

## CHANGING VALUES

THE WORLD of 1945 was not the world of 1939. The end of hostilities left changes which could never be reversed. The experiences of those six years affected everyone, and only when all was over and some semblance of normal daily life restored was it possible to pause and take stock of the position. People had been uprooted and were now remote from their pre-war localities; meetings had been suspended and in some cases were never resumed. The characteristic work of the movement had been impeded by restrictions on publishing, on public meetings, on movement, in common with other Christian groups; the prevailing mood was in the form of one overriding question: What now?

Nevertheless, and despite these hindrances, although there was recession in some fields, a great deal was accomplished in others. The Conventions suffered most; it was obvious during the war years that large gatherings in city halls under the threat of air raids were out of the question. The national August London Convention at Conway Hall was suspended for the duration and so were many of the usual provincial Conventions. A notable exception was Warrington, where the Easter Convention was maintained throughout; this served the needs of brethren in the Midlands and North-West. Dewsbury managed one in 1941, Manchester in 1942 and Birmingham in 1944 and there were a few minor ones at other times. The smaller local Home-Gatherings, not demanding the use of large halls or the congregation of relatively large numbers, were able to continue as occasion offered, although not so many as previously. Something like eight or ten in each of the war years are recorded, with attendances of ninety to a hundred and fifty. With wartime difficulties of travel these were about the only

means of contact between brethren normally residing in country districts or small towns. The faithful came together on these occasions and hoped for better times.

The Pilgrim visits to local centres and isolated individuals had virtually to stop. Wartime was no time for itinerant ministers of religion to be travelling the country; there was too much to do at home. It goes without saying that there were no visits from American friends. 1938 had seen extended tours in this country by Paul Thomson and Norman Woodworth, something like six months each; there was no more until 1947 when John T. Read spent six months in the UK.

These activities were the chief casualties of the war. In the field of publishing – perhaps the most important aspect – there was, despite the operation of the Paper Control Order, which severely restricted the amount of paper allowed for any given publication, a continuous although considerably reduced output of literature quickly snapped up by brethren anxious to “work while it is called day”. Tract distribution went down to ten per cent of what it had been in immediately preceding years. As though to make up for this, however, there was quite an appreciable production of booklets. An outline of the Divine Plan entitled “The Golden Future”, first published in 1939, saw its first edition of 25,000 exhausted in two years and a second of 10,000 during the rest of the war, with a third edition later. Another well taken up booklet dealing with the subject of the Second Advent, “The Promise of his Presence” had its first edition in 1939 and its second in 1943. Other booklets which saw the light during the war years were “The Beauty of Holiness”, “Parables of the Kingdom”, “Jacob’s Trouble” (dealing with the final experiences of Israel in the Holy Land at the end of the Age as outlined in the visions of Ezekiel, always in popular demand and still available in later editions) and a few minor ones. But the total quantity of such publications issued during the war was pitifully small.

The impracticability of the customary public lectures during wartime was much upon the mind of one well-known and popular brother who had been associated with the public showings of the “Photo-Drama of Creation” in 1914. Bob Darby conceived the idea that its success during the first war

might possibly be repeated in the second, and he approached the committee with the suggestion. There was considerable scepticism; it was not known if the films still existed and could be located, and even if they were and could be obtained whether public exhibition under wartime conditions would be feasible. Bob Darby's customary enthusiasm, however, was irresistible and it was agreed that the BSC would attempt to acquire the films via its American contacts provided that Bob and the few associated with him would undertake responsibility for their use and exhibition in the United Kingdom.

Initial progress seemed promising. The films were located and copies of several typical ones made and sent to the BSC for a start. Bob Darby and his men went into action. The idea was to limit exhibition of the films, together with an accompanying short discourse on the Divine Plan in relation thereto, to small public meetings to which the interested were invited, in small halls where the current objection to large gatherings of people was not so relevant. The October 1940 issue of the "Monthly" carried a displayed notice of the proposal in tones calling to remembrance the days of the Photo-Drama thirty years earlier and this immediately awakened the interest of those who had participated in the activities of those days. The general title chosen for the effort was "The Divine Drama of the Ages"; this in itself was sufficient to rouse the interest of the brethren. Said the announcement, in part:

