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The Baptist Missionary Society
**HOW IT WORKS
AND WHY**

By

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LONDON :
THE CAREY PRESS
19, FURNIVAL STREET

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FOREWARD

THE substance of what is here offered to the reader has appeared in a series of articles in the *Missionary Herald*. Its purpose is to provide a reasoned answer to friendly inquiry and a defence against injurious doubts concerning the methods of a pioneer Society of the modern missionary enterprise.

It embodies the result of a lifelong and intimate observation of Christian Evangelism overseas and its administration at home.

The Christian Church has been entrusted with a message of Eternal truth, and world conditions are changing with amazing rapidity. Faithfully to hold the original Divine Commission, and readily to adapt every means of fulfilling it in the world of to-day, are our high purpose and our challenging problem.

I

THE OBJECT OF MISSIONS

THE old constitution of the Baptist Missionary Society contains this brief statement of its purpose :

“ The object of this Society is the diffusion of the knowledge of the religion of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world beyond the British Isles.”

If that were the text of a sermon there is enough in it to enable any practised preacher to expound fully the wide scope, the comprehensive methods and the central message of foreign missions as carried on by British Baptists.

Aims and Methods must be closely related. If we are rightly to understand what missionary societies are doing and why they carry on their various activities, we must have clear ideas about the central missionary purpose, and we must know what are the conditions under which they work. There has lately been a good deal of discussion about missionary methods. This is to be welcomed if it be sincere and constructive.

There has never been a time when the missionary enterprise has been free from criticism, sometimes friendly, sometimes entirely hostile. About the latter kind missionaries do not need to be greatly distressed. It is part of the opposition to the Cross of Christ. The people who “ do not believe

in Missions " do not really believe in Jesus as the Saviour of the world, and they have not accepted His authority. But there have always been critics of missionaries within the Church, from Apostolic days to the present. St. Paul took much pains to answer his critics, and we owe some of our most precious Scriptures to that fact. He would allow none to rob him of his claim to Divine ordination, nor would he yield to any challenge of his loyalty to the Gospel of Christ.

When we take up the study of the missionary methods of the early Church, we find much that is perplexing and difficult about the spread of the faith. It is very hard to account for the successes and the failures of the Christian Church and its ministry in one place or another, both within the pages of the New Testament and since the canon was closed. Most of the Churches mentioned in the Scriptures, although founded by inspired apostles, were afterwards wiped out by heresy or persecution. Very little sound argument as to what is permanently successful, or otherwise, in missionary effort, can therefore be built upon the actual methods employed in the foundation and development of those New Testament Churches. The only Church now existing that claims to direct descent from a New Testament namesake is Rome, and probably no reader of these words would admit that the methods that have gone to the building up of the Church of Rome are consistent with evangelical teaching.

It is therefore necessary to admit frankly, at the outset, that there is no exclusive uniform plan laid down for us by which, as servants of Jesus Christ, we can preach the Gospel, disciple the nations, or,

in the language of the B.M.S. Constitution, "diffuse the knowledge of the religion of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world."

It is only a man who is made bold by inexperience who would generalise about the missionary methods which are required in places so different as Central Europe, Latin America, the South Seas, Egypt, Mid-Africa, the City of Peking, the Shensi villages, Delhi and the Lushai Hills.

Of course it is insisted that the essential aim remains one, and the essential message is unchangeable—which is Jesus Christ and His Salvation. It is important to keep clearly before our minds what the one Aim includes. It is to win disciples for Jesus everywhere—to gain acceptance for His Gospel and adhesion to it, to teach men to observe His commands, to confess Him as Lord, to join the fellowship of believers in Him, to enter His Church.

Evangelisation certainly means all that. It fails unless it leads to the building up of the Church disciplined in His Gospel and obeying His Word. "The diffusion of the religion of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world" must therefore aim at the growth among all the peoples of the earth of Christian Churches—all parts of the one indivisible spiritual Church. The members of that Church must themselves maintain and carry forward the witness of the everlasting Gospel—relying on the Lord's promise: "I am with you always even to the end of the age."

But our Lord has prepared us to expect unequal progress in the spread of truth by what He has taught us about the growth of the seed, and the measure of the crop. He Himself knew what

rejection and misunderstanding were among His hearers.

The Baptist Missionary Society, like its sister Societies, is doing many things to diffuse the knowledge of the religion of Jesus Christ. What methods it employs ; why those methods have been adopted ; and what results are following its work, are to be briefly discussed in the following pages. Upon this point, however, the emphasis is laid here—that every method in every different place and condition is used only and wholly with the one evangelistic purpose—that of exalting the Lord Jesus Christ as the Divine Redeemer, and leading men, women and children to His feet.

II

THE GIFT OF TONGUES AND THE MAKING OF BOOKS

OF all the methods required for the effective evangelisation of the world, the most fundamentally necessary is to give each nation and tribe the Gospel of Christ *in its own language*.

It is astonishing how little this is recognised, and how little all that is involved in it is understood to-day. Some of the easy critics of Missionary Societies and their operations seem to ignore the foundations on which all the structure of religious knowledge and privilege have been built up.

Nations cannot be evangelised either in Ecclesiastical Latin or in Imperial English if these languages are not the languages of their own hearths and homes. A few scholars here and there may receive the new birth of the soul through the medium of spoken or written words in an acquired foreign language, but to preach the gospel to every creature requires the gift of many tongues. That is why the Church was granted the wonderful beginning at Pentecost.

The Baptist Missionary Society is rich in the tradition of sound language study and the persistent use of the common every-day speech of the people among whom its missionaries live. They use the common talk of the market-place and of the women and children. They fearlessly translate the Bible into any and every language, whether that language has ever been written before or not. William

Carey is still our unsurpassed, our unapproached, example. He had his critics, whom he ignored or defied. His amazing achievements in personal study of Oriental languages, in attracting to Serampore pundits from all parts of India, and with them and through them producing new Scripture versions at the Serampore Mission Press, are still a wonder to his successors. Carey was a pioneer, and if he were among us to-day he would be the first to keep us reminded of the urgent needs of the present in capturing for Christ every form of human speech, in getting to know as perfectly as possible the ways in which men and women think and express their thoughts, in order to interpret to them the things of Christ, and to publish widely the Word of Life for all to read. The Apostle Paul was equipped for his great missionary service by his ability to use the languages of Hebrew, Latin and Greek, which he devoted many years of his life to acquire. All his writings have come down to us in Greek. And to emulate his apostolic service means for the modern missionary, without any miraculous endowment, no less a devotion of mind and spirit.

