

# For Liberty Against Tyranny

First World War Centenary Exhibition



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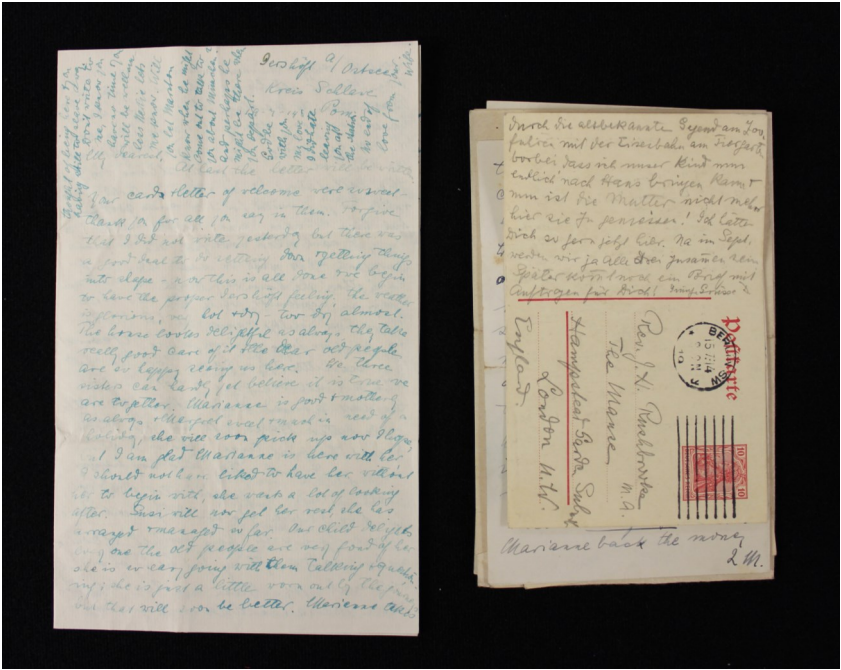




The world of the early twentieth century shook in August 1914, the tremors extending to the Baptist faith. Despite earlier efforts to support international peace, Baptists soon backed the war effort. The faith declared itself against the evil of the Central Powers; 'For Liberty Against Tyranny' seeks to tell their story. Phrasing themselves in moral terms, Baptists were a key part of the wider war effort, putting aside their qualms about warfare to fight at the fronts or to serve as chaplains in the trenches, while those at home made a concerted effort to support the British campaign against tyranny. This exhibition displays formerly unseen documents and photographs that bring to light a less famous, but no less important narrative of an infamous war.

Prior to the outbreak of the First World War, there were calls for the Churches of the world to unite in working towards global peace. In the days before Germany declared war, unaware of the looming threat of conflict, representatives from European Churches planned to meet in Constance, Germany, at The Church Peace Congress. Revd J. H. Rushbrooke was one such delegate.

1. Revd J. H. Rushbrooke's personal correspondence including postcards from Berlin, Jershöft and Osnabrück to London, July 1914



Rushbrooke was married to Dorothea Gertrud Weber, daughter of the German painter, Professor Anton Weber. Twice in Rushbrooke and Dorothea's married life they lived through the trauma of England and Germany being at war. In the weeks just before the outbreak of the First World War, Dorothea and their daughter were traveling ahead of Rushbrooke to Germany with plans to meet after The Church Peace Congress. Dorothea's postcards suggest that she saw no sign of the troubles ahead.

## **Extracts from correspondence between Dorothea and Rushbrooke**

15.7.14 from Germany (Osnabrück) to London

‘My darling, until now the journey is really good. The sea is calm. Alone in the cabin. No problems with the customs, but it is extremely hot. The child is very good, she is sleeping now. On top of the ship she couldn’t sleep much [...] If the time would pass by faster. A kiss from everyone.’

15.7.14 from Berlin to London

‘Now we sit here and are going to have dinner. The room is very nice. The little girl is already washed, fed and in bed. She was so extremely sleepy during the journey, it was so hot. We all thought it took a very long time despite the train’s punctuality. Though it was very nice, we were the whole time alone. How are you? Did you get a cold? Here is real terrific German heat, but Berlin is beautiful. It is so clean and the motors are so absolutely noiseless. Everything is alright. It would be so nice to have you here....’

16.7.14 from Berlin to London

‘My Dear, we are so comfortable together here, Holla, Hans, Rudi, Marianne, Margret, Susi...I tell you, it is great. Would you be here you poor abandonee, we are so happy together. Everyone is sending you best wishes.’

21.7.14 from Jershöft (Baltic Sea, since 1st October 1945) to London

‘My Dear today is Susi’s birthday, we are so happy together and the weather is great. Would you like to swim in the sea with Margret? [...] I have your blue pants here, could you get one or should I send it? Please bring the child’s overall with you but take the label off. Your lovely letter just arrived. Thank you so much. [...] Please write to Susi’s friend on the day of your departure, he can help you to get away that night. Never ending love.’