"The Photo-Drama of Creation is remembered by many as a wonderful stimulus to faith and activity. Brethren who saw these pictures often wish they might see them again; others, who never saw them, at times express regret that the Photo-Drama is a thing of the past. As a means of witnessing to others with our message the Photo-Drama was unrivalled . . . . Now in the fulness of time the Drama films will (D.V.) again be seen in England. Prayer has been ascending and there has been a waiting for our Master's leading. As a first step toward a new "film witness" the friends will be able to see, on the screen, some of the pictures which thrilled them in years now past . . . . It is planned to make the first films available to any class or group of friends so desiring. If you can provide a small hall or large meeting-room in your area, write to the office with your request,

and arrangements will be made. There will be no charge, and the brethren who have this work at heart will provide all apparatus and operators."

All went well at the start. The January 1941 "Monthly" gave details of the arrangements. "The object of this effort" it said "is to encourage brethren to arrange Biblical film meetings to which personal friends, neighbours and others may be invited and see for themselves something of the Bible message as we understand it . . . . It is desirable, though not essential, that a brother be appointed to give a short talk after the film explaining some of the matters dealt with, although some may prefer to afford the audience an opportunity for questions instead . . . ."

The first two films thus made available were two well-remembered ones, "The Raising of the Shunamite's Son" and "A Royal Prince", this latter comprising the story of the early life of Jesus from birth to manhood. The project seemed to promise success. The decision to confine the exhibitions to small rooms and limited numbers proved the right one. Gone were the days when these same films had been shown to thousands in places like the London Opera House and many came to the Faith in consequence. Said the "Monthly" for September 1941 "Friends in many parts of the country have now had the opportunity of seeing the first two films in this series. Large groups and small, in halls and homes, have been taken back in memory some twenty-five years or more when first they saw God's great Plan of the Ages declared in picture form . . . . Scotland and Kent, towns in the Midlands and Wales - in short, in every part of the land, has been visited in turn, but yet there is opportunity for those who have not had a visit to make request . . . ."

It would seem that much of the old-time fervour was aroused by these exhibitions. The Easter 1941 Convention at Dewsbury allotted space on its programme to the first two films. Manchester, traditionally always quick to exploit the possibilities of new ideas, made a special and sustained effort and towards the end of the year reported to the country at large via the pages of the "Monthly". "The friends at Manchester have been impressed by the fact that films in colour have their appeal

to the public and have proven a successful medium in presenting Bible themes to interested children and adults . . . . . By leaflet and by newspaper space, attention had been drawn to the message, and the complete effort had shown signal signs of response hardly anticipated. With some diffidence some of the friends had hoped that this modern application of popular appeal might be found to draw the public, and now faith had eventuated into practical reality . . . . . The Shunamite's little son had been instrumental in bringing together those whose hearts joyously sought in the past to serve the Lord, and once again refreshed, brethren united in praise to the Lord in happy service."

At a similar effort organised by the brethren at Darlington, where the visual display was accompanied by a short explanatory discourse, one declared that she had learned more about the Bible that afternoon than in all her life before, and another that he had learned more than in forty years' of church going. Incidents like these only served to increase the confidence of the brethren that a new and fruitful avenue of witness was opening up perhaps to supplant the now obviously outdated "public lecture".

Sadly, this was not to be. The increasing intensity of the war began to render even the limited scale of the exhibitions increasingly difficult and finally impracticable. The films themselves, copied from ancient and more or less worn out originals, were by no means up to modern standards, and when they had been shown once in any one locality there was no real merit in showing them again. By the middle of 1942 their usefulness was coming to an end and any idea of continuing the effort lapsed. It had proved an inspiration to the brethren while it lasted and a number of people were brought into contact with a faith and hope they had not previously known existed, and that was all.

After the war everybody went back to the traditional public lecture. Public halls were becoming available for hire, there were plenty of speakers and plenty of supporting literature. For the next ten years or so there was a veritable plethora of such functions all over the country, organised in the main by individual groups in their own localities or by a fusion of such

working together. The most noticeable of these latter was the "North-West Council of Activity", of which Fred Musk was the guiding spirit, comprising a system of joint action by the brethren in Cheshire and Lancashire, centred at Manchester, whereby public meetings were almost constantly in progress in one town or another. Organised in 1946, this "Council of Activity" was in operation for some twelve or fourteen years thereafter until the enthusiasts behind the project had to admit that results were not worth the effort. There was no fighting against the competition of radio and one hundred and one other attractions which simply did not exist in the earlier days when one had only to put up a notice "Bible lecture in this hall" to have a crowded audience waiting to listen.