The B.M.S. is still at work making new translations of the Bible into Indian languages. Lushai has the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament ; Chakma has the New Testament ; the Kond Hills language, Kui, has parts of the New Testament only. A new and simple colloquial version of the New Testament has just been published in Oriya. These are all the work of our own missionaries, associated, of course, with native scholars. The invaluable aid of the Bible Society in the printing and publishing of these versions is gratefully acknowledged.

The Bible Society equally acknowledges that it can only produce and put into printed, saleable form the work the missionaries have done. In the greater languages of India, spoken by many millions of people over large areas, the B.M.S. shares the same Bible versions with other Missions and Churches, through the Bible Society.

What has been said of India, our first and oldest field, is still more true of Africa. For there our missionaries are working among tribes who speak many different languages, and who had no books at all before the missionaries went to them.

People who speak dubiously about the methods of Missionary Societies, "establishing settlements" instead of making continual progress from place to place preaching the gospel and leaving converts to maintain their independent witness, cannot have taken in all the facts of the situation in a non-Christian land like Africa, for instance. How long a time would these critics allow for a native Church to be established in a barbarous nation, with the Bible in its own language, and native teachers and preachers to lead the converts in the study and practice of its teaching?

We have honoured men still living who were present with Thomas Lewis at the first baptism and first communion of San Salvador, the Mother Church of Congo. They have recently had the joy of producing the first Ki Kongo Bible, of which Dr. Holman Bentley laid such good foundations. It is a wonderful accomplishment for fifty years.

The beloved blind brother, Nlemvo, who assisted Bentley, still lives, but though the membership of the Kongo-speaking Church has multiplied to many

thousands, the work of interpretation and teaching and preparation of leaders has hardly yet got beyond its first stages. In the Congo Mission the B.M.S. is working in seventeen spoken languages, and of these only six possess, thus far, the New Testament, and in the rest only small portions have yet been done.

People sometimes quite mistakenly speak of "Evangelistic" work as though it were something separate from other methods of missionary service. Was not William Tyndale, the martyr-translator of the English Bible, an Evangelist? Were William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward evangelists, and Yates, Wenger and Rouse, of Bengal; Parsons and Bate, of North India; Bailey and Pike, of Orissa; Daniels and Carter, of Ceylon; Alfred Saker, of Cameroons; Holman Bentley, Walter Stapleton, and Thomas Lewis, of Congo—were they evangelists? Yet all of them spent in the aggregate many years of their missionary career in school teaching, learning from their scholars, poring over manuscripts, or toiling in a printing office. For it is through great travail that missionaries learn how to "translate," that is, to carry over from one set of word-forms into other forms of expression the thoughts they are entrusted to convey.

There are missionaries and there are Societies that live on the labours of others in translation and literature. There are people who make large claims for themselves who reap their harvests out of other people's sowing, without acknowledgment. There were such in St. Paul's day. But their work, whatever it is, cannot be called Pure Evangelism.

The B.M.S. record is one we can be thankful for. We have been pioneers, and are still pioneering.

We have tried to build our work upon secure foundations. If we may "foolishly boast," in the Apostle's language, we may claim that in proportion to our numbers and expenditure we have done conspicuously more in Bible Translation and in the making, printing, and circulation of Christian books in native languages than any other Missionary Society. Within our own organisation we have some of the best equipped and most successful Mission Presses and publishing houses to be found in non-Christian lands. And in co-operative enterprises, such as the Christian Literature Society of China, the B.M.S. has borne a very considerable share of the expenditure and supply of qualified workers.

A little cultivated imagination is sufficient to realise the need of evangelising through all kinds of Christian literature. In order that we may hand over the sacred task to our fellow Christians of the new churches as they grow in knowledge and experience, it is our duty and privilege to give them as much as we can of the riches of the Truth in their own language. And that can be done with more accuracy and permanency when it is committed to the printed page, to be read again and again, than when it is only remembered from the spoken word of the teacher.

In all the long story of the past it has been shown that Truth has been preserved and spread by means of sacred writings. That is the reason for giving a large place in Modern Missions to Literature.

III

EVANGELISM AND EDUCATION

WITHOUT controversy it may be claimed for the B.M.S. that all the methods it employs, under all the varying conditions of different lands, are directed to the one purpose of evangelism, and are only adopted because they are necessary to that end.

It is important in any work so great and so widely distributed that a proper proportion and balance should be preserved among all its parts. One of the most competent observers of the B.M.S. operations in many lands—not himself a member of our own Society or of the Baptist denomination—has remarked upon what he called the “symmetry” with which we were organised.

In the previous chapter it was shown how fundamental and necessary is the thorough acquisition and use of the vernacular speech for direct preaching to all classes, the translation of the Scriptures, and the supply of Christian literature for every language.

The next step is Education, for if the Bible is to be of use, and the Faith that has been received is to be preserved in purity, people must be able to read and interpret the Bible for themselves.

It is one of the glories of Evangelical Christianity throughout the world that wherever there is a group

of believers, a school is established. Christian converts from all the non-Christian communities are to be found in our Missions even in adult age, striving to master the mysteries of reading so that they may use their New Testament and hymn-book. In the Congo it has now become one of the ordinary conditions of acceptance for baptism that candidates should be able to read the New Testament. And it is true in general of those who have accepted Christ in non-Christian lands that they are eager to have their children educated—*their girls as well as their boys*. Mission districts, therefore, include schools as part of their equipment for the declared purpose of giving a Christian education to the families of the native Church, and winning the young people for Christ. These schools range from the most elementary village day schools to the more efficient boarding schools under the personal supervision and care of resident missionaries. It is from these schools that we expect to get, and year by year are actually getting, a regular stream of candidates for baptism and Church membership. And not only so, but through this school training there is produced the best material for Christian leadership both for the villages and the towns. The most suitable and promising young people are encouraged to go on with their studies to become teachers or preachers, or to take their place in the nursing and medical services of their country. Whatever can be said to justify the consecration by foreign missionaries of their educational and professional equipment to the work of Christ, can be said with equal or greater force in support of the training of native Christian workers for a like service.