22.7.14 from Jershöft to London

‘Well actually I have nothing to write about today, my dear. We are living in a situation right now where nothing happens. I hope I have packed all of your things properly. Don’t forget your slippers, 2 pairs of boots. Your jacket is in your closet. The trouser is already in the bag[...] The people are currently very elegant here...’

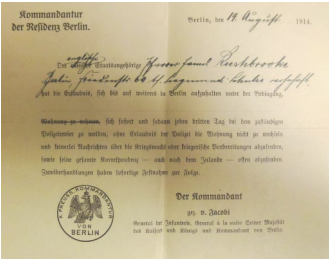
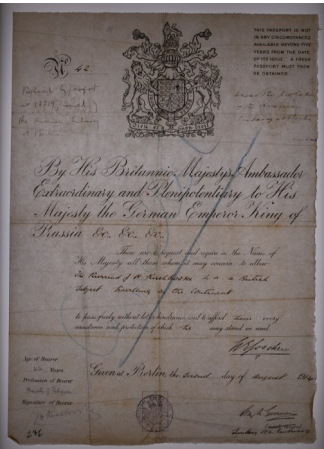
2. Cancelled Passport, Emergency Passport and Travel Documents issued to Revd J. H. Rushbrooke at the outbreak of the First World War

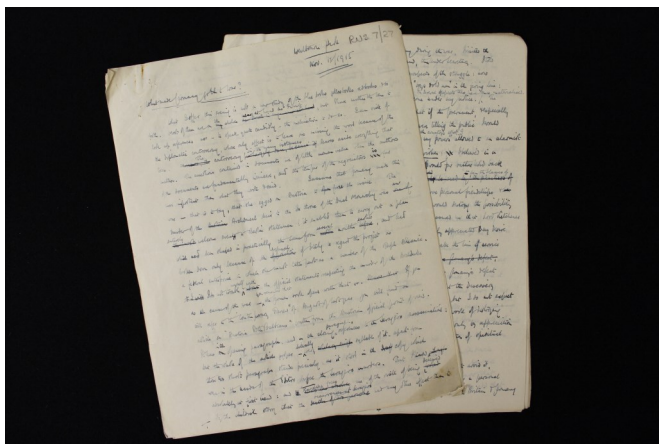
After The Church Peace Congress at Constance, Germany was adjourned due to building hostilities, Rushbrooke attempted to travel across Germany to meet his wife and daughter. He sent a telegram to his wife to say that he'd reached Schlawe safely, but when leaving the Post Office was arrested by a minor German official under suspicion of espionage. He was released after two days in a prison cell.

Rushbrooke eventually met with his wife and daughter, but the family were detained in Germany for several weeks after the outbreak of war. Writing to his congregation in Hampstead Garden Suburb, Rushbrooke stated:

*Perhaps the shock of this war has fallen on few as heavily as upon me, who had toiled for years on behalf of friendly relations between two nearly-related peoples, and had believed that the Christian faith was strong enough to overcome the suspicions and jealousies that make for war...*

After securing an emergency passport issued by the American Embassy, Rushbrooke and his family were finally able to return home in October of that year.





### 3a. 'What made Germany go to War' Revd J. H. Rushbrooke, November 12<sup>th</sup> 1915

A handwritten lecture presenting Rushbrooke's opinion on the factors that led to the outbreak of war in 1914. The address highlights changes in the relationship between British and German Baptists and Rushbrooke suggests that the German Church had become invariably political, allowing the power of the state to increase. Rushbrooke's words also demonstrate Baptist justification of war including claims that the German political system at the outbreak of war was 'the negation of God.'

### 3b. 'The Baptists of Great Britain and Ireland: To the brethren of our faith and order in Sweden' Revd J. H. Rushbrooke, April 1917

Once war had been declared, Baptist leaders and their congregations were, in general, supportive of the position of the British government. In this hand drafted address to brethren in Sweden, Rushbrooke claimed that Baptists stood for peace, goodwill and brotherhood in social and international relations as well as in the Church and that Germany's violation of these principles convinced many of the righteousness of the British cause. Rushbrooke justifies his argument by illustrating Germany's apparent determination to incite war in Europe and by highlighting the unacceptable treatment of the Belgian people at the hands of the German army. In Rushbrooke's words:

*Lovers of peace as we were and are, we Baptists are not committed to a Quaker doctrine of non-resistance, still less to the position that we ought to stand aside and permit the weak to be overwhelmed by the strong.*



#### 4. Letters in response to Revd J. H. Rushbrooke

These two letters written by members of the public are just an example of many such messages received by Rushbrooke after his return from Germany. It is clear that not everyone shared the opinions of the Baptist leader. While a German girl is grateful of Rushbrooke's sympathetic and open-minded attitude towards the German people, others such as H. W. O'Keefe wholeheartedly disagree; perhaps an indication of wider support for the war among the British public.

