Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology



https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb

PayPal https://paypal.me/robbradshaw

A table of contents for the *Irish Baptist Historical Society Journal, new series,* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_irish-baptist-historical-society-journal_ns-01.php

JOURNAL

of

The IRISH BAPTIST

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Editor:

Joshua Thompson, B.A., D. Phil. (Oxon.)

Volume Four (New Series)

1996-97

IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(Founded 1968)

JOURNAL

Volume Four (New Series) 1996-97

EDITOR: Joshua Thompson, B.A., D.Phil. (Oxon.)

© Irish Baptist Historical Society

ISSN: 0075-0727

Membership of the Society is open to persons interested in the history of the Baptist Churches in Ireland.

The membership subscription is £5.00 sterling (in the British Isles) and entitles to the Society's Journal, published annually in May.

Overseas members annual subscription is US$10.00.

Subscriptions fall due on January 1.

Cost of Journal to non-members: £6.00 sterling or US$12.00 per issue plus postage & packing.

Published by
The Baptist Union of Ireland
117 Lisburn Road
Belfast BT9 7AF,
Northern Ireland
Telephone: Belfast (01232) 663108
Fax No: 01232 663616

CONTENTS

Editorial 5

Irish Baptist Attitudes to the first century of Brethrenism 7
Roy McMullan

Prominent Irish Baptists of the Eighteenth Century 25
H. D. Gribbon

Reminiscences of a Retired Missionary 45
Mary Sloan

Book Reviews 59
Robert Dunlop

Report to Annual Assembly 1997 63

Membership Application Forms 65

About Our Contributors:

- Roy C McMullan, BA, BD, Dip Ed is pastor of the Gilnahirk Church, Belfast and Chaplain to the Northern Ireland Hospice and to Baptist students at Queen's University, Belfast.

- Dr H D Gribbon is the President of the Irish Baptist Historical Society.

- Robert Dunlop MA, M Litt. who wrote the Book Review is minister of the Baptist congregation founded by Huguenot nobleman John La Touche at Brannockstown near Ballymore-Eustace in Co. Kildare.

- Mary I Sloan, SRN, SCM and her husband, Sam were esteemed members of the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission working in Peru, S. America. Now retired they live in Coleraine, Co. Londonderry.

EDITORIAL

Reflecting on the past years since the formation of the Society in 1968 it may be said with some assurance that the quarterly meetings continue to provide a forum for discussion of Irish Baptist history and the Journal a useful way of publishing and preserving the results of study by individuals. Articles aim at both academic quality and popular appeal.

The policy of encouraging the writing of local church histories has developed a natural interest among Irish Baptists with their notable stress on the independence of the local church. Guidance and help has been given in research techniques and advice on how to aim at balanced results. This year the Shankill-road Church, Belfast, produced an excellent brochure history celebrating the church's centenary entitled "Baptists on the Shankill". Fenton Butler and Philip Orr, who researched and wrote the brochure, gave the members of the Society a talk, illustrated by a small exhibition, taped interviews, describing how they went about their task.

The papers published in this issue are good examples of the desired mixture of academic quality and popular appeal. This issue is unique in the sense that it carries articles by a brother and sister. Mary Sloan is a sister of our President, Dr H. D. Gribbon. Thanks must be expressed to them and to our other contributors.

IRISH BAPTIST ATTITUDES TO THE FIRST CENTURY OF BRETHRENISM

by R. C. McMullan

I empathise with the speaker, introducing a paper read at a meeting of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland on the 30th June 1886, who began, 'Mr President and dear brethren, I have little sympathy with speakers who invariably commence sermon or speech with an apology. I do not offer one on this occasion, for I read from compulsion, not of choice, and regret that you did not select some other brother to write a paper. To me it is an ordeal, an exercise undertaken with great reluctance, commenced with great misgiving, concluded with self-disgust, and read with a sense of immense relief.' [1]

The Brethren Movement came into being around 1825, though many of the Brethren community would insist on tracing their roots back to the apostolic era. In the early part of the nineteenth century denominationalism was strong among the various christian churches and the barriers which divided were difficult to surmount. A group of young men, some of whom were associated with Trinity College, Dublin, were anxious to meet together for worship and fellowship in a way which would transcend the divisions. There was no intention, initially at least, to initiate a fresh movement, much less to lay the foundation for what was to become another denomination. In the beginning they continued as members of their original churches, in which a few of them were ordained ministers, but that situation did not continue for very long. One of the earliest leaders was a Church of Ireland clergyman, John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). Darby was a man of great intellect and a strong personality. His concern in the early days was to establish a corporate worldwide witness to the unity of the Church of Christ in an age of ecclesiastical fragmentation. [2] But his identification with the Exclusive Brethren, when they were formed in 1848, put paid to that idea.

In the early days of the Movement there was a keen interest in the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy, a feature which is reflected in many of their hymns. In a recent biography of Stephen F.Olford entitled *Only One Life* it is claimed that the early Brethren rediscovered a number of key Bible truths. Among these it is asserted that they went back to a literal, grammatical, cultural method of Biblical interpretation and so rediscovered dispensationalism as an important key to understanding the Scriptures. In so doing, it is said, that 'they rescued the truth of the Second Coming of Christ from the debris of confusion, where it had been buried by prevailing, popular theology'. [3] It is also asserted that they were responsible for rediscovering the truths of the priesthood of all believers, the oneness of the body of Christ and the importance of the Lord's Supper.

One area in which they were at odds with most other churches was in their ecclesiology. In those early days they stood opposed to the idea of an ordained pastoral ministry which was common to most churches. To them human ordination was unnecessary and a local assembly should have a plurality of qualified and spiritually gifted elders who should also be its shepherds or pastors. The opportunity to exercise a pulpit ministry should be open to anyone in the fellowship with the necessary spiritual gifts rather than being dominated by one man.

Anthony Norris Groves, one of the early leaders of the Brethren movement, and the first Brethren missionary, who sailed for Baghdad in June 1829, expressed himself as having no difficulty concerning the possibility of some giving their whole time to the ministry of the Word. He wrote, 'I have no question but those whom God has called to minister should wait on their ministry and give themselves wholly to it ... recognised pastors and teachers are essential to the good order of all assemblies; and as such required and commanded by God; and though I should not object to unite with those who had them not, if it were the result of the Lord's providence in not giving them any, I should feel quite unable to join personally those who reject them as unnecessary and unscriptural'. [4]

It was not the intention of those involved in the early days of what was to become known as the Brethren movement to form a separate denomination, and even to this day there would be those among the Brethren who would

repudiate the idea of labelling it as a denomination. While such high ideals did not survive for very long there were instances where the lines of demarcation were blurred. Such was the case with Robert Cleaver Chapman, a notable figure among the early Brethren, who settled in Barnstaple in 1832. Interestingly enough he was told by some of his friends that he would never make a preacher. But his reply was, 'There are many who preach Christ, but not so many who live Christ; my great aim will be to live Christ'. However Chapman felt himself called of God to the ministry of the Word. He was invited by