It is difficult to over-state the importance of mission schools and colleges in the building up of the Church and Christian community in the midst of the non-Christian world. In India and in China, with all their age-long civilisation and pride of learning, the great mass of more than eighty-five per cent. of the population are quite illiterate—unable to read or write in their own language. The standard of literacy of the Christians in these lands, compared with the Hindus, Mohammedans or Buddhists, is notably higher, especially in respect to the girls and women, and this notwithstanding the fact that the Christian population is being continually increased by conversion from among the depressed and uneducated classes.

In Central Africa there is practically no education for the people apart from what the Christian Missions provide.

It should not need to be said that the missionary, while earnestly desiring that all the pupils of his schools shall become true Christians, does not desire or expect that they will all enter the service of the Missionary Society, or that they will become paid workers of the Church. Such workers are greatly needed, of course, and it is encouraging to see that they are forthcoming in greater numbers, and that the indigenous Churches are trying to take advantage of their service. But even more necessary for the strength of the Church than salaried preachers and teachers are the consecrated and intelligent Christian lay-workers who, while earning their living in their business or profession, will serve the Christian Church as responsible officers and honorary workers. And it is in the mission

schools and colleges that this is being made possible. The process may be slow, but if we are patient the result is sure.

Those who are maintaining the administration of the affairs of missionary societies are sometimes greatly surprised by the criticisms that are offered; and one of the most curious and needless which was recently expressed is this—that we are spending too large a part of our resources, in money and in the strength of our missionaries, upon Education, which, it is said, is the work of the Government and should be left to Government.

As to leaving the Christian education of converts and their families to Government, that is impossible. Even in India, where the conditions are more favourable than in any other part of the non-Christian world, the Government does not and cannot undertake any religious education. If there were no mission schools or colleges, our Indian Christian youth would be educated under Hindu or Mohammedan influences, or altogether in secularism. What the Government in India and in Ceylon does is to offer equal encouragement and financial aid to all religious bodies, Hindu, Moslem or Christian, to carry on their own schools. What would have happened in China if the education of native Christians had been left to the Government? In Belgian and Portuguese Congo the only chance of any kind of education for natives, apart from Protestant missions, would be in the limited provision made by the Roman Catholic Church. As a means for the spread of the Gospel, for the Christian education of converts and their families which otherwise they could not obtain, and for the priceless opportunity

it affords of influencing non-Christian scholars, the Mission School is one of the most effective agencies missions can employ.

But what is the proportion in which the B.M.S. is maintaining schools in comparison with other branches of its missionary operations ?

Let readers take particular note of the fact that the amount is so small. With the ideal of " symmetry " before us, it might be, and in some directions it certainly ought to be, increased. A careful analysis recently made of the expenditure of the B.M.S. on its educational work yields this result—that considerably less than one-fifth of the annual outlay of the Society is spent upon it. This includes the full allowances of the thirty-two men and thirty-seven women missionaries who are specially entrusted with the care of the schools and colleges, although every such missionary engages in preaching and many other kinds of evangelistic service.

We have more European women missionaries devoting themselves to the work of girls' schools than we have men missionaries in our boys' schools, because Native men teachers are obtainable in larger numbers than women, and also because the education of girls in non-Christian lands is more dependent on boarding schools, requiring resident missionary teachers.

The funds required for School and College maintenance have not to be supplied by the Missionary Society only, because fees and grants are earned. But out of a total expenditure last year of over £200,000, the B.M.S. outlay on its schools and colleges did not exceed £35,000.

Much more could be done profitably if the money

and the workers were available. More personal contact with pupils could be made, and better results could be secured, if more educational missionaries were able to devote themselves to this most attractive and fruitful field.

Let us remember the first injunction of our Great Commission to go *into* all the world. That means more than a wide extension of travel to many lands. William Carey's book, *Enquiry*, showed something of the broad fields to which his eager spirit urged the Christian Church to send its messengers in 1792. But William Carey's greatness as a pioneer evangelist was shown in his determination not only to get to India but to enter into the heart and mind of India's people. His linguistic and literary work was only matched by his educational vision and the heroic plans he and his colleagues made for winning the soul of India for Christ through making disciples. His schools and his great College were the natural and logical completion of all his missionary plans. Building up the Christian Church by winning and training individual native witnesses to the truth and grace of Christ—that is the highest and most potent force we can exercise.

Some of the greatest missionaries the world has known have spent their lives within the comparatively narrow limits of a school compound, not going widely, but going deeply, into the life of the people for whose redemption they prayed and toiled, by teaching its youth and winning for Christ the kingdom of their hearts.

If men or women endowed with the wealth of money want to perpetuate their service for Christ after their death, they could not do it more profitably

for the world than by supplying the means by which some of these missionary schools and colleges could be sustained in efficiency. It is a nobler memorial to be associated with a Christian teacher's chair than to have one's praises carved in marble. No legacies in the world are richer than the influences of a teacher upon the lives of those whom he wins to be disciples of Christ.

IV WELFARE AND HEALING

THE Gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ was translated for us in all that He was and did on earth. When He commissioned His disciples He told them to go and do things for people, as well as say things to them. And the reward of His approval is promised to those who serve Him, "inasmuch" as they do unto the least of His brethren all the works of mercy for which hunger and thirst and sickness and bondage are calling.

The spiritual want and pain of men are as real as their bodily suffering, and to the whole of man's nature Christ is Saviour. All through the centuries, and wherever He has been received and obeyed, He has been healing the world's diseases and redeeming the world's life from destruction. It is the bare truth that Christian faith and practice have brought, and are bringing, more abundant life to individuals and to nations. There is, we know too well, a vast amount of suffering and need in the most enlightened and progressive lands, but it does not go unheeded or without attempt to relieve and remove it. It is in the non-Christian lands that there remains the deepest and most pathetic need for the ministry of mercy. Wherever the veil is lifted we see with horror the unrelieved misery

of multitudes of men and women and little children. The causes are many and mingled—sheer ignorance, foolish and superstitious ideas, selfishness, carelessness and cruelty.