The Midlands brethren, banded together under the title, "the Midland Group" carried on a similar work on a lesser scale; in the Newcastle to York area the "North-East Council of Activity" set out in similar fashion but retired much earlier. South Wales did somewhat better, proportionately, but again it did not last. London went in for fewer but larger meetings but apart from a spectacular one at Conway Hall in 1947 when one in four of a crowded audience were so interested in what Fred H. Guard had to say that they left cards asking for further information, not much happened that endured. It was slowly borne in that the day of public meetings in Britain was past, and after 1956 they were generally few and far between.

1941 witnessed a rather unique occurrence in the history of the fellowship. A number of "old-time" brethren who had remained with the original Society when in 1919 the secession movement was organised now seceded in a body, for reasons satisfactory to themselves, and became integrated. They were welcomed as brethren having the same faith and hope, a welcome which to some was somewhat dimmed by the discovery that during the twenty years' separation they had abandoned the characteristic Bible Student view of the Advent, that it commences with the entry of our Lord into the time and space framework of our world, imperceptible to human senses but sensed by his own "watching ones" in consequence of their right understanding of the "signs of the times", followed by the change of the Church to heavenly conditions, the breakdown of

this present world order, and finally his manifestation to all the world with his Church and assumption of control and inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom. This was the vision which had inspired the early Bible Students and made possible the achievements of what was always called the "Harvest of the Age". The newcomers had adopted the normal concept of church theology, that the Advent is to be an instantaneous occurrence, manifested at once to all men, the "Church" being "caught up" into the air to meet him, all this being in the future although imminent.

This view was by no means new. The Advent has been viewed in these terms since the days of the Reformation. Based upon a frankly literal reading of the Scriptures, it suited the mentality of the Fifteenth century and still suits many Christians to-day, but at this time not many of the brethren expected it to be seriously argued as an advance upon what had been held since the inception of the movement as a clearer and more up-to-date understanding of the Divine Plan. But it was not altogether unknown amongst the brethren at this time. For some years past, individuals aggregating a small minority had been thinking and talking along such lines, chiefly within the confines of the Church at Forest Gate, where it eventually became the majority view, so that in 1939 that Church announced it as their generally accepted position. One of the two main Glasgow Churches, known as the "All-sufficient Word Fellowship", followed suit; apart from this there was little support for the thesis. The irruption of this new sizeable contingent, holding the same view, tended to make it more widely known over the country and it began to gain adherents.

Whilst the comparatively small number involved in this secession, emanating chiefly from the Manchester and London areas, cannot be compared with the original separation of 1919-24, when more than three thousand parted company with their former associates to form the present fellowship, there was certainly some repetition of the spirit animating the earlier ones, manifested in a sense of freedom from domination and a revival of enthusiasm for the work of the Truth. (Some of the "old stalwarts" were known to remark that they might have

done it twenty years earlier when the original separation was in progress instead of lending their support to a system which now they were driven to repudiate, but this was really more in the nature of friendly banter than of adverse criticism. Twenty years or no twenty years, ties of friendship and fellowship which had been broken were now restored.)

That sense of freedom and renewed fervour found its outlet in a fairly small gathering held at Queens Square, London, November 22- 23, 1941, to which the brethren generally were invited, and the outcome of this was a kind of manifesto addressed to the brethren generally which was published in full in the "Bible Study Monthly" for January 1942. Its terms were reminiscent of the very similar statement issued in 1919 when the entire country was involved in a similar but much more extensive re-alignment of loyalties. "It was evident" said the report prepared by the organisers "that those gathered at this convention realised the time was ripe when all the Lord's consecrated, having the same hopes and faith, should seek to gather together more and work together in whatever the Lord may have for his people to do . . . ." A statement was prepared addressed to brethren generally and this ran in part "The brethren gathered at this convention in London on Saturday and Sunday, November 22/23, 1941, being of those who find themselves separated from their first association . . . . send love and greetings to all their brethren in Christ. This assembly believes that the Body of Christ cannot be divided . . . . We, therefore, your brethren in London on this occasion, deploring all schism and loss of fellowship in spirit and in work, invite your prayerful attention to this matter . . . . and we, therefore, invite suggestions from all those of like precious faith who desire to know and do his Will". This, of course, addressed to those who for twenty years past had been doing just that, could be construed as preaching to the converted; but the exhortation was received in the spirit in which it was presented and the newcomers must have felt that they were completely integrated.

