

# The Fraternal

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# SCANDINAVIAN ISSUE

## INTRODUCTION

WHEN I was asked to collect papers for a Scandinavian number of the *Fraternal*, I could do no other than accept it as a command. Yet my own contacts with Scandinavia have been mainly academic, and my contacts with Baptists there have been slight. I number amongst my friends a large number of Scandinavian scholars, mainly in the Old Testament field, and I have lectured at four universities in Denmark and Sweden. On these visits, I have made such contact as I could with our Baptist friends, and I have lectured at the Swedish Baptist College in Stockholm and visited the Danish Baptist centre at Töllöse. In Stockholm, I was entertained by a number of the Baptist leaders, and I have worshipped at Baptist Churches at various places in Denmark and Sweden. But there are others in our fellowship whose contacts with Baptists in these countries are much closer than mine. In Finland and Norway, I have not yet set foot, though I am a member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, and I have not yet had the opportunity of meeting any of the Baptist leaders of these lands. My suitability for the task committed to me was therefore slight. Happily, I was able to take advice from Dr. Nordenhaug, the Principal of the Baptist Seminary at Rüscklikon, who is himself from Norway, and who is in close touch with Baptist leaders throughout the northern countries.

I have sought to collect some papers which would introduce the readers of the *Fraternal*, both at home and overseas, to the life and thought of our brethren in Scandinavia. Dr. Gunnar Westin, who is Professor in the University of Uppsala, and who is the first Free Churchman to hold a chair in Theology in any State university in Sweden, has contributed an article which carries us back to Baptist beginnings in that land. Dr. Erik Rudén, who is the General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Sweden, has dealt generally with the work of Baptists in Scandinavia to-day, while Dr. Alfons Sundqvist, who is the Principal of the Christian Folk High School at Veikars, in Finland, has given a more particular account of Baptist life and work in his own country, where the small Baptist community has to face the special difficulties created by the language division within that land. From the Rev. Eric Strutz, who is the Foreign Missions Secretary of the Swedish Baptists, comes an article which deals generally with the overseas work of all the Scandinavian countries. All these articles contain much new information for many of our readers, and will enable them to think with sympathy and understanding of our brethren, and to pray for them with new earnestness and constancy. We belong to one brotherhood, and it becomes us to know what the churches elsewhere are doing.

It is also important that we should know what our brethren are thinking, and I have therefore sought articles which introduce us to their minds as well as to their activities. The Rev. Johannes Nørgaard, the Principal of the Baptist centre at Tølløse, in Denmark, where the small Baptist College is but one of the institutions placed under his charge, and the Rev. Nils Engelsen, the Principal of the Baptist College in Oslo, have supplied two articles which serve this purpose.

To all of these friends I express my thanks, and I feel sure many readers of the *Fraternal* will share my feelings. The limits imposed on me made it impossible to invite other articles, though there are many others of our Scandinavian Baptists who could appropriately have been asked.

Some contributors to this number have spent time in America, and Dr. Sundqvist has the doctor's degree from Berkeley Divinity School, where he wrote a thesis on the Theology of John Bunyan. The articles came into my hands in remarkably good English. Here and there I have made slight changes in sentences, but these have been kept to the minimum, so that readers could hear as closely as possible the accents of our friends as they testify of the faith that is in them and of the work that the Lord has done through them. May blessing continue to attend them, and their work go from strength to strength, the Lord adding unto them daily those who are being saved and who are sharing the glorious tasks of saving others, in Europe and throughout the world.

H. H. ROWLEY.

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### OUR THANKS

The Editorial Board, on behalf of all readers, thanks H. H. Rowley for his kindness in taking trouble—amid so many demands on his time and strength—to collect and edit the articles comprising this Scandinavian number of the *Fraternal*.

Gratitude is expressed also to the various writers for their kindly co-operation—busy men as they are. May God's blessing continue on their manifold labours of Instruction and Organisation. Greetings to our fellow Baptist ministers in Scandinavia whom we shall the more intelligently remember in our prayers because of the insight afforded by the articles that follow. At some future date we hope to give space for a review of Baptist life and work in other parts of Europe.

The Bible Study which Frank Buffard has been kind enough to prepare will, we hope, be followed by others of a similar nature.

Thanks again.

E.B.

## ANDERS WIBERG

### THE FREE-CHURCH PIONEER IN SWEDEN

**L**AST year the Baptists of Sweden celebrated a remarkable centenary. In 1852 there appeared a unique book of theology, right in the headquarters of theologians at Uppsala. It was written by a man who had recently resigned his position as a clergyman of the Lutheran State Church and who now lived in Stockholm and preached and exhorted in unlawful conventicles. His name was Anders Wiberg, and his book dealt with the doctrine of baptism and the true Church. It was a real bomb that he dropped in the old university city of Uppsala close to the castle of the Archbishop. He turned the old Lutheran doctrine of infant baptism upside down and declared that it was altogether false. He had become convinced that his theological studies had led him astray and that he must now confess his error and proclaim the doctrine of Believers' Baptism. Its effect was remarkable.

But who was this Anders Wiberg? He was a man thirty-six years old, well educated in various schools and at the university of Uppsala, where he obtained two degrees of theology. He had been a co-worker of the famous Methodist missionary in Stockholm, George Scott, and for a couple of years (1840-42) had done literary work in connection with Scott's various enterprises. As Scott was compelled to leave the country and the Methodist mission was stopped in 1842, Wiberg went back to Uppsala to complete his studies. He was ordained to the Lutheran ministry and served about eight years in the Established Church. During the last two years, he was disturbed by various abuses in the church and opposed, among other things, the superficial way of confirmation and administration of the Lord's Supper. He had become a leader among the so called "readers," the pious people gathering in conventicles and prayer-meetings. It also happened that as a clergyman he administered the Lord's Supper to private circles not following the liturgical order of the Church.

This led to an action against him, and as he denied the church authorities any right to compel him, he might have been deposed had he not resigned in 1851. At that time, he had come in close contact with the pious "readers" in Stockholm, who cherished the new evangelistic conception of Christian doctrine and life. This trend in the religious movement in Sweden had a Moravian background and was characterised by its stress on the free grace in Jesus Christ without the works of the law. It was a warm and somewhat emotional type of piety and sometimes tended towards antinomianism. As to Wiberg, he seems never to have gone to an extreme, and when he soon became a Baptist, he came under some control of the mild Calvinism of the American Baptists, who later supported him in his work in Sweden.

Wiberg's way to the Baptist Church was not a long one. When he came to Stockholm in 1850, as a retired clergyman, he entered a circle where the question of baptism was much discussed. Some of the separatists in the north, where Wiberg had exerted influence, opposed the infant baptism administered by the church and its ungodly clergy, and in many cases the laymen had taken it in their own hands. Besides, the case of the first Baptist preacher in Sweden, the former sailor F. O. Nilsson, was at that time an issue in the liberal newspapers and was much discussed in various parts of the country. Nilsson had become a Baptist in 1847 and was banished in 1850. Then Wiberg started his new study of the doctrine of baptism.

In Hamburg, he met J. G. Oncken, the German Baptist pioneer, and in his church got in contact with Baptist ideas and practice. Coming home he had new material to work on, especially some books in English, and he, of course, examined the Greek New Testament. The result was the book mentioned in the beginning of this article. Its title would be in English: *Who should be baptised and What is Baptism?* (Uppsala, 1852). When the book was published, the author was on the other side of the Atlantic. He left Sweden and when the boat stopped near Copenhagen, he visited the banished F. O. Nilsson, who lived there, and was baptised by him—surely a wonderful experience for both of them. Wiberg therefore came to New York as a Baptist and joined the First Baptist Mariners' Church and worked as a missionary among sailors and emigrants, until he got employment through the American Baptist Publication Society in Philadelphia. There he wrote several pamphlets and books relating to his new conviction, among them a large book in English: *Christian Baptism set forth in the Words of the Bible*.

His future was not clear. It is true, he had cast himself on Christ for life and death. He had given up all for His sake, and he knew well what Mr. Nilsson had suffered before him. In touching words he stated his breach with his former belief: "I cannot, against my conscience, distort the Scriptures in order to please men or to retain the confidence and attachment of Christian friends. I have lost this world, I will not also lose the coming one." He could not continue long as colporteur and translator in Philadelphia; but was there any possibility to return to Sweden as a Baptist preacher? In fact, he had been re-ordained in New York, but going to Sweden meant perhaps imprisonment and banishment. He made a deep impression on his brethren in America, and finally it was decided that Wiberg should be sent by the Publication Society as "Superintendent of Colportage in Sweden." This was in 1855, and from this year he worked consistently for thirty years for the Baptist cause in Sweden. The restrictions and disabilities of dissenters were gradually removed, and Wiberg had the great satisfaction to see the Baptist denomination grow to one of the largest bodies among the Free Churches of our country.