It is impossible to be Christ's messengers to these lands without attempting to do in His name something that we believe He Himself would do.

FAMINE RELIEF.

That is the reason why in the wide fields of the Baptist Missionary Society we have almost every kind of philanthropy that can be named. The missionaries in one whole area of our China Mission have in these last years been devoting themselves and sacrificing their health to relieving the victims of famine, and fighting against the pestilence that stalks through a famished land. They could not merely say, "Be ye warmed and filled." Although they knew that the famine was chiefly due, not to natural causes, but to the unnatural folly of civil war and the greed of man, they could not look upon the hungry multitudes without feeling the compassion of Christ for them. And because, in all their famine relief work, they have specially striven to keep alive many hundreds of children, there will remain on their hands, after the famine has passed, as in former times, a large number of orphans to be cared for somehow until they grow up.

MEDICAL MISSIONS.

The physical sufferings of untold millions of non-Christian children and adults, who are both ignorant of the remedy and unable to obtain skilled treatment

in their pain, are in themselves an eloquent plea for the missionary devotion of the Christian Church, for apart from the Christian Church these sufferings cannot be met. Who else cares enough ?

Christian missionary hospitals and dispensaries are always crowded with patients, even when other means of treatment are offered to them, because mercy and sympathy are mingled with the medicine that the servants of Christ dispense. There is real evangelism in such ministry. It is not the whole of our mission, as it was not the whole of our Lord's ; but it is a sacred part of it.

It is costly, of course. Medical missionaries and trained nurses give their services with the same disregard of selfish interest as all the rest of their fellow workers. But the equipment of a medical mission is expensive, and no department of our work is so difficult to keep at an adequate standard.

CHILD WELFARE.

We must also include, with this missionary method, not only the ministry which is technically known as medical work, carried on by professionally qualified workers, but also every variety of welfare service, rendered by all our missionaries in some degree.

The remarkable story of the progress of the Gospel among the barbarous people of the Lushai Hills began years ago with the attempt of two young bachelor missionaries to make an effective protest against the sacrifice of an infant at its mother's heathen funeral. They showed the astonished people that it was possible for the motherless child to be nursed and fed with cow's milk out of a bottle.

Their little protégé became the first really convincing argument in favour of their message.

There are evil spirits of prejudice and fear and superstition that Christ, through His disciples, is every day casting out by means of the mothers' class, and the village school, and the little textbooks on life, and health, and first-aid, and home nursing. It was a medical man who, in the great Missionary Conference on African Missions held at Le Zoute some years ago, declared that the tropical diseases which have been decimating the population of the Dark Continent can only be successfully dealt with through the mission schools, by patient and persistent teaching of pure and healthy living.

SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT.

When the Christian converts among the Lushais had become numerous enough in a certain village they determined to abandon their old site, with its insanitary huts, and build a new village. Before they began they held a council, and laid down a set of town-planning rules. The first of these was that the roof of every dwelling must be high enough for the tallest man among them to stand upright under it—a very drastic reform. The second was a still more wonderful innovation, that there must be a sleeping apartment with privacy for the women of the home. The third rule provided for the keeping of a clear roadway between the rows of houses, and the fourth that this road should be swept clear of refuse by the village householders in turn. All of these rules had a very real moral significance, and were expressions of their new religious experience as Christian converts.

The vast majority of the non-Christians of the world to-day are living in villages. The minority which is found amid the squalor of oriental cities, or in the artificial and demoralising conditions of modern industrial settlements, have a special claim upon our sympathy. But the 85 or 90 per cent. of the African, Indian and Chinese peasants, in their poverty and illiteracy and disease, cannot be helped and uplifted without the Gospel that saves the whole nature of man, mind and body, habits and character.

RURAL NEEDS.

The population of the Congo is miserably small for the area it occupies. It is starving to death for want of good food and enough of it. The people have no cattle, or proper cultivation of the soil. They cannot put up a victorious fight against the diseases that ravage the country.

The ghastly truth about native village life in the East cannot be told or written so that it will be believed by those who have never seen it for themselves. The pollution of the unprotected drinking supply, the exposed refuse, the vermin and flies, the mangy dogs, the neglected children, the mendicant lepers, the infected sick folk, the lack of nursing and the misguided treatment of child wives and mothers—these are but suggestions of the awful conditions, always intensified by the hopeless poverty of the great majority. Nothing but the moral dynamic uplift of the Gospel can effectively deal with so vast a need, and only men and women whose hearts are filled and whose devotion is sustained by the love of the Saviour can apply the force of that Gospel.

Such work needs no apology, and should require no appeal to secure its enthusiastic and generous support. Women who are visiting zenanas, and are taking to the homes of non-Christian lands love and sympathy and practical help, should be upheld by the prayers of the Church continually, that they may keep their tenderness and the freshness of their faith. Nurses and physicians who toil on through all seasons among their patients, trying to bring healing to souls and bodies at the same time, may easily be overborne by the sheer weight of their task, unless they are reinforced by secret supplies of grace. Those who care for lepers, and those who fight against hardened customs and prejudice, need alike the courage and the love of Christ.

And all these servants of Christ have a right to call upon us for help and comradeship. We who live in comfort and health and have innumerable privileges must at the last come ourselves to the test of the Master's "Inasmuch."

V

THE PREPARATION OF MISSIONARIES

NOTHING is so important in a Missionary Society as the missionary. Everything may be said to depend on the kind of person sent and the kind of training with which the missionary sets out.

There is no committee at the Mission House which is found by its members to be more absorbing or exacting in its demands than the Candidate Board, and the greatest care is taken every year in electing by ballot from the General Committee those who are to carry the responsibility.