A periodic journal, "Maranatha" ("The Lord Cometh"), was commenced in 1952, devoted exclusively to matters connected with this understanding of the Advent, and con-



tinued for thirty-six years, during this time acquiring an increasing circle of interested readers and forming a link between brethren who looked upon the Advent as a future event and so were avowedly "looking for his appearing". As an extension of the particular thesis there was commenced in 1950 an annual one-week "Maranatha" conference at which the speakers were expected to specialise on the same general theme. Held during the first few years at the Rosehill Conference Centre at Reading, it transferred later to the more commodious High Leigh Conference Centre at Hoddesdon, Herts, being discontinued in 1980 due to diminishing attendance. The fact that this annual conference represented a view variant to what had always been regarded as one of the fundamental features of the faith did not prevent brethren of both schools of thought from attending the conference and in fact it turned out to be about the most popular and pleasant "get together" of the later years.

During the latter stages of the war a situation was developing which resulted in a fundamental change in the central organisation. The elective basis of the central committee meant that its seven members were drawn from every part of the country and the frequent committee meetings - usually monthly - required that they had to travel long distances every four or five weeks at week-ends. Since they, as a rule, were engaged in employment or business, the only practicable day for such meetings was Sunday. Prior to the war this presented no travel difficulties. The railways offered an excellent service of Sunday excursions between towns at reasonable rates and it was possible for committee members to leave their homes at five or six o'clock in the morning and be at the rendezvous by eleven. Return trains were available at about six and those with the longest journeys would be home by midnight. (Car travel, was, of course, rather unusual in those days and the usual method of travel was by train.) It meant personal sacrifice and devotion to the Cause to mortgage one Sunday in four to this proceeding but all who accepted nomination for election were happy thus to assume the obligation. Up to the time of the Second World War the system worked perfectly well. But the war changed it. Cheap travel facilities were withdrawn, train services reduced with

consequent overcrowding, sundry obligations at home or in the home district rendered the monthly trek increasingly difficult, and the work of the committee began to devolve more and more upon the shoulders of such members as lived in the London area and could get together more easily. It began to be obvious that some kind of a change would have to be made.

Matters came to a head at the July election in 1940. Of the seventeen names nominated by assemblies all over the country only seven felt able to stand for election. Faced with this position, which had never happened before, the Election Scrutineers declared these seven elected, but gave the voting brethren an opportunity to dissent or offer alternative suggestions. None did so, and the seven took office.

A special leaflet had been printed and sent to the secretaries of all meetings and to all known brethren in the country in the following terms:

"A situation without precedent has arisen in connection with this year's election. For the first time since the Committee's inception in 1919, seven brethren only, of the seventeen names nominated by the classes, are prepared to stand for election. Under these circumstances there is no choice to put to the friends for voting, and according to the Constitution of the Committee, these seven brethren properly take up the duties involved.

"It is felt, however, that the peculiar circumstances of the case render it appropriate that the friends generally be given an opportunity of expressing their approval of the situation or expressing their alternative preference. Since the entire control of the Committee and its activities is vested in the brethren of this country, we feel that the present situation may be a means of their realising afresh the responsibilities involved, and that the friends will willingly take their part in the direction of those activities amongst us which are of joint concern.

"In the case of those nominated to stand for election, it is realised that the complexities of the present political situation, longer hours of work, and so on, make it more than ever difficult to give time to the duties which devolve upon Committee members . . . . In these circumstances, therefore, we do ask all brethren everywhere to either indicate their agreement that:

(a) The seven brethren at present in office should continue so until the next election in July 1941, or alternatively

(b) Offer a suggestion as to what other course should be adopted.

"It is the duty of the Election Scrutineers to see that the wishes of the brethren are carried out, and should there be a definite desire for some change in the present arrangements, occasion will be taken to obtain the voice of the brethren throughout the country . . . . . Please send your reply by September 30, 1940, to the Election Scrutineer, Bro. G. Absalom . . . . ."

