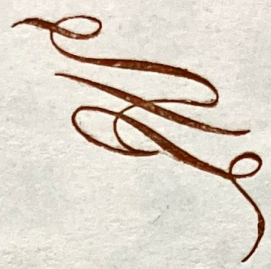
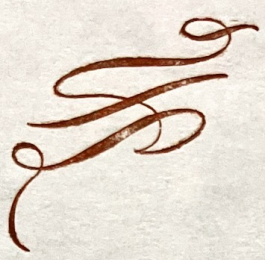


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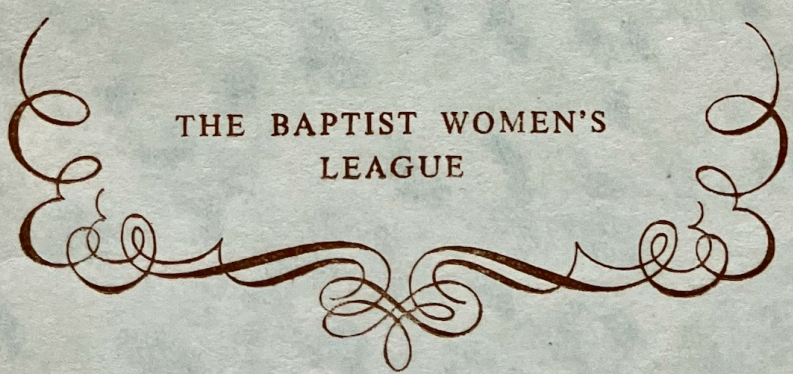


FIFTY YEARS' ACHIEVEMENT

1908



1958



THE BAPTIST WOMEN'S
LEAGUE

Foreword

THE fiftieth anniversary of the women's organization connected with the Baptist Union is a notable event.

It will soon be a hundred years since Baptist women banded themselves together in support of missions overseas. Women had to wait longer to be called to leadership, or to be given a measure of independence, in church affairs in this country, whether local or denominational. In the twenty years before the Baptist Women's League came into existence, Young Women's Guilds occupied some of the energy of the unmarried girls, most of whom lived at home and had time on their hands. Some of the more adventurous went "slumming". A few became the pioneers of the deaconess movement. The first woman speaker on the platform of the Baptist Union appeared in 1889. The first woman delegate to the Assembly was appointed in 1894. The North will no doubt take pride in the fact that she was sent by one of the Manchester churches! But many members of the male sex looked askance at these developments. The growing political agitation of the suffragettes was not, of course, regarded as "proper" for the daughters of deacons and church members, though some of them indulged in it.

The Baptist Women's League offered new opportunities of fellowship and service at a vital moment in the social and religious history of this country. It has been a living, changing thing, as the pages that follow show. The drawing-room meeting and the working-party have almost disappeared. They meant a great deal to our grandmothers and our mothers, and an immense volume of practical achievement lies to their credit. More recently, the women's meeting has filled a great need in the lives of many. Who that was privileged to see Mrs. Rowntree Clifford in action on a Monday afternoon at West Ham will ever doubt that? But the same was true in its own way of meetings in the schoolrooms of village chapels. Here women felt at ease with one another, laughed and cried together and frequently touched the hem of the garment of One who comforts and heals.

Through the binding together of the branches of the League and these women's meetings it proved possible for women to have a large share in the raising of denominational funds, as well as maintaining special enterprises of their own like the Girls' Hostel and, more recently, The Haven. Women have also now secured a larger place in the life and witness of the local church. Women deacons have become even more familiar than deaconesses.

There is much that is worth recalling and gratefully celebrating at this time of Jubilee, but women will want to look forward as well as back. We are again in a period of transition. We hear now of Young Wives' Clubs, of Business and Professional Women's Groups, of Women's Forums and so on. They give confidence that the Baptist Women's League and the Women's Department of the Baptist Union will continue to adapt their organization and service to changing needs and opportunities.

The whole denomination is indebted to those associated with the League and continues to depend on their enthusiasm and generosity.

ERNEST A. PAYNE



Recollections of the Early Years

By the late

Isobel Russell James

How vividly I remember the afternoon in 1908 when my drawing-room was filled with representative women from my father's church, Archway Road Highgate, Muswell Hill and Ferme Park. Dr. Charles Brown and Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke were present and I was in the chair,

and not as nervous as I might have been as the week before I had taken the chair at a large meeting of women Liberals. At that meeting the first branch of the League was formed in London and Mrs. Charles Brown was the local president.

It was not easy going during the early years. There was prejudice to break down. Even personalities such as Miss Margaret Hardy, Mrs. Enoch James, Mrs. Ben Smith, Mrs. Principal Edwards and Mrs. Winsor Bond often had a cool reception. At one meeting when I was in the chair and Mrs. Principal Edwards the speaker, a deacon came up to us saying, "If you two ladies continue to speak in public you will certainly lose your charm and femininity." But the denomination began to get used to us, and, to quote the "Christian World"—"the hoary-headed delegates no longer rubbed their eyes in astonishment to see a young woman mount the rostrum."

It was a red-letter day for me when Sir George Macalpine wrote to say he was willing to arrange a meeting in Accrington. I told my husband when he next played golf with Sir George to let him win. Another early recollection is of going to Torquay in the hope of forming a branch at Upton Vale. At the close of the meeting a lady rose to move a vote of thanks and to support the new cause. It was a brilliant speech and I knew instinctively that this lady was going to mean much to our League. *How* much I did not quite realize. Her name was Mrs. Ernest Brown.

Mrs. C. S. Rose, our first Organizing Secretary, was a remarkable woman. She was always calm and efficient. I used sometimes to fume with what I called "righteous indignation". Mrs. Rose would smile gently at me. We felt "safe" whenever Mrs. Rose was present, for no matter what awkward questions were asked she had the right answer at her finger-tips.

I finish with a sentence I often used when I addressed a Baptist audience—"as long as there is a Baptist Union there will be a Baptist Women's League".

Greetings from the First National President of the League

I pray that the year of Jubilee may be a very happy one and that the work of the Baptist Women's League will continue to grow and prosper. I think with awe and admiration of the many fine women who have occupied the presidential chair and have organized so splendidly for the spread of Christ's kingdom.

My recollections of the early days are of very happy occasions, committees when we rarely disagreed. I have always felt very strongly the importance of providing a happy, healthy home under Christian influences for young girls coming up to London, and my chief interest has always been the Girls' Hostel—from the early days in Mecklenburgh Square to the present day at St. Andrews. I know that countless parents have been grateful for these healthy surroundings.

SARAH M. MARNHAM

Beginnings, 1908-1914

FIFTY years is a very short time. It is well within the memory of some who, being still with us, made much of the history that is here recorded. Yet this short span of years has witnessed so many changes that the turn of the twentieth century could seem centuries ago in its thought and social custom. It is against this background of change and upheaval that the story of the Baptist Women's League must be assessed.

"Men entered the twentieth century with enthusiasm and confidence, and Nonconformists in particular looked forward eagerly, for they had more liberty, prosperity and influence than ever before." (E. A. Payne in *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England*.) Women had succeeded in making their voice heard in the life of the nation, and Baptist women who saw little scope for their energies within the denomination were beginning to look to politics and local government as possible spheres of service. It was at this particular moment that the pent up energies and untried resources of women were sought and harnessed for the life of the Church. There were two factors which contributed to this decision which has had such far-reaching effects. One was the appointment in November 1907 of the Rev. C. S. Rose, then minister of Garland St. Bury St. Edmunds, as Caravan Missioner of the Baptist Union, to engage in evangelistic work and in obtaining money for the Home Work Fund. The second factor was the character of the man who since 1898 had been Secretary of the Baptist Union—the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare. Both men were proved to be gifted for the demands of the days in which they lived.

Within four months of his appointment, C. S. Rose was tackling both the need for evangelism and the need for money with breathtaking courage. In March 1908 at the General Purposes Committee of the Baptist Union "the Secretary reported that the Rev.

C. S. Rose desired to form Ladies' Auxiliaries in various towns throughout the country for the purpose of securing more systematic help on behalf of the Home Work Fund, and it was resolved that the formation of such Auxiliaries be sanctioned, the method of its operations to be under the control of the Secretary." That last phrase could have been ominous for the new venture had not the Secretary been the statesman he was! T. R. Glover in summing up the contribution of J. H. Shakespeare to the denomination, says of him—"Shakespeare taught Baptists to form large ideals for their Church, to conceive of it as a great society where differences of tradition should not outweigh the fact of a common faith, where women should have their function as well as men, to realize it in its worldwide range and significance, and to live more consciously as members one of another."

The Baptist Union Council, composed entirely of men, approved the formation of a Ladies' Auxiliary, and a month later its General Purposes Committee drew up a constitution for the "Baptist Women's Home Work Auxiliary". It was to be a department of the Union, under the control of the Council which would nominate ten of its committee, leaving the women to elect ten more at an annual meeting. It is an interesting reflection of the times that they conceived the objects of this Auxiliary to be the development of the Home Work Fund, the promotion of evangelism and colportage, welcoming church members passing from one district to another, and assisting Baptist girls seeking situations.

Within a week of this decision being taken the Assembly meetings were in full swing and a special meeting of women was called together in the council chamber of the Church House. Fifty-two women were present from all parts of the country. There were representatives from Plymouth and Plumstead, Birmingham and Beckenham, Derby, Stratford-on-Avon, Chudleigh and Cambridge, Manchester, Cardiff and Oxford and many other places. To them was outlined the suggestion of the Council by C. S. Rose and J. H. Shakespeare, and they promptly appointed a committee to put the scheme into operation.

It is surprising perhaps that the thrill and surge of new life can be recaptured from the pages of dusty volumes in decaying leather bindings—pages bearing the minutes of these meetings held fifty years ago. But so it is, and even their formal and self-consciously business-like phrasing cannot disguise the vigorous character of the women who accepted this adventure. This provisional committee met and promptly altered the management section of the constitution drawn up by the men! Their provisions were practical, and they decided to appoint a lady as deputation and organizing secretary for a year and a chairman to hold office for three years, while retaining the Baptist Union President, Secretary and Treasurer as officers of the Auxiliary.