Dear Sir,

I read with much interest your account of your German experiences in to-day's Daily News. - Will you allow me, a German girl, to thank you for the kind and considerate way you look at the problem of Germans and Austrians still in this country? If only some of the papers which lead such a furious campaign against all their enemies would for one moment stop to consider our position. - Giving you my personal attitude in this matter, I am sure I must speak for a good many other Germans. -

Yours truly,  
Therese.

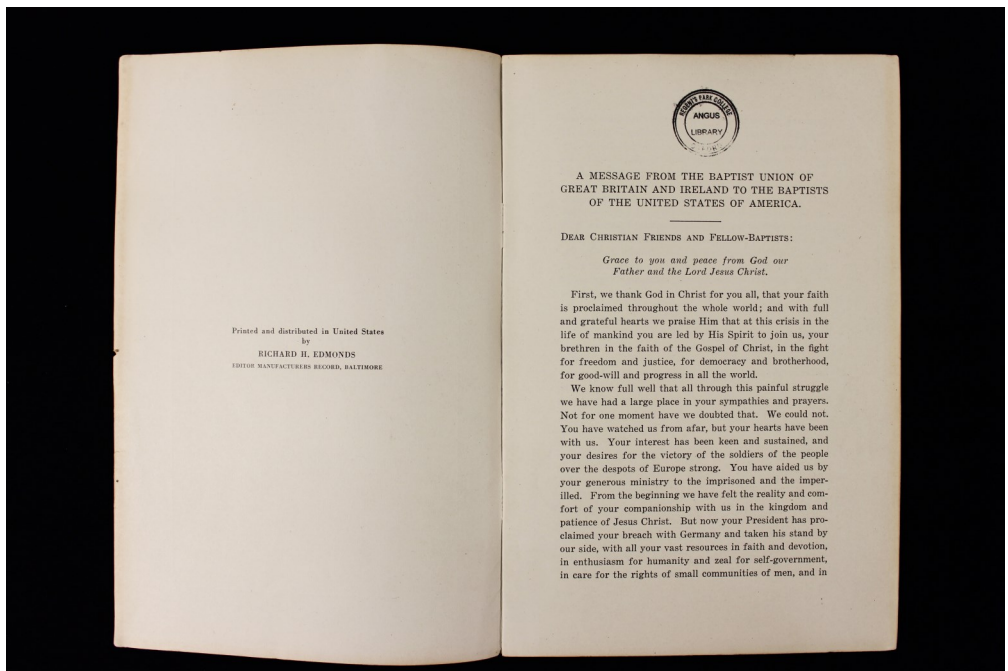
Hampstead Garden Suburb  
30th Oct 1914

Rev. J. H. Rushbrooke M.C.  
Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Dear Sir,

As a resident of the Hampstead Garden Suburb I wish to congratulate you on your return from Berlin, and to rejoice thereof. I have read some of your Press contributions since your return, however, and it seems to me that you have not yet quite got the British point of view, and so I am writing this, which may be of some help to you. I am in no mood for





**5a. *A Message from the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland to the Baptists of the United States of America, May 2nd 1917***

‘A Message...’ was written for distribution throughout the United States. The British and Irish Baptists hoped for a sympathetic and active response from loyal American Baptists. The message was written with overtones of cheer and hoped to reaffirm a united spirit among all Baptists.

The document reads:

*Dear Brethren, we know not when this day of strife will end, but however long it may last and however chequered may be its course, our fellowship with one another will be an increasing satisfaction, and the assurance of our unity in faith and aim, in effort and in hope will be an unfailing fountain of strength and joy. We are stronger because you are at our side, and we shall march with surer feet and braver heart because we march together to the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness and peace shall dwell, not as occasional visitors, but as perpetual guests...*

## 5b. *Letters from American Baptist Ministers*

W. Y. Fullerton, August 1917

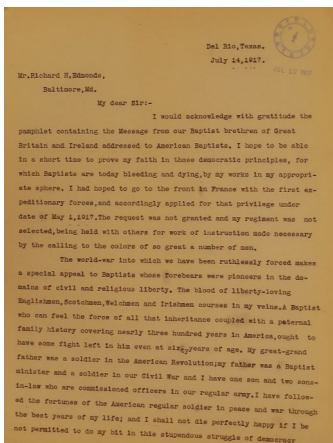
In acknowledging receipt of a pamphlet copy of 'A Message from the Baptist Union of Great Britain...' a number of American Baptist Ministers replied with strong commendations, expressing a profound sense of the responsibility of a nation to fight by the side of the Allies. Responses included:

*The unselfish attitude of the British people in this frightful war at such terrible cost is magnificent. We American Baptists rejoice that our people have entered the war to share the service and cost of securing for mankind the destruction of this wicked attempt at Germanizing the world...*

*Carefully-prepared addresses in these lines are just what our country needs to awaken the patriotism of the many that have not as yet come to take in 'the full' meaning of the world war.*

*The fraternal and cosmopolitan message from the Baptists of Great Britain and Ireland will surely find a sympathetic and mighty response in the heart of every loyal American Baptist.*

## 5c. Letter and photographs from C. C. Bateman responding to 'A message from the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland to the Baptists of the United States of America', July 14th 1917



Bateman's letter is just one example of the supportive replies to 'A Message from the Baptist Union of Great Britain...' The letter with the photographs of Bateman shows his pride in the strong connection between American and British Baptists, and his desire to assist in the 'stupendous struggle of democracy against the most barbarous and brutal autocracy this planet has ever known'.



Russia, France and Italy <sup>have</sup> on urgent business connected with this terrible war makes it impossible for me to come down; but I wish the new Institute well. There is no doubt about the need for it. It starts with a good name, and the best I could hope for it is that it should always prove worthy of it.

Yours sincerely,

*D Lloyd George*

## 6. Letter from the Rt. Hon. Lloyd George on the occasion of the opening of the Percy Illingworth Institute, July 14th 1916

Baptist leaders were not isolated from the political world and their opinions were

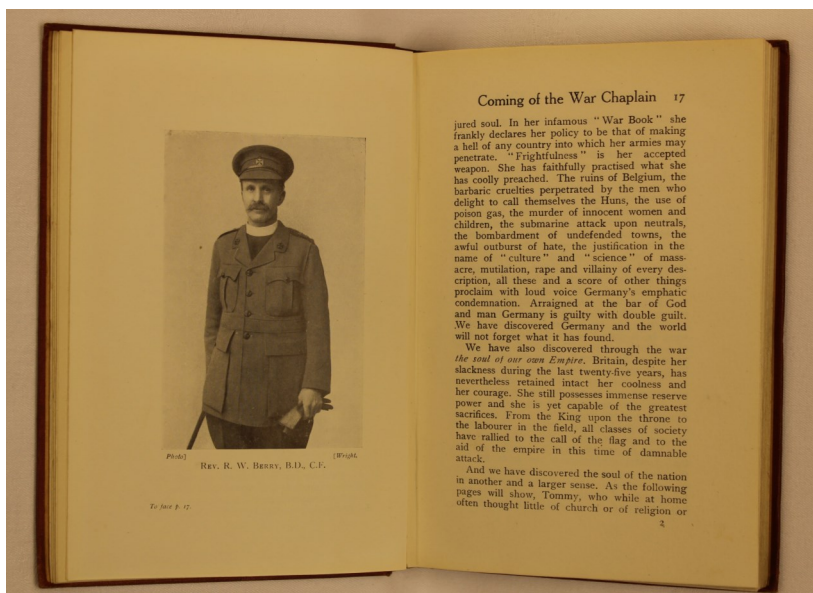
heard by a wide audience of influential characters. In this personal letter to J. H. Shakespeare, General Secretary of the Baptist Union, the Secretary of State for War, David Lloyd George, sends apologies for his absence at the opening of the Percy Illingworth Institute due to the presence of foreign ministers in parliament on 'urgent business connected with this terrible war.'

## 7. 10<sup>th</sup> West Yorkshire Regiment



Men of the 10<sup>th</sup> West Yorkshire Regiment with their mascot, a goat. A huge number from the 10<sup>th</sup> West Yorks were killed at the opening of the Somme Offensive in July 1916; it is believed that this regiment suffered the largest casualties for a single battalion on the first day of the Somme.

Faith played an important role in the lives of many men serving in the armed forces. The 10th West Yorks were under the care of the Rev. William Cramb Charteris. Cramb survived the war and later returned to his congregation in Ayr, Scotland.



## 8. *Some Chaplains in Khaki* F. C. Spurr, c.1916

It was during the First World War that the Free Churches received official denominational acknowledgment from the War Office and Baptist chaplains along with other Free Church denominations were appointed to provide their services as part of the armed forces. Spurr's volume provides personal accounts of the experiences of Baptist chaplains serving in the war and gives some insight into what men experienced on the front line.