Came election time in 1941 with the war continuing and this time only seven names were nominated and five of these already serving. When in 1942 the same thing happened it began to look as though the brethren generally felt that the needs in wartime were best served by a permanent committee, and this, on a dispassionate view of the situation, made good sense. With Government controls and all kinds of restrictions affecting the work of the brethren, a considerable amount of contact with various official bodies had become obligatory and this in turn required experience and a measure of continuity which could not be attained with an annually changing personnel. The position was accepted and the, by now, more or less permanent committee soldiered on.

But not without thought and discussion. Did this recurring frustration of the normal elective process indicate a leading to some modification of the traditional organisation? No one knew how much longer the war was going to last nor yet what kind of social order would follow its termination. The outcome of this thought and discussion, after taking into consideration such suggestions as did come in from interested brethren, was the institution of a national referendum asking for guidance and decision on these alternatives. The ballot paper, dated 1st August, 1942, after referring to the matters at issue, said, in part:

" . . . . . The Committee has had the subject under discussion during the year just past, feeling that the position is not altogether satisfactory, and would now like to proffer a further opportunity for interested friends to exercise a vote . . . . . There

are two immediate practical alternatives; one, that the existing Committee remains in office for another twelve months, to be subject to re-election at the expiry of that time, and the other, that a new election be held at once.

"There is a third alternative which may appeal to some, that the Committee shall be re-organised upon a basis especially devised to meet the needs of to-day. Those who feel that an entirely new charter ought to be drawn up to replace the 1919 Constitution may vote for the third alternative, with the understanding that in this case the existing committee remains in office while the new charter is prepared and voted upon. In the event of the third alternative heading the poll, the friends will be called upon to submit their proposals for the new charter."

The result of this ballot, announced in the November 1942 "Monthly", ran:

"Result of postal ballot.

"The Election Scrutineer, Bro. G. Absalom, has made his report, which shows a heavy majority in favour of Alternative 1, viz., that the present committee remain in office until July 1943. This alternative was carried by a majority of 77.6%

"The second alternative, that a committee election be held immediately, polled only 3.4% of votes, and the third alternative, that a new charter defining the committee's activities be prepared and voted upon, commanded 19.9% votes

"The number of brethren who voted is greater than has been the case at any time since 1937."

With this 80% mandate to preserve the status quo there was no option to do other than carry on, and this was the accepted position until the end of the war. Only in 1945, when the end was in sight, did the matter surface again. There had been considerable discussion and the bandying to and fro of the apparently most fitting arrangement for the necessary services during those past two years and now that the time had come to make a decision it was evident that general thought was in the direction of a permanent centre for the production and distribution of literature and the publication of the monthly magazine, leaving the individual churches to go their own way with their own resources. Some of the old activities needing the

aid of a central body, such as public witness afforts, conventions and the like, were well within the abilities of the local city and other churches, and a certain spirit of independence was rife in the community which tended to foster local rather than community effort. It was also recognised, and expressed, that much of the work for which the committee had been organised at the first now needed knowledge and experience of Government regulations which had not been the case previously, and would be operating for a good many years yet, and in the publishing field a knowledge yielded by experience of printing and publishing matters. It was evident that sentiments were tending towards the third alternative of the last poll taken in 1942 and that any new charter would be in the direction of a permanent body responsible for these matters.

Following consultation with various interested brethren, a proposition on these lines was put before the brethren toward the end of 1945 the effect of which was to separate the administration of the Benevolent Fund from the main work of the committee, George Ford to undertake this work. The remainder of the committee's functions, which now only need cover the printing and publishing field, to be concentrated on a permanent basis in South-East London where a community existed able to keep the work going. Several members of the committee who had held on during the war years were desirous of retiring once satisfactory arrangements could be made.

Put to the national poll, the issue was not in doubt. The two Scrutineers, G. Absalom and A. G. Reid, of the Nottingham church, reported 90% in favour and 10% against. The revision of arrangements evidently had general approval and in fact the life of the movement continued without perceptible change.