What has been written in previous pages has shown that there is a very wide range of service to be undertaken by our missionaries in carrying out our Lord's Great Commission among non-Christians in the world to-day. The desire springs up in the hearts of people of many different kinds to offer themselves for this service. All the history of the past shows that God works through many agencies for the fulfilment of His purpose. It is therefore the task of the Missionary Society to try to discover those who are really the people of God's choice—the missionaries with the true Message—and to help them to get the equipment they need in order that they may deliver that message worthily.

Most of those who go abroad as missionaries have received and responded to the Call in their childhood or early youth. The B.M.S. Secretaries are always glad to be in correspondence with such and to advise them about their first steps in preparation before entering college. The Home Preparation Union has a large enrolment of 420 students (of whom 120 belong to the Lay Preachers' Section) who, through the post, are following courses of reading under the guidance of sympathetic and experienced tutors.

THE CANDIDATE BOARD.

In the case of women candidates, the procedure has usually been that they have been medically examined and interviewed by the Candidate Board prior to their college training, so that only those who are provisionally accepted on the ground of physical and general fitness are called upon to leave home or business to enter upon their prescribed course of one, two, or three years' study.

The procedure in the case of men candidates has hitherto been different, but it is now desired that, as far as possible, they also shall appear before the Candidate Board at an early stage in their preparation so that the question of health and general fitness may be considered and a suitable direction may be given to their line of studies.

During the last ten years two hundred and thirty-six candidates were approved for foreign service in connection with the B.M.S. Of these, eighty-eight were men and one hundred and forty-eight were women. Of the men fifty-seven had been through theological colleges,

nineteen were qualified doctors, and twelve were trained teachers, or had other special qualifications.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES.

There are several advantages in the training of missionaries for service overseas in the same colleges as Pastors for the Home Church. The normal standard of missionary training, under present-day conditions, needs to be no whit less thorough than that required for ministry in our own country. Success on the mission field is largely dependent upon aptitude in language study and an attitude of appreciation and sympathy towards the culture of other races. The presentation of the essential message of the Gospel of Christ in full knowledge of the non-Christian religious ideas held by so large a portion of the human race and the rapidly increasing secularism of the world, is becoming a common concern of the Church in all lands. This has, of course, a double implication for the shaping of the theological curriculum of our colleges. It can be easily understood that the associations formed in student days between pastors and missionaries are a strong and valuable link of interest in their years of active service. And in the event of missionary students being prevented from going overseas, or of missionaries being obliged to return from abroad, they ought to be qualified to serve the Church in the homeland.

The separate and specialised training of men for foreign missionary service ought perhaps to a larger extent to be undertaken in additional and supplementary courses following the ordinary theological

education, but not as a substitute for the full training now provided in theological colleges.

THE TRAINING OF WOMEN.

The women candidates of the last ten years included thirteen qualified doctors and thirty-seven hospital nurses. There were thirty-six who had qualified as teachers. Most of our women candidates have been trained in missionary colleges. Carey Hall, Selly Oak, has provided for the largest number. The Women's Missionary College, Edinburgh, and Havelock Hall, London, have together provided for the remainder.

SPECIALISED TRAINING.

Whenever a special course is prescribed for a missionary candidate or young missionary on furlough, facilities have to be found for that course. Educational courses are obtainable at Selly Oak, the London Day Training College, or Goldsmith's College. Courses in foreign languages and related subjects have been secured at the School of Oriental Studies. Livingstone College, Leyton, gives most valuable medical instruction and practical guidance to missionaries whose work is in areas where professional medical advice is not available and responsibility has to be borne by "amateurs" for maintaining the health of themselves, their families and colleagues under tropical conditions, and opportunities have to be used for ministering in the name of Christ to the needs of sick and suffering people otherwise uncared for. The medical courses provided by the Belgian Colonial Government in Brussels have been generously opened to Protestant

missionaries going to the Belgian Colony. Congo missionaries, both men and women, are now being sent to Brussels for several months to take advantage of this course, to study and use the French language, and to make friendly contacts with the Belgian people. In a similar manner, though without the same medical facilities, the missionaries designated for work in Portuguese Congo are sent for periods of residence and study to Lisbon or Coimbra, in Portugal. Moreover, by the courtesy of the Phelps Stokes Trustees in America, it has been made possible for a few of our B.M.S. missionaries to visit the famous Negro Educational Institutions in the Southern States for the purpose of study and observation of methods.

FINANCIAL AID.

It must have occurred to the reader that all these means of general and special training can be secured only if financial help can be supplied to the candidates. Happily there are a number of scholarship funds, by means of which B.M.S. approved candidates can be assisted. It would be for the greatly increased efficiency of their work as Messengers of Christ and as helpers of the young growing churches in non-Christian lands if we had more such scholarships for candidates and furlough missionaries.

THE SUPPLY OF CANDIDATES.

How necessary is the constant supply of new workers as fully-equipped as possible will be seen from the fact that after receiving 236 candidates in ten years the Candidate Board have not increased

the staff of the B.M.S. beyond the total of the year 1920. The proportions of men and women have changed, but the total figure is just one less. There are more women and more doctors and nurses, but there are many less men engaged in the general work. This is due to the heavy losses in our staff during the ten years by death and retirement, and the too slow rate of reinforcement. These losses have fallen most heavily upon India and China.

THE SUPREME EQUIPMENT.

The B.M.S. regards the preparation of the missionary as exceedingly important. But much more important still are the spiritual gifts, the response to the Divine Call, and true consecration of life.

As a man ought to have the passion for soul-winning and the gift of preaching before he enters a theological college, so a man must be really a missionary in heart and character before he can be specifically trained for his career. Many disappointments have to be met. The Christian Church should be always watchful for the signs of the Divine vocation among its young men and women, and always ready to encourage and help those whom God is choosing for His service in fields both near and far.

VI

BAPTISTS AND CHURCH UNION

ON the first page of the first book of the Records of the B.M.S., in the handwriting of Andrew Fuller, the foundation principles of our Society are set forth, and among them is the following significant paragraph :

“ As in the present divided state of Christendom it seems that each denomination, by exerting itself separately, is most likely to accomplish the great ends of a Mission, it is agreed that this Society be called the Particular Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the heathen.”

