

THE BAPTIST RECORDERJournal of the Baptist Historical Society of New South Wales
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No. 83/2

May, 1983

Our NEXT MeetingThursday, 16th June, 1983.

Speaker : Dr. Alan Roberts,
President, N.S.W. Branch, Oral History,
Association of Australia.

Subject : The Importance of Oral History for Baptists.

Venue : The Theological College, Eastwood.

Time : 8 p.m.

Chairman : Dr. K.R. Manley All Correspondence to:
120 Herring Road,
Publicity Officer : Mr. H. Watkin-Smith EASTWOOD, N.S.W. 2122

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING21st April, 1983

The meeting was held in the G.H. Morling Chapel of the Theological College commencing at 8 p.m. Approximately fifty persons were present.

The Chairman, Dr. K.R. Manley, opened the meeting with prayer, welcomed all who were present and made a number of comments on the hopes of the Society for the future and its achievements in the past.

Apologies were presented and received for the Secretary, Mrs. L. Ollif (absent overseas) and Revs. A.C. Prior, H. Orr, G.N. Chambers and D. Baker.

The minutes of the last Annual Meeting were read and confirmed.

Reports from the Chairman and Secretary, both printed in The Recorder which was distributed at the meeting, were adopted.

The Treasurer's report, duly audited, was presented with some comment, and adopted. It also appeared in The Recorder.

It was announced that our third publication, "The Growth of Baptists in N.S.W., 1900-1939" was imminent and orders were solicited.

Five recommendations were presented by the outgoing Executive and with a slight amendment to the third were passed without dissent, as follows:-

1. That the state of our finances be clarified by the division of our funds into two accounts, viz., a General Fund and a Publications Fund.
2. That membership Fees be increased to \$7 per annum, but that student, pensioner and unemployed members be accepted for \$3 per annum.

3. That churches be encouraged to become members at a subscription fee of \$10 per annum.
4. That a Publicity officer be appointed whose duties would include:-
 - (a) reports to and advertisements in appropriate journals, and
 - (b) the issue of The Recorder.
5. That The Recorder be issued three weeks prior to each meeting and include a reminder of the date of the next meeting, minutes of the previous meeting, a summary of the previous meeting's address, a list of the financial members and any items of interest contributed.

Prior to the election of officers the Chairman paid a tribute to the work of Rev. F. Coan who was retiring from office because of ill health. It was resolved that a Vote of Thanks be recorded to Mr. Coan and a letter be sent to him conveying our thanks and our greetings.

The election of officers resulted as follows:-

Chairman:	Dr. K.R. Manley
Vice Chairmen	Messrs. H. Watkin-Smith and P. Young
Secretary	Mrs. L. Ollif
Treasurer:	Mr. M. Petras
Archivist:	Rev. E. Archer
Publicity Officer:	Mr. H. Watkin-Smith
Auditor:	Mr. A. Gravolin

The Chairman welcomed Principal M. Himbury of Whitley College, Melbourne, who gave the Annual Lecture : "The History of the Training of Baptist Preachers".

After questions, a vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

The meeting closed with prayer.

THE ANNUAL LECTURE

The History of the Training of Baptist Preachers

Principal Himbury, in an address distinguished by learning and enlivened by humour, opened up the whole question of the purpose of ministerial training as conceived in the past and as necessary for the future. We give here an outline of the address but a much fuller account appears in The Australian Baptist commencing with the issue of May 4th.

In introducing his subject Principal Himbury turned to the circumstances which influenced early Baptist preachers. To the Puritans the preaching ministry was great and holy, and so those exercising it needed the best education available. They believed that skills in ancient languages were needed to understand what the Scriptures were saying, and also that the preacher needed to

be instructed in the whole study of Theology, for by Theology the sinner finds his way to the Saviour and to salvation. Study for the Puritans was not for its own sake but in order through the sermons to bring glory to Christ and to meet the needs of the people. The knowledge required was not limited to divinity, for it was contended that the preacher needed to sharpen his wits by a study of the arts.

He went on to show that the Puritan attitude was in keeping with the Reformation tradition as the Reformation produced eminent scholars. Luther spent a lifetime training clergy and these men propagated his views. The school must be next to the Church. Calvin's scholarship helped the spread of Calvinism and from the Council of Trent onwards the Roman Church recognised that the thorough training of priests was basic to their programme.