## 9. *With Our Fighting Men: The Story of their Faith, Courage, Endurance in The Great War* The Revd W. E. Sellers, 1915

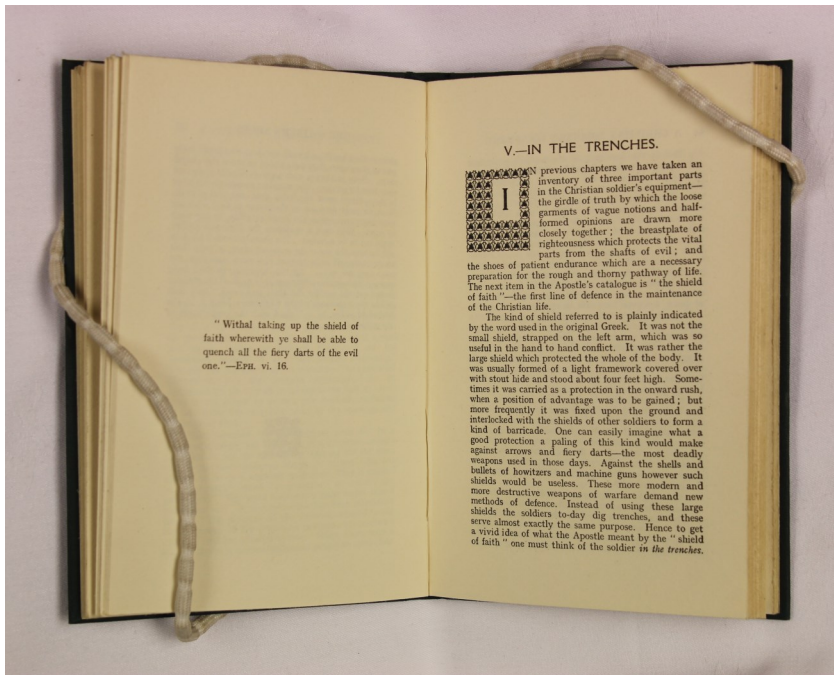
Along with thousands of young men across Britain, Baptist men enlisted to fight for their country. By November 1914, J. H. Shakespeare had been informed of at least 13,255 recruits. *With Our Fighting Men* tells the story of Christian soldiers during the war.



## 10. *The Christian Soldier's Equipment*

Revd William Thomas, c.1915

While many of the Christian denominations were not opposed to men fighting in the war, they were concerned with maintaining the morality of men in service. *The Christian Soldier's Equipment* was written as a companion for Christian teachers to carry with them on the field. It teaches of the spiritual armour that a Christian soldier carries with him through his faith and the ways in which a soldier could prepare for 'spiritual warfare'.



## 11. 'The Panoply of God: Address to British Soldiers in the Doeberitz Prisoner-of-War Camp'

The Revd J. H. Rushbrooke, October 4th 1914

This is a handwritten draft of Rushbrooke's address to British soldiers detained at the Doeberitz Prisoner of War Camp soon after the outbreak of the war. Rushbrooke explains the 'Christian Soldier's Equipment' and the ways in which faith can help men at war by providing them with a spiritual armour. In a more practical note, Rushbrooke reminds the men that they are representing their country in a foreign land; they are encouraged to pursue noble living and uphold good Christian morals.

## 12. Letter to The Revd J. H. Rushbrooke from the Parents of Private R. W. Dulley, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1914

For many parents, the war years were a time of worry, uncertainty and sorrow as shown by this letter sent to Rushbrooke from the parents of Private Robert W. Dulley asking for news of conditions at Doeberitz prisoner of war camp where their son was held.

29 OCT 1914

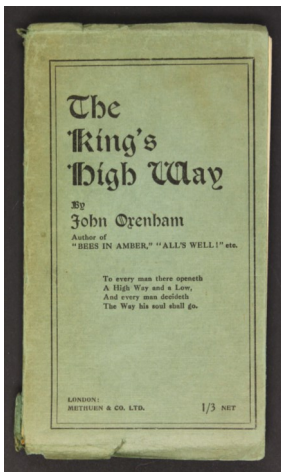
Dear Sir,

May I presume upon your kindness?  
I see by the 'Daily News' that you  
have recently returned from Germany.  
I have a son only 18 years of age, who  
enlisted in the R. M. L. Infantry, on  
the 8<sup>th</sup> August last, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> Sept.  
having received his furlough only about 10 days  
before, was transported to the seat of War,  
eventually arriving at Antwerp, where  
he remained throughout the Siege.  
We had a letter from him on 29, Sep, and  
the Admiralty reported him 'Missing' on  
22 Oct. several days of suspense ensued,  
and at last on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct we were pleased  
to receive a few lines from him to say  
he is a Prisoner of War at Doeberitz Camp,  
and un wounded. I enclose a copy  
of his letter, and should like a few lines  
from you, as to how you found things  
in 'The Camps'. We have sent him some  
additional wearing apparel & a letter,

## 13. *Memoirs of Ministers and Missionaries, 1917-19*

The First World War was the first time that Baptist chaplains served in the British Armed Forces with commissioned rank and on the same terms as chaplains from other churches. As a direct result of the conflict, six Baptist chaplains lost their lives, some of whom are listed in these *Memoirs*. Chaplains across the denominations had a number of roles, including: helping out in canteens, tending the wounded, or writing to widows and other relatives informing them of the loss of a loved one. Before the war, Communion was practised once a month, but during the war it was practised whenever possible and held at least once a week.





