well to read, along with this little book, some other treatment of the industrial problem, which would look for some method of dealing with extremes of poverty and riches, and of providing a fair though not necessarily an equal chance for all, and which would not lay down that the *only* way to regulate wages is the law of supply and demand. The Bishop of Manchester's volume of *Essays in Christian Politics and Kindred Subjects*, published this month by Messrs. Longmans, might be suggested.

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## Present-Day Faiths.

### The Faith of the Baptists.

BY PRINCIPAL H. WHEELER ROBINSON, M.A., D.D., REGENT'S PARK COLLEGE, LONDON.

THE living faith of a religious group is no more to be limited to the pattern of its beginnings or subsequent history than the meaning of a word to its etymology and usage in previous generations. The word 'Baptist' itself illustrates this, for it is the abbreviation of the opprobrious word 'Anabaptist,' which was repudiated by those in this country

who followed the New Testament ordinance of believers' baptism from 1612 onwards; but the word has now been accepted by Baptists and filled with an honourable meaning, as have been the equally opprobrious terms 'Methodist,' 'Quaker,' and even 'Christian.' The Baptists, like the 'Anabaptists' of the sixteenth century, were

characterized by the retention of a New Testament practice which the rest of the Church had abandoned in its original form and meaning; but it has yet to be proved that there was any historical continuity between Anabaptists and Baptists, whilst it is certain that the teaching of the first Baptists differed materially from that of the continental Anabaptists.

The first English Baptist was John Smyth (1569?–1612),<sup>1</sup> and the gradual development of his convictions is interesting on its own account, and significant of the future characteristics of the religious denomination of which he was the pioneer. In his first phase, that of a Puritan, we meet with him as a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, in the last decade of the sixteenth century, and subsequently (1600–1602) as a 'lecturer,' *i.e.* a chaplain, to the city of Lincoln. His aims were those of the Puritans in general, which means that, whilst remaining within the Anglican Church, he sought to bring its worship and constitution into fuller harmony with the principles of the Reformation. In his second phase, at Gainsborough, after long thought and discussion with his friends, he became a 'Separatist,' that is, one who had become convinced that the Puritan ideals could not be realized within the Anglican communion, and required the formation of a 'separate' community of the regenerate. He accordingly became the pastor of such a community, organized simply on what we should now call 'congregational' lines. With him was associated John Robinson, the leader of the closely linked group at Scrooby. The often quoted words of the latter, that 'the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy Word,' may be traced back to the influence of his friend and leader, John Smyth, who had based the Gainsborough Church on a covenant containing the words, 'to walk in all His (Christ's) ways made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, whatsoever it should cost them.' It should not be forgotten that the assertion of religious liberty, of the right to worship God and organize a Christian Church according to a conscientious interpretation of the New Testament, went hand in hand with the humble conviction of these men that they knew only in part and prophesied in part, and with their professed and real readiness to be led to fuller knowledge. John Smyth was acting in simple

obedience to his own Church covenant at Gainsborough when he advanced to his third phase in Amsterdam, whither he had gone with some of his followers to find the liberty which England refused him. This third phase was marked by the conviction that a true Church should be based, not on an Old Testament covenant, but on the New Testament rite of the baptism of believers, already conscious of a saving experience (1609). Thomas Helwys, a foremost friend and companion of Smyth, was led to the same conviction, and subsequently (1611–1612) returned to London to found the first Baptist Church in this country. Smyth remained in Amsterdam for the few months to his death in 1612, and his last book shows that he has penetrated beyond all that can be called sectarianism to that true Catholicism of spirit which justifies the high praise of an Anglican scholar—Mandell Creighton—'None of the English Separatists had a finer mind or a more beautiful soul.'

