

The Wallis House, 1792.

Substance of an Address at Kettering, October 2, 1922.

THE Baptist Missionary Society can say now, with Jacob, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years." But she will by no means go on to lament that they have been few and evil; she may say, with the honest pride of Isaiah, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs from the Lord of hosts." If we cast our eyes back over the years preceding the birth of the Society, we may discern five lines along which Divine preparation was being made in Northamptonshire, so that Kettering should see the actual origin:— The General Baptist tradition of evangelizing; A group of men from other counties; The conversion of men from other communions; An Association that blended these elements; A family that offered its home for a birth-place.

I. THE GENERAL BAPTIST TRADITION OF EVANGELIZING. The first Baptists in those parts were General Baptists, who held that the grace of God was really meant for all men in general, not only for particular people. Thirty of their Churches published in 1651 a statement of their faith and practice, which has in it the seed of the seven resolutions at Kettering. For they declared "that God requireth or commandeth service of men, answerable to those gifts of grace which he of his good pleasure hath bestowed upon them: that it is the gracious pleasure of God, that Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection, should be made known unto men, and by men, as arguments, or motives, to allure or provoke them to live holy, and righteous in this present world."

Slight changes of name and of doctrine have too long obscured the fact that the principle of missions was asserted in 1651 by some of the very churches whose sons reasserted it in 1792, known to-day as Oakham, Morcott, Wymeswold, Mountsorrel, Whitwick, Friar Lane, Earl Shilton, Sutton in the Elms, Arnsby, Long Buckby, West Haddon. Those men practised what they asserted. We have the minutes of a meeting at Peterborough, when, after sending so far afield that they planted churches at Canterbury and Eythorn, they planned a long evangelistic tour in the midlands. And so there were soon to be found groups of these Baptists every few miles round Leicester,

meeting in farm-houses and cottages, edified by one another, and shepherded by a "Messenger" or General Superintendent living at Ravensthorpe. Orthodox and fervent as they always were, they yet had two weaknesses: they were slow to build meeting-houses, they were reluctant to train ministers. And so, one by one, their churches adopted the sterner creed of Calvin, disseminated from Northampton and Kettering, and passed over to a new fellowship which did value education, and into which they carried their steady custom of evangelizing. The process may be illustrated by the churches at Moulton and Long Buckby, with the allied families of Stanger and Staughton.

Moulton contained General Baptists from 1648 at least, and they swarmed in the hamlet west and north. Among them settled a Harringworth farmer, William Stanger, married to a daughter of John Staughton, at Blisworth: their fathers had both been in prison for their faith. He was soon chosen to superintend all the local work, and presently induced the Assembly of the whole denomination to meet regularly at Stony Stratford till 1732. Their son, Thomas, was called to be a preacher, and we hear of services at Ravenstone, East Haddon, Long Buckby, Walgrave, Scaldwell, Brickworth, Spratton, Isham and Harringworth. At Moulton itself he promoted a meeting-house in 1750, and while still supporting himself by his farm, was chosen pastor. When he died in 1768, no successor could be found, his co-pastor could no longer manage the out-stations at Long Buckby and Ravensthorpe, and the local Association disintegrated. His son John had been sent to a difficult post in Sevenoaks, and could not desert it, and an attempt he made to get kindred spirits to labour at Moulton proved abortive. The widow did her best to keep the place open, but on her death some radical change became necessary. Now John had made friends with Calvinists, and found that dead as London was, a better spirit had arisen in Olney and Kettering. So in 1785 he agreed to hand over the meeting-house, and he soon had the pleasure of joining with Ryland, Sutcliff, and Fuller in laying hands on William Carey as the first Particular Baptist pastor of the church at Moulton, which at once joined the Particular Baptist Association.