The fight was hard in the beginning. His book was attacked from several quarters. The professor of Church History at Uppsala published a refutation in 1854. The professor said that the time had come for the scholar to settle the case, and with others he hoped the Baptist error would be an insignificant episode, as the truth was now given in his book. But to-day his chair at the university is occupied by a Baptist, and at least 200,000 Swedes, now living, are baptised believers. Anders Wiberg did not work and suffer in vain!

In Stockholm Wiberg took care of the small group of Baptists, and the First Baptist Church grew rapidly. He also organised co-operation between the few churches in the country, called representatives to general conferences and saw to it that district associations were organised, following the pattern of the denomination in the U.S.A. and England. Two well-known men from England participated in the general conference of 1858, Dr. Edward Steane and Rev. Howard Hinton. This contact meant much later on, when help was needed to build two large Baptist churches in Stockholm.

The meeting-hall in Stockholm was small and not well located, so Wiberg started a project to build a special church, but this was not easily done. In 1860, he visited England to collect money, and spent a whole year there; the journey was not always pleasant, but he met many good friends and helpers. Among others, C. H. Spurgeon received him with brotherly love. Wiberg and his wife similarly undertook a journey in the U.S.A. He also sought support for a proposed theological seminary, and in this he had remarkable success. When he returned in 1866, he had not only a large sum for the new Bethel Chapel, seating more than one thousand, but also contributions for the Bethel Seminary, which started the following autumn. Besides, he had found the great man in U.S.A., who became the first and famous principal of this institution, Colonel K. O. Broady. Broady had emigrated from Sweden in his youth, had served during the Civil War in the army and became a colonel. For some forty years Broady remained in his post in Stockholm, and he became one of the most famous preachers of our country.

Once more Wiberg went out as a beggar for the Baptist mission in Sweden. He moved to the south of Stockholm and started a work there which resulted in the erection of the large Salem Chapel. To get help for this great enterprise Wiberg travelled in Great Britain, 1874-76. His diaries are interesting reading for British Baptists, as he describes his various experiences. He met outstanding men and gathered a good sum towards the cost of the new church. In London he was entertained by the Wilkins family, Hampstead, and he further mentions Spurgeon and his church, Mr. Oliver in London, Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Jarrold in Norwich, Mr. Elwood in Bath and George Müller in Bristol. In Exeter, he met Robert Moffat. He also heard Moody and Sankey in London at that time. His itinerary took him also to Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

Because of the long journey to Great Britain, Wiberg gave up one of his main tasks as the Baptist pioneer in Sweden. He ceased to edit the theological organ *Evangelisten*, which he had started on his return from the U.S.A. Until the autumn of 1873, he continued this very important work. In this bi-monthly, he wrote on various theological questions of the time, and thus he moulded the young Baptist denomination. He also formed the Baptist Confessions, which appeared in the pioneer years, and was the outstanding man in the debates with the Lutherans.

It has been said that Wiberg was no great organiser, and it may be that the rapidly developed Baptist movement in Sweden became too much for one man to lead. In ten years, until 1866, there was a steady increase, so that the churches numbering 183 had a membership of nearly 7,000. In this same period, Wiberg had the pastoral care of the growing church in Stockholm, he had to supervise the colportage done by many travelling preachers, he was the editor of *Evangelisten*, and had to defend the Baptist cause in courts and before the Government. He travelled widely and was also called upon by Baptists in other Scandinavian countries. No wonder that he could not keep the reins in his hands, when a young generation of gifted leaders arose in the growing Baptist army. Later he also began teaching in the new seminary in Stockholm.

Wiberg wrote several books in his later years, including *The Doctrine of Sanctification* (1869), *Christian Unity* (1879), and *An Answer to the History of Infant Baptism by P. Waldenström* (1880). As a consistent abstainer he worked eagerly for the temperance cause. In the eighties he contributed to a new theological monthly, but since he left *Evangelisten* in 1873, he was no longer the leading theologian in his denomination.

His theology was dominated by his practical purposes, and therefore it focused in the doctrines of justification, conversion, the sacraments, sanctification and the true Church. As a writer he used the same way of calm and warm reasoning and teaching as he used in the pulpit. He accepted the "close communion" customary among the American Baptists, but he had difficulty regarding the Calvinistic teaching that prevailed among them. It was the great English theologian, Andrew Fuller, who helped him in this respect. He studied him eagerly, and in a letter during his stay in the U.S.A. he stated that all the Baptist preachers he met there recommended Fuller to him. As may be seen in various parts of this article the relationship between the English and Swedish Baptists was important at that time.

Wiberg had the great satisfaction to see his Baptist denomination prosper. When he died in 1887, seventy-one years old, the churches numbered 473 with a membership of 31,850. Besides, there had grown up strong Methodist and Congregationalist churches, which did not exist when he as the pioneer Free Church theologian began his work in 1852.

GUNNAR WESTIN.

## BAPTIST WORK IN SCANDINAVIA TO-DAY

## I.

**E**VER since the time of the Reformation up to the Evangelical movements in the 19th century, the condition for carrying on any Church activity in Scandinavia was a single Church. Through several legal restrictions the Lutheran Church maintained the sole control of the religious life. But stronger than the power of those keeping the religious freedom back, was that of those pushing on. Firstly, there were the Pietistic movement and the Moravian Brethren, and—when their influence slackened—a new floodwave welled force through the Evangelical Revivals coming from England and America.

Lutheranism loosened up. In Norway, the basic principle of religious freedom was established in 1845, when people got the right to form Free Churches. Denmark's new constitution of 1849 included religious freedom. In Sweden, on the contrary, such freedom was not granted the citizens until 1860. From the resistance put up against the forming of Free Churches in Sweden, one might think that Baptism would not be very widely spread, whereas the soil in the neighbouring countries with their previously established ideals of freedom was more favourable. But, in fact, it was just the contrary. The Baptists as well as other Free Churches in Denmark, Norway and Finland gained a comparatively slight number of members, while the Free Church idea in Sweden developed quickly. The revivals that broke out in Denmark through the influence of Pietism were from the very beginning directed by the Lutheran clergymen and a strong "home mission" was formed within the Church. The development in Norway and Finland was of a similar nature.

Dr. Gunnar Westin stresses among other things that in Sweden the Lutheran clergy on the whole maintained a defensive attitude towards the Evangelical revivals, and those made a way of their own. A layman's movement was formed, creating its own modes of existence. While the rest of the Scandinavian countries allowed free religious activity, the Lutheran Church in Sweden tried to maintain the uniform Church and stubbornly refused to allow the formation of Free Churches.

## II.

The first Baptist church in Scandinavia was founded in 1839 in Copenhagen. When, later, the state authorities recognised the forming of churches beside the Lutheran State Church, the Baptists were not counted among them. This right was not granted until 1952. Through all these years the Baptists were looked upon as people of "secondary rate." This, however, did not stop them from gallantly fighting for their ideals. The Danish Baptists are the pioneers for the Free Church movements in their country, and they have from the beginning considered themselves as the



lasting corrective to the general development of the Christian Church in Denmark.

The growth of the Baptist churches in membership was slow but quite steady. Take, for instance, the year 1920, the time of the B.W.A. conference in London, when thirty-three churches existed and their members amounted to 4,500. Now there are about forty churches and 7,500 members.

There are several reasons for this steady development. One is that the Baptists have been spared severe internal splitting, and the members stand loyally gathered around their leaders. The Baptist pastors in Denmark, amounting to about thirty, form a united body. Another reason is the well organised youth work. When confronting the difficulty of maintaining the influence over the Sunday School Children, the Baptist Scout movement was created in the nineteen thirties, a movement that is now generally recognised, on account of its close contact with the churches.

One of the most important forms of work among the youth, is the school at Töllöse with its Folk-High-School department, an Academy, and a Theological seminary. The first mentioned is giving five months' courses for young men and women, not just aiming at giving instruction but also at furthering the character-moulding factors. The Academy of about seventy-five pupils comprise the liberal arts and some basic knowledge of natural science, mathematics, English and German. The students at the Theological seminary have as a rule received their basic training in the two mentioned schools before entering the seminary, the courses of which reach over a period of three or four years.

For the students at the universities a special organisation—Eleuteros—has been formed. There is a difference between Denmark and Sweden, where a similar organisation exists not only limited to Baptist students but open to students of all Free Churches.

Among the organisations may be mentioned: *The Publication Society*, having made it their task among other things to publish books on the Baptist principles; the *Foreign Mission Society*, doing missionary work in Ruanda-Urundi; the *Baptist Society of Teetotalers*, a temperance organisation; the *Women's Society*; and the more loosely organised *Laymen's Association* and a *Society for Nurses*. A popular branch of social welfare work is the *Home for infants*, admitting an average of forty children. Dr. Nørgaard writes: "The Danish Social laws give good support to all kinds of social work and, as a result, it is made possible for the churches to conduct kindergarten classes through the week and to erect day homes for children of school age, whose parents are working outside their homes."