That was written in October, 1792. The present state of Christendom is still divided. The Society of Carey and Fuller is still a “ Baptist ” Society. Those who support it know it to be so, and every missionary who joins it and remains in its ranks is bound to honour its fundamental principles as an Evangelical Free Church and Baptist organisation.

THE B.M.S. A FREE CHURCH SOCIETY.

It seems necessary constantly to make it clear that the B.M.S. represents and serves churches that are free, and also that in relation to the indigenous churches on the mission field it remains free and encourages freedom. Nobody can be forced to support the B.M.S. There are some Baptist churches in this country who to their own detriment, as we

judge, and certainly to our loss, divide and distribute their missionary support among other and non-Baptist societies. They thus exercise their unquestioned liberty. But while Baptists find it necessary to maintain their separate existence, the Baptist Missionary Society is their special and appropriate agency for the fulfilment of their missionary obligation in the non-Christian lands overseas. Baptist missionaries rejoice in fraternal friendship and co-operation in many ways with other Missions both denominational and undenominational. But we remain confident and unashamed Baptists and Free Churchmen.

INDIGENOUS CHURCHES ARE FREE.

The B.M.S. does not assume any ecclesiastical authority. It is an evangelising society, supported and governed by the churches who contribute to it. Its missionaries are not priests or bishops. They are the beloved and trusted messengers of Baptist churches in this country, sent out and supported in other lands to propagate the Christian faith, and to help in the development of Christian churches, in the same spirit of evangelical freedom in which the B.M.S. itself lives and moves. No church in India, China, or Africa which has come into existence as the result of the labours of the B.M.S. missionaries is compelled to be just like the Baptist Church at Broadmead, Bristol, or Bloomsbury, London. They *could*, if their members so determined, adopt some other form of worship and church government, or even of doctrine. The B.M.S. and its missionaries cannot command their obedience. They can only teach them the truth as they know it, and counsel

them according to their understanding of God's will. And the indigenous churches must also respect the character of the B.M.S., which is Baptist and Free.

THE RELATION OF MISSION AND CHURCH.

Even valuable watchwords may be misused, and the excellent doctrine that the Church on the Mission field must be "Centric," and that missionary operations within its area must all be related to the Church, has been sometimes developed into the quite impossible demand that the Missionary Society must be merged into the organisation of the Native Church, whatever that may happen to be—at any time or place. Many of our readers are aware that the Baptist churches of our China Mission field are organised in a connexional system somewhat Presbyterian and somewhat Methodist. Recently the Shantung Baptist Union decided to accept the invitation to join the Church of Christ in China. This is a combination of Congregationalists and Presbyterians. It has a Chinese name which declares its Christian character without any "foreign" sounding label. The Shantung Baptists joined on the assurance that they could still retain their Baptist principles and practices, and their local autonomy. It would probably be more correct to call it a federation than a Union, but whatever it is, and wherever it may lead, the issues involved must be faced by the Chinese. The B.M.S. must both keep itself free and give freedom to the disciples it has gathered.

If the Church on the mission field demands that the Foreign Missionary Society shall now be merged

into its organisations, and that the Society's administration, its finances, and its missionaries must be controlled by the Church, it is asking for something to which it has no right, and the granting of which would only injure both parties.

CHURCH UNION MOVEMENTS.

The movements of the present time are towards new combinations of Churches, and it is expected by many that within the next few years not only in South India, but in North India and in China, we shall see great achievements in Church Union. The attitude of Baptists towards all these movements is necessarily cautious and detached. Our essential principle of personal discipleship and confession of faith in baptism as the basis of Church membership, and our denial of all sacerdotal pretensions in the ministry, make it as hard for us to approve some of the schemes of organic union that have been put forward as for Quakers and Salvationists. In our view, we and every other believer belong to the only Church that really exists when we and they belong to Christ Himself. There is no special sanctity or merit in any particular name or form of government. The world will be no more convinced of the saving power of our Lord when conventions and assemblies have passed union resolutions, and Acts of Parliament have authorised new Church Union Trusts, than it is now. There will still remain the same necessity for all the varied forms of Christian witness and service to meet all the manifold conditions of human life and character.

It is easy to conceive that the reduction in the number of denominations would be no disadvantage.

It is also easy to imagine that when some big Church combinations are completed the spirit of enthusiasm in the Church will break out again, and new sects will spring up, by the will of God, as aforetime.

A foreign missionary sometimes longs to see something among his converts in the way of revolt from the easy observance of imported customs, dear as may be those customs and their associations to the missionary himself.

There are very many things more to be feared than the abuse of independence. The lack of independence itself is often a very deadly evil—especially in the case of State-aided, endowed or subsidised churches. The B.M.S. exists under the direct blessing of God by the free-will offerings of Christian people from year to year. It is not endowed, and when those offerings are insufficient there has to be an appeal to its friends for the deficit. There is no other way. And the Churches which are founded on the Mission field will only grow and flourish as their members support them. They will only voluntarily support what they approve and love. They will approve and love what they know and understand, and what they help to control. It is one of the suspicious features about certain Church Union schemes on the mission field that they rely so much upon foreign subsidies.

The Congo churches like Yakusu, Bolobo, Kibentele and Kibokolo, are doing nobly. They consist for the most part of poor folks whose education is but slender. But they take a real share in the management of their own church affairs. They link the isolated village groups with their central congregation. They bear the burdens of the weak, and

without waiting for the aid of the Missionary Society they spread abroad their witness through the whole area. They do not bother about congregational or connexional theories; they try to adapt their methods to the existing need. Baptist missionaries encourage all that, but they look doubtfully and anxiously at all pretentious schemes of Union that involve much talk of the status and power of human officials and the validity of ceremonies.

It is an unpopular doctrine in some quarters to-day, but it is very true, that many things are better small than big. It applies to Churches as to other things. It is no sure proof that a saying is true, that many people unite in repeating it. There is something unreal about much of the lamentation of "our unhappy divisions," when the same people who so lament are in the bondage of very "unhappy unity."

We are not afraid to believe that our Baptist witness is approved of God, and that wherever and so long as the need of it lasts, it is His will that we should serve the whole Church of God at home and abroad by our distinct and separate service in the spirit of ever-ready co-operation. The Baptist Missionary Society remains as at the first, free from ecclesiastical entanglements at home or abroad to spread the gospel and to encourage in all lands the growth of free evangelical Churches of baptized believers.