Glance down the other line. John Staughton of Blisworth had a son, Zacharias, who became elder of the General Baptist Church in Leicester that had signed the confession of 1651; he was reported to the Bishop in 1709 as teaching in Friar Lane. His son William married Ann Sutton in 1742, and settled at Long Buckby, where he became one of the first trustees of a meeting-house. His death in 1780 proved a turning-point for this church also, for his son, Sutton Staughton, had left the village for Coventry, the rest of the family had gone also, and

ther was no one left to continue the work under General Baptist auspices. The influence of the elder Ryland and the elder Hall told here also; though the church did not join the Association, Rippon reckoned it as Particular in 1792, and it is well known that Sutton Staughton's brilliant son, William, was one of the original subscribers to the Particular Baptist Missionary Society, showing thus the persistence of the General Baptist custom of evangelizing. That custom, be it marked, had been shown on wider fields than England. In 1714 two Messengers had been sent to Virginia, in 1739 to Carolina, and again in 1758 and in 1772. It was General Baptists who first sent evangelists overseas, when Whitefield lay in his cradle, and Wesley was at Charterhouse.

Yet these churches and these families illustrate not merely the value of the evangelistic tradition, but also the weakness of a mere evangelism divorced from education. Our Lord's charge to the apostles included not only the proclamation of the gospel to all men, but also the impartation to them of a training in all His ways. Because the General Baptists forgot this, their work always tended to limp. They won disciples, but did not teach them, and therefore they often lost them. Young Staughton consecrated his gifts to preaching, but unlike young Stanger, he went to college, and thereby trained his gifts so that while Stanger lived out a faithful but obscure life in a village, Staughton became a revered and trusted leader throughout the United States. We have here a warning against the shallow evangelism, at home and abroad, which has nothing but "the simple gospel," and does not follow that up with hard thought, systematic doctrine, organised action.

II. A GROUP OF MEN FROM OTHER COUNTIES.

A district led by men who were born and bred there may easily cease to advance. Not every tree is self-fertilizing, and the best results are when the bees visit flower after flower. God had guided hither eight or ten men, bringing the traditions of other parts.

Joshua Burton had brought to Foxton something learned from Abraham Booth at Sutton-in-Ashfield. From the delightful village of Bourton-on-the-water, on the eastern slope of the Cotswolds, had come first the Rylands to organize the Baptist forces of the country, and more lately Alexander Payne, transplanting the experience of Stow-on-the-wold and Bewdley to enrich Walgrave. The coming of John Goodrich from Preston shows that Stony Stratford had before 1790 passed over to the Particulars. And Lancashire had sent also John Law, from Rossendale, who after serving Waingate, Shifnal, Welshpool, had administered the tonic of Calvinism to Weston-by-Weedon.

Barnoldswick, in Yorkshire, had contributed Abraham Greenwood that Oakham might fructify with pollen gathered in three counties. His fellow-student, John Sutcliff, who had tramped from Hebden Bridge to improve himself at Bristol, was settled for his life work at Olney. And at Nottingham, again of General Baptist origin, was to be found Richard Hopper, who had founded a church at Bishop Burton in the East Riding.

Take one case for an example. Robert Hall was born in Northumberland, where he obtained sound doctrinal training in a Presbyterian Church. When he was about twenty, he foregathered with some students for the ministry, and hearing that his brother Christopher was entangled with a family of Baptists in the next county, he and his friends went to dispute with the Baptist minister. In two nights' debate they were silenced, and Robert set himself to study the question. Naturally he became convinced that believers ought to be baptized, and like an honest lad he went to the minister to confess his faith. He was soon taken into the church at Hamsterley, and called out to the ministry. Now a Lutterworth man had been in the army that marched north in 1745, and had met Christopher Hall ministering at Great Broughton in Cumberland. This led to an invitation going from Arnesby first to Christopher, then to Robert. The latter came south and settled in June, 1753, to exercise a leadership like that of Moses for nearly forty years, and to catch a Pisgah view of the land to which he had brought them.

For the leadership fell entirely to new-comers. Just as those who had dwelt all their life in the pleasant land of Egypt needed to be braced up by one who had been trained in Midian, so it was the Rylands, Sutcliff, Hall, who summoned the Midlands to new undertakings. And the case of Hall brings us to notice the third factor at work here, that there were men trained in other schools of thought, able to contribute fresh ideas and energy.