The weekly paper of the Danish Baptists is *Baptisternes Ugeblad*.

From the very beginning the Baptist Union has been active in Christian co-operation, whether this has been expressed in the

Ecumenical Council, the Evangelical Alliance or the Free Church Council. The Danish Baptist Union is the only one of the Scandinavian Baptists that has joined the World Council of Churches.

### III.

When the persecution of the young Baptist movement in Sweden, having formed their first church in 1848, culminated in the expatriation of the leader, F. O. Nilsson, future prospects were considered very dark. The Evangelistic revivals, however, could not be stopped, and by and by one of their main streams became definitely Baptist in character. The eighteen-eighties was a particularly progressive period. The Swedish Baptists have, however, suffered severely through the influence of the Pentecostal movement. During the last few years the membership of the churches has decreased by two hundred a year. This decrease is partly due to a "transfer" of members, many Baptist members in the nineteen-thirties having passed over to some of the younger Free Church unions, such as the Pentecostal movement and the Orebro Mission Society.

This tendency has now been overcome and a noticeable consolidation and deepened unity are characterising the general position. Besides, with the recognised methods of church activities, the youth work has become more important after it has been proved that the churches are mainly recruited thereby.

In legal respects the position of the Free Churches has been strengthened by the Law of 1952 allowing religious freedom. In connection with the enactment of this Law the Free Church pastors were also granted the legal right of officiating at marriages.

The Swedish Baptist Union has 35,400 members in 531 churches. They elect representatives for the annual meeting that appoints the Mission Board, which manages both the Home Mission and the Foreign Mission.

Evangelisation work has been intensified during the summer through Youth Camp Weeks and Tent missions.

The number of the pastors is about 250. A special fund grants additional salary to those receiving the lowest pay. The same principles as applied by the Baptist Union in England are mainly followed in this respect. Efforts are made to give still better economic support to the pastors. This year a collection will be started for that purpose.

No special association for laymen has been formed, although a characteristic feature of Swedish Baptists is probably an increased activity on the part of the laymen.

Among other organisations are:—

The *Women's Association*, whose main task is to help preachers' widows and preachers' families, hit by illness. The programme is now widened. Thus, during the last year, through the Association, 85,000 crowns were collected for a hospital in Congo.

The *Youth Association*, with its various sections, has as its aim to further the training of leaders. Another field of activity for the Youth Association is the social welfare work. For several years there has existed a home for boys, and lately this has been complemented by a similar home for adolescent boys.

Oldest among the schools of the Union is the Bethel Seminary, the training centre for pastors and missionaries. The course extends over four years.

In conformity with the Danish Baptist Union, the Swedish one has a Folk-High-School—one of the largest in the country and admitting 125 pupils.

In *social welfare work*, some of the largest Baptist churches have their own Homes for aged people. An *Association for the Training of Deaconesses* was founded in 1922, after the German pattern. A *Publishing Society* has also been formed, the most important papers being *Vecko-Posten* and *Ungdomens Veckopost*.

Free Church co-operation has been very real in Sweden during the last few years. The Free Church Council represents eight Free Churches, and the Baptist Union has been a member of this Council since it was founded. The Baptist Union also appoints representatives on the Ecumenical Council in Sweden.

#### IV.

As soon as the Baptist Church had been rooted in Denmark and Sweden its influence stretched out to Norway. The first baptism there took place in 1858. The persecutions during the pioneer period led to greater understanding and appreciation. The growth of the Union has been regular, but in the nineteen-forties a tendency to stagnation was felt; better signs are now apparent. Church services are better attended and baptisms have increased. The membership of the 64 churches is 7,300, and there are over 76 chapels and twice as many preaching stations, spread all over the country, from the Skagerrak to the northern borderline at North Cape.

With the same inflexible strength with which the Norwegian people during the war fought their invaders, they have during the post-war years worked on restoring what was destroyed, notably the Honningsvold Fishermen's Home in North Norway, and three churches which were completely destroyed.

The islands along the Norwegian coast amount to 150,000, and the population of 3,000 of them is estimated at 300,000. Among these the crew of the "Fredrick L. Rymker" spreads Christian literature and preaches the Gospel.

Another field where a noticeable expansion has taken place is that concerning the *literary activity*. From having consisted of a small book and tract mission it has developed into one of the largest Christian Publishing Houses in Norway. The weekly of the union is *Banneret*.

The Baptist Union has a theological school for the training of its pastors and missionaries, courses extending over four years.

The Baptist Union is the only Free Church union in Norway having a theological training institution. The school enjoys confidence and both the Norwegian Covenant Church and the Norwegian Pentecostals are sending their students to the Baptist seminary. Next year a larger building will be erected for a preachers' school and a youth school.

Also Norway has organised an association for its youth work. On the whole, the same methods are used for this as in Sweden, though neither in Norway nor in Sweden has scouting been as widely spread as among the Danish Baptists. Another similarity to the Swedish activity is the marked interest in social welfare work, resulting in the establishing of two homes in North Norway, one for aged people and one for youth in which the *Youth Association* has been very active. The Norwegian Baptists have not hesitated to give their young men leading positions within the Union. When a Principal was to be appointed for the theological school, a theologian aged 35 was elected.

The *Women's Association*, founded in 1915, has about 150 branches. When its sister organisation in Sweden organised a collection for the Congo mission, the Norwegian pattern was followed. In Norway, such a collection has been maintained for several years, resulting in 100,000 crowns for the erection of a Hospital on the Mission Field in Congo.

The social welfare work is closely connected with the institutions in the northern part of the country for the aid of the fishermen and their families, but it has also reached beyond the borders of their own country.

Baptist doctrine has reached far and wide, and not least in Norway, where the Christians who maintain that only decided Christians are to be baptised are far more numerous than the actual church members. The co-operation in regard to the training of preachers may serve as an illustration of the fellowship between the Free Church people, and also show that the influence of the Baptists is greater than would appear from the size of the Union. Also in the State Church the Baptist forms of work and methods of activity are now willingly accepted.

## V.

The Baptist message came to the Swedish-speaking population of Finland from Sweden. Firstly, a church was formed at Aland in 1854, and from there the revival was spread to Osterbotten. The first baptism on the Finnish mainland took place in 1869. Over three decades the Swedish-speaking and the Finnish-speaking Baptists were co-operating in one Union. By and by, however, the difficulties on account of linguistic questions seemed to grow so large that they agreed to split the Union, and the Finnish-speaking group formed their own body in 1903.

The Swedish Union has 2,500 members in about thirty churches. A noticeable activity, large attendances at the services, and a

growing number of members, have been characteristic during recent years. The work of spreading literature and the youth work are well organised, and recently their own first missionaries were sent out to the Swedish Baptist field in the Congo. The Home and the Foreign Missions are directed by a mission board consisting of seven people, elected at the annual conference.

With Swedish support, a theological school was founded in 1924, the courses of which last for two years. As a rule the students continue their training at the Bethel Seminary in Stockholm. The interest in studying has also taken other forms such as, for instance, in the arranging of shorter Bible courses and in the initiative to establish a Christian Folk-High-School. This has now existed for eight years and it serves all the Swedish-speaking Free Churches of Finland.

When the Finnish-speaking Baptists formed their own union several advantages were obtained. However, it is evident that the inconveniences were greater than were anticipated. The small number represented by the Finnish Baptists had needed to stick together in one body. At present the number of members of the Finnish churches is about 1,000. For some years, progress was rapid, but unfortunately, a split was made through the growing Pentecostal movement which many Baptists joined. The situation was aggravated by the lack of leaders. Rehabilitation has now taken place. The churches have enjoyed progress and in addition to the evangelistic campaigns, they have purposefully aimed at building up stronger Children's and Youth activities. Further, they have been able to establish a Bible Institute for training of preachers and leaders.

In legal matters the two groups of churches have different standing. In 1922, Finland accepted a Law of religious freedom allowing the forming of legalised religious bodies, but also admitting religious activity without the forming of such bodies in the legal sense. The Finnish-speaking Baptists chose the former means and organised a church union recognised by the State, called the *Finnish Baptist Union*. The Swedish-speaking Baptists chose another way. The members were entered in the so-called Civil Register, kept by the State authorities, and the churches were registered as an association called the *Swedish Baptist Conference in Finland*. This is not the proper place to report on the advantages or the inconveniences of the two methods, but it is decisive that the Baptists of Finland enjoy full freedom for their activities.