Mrs. C. S. Rose was appointed as Secretary and Mrs. H. Marnham as Chairman, and, such was their vision and enthusiasm, that within six months they had planned for the annual meeting to take

Organising and Deputation Secretaries of the Baptist Women's League



*Miss Doris M. Rose, M.B.E. (now Mrs. T. G. Dunning)
1934-48 and Secretary for Deaconess Work till 1956*



Miss Lois Chapple (1944-)



Mrs. C. S. Rose (1908-33)

place in Assembly week; Mrs. Rose had reported on the work of the Auxiliary to the Home Work Fund Committee and the Auxiliary was asked to nominate six of its members to serve on that committee of the Baptist Union; no less than seven meetings had been planned to propagate the Auxiliary in various parts of London, Bury St. Edmunds, Stratford-on-Avon and Worcester; Mrs. Rose was booked to speak at a Women's Rally at the Buckinghamshire Association meetings in May 1909. The first of these meetings to take place was the one planned by Mrs. Russell James in her home in Highgate on 22nd November, 1908, and it was to be reported in the *Baptist Times*.

By October 1909 the cumbersome title of Ladies' or Women's Auxiliary to the Home Work Fund seems to have died a natural death and the Baptist Women's League crept into the minutes, unheralded, until it was made the official designation in 1910. By this time forty-two towns had been visited and seventy meetings held, and branches, some in individual churches and some in a group of churches, were springing up rapidly. National committee dates had already clashed with those of the Zenana Missionary Society, as the women's work of the Baptist Missionary Society was then called, and they had agreed not only to avoid such clashes but to discuss the possibilities of closer co-operation between the two groups. They visualized their future as promoting foreign mission work as well as undertaking evangelistic work themselves, encouraging women to speak, to pray, to study the Bible, to work among young women, visit maternity cases, become acquainted with the work of the denomination—and enlist the sympathy of the deacons of Baptist Churches. Evidently deacons in those days were a formidable and therefore strategic body to be won. At this time also, Mrs. Rose was appointed the B.W.L. representative on the newly-formed Women's Auxiliary of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, and the League was thus linked with other Free Church women who were finding new opportunities for service.

It was about this time that the Sustentation Fund was envisaged to commemorate the Tercentenary of the modern Baptist denomination, and the women were enlisted to raise £50,000 as their share of it. This did not daunt them, but called forth much energy and planning for bazaars (one B.W.L. member made one-and-a-half tons of toffee at a profit of £100), and for deputations of speakers to visit churches, and for further itinerations on the part of Mrs. Rose who appealed for the fund and started B.W.L. branches at the same time in parts of the country hitherto unvisited.

In 1911 Dr. Shakespeare reported to the annual business meeting of the League that ten ladies had been co-opted as members of the Baptist Union Council. England was invited by the Baptist World Alliance to send a woman speaker to their meetings in Philadelphia and later, in Stockholm, and the League sent Mrs. Bonwick and Mrs. Rose. While the League was busily engaged in promoting the Sustentation Fund, it also welcomed the proposal to start a Girls' Hostel although this meant taking responsibility for raising

money to acquire and furnish a house. This project was first mentioned in November 1910, and by June 1912 it was opened. There were eighteen residents and a matron had been found and appointed with the princely salary of £20 per annum.

As the work of the League widened so the constitution was constantly under revision, and in 1913 the first suggestion appears for making a printed report of the work. By 1914 the energy and ideas seemed boundless as women were enlisted by the churches to visit members and encourage them to participate in the first simultaneous collection, and Mrs. Rose prepared a paper for the annual meeting on "The Future Work of the B.W.L." Much of what she saw for the future had to be abandoned because of the outbreak of war, but there seemed to be no premonitions of this disaster and thoughts turned to social work and further developments of the League. Plans were made for publishing a periodical—how often our thoughts have turned in this direction! A girls' department was to be started as a junior auxiliary to the League. It was urged that a Nurses' Guild should be started; and only the desire to complete the Sustainment Fund deterred them from beginning convalescent homes for working women. Branches of the League were to be circulated with a leaflet drawn up by Mrs. Rose and Dr. Florence Willey on how to start schools for mothers. Indeed many of the ideas that have seemed so new to us in the last two or three years are here in the first flush of adventure, doomed to be buried by the tides of war.

II. The War Crisis, 1914-1918

EXACTLY a month after the National Committee had seen so many avenues of service opening up for the League it met again to consider the policy it should follow on the outbreak of war. Mrs. Rose and Dr. Shakespeare had been in consultation with the officers of the Congregational Women's League which was proposing to undertake relief work. A manifesto, sent to the women of the Baptist denomination, stressed the importance of organizing effort to avoid overlapping and waste. "During the last two years the League has rendered signal service to the denomination but it is now called upon to serve the nation at large. The appeal has reached us all . . . for simplicity of life, self-denial, sympathy between rich and poor, and for quietude and self-control under success or disaster. Recommendations followed for all kinds of service, and women were urged to take the places of those called away for war service.

The record of the next four years shows how well this programme was implemented. Thousands of garments of all kinds—mufflers, body belts and flannel shirts included, were collected and despatched. Hospital requisites, books, soap, candles, a gramophone and records, and a portable organ to supply the needs of chaplains and men overseas were collected, not to mention funds for equipping canteens at home, and the raising of nearly £4,000 for an appeal for re-housing French Protestants. In 1917 there was a national food economy campaign and branches held food economy meetings with

demonstrations; they were asked to "practise strict economy in food provided at public teas".

But this is by no means the full story of the war years. New branches and federations continued to spring up, although wartime conditions made deputation visits difficult. The Scottish Women's Auxiliary was invited to send a representative to the national committee; definite suggestions were made to branches for co-operation with the existing meetings of the Women's Missionary Association, and the fostering of joint meetings. It was also suggested that a permanent joint committee should be appointed, but this does not seem to have been done, and it was 1927 before a Joint Standing Committee was mentioned for the planning of a united conference at Swanwick. The hostel was maintained and its accommodation taxed to the utmost. Its charges had to be increased because of the rise in the cost of living. The Sustentation Fund was still a major concern of the women, and a Penny a Month Fund was started in order to increase the minimum stipend of ministers who had children.

Women representatives were in many cases elected for the first time on to Area and Association committees both in London and the provinces.

They were concerned also with the administration of the ordinance of Baptism, and designs for baptismal gowns were invited through the medium of the *Baptist Times*. Eventually two designs were selected as being suitable for female candidates and these were recommended to churches together with a pamphlet prepared by them "containing suggestions for the conduct of a baptismal service with a view to increasing the reverence and decorum of the administration of the ordinance".

During these years the thought of a Girls' League was constantly before them. Plans were made first of all for a joint organization linking up the B.M.S. Girls' Auxiliary and a B.W.L. Girls' League, then they were abandoned because 1915 seemed an inopportune time for beginning new things. But this bee was still buzzing a year later, and in her presidential address Mrs. Russell James drew attention to the "need of training and using after the war the abilities and enthusiasm of the girls who have entered so freely upon national service. With this end in view a scheme has been drawn up and all branches of the League have been approached and advised to form Girls' Leagues or Junior Branches in affiliation with the senior organization. The promotion of devotional meetings amongst girls themselves and definite training in social service will prove of great value when the present abnormal activity is over." In 1917 four or five of these junior branches were formed and ten are recorded in 1918. By the following year it was suggested that the Girls' League should be united with the Young People's Department and that seems to be the end of that experiment, though this concern for the younger generation came to fruition again in another post-war age, as we shall see.

Schools for mothers did not materialize, though plans were being

made during the early stages of the war, neither did the periodical materialize, and nothing more was heard of the convalescent homes. The Nurses' Guild did appear two years after the war. It was the unforeseen need which suddenly emerged and swept up all the energies and enthusiasm of these years. A letter was sent to the Baptist Union Council from the Baptist Deaconesses' Home and Mission asking for its help and co-operation. This appeal was passed on to the B.W.L. National Committee in November 1917 which responded at once "in view of the importance of women's work in the churches, especially after the war" and offered to assist in any committee that should be appointed to re-organize the work "and put it upon an efficient and satisfactory basis". There ensued an orgy of committees. The work of the Deaconesses' Home and Mission was deeply appreciated, and it was felt to be essential that their ministry among the poor should be continued. At the same time much thought was given to the problem of providing special training for women anxious to serve the denomination. This question of the training and place of women in the Church was also uppermost in the mind of the Free Church Women's Council, and a small sub-committee was appointed from the Baptist Union Council and the B.W.L. to consider the Free Church Women's suggestions, but there is no record of their deliberations and it may be that the task of re-organizing the Deaconess work appeared to fulfil a modest part of these proposals, and to be a big enough venture in itself.

This project was undertaken with characteristic energy and funds were immediately raised to give a war-bonus of £10 to every Deaconess engaged in church work, and to begin a fund for training; methods of selection of applicants were agreed, and it was thought possible that New College, Hackney and Regent's Park College and, later, Spurgeon's College might make special arrangements for training women academically and practically.

It was at this hopeful and forward-looking stage that hostilities ceased among the nations and the November Committee of the League sent a message to the Prime Minister congratulating him "on the success of his efforts to secure the victory of the allied cause".

III. Between the Wars, 1919-1939

FROM this time onward the Deaconess work figures prominently in the thinking of the League. By the end of 1919 the women had raised £560 for the Deaconess Fund, the old premises had been given up and new ones acquired in Hampstead, and named Havelock Hall. A Principal had been found and appointed—Miss K. Dunn. She wished to prepare herself to undertake the "training of women for various forms of service in the churches and for the work among the poor". It was agreed that she should take a year for study—Carey Hall and Oxford both being suggested as possibilities. Until such time as she was ready to take charge, Havelock Hall was put in the care of a Warden and Miss Kate Marnham undertook this

duty. The Leaders of the League were ready to do anything when their hearts were set upon a project they saw as vital to the advancement of the Kingdom. A three years' curriculum was planned to include theological study, social work and nursing. Contact was made with the Student Christian Movement with a view to enlisting university trained women as candidates for Deaconess work.