So the brethren set out in 1946 in reasonably good heart. The organisation for the production of literature and for keeping everyone in touch with everyone else was still there and functioning, and the country as a whole continued to use it. There was still the call for printed matter, leaflets and booklets wherewith the message of the Kingdom might immediately be proclaimed as in the days of yore. During the next eight years nearly a million four or six-page leaflets were printed, mainly by the centre and in part by various city groups such as Forest

Gate, Glasgow, Aldersbrook, Manchester, the Midlands, Darlington, and so on. In 1948 the London centre commenced the issue of a large four-page illustrated newspaper-size publication entitled "Millennial Message" containing various aspects of the general theme presented as "news items" and this was promptly taken up in many quarters and distributed all over the country. In the four years it continued - cost dictated its eventual demise - a quarter of a million copies were put out. Over the ten years 1946 - 1956 ten new booklets were published dealing with various aspects of the Divine Plan, of which the most popular were "God's Fulfilling Purpose" and "A Glimpse of God's Plans"; these, together with the old standard favourites "The Plan of God in Brief" and "The Golden Future" were going out at the rate of seven to ten thousand a year during this period. In addition a new edition of the old booklet "The Promise of His Presence" was produced to reaffirm the basis of the traditional Advent belief. The "Plan of God in Brief" was translated into Swedish by the brethren there in 1948, and into Hebrew in 1953 by some friendly American brethren, and widely used in their relevant spheres. (A copy of the Hebrew version was sent to every Rabbi in the UK for their interest, without pressing or expecting conversion.)

In addition to all this activity the work of the USA Dawn Bible Students Association began to make its impact in UK. The Dawn, a later secession, was born in 1930 and its introduction to the UK was brought about by the committee invitation in 1937 for Norman Woodworth, its then head, to visit this country for an extended tour and to get acquainted. From that time on close relations were maintained. In 1946 the Dawn thought it proper to establish a definite branch depot in this country to store and distribute their characteristic literature among the brethren and this, from that time onward, has been available to the British brethren to the extent they desire.

Keen as the brethren were to get back to the work of evangelism, there was another matter of some importance - the restoration of contact with brethren on the European continent from whom the UK brethren had been separated by war. Virtually no news of their welfare had been received since the

war commenced and there was concern as to their position. Just one letter got through to America in 1942 from an old friend, Carl Luttichau of Denmark, in which he assured all of his welfare, "considering". "I myself, and the friends I have the privilege to serve, are faring very well" he said. "We have freedom to gather round the Bible and even to meet at little Sunday conventions . . . . We have full freedom to send out our little paper in this country. At Christmas time I had the privilege of visiting friends in Stockholm, Sweden . . . . I am still able to travel round the country and meet with little groups."

Contact was speedily made with Denmark and the Scandinavian countries, with Holland, Belgium and Germany. Some had survived, some had not. A well-known visitor to this country, George Van Halewijn of Rotterdam, was among the survivors and together with Carl Luttichau was later to make further visits to the UK. What was now of more importance, however, was the plight of the German brethren. Together with all their compatriots they were suffering, acutely, the aftermath. With a view to seeing what could be done, Harry Nadal of the Aldersbrook church, London, undertook two visits to Germany in 1948. He had already been active for a considerable time organising the sending of food and clothing and now he was to see for himself how matters stood. Crossing first to Holland he made immediate contact with Jacques Alblas and George Van Halewijn, well known from previous years, and then to Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hanover and other places, renewing acquaintance with the brethren at each place, and ascertaining needs still unfulfilled. A heartening aspect was the ready co-operation of the British Military Control in Germany; the outcome of the trip was very fruitful and enabled the more effective organisation of relief.

In 1951 George Jennings and Will Fox undertook a further trip to observe progress and current needs, meeting with warm hospitality wherever they went. In this same year the work still being handled by Harry Nadal was extended to South America, where much distress existed among the brethren there.

By 1957 the need was disappearing; Germany was getting on her feet again. In that year Harry Nadal and Tom Allen made

another visit which this time was more in the nature of a 'pilgrim trip', visiting many of the groups which had been re-established and speaking at a central convention which had been organised at Kirchleugern. Some twenty-four groups in towns all over Germany were visited; thus contact with the German brethren continued into succeeding years.