## VI.

After the war, the Scandinavian Baptists appointed a committee for co-operation. The greatest importance of this is of a personal nature, through the value of brotherly contact and Christian fellowship. But the committee has also taken some practical initiative.

Firstly, there was the charity work for Poland. Then we have the Scandinavian Seamen's Mission in San Francisco, an activity that is expanding. Further, it may be mentioned that the different seminaries from time to time arrange study-weeks and that seminary-teachers give lectures at each other's schools. The youth work is another field of co-operation.

The Scandinavian Baptists are strongly connected with the international Baptist fellowship. During the pioneer years the contact with England and America was of great help to the fighting groups. Many of the Swedish Baptists who were severely persecuted during the first decades, found refuge in America, others went there to continue their education. The action taken by the English Baptists to overcome the persecutions is still kept in mind. There was the deputation sent to assist the imprisoned Baptists, and the appeal in favour of F. O. Nilsson, the exiled Swede. Several Scandinavian Baptist preachers have in the course of years studied in England and groups of youths going there for a visit have created friendship. It seems desirable that these contacts between Scandinavia and England should be deepened, particularly as regards theological studies and research, the strategy of missions and the contact between the preachers of the different countries. As the English Baptist Church is one of the oldest of Europe, and is also greatest in number, it has an important mission to further the unity of the European Baptists.

ERIK RUDEN.

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## GLIMPSES OF THE BAPTIST WORK IN FINLAND

THE opposition against infant Baptism in Finland first came from the Pietistic groups during the eighteenth century. Some persons who refused to have their children baptised were banished from the country, and others were imprisoned. These occurrences, however, were only sporadic, and the Baptist movement in the British Isles and America seems to have been unknown.

In the nineteenth century the Pietistic revival movement rose to new strength and power and spread over wide regions. To the religious life in Finland, this revival was of the greatest importance. To a remarkable degree the religious life of the Lutheran Church in Finland is coloured by this movement still to this day. And many who were later brought to conversion through the testimony of the Baptist preachers, got their first religious impulses from the Pietistic movement. In this way it also prepared the ground for the Baptist movement in Finland.

### THE BAPTIST MOVEMENT AMONG THE SWEDES OF FINLAND

In Finland there are two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. About 91 per cent. of the population speak Finnish, and 9 per cent. speak Swedish. There has always been a close communication of ideas between the Swedes in Finland and the people of

Sweden, and so many influences have reached Finland through that medium. This is also the case with respect to the Baptist movement.

The first proclaimer of Baptist ideas in Finland was a sailor from Sweden by the name of Karl Justus Mathias Möllersvärd. As a sailor he went over to the United States, where he was converted and baptised in the First Baptist Mariners' Church in New York. After returning to Sweden he began to testify about his new faith.

By this time a Lutheran pastor in Aland, an island in the Baltic belonging to Finland, wrote to some friends in Sweden who belonged to the Evangelical Alliance, and asked them to send an evangelist to this island. These arranged for Möllersvärd, at that time known as a good preacher, to undertake this journey. In the autumn of 1854, he left Stockholm with some fishermen from Aland, and after a difficult voyage he arrived at the small island Föglö which belongs to Aland.

In Föglö, this warmhearted preacher commenced his work. Crowds gathered, and a revival began that spread all over the island. But at the same time a persecution broke out, inspired by some clergymen. After only five weeks Möllersvärd had to return to Sweden.

The fire, however, that had been lit could not be extinguished. Those who believed gathered for worship, study of the Word of God, and for prayer and singing. No separation from the Lutheran State Church occurred, as Möllersvärd had not in public mentioned anything about his opinions of Baptism and Church membership. Privately he seems to have mentioned it to some.

The following summer, 1855, a person from this island visited Stockholm and brought home with him some booklets written by the former Lutheran clergyman, Anders Wiberg, who had joined the Baptists in Sweden. Many of those whose consciences had been stirred came to clearness about the question of Baptism and Church membership through reading these books.

One of these was a farmer, Johan Erik Ostling, who in the spring of 1856 sailed to Stockholm to meet the Baptists there. On 25th May, he was baptised by P. F. Hejdenberg. Thus he became the first Baptist in Finland.

Late in 1856, the first baptismal service in Finland was held. It took place in Föglö. We do not know the exact date. Three persons were baptised, and these together with three others who had been baptised in Stockholm immediately constituted the first Baptist Church in Finland, called Föglö Baptist Church.

Persecution soon broke out. The leaders of the church were heard, first by the local clergy, and then by the Bishop's Chapter in Abo. The second hearing, on 1st June, 1859, however, had quite unexpected consequences. One of the members of the Chapter, Rev. Henrik Heikel, Rector of St. Mary, close to Abo, after the examinations invited the Baptists to his home, not in order to dispute

with them, but to get closer knowledge of their opinions. The Baptists came, and they were talking the whole night with the rector and his family. Several of those present got ineffaceable impressions of the Baptists' simple but fearless testimonies. This was later on to be of the greatest importance.

The next year, 1860, Henrik Heikel became rector of Pedersöre, near Jakobstad, in the province of Ostrobothnia, on the mainland of Finland, and moved over there with his family. Here the Pietistic movement had well prepared the ground. The members of the Heikel family could not forget the Baptists from Aland, but kept up the connection with them. Especially after the death of the rector in 1867, this family became a centre for the Baptist revival in this part of the country. A son, Viktor Heikel, was baptised in Stockholm in 1867, and a daughter, Anna Heikel, was baptised there in the following year.

When returning, Anna Heikel brought with her some books about Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Church membership. This started a lively discussion about these things. In 1869 the Heikel family got a visit by the blacksmith and preacher Adolf Herman Valén from Aland, one of the men who had visited the rector in 1859. A meeting was arranged, and Valén thus was the first Baptist that preached on the mainland of Finland. His sermon about the Prodigal Son brought several to conversion.

In the evening, on 14th July, 1869, the friends met at Stora Lysarholmen, three kilometres from Jakobstad, and here the first baptismal service in the mainland of Finland was held. The farmer, Petter Stormåns, and a woman, Miss Maria Ekqvist, were the first persons baptised on the mainland of Finland.

About this time a young woman from Vasa, south of Jakobstad, Miss Alba Hellman, used to visit the Heikel family. In their home she came to know her Saviour, and at the second baptismal service on the mainland of Finland, on 5th August, 1870, she was baptised. She was then 26 years of age. Miss Hellman is described as a very small person in bad health, but she had a living faith, a burning zeal, and an unusual energy. Together with her two sisters who were teachers, she owned a religious bookstore. She was admirable in spreading Bibles. Together with her sisters she took the initiative in organising the first Temperance Society in Finland, and recent investigations have shown that she led Matilda Wrede into her wonderful work among the prisoners in Finland.

For seven years, Miss Hellman was the only Baptist in Vasa, but in 1877, another woman was baptised, and two years later two more came. This was the nucleus of the Baptist Church in Vasa which was founded in 1881.

One of the foremost Baptist pioneers in Finland to be mentioned is Rev. Erik Jansson. He does not, however, belong to the men who initiated the work but came a few years later. In his youth he had been a sailor, and for some time he had lived in Chicago where he had been converted and joined Moody's church. In 1877,



however, he returned to his native Finland, feeling a strong urge to testify to his countrymen about his experience of salvation. He was not then a Baptist, but he tells us that when he was preparing for a debate about the meaning of Baptism, he came to the conclusion that he was wrong, and decided to be baptised. This happened in 1881. He soon became a leading Baptist preacher, and for many years he was pastor of the Petalax Baptist Church, a country church which sometimes numbered over 400 members.

The Baptist movement reached the southern part of Finland somewhat later. Petter Malmqvist, a Baptist from Sweden, settled in Helsingfors in 1881. There were also some other Baptists in the city, and on 5th April, 1885, the Baptist Church in Helsingfors was constituted.

The Swedish-speaking Baptists now have 28 churches with a membership of about 2,200. A small Theological Seminary was founded in 1924. It gives a two-years' course at the present. The students usually complete their studies at the Bethel Seminary in Stockholm, Sweden.

The Denomination has its own Publishing Society, named "Facklans Förlag" (The Torch Press). The denominational paper, *Missionsstandaret* (*The Missionary Standard*) is published twice a month with an issue of about 2,500.

In order to get proper facilities for the Seminary, the Publishing Society and the paper, a house was procured in Vasa in 1945 which has been made a "Baptist House" and serves as headquarters.

In addition to the missionary work in the homeland, the Swedish-speaking Baptists of Finland also support two missionaries in the Belgian Congo. A Mission Board of seven members takes care of the common activities between the Annual Conferences which are held each year in June.

The Swedish Baptists in Finland also take part in the united work of the Free Churches. In the Swedish Free Church Council of Finland they have been represented from the beginning. In founding the Free Christian Folk High School in 1945, which is specially intended for young people from the Free Churches, the Baptists also partook. The initiative was taken by them, and the principal is a Baptist.