III. THE CONVERSION OF MEN FROM OTHER COMMUNIONS. A still more illustrious example is that of Andrew Fuller. A Pedobaptist church at Isleham had been guided by the eccentric David Culey, and after his death there arose out of it a separate church, meeting three miles away in a barn at Soham. The Fullers had lived in both places, and had heard great variety of doctrine before they settled down to the hyper-Calvinist preaching of John Eve, the first Baptist pastor. A scandal among the members led to the minister departing, and to Andrew questioning the scheme that seemed to defend bad conduct. In the end he was called to the pastorate, and was ordained by Hall, through whom the church joined the Northamptonshire Association. And finding what he felt to be "False Calvinism" rampant in the district, spread abroad from Rothwell, by 1780,

he wrote a pamphlet on the true. He thought over it, prayed over it, and after five years he published it with the title, "The Gospel worthy of all acceptance; or, the obligations of men fully to credit and cordially to approve whatever God makes known. Wherein is considered, the nature of faith in Christ, and the duty of those where the gospel comes, in that matter." And so there emerged a great theologian, and were it not for his experience in other circles, with other doctrines, which urged him to think, it is improbable that any such exposition of Calvinism would have preserved the churches from putrifying.

One of the deacons at Soham who signed his letter of dismission to Kettering, John West, succeeded him as pastor, and then came on to shepherd the flock at Carlton. Reynold Hogg brought other strains of thought. He was a Londoner trained in Yorkshire, where he had served three Pedobaptist churches. Thence he went to Oulton, came to Oundle, spent a year or two at Stourport, and returned to the county at the urgent request of the Baptists in Thrapston, to whom he ministered from 1790 to 1808.

A fifth case was even more remarkable. William Carey was son of the parish clerk and schoolmaster at Paulerspury. When apprenticed to a shoemaker at Hackleton he had a dissenter as fellow learner, and by him was led to join in establishing a Congregational church in the village. Then there fell into his hands "Help to Zion's Travellers," by Hall of Arnesby; as a result he made a second change, being baptized by the younger Ryland in 1778. Three years later the Association set him to preach regularly at Earl's Barton. Yet it was 1785 before he applied to join a Baptist Church, and Olney pondered over the request before granting it.

Now men who have enough independence of thought to examine the systems in which they have been bred, and enough force of character to adopt a better, have usually enough to make their new friends terribly uncomfortable by their energy. Just as in the last century lethargic Baptists in London were rudely shaken by Baptist Noel and Spurgeon, so the impetus that brought these five men from other denominations and other counties could not be absorbed and deadened; it proved strong enough to carry on the neighbouring churches to new positions.

IV. THE ASSOCIATION THAT BLENDED THESE ELEMENTS. "The Annual Association of the Particular Baptist Ministers and Churches in the Adjacent Counties formed on the Principles of Christianity" was founded at Kettering on 17 October, 1764. When the new society met next Whit-week, it was attended by twelve ministers from the shires of Cambridge, Bedford, Leicester, and Northampton. Obscure as were most of

them, there were a few who were not content with vague phrases about "the principles of Christianity." They were led by the grace of God to see that these principles were active, and they took up the very work which had been so long maintained by the expiring General Baptist Association. Within fifteen years they had an Association Fund to promote village preaching, to foster new cases, to send ministers on visits to feeble churches: its first treasurer was Beeby Wallis, and under his care arose the churches at Burton-on-Trent, Derby, Braybrooke. Its vision ranged across the Atlantic: while our kinsmen across the sea were bringing to a successful issue the struggle for freedom, this Association was reading and reprinting the works of Jonathan Edwards. Thus in 1780 his life of David Brainerd was recommended to the Association, and those who read it would see that the "nature of true religion" was to hold aloft the light of truth. And within ten years a call was sent out to rejoice in the great increase of Baptists in Virginia, where we recall the first church had been organized by missionaries from the General Baptists.