Visits of USA brethren continued. 1947 saw John T. Read tour the country, making 99 visits to local meetings and 1948 saw him here again, this time only 47 but also a visit to Denmark to serve the brethren there. Our old friend Carl Lutichau came from that country and restored contact broken by the war - sadly, this was his last visit; he passed away in 1955. 1950 was marked by a short trip by Brother Trippler of Germany and a longer one by Russell Pollock of USA, representing the Dawn. Each year to 1960 after that had its visitor, traversing the country and ministering at the meetings, Norman Woodworth in 1951, George Van Halewijn of Holland in 1952, Percy Read, John T. Read, Paul Thomson, Will Siekman, and others. The trips tended to get shorter as the number of meetings available to receive them diminished; the spirit remained the same.

So it was with the conventions. Attendances were decreasing, not because of failing interest but because of the "passing on" of the "old stalwarts". Each year saw the three traditional main gatherings, Easter at Warrington, Midlands at Whitsun, August at Conway Hall, London. In the North, Glasgow, usually at Easter. Lesser ones were held at other weekends at centres such as Manchester and Cardiff. A new venue for an annual Whitsun gathering opened up in 1950 at Portrush, Northern Ireland, where unique facilities existed, and this continued until 1980, when those facilities ceased to exist.

By now there was a teenage postwar generation beginning to assert itself. Knowing little of the movement's pre-1st war history it was only to be expected that they would wish to strike out on their own. A "Young Bible Students Circle" came into operation in 1948 with the ostensible object of making progress in the knowledge of the faith and work of the community. There was great enthusiasm for a while, the organising of "Young Bible Students" conventions and other joint activities, some



attempts at open-air preaching and other methods aimed at proclaiming the good news, long since found relatively ineffective by the older ones – but each generation has to find these things out for itself. After about fifteen years the erstwhile Young Bible Students were that much older and had settled into the ordinary framework of the community and their successors did not seem to have the same degree of zest for this kind of effort so that not so much was heard of it later on. It served to direct and shape the Christian lives of those who initiated it and that perhaps was the reason for its emergence.

1951 saw a change in the name of the journal, which through all the ups and downs of Bible Student history had consistently maintained publication. From “Bible Students Monthly” it became “Bible Study Monthly” and the reason, as given in an explanatory notice, was that the old Society had begun to resume use of the term “Bible Students” in its own work and this was leading to confusion in the minds of readers and others. For much the same reason, and following this lead, many of the groups began terming themselves “Bible Fellowship” preceded by the name of their town. Leicester in 1946 was the first to adopt the term and they were followed from time to time by others so that in the provinces the name has become more or less universal.

By now many of the original workers to whom so much was owed, stemming from the 1910 to 1920 period, were being called to higher service. Henry Shearn, architect of the secession, in 1946; “Father” Guard, of Forest Gate, 1947; Don McLeod of Swansea, 1948; Ben Thatcher of Leicester and Sidney Smith of Manchester, 1949; Morton Edgar of Glasgow, 1950; William McNerlen of Sheffield, 1953; W. Reid Sharp of Newcastle, 1956; John Melville of Barrow and William Crawford, 1957. These all “finished their course with joy” and their loss made a difference.

And now, towards the end of this period, a certain amount of heart-searching was going on among the more serious minded of the older brethren. There was no doubt that progress in the movement was slowing down. The younger generation, in the main, was not following altogether in the way of their fathers, and in some quarters this was causing concern. The fact that the

same phenomenon has been true of every generation since the dawn of history was not fully appreciated by many, and those who did appreciate it were not sure what they could do about it. What was it in the fellowship, its activity, its theology, its demands, which was failing to induce the young to take part in the life of the community as whole-heartedly as had their forebears? How was it that the message of the present Lord and the coming Age of blessing failed to evoke that same rapturous acceptance that it had done in the earlier years of the century? A few years later the answers became apparent; at present they were but questions. And in the meantime the older ones were passing off the scene, increasingly quickly.

This concern resulted in a series of several meetings in London of leading brethren to consider the position. Here, perhaps for the first time, it was felt, and expressed, by some that the development was inevitable. Every generation has to find its own way for itself and if it has the good sense to profit by the works of its predecessors, well and good; "other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours". But if not, it finds the way by experience and no one generation can be expected to follow precisely the previous one. The Bible Student faith itself was the result of a younger generation of sixty years ago building upon the earlier foundation of 19th century Advent expectation and transforming it into something new. Who knows what might yet be expected of the present one?