#### THE WORK AMONG THE FINNS

The Baptist movement, as we have seen, reached Finland through the mediation of the Swedish-speaking group. But it did not last long before the Finnish-speaking people also came in contact with the Baptist ideas. The first person we know of was the Lutheran pastor John Hymander in Parikkala in the province of Carelia who, after studying his Bible, had come to the conclusion that the Baptist idea about Baptism was right. In 1871 Hymander resigned from the Lutheran ministry, and the following year he was baptised at the Conference of the Swedish Baptists

in Stockholm. It is known that he had friendly relations with the Heikel family in Jakobstad. Coming back from Sweden, he baptised his wife and several others who had been converted, and a Baptist church was organised. Pastor Hyrmander died after a few years, and his church became rather isolated until 1907 when it joined the Finnish Baptist Union.

The first solely Finnish-speaking preacher we know of is a sailor Henriksson who is said to have been converted and baptised in England. When he came back to his native country he began to preach, and as a result of his work, Luvia Baptist church was founded. Henriksson died a few years later.

Among those who believed and were baptised during the revival in Ostrobothnia there were several who also could speak Finnish, and they soon began to witness in that language. One of these was Henrik Nars from Purmo who preached the Gospel with great blessing to many in this district. Several Finnish-speaking Baptist churches were organised.

Up to 1903, the Swedish-speaking and the Finnish-speaking Baptists belonged to the same Union. Doubtless the mutual contact between these groups was of great importance to both sides. But some difficulties arose from this arrangement. The Finnish and the Swedish languages differ so much that a person who knows only one of them is not able to understand the other. On account of this everything had to be interpreted when they were having discussions and meetings together. Because of these practical difficulties they decided to have each their own organisation. This arrangement was made from the beginning of 1903. Without doubt some practical difficulties were removed through this action, but a disadvantage was that the closer contact was severed, and each denomination went its own way.

This is also stressed by one of the leading Finnish Baptists, Rev. August Jauhiainen, who says that "it seems as if this separation from the Swedish-speaking Baptists occurred too quickly and too soon. It is true that our work was rather successful in the beginning, while the leading brethren still were in their best years. But any kind of work needs men of sane judgment, and these seem to some extent to have been lacking. The first big rebuff came when the Pentecostal Friends started their work. Lots of members left our churches and joined the new movement. That so many left was perhaps due to the absolutely negative view of the truth about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the signs that follow this deed that the leading brethren were holding.

"The next blow, which, judging from what happened, was even harder, came when the preachers became old. There was no younger generation of workers who could take up their work. They had not in time understood the necessity of getting new preachers trained for the ministry. This was a fatal inadvertency through which the Finnish Baptists have suffered much, and still are suffering.

"Also the war brought with it considerable difficulties, even direct losses. Our few preachers were mobilised, and had to spend their time 'somewhere,' just as the other men in Finland at that time. There was no one to take their places. This had its consequences. When we had to give up part of our country we entirely lost the church in Pitkäranta. The chapel in Värtsilä was burnt down, and the ground was left on the other side of the boundary, while most of the members moved into Finland. Also part of the members in Parikkala Baptist Church had to leave." So far Rev. A. Jauhiainen.

The Finnish Baptist Union consists of 19 churches with a membership of about 1,200. The publishing activity is limited to one journal, *Totuuden Kaiku* (*The Echo of the Truth*), which is published monthly, and a Christmas paper, *Jouluaamu* (*The Christmas Morning*). In 1949, a Bible Institute was founded for the training of ministers. The Principal, Mikko Kolomainen, has in addition to his studies in Finland been trained in Bristol College.

Legally, there is some difference between the Finnish-speaking and the Swedish-speaking Baptists in Finland. When the so-called Dissenters' Bill was passed in 1889, the Finnish as well as the Swedish Baptists in the country, who then all belonged to the same Union, adjusted their work to the new regulations, and organised legalised Dissenting Baptist churches. When the new law about Liberty of Religion was passed in 1922, the Finnish-speaking Baptists formed a legalised religious community called the "Finnish Baptist Union." The Swedish Baptists did not go this way. Since the law gave them a possibility to carry on religious work without forming a legalised religious community they preferred this. Their members are registered in the so called Civil Register which is kept by State authorities. The denomination is registered as an association called "The Swedish Baptist Mission of Finland." Each way has its advantages and disadvantages.

#### BAPTISTS, A RELIGIOUS MINORITY

The Lutheran Church is the State Church in Finland. About 95 per cent. of the population belong officially to this church, and the Lutherans claim that "Finland is the most Lutheran country in the world," which might be true. The Greek Orthodox Church has legally about the same position, but the membership of that church is relatively small. It is to be admitted that there is much spiritual life within the Lutheran Church in Finland. The strong revival movements in the last century permeated the life of the church, and this spirit is still living and at work. Under these circumstances it is not so easy for Free Church ideas to get through, and the Baptists have had to face considerable difficulties in their work. On the other hand, Church historians are now beginning to pay attention to the fact that the Free Churches, especially the Baptists, have acted as a ferment, and that their influence has by far exceeded what one would expect, if only their numerical

strength were taken into consideration. And the Baptists of Finland believe that they have a special message also to the people of Finland, a message about Christianity as a personal matter, a personal experience, and they find that this message is especially needed in our own time when life is being more and more secularised, and old beliefs are forgotten. The Baptists want, in co-operation with other Christians, to stress the necessity of personal Christianity, and they believe that this is a message also for Finland of to-day.

ALFONS SUNDQVIST.

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## SCANDINAVIAN BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSION WORK

THE Scandinavian people are playing a great part in foreign mission work all over the world. Even before William Carey had started his work in India a Swede by the name of Johan Zacharias Kiernander was working there as the first Swedish missionary to a non-Christian country. He was educated in Halle, Germany, and sent out by the English S.P.G. He was not a Baptist, but was one of the few who really welcomed Carey, when he knew of his arrival in Calcutta. Kiernander died there in 1799.

Among the Scandinavian societies for foreign mission work the Baptists took their place towards the end of the eighteenth century. And as the Baptist Unions in the different countries are not large religious bodies, it is interesting to notice what a comparatively big foreign mission work they carry on. The Danish Baptists were the first to send out a missionary to a heathen country. This was in 1888, and he worked with the American Baptists in the Lower Belgian Congo.

In 1848, the Baptist cause started in Sweden, and the first churches were founded during the next years. A severe persecution broke out, and many had to leave the country to maintain the right to worship God in the way which they had found in the New Testament. In spite of this the Baptist faith spread, and the records tell that there was very early a keen interest among our folks to bring the Gospel also to people in other countries. At the Annual Conference of the Baptist churches of Sweden in 1872 (the Baptist Union of Sweden was not founded until 1889) a committee for foreign mission work was elected. Money for this purpose was sent out through the American Baptists, mostly to Burma.

Somewhat later the interest was turned towards Spain, and missionaries were sent to this country, where the Roman Catholic Church dominated. The best known is Dr. Eric Lund, who began his work in Spain in 1877. After some years he joined an American mission and became their missionary in the Philippine Islands. Being an excellent linguist, he did a lot of Bible translation and other literary work. In 1921, this mission was taken over by an American Baptist Mission.

In the eighteen-eighties, the Swedish Baptists began work in Finland and Russia with Esthonia, especially among Swedish-speaking persons. This work was carried on by several brethren till about 1930, and later two sisters have been trying to spread the Gospel and help the poor in Esthonia with the little town of Mustwe as a centre. One returned in 1943, the other preferred to stay among her friends there, and for many years no news has come from her.

For sixty years the Swedish Baptist Union has engaged in mission work in China, in the province of Shantung, not far from one of the B.M.S. fields. It was a prospering and successful work, though impeded by the Japanese-Chinese war, 1937 to 1945, and later on, broken off from all connection with the Swedish friends through the hostile feelings of the Communist regime. Since 1951, when the last of the missionaries left the country, nothing has been heard from the Chinese Christians about the conditions under which they live or if they are able to keep together and hold any kind of services. As far as can be understood, their freedom to proclaim the Gospel is not very great. Our prayer is that God shall keep them in His love and help them to be witnesses for Him in their everyday life.