If we keep in mind these four phases—Puritanism, Separatism, the principle of believers' baptism, and 'Catholicism' in the sense of the universalism of Christian fellowship, we shall have a fair indication of the faith of Baptists to-day as reflected in their dominant interests and distinctive practice. The Churches which came into existence through Smyth and his followers were Arminian in their theology, and were known as 'General' Baptist Churches; other Baptist Churches arising similarly out of the Separatist movements (*e.g.* in the Jacob-Jessey Church at London, 1633–1640) were Calvinistic, and so came to be known as 'Particular' Baptists, since they confined the atoning work of Christ to the elect 'part' of mankind, instead of making it valid 'generally,' *i.e.* universally. The Particular Baptists eventually became the main body; their union with what remained of the evangelical General Baptists in 1891 showed that the division had ceased to have cogency for most Baptists. But whatever their theological colour, we may say of Baptists in general that they are Puritans who emphasize the necessity of conversion as the basis of the Church, that they are Separatists who adopt a congregational method of Church government, that they repudiate infant baptism as something not found in New Testament times, and alien to the demand of the New Testament for conscious faith (with baptism as its expression), and that the most enlightened amongst them, whatever their views on Church reunion, do recognize in practical ways their fellowship in and with the whole household of faith.

The Baptist insistence on conversion as essential

<sup>1</sup> His complete works, in two volumes, have been edited, with a biography, by Dr. W. T. Whitley, whose *History of British Baptists* should also be named here, as the best work on the subject.

to Church-membership (a principle found, in greater or less degree, in all the Free Churches of this country, though the baptism of infants tends, as Baptists think, to obscure it) may easily have an old-fashioned ring in modern ears. Yet contemporary study of the psychology of religion has served to bring us back to certain phenomena of religion as fundamental, and conversion, in its multitudinous varieties of form, is one of the foremost of these. The theological content, the emotional colouring, the chronological place of conversion, show the greatest variety; but both the psychological and the comparative study of religion reveal the supreme importance of this experience. If religion is to be vital, there must at some point be the conscious discovery of God by the individual consciousness, and a consequent change of attitude and life under the influence of this discovery; this is conversion, which may be sudden or gradual, intellectual or emotional, highly complex or astonishingly simple. If we make the frequent mistake of standardizing a particular type of conversion, we may easily regard it as unreal or imitative. If we forget that the ideal of a surrender to God is never completely realized, we may easily indulge in cheap cynicism about the 'converted,' and their failure to be very different from others. But the more scientific and philosophical our conception of conversion, the less we shall be inclined to make light of it as a phenomenon of religious experience. The ideal may be difficult to realize, but it is a high ideal, and not a narrow delusion. The apostle Paul lifted it above all provincialism by his striking parallel between the creative work of God in the world without, when He said, 'Let there be light,' and His creative work within the individual heart, for in Christ every man is a new creation (2 Co 5<sup>17</sup>): 'it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (*ib.* 4<sup>6</sup>). Let any one who wishes to see the implications of the experience stated comprehensively read Bushnell's sermon on 'Regeneration' in the volume called *The New Life*. This is the truth of Christian experience which Baptists desire to emphasize as being of cardinal importance, and their emphasis upon it has made them, for good and for evil, the individualists in ecclesiastical theory and practice which they certainly are.

It is plain, from the history of the Free Churches, that the principle of a regenerate Church does not decide what shall be the polity of such a Church, which might be Presbyterian, Methodist, or Con-

gregational. The third form is the simplest and loosest, and most natural to arise sporadically in the absence of central leadership. It was from the more 'Congregational' type of Puritan Separatism that Baptists emerged, of both the 'General' and the 'Particular' kind; it was natural, therefore, that they should retain the polity of local Churches, without any executive control from a central body. This method of Church organization has obvious defects; indeed, its defects are those most likely to be obvious, whilst its virtues are apt to be less in evidence. Any group of people, however incompetent, can form a Congregational or Baptist Church, and even the absence of official sanction from the union of recognized Churches does not prevent these from being all tarred with the same brush, whenever local scandal may arise, or personal animosities lead to a 'split.' On the other hand, there is great educative power in the democratic control of the affairs of a local Church, where they are taken seriously; there is something in the 'Church Meeting' of the Congregational type of polity, for which there is no equivalent in, say, Anglicanism. Whether this is, on the whole, and for present conditions, the best type of Church government, is open to debate. As a matter of fact, both Congregationalist and Baptist Churches have found it necessary, whilst retaining the ultimate independence of the local group, to take common action in matters of common interest to them respectively. There is, however, no surrender of executive power to any central body or authority; this is always retained by the local Church, in theory, if not in practice; common action is by common consent. This jealous guarding of local liberty is characteristic of the Churches formed from the Separatists. In one respect, Baptists can claim to be pioneers. They were the first to claim *full* religious liberty, a conception to which their fellow-Separatists had not yet attained. John Smyth held that the magistrate must confine himself to civil transgressions, and must not meddle with religion at all. Thomas Helwys printed in 1612 the first assertion of this doctrine in English, frankly telling the king of England that he had no authority over a man's religion, which lay between a man and his God; even heretics, Jews or Turks, were not to be persecuted. Roger Williams carried this principle of religious liberty to America, where it was carried into practice in Rhode Island, and finally was incorporated in the constitution of the United States. In this important and now accepted principle, Baptists have led the way for their fellow-Protestants, and it is not surprising