#### 14. *The King's High Way*

**John Oxenham, 1916**

This little book of war poetry reflects the fears, hopes and efforts of the people at home in Britain. During a time when everyone at home and abroad was caught up in war, Oxenham stated, 'if war brings out the very worst in human nature it offers opportunity also for the display of the very best.'

#### 15a. Diaries belonging to Ernest Payne, 1917-18

When war broke out in 1914, future BU secretary, Ernest Alexander Payne was 12 years old. His diaries show how everyday life continued at home and the diaries entries often mention school work and holiday activities.

However, the ongoing war remained at the forefront of his mind and Ernest documented the daily air raids and the comings and goings of peers who left home to fight.

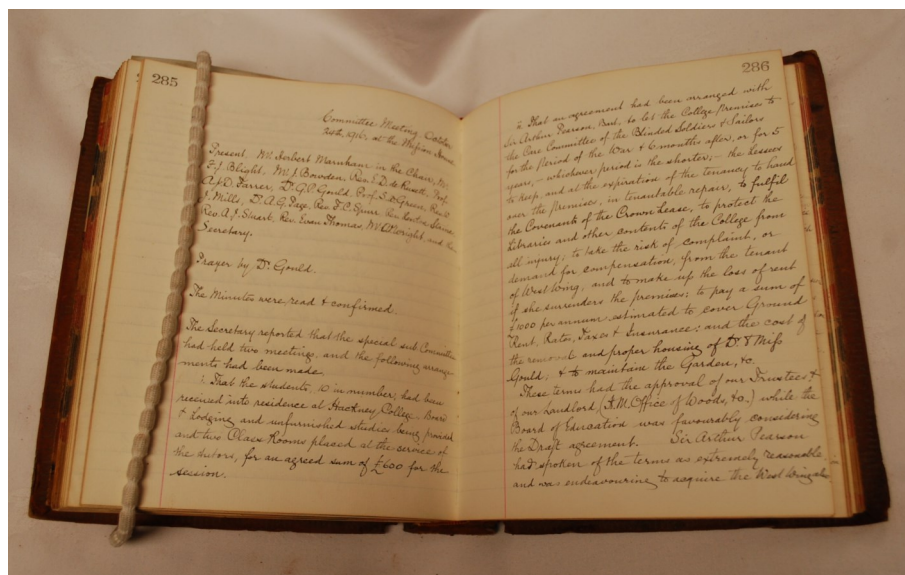


#### 15b. Scrapbook belonging to Ernest Payne, 1914-16

The young Payne also kept a scrapbook of newspaper cuttings relating to the war, the volume on display covering the period from October 1914 to January 1916.

16. *Regent's Park College Minute Book, 1902-20*

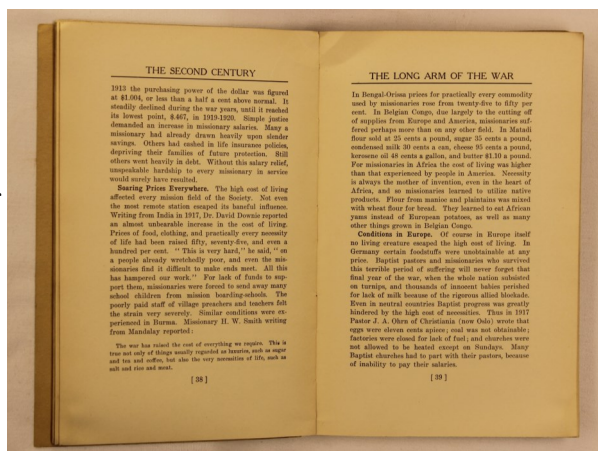
From 1916 to 1920 Regent's Park College loaned its premises, then in London, to St Dunstan's Hostel for Rehabilitating Blinded Soldiers and Sailors. Support for the move came from Revd J. H. Shakespeare and David Lloyd George. The college moved in with Hackney College which was later commandeered for the use of the Royal Flying Corps in 1918. These then joined New College which led to a scheme of united theological classes for the colleges in 1919.