Before these difficulties occurred, there were fifteen Baptist churches, all belonging to the Swedish-Chinese Baptist Union with an Executive Committee of Swedish and Chinese men and women, responsible for the work. The biggest Churches had native pastors, whom they supported themselves. Altogether, there were about 5,000 members. Great importance was put on the education of boys and girls, both from Christian and non-Christian homes, and very early, schools were started. Their numbers grew from year to year till 1929, when the government ordered all schools to be registered and forbade religious teaching even in the mission schools, which mostly had to be closed. Some were opened again, after a while, and during the war with Japan the school work had a prosperous time with revivals among the students. The native workers have been taught in yearly courses for evangelists and in a school for Biblewomen, but later, a united training school for men and women was established. Some were sent to theological schools belonging to other missions for further education. The dream of getting a hospital on the field was never fulfilled, but in small dispensaries many have been helped by foreign and Chinese trained medical personnel. For twenty-five years a small orphanage received and brought up about one hundred girls, whose parents did not want them. In 1947, forty-two native pastors and evangelists and twenty-six Biblewomen were in active work. Forty-seven Swedish missionaries have been working for a longer or shorter time on the field. Four of them have together given 206 years of faithful labour for their Master's cause in China.

The Finnish-speaking Baptists in Finland used to support two native workers in China before the war, but the contact was

broken in 1939, and there has been no possibility of renewing it since then. The question of renewal is now under consideration and they are planning to send a young man, now studying in Rüschlikon, either to India or to Africa.

The Belgian Congo has specially captured the interest of the Baptists in Scandinavia, and now all four countries have workers there. In 1891, the Swedes were ready to take up work in this dark continent. A young student, E. W. Sjöblom, was set apart and sent out in order to find a suitable field, a project unsuccessful, owing to his untimely death in 1903. During his first period, when working on English and American stations, he saw much of the cruelty inflicted by agents of the Belgian Free State in getting as much labour as possible from the natives. Sjöblom could not be silent. He told the world what he had seen, specially when in London on his way home, and, due in no small part to his bold interference, public opinion was turned against the Belgian government and the worst cruelties were stopped.

In 1914, the Swedish Baptists again sent missionaries to Congo. This time they found a suitable field in Basakata, the country between the Rivers Kasai and Lukenie in the Belgian Congo. Recently the field has been extended to embrace also an area south of Kasai and one north of Lukenie in the Lokolama district. Here are now five mission stations with foreign missionaries. One nurse is working in a hospital run by the Belgian Government and altogether twenty-eight missionaries are on the field. One is engaged in building. Two come from Finland, supported by the Swedish-speaking Finnish Baptists, and two are stationed at a training school for native teachers, run co-operatively by three different missions.

In 308 schools more than 6,500 children are taught by 413 teachers. Since the Protestant mission schools were acknowledged by the State, and subsidised like the Roman Catholic schools, great demands have been put on the teachers, both foreigners and natives, and on premises and equipment; thus much building is necessary. There is a Normal school teacher training, and an Industrial school, much appreciated by the State.

Medical work grows year after year. In 1952, about 15,000 patients were treated in five clinics. A maternity ward and a small hospital will be built next year. The first will be paid for by money given for such purposes, the hospital will be a gift from the Baptist women of Sweden, who last year collected £6,000 for this aim. The doctor who is going to supervise first the building and then the work of the hospital is just ready to leave Sweden; also a colony for lepers has been opened in a new station. Many missionaries have given much time to translating parts of the Bible and other literature.

There are now six churches with nearly 8,000 members on the field. This rapid growth creates a problem, as it is hard for the missionaries to get time to guide them all spiritually, as they would

like to. It is also hard to find suitable employment for all the young people who graduate from the schools, and much more ought to be done for the women who often remain on a low standard, when their husbands advance both in their religious and cultural life.

The Danish Baptists now have their mission field in Urundi-Ruanda, where six other Protestant missions also work (and a strong Roman Catholic mission). As to methods, the Danish brethren say that they have learned them from the Swedish Baptists in the Lower Congo, where Danish missionaries had been stationed on the Swedish field. The aim has been to make the churches self-supporting and they are so mostly now. All the native workers, pastors, evangelists and teachers, are paid by the churches. There are two churches whose combined membership amounts to 2,500. Twelve missionaries are in active work, among them a lady doctor. Four or five are proposing to join them. There are one hospital and four clinics, two church buildings and two big schools (one, the biggest and most modern Protestant school in Urundi).

Also the Norwegian Baptists work in the Northern part of Belgian Congo. The work was opened in 1920 and is now carried on by twenty-three missionaries and 191 native helpers, with schools, dispensaries and evangelical work. There are nearly 7,000 baptised members. More than 50,000 patients have been treated in the dispensaries and about 2,000 boys and girls study in the different schools.

Since 1944, the Swedish Baptist Union has had eight missionaries in India, first in Bangalore and later in co-operation with the American Society in the Nellore district, South India.

Most of the Swedish missions earlier working in China have now turned their interest to Japan. Two missionary families are now busy there and work in close contact with the Americans and the small Japanese churches in various places.

Finally, some statistics: The Swedish Baptist Union has 531 churches with 35,682 members and 60 missionaries. The budget for the foreign mission is about £40,000 a year. The Danish Baptist Union has 40 churches with 7,262 members and 12 missionaries. The money raised for the foreign mission is a little more than £5,000 a year, besides some money coming yearly from Danish-American friends. This year, £5,000 as an extra fund has been collected to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the mission. The Norwegian Baptists with between 7,000 and 8,000 members, have raised about £8,000 for their foreign mission. The Swedish-speaking Finnish Baptists have 28 churches with about 2,000 members, and have collected for foreign missions £2,750.

ERIC STRUTZ.

## SHALL OUR INTERPRETATION OF BAPTISM BE ALLOWED TO DIVIDE BAPTISTS ?

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE GENERAL DISCUSSION FROM DENMARK

**A**BOUT a year after the famous philosopher Søren Kierkegaard had become converted, the First Baptist Church was formed in Copenhagen in 1839. This relationship is evidence of the fact that Søren Kierkegaard did not have any influence on the foundation of the Baptist church in Denmark. Although he later in his life proved to be influenced by the Baptist denial of infant baptism, and his own brother, later Bishop P. C. Kierkegaard, was the first clergyman who refused to baptise children by coercion because he considered this procedure to be a degradation of any baptism, Søren Kierkegaard had the conception that his own task was given him by God as a unique task, which demanded his total isolation from any church.

The relationship to the Baptists of another famous Dane, N. F. S. Grundtvig, is on the contrary a quite different one. Grundtvig had, in spite of his aristocratic aloofness towards the awakening of the pious laity, become the most favoured minister of his time for these people. And his significance as a spiritual leader for them was unbroken until in 1824-25, he began to announce his new visions of the Christian Church and his revolutionary convictions concerning the relationship of the Bible and the church with its baptism and creeds.

The rising tide of rationalism and Biblical criticism had threatened the very foundation on which Grundtvig until that moment had built his faith, namely the Bible as the reliable witness of Christ. And in his search for a better foundation of faith he fastened on the Christian Church with its sacraments and creeds. The Church, he held, was an independent witness of true Christianity, and so were baptism and the Apostles' Creed. Moreover in his joy over his marvellous discovery he reduced the Bible to a source of information about Christianity, while the sacraments were the real fountains of life.

Grundtvig found outstanding followers on his new path, but he also had to meet a decided resistance. Among the latter were some laymen, who would not lose their heritage from the pietistic revival in Denmark, and who did not seem to be able to trust the postulated great effects of infant baptism and the Lord's Supper, when they were, as usually, administered and received without personal faith. It was from this group of resisters to the Grundtvigean interpretation of true Christianity that eleven men and women took the radical step to form the first Free Church in Denmark.

Looking back, we must admit that in spite of the fact that the Baptists succeeded in holding their own as over against persecution, and also have been able to do an evangelical service, which is worth while, it was Grundtvig who influenced a great part of the Danish



Christians, who remained within the State Church, and even the people who did not want to become his followers he taught the value of the sacraments so effectively that the Danish Lutheran Church to-day can truly be said to be the most sacramental church among all Protestants.

Moreover, considering the trend in modern Old Testament theology, is it too much to say that Grundtvig was a true prophet in indicating the independent witness of the cult, the creeds and church beside the witness of the Scriptures ?

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Before we answer the question, which the Grundtvigian movement places before us, we shall note the fact that Baptists of to-day are not in general the people who stir the consciences of Christians directly with their witness about Christian baptism. We have at present, strangely enough, left that task to theologians of other confessions.

Likewise, we shall observe the fact that our thinking about Christian baptism in its patterns is largely determined by the thinking of pædobaptists. Karl Barth has supplied us with the question whether baptism is largely cognitive or predominantly causative. And we are ready to answer according to this pattern of thought.

My contention is that whatever difficulties Baptists of to-day may have in regard to the interpretation of Christian baptism among themselves, they are very largely due to our hesitation in giving to the world a positive interpretation of baptism according to its function in the New Testament church and to our acceptance of pædobaptist patterns of thought about Christian Baptism, patterns which to a large degree are heterogeneous to Christianity and based on philosophical speculations with regard to the nature of baptism.