that a passion for liberty was and is a chief characteristic of the Baptists. They fought for it in Cromwell's army, in which they took a much more prominent place than has usually been recognized. They suffered severe persecution for it through the period of the Restoration. They continued to exist through the common religious lethargy of the earlier eighteenth century into the new life of its later decades, as legally 'tolerated' religious groups. They helped to secure, in the nineteenth century, the removal of most of the remaining disabilities. To-day, their sympathies with those who still suffer under such disabilities are quickly aroused. No one can live reflectively amongst Baptists without being conscious of this passion for liberty as a leading characteristic of their type of faith (most familiarly represented in the late John Clifford). It goes back to their Separatism and the training of the local Churches in self-government and vigorous individualism.

The third characteristic feature of the life and faith of the Baptists is their distinctive practice of believers' baptism. I have ventured elsewhere<sup>1</sup> to suggest that in this respect Baptists are a projecting 'shelf' on the rock of the Church because the other strata have 'weathered.' It is a mistaken criticism to blame Baptists for making too much of a particular ordinance; a man made conspicuous by the withdrawal of others ought hardly to be blamed for putting himself to the front! But it is a perfectly fair criticism to ask whether the baptism of believers, or especially the ancient mode of immersion, is so important a point as to justify continued separation from other evangelical Christians because of it. We cannot meet this by any literalistic appeal to the New Testament, for we have all agreed to drop some New Testament practices. The soundest justification, on modern lines, for the retention of believers' baptism is its intrinsic value and its actual service to religious experience. Here we must distinguish the *mode* from the *subject* of baptism—the way it is administered from the kind of person to whom it is administered. As regards the mode, it is simply foolish for outsiders to suggest, as they too often do, that Baptists are pedantically antiquarian, because they stand for more water rather than less. Such remarks ignore the real value of the mode of immersion as practised in the New Testament times. This is set out in Ro 6<sup>1-4</sup>, where the Apostle is gathering into the mystical unity of Christian experience three distinct sets of phenomena. The first in order of time is the death, burial, and resur-

rection of Jesus Christ—the historic facts which are the basis of the Christian faith. The second is the faith of the believer in this Lord, a faith which implies a conversion from the old life of moral darkness to the new life of light and liberty. The third is the actual going down of the believer into the water of baptism, and the actual rising from it, after his submersion. Paul teaches that this physical act is a kind of 'prophetic symbolism' which *does* something. It pledges the believer to that life of faith and moral regeneration which it dramatically sets forth; it identifies him with the historic Person in whom that regeneration is accomplished. The three are one in mystical unity, and it is the fitness of the symbolism of immersion which makes this fundamental unity apparent. Is it not worth while to go to some little trouble in order to proclaim such deep and permanent truths? Does not believers' baptism by immersion proclaim or 'preach' the Lord's death, like the Supper? As a matter of fact, the retention of a strongly evangelical faith amongst a community which has no common binding creed—a community, indeed, which tends to repudiate any emphasis on creeds at all—must be traced to the retention of believers' baptism itself, which is an acted creed, continually bringing before the eyes of Baptists the fundamentals of their faith, continually challenging a deeper interpretation of its own meaning, yet continually allowing for that liberty of interpretation within a common loyalty to Christ which the passion for liberty itself requires. The mode is thus of real value, because it so clearly suggests and re-enforces the truth about the subject—the person baptized. He must be a true subject, a true person, not a passive object, like the unconscious infant to which the rite is administered before personality can be said to be awakened at all. He must be a believing person, who has entered into such a relation of faith that the activities of the Holy Spirit can work through his consciousness. In this activity the rite of baptism itself can play an important part, for it is psychologically a most impressive rite. Baptists, at least, can put the greatest emphasis on the rite of baptism, without peril to an evangelical faith, for they unhesitatingly hold that it is no baptism at all unless there is evangelical faith, and that the baptism derives from the faith, and not the faith from the baptism. Yet given this true priority, the act of a quasi-physical union with the dying and rising Lord can become a means of grace of the most profound kind, and therefore a channel of the Holy Spirit. Baptists themselves have been too re-