The first British Baptists did not stress scholarship although Smyth was Cambridge trained. His successor Helwys was trained only in Law and humanities and Murton had no special educational or theological training at all. During the 17th Century, although University-trained men were common in Baptist pulpits there was a tendency to scorn Baptists as tradesmen-preachers. This arose because Baptists denied the accepted view that preaching presumed ordination following upon training. Baptists contended that a preacher needed no orders from a bishop nor university training as such, a position reinforced by their exclusion from the universities after the Restoration. Human learning, they held, does not necessarily make a preacher and it may interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit. However, Baptists felt that training, if not essential, was nevertheless a great advantage in exegesis. Principal Hymury produced evidence, firstly, of an increasing interest during the late 17th and early 18th centuries in the need to establish academies, and secondly, of doubts among hyper-Calvinists that learning may become more important to preachers than the outflow of the Holy Spirit.

Fullerism brought increased demand for academies as evangelism and missionary interests revealed that knowledge was needed to make the most effective use of innate abilities for preaching. At first the emphasis was upon improving the gifts of those men who had already proved themselves fitted for preaching. Principal Hymury then traced the growth of the academies and commented on the curriculum which included general science as well as languages. The approach to language of the dissenting academies differed from that of the universities. To the dissenters there was a Biblical language used by the Holy Spirit. It happened to be Hebrew and Greek. Preachers did not learn two ancient languages, Hebrew and Greek; they learned how to read the Bible. He observed that the studies in the academies had two profound effects on modern education :- the study of science prompted the introduction of science into secondary and tertiary education, and the study of language for missionary translation work has influenced the development of the teaching of modern languages.

The attitude in the 17th and 18th centuries was that no man sought the office of a preacher. Instead, the church commended for preaching such men as revealed a gift. In the 19th century it was believed that a church should test a man's call over and over again before he entered the ministry.

In Australia in the early 20th century the emphasis was on preaching in the British tradition - making the Bible relevant to people. In the 1950s a change came as the American influence stressed Christian education. Bible languages no longer have the prime place in our curricula as pastoral care has taken the place of preaching as of first importance. Principal Himbury suggested that neither the earlier British tradition nor the later American emphasis was appropriate for Australia. Our ministerial students need to be Australian to enrich the culture of the people in our pews.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Publication. It is anticipated that our third publication, The Growth of Baptists in N.S.W. - 1900-39, will be available at our next meeting.

Financial members. The Treasurer has supplied the following list of members as at April, 1983.

- Revs. E.A. Archer, R.S. Arndell, D.S. Baker,
- K.H. Bennett, R.C. Briggs, F.W. Coan, J.S. Connor,
- H.E. Evans, B.J. Hoar, Dr. K.R. Manley, R.F. Pope,
- M.V. Tronson, D.H. Vaughan, E.G. Wykes.
- Mesdames D. Ellerman, E.M. Linklater, M. Manley,
- L. McDonald, L. Ollif, R. Russell.
- Misses H.M. Burton, N.E. Henderson, D.H. Macindoe,
- Pastor V.M. Grice, Mr. Justice T.R. Morling.
- Messrs. F.J. Church, J.F. Church, H.W. Gow,
- P.E. Hayward, B.A. King, I. Kirkwood, N.M. Leder,
- W. Menzies, K.A. Palmer, M.J. Petras, H. Watkin-
- Smith, P.G. Young.
- Auburn Church, Concord Church.

Help Requested. The Executive has considered for some time the desirability of compiling a "Biographical Dictionary of N.S.W. Baptists". Members are requested to assist by supplying information of a personal and career interest about any ministers and also about any laymen and women who have given long or distinguished service as Baptist Union committee members or as church officers. Such items may be sent to the editor of The Recorder, Mr. H. Watkin-Smith, Unit 38, "Aminya", Goolgung Avenue, Baulkham Hills, 2153.

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THE PIONEER PASTOR AT ROOTY HILL

Rev. James Dawbney Brown, 1826-1918.

In his history of Baptists in N.S.W. Some Fell on Good Ground, Rev. A.C. Prior has a short paragraph on Rooty Hill in the section entitled "Churches which have ceased to exist" p. 312. He says:-

"A layman, Mr. J.D. Brown, was the leading spirit and driving force in the accomplishment and he also ministered the Word. The Baptist Union accorded Mr. Brown ministerial status in view of his honourable and efficient service." Who was J.D. Brown?

The account which follows is based on an unsigned paper, thought to have been written by his daughter, in the archives of the Parramatta Church. It has been amplified by information garnered from the Minutes of the Parramatta Church.