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Looking for the functions of Christian baptism in New Testament times it occurs to me that our attention is drawn to the following facts:

1. From the very beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ He concerned Himself with the salvation of the people with whom He met and for this purpose He made use of preaching and teaching, baptism and healing. The unifying factor in this diversity of means was His own authority. By His authority He became Saviour for His contemporaries. Whoever came under the sway of His power was redeemed from the Kingdom of evil and changed profoundly in his innermost being.

Is it too much to say that this still is the way in which God is using Christian baptism, wherever it is administered in connection with preaching and teaching ? The authority of baptism is exclusively the authority of Christ.

2. Moreover, the authority of Christ in baptism became a severe test for the confession, obedience and love of the disciples. The determining power of the authority of Christ had to work

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**A MESSAGE FROM Mr. SEYMOUR J. PRICE  
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE  
BAPTIST MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP**

My dear Friends,

**On Competition**

Someone has said that "competition is the spice of business." Certainly a contest and battle of wits can be very exhilarating, and successes bring a wonderful uplift of spirit. In some circumstances failure provides a lasting inward satisfaction.

Competition to be fair must be based on the same premises and the quality of the respective articles clearly shown. Our denominational Insurance Company has had to face strenuous competition, but invariably the competition has been unsuccessful. That is not surprising if we recall that,

**First.** We have the proud record of having contributed nearly £70,000 to Baptist Union funds, and thus helped the Union to maintain the many activities which are supported by the Home Work Fund. No other Insurance Company has contributed a penny.

**Secondly.** Those who have made claims, whether Churches or individuals, know that because we are their own Office we do more than other Offices could be expected to do. Here are recent examples from our claims record:—

Missionary boxes were brought to a provincial Church for opening and left in the unlocked vestry. At the close of the evening service, the boxes were missing. The Church had no legal liability to the B.M.S. for the money contents. However, we admitted the claim under the theft policy and paid £13 15s. 3d.

Another provincial Church had a burn out on the motor of its electric blower. The Church did not hold an electrical policy, and this incident was, of course, not a fire. Again, because of the good work of this small Church, we decided to meet the claim of about £15.

We could give many more examples.

Every good wish for the Christmas season and the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

*General Manager.*

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itself out into the lives of the disciples in all their relationships to their fellow men, and baptism meant to them the first great trial of the sincerity and depth of His swaying rule. Could it break the fear of men? Would it be able to call forth an obedience, which was qualitatively different from that to the law? In short, had the disciples been born into a vital faith? Does not Christian baptism still exercise this searching of our hearts?

3. After the death and resurrection of Jesus His authority had grown to such a degree that baptism became valid in His name only, and it was interpreted by Paul as a spiritual representation and participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. Baptism, therefore, became the dramatic confirmation of the preaching of the Cross of Christ. Baptism witnessed to the fact that everyone who believed in Christ was separated from the realm of evil and was raised into the realm of Christ. Baptism gave to the disciples the assurance that in Christ they had their forgiveness of sins, their circumcision and regeneration. Are we not as yet in need of such an assurance?

4. As the Christian Church was founded under the headship of Christ, baptism naturally functioned as the visible fence between the unbelieving and unbaptised world and the believing and the baptised community of Christians.

The significance of such a distinction is a double one. First of all it promotes the unification of the Church as a redemptive society, which is especially emphasised in the Johannine writings. Secondly its clear line of demarcation challenges the world outside to decision for Christ.

5. Finally, the Johannine writings place baptism to Christ alongside preaching about the Cross of Christ and the experience of the witness of the Holy Spirit.

In this evaluation of baptism as one of the divine witnesses to Christ, John is underlining the witness of the Old Testament cult, which through the sacrificial blood, and through ritual cleansing testified to the mercy of God.

John takes, however, care to warn his readers against the misunderstanding that baptism isolated from preaching of the Cross and from the witness of the Holy Spirit is able to fulfil its mission. And he rejoices evidently in being able to make the following statement: "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that He has borne witness to His Son."

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Having traced some of the most significant functions of New Testament baptism and noticed its Christ-centredness and its dependence upon Gospel preaching and upon the witness of the Holy Spirit as well as its appeal to personal faith, Baptists may without much stir discuss the nature of baptism with friends from all Christian churches, as baptism has again become related—not primarily to the Church—but as originally to salvation in Christ.

Placed in this setting, the question of Karl Barth as to whether baptism is cognitive or causative becomes an irrelevant one, as New Testament baptism points to Christ as the only source of salvation, but it never appeals to us in an impersonal way. Preaching, therefore, necessarily precedes baptism. And the authority of Christ through baptism is no empty affair.

Moreover, the criticism of Karl Barth against Baptists to the effect that we are demanding faith before baptism in a similar manner as the Roman Catholics are demanding good works to be saved, while the New Testament demands only "Bereitwilligkeit" before baptism, appears also to be a somewhat superficial one, as "Bereitwilligkeit" towards Christ's authority is the very beginning of personal faith.

Karl Barth, therefore, in his exposition of Christian baptism neither does justice to the significance of the authority of Christ nor is he successful in his attempt to displace personal faith from its strong connection with Christian baptism.

Likewise when we turn back to Grundtvig and to the Lutheran Church, which in Denmark very largely follows his sacramental interpretation of baptism, we are not interested in discussing primarily the nature of baptism, but the function which Christian baptism has in the New Testament, and on this platform it is evident that although Grundtvig may be right in his emphasis on the independent function which baptism has in the Christian Church alongside the *kerygma*, we are not justified in ascribing to baptism the same function as that of Christ Himself. If we did so, we should in fact uplift baptism to a place in the trinitarian doctrine, as it is only in that doctrine that the presence of the Father guarantees the presence of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

New Testament baptism, however, never identifies its own function with that of Christ. On the contrary, it witnesses solely to Him alone.

JOHANNES NÖRGAARD.

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## THE NEW TESTAMENT

### AUTHORITY AND ACTUALITY

THE Bible has always been *The Book* within our Baptist churches, the final authority concerning faith and doctrine. This, however, does not imply that we look upon the Bible as a code of law, fallen from the skies, which has to be obeyed without question. The Bible is not a mere outward authority forced upon us, and more or less irrelevant to our Christian faith. Anyone who has experienced Christ in his life will quite spontaneously reach for the Bible, because he needs it, and can hardly do without it, because it constitutes a vital factor in his new life. Often we have been accused of legalism, but it is not as legalists that we appeal to the Scripture.

It is said that the distinctive features of the Baptists are their appeal to the Bible and Believers' Baptism. But to state this is not to explain the whole situation. One has to ask why the Baptists appeal to the Bible and why they practise Believers' Baptism. If this is done it will soon be evident that our real distinctiveness is our witness of a personal experience of God. This experience of God's redeeming love in our lives is not, however, a phantom of our imagination; it is solidly founded on God's act in Jesus Christ. Thus our faith is not founded on airy speculations, but on the Act of God in history, on the Cross of Christ and His Resurrection. In our experience we face the God Who has made Himself manifest in flesh. The historic testimony is therefore absolutely necessary for our belief, and we have this testimony; we have it in the New Testament.

When we, therefore, as Baptists stick to the Bible, we do nothing else than Luther, when he made his defence before the Diet of Worms, where he bore testimony to the redeeming act of God in Jesus Christ as a free gift of grace. He opposed the Pope, the Roman Church and the Church Councils, and made the Bible the final court of appeal in religious matters. But this attitude to the Bible is neither invented by Luther nor maintained by us as an empty creed.

Let us pause with the Early Church, because that will furnish us with a valid principle for a conception of the New Testament, and give us a key to the understanding of its authority.

When the apostles died, one by one, and the young Christian Church faced the pagan world with its many varied religions and trends in philosophy, it became urgent to find a court of appeal, or a criterion that could help the church members to keep Christianity distinct from the dominating syncretism of the time. They felt that the writings of the apostles would offer that which was needed. The men whom the Lord Himself had chosen and authorised to proclaim the Gospel had in their writings set the seamarks that would help to navigate the church vessel safely through the dangerous breakers of their time into smoother seas. Thus the writings of the apostles and their disciples became a divine gift to the Christian Church, a defence against all speculation and subjective religiousness.

But the apostles are not final authorities in themselves. Their words and testimonies have their special value because of the historic situation in which they were written, and because of the divine call they had received. But also they themselves had once faced overwhelming problems and felt the urgent need of help in the situation in which they had been placed when Jesus had left them. As long as Jesus Himself was among them and could step into the breach, everything looked simple, but when they themselves suddenly had to face an overwhelming Judaism, that could easily have undermined their experience with Jesus and neutralised their influence, they sought for a final authority, and found it . . .

How had Jesus looked upon Himself and His calling? What had He taught them that the Scripture (Old Testament) said about Him? What did His miracles tell about Him? What answer had He given to the burning questions of life?