**17. Letter from St Mary's Gate Baptist Church regarding charitable work, 28th October 1914**

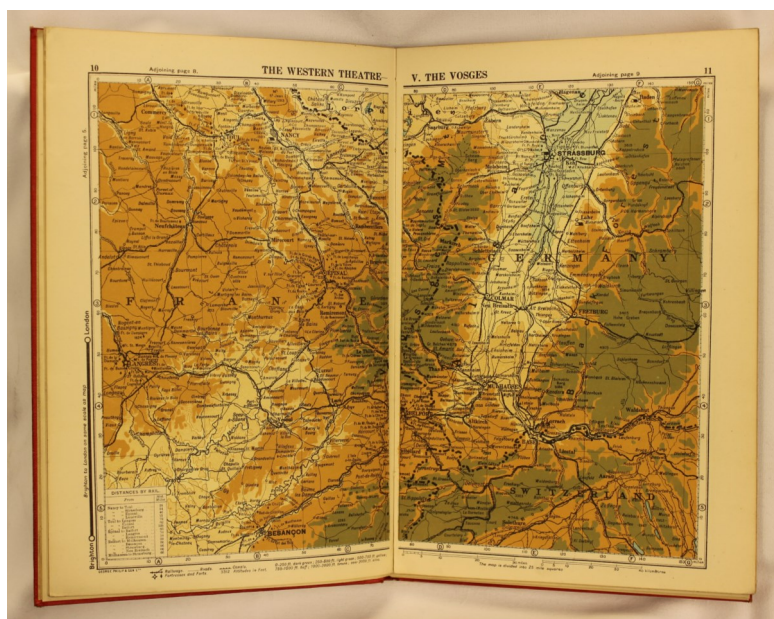
Across Britain people wanted to be part of the war effort. Those who could not fight found other ways to contribute. The role of women changed dramatically as they entered the workforce into positions previously held by men. Fundraising and charitable work was also prolific and varied. In this letter from St Mary's Gate Baptist Church, T. S. informs Rushbrooke that money was raised to furnish a house for Belgian refugees and support the Ladies' Working Party for War Relief.

## 18. *The Second Century of Baptist Foreign Missions* William B. Lipphard, 1926



Lipphard recognised the cost of the war to humankind. He quotes figures from the League of Nations which state that 10 million were killed, 20 million wounded and 5 million traumatised. Suffering

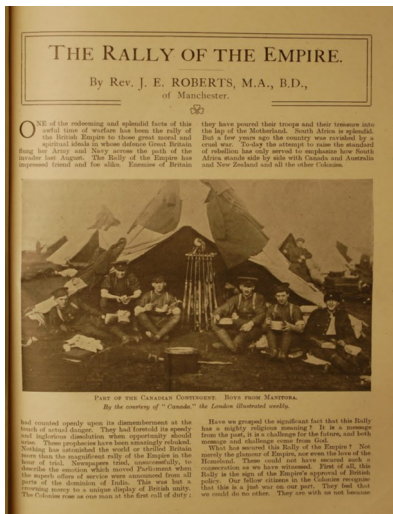
happened in many ways; food prices rose, building materials doubled in price as did the cost of travel. In Germany, people lived off turnips in the last year of the war and babies perished through lack of milk. Lipphard saw that missionary work was vital after the war just as much during it. Lipphard suggests that preaching the gospel, relieving human suffering, and training new missionaries was vital. He also recognised that new missionary objectives were needed to tackle the industrial strife, social turmoil, racial prejudice and intellectual unrest which came from the conflict.



## 19. *The Times War Atlas and Gazetteer, 1917*

Bound volume of 40 coloured maps of the war areas including statistics relating to the Belligerent countries including area and population.





## 20. *The Rally of the Empire*, published in the Baptist Times, 1915

This leaflet was included in an edition of the Baptist Times in 1915 and depicts the wide ranging effect of the First World War. Truly the first global conflict, the leaflet shows troops from all over the British Empire rallying to war, illustrating the numerous theatres of war involved in the conflict.

## 21. Salonika, Greece, photograph album, Frances Major, 1916 -17

At the request of the Greek Prime Minister, in October 1915 a two large French and British brigades landed at Salonika to help the Serbs in their fight against Bulgarian aggression . Frances Major was a British nurse from Swindon, who served with the armed forces during



the First World War. This photograph album documents two years spent in Salonika, including images of medical staff, soldiers and ruins of buildings. Whilst many of the images show the devastating effects of war, there are also heart-warming images which depict the friendships which were built between the nurses.



## 22. 'The Latest War News' photograph album from India, 1914

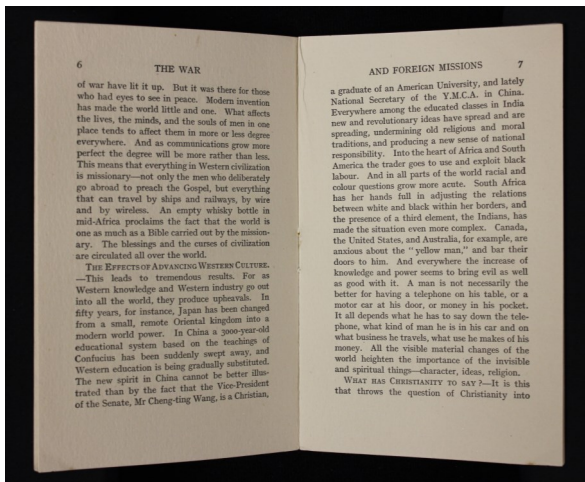
This photograph is in an album which documents mission life in India. The image on the left shows locals gathered to hear the 'latest war news' in 1914 and demonstrates the far reaching significance of the war across the globe.