VII

WHAT HAVE MISSIONS GIVEN TO THE HOME CHURCHES ?

THIS is not asked in irony or jest, but seriously and to provoke inquiry. Too often the Missionary Society is associated in people's minds with an unwelcome and unconvincing appeal to give ; and from this unhappy association of ideas comes the impression that Missions tend to impoverish the Church.

But is that true ? If a balance could be struck, on which side would be the greater gain ?

Has not the Church in these homelands profited by its missionary enterprise ? Has not its own life been made more abundant, the content of its message enriched, and its spiritual authority strengthened ?

It is not difficult to discover by a study of the records of our denomination in the eighteenth century what the absence of a world outlook, and the lack of a common evangelistic enterprise, meant to the religious thinking, the pulpit ministry, and the corporate fellowship of each congregation, and the whole community of Baptists.

William Carey did something which has left its indelible mark on English Christianity, quite apart from what he did for India and the non-Christian world. There were people who did not believe in Missions in the eighteenth century because they did not realise the full meaning of the Gospel, nor the glory, power and grace of Jesus Christ. There are

still, unhappily, some people with the Eighteenth Century mind to-day.

But the Church as a whole has been made to examine its faith and think of its duty in relation to an unbelieving and unevangelised world.

It would not be too much to say that the missionary outlook and the missionary effort that Carey and Fuller and their associates gave to the Baptists of this country have done more than anything else, under God's blessing, to preserve to us our evangelical vitality.

Christianity can only live and flourish as a missionary religion. The first four centuries of Christian history abound in stories of heroic missionaries who spread the faith of Christ among the pagan nations. It would be a wholesome thing if all our Baptist congregations and Sunday Schools could be told again and again the stories of the pioneers and martyrs of the early Church, and especially if they could come to realise what they owe to the missionaries who brought the Gospel to the heathen British Isles.

In the course of the centuries there have been periods in which the Church has become politically entangled, when it has been more concerned with ecclesiastical organisation and theological controversy than with evangelism. These have been times of slackening in morals, of corruption of faith, and loss of power. Every time of reformation and revival, when Christians have recovered a joyous experience of the presence of Christ in their midst, has been a time when there has been a new spirit of personal evangelism, and an urge to go out into regions beyond. The B.M.S. and its sister missions have been continually bringing to the Home Churches the

records of new conquests of the Cross through heroic lives and martyr witness.

It is quite natural that Missions should be a sort of thermometer of the spiritual life of the Church. For the missionary spirit is essentially unselfish. We do not go out nor send others to win the heathen for our own profit. It is an exercise of faith and love. It cannot but involve some degree of self-denial. But there is always a reflex blessing from unselfish effort of any kind which is all the more real because it is not consciously sought. The Church is most surely enriched by its own unselfishness. Then, too, by its very nature a missionary enterprise which extends beyond our own familiar borders calls for personal devotion and adventure which has in it some element of sacrifice.

We hardly dare use the word sacrifice in relation to any human service when we think of Christ's supreme sacrifice for us. But it is true that the Church or the individual missionary set on winning the world for Christ must go by the way of the Cross. And there is no way like that for Divine Companionship. Missions can only be sustained in the spirit of prayer and overflowing love for Christ. Whatever else a Church might accomplish in cold formalism, it certainly cannot carry on foreign missions. And the Church that is stirred by missionary enthusiasm and is quickened to missionary effort is thereby strengthened in its own spiritual life. This is one of the ways in which the B.M.S. has ministered to the Home Church. Who can measure, for example, what the Congo Mission with its early heroism and tragic losses, and its later triumphs and progress, has added to our faith and character as a denomination ?

The Church's message has gained a fuller content through the testimony to Christ which has come back from the Mission field. We all come to know with a gladder certainty that Christ is Saviour of the World when we see His saving grace effectively working among people all over the world.

The Christian faith is expounded for us as it is exposed to all the spiritual needs of men and women of other races as well as our own. New depths in the unsearchable riches of Christ are being continually discovered. Our gospel is continually growing more worthy in our own eyes. The sword in our hand becomes to us a more trusty weapon as its tempered steel is proven in the hardest conflicts of the non-Christian world.

Again, the notable work which our Baptist Missionaries have accomplished in Bible translation and in Christian literature in many languages has not only served to build up new Christian communities, it has strengthened the whole fabric of our Baptist faith and witness throughout the world. The B.M.S. and other Baptist Missionary organisations have made possible a Baptist World Alliance of twelve and a half million members. And the universal Christian Church which so greatly needs the distinctive contribution which Baptists have to make would be far poorer if it lacked the missionary enterprise and the part which Baptists have taken in that enterprise.

The question remains, On which side is the balance of profit? Have not the Home Churches been receiving benefits, as well as bestowing them, while they have been sending forth their men and women and giving of their substance for the evangelisation of the world?

VIII

THE B.M.S. AND THE EVANGELICAL FAITH

THE Missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society are the custodians of its high and sacred tradition. They have no reason to be ashamed of the great record of its achievements. They dare not be faithless to its evangelical purpose. Nor can they permit anyone without protest to call in question their loyalty to their own pledged confessions.

The everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ has no more faithful heralds, nor have the Scriptures any more zealous guardians and interpreters, than the men and women who have given up all else to serve Christ as missionaries of the B.M.S. Any suggestion that they have faltered in their allegiance to Christ, or have departed from a reverent and loyal attitude to the Bible, is committing a grievous wrong against them, and any disparagement of their service in comparison with that of others in any Church or missionary organisation is neither justified by the facts nor creditable to the critics.

The Baptist Missionary Society is the foreign missionary agency of the churches of a large denomination, and its missionaries are the personal fruit of the ministry of town and village churches in all parts of the British Isles.

Like their fellow Baptists in the home churches, they are not all of one pattern. They have not all

the same social and intellectual background. They represent many types of religious experience and temperament. They have not all been trained in the same way. But they have all been accepted by the Society because of the proofs of their Divine call and their essential fitness for the holy tasks to which they are devoting their lives.