But the Association made one striking innovation in the Circular Letter. The plan in vogue elsewhere, hallowed by a century's usage, was that every church sent a letter to the association, and its representative read it aloud. To this extent some rural associations still keep up the old custom, and it is pleasant to hear a lady deacon or a lay-preacher giving an account of the year's work in some village, so that every church at first hand knows the doings of its sisters. But in former days there was nothing doing, and the churches had to pad their letters with lamentations as to the woeful state of Zion; the public reading of a dozen letters of this type must have reduced any meeting to a state of depression. In this mood it told off one of its members to retire and draft a reply, into which he naturally concentrated the essence of gloom. After revision, this was dictated, and every church had a copy taken down by its own representative and signed by the moderator. When this was read at the next church meeting it must have yet further lowered the spirits of its hearers.

Now the people who planned the Northants Association had a better vision. They had learned to take the initiative, and not merely answer the moves made by others. They decided that the Association should send an original message to the churches, and by no means echo their wails. They told off a man, a year in advance, to prepare that message against their meeting; and they told him what they wanted to hear about. The result was the production of a thoughtful essay, which even in 1766 they saw was worth printing and circulating widely. A course of sound theology was thus built up and imparted. Quite early in the series we find Robert Hall of Arnesby on "The Nature of

the Glorious Gospel of the Grace of God"; John Collett Ryland on the "Assistance of God to True Christians"; Martin on Election; Woodman on Original Sin; Gill of St. Albans on Free Justification. When in 1785, the year Carey joined the church at Olney, the younger Ryland presided over the meetings at Oakham, the circular letter was by Fuller, "An Enquiry into the Causes of Declension in Religion, with the Means of Revival." Note the practical aim; it was trite to lament declension, what was needed was to diagnose the cause, and to prescribe the remedy.

Yet not all the Associated churches were effectively leavened. There were more than a score of them in 1792, and though it had been agreed at Nottingham that definite action was to be taken in the autumn, they were not all represented at Kettering. And there was a second sifting, for the Association as such did nothing. It was a meeting of individuals, not of church representatives, that gathered in the Beeby Wallis house. This had two advantages; on the one hand it took it out of the power of the luke-warm to chill the enthusiasm of the others; on the other hand it opened the door to sympathizers from beyond the Association. And so we find persons, not delegates of the churches, who drew up the resolutions and framed the Society. They did not make the first subscription. Thomas Potts had found £10 to publish Carey's pamphlet, and Carey had issued it with the notice that all profits would go to the projected mission. But these men ably supported those who moved and seconded.

Examine the churches which heard the call to act, and consider their response. There were at least fourteen which belonged to the Association, but failed to signalize themselves that day. Some were far away, in Derby, Lincs., and Notts. Arnesby had just lost its pastor, but it showed how it had drunk of his spirit by calling one of the first subscribers. Nottingham, by some mischance, sent no one into the back parlour, but the first printed list of subscriptions shows it the most liberal on the Association, the second shows it best in the kingdom; verily the sermon had done its work, and the church had attempted great things for God. Yet when every excuse has been imagined, the melancholy fact remains that by the close of the century there were still nine churches which showed themselves completely without interest in the movement which had been before their Association so long. Of these nine, seven have since found the grace of repentance, and last year subscribed between them £342 7s. 6d. Two others remain, evincing only the grace of consistency, and subscribing nothing: the one has 21 members; the other 11. Two mottoes may be offered them for choice: "I will come unto thee, and remove thy candlestick out of its place;

unless thou repent"; "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto Me."

Turn to the happier group—the churches that did heed. Well have they maintained the start they took: Clipston, Kettering, Northampton, Olney, Wellingborough, have representatives on the field to-day, four of them having been on the first printed subscription list. Great towns such as Birmingham, Northampton, Kettering, have never lacked those who tell their glories; let us rather take for an example a country town, more typical of Baptists then. Oakham had a church of General Baptist ancestry, reconstructed in 1770, which joined the Association three years later; its membership varied from sixty to ninety, and it was plucky enough to entertain the churches thrice in fifteen years. At this time it was led by Abraham Greenwood, disciple and son-in-law of Alverey Jackson, the champion in Yorkshire of those views as to the duty of faith, which Fuller had advocated in these parts. Greenwood had been the first pastor at Rochdale, from Dudley, had founded a new church at Coseley, and was now in the seventh year of his pastorate at Oakham. That he was one of the original thirteen subscribers is well known; but many a man regards money as a substitute for personal service. What did he do in his church?