The outcome of all this was the institution of a monthly meeting at Caxton Hall, London, where young and old could come together for mutual consideration of matters of faith and belief; this became a gathering where attendants from the various London groups and the surrounding areas could come together for what amounted to a series of mini-conventions. A good many found common ground in these meetings, which commenced in 1950 and were not discontinued until 1956. Diminishing attendances dictated the discontinuance and these were consequent upon a factor which was becoming increasingly noticeable, the onset of old age. It was beginning to be realised that the pronounced increase in membership of the brethren in the halcyon days of 1910-20, in the days of the

"Harvest", was now, forty years later, going to be reflected in the consequent departure from this earthly scene of so many of those who had embraced the faith in their thirties and forties, and now were in their seventies and eighties.

And in 1956 there had to be serious consideration of prospects for the future and particularly in what way the message of the Truth could most effectively be proclaimed to the contemporary generation.

Members of Bible Students Committee 1919-1945

	Secretary						
1919	Shearn	Crawford	Edgell	Tharratt	Seager	Guard Sr.	Guy
1920	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1921	"	"	"	Housden	"	"	"
1922	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1923	"	"	"	"	McNerlen	Brett	Palmer
1924	"	"	Thatcher	"	"	"	"
1925	"	Jacobs	"	"	"	"	"
1926	"	Hillary	"	"	"	Wileman	Morrall
1927	"	Holmes	"	"	"	Humphrey	"
1928	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1929	"	"	"	"	Morrall	Court	Smedley
1930	"	Morrall	"	Drinkwater	McNerlen	"	"
1931	"	Holmes	"	"	"	"	"
1932	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1933	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1934	"	"	"	"	Ford	"	"
1935	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1936	Hudson	"	Absalom	Smith	Cruikshank	Couling	Morrall
1937	"	"	"	"	Wenborn	"	Guy
1938	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1939	"	"	Ward	"	Batcheller	Osborne	Boyce
1940	"	"	"	Hall	Ford	"	Sears
1941	"	"	"	"	"	Rew	Allbon
1942	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1943	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1944	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1945	"	"	"	"	"	"	"



**CONVENTIONERS AT HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE  
HODDEDON**



6-PAGE LEAFLETS DISTRIBUTED 1947 ONWARDS



SELECTION OF 16-PAGE PAMPHLETS IN USE 1965 ONWARDS



# MARAN-ATHA

THE LORD COMETH!

READ SAID—  
 "BE YE ALSO READY for ye  
 can't see how ye ARE NOT  
 THINKING, THE SON OF  
 MAN COMETH" Matt. 24  
 "Come ye, Lord Jesus, COME!"

W. G. B.

## THE FOREST GATE CHURCH BIBLE MONTHLY



Vol. 1 No. 1 MARCH-APRIL 1965

Published by THE FOREST GATE CHURCH

Forest Gate Church  
 - a Baptist Ministry  
 "Bible Study for all"  
 The Shepherd of the Flock



### BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

Vol. 11, No. 1 MAY/JUNE 1966  
 Published May 1st First Year July 1st

CONTENTS	
Thought for the Month	10
Man from Marazion	11
The Kingdom of God	16
Deacons in the Church of England & Deacons of the West	20
The Church in the Past	30
"The Christian Power"	44
Letters in the Church	50
The First Phase	52
Quest of Christ	59
The Tenacity Club	71

The Journal is one of the largest in its field and is published monthly and is supported by the voluntary gifts of its readers.

Published by  
 Miss Catherine Clark,  
 11 Church Street, Marazion,  
 Cornwall TR10 9JH

Printed and bound by  
 The Forest Gate Church,  
 11 Church Street, Marazion,  
 Cornwall TR10 9JH

Single copies 1/6 per copy.  
 All other rates on application forms.  
 In a few days you will receive it.

The Dawn  
*Herald of Christ's Presence*  
 November 1966



THE HERALD  
*of Christ's Kingdom*

#### Table of Contents

November 1966  
 November - December

1. Introduction by the Editor  
 2. The Church of Christ  
 3. The Church of Christ  
 4. The Church of Christ

**PERIODICALS IN USE IN UK**  
 ("Dawn" & "Herald" published in USA)