The confident claim is here made that in them is seen British Baptist Church life at its highest and best—that they stand for those things most assuredly believed among us, and as a body are worthy of the fullest confidence and most ample support.

The Christian Gospel is a universal message, because our blessed Lord is the all-sufficient Saviour of the world. The Christian Church is the greatest international fellowship which exists or can exist. But Christian people in all countries, and even in the provincial areas of the same country, have their own peculiar expressions of religious life. The missionary who goes overseas is charged to proclaim the essentials of the faith of which he is the trustee and messenger. It is not his business to transport to other lands all the external furnishings of his own home church. Among the lessons which a young missionary has to learn with the learning of a new language is the distinction between what is essential to Christianity and what is not. How much of the familiar religious associations of his home is he to expect to see reproduced among the converts who may be won? How much, for instance, is it necessary that they should know and believe before they are baptized? What parts of the Bible should be first translated and taught? These questions

really touch fundamental issues. And it would probably be a wholesome experience for some of those who have become entangled in modern controversies, on one side or the other, to find themselves face to face with, shall we say, a class of native inquirers in Central Africa, with the responsibility of selecting what was required to prepare them for Church membership. They would find a good many of the most cherished theological watchwords very difficult to translate, and almost certainly useless to them or their hearers if translated.

A full and ordered system of Christian doctrine is of course necessary for every developed Church, and every Church should be free under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to express all its beliefs. But, thank God! it is possible for simple people to accept Christ as Saviour and to be numbered among His redeemed people with a creed that can be expressed in very few words.

It is significant that, when Carey and Marshman drew up the trust deed of Serampore College, and, looking forward to the time when it would serve the Church of Christ in all parts of India, of all denominations, they wanted to preserve its essential Christian teaching, they laid down two articles of the Christian faith to be required in every one holding the position of Professor in the College. Those two articles were the Divinity of Christ and His Atonement.

Those, we may say, were Carey's fundamentals. He held, of course, tenaciously and fearlessly, many other doctrines. Those were days when the distinction between Particular and General Baptists was so strong as to keep them in two denominations

in the homeland and in two separate missions in India. Calvinism and Arminianism were also very real issues. They were very ardent Baptists. The immersion of Adoniram Judson, the Congregationalist, at the B.M.S. Chapel in Calcutta, led to the creation of a new missionary society in America. The Theological discussion which we know took place between the devout Anglican, Henry Martyn, and the Serampore brethren, tended to generate some amount of argumentative heat, though happily this did not prevent their united intercessions for India in the Old Pagoda at Serampore. But when it was their purpose to safeguard, for all time, the Christian character of their beloved college, those B.M.S. pioneers shrewdly concentrated everything upon the Person of Christ and His mediatorial work.

There have been some who have entertained the fear lest the work of evangelising the world should be imperilled as the result of modern critical scholarship upon the Bible, and as a safeguard against such a danger they have urged that the missionary societies should adopt a particular statement concerning the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments which all candidates and missionaries should be required to accept. Moreover, it has been predicted that financial support would be withdrawn unless this course were adopted. The B.M.S. Committee has, in recent times, given very earnest and prayerful consideration to that matter, and has issued a statement which has approved itself to the great body of those who, in the Baptist Churches of this land, love the B.M.S. and cherish its great history. The first part of the statement was submitted by the Candidate Board, as follows :

“ The sole duty of the Candidate Board of the Baptist Missionary Society is to discover, among the Baptist applicants, those who have been called and fitted by Christ for foreign service, and to recommend them for acceptance to the Committee.

“ As evidence of this call and fitness, the Board requires a personal knowledge of Christ and of His Spirit’s power, a real experience of His saving grace, a satisfactory record of faithful service and loyalty to the evangelical faith, including a reverent acceptance of Christ’s witness to the Scripture and the Scripture’s witness to itself. And while upholding the right and duty of private interpretation, the Board impresses upon candidates the need of the teaching of the Holy Spirit to a true and spiritual understanding of the Word of God, which is to be received as the inspired record of God’s revelation to man and his final authority for the Missionary Message.

“ To arrive at its decisions the Board, while prescribing no form of words, demands from each candidate a clear written statement of belief, and a readiness, in the interview which always precedes acceptance, to answer any questions any member of the Board may desire to ask.

“ The Board is alive to the perils of the time, but believes that the safeguarding of the evangelical faith does not lie in any formal credal statement, but in the living guidance of the Spirit of God through men who humbly and prayerfully seek it.”

This was unanimously endorsed by the General Committee, and these further statements were also added :

“ The Missionaries of the Society to-day, as in the past, have given full proof of their loyalty to the Deity, Atonement, Resurrection and Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of their vital experience of His saving grace and power. To the Baptist Missionary Society Jesus Christ is central and supreme.

“ If renewed assurance is desired that the B.M.S. stands for and teaches the Divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, that assurance is hereby given without hesitation or qualification. But the Committee, inheriting at once the Faith and Freedom of our fathers, decline to issue any statement that would bind the Society to any particular theory of inspiration.

“ The Committee strongly condemn the spreading of suspicions regarding the B.M.S. Missionaries, which, being quite unfounded, cause needless distress to the friends of the Society.

“ The Churches know their own Missionaries and trust them, and it has always been, and is to-day, a point of honour that, if the views of a Missionary change on a fundamental issue, he resigns without pressure.

“ The supporters of the Society are reminded that the Committee is representative, that by the method of election every member of every contributing church has a potential voice in the choice of those to whom is entrusted the conduct of its affairs. The true safeguard of its position lies in the choice of the right men and women for the Committee.

“ So anew the Baptist Missionary Society—which has been privileged to give the Bible to so many people of different languages and to win hundreds of thousands of men and women for Christ, to train whole communities in Christian knowledge, and to change the face of country after country—is commended to the increased sympathy and support of those who value the Gospel of Christ and desire the enlargement of His Kingdom.

“ Prayerfully this statement is laid at the feet of the Master, in the hope that, in spite of all unworthiness, He may be pleased to use it, in some measure, to draw those who seek only His glory into closer unity as they contend with the world for the faith once delivered to the saints.”