His deacon at Oakham was a saddler, named Gray, who had a motherless lad of sixteen, with no interest in religion. Three years later Greenwood was baptizing a new disciple, and the witness thus borne was brought home to the heart of the young man. William Gray was himself baptized, and when his pastor went on to Barrow and Killingholme, he was encouraged to be an occasional preacher. When he was formally called out to the ministry, he at once showed the influence of his pastor. Greenwood had had the best education available, first from an Independent, then in Fawcett's academy; Gray reversed the order, and went first to Bristol, then to Edinburgh University. Greenwood had gained experience in three counties; Gray served an apprenticeship under Abraham Booth in London, imbibed a love for hard work under Steadman at Plymouth, preaching 229 sermons in one year, then removed to the Oxfordshire village of Chipping Norton. Here he supported himself by a boarding school, and gave his time richly to denominational work. He served well the local church, and soon became secretary of the Oxford Association, then founded a county home mission, thus transplanting the traditions of Northamptonshire. But, above all, he carried the missionary tradition everywhere.

As soon as he settled in London, the long list of Greenwood subscriptions from Yorkshire may be balanced by "Mr. William Gray, White Chapel, one guinea." In the year he went to Plymouth there were two contributors there; two years later

there were sixty-three, besides many who gave less than the recorded 10s. 6d. When he came to Oxfordshire, the whole county gave seven and a half guineas; in his first year Chipping Norton alone gave twenty. Even better than his canvassing was his teaching, and soon he was training men for service. Thus there were two ministers, Mursell and Philippo, who sealed their friendship by naming their sons James Philippo Mursell and James Mursell Philippo. Both came to Gray for training. The latter went in 1823 to Jamaica for an honoured career of fifty-six years, which began with the emancipation of the slaves, their settlement, their education; the former followed his teacher to the Midlands. For Gray won recognition in two ways: when the B.M.S. Committee was widened, and met in London, he was asked to join, and served it for twenty years. When Blundell, son of one of the first subscribers, resigned from College Lane, that church called Gray, and most fitly invited Heighton of Roade, another founder, to take a leading part at the settlement. He soon gave a flavour to his ministry by having one of his pupils, James Flood, designated to Jamaica at Northampton. Then came another, James Philippo Mursell, to keep up at Leicester the splendid succession of Carey, Ryland, Hall the younger. And one of Mursell's latest acts of friendship was to come and designate Capern, of Long Buckby, for work in the Bahamas.

Sum up the apostolic succession, in the old and true sense of that phrase, revealed in these men. From Fawcett's church at Hebden Bridge sprang Greenwood. From Greenwood's church at Oakham came Gray. From Gray's church at Chipping Norton went Philippo. Gray's son at Stepney trained J. H. Anderson, who laboured in India for thirty-six years, and William Bentley, whose eldest son pioneered on the Congo. Such is but one line illustrating what Paul enjoined on Timothy: "The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

V. A FAMILY THAT OFFERED ITS HOME. Within the nursery of the B.M.S., the Northamptonshire Association, we narrow our gaze to the cradle, the home of the Wallis family.

The thirteen men who were in earnest had no vestry at their disposal, the public business of the day was ended. But a home was thrown open to them, as it had often been opened to the Lord's servants engaged on His work.

A genial hearth, a hospitable board,
And a refined rusticity, belong
To the neat mansion.