All that they had experienced with Jesus was quite naturally brought to memory:

Jesus had come as a prophet, yes, and more than a prophet. He had looked upon Himself as God's promised Messiah. With convincing insight and personal authority He had proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and what that implied He demonstrated in words and deeds. Completely spellbound they had listened to His message about a loving God, quite amazed they had seen how sick people were cured and those possessed by the Devil brought back to their senses by His commanding words, and frightened and cheerfully they had even witnessed how He raised up the dead. He so strained their expectations that they looked upon Him as "the hidden Messiah" (John i, 26-27, Mark i, 44, viii, 26) who any day would reveal His identity, take arms and set up His kingdom. But the triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday ended in a catastrophe. He was betrayed by one of His own disciples, arrested, sentenced by the High Court, brought before Pilate, consigned to death and crucified. For three days they lived among the ruins of their dream empire, which had collapsed. Easter Sunday, however, brought news about an empty tomb, and when they met Him as arisen a new light was thrown upon His life and work. He must be the Messiah, as He had told them.

Little by little they dimly began to see the contours of the dramatic history in the midst of which they had been. His rejection and crucifixion had been far from a messianic self-contradiction. This part of the life of Jesus had also been in accordance with God's plan for His life. His resurrection from the dead had shed new light upon His whole life. Now they saw meaning, purpose and cohesion, where before they had not seen it. The Scripture and the words of Jesus got new actuality. The voice to Him from heaven at His baptism: "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased," had been a combination of the words from the royal Psalm with those from the Songs of God's Suffering Servant. And of course there must be a purpose in this quotation. The meaning must have been that His baptism was a consecration to be the "Servant-King." Jesus had seen it clearly Himself, and thus dictated His rejection of the popular messianic ideals (the Temptation); and when the disciples had proclaimed their belief in Him as Messiah (Luke ix), He had asked them not to make it known, because His conception of the Messiah was another than the popular one, which they held also. To the secret of the Messiah belonged the secret of suffering. He, Messiah, had to suffer many things and be rejected. That meant that He was the Suffering Servant and Messiah in one person. His suffering and death had not been an unforeseen catastrophe, but the very purpose of His life (Isaiah liii).

Little by little a whole treasury of memories had been stored up among them, memories which quite naturally arranged themselves around the Crucifixion and the Resurrection as the climax of a peculiar and blessed life, in which words and deeds seemed to have had a divine spring. All these memories or traditions at last formed relatively fixed compositions which all characteristically pointed forward to the Cross and the Resurrection. These traditions are our Gospels!

Surely many circumstances co-operated in animating these memories and keeping them alive.

To them the Cross and the Resurrection had come as a surprise. But in the plan of God it could not be so. All that Jesus had taught them, and His interpretation of the Scripture (Old Testament) helped them to see how everything they had experienced with Jesus formed parts of God's great plan of salvation, and constituted the fundamentals for a message of salvation. Now they could see the arranging hand of God in all that had happened. In Jesus of Nazareth was salvation, in His hand God had placed the future of mankind.

Here they were, a bunch of simple and uneducated people with an insight and a knowledge that placed them under the most serious obligation. Now they were responsible for the proclamation of this message of salvation. Jesus Himself had chosen them for this great task. He had authorised them and given them power. They knew that the proclamation of the Gospel would be supported by the Spirit of God, and that they were not left alone. The Holy Spirit was among them according to the promise of Jesus. Even the understanding of what they had experienced was felt as a guidance of the Spirit: ". . . the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv, 26).

But like Jesus Himself, they soon found that their message met opposition. Their great opponents were now as with Jesus the Scribes and the Pharisees. It is in the controversies with them that similar cases to the controversies that Jesus Himself had had with them got new actuality, and He brought them a most needed support. For instance, in the Sabbath conflicts and the argumentations of Jesus, the difficult question about the Resurrection, which they now proclaimed, the attitude of Jesus to the "Tradition of the Fathers," to the Law, etc., Jesus was to them the authority. Therefore the attitude of the Gospel is the attitude of Jesus Christ Himself. And His answer and attitude will for ever be classic within our churches, because they are based on His understanding both of God and man.

What this treasure further brought them a couple of traditions from the preaching of Jesus will illustrate. We choose two parables which in a masterly manner give expression to fundamental thoughts in the Gospel and in Christian life. Here the attitude of Jesus to

sinful man is evaluated in the light of man's own attitude and natural judgment.

Jesus had found His way to the religiously dubious individuals and the outcast, because He had taken pity on them. In His practice and preaching a new idea fought its way to recognition: God must not be looked upon primarily as the rewarder of the ethical achievements of man, as the God of the righteous ones. He was much more a God who sought for the lost ones to raise them up and cure them. The attitude of Jesus naturally caused offence and indignation in legalistic circles. He was called a friend of publicans, did not even shrink from speaking to harlots, and recruited supporters from among the uneducated and ignorant and therewith religiously dubious people. Jesus meets the critic with a parable, probably the most radiant of them all, the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Behind this parable we catch a glimpse of Him, who is the Father of all, the Father even of the lost ones. Both in this parable and in that of the Lost Sheep, Jesus tries to convince the religiously and morally recognised people that His attitude was in accordance with life itself. His attitude to the outcast and the lost ones was just as natural as the attitude of a good father towards a wayward son, who, deprived of everything, repentant seeks his father's forgiveness, and the attitude of a good shepherd to his lost sheep which he seeks in the wilderness to carry it home on his shoulders, rejoicing. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

God's love for sinners is the heart of the Gospel, and this parable makes us in deep understanding nod our heads in approval. The attitude of Jesus is blameless, and in conformity with the law of life itself as we also know it.

And what does not the parable of the Good Samaritan tell us? Let us for a moment put ourselves in the place of this poor creature who had been beaten till he was half dead, robbed of everything and left in the wilderness to perish. His only hope was that one of his fellow countrymen would by chance find him and help him. Suddenly through the silence he heard footsteps. Imagine his joy when he observed a priest coming. God had showed mercy on him! But the priest went by with only a glance at him, leaving him behind in despair. Again footsteps penetrated the stillness and a Levite came along, noticed him, then took a closer look at him and passed by without a word. Not even this servant of the Temple felt any responsibility. The man did not belong to his caste. When for the third time someone came hope again flared up, but only to be damped, when he observed that it was a Samaritan. This contemptible creature, despised by all true descendants of Abraham! But what actually happened? Here he met fellow-feeling and compassion. The Samaritan did not ask whether this man was his neighbour. He himself acted as neighbour to this helpless creature.



Here again we are confronted with a central thing in the Gospel of Christ. The question about my neighbour has to be solved from other rules than those of caste, race, nationality and political creed. The Gospel has a message about the brotherhood of man across all borders that sin has built between man and man. It has a message about fellow-feeling, about care and responsibility, and the value of my fellow man.

But this question of neighbourhood is in fact still unsolved, in spite of all the tears of sympathy shed in churches and chapels on the very same topic. To-day we have millions of men whose situation cries out to us, because communications have brought our world so close together. But it is too often just as when the priest and the Levite passed by. Human need does not make an appeal strong enough to make us act. Too often it is even so that we think it is not any business of ours, and pass by with unmoved conscience. How often have we not acted as the priest and the Levite?

This little parable had probably also something to say to the early Church when they discussed the "right" of the Gentiles to the Gospel, their "right" to the salvation of God.

In like manner, we could find our way to the whole treasure of the Christian Church as we find it in the New Testament. Everything has its meaning and its power in Jesus Christ. It is He who is the final authority, concerning the conception of God, man and salvation. It is Jesus Christ who gives the Bible its strong religious and ethical appeal, its absoluteness. The writings of the apostles are therefore the revelation of God, even if they have a human side. To separate the historic facts from their "interpretation" is impossible.

The first Christians or the apostles witness only to that which they had seen and experienced. They do not primarily create; they tell what God has done and apply this knowledge to life. Because they were contemporaries of the historic Christ and chosen to be witnesses to what they had seen and heard, their testimony is authoritative and forms together with the tradition of Jesus, His words and deeds, the classic expression of Christianity, doctrinally as well as practically.

The Book has endured the stress of hundreds of years and of all critical tests. Still the hand of God is visible behind it, and the power of God unto salvation is revealed through it. A living Christian and a living Church can never put it aside without suffering damage and losing their power.

We have seen that it is not only a shelter and a shield to hide behind, a secure harbour in the storms of life. It also sends us forth on stormy seas as a life-brigade. It is a challenge to deed, an urgent appeal from a God whose heart beats for the ruined and storm-beaten vessels that drift along without a rudder.

The open Bible is a gift, but also a task for us evangelical Christians. Its authority is Jesus Christ Himself.

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