J.D. Brown was one of about twentytwo young men brought out to N.S.W. in 1850 by Rev. Dr. J.D. Lang for the purpose of establishing a theological course in his Australian College. Lang, a noted figure in the political and religious life of Sydney for several decades, had been active in promoting the immigration of free settlers and recognised that ministers of the Gospel were needed to nurture their Christian standards. Most of these young men were Presbyterians. Some, of whom Brown was one, were Congregationalists. Six, including the first pastor at Parramatta, were Baptists. The students had understood that they were free to attend the church of their own denomination and when Dr. Lang required them to attend the Presbyterian Church Brown and some others declined to do so. His College course thus came to an abrupt end.

He opened a school in Windsor with the assistance of a tutor and governess and carried it on successfully for some years. During this time he was married to a Miss Sarah Hopkins by Rev. M. Adam, the Presbyterian minister. While living in Windsor he occupied for three months the pulpit of the historic Ebenezer Presbyterian Church while its pastor, Rev. G. McPhie, was serving on one of the goldfields.

Desirous of a life in the open air Brown moved to West Maitland where he engaged in farming for some years. He returned to Windsor and went to Freeman's Reach where he was instrumental in opening a public school and commencing a Sunday School. He arranged preachers for Sunday services, frequently conducting the services himself. A succession of disastrous floods, destroying crop after crop, forced the Browns to leave the district and settle near Parramatta. Here James Brown became a leader in the Congregational Church, being a deacon and the Sunday School Superintendent. He was one of four present on the historic occasion when George Verrey, a fellow deacon but a Baptist, advised the Congregational pastor, Rev. T.S. Forsaith, that he proposed to support the re-opening of Baptist services which had lapsed. A few months later Brown joined the Baptist Congregation. On 8th April, 1877, he was baptized in the Parramatta River by Rev. A.W. Webb of the Harris Street Church, in the presence of nearly 300 people.

Mr. Brown was greatly respected by the Parramatta Church and frequently preached. In January 1879 when the Church decided that a third deacon was needed to help the Secretary and Treasurer the choice fell on James Brown, and he held that position for six years when his place was taken by his third son, Lewis. For one year, 1879-80 J.D. Brown was Secretary of the Parramatta Church and for five years the Church's delegate to the Baptist Union Assembly. He also served for seventeen years

as a Trustee of the Baptist Cemetery on the Western Highway. Five sons and a daughter became members of the Parramatta Church. Lewis was at various times Church Treasurer, Church Secretary, Choirmaster and a very active Sunday School Superintendent. The fourth son, Albert, was choirmaster for a time and a deacon for several years. The daughter, Amy, served for many years as Church Organist and taught in the Sunday School for a very long period.

The involvement with Rooty Hill began in 1882. The Congregationalists had for years carried on a witness at Eastern Creek but were unable to continue. At the request of Rev. Alfred Lloyd, a Congregationalist, Brown agreed to conduct the services at Eastern Creek which were held in a wooden hall. Parramatta Church received in July 1882 the sum of £6 from Brown being the remuneration from the Eastern Creek congregation for his services during the previous three months. Parramatta's Annual Report in November 1883 mentions that J.D. Brown was preaching every Sunday at Rooty Hill. Other reports tell of Brown's preaching to aborigines at Eastern Creek, Blacktown, Riverstone and Penrith.

Congregations grew and it was thought desirable to raise funds to build a church. A suitable site nearby was generously given by Dr. McKay of Rooty Hill, the building to be for a Baptist Church. Mr. Brown wrote to many Baptists and other friends for monetary help and a generous response was made. Mrs. Eyles, a local member, raised considerable sums and Mr. Learmonth, a local man, donated the necessary bricks. In due time a neat brick church with a baptistery was erected. The opening was presided over by the Rev. F. Hibberd, then President of the Baptist Union, who received James Brown into the Union as one of its ministers with full ministerial status. A membership was formed together with a Sunday School, a C.E. Society and a Band of Hope. In 1887 the church was received into the Union.

Brown continued at Rooty Hill for about ten years when family circumstances and the health of his wife made it necessary to leave Parramatta and remove to the Ebenezer-Sackville district. But he could not rest while people far from a place of worship needed a spiritual leader. He visited scattered homes in the East Kurrajong area and commenced services which continued regularly for many years. Eventually a neat weatherboard church was built and at the opening service well-known Baptists who attended includes Revs. J. Straughen and E. Price and Mr. W. Buckingham of Stanmore. He continued to preach once a month and to give religious instruction in the public school. It was a pleasure for him on one occasion to have Dr. Waldock and on another to have Rev. E. Price preach at Glossodia. He himself preached from time to time until the age of ninety. He died on Christmas Day, 1918, in his ninety-third year.