Consider the record of its owners. William Wallis had once

been an elder of the Calvinistic Independent Church in Kettering. In 1689 there was no Calvinistic Baptist Church in the whole county, though a member of Arnesby lived in this town. In the course of a dispute originating at the church of Rothwell, Wallis avowed himself Baptist; so great may be the faithful influence of one obscure member. Wallis and half a dozen friends received an honourable dismission, and founded a tiny Baptist church, remaining on good terms with Rothwell and their former church, and all the high Calvinists. In 1713 Thomas Wallis succeeded his father as pastor. Within three years he baptized John Gill, son of his deacon, who presently helped him in his ministry; then John Brine, who also was called out. The church was strengthened by uniting with a second secession from the Independents, soon after the death of Thomas Wallis, but his son William did not succeed him. Probably he was a high Calvinist; and as the united church adopted open communion, perhaps he felt out of sympathy. Six years after his death, his son Beeby was baptized by John Brown, the pastor, and became deacon in 1768. Next year he sold, very cheap, a house, land for burial, and a warehouse, which was soon converted into a meeting-house and equipped with the old pews and fittings. Such a tower of strength did Beeby Wallis become, that he was chosen treasurer of the Association fund, and learned to support work on a wider scale than in a town. When a vacancy occurred in the pastorate, he was called upon to act for a time, and the time stretched out to five years. He was steadily trying to persuade the church at Soham to yield up Andrew Fuller; one call was refused, another given, but only after a year's probation did Beeby Wallis sit again under a regular pastor. For ten years they laboured together, and when Beeby Wallis died, a few weeks too soon to hear Carey at Nottingham, his pastor paid him a rich tribute, as wise in counsel, active in execution, sincere, decided, humble, and godly. His widow Martha kept up the family reputation, and by the modest hospitality of that day, has immortalized his name. His successor in the diaconate, Joseph Timms, showed himself imbued with his spirit, for he came into the back parlour and pledged a guinea.

We owe much to this family! To its founder we owe the greatest Particular Baptist church in the county, a mother of churches, a mother of ministers. In the next generation we owe two men who served two of the important London churches. In the third we owe a home for this church, which still worships on the site of a warehouse used by the silent William Wallis. In the fourth generation, which especially interests us to-day, we owe a county home mission, and a pastor extricated from a fenland church, afforded an opportunity to teach and to write till the whole denomination was leavened. Such was the family that had

woven this cradle for the B.M.S. As the infant has grown, it has never forgotten its nursery, the Association, or its cradle, this house.

Fifty years after Beeby Wallis had been laid to rest, men gathered from the East Indies and the West to his home, and met there Reynold Hogg, first treasurer, sole survivor of the guests of Martha Wallis on 2 October. In 1792 this place saw the birth of the third Foreign Missionary Society of England, the fourth of all Protestant Christendom: by 1842 the Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, on both sides of the Atlantic, had organized, and there were six great continental societies. In 1792 the promises in the back parlour were twelve and a half guineas; in 1842 the cash gifts on the lawn were £1,300. Nor had the family spirit died out: Martha had left a large bequest to the society, W. T. Beeby presided over the great meeting in 1842 at Calcutta four days before he joined the family on high, and five Wallises at home sent liberal gifts to the Jubilee Fund. See what God had wrought in the half century! In Baptist dayschools there were ten thousand children of India, Africa, and the Caribbean; there were 35,000 adults in Baptist churches; 44 versions of scripture were called into existence. In 1792 a back parlour in Kettering held all who cared about the matter; in 1842 4,000 Jamaicans sat down to the Lord's Supper in a vast booth at a new Kettering; and in the same year those islanders established their own Union, needing no more missionaries.

It would be delightful to tell of the gatherings in 1892, with its reminiscent touches, as when Mrs. S. Wallis, single-handed, subscribed the historic twelve and a half guineas, and in a younger generation R. E. Wallis collected 5s. But these need no recalling to many—they are within living memory. Rather look back again to the birthday in 1792. The people who met at Kettering were all Particular Baptists, though many of them hailed from churches which had once been General. There is yet a third important group of Baptists in these parts, originating at Barton-in-the-Beans. What was their part or lot in this matter.