Limited, unreliable, and delayed means of communication during the war meant that scenes like these would have been frequent on further afield areas of the British colonies.

## 23. Dr Ellen Farrer's diaries, 1914-19

Dr Ellen Farrar was a pioneer female doctor who set sail for India in 1891. She worked in a missionary hospital in Bhiwani. Extracts from her diaries give an insight into how her daily life was affected by war. From her concern for soldiers' cold and sockless feet, to her keen interest in the dissemination of war news through the newspapers and cinema, and her constant anxiety of friends being wounded or killed. Dr Ellen Farrer's strong resolve and ability to find pleasure in the joy of receiving post from loved ones creates a personal and moving picture of a British Baptist experiencing war far from home.





## 24. *The War and Foreign Missions*

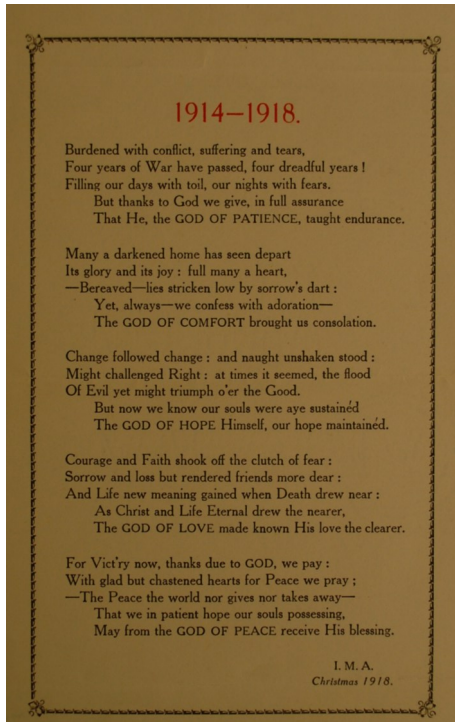
The Revd Neville Talbot,  
c.1915

In *The War and Foreign Missions*, the Revd Neville Talbot recognises that the world was changing quickly during the war. Neville urgently sought former soldiers to become missionaries and

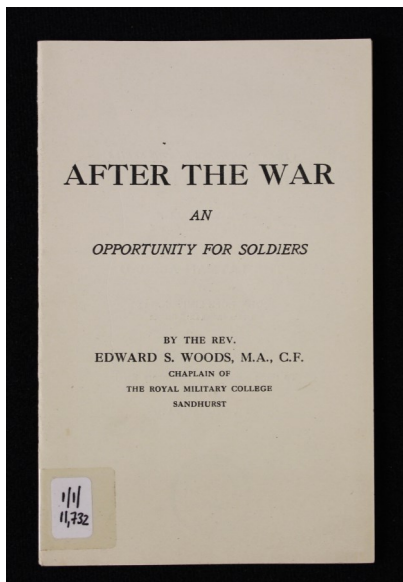
travel. He believed these men would benefit from passing on Christian beliefs in exchange for learning far eastern values for the benefit of mankind. Neville realised that if we did not learn respect for other values and cultures then there would be a larger war than the First World War.

## 25. '1914 - 1918', I. M. A, Christmas 1918

This poem was written to commemorate the end of the war. Its unknown author cites the suffering of the conflict, and the fear that 'Right' (the Allies) would be crushed by 'Might' (the Central Powers); however, the overall message of the poem is that it is God that has ensured the victory of the Allies, and that meaning through faith has survived the horrors of war.







## ***26. After the War: an Opportunity for Soldiers***

**The Revd Edward S. Wood**

This pamphlet created by the Revd E. S. Wood, chaplain of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, is encouraging soldiers to take up mission work after finishing their service in the armed forces.

## ***27. The Position and Progress of the Baptist Denomination in Europe*** **Revd J. H. Rushbrooke, 1923**

The lasting impacts of the war can be seen in the actions taken by Baptist organisations in the years following the signing of the armistice. The main concerns at a conference of the Baptist World Alliance in July 1920 were to ensure a lasting peace in Europe, rebuild relationships with Germany and ensure that churches in war-torn countries had the material necessary to continue their work.

In July 1923, at the Baptist World Alliance Third World Congress in Stockholm, Rushbrooke delivered this hopeful message:

*I rejoice in the knowledge that the need in Europe is far less than it was. Slowly, painfully slowly, normal conditions of life are emerging; but it will be necessary whilst in Stockholm to confer with the brethren of certain lands, and especially of Russia and Germany, regarding the conditions likely to obtain in the near future.*

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