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Swedish Baptists.

An address at the Scandinavian Baptist Congress in Copenhagen,
October, 1926.

WE Swedish Baptists are specially indebted to our Baptist brotherhoods in America, Germany, Denmark and England.

Our pioneers, Captain Schröder and Mr. F. O. Nilsson, missionary among sailors, came from America. Many of the excellent ideas which they had acquired in America were transplanted by them in our country during the fourth decade of last century, and those ideas were fruitful. Then came the liberal support which was granted Baptist Mission work in Sweden, at first from the American Baptist Publication Society of Philadelphia and later from the Baptist Missionary Union of Boston.

In Germany our brethren Mr. C. M. Björkholm, in 1845, and Mr. F. O. Nilsson, in 1848, were baptized by Rev. J. G. Oncken. Mr. Nilsson was the first Baptist preacher in Sweden. The attendance of Rev. J. G. Oncken and Dr. Julius Köbner at the General Conference of the Swedish Baptists in 1858, and their valuable contributions to the discussions, had a great influence upon the development of the polity and doctrinal standpoint of our denomination in Sweden.

From Denmark came in the early days the brethren, P. E. Ryding and A. P. Förster, to witness for Christ in our land. The latter was the founder of the first Baptist church in Sweden in 1848. There are also two other things which I wish to mention. Here, in Denmark, Mr. F. O. Nilsson was granted a first place of refuge when he, on account of his Baptist faith, was banished from his native land, Sweden. This was in the years 1852 and 1853. And Denmark lent her grand baptistery for the baptism of Rev. Anders Wiberg when, in 1852, he was baptized in the sea on one of the Danish shores.

From England also much kindness has been shown to us. Dr. Edward Steane and Rev. J. H. Hinton, who, in an effectual way, advocated the cause of the persecuted Swedish Baptists in the fifties of last century. The names of these brethren are, like many others, indelibly inscribed in Swedish Baptist History.

The Swedish Baptist church, which was organised at Borekulla, Halland, in 1848, then counted six members. From those

six the work has grown so that we now count a little more than sixty thousand Baptists in Sweden. But also in America there are several tens of thousands of Swedish Baptists. There are also thousands in Finland. To-day there are thus about 100,000 Baptists, who speak our tongue.

The progress has been good, but it could certainly have been better, if we had been more eagerly working for Jesus Christ, and laboured more zealously for the kingdom of God. As special reasons for the success we have had we may mention the two following:

1. We early got good, gifted and well-educated men at the front of our denomination. Such men were Rev. Anders Wiberg, the noblemen Dr A. Drake and Editor Karl Möllersvärd, three brothers Palmqvist, Rev. Wilhelm Lindblom, Dr. T. Truvé, Professor C. G. Lagergren and others.

2. We got as early as in the sixties a good school for the education of ministers. The Bethel Seminary was founded in 1866. Its president was, for forty years, Colonel K. O. Broady. Its leader is now Dr. C. E. Benander. [Since the address was delivered he has retired, and is succeeded by the Rev. N. J. Nordström.] Besides the Bethel Seminary Orebro Mission School has been at work for several years and a good many young men have received their education there.

From the beginning of our history we have had a powerful and extensive Sunday School work, which in a high degree has contributed to our denominational progress. Most of our churches have hopeful young people's societies and junior societies which are organised into one numerous Swedish Baptist Young People's Union. Then we have the Baptist Women's Union. Also a society for social work has been founded of late. Our Baptist Union is carrying on a considerable foreign mission work, through which we strive to share in the evangelisation of nations who have not been favoured with the gospel of Jesus Christ before.

Among influences which have in some way been hindering the advancement of our work, may be mentioned the so-called Pentecostal movement, which has, during recent years, drawn not a few members from our churches in several places. There is also existing, within our ranks, a somewhat schismatic dualism which, in some degree, has lessened the power of the Christian unity in spirit and truth, which we should have wished to have been benefited by unbroken harmony. Chilling winds of rationalism, which have been blowing over some countries and denominations have not in any disturbing way affected us in our circles, but times are such that even with regard to that, the warning is ever needful, "Be watchful and praying."

As to our faith we believe that the Bible is the word of God, that Jesus Christ, both God and Man, is our Redeemer. We believe in the aid of the power of the Holy Spirit in our labour. And we believe in the speedy second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we dare not state the year and day for His appearance.

J. BYSTROM.

Canterbury Baptist Tombstones.

THE General Baptists in this city acquired part of the old Blackfriars from a Huguenot, as mentioned in vol. II, pages 140, 181. The property has now passed to other hands, and it may be well to record some facts inscribed on the old tombstones. Elizabeth Benge died 1747, aged 57. Richard Huggett died 1763, aged 40. Thomas Oldfield died 1776. Thomas Benge died 16 December, 1777, aged 84. Sarah (first) wife of Sampson Kingsford died 29 April, 1782, aged 23. James Calverley Benge, son of Thomas and Elizabeth, died 1789. Dan Hayward died 1790, aged 45. Thomas Brown died 1793. Sampson Kingsford, born at Sturry, 2 April, 1740, pastor more than 40 years, died 27 August, 1821. Mary, his second wife, of St. Alphage, died 1824, aged 66. Michael Child Kingsford, their second son, died 1825, aged 27. Priscilla Kingsford, their second daughter, died 1839, aged 51. Mary, wife of Sampson, who was son of Sampson and Mary, late of Sturry, died at Dunkirk 1840, aged 46. Caroline Kingsford, daughter of John and Caroline Love of Canterbury, died 1852, aged 19. Jane Ann, wife of John Russell Philpot, died 1826, aged 36. John Farrin, minister more than 40 years, died 1838, aged 83. William Thomas, a minister, died 1848, aged 81. Phineas Shrubsole of Chartham died, aged 88.

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The "Popular History of the Baptist Building Fund" is now published, and a copy is sent to each of our Guinea Subscribers. Mr. Seymour J. Price has spared no pains in finding what has been done, and in telling. Most of the chapters appeared in our pages, but many amendments have been made, and fresh material has been introduced. Also a new chapter appears, "Prospice."