Eleven years earlier, Stanger of Moulton had asked the Leicestershire Conference to receive him into their New Connexion; and they decided that the proposal be "taken into consideration"! They failed to see their opportunity, and Moulton was lost to them. We sometimes have the chance of learning from our mistakes, and doing better next time. In 1792 a letter came to that same Conference from Moses Liele of Jamaica, asking for help. They considered the appeal at Diseworth in December, when they may conceivably have heard what had been decided at Kettering in October. They reprinted the letter, and circulated it with a recommendation, so that many churches

actually subscribed. The New Connexion did expend money on foreign mission work in the West Indies before the Particular Baptists had started Thomas and Carey to the East Indies. But now see how we reap what we have sown. At the end of 1794 the committee of the B.M.S. published the first of the Periodical Accounts. Also they told Pearce that he could do better service among the home churches than by the side of Carey. So he was advertised to preach for the mission at Loughborough in April. A week earlier the New Connexion men met at Friar Lane, which ancient church had thrown in its lot with them. Benjamin Pollard had already been writing about the Indian Mission, and he was now appointed to meet Pearce at Loughborough and enquire whether subscriptions from their churches would be accepted, whether they might be allowed to send one minister of their own. But even Samuel Pearce could not rise to this; the enquiries were shelved, as Stanger's had been by them, and no answer was ever returned. On Christmas day he preached at Harvey Lane; it is to be feared that visitors and contributions from Friar Lane were not welcomed, even on the day of goodwill among men.

Similar overtures were repulsed more than once; but when, in 1821, the New Connexion ordained its first missionary, William Ward the Particular Baptist came and spoke at that very Loughborough where Pearce had evaded the overtures. Bampton and Peggs sailed with him, and sought counsel at Serampore; when they went to Orissa, it was on the advice of the older missionaries. Men at home, immeshed by inherited prejudices and misunderstandings, may be silent in face of offers of help, though they be seraphic Pearces; men face to face with the realities of heathendom learn more of the spirit of Christ. It was the missionary enthusiasm that brought these two bodies nearer. When the Jubilee of 1842 came, the best account of the mission and of the celebrations was issued by Winks of Leicester, the New Connexion minister and publisher. Soon afterwards the autobiography of Amos Sutton, who had sent to Carey a revision of his Oriya gospels to be printed at Serampore, was issued with a preface by William Hopkins Pearce, who thus nobly atoned for his father's silence. Before the centenary, all feeling of aloofness was gone. It was one of the joys of 1892 that the two missions were actually united. It was no longer a portent that Baynes and Kerry should visit the New Connexion Conference at Pooree; even at home, Friar Lane and Harvey Lane no longer scowled at one another like Judah and Ephraim: the two sticks were joined, Beauty was added to Bands.

Since then another generation has arisen, which calls itself merely Baptist, and has so well learned the lesson of unity that it hardly knows what was meant by the phrases General Baptists, Particular Baptists, New Connexion. It is in the active service of

Christ that divisions seem wicked, and disappear, that men unbuild the old to rebuild on a vaster scale.

John G. Paton tells how, on a South Sea island where timber was scarce, a house was needed for the worship of God, and it needed to be both wide and long. The coral walls arose, and three white principals spanned them. But one bay needed providing for, and the resources of the island seemed exhausted. In the morning the puzzled architect was aroused by tramping and singing: a procession was bearing aloft a smoke-begrimed beam, the chief dancing along in front, a very David. He had uncovered his own house and brought its mighty timber to be hallowed by completing the roof of God's house.

The roof at Kettering was hallowed by sheltering a god-fearing family, and gathering many sacred memories. There has now been a rebuilding, and Wallis House will in future shelter many families that come home for rest. They will dwell in a fitting atmosphere, may gain inspiration from the past, may add year by year to its rich associations. At Olney Cowper had sung:

Behold, at Thy commanding word

We stretch the curtain and the cord;

and had given Carey the idea of his great sermon. That couplet might well be blazoned over a doorway in the re-modelled house, and another from the same hymn will assuredly express the prayers of all who enter:

Dear Shepherd of Thy chosen few,

Thy former mercies here renew.

W. T. WHITLEY.

The Future of our Ministry.

THE Baptist denomination deserves good ministers. It has not always shown a high sense of responsibility either for their equipment or their maintenance in freedom from material cares. During these last years it has made its confession in a handsome way. In return our congregations have a right to expect from its ministry a greater efficiency. If this is not reached, the Sustentation Fund may prove a curse and not a blessing. It may add another to the list of churches in which the ministry becomes a vested interest and a traffic in spiritual things. The danger should be avoided by the pressure of an opinion that demands the highest standard of moral and intellectual power.