Meanwhile the challenge of furnishing and equipping the new premises, which provided accommodation for between twenty and thirty students, found a ready response and many gifts were forthcoming. Within the year from the time the premises were acquired, Havelock Hall was opened, on 2nd October, 1920 as the official training college for the Baptist Sisterhood. There were eleven students in residence, three of whom were accepted B.M.S. candidates. Six months later the College and Sisterhood Committee became a regular committee of the Baptist Union.

So far so good, but at the end of two terms the Principal felt impelled to offer her resignation. Who should be asked to tide them over this crisis but Mrs. C. S. Rose! She took up residence at Havelock Hall in 1921, not knowing then that it would be a full two years before the appointment of Miss Jean Arthur, M.A., as Principal. During this time she gave lectures to the students on Sunday School work and Missions, as well as carrying the responsibilities of the League which were growing greater with the years. All this must have told on her physically, but she had an indomitable spirit.

In the autumn of 1922 a Linen Guild was formed in order to keep an adequate supply of household linen for the Training College and the Hostel. Mrs. F. W. Winpenny of Ferme Park, and Mrs. W. H. Mayne of Cardiff undertook this work for England and Wales respectively, and urged League members to contribute one article a year. So splendidly did the women respond that hundreds of articles poured in during the succeeding years and in 1927 not only were the needs of Havelock Hall and the Hostel met, but the Percy Illingworth Institute was also assisted—and the newly opened "Child Haven" of West Ham Central Mission. In 1932, Mrs. Winpenny died and Mrs. Henry Cook of Ferme Park consented to take on the oversight of the Linen Guild. This work continued until the Second World War when rationing of textiles caused it gradually to cease.

The Nurses' Guild, envisaged in 1914, and deferred in 1915, came into being in 1920, and for ten years gave unique service to hundreds of nurses of many nationalities working in London hospitals. There were practically no facilities in the hospitals of those days for the recreation and well-being of the nursing staff. To meet this need the League, through the energy and insight of Mrs. Carey Bonner, obtained the use of a room at Bloomsbury Central Church. This Rest Room was open from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. every Wednesday and Mrs. Bonner and her helpers were there to give refreshment and friendship to all who availed themselves of it. The matrons of all London hospitals were informed and many of them wrote later expressing deep appreciation of the care thus given to

their staffs. During the first year of this experiment no less than twenty hospitals were represented by nurses who paid six hundred visits to the room. In two years, thirty hospitals were represented, and in the third year of its existence the League seriously considered the advisability of opening the room daily instead of weekly. For ten years this work among nurses was carried on faithfully and inspired the setting up of similar amenities in connection with St. Andrew's Street Church, Cambridge. By 1930, however, the majority of London hospitals had improved their own amenities so much that the attendances at "Bloomsbury" were decreasing, and the League decided the Guild was no longer necessary. Instead, it was suggested that members should make contact with individual nurses and probationers and offer them the friendship of their homes. The "Bloomsbury" branch of the League held special quarterly social gatherings for nurses, and these were continued until 1932. It is good to see that the women who had the vision to meet a special need also had the courage to stop when the real job they set out to do was accomplished.

War relief work was gradually closing down but an appeal for help made in 1921 for continental Baptists and to relieve famine in Russia was immediately taken up, and within a short time eighteen bales of clothing alone were sent to Moscow. Five years later with a crisis in the Welsh mining valleys the B.W.L. and the Deaconesses took immediate steps to provide new and secondhand clothes, and to care for Welsh girls working away from home, and in some cases to remove them from unscrupulous employers who exploited their youth and inexperience. Special mention is made of a church in Ilford which ran a club for Welsh girls in domestic service. The aftermath of this crisis in the stagnation of unemployment gives the background to much of the work of the League and the deaconesses in the years that followed. Through all this period until 1939 there runs the thread of care and concern for the material needs of women and children as well as the running of clubs and lifting of morale for the unemployed.

In planning for the Annual Meeting to take place during the Assembly at Leeds in 1926 it is curious to find the one and only reference during all the years to industry, except that in 1924 there was a B.W.L. representative on the deputation that waited on the Home Secretary in connection with the Factories Bill. The state of the country had suddenly, perhaps, made an impact on their thinking. We are not given any clue to the reasons why the B.W.L. planned meetings to take place for three days for industrial women workers in the dinner hour. Unfortunately we are not told any more about them and cannot gauge the success of this venture. There is, in fact, no direct reference to the General Strike which was coming to a head during this assembly and which caused the Baptist Union Council then to say that it "views with deep and solemn concern the imminent prospect of an economic and social struggle involving immense financial loss . . . and irretrievable civil and moral evils especially through the embitterment of feeling between classes and

individuals. . . . The Assembly believing that the roots of evil in social and economic relations are moral and spiritual calls the churches to earnest prayer that the spirit of conciliation and goodwill may govern those who exercise influence and authority." Their concern was only too well founded.

Although the schools for mothers so enthusiastically outlined in 1914 as an expansion of League activities never came into being, the need for helping young women and particularly young mothers was never very far from the thinking of the League. In 1922 the national committee asked branches to assist them by "members sometimes remaining in charge of the home while the mother attended the services or League meetings." They decided to recommend young mothers to attend the various clinics and schools where instruction was given in Child Psychology and the Care of Infants.

At this time too, the denomination was embarking on an Evangelistic Campaign, and the areas were asked to include women in their planning committees, and League members were urged to assist particularly by visiting the homes of Sunday School children and talking to the mothers. Again in 1931 when the Union was planning the Discipleship Campaign, the help of women, both of the League and the W.M.A. was sought, and many of them gave up a week's holiday to make contacts with women in villages and country districts, visiting them and holding meetings.

In 1932 it was the needs of the young business women that claimed attention and three Saturday afternoon conferences were planned for them. These "discovered a wealth of talent among our younger women". And although there is no further record of such conferences or what they did with the talents thus discovered, it is interesting to find that in 1934 some branches were experimenting with occasional evening meetings to cater for younger women who were at work all day. Mrs. J. N. Britton who was appointed in 1938 as the League's travelling representative to organize and develop women's work in the churches, recommended the use of study and discussion groups to "bring into the League the younger women of the churches to whom we must look for our future leadership".

For twenty years or more the need to think constructively for young wives and business women had been seen clearly by the few. It took the upheaval of a Second World War to galvanize the rank and file into action, so that what could not be achieved in time of peace became a necessity in time of strain and a priority when all values were being challenged.

It is interesting that a similar thread of thought runs through the years concerning some kind of magazine specially to promote B.W.L. interest, though in this case the thread has not yet woven itself into a permanent place in the pattern. The periodical planned in 1914 was dropped completely. By 1922 the achievements of the League were respected in the churches, so that when the denomination wished to increase the sales of the *Baptist Times* they tried to find an agent in every church through the League. At the same time it was agreed that the paper should give space for a women's column to be

the organ of the League, the column to be conducted by Mrs. Rose. How long this lasted we do not know, but in 1925, only three years later, the women sought to re-introduce a B.W.L. column in the paper. They visited Dr. Carlile who "did not approve of columns" with a request that the page devoted to women's work might be shared by the B.W.L. to advance the denominational interest. Huddersfield branch had written asking for weekly articles in the *Baptist Times* or for the production of a small magazine. The latter suggestion was deferred. In 1928 the question of a quarterly periodical came up and was deferred. In 1931 the *Baptist Times* agreed to accept monthly articles about women's work written by Mrs. Rose. The idea of a printed letter was used by Dr. Aubrey in October 1928 to inform branches of the illness of Mrs. Rose and how the work would be dealt with in her absence. It came to the fresh and active mind of Miss Doris Rose in 1936 to suggest to the General Committee that quarterly news letters should be sent to branch secretaries, and from then onwards printed letters have been a regular source of information to the branches. These, however, did not quite fulfil the purpose that a more public organ would have done, and in May 1939 the League was indignant that the lady who wrote under the disguise of "Dora" in the *Baptist Times* could say: "I am not familiar with the Baptist Sisterhood". Miss Rose was despatched to see Dr. Carlile and ask that such ignorance be rectified!

Although the League raised vast sums of money for all sorts of funds and appeals, its own finance was a constant challenge. In 1922, for instance, it had raised more than the target of £8,000 for the West Ham Mission Building Fund but there were deficits on the Hostel and Havelock Hall, and the need for making a superannuation fund for deaconesses was urgent. In 1923 the League decided to have no more bazaars to raise its income but to hold a gift and thank-offering week in October instead, and to precede the week with a Women's Sunday—an innovation from Wales. In 1925 the need was so acute especially in relation to Havelock Hall and all deaconess work that the League took special responsibility for publicizing the work, and Sister Margaret Evans was appointed by the Training College committee to do propaganda work for twelve months, which she did so successfully that it was extended into two years.

In spite of this and the re-organizing of Havelock Hall itself, the decision was taken in 1929 to close it and to organize a small training centre in connection with the church at King's Cross. Havelock Hall was sold and Hillside, Camden Town acquired, and a deaconess—Sister Gertrude Kendall, became Warden. It is interesting to note that when the college had moved to smaller premises and its curriculum was narrowed down to the requirements of a much shorter course of training, there was a solitary inquiry for the training of a minister's wife which was refused on the score that there was "no room at present". The history of the Deaconess work has already been written, but no history of the League could be made without reference to it, for they are inextricably bound together. Every League

committee was concerned with some aspect of this work, branches helping to maintain sisters in new districts and, as in the case of Wood Lane, Dagenham, organizing women's work with the deaconess in charge, giving days or weeks to visit from house to house.

In order to assess their finances properly and to clarify their relations with the Baptist Union, the B.W.L. suggested to the Union in 1924 that a Women's Work Department of the Union should be formed to include the League, the Sisterhood, Training College and Hostel. An interim committee was set up in 1926. The number of committees that are set up and then leave no trace of their living or dying is vastly intriguing. This one seems to have been buried, for it was nine years later that the question of a Women's Department suddenly burst on the scene again. This time it came almost as a Christmas present from the Baptist Union to the League. On the 17th December, 1935 the Finance Committee of the Union sent a letter to the B.W.L. suggesting the co-ordination of all the women's work. This time the proposition was discussed by all the women's committees and they agreed to the formation of such a department, stipulating that the existing National Executive Committee of the League be the governing body of the department. Their deliberations continued until the end of 1937 and were successfully concluded in the establishment of the Women's Department in January 1938.

During these years the League itself was growing steadily, new branches being recorded every year. It was also making links with women in other ways. In 1920 it affiliated to the League of Nations Union—and the need to work for peace was constantly urged upon the members. In 1921 it affiliated to the Women's Consultative Council. By 1924 there were many overseas links with Baptist Women's Organizations, which affiliated to the B.W.L. including South Africa, Jamaica, Ceylon and Australia. In 1931 the suggestion was first made that women's meetings in Baptist churches should be able to affiliate to the B.W.L. and the following year this policy was adopted. In 1932 the League joined for the first time in meetings for the Women's World Day of Prayer in London, Bristol, Birmingham and other centres, and interest and support for this has increased with the years. By 1936 the League Report observes that "the art of co-ordinating all the women's work in a church through the League is becoming increasingly important as opportunities for service by women develop".

Perhaps the most important of all these impulses towards co-operation is to be seen in the development of prayer and work with the Baptist Missionary Society's W.M.A. As we have seen, this was indicated within the first year of the League's existence. A new impetus in this direction came in 1924 when the two organizations formed a small joint committee to plan the holding of regular prayer meetings. The first of these became a conference on "The Place of Women in the Church". Three years later the W.M.A. Officers requested a meeting with the Officers of the League and as a result a Joint Standing Committee was formed with an educational sub-

committee attached to it. Their first decision was to hold a united day of prayer in June, and this practice was only discontinued recently when the Baptist Women's Day of Prayer was adopted in conformity with the custom of the women of the Baptist World Alliance to hold a day of prayer at the beginning of December. Their next decision was to plan for a united conference to be held in the autumn of 1928 at Swanwick. This turned out to be so stimulating an experience that a second was planned for 1930 and so the biennial conferences began which have meant so much to the women of the denomination.

The educational sub-committee's name is self explanatory. They felt very strongly the need to give definite teaching "to replace the somewhat irrelevant and peripatetic discourses which are often regarded as suitable for women's meetings." They produced their first educational programme in 1929 entitled "The Christian Way of Life". They continued to produce various kinds of helpful material and in 1938 the first series of "Everywoman's Bible Readings". Two thousand six hundred copies were issued for the first quarter and the demand increased during the following year. 1938 also saw the publication of studies on the Tambaram Conference which met under gathering war clouds to assess the work and message of the world church. This need for definite teaching is not met just once, but continues in every generation, and the battle goes on for the minds as well as the hearts of women in the churches.

In 1924 the Baptist Union faced the necessity of finding a successor to Dr. Shakespeare, whose health had been giving much concern and made his resignation imperative. The Union therefore requested the B.W.L. to appoint two representatives to serve on the sub-committee to appoint a new General Secretary, and they chose Mrs. Edwards of Cardiff and Mrs. Rowntree Clifford of London.

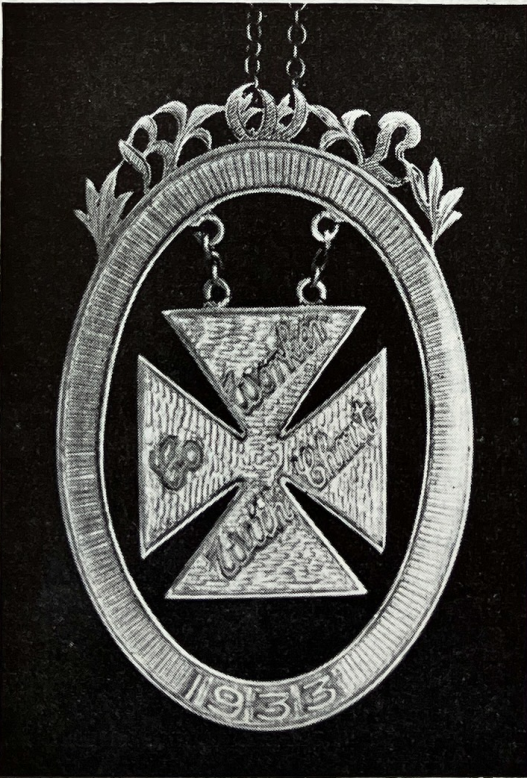


Residents in the Common Room at the Girls' Hostel

It is gratifying to know that the League had a share in the appointment of the Rev. M. E. Aubrey.

From 1925 there were constant excursions and alarums about the Hostel lease, and the premises became more expensive and inadequate, until at last there was nothing to do but search for new premises. These were found in 1934 at 54, Amhurst Park, Stamford Hill, which was leased for three years from the B.M.S. This house was sold in 1938, and the Hostel eventually established again in 1939 at St. Andrews, Green Lanes. It had been doing too valuable a work to be discontinued, and so once more new premises had to be found and equipped. This time the house was bigger than any previous one, with accommodation for thirty-eight girls.

In 1929 the B.W.L. came of age. This was celebrated by the production of a special "Coming of Age" leaflet which gave briefly the history of developments since 1908; by the raising of a Birthday Thank-offering Fund; and by the unexpected presentation by Mrs. F. A. Parsons of a Presidents' Bible at the Annual Meeting. It was agreed also to make a presentation to Mrs. Rose whose inspiration during the twenty-one years had never wavered. Hard on the heels of this came the Semi-Jubilee which also called for some kind of celebration. It seems, inevitably, that our minds turn to the giving of thanks in tangible ways—and a Semi-Jubilee Thank-offering Fund was planned. Gifts of twenty-five coins were to be collected in small bags, the material for which was given, and the bags made by a



few of the members. It had been agreed in 1928 that when the Assembly was held in the provinces, the B.W.L. should hold a separate annual meeting in London for the London branches. In 1933 the Assembly was held in Glasgow. The Semi-Jubilee Fund was launched and the bags distributed in May 1933 in the Kingsgate Chapel. This was followed by a luncheon at the Kingsley Hotel, the Sisterhood Annual Meeting at "Bloomsbury" in the afternoon, a tea for five hundred representatives of the League at the Y.W.C.A. and an evening meeting at "Bloomsbury". At the May General Committee

a minute records thanks to "Mrs. E. Masey Walker for her kind thought in presenting to the League in commemoration of the Semi-Jubilee, a badge of office in gold and blue enamel to be worn by the President during her year of office". In October, only five months later, the bags were received by Mrs. H. Marnham and the Fund totalled £1,295 7s. 11d. (could not someone have put in that odd penny?). This was increased by an additional £40 from Bristol who were unable to be present at the meeting. This money was to be used "for the support and extension of Christian social service enterprise", for the Training College and grants to sisters, for the work at Wood Lane, Dagenham, for the general work of the League, and to augment the Sisterhood Superannuation fund by £300.

These celebrations must have been tinged with a sadness that had not been present at the coming of age rejoicings—the knowledge that Mrs. Rose had reached retiring age and that they must bid farewell to her in 1934. For many people she must have been synonymous with the League, having served it for the twenty-six strenuous years of its existence. Members of the General Committee met in the summer of 1934 in Mrs. G. J. Rowley's garden and bade her farewell. In January 1936 she died suddenly "having seen this movement include thousands of women in over five hundred branches".

The Sub-Committee appointed in July 1933 to find a successor to Mrs. Rose must have felt they faced an important and difficult problem; as the Rev. M. E. Aubrey reminded them, Mrs. Rose's appointment had been an almost casual thing compared to the task which confronted them. The result of their careful work was that on 20th November, 1933 Miss Doris Rose was introduced to the General Committee. She was not related to Mrs. Rose. For eight and a half years she had been the Secretary of the Girls' Life Brigade, and had travelled widely throughout the country, now she was to take on the responsibilities of a still growing and unpredictably developing movement. Mrs. H. G. Hughes was the incoming President for 1934 and was perhaps the first president to make a policy of meeting branch and district officers on her travels. In the following years, regional conferences were held, the work of the League was reviewed and the need for evangelism at home clearly seen. Once more the Training College was moved, this time to Putney. In 1935 the title "Sisterhood" was changed to the "Order of Baptist Deaconesses" to avoid confusion with the Sisterhood movement. In 1938 they were trying to survey the organization and function of the Order, and still needing more candidates and money to support the college and the work. In 1939 a new principal was appointed—Miss E. Webb Samuel, on the resignation through ill-health of Sister Gertrude Kendall.

By 1939 there were six hundred and forty-four branches of the B.W.L.; women went on thinking and planning, praying and evangelizing. There was a tenacity and a purpose which threats of war, and war itself could not shake. In September 1939 they determined that "branch activities and departmental responsibilities should be maintained as far as possible".

IV. The Second World War, 1939-1945

WAR! As the first months of 1939 ran their courses, it was evident that war clouds were becoming more menacing and by midsummer it was no longer a question of "if" but "when" this country would again be involved in a life and death struggle for existence and freedom. By the early days of September, for the second time in twenty-five years, aggression had to be met by force and the nation found itself at war.

Long before the outbreak of hostilities it was obvious that, with the advance in aviation, in science and in methods of modern warfare, conditions would be totally different from those obtaining in 1914. Among other things, one had to face the fact that large sections of the civilian population would be in the front line of battle. As a consequence of this, the Baptist Union in common with everyone else, had to face new situations. Many problems that arose vitally concerned the women of the country and the B.W.L. members and branches were called upon to accept new responsibilities. These were faced in the spirit of fortitude and endurance and the record of the war years is one of which all may be justifiably proud.

At the outbreak of war it was uncertain whether the Baptist Union would be able to keep headquarters in London. The decision to remain, unless and until driven out, was generally approved. As the war advanced it became increasingly difficult to carry on and when the B.W.L. office was damaged by incendiary bombs in September 1940 and rendered uninhabitable the work was still continued in a schoolroom basement under Kingsgate Chapel. The present rooms on the third floor of the Church House became available in 1945.

The evacuation of many women and children from specially dangerous areas, as well as the calling up of both men and women for the armed forces and other war activities meant the break-up of many homes and the invasion of others by strangers. The Leagues in the reception areas were encouraged to do their utmost to facilitate the settling in of the evacuees and to promote their well-being. In many of the country churches working parties, clubs for mothers and play centres for children were set up and maintained during the war years as the need arose. The Christian grace of hospitality was extended to the "strangers within the gates" and to the members of the Forces who found themselves in temporary camps and barracks. Many would testify to having "entertained angels unaware", and lasting friendships have strengthened the bonds between city and provincial churches. The tales of those who went and those who received would make varied and interesting reading!

The fact that so many men and young people were of necessity away from all the churches meant that new tasks had to be undertaken by the women. Positions of influence and authority, formerly occupied by men in the churches, were being filled by women, and a number of B.W.L. members found themselves for the first time on

diaconates and having to shoulder the responsibility for maintaining the church's witness in the community. The record of such service is one of the great chapters in the history of many of the churches. Many women also willingly staffed canteens, Red Cross posts, Rest Centres and First Aid Centres.

At the request of a special committee set up by the Baptist and Congregational Unions the Women's Department undertook the despatch of packages to men and women in the Forces and to Chaplains. This work was later extended to the distribution of clothing and food parcels, including special gifts from Canada, Australia and the U.S.A., to civilians who had suffered in air-raids. Many B.W.L. members in London and nearby areas gladly gave of their time and energy to this work.

Many more women than in 1914-18 were engaged on war service and soon there was a demand for social work among girls, especially in the provision of talks and lectures of various kinds for women by women. Miss Rose (now Mrs. T. G. Dunning) and Miss Webb Samuel (now Mrs. Coke Norris) the then Principal of the Deaconess Training College, represented Baptist women on an inter-church Council, the Churches' Committee for work among Women in the Forces. A number of Baptist women able to help in this work gladly responded to the invitation. The scope of this Committee grew rapidly and a scheme was evolved for the appointment of full-time women workers with the official title of Chaplains' Assistants, who had official status and access to camps in all three services, and who were able to make valuable contacts and to be of real help to girls in the Forces. Two of the Free Church vacancies were filled by Baptist deaconesses.

All the while these extraordinary tasks were being tackled the work of the League both locally and at Headquarters was being maintained. In many cases the times and format of the regular meetings had to be altered, but one is encouraged to know that in spite of the difficulties and changed circumstances the witness was steadily maintained even in places of continuing danger.

As early in the war as 1941 it became evident that there was a need for some kind of leadership training and in response to many requests a Correspondence Course was inaugurated to help women in the conduct of women's meetings and in public speaking. A panel of honorary tutors was prepared and the work was organized. In the following year a Commission of Younger Women was set up. In 1943 this Commission was constituted a standing committee of the Department with the title of Younger Women's Committee. Much time was given to a general survey of existing conditions with special reference to paganism in the homeland, war-time disturbance of family life, intemperance and immorality and indifference to organized religion. At one of the meetings of this Committee, Mrs. Douglas Stewart, then of Hampstead, spoke of her social work in Hampstead and so stirred the consciences and hearts of those present that it was felt that there should be some practical expression of concern. This led to the proposal to the General Committee of the

Department and through them to the Baptist Union Council that a home for unmarried mothers should be established.

The Younger Women's Committee also faced the problems of demobilization and the years following the war and prepared a list of Practical Suggestions to help in post-war planning. Many of these suggestions were used as subjects for discussion at Day Conferences which were being encouraged wherever possible and as material in drawing up programmes for Young Wives' Clubs and Business Women's Groups which were increasingly being formed. Two small booklets, *Everywoman's Chance* and *Pioneers All* were also published.

Another new war-time venture was the setting up in 1944 of a Hospitality Committee which was empowered to "prepare a detailed list of Branches and activities; to welcome visitors to the Church House; to arrange for hospitality for provincial members attending London meetings; to foster friendship with Baptist women in other countries". Hostesses were in attendance daily at the Church House, and many provincial visitors were welcomed in London homes. An extensive correspondence with overseas Baptist women was fostered.

In spite of, or perhaps even because of, war-time conditions the work of the Department continued to grow and it became necessary to find additional staff. In May 1944 Miss E. Lois Chapple was appointed as Assistant to the Organizing Secretary, Miss Rose. Miss Chapple had rendered outstanding service to the Denomination as a deaconess at "Bloomsbury" for three years, then as B.M.S. missionary in China for seventeen years. After her return from China for personal reasons, she served in the government Censorship Department (Chinese section) where her special qualifications and abilities were highly valued and from where she was released with reluctance. She came to the Department with great gifts of personality, of mind and of experience and has enriched the denomination by her devoted service. After Miss Chapple had been there for some months it seemed wise that the work of the Department should be divided. Miss Rose assumed responsibility for the Deaconesses and Training College while Miss Chapple devoted her time to the Baptist Women's League, and the two ladies worked together as Joint Secretaries.

The work of the Department continued in spite of war-time difficulties. As was to be expected war conditions greatly affected both the training and work of deaconesses. With the calling up of women fewer candidates were available for training and it was not until nearly the end of the war that some of the accepted candidates were released for their studies. Although the numbers were depleted the work of training continued. This was very gratifying especially in view of the increasing demand for deaconesses. In 1939 the Committee received with regret the resignation, through ill health, of Sister Gertrude Kendall, the Warden of the College. She was succeeded by Miss E. Webb Samuel whose personal qualities and gifts coupled with long teaching experience were invaluable in

the years in which she served the Committee as Principal of the College which she raised to a new place in the esteem of the denomination. On her resignation in 1944 Miss Dorothy Knights was appointed acting warden until the Committee succeeded in finding a Principal. From 1945 the management of the College was put into the hands of a College Committee set up by the Baptist Union. On two occasions during the war, the College building suffered damage and the gratitude of the denomination is due to those who effectively maintained the work of training available candidates in very difficult circumstances.

While war conditions brought many difficulties they also provided



"The Haven," Yateley

new opportunities. The service of deaconesses was in ever increasing demand. Deaconesses were given positions of greater authority and influence and from the war years dates the rapid growth of pioneer work by deaconesses on new housing estates in Forward Movement Areas. Deaconesses were also called upon to embark on new ventures in connection with youth movements, moral and social welfare work among girls and ever-increasing demands were made upon them to assume full responsibility for church leadership.

Changes too, were the order of the day at "St. Andrews", the hostel for business girls in north London. The first impact of war meant a considerable decrease in the number of residents, but within a comparatively short time the house was full again and continued to be so during the period of hostilities. The age limit of twenty-five was relaxed during the period and many girls for shorter or longer times were cared for both materially and spiritually by Sister Jennie Hughes, the Warden, and her staff. The influence of such a Christian home in days when standards were falling owes much to the gracious personality of the Warden.

One of the outstanding events of B.W.L. war-time history was the acquiring of "The Haven", the home for unmarried mothers and babies at Yateley, Near Camberley, Surrey. When the work was

first suggested it seemed that the centre should be in London, but after several unsuccessful attempts to secure suitable premises in the London area, the Committee came to the conclusion, since fully justified, that a home should be sought in the country. It was with joy and thankfulness that the Committee were able to report that a suitable house was being purchased and that it was hoped that it would be ready for occupation by the summer of 1945. Much interest and enthusiastic support were aroused throughout the country. The appointment of staff in the persons of Miss A. K. S. Finney, S.R.N., S.C.M., M.T.D., D.N.(Lond) as Matron and Miss R. E. Burt, S.R.N., S.C.M., as assistant Matron, both women of



*Twin babies at "The Haven," with (left to right)
Miss A. K. S. Finney (Matron), Miss M. Bassett (Adoption
Visitor), Miss R. E. Burt (Midwifery Sister)*

sterling Christian character, excellent qualifications and a real sense of Call to this work, was further evidence of the guiding hand of God in this venture where it was hoped that girls who came for help might find entrance to a new life in Jesus Christ.

The need for moral welfare work was driven home to the minds of Baptist women by the fact that so many young girls of fourteen and fifteen were brought before the Court for various offences and handed over to Probation Officers for care and protection. Many deaconesses in close co-operation with Probation Officers and others did magnificent service. The welfare of young girls in London was laid upon the heart of one of the deaconesses who felt specially called to this work. A small hostel under the superintendency of Sister Mary Davies was opened by the church at Vernon, King's Cross and the work was signally blessed. While this was not officially sponsored by the B.W.L. it had the practical sympathy and support of many branches especially in north London.

Even during the war the wider call was not unheard. Close contact was maintained with the Women's Missionary Association of the

B.M.S. Joint weeks of prayer at times to include the Women's World Day of Prayer were organized. Day Conferences were arranged. The Joint Standing Committee continued the publication of *Everywoman's Bible Readings*, which were intended to help those who had done no systematic Bible study. The circulation was steadily maintained. A further booklet *Prayers for Women* was also issued. By undertaking common tasks the Committee acknowledged and reminded themselves that the work of God at home and overseas is one.

X A word must be said regarding finance. The training and maintaining of deaconesses is costly. The work of the Hostel in the early days had to be subsidized. The proposal to open "The Haven" called for large gifts. The Ter-Jubilee of the B.M.S. made a wide appeal to B.W.L. members. The cost of maintaining Headquarters had to be met, and the women rose to the occasion! A Bursary Fund for students and a B.W.L. Settlement Fund were inaugurated and considerable sums contributed from all parts of the country. Special efforts of various kinds were held to help the finances of the Hostel while several branches and federations showed their practical interest in furnishings and gifts in kind. The appeal for "The Haven" resulted in over £6,000 being raised towards the cost of buying and equipping the house. Many branches made substantial gifts to the work overseas though the B.M.S. Ter-Jubilee Fund and contributions continued to come in to meet Headquarters expenses. The policy of the Baptist Union to concentrate on one Fund—the Home Work Fund—necessitated a change in the approach to branches for financial support. All expenses in connection with the Department were to be met from this Fund and while gifts could still be earmarked if desired, branches were urged to send their contributions to the Home Work Fund. As the general policy became more widely known and understood, the response was increasingly satisfactory.

What can be said of the war years as a whole? The record is encouraging—numerical increase in the affiliation of 190 new branches and seven federations; a widening of outlook; a grasping of new opportunities and a shouldering of fresh responsibilities; a forward look in planning for the post-war years; a stirring of the social conscience and a practical expression of concern in maintaining old, and in inaugurating new welfare work; a growing sense of the need for wider contacts and closer co-operation both at home and overseas. It is impossible to mention all those who carried the burdens of the war years, but our special gratitude must be expressed to those at Headquarters and to the late Mrs. Rowntree Clifford, convener of the Deaconess Committee, to Mrs. Herbert Marnham, convener of the Hostel Committee and to Mrs. Ernest Brown and the late Mrs. F. John Scroggie who by their personal efforts raised large sums for Deaconess work.

The National Presidents of the League rendered outstanding service during the war years. They carried out heavy programmes of speaking engagements, travelling far and wide, undeterred by black-out, bombing and inadequate transport. We should salute them and all those who put into practice in difficult years the motto, "By love, serve".

V. The Post-War Period

"The Lord hath done great things for us: whereof we are glad."

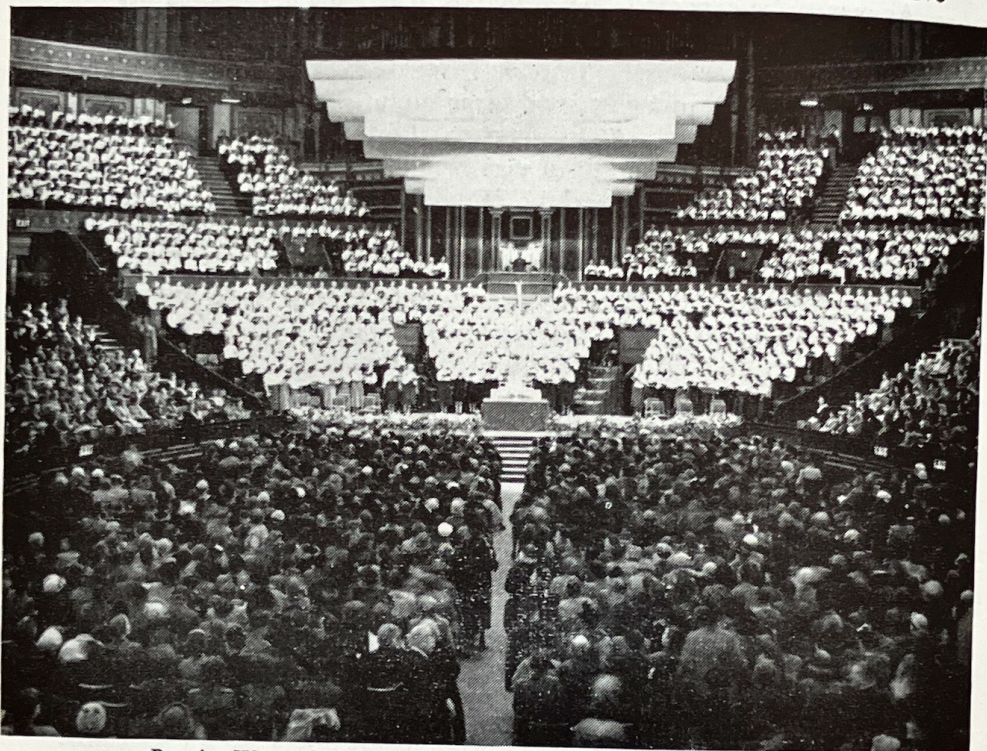
SUCH were the sentiments following the cessation of hostilities both in Europe and in the Far East. Only after the war did the nation realize how great had been the deliverance. The destruction and tragedy which are always a legacy of war presented a challenge to the Christian church to proclaim the gospel of the Grace of God and to win the world for Christ. The B.W.L. sought to grasp these new opportunities and to share in the reconstruction.

As was to be expected, the despatch of parcels and books for the armed Forces gradually decreased, but there was a tremendous increase in distress relief. Friends from overseas and in particular from America continued to send large quantities of food and clothing which were gladly distributed to those in want especially in Europe where the aftermath of war brought so much destitution.

The year 1947 inaugurated the "Campaign to Women" and called all Baptist women to prepare by prayer and re-dedication for witness and evangelism. "Christ is the Answer to the World's Need" was the theme. A call to prayer was sent out. A small number of women were asked to serve in various parts of the country as Commissioners to awaken interest, to give information and to promote the formation of visiting teams. Thousands of copies of a leaflet, *Lights Up*, were distributed. Day conferences were held all over the land. Leaflets for visitation were prepared and extensively used. The Commissioners met in conference from time to time and their reports and findings were embodied in a booklet entitled *I Offered them Christ* (a phrase from John Wesley's *Journal*). In 1949, Dr. Aubrey, then General Secretary of the Baptist Union, initiated a denominational forward movement under the title "Baptist Advance", and the "Campaign to Women" was finally merged in this wider effort. The Baptist Union Committee for Evangelism sponsored the sending out of evangelistic teams and several of the B.W.L. leaders were invited to become members of these teams. The results of all these efforts, as far as the B.W.L. was concerned, were a fuller consecration on the part of the women; a deepening of their devotional life; an earnest attempt to examine existing methods of evangelism and to try out new ways as a practical expression of vital concern for "the outsiders"; a realization of their obligation to support the Baptist Union and all its projects, both spiritually and financially.

Naturally the years brought changes. While the amazing numerical increase—635 new branches, 25 federations and over 500 personal members being welcomed since the war—has been a cause for profound thanksgiving and real encouragement, the very widespread interest has brought its own problems. It is a far cry back to the days when "Bloomsbury" more than comfortably seated all those who came to the Annual Meeting during Assembly week. Westminster Chapel was adequate for a few years, but the question

of a suitable venue for the meeting became urgent after 1948 when many were unable to attend because of limited seating. Greatly daring, the General Committee agreed to hire for the 1949 meeting the Empress Hall, Earls Court, which seats nearly 10,000. In the early weeks after the hall was booked, committee members were asked to urge branches to attend in large numbers, but several months before the date of the meeting the full complement of seats had been allocated. It was an impressive sight to look out on the large hall filled to capacity with women who had gathered to worship. On two other occasions, separated by some years, the Annual Meeting was held at Empress Hall. The very high costs and the excessive



Baptist Women's League Rally. Royal Albert Hall, London (1954)

amount of organization in the office meant that other arrangements must be made. Westminster Central Hall and an overflow meeting with an independent Chairman did not adequately meet the need, neither was the idea very satisfactory of holding two practically simultaneous meetings. Besides putting a very heavy strain on the President and Secretary who had to "double" in everything, much of the fellowship was lost. The Royal Albert Hall proved inadequate for the numbers who wanted to attend. On two occasions, again in Westminster Chapel, the meeting was limited to office bearers and delegates from branches, but the real problem of finding a suitable hall remains unsolved. A feature of several of the meetings was the singing by a choir from many parts of the country. The excellence obtained was a tribute to the conductors, and to the local assistant conductors who made such a result possible.

Several changes have taken place in the constitution of the Department, the most notable relating to the Deaconesses. For some time it had been increasingly felt that the training and work of the Deaconesses was a matter for the denomination as a whole, rather than for one department. The Women's Training College Committee and the Deaconess Committee were therefore recognized as standing committees of the Baptist Union Council. The Women's General Committee approved this as a forward step and as a sign of the growing appreciation of the importance of the service rendered to the denomination by trained deaconesses. Miss Rose thus ceased to be one of the Organizing Secretaries of the Women's Department and became Organizing Secretary of the Order of Baptist Deaconesses and of the Women's Training College. Closest co-operation, interest and support have been maintained and Miss Rose continued to attend the meetings of the General Committee. The women of the denomination, especially, had rejoiced when soon after the war Miss Rose had been honoured in receiving the award of M.B.E. for valuable war service. The General Committee later paid tribute to her on her marriage to Dr. T. G. Dunning and on her retirement by electing her an honorary vice-president of the League. The Women's Department would like to place on record their warmest appreciation of the wonderful contribution that Mrs. Dunning has made to the work and success of the Department.

Miss Dorothy Finch, a former deaconess, who had also done welfare work in connection with Dr. Barnardo's Homes was appointed as successor to Mrs. Dunning. She came to her new post with inside knowledge of the Order and with the sympathetic understanding and appreciation of one who had experience in social work. In addition to responsibility in all matters concerning deaconesses, Miss Finch shares in the activities of the Women's Department.

Other changes involved slight alterations to bring the Department into line with the rest of the Baptist Union; adjustments were made in committee representation necessitated by the increasing size of the General Committee; the period of Chairmanship of sub-committees was limited to four years, except in the case of The Haven Committee where it was desirable to have more continuity; length of service for elected members of the Executive was also fixed at not more than three years at one time.

In 1945 the denomination began a new era in the training of its women. In the autumn of that year, through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. R. Wilson Black, the Women's Training College moved to more suitable premises at "Struan", Wimbledon Park, London. The Rev. H. H. Sutton, B.A., was inducted as Principal; a board of studies was set up to consider the curriculum from both academic and practical standpoints. A sub-committee was formed to go into the question of financing the College and an advisory group to consider the whole question of entry, training, settlement, function and status of the deaconesses. "Struan" remained the training centre, under Mr. Sutton and later Rev. H. M. Angus, B.A., B.D., until 1955, when the Baptist Union Council agreed to send deaconess students to

Carey Hall, Birmingham, to be trained alongside B.M.S. candidates, and extended the period of training from two to three years.

For several years immediately following the war, the question of supply and demand for deaconesses was a real concern to the Committee. The position was liable to change completely in a very few weeks from one where there were several openings and no deaconesses available to one which was the complete reverse. Once conditions became more stable and the value of deaconess service more appreciated, the demand far exceeded the number who could be placed and this remains the position today. Perhaps one of the most encouraging aspects of the work is the record of magnificent



Baptist Deaconesses in Conference

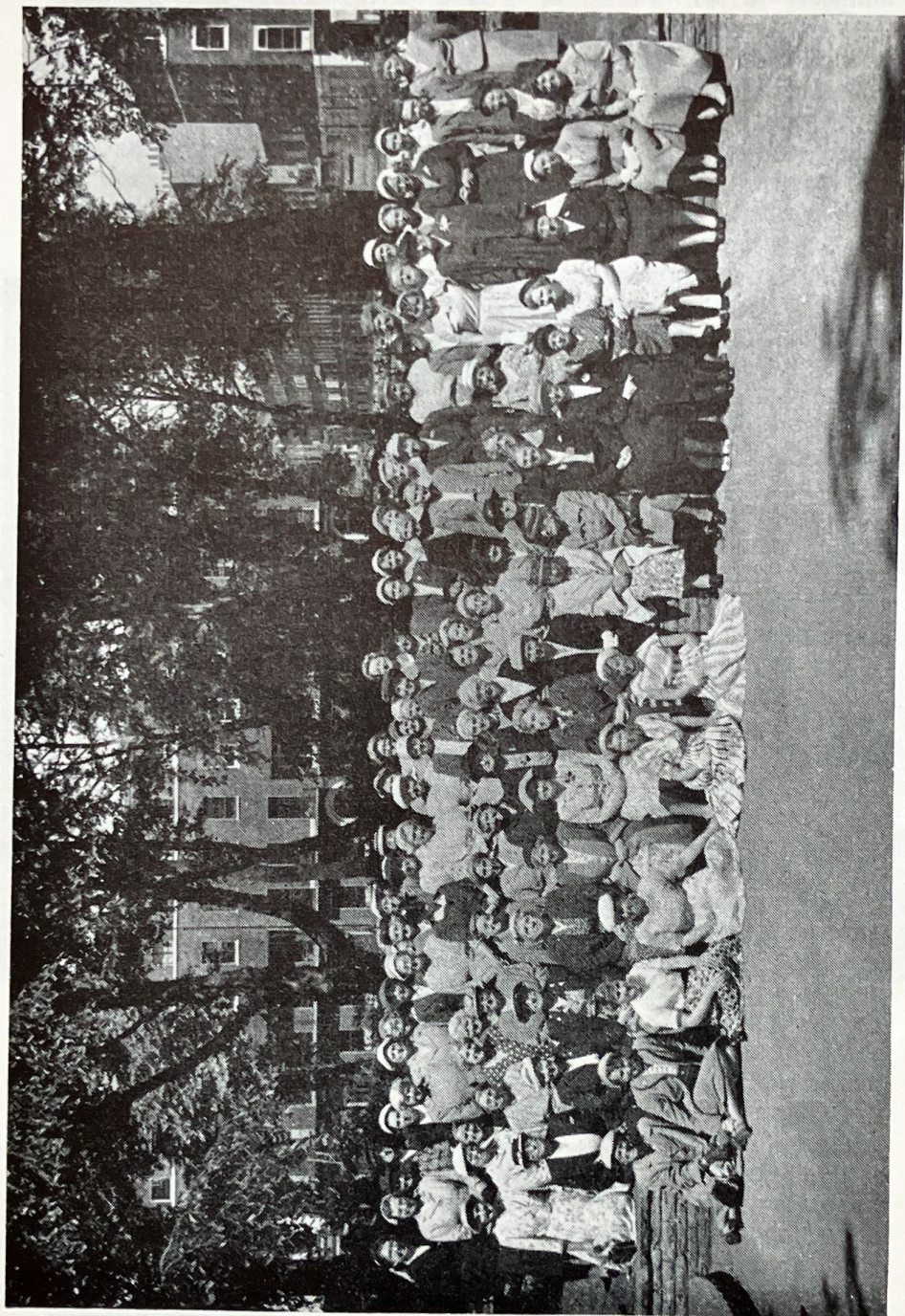
service being rendered by deaconesses in new housing areas and in initial pastorates.

A feature of the post war years is the steady increase in the numbers of meetings for young wives and business women. The General Committee was alive to the possibility of these becoming isolated groups and gave much thought and time to their relation to the B.W.L. The suggestion was sent out that wherever possible there should be in the churches a Women's Council, or Committee, consisting of representatives from all women's organizations. This Council should meet at regular intervals and seek to co-ordinate all the women's work in the Church.

The Younger Women's Committee has devoted much of its energies to providing help for these newer meetings. The Corres-

pondence Training Courses for Leaders were reorganized and brought into line with present day needs; day conferences for ministers' wives, leaders of Young Wives' Clubs and Business Women's groups were held at various times in different places; a pamphlet of suggestions and help for the guidance of leaders was revised and enlarged; suggested programmes were drawn up; scripts covering a wide variety of subjects were made available; a special series, entitled "Light on Everyday Problems" dealing with matters of Christian behaviour and moral standards, and set out in the form of dialogues with questions appended, has proved very popular. A new venture was the setting up of a Women's Forum, held twice a year in the evenings at the Church House. The Christian attitude to certain problems of the day was dealt with by expert speakers and questions and discussion were invited from the audience. The planning and carrying through of these Forums was entrusted to the Younger Women's Committee and the Department would express thanks to the members for the excellent variety and high standard provided in this as in all other departments of their activities.

The Hospitality Committee continued to live up to its name and to exercise its gracious ministry. On General Committee days and on all special occasions during the years, beautiful flowers are evidence of their thoughtfulness. Lunches and teas were provided and served to Committee members. By the kind invitation of the Committee the Deaconesses have been entertained at their Reunions during Assembly week. A large number of Welsh ladies who came to the first Empress Hall Rally enjoyed food and fellowship before they returned on the midnight train. The residents of the Girls' Hostel accepted the Committee's kind invitation to a party. The members of the Baptist World Alliance Women's Committee were graciously cared for during their pre-Congress week in 1955. Friends from home and overseas have been welcomed to the Church House and invited to sign the Visitors' Book which was a gift from the Hospitality Committee. Many friends in sickness or sorrow, as well as on some happy anniversary have been cheered by gifts of flowers sent in the name of the Department. The interest and generosity of the late Mrs. Russell James made possible much of the work carried out by this Committee, particularly during the earlier years of its existence. The stewarding at Annual meetings and attendances on such special occasions as the Commonwealth and Colonial Congress, as well as the regular rota of hostesses at the Church House, have all been willingly undertaken. The Committee receive no grant from the Home Work Fund and have raised their own funds by special functions which proved to be occasions for fellowship as well as means of raising money for their many activities. A two-day Bazaar was organized in 1947 when over £800 was raised to help Baptist institutions with household equipment. The Church House, Arundel House, the Women's Training College, The Hostel and The Haven and the Illingworth Institute at Aldershot all received grants. The Committee have also made it possible for some folks badly in need of a holiday to enjoy the



General Committee of the Baptist Women's League, 1957

fellowship of Arundel House. The Committee now is responsible for serving lunch at Baptist Union Council Meetings.

"St. Andrews", the Girls' Hostel in north London, is still meeting a need for girls working in the city. Just after the war, Sister Jennie Hughes, who had given devoted service as Warden for twenty-five years, retired and a few years later Mrs. H. Marnham who had been Chairman for so long felt obliged to resign. A real debt of gratitude is due to those two noble Christian women for their long and devoted service. For most of the post war years, the house has been well filled, full strength being thirty-seven. The age limit of twenty-five has again been introduced. Staffing problems have arisen from time to time but have been solved. Repairs and renewals were at a standstill during the war, which meant that there has been very considerable outlay in these respects during recent years. At the request of the Hostel Committee, an independent group, including two gentlemen, was set up to make a complete survey of the Hostel and its aims and functions. Their report was that the work is still not only needed but well worth while. They suggested several improvements which are being carried out as funds are available. The ordinary running costs are covered by the residents' fees which are kept as low as economically possible while ensuring that the Hostel is not a charge on the Home Work Fund. "St. Andrews" now attracts quite a number of students as well as business girls who all live together under Christian influences. Several local ministers have given their time and energy to holding a "Padre's Hour". An annual "Open Day" is held which gives interested friends an opportunity of seeing the Hostel and also of raising small sums of money for the finances.

4th September, 1945, was a great day in B.W.L. history for it was then that "The Haven", the home for unmarried mothers and their babies, was opened. Widespread interest throughout the country was shown in many loving gifts both in money and kind which made it possible to furnish and equip the house as an up-to-date maternity home. The service of dedication was performed by Dr. M. E. Aubrey, then General Secretary of the Baptist Union, and the home was declared open by Mrs. David Salmon who has acted as Chairman of the Haven Committee since its inception and to whom, along with the staff, the denomination owes so much for wise counsel and faithful service in the early days of this venture. From the outset it has been the policy not only to provide practical help, but also to surround the girls with Christian influence, to restore those who have wandered away, to bring others to commit themselves to Jesus Christ and to help all to build a new life on secure foundations. Over 800 girls have been admitted, and many bear testimony to great spiritual blessing through the loving patient care of Miss Finney and Miss Burt.

In 1949 the generosity of the B.W.L. in Wales made possible the opening of the little Haven Chapel which has proved such a sanctuary. In 1952 there was added a much needed Staff House, the furnishings for which were given in memory of a B.W.L. member, Mrs. Russell Smith. In 1953 a small garden, the gift of the Women's Free Church

Federal Council, was opened in memory of Mrs. Gwendoline Tanner, a past president of both B.W.L. and W.F.C.F.C. The "Gideons" (Christian business men) from Reading have provided Bibles and New Testaments for each girl. The Department would express grateful thanks to those and many other friends who have improved the amenities of The Haven and made generous gifts to it.

In 1948 the Baptist Union Adoption Society was formed and registered. It was the strictly observed policy from the beginning that babies should be placed only in Christian homes. The stories of security and affection given to babies and of joy brought to adopting parents, make thrilling telling. Quite a number of the young mothers keep their babies, facing their responsibility for them with faith and courage. The decision about their babies' future has always been left to the mothers themselves.

X Close co-operation with the Women's Missionary Association of the B.M.S. is still maintained through the Joint Standing Committee. Immediately after the war a manifesto was issued in an attempt to put before Baptist women the avenues open to them in the service of Christ and the urgency of the task of evangelism at home and abroad. *Everywoman's Bible Readings* continued to be published each year. The Committee sponsored the publication of two books, *Such as These*, by Miss Dorothy Gotch and *Homes and Children*, by Mrs. W. J. Grant, B.A. A series of six scripts for use in women's groups entitled *Missionaries All* was prepared by the Committee.

For some years arrangements were made to hold a central Women's Day of Prayer in June. From 1953 it was agreed to drop the central meeting and to encourage local districts to hold their own special prayer sessions and also to join in the Baptist Women's Day of Prayer in December. Close contact was maintained also with the Women's World Day of Prayer Committee.

After the war the biennial conferences for women were revived and to this committee fell the task of planning and arranging six such residential conferences, one at "High Leigh", Hoddesdon and the others at "The Hayes", Swanwick. The fellowship, the high standard of the addresses and the fruitfulness of the discussion periods have proved the value of these conferences. In response to a request from those who were unable to attend mid-week events a week-end conference, having in view especially the needs of business women, was planned and successfully carried through in the spring of 1957.

In August 1948, a number of B.W.L. leaders were invited to a Women's Conference in connection with the Executive meetings of the Baptist World Alliance. Many European countries were represented, and a liaison committee of European Baptist women was set up, which later formed the first committee of the European Baptist Women's Union, the first of the Continental Unions of the Women's Committee of the Baptist World Alliance, on both of which bodies the B.W.L. is represented. During the meetings of the Baptist World Alliance Jubilee Congress in London in 1955, Mrs. F. F. Pepper, a past-President of the B.W.L., was appointed Chairman of the European Baptist Women's Union. This office carries with it

committee membership of the Baptist World Alliance Women's Department and of the European Baptist Federation. Mrs. Pepper has travelled extensively in Europe and has brought encouragement to many on the continent as well as making first hand information available in this country. Several official meetings of the European Baptist Women's Union have been held, hospitality being arranged by the countries where the meetings were taking place.

In 1955, the Baptist World Alliance Women's Committee were entertained in one of the hostels of London University by the kind invitation of the late Mrs. Russell James. This was a time of rich fellowship for all concerned. Many of the visitors had the opportunity of visiting "The Haven" and "St. Andrews" and expressed sincere interest and appreciation. The B.W.L. contact with the Baptist World Alliance is further strengthened by the fact that at Cleveland, Ohio in 1950 Miss Chapple was appointed Secretary of the Women's Committee of the Alliance. Among the many duties she carries out in connection with this office is the publication of a Quarterly News Letter to which many of the B.W.L. branches and members subscribe. The British representatives on the Alliance Committee were requested to prepare the Order of Service for the Baptist Women's Day of Prayer in 1957. Further overseas contacts were made during the Commonwealth and Colonial Congress in 1951, when the Joint Standing Committee arranged for the women's sectional meetings.

The Department is very grateful to Mrs. Ernest Brown, a former Chairman of the Baptist World Alliance Women's Committee, for her continued interest in it and for her gracious hospitality on several occasions when she arranged social functions to raise funds for the expenses of this work.

The Women's Department continues to be represented on several other outside bodies; the Committee of the Churches' Work for Women in the Forces; the Consultative Committee of Women's Church Organizations, formed in 1950 and providing interdenominational fellowship under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Geoffrey Fisher; the Girls' Auxiliary to the Baptist Missionary Society; the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child; the National Free Church Women's Council; the Nurses' Christian Movement; the Women's World Day of Prayer Committee; the United Nations Association (Women's Section); the Old People's Welfare Committee of the National Council of Social Service; the Standing Conference of Societies Registered for Adoption; the Council of Kindred Societies (N.B.W.T.A.U.). In these and in many other ways the voice of Baptist women is being heard throughout the land.

According to its constitution the Baptist Union Council must include at least ten women. These places are generally filled by elected women members who seek to take their share in the general affairs of the Baptist Union. The Women's Department would express its gratitude to the Council for their interest, and in particular to Dr. Aubrey, Dr. Payne and the Rev. O. D. Wiles, who by their presence at General Committee meetings and Annual rallies and by their constant concern for and co-operation in women's work in

general have been a source of encouragement to those who have been privileged to share in the direction of the Department's affairs.

The foregoing pages reveal how varied are the opportunities and activities of the Women's Department and in how many ways women are seeking to further Christ's Kingdom and promote the interest of the denomination, but all this costs money. The expenses are met from the Home Work Fund. Women's contributions to this fund have been well maintained. Over the years there has been a drop in gifts allocated to special pieces of work, but a large increase in the total amount contributed by women's organizations. No actual figures can accurately reveal the total of women's giving as so much of it is included in the normal church monies. One is encouraged by the fact that with the discontinuance of affiliation fees the branch contributions have been in most cases materially increased. The many additional personal members have also accounted for substantial sums of money. Branches have been constantly encouraged to face their financial responsibilities so that the total work of the Baptist Union may be satisfactorily maintained. Congratulations are offered to those who have responded so well and a word of appeal to any who lose sight of the wider needs in their own local commitments.

With the approach of 1958 the Executive and General Committees gave much consideration to plans for a worthy celebration of the Jubilee. The story of the past fifty years gave great cause for thankfulness for the vision of those who commenced this great work, for the courage, patience and endurance of those who pioneered and for the faithfulness of all those down the years who have served in whatever capacity. It was felt that this gratitude should be expressed in a practical way, but it was further stressed that any appeal should go far beyond a purely financial one. One was reminded again of the spiritual foundations of the work and for the clamant need of these days for a reassessment of values and a replacing of emphasis on the "things that are eternal", and so a three-fold call—to consecrated living, consecrated serving and consecrated giving—was sent to all branches, affiliated meetings and individual members. All were asked to consider what the fellowship of the church and women's meetings and blessings both spiritual and material had meant to them and, as an act of thanksgiving and a pledge of consecration, to place fifty coins in an envelope specially designed and prepared for the occasion. It is hoped that the gifts will be used in initial pastorates and for women's work in general so that with the thanksgiving is coupled the earnest desire to extend Christ's Kingdom. The Annual Rally in the Royal Albert Hall on Thursday, 1st May, 1958, will be the occasion for receiving the Thank-offering, but 1958 will be a whole *Year* of Jubilee inaugurated in January by special consecration meetings throughout the country for which a suggested order of service has been prepared.

Jubilee is a golden opportunity to give thanks to God for all the blessings of the past: to review the achievements of those who have served: to renew our vows and to go forward into the future with courage and hope for there is still "much land to be possessed".

B.W.L. Jubilee Meetings

in the

Royal Albert Hall

Thursday, 1st May, 1958

AFTERNOON SESSION: 2.30—4 p.m. *Chairman:* Mrs. G. Clifford Batten, B.A.

Induction of Mrs. Douglas Stewart as National President, 1958—9.

Fifty Years of B.W.L.—an item of Script and Music while the Branch Representatives hand in Gift Total Cards.

Announcement of Thank-offering Total and Prayer of Dedication.

Greetings and Good Wishes.

A Message from the Outgoing President.

Special Singing by a Nation-wide B.W.L. Choir.

EVENING SESSION: 6.30—8 p.m. *Chairman:* Mrs. T. G. Dunning, M.B.E.

Presidential Address—Mrs. Douglas Stewart.

The Baptist Union greets the B.W.L.—Dr. Ernest A. Payne, M.A.

Announcement of Thank-offering Total.

Guest Speaker.

Special Singing by the B.W.L. Choir.

Presidents of the Baptist Women's League 1908-1958

† Mrs. Windsor Bond	1915	† Mrs. R. Rowntree	
† Mrs. Russell James	1916	Clifford, O.B.E.	1938
† Mrs. W. Edwards, J.P.	1917	Mrs. J. A. Froggatt	1939
Mrs. A. Douglas Brown	1918-19	Mrs. Cecil Rooke	1940
† Miss Margaret Hardy, M.B.E., J.P.	1920	† Mrs. J. N. Britton	1941
† Miss Kate Marnham	1921	Mrs. Ernest Brown	1942-43
† Mrs. J. Freeman	1922	Mrs. David Salmon	1944
Mrs. F. C. Spurr	1923	Mrs. D. Christy Davies	1945
† Mrs. Carey Bonner	1924	Mrs. F. Lefevre	1946
† Mrs. Enoch James	1925	Mrs. O. D. Wiles	1947
† Mrs. J. D. M. Robertson	1926	Mrs. Angus McMillan, M.A.	1948
Mrs. F. E. Rowley	1927	Mrs. F. F. Pepper	1949
Mrs. F. A. Parsons	1928	Mrs. W. G. Channon	1950
† Mrs. H. Ernest Wood	1929	Mrs. J. Howard John	1951
† Mrs. F. J. Burgess	1930	Mrs. H. H. Pewtress	1952
† Mrs. John Scroggie	1931	Miss Marjorie Russell	1953
† Mrs. Edmund Lord	1932	Mrs. L. G. Webb	1954
Mrs. Ernest Brown	1933	Miss E. Barker	1955
Mrs. H. G. Hughes	1934	Mrs. Ithel Jones	1956
Mrs. B. Grey Griffith	1935	Mrs. G. Clifford Batten, B.A.	1957
Mrs. Edgar Cule	1936	Mrs. Douglas Stewart	1958
† Mrs. F. W. Tanner	1937	† Deceased.	

First President

MRS. HERBERT MARNHAM

1908-1914