<sup>1</sup> *The Life and Faith of the Baptists*, p. 78.

luctant to teach this positive side of the grace of God in baptism, owing to their reaction from 'sacramentarianism.' They have faithfully taught the relation of baptism to moral conversion and the open confession of religious faith. But the New Testament also connects baptism in water with a baptism of the Holy Spirit, *i.e.* with grace, and makes baptism the entrance into this new life of grace. I believe there is no greater contribution which Baptists could make to the Universal Church than to teach it to reunite faith and baptism, joined by God and sundered by man, to the incalculable loss of Christ's Church. But if they are to make this contribution, they must themselves learn the complementary truth about baptism which the rest of the Church has held, and Baptists have usually neglected—that baptism is the entrance into a new life of power, and of regenerated activity, through the Holy Spirit, and not simply the moral repudiation of an old life of weakness, joined to a profession of loyalty to Christ.

If Baptists have failed to realize the full catholicity of their testimony, they have not failed to make the practical application of their evangelical faith in personal evangelism and missionary service. It is their pride to have been in the forefront of modern missionary activity, through the genius and persistent patience of William Carey, who learnt from Andrew Fuller to throw off the shackles of the narrower Calvinism, and to acknowledge a duty to the whole world, too long neglected by the Church. From 1792, when the Baptist Missionary Society came into being, the missionary spirit has more and more permeated the Baptists, so that it may fairly be placed, along with the passion for liberty, as one of their marked characteristics. 'The Baptist tabernacle is not always a graceful structure, but at least we may say this of it, that the twin pillars at its door are evangelism and liberty.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 164.

It has mainly appealed to folk in the humbler walks of life, just because of the simplicity, and often the crudity, of its presentation of these two great interests of religion, which means, of the human heart. But its world-message is apparent in the fact that the communicant membership of Baptist Churches throughout the world is now about ten millions, a number exceeded only by the somewhat larger communicant membership of all types of Methodism.

It has not seemed necessary in this brief review of the faith of the Baptists to speak of those doctrines of the faith which they hold in common with other evangelical Churches; but their close, underlying attachment to Scripture ought to be mentioned, in connexion with the appeal to Scripture as the justification for believers' baptism. This habit of reference has been educative, and has doubtless helped to keep Baptists near to the Bible. If this has issued in transient waves of 'Fundamentalism,' and provides shelter for more 'cranks' than other denominations possess, yet the price may be worth paying, for the sake of the deeper quality of Scriptural experience, which seems to me to characterize the living faith of the denomination. As one who was trained in a Congregational college, has often preached in Congregational churches, and is engaged in teaching Congregational as well as Baptist students for the ministry, I should not hesitate to say that there is a real difference between Congregationalists and Baptists, who, in Church polity, have little or no difference. Whilst Congregationalism has more culture, the Baptists seem to me to have a closer grip on the realities of the evangelical experience. This may mean simply that they are more old-fashioned; but I think it means that the retention of believers' baptism has kept them closer to some permanent truths and abiding values of the common Christian faith.

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## Psalm lxxxi.: A Sidelight into the Religion of North Israel.

BY PROFESSOR ADAM C. WELCH, D.D., D.TH., NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

A DIFFICULTY which attends the study of the Psalter is the uncertainty of the date to which any psalm should be assigned. Hymns which were largely liturgical in their origin and use were naturally liable to change according to the developing

religious thought and the altered religious practice of the nation. And while it is difficult to prove in any case that an individual psalm has been retouched in order to adapt it for later use, it is often impossible to ignore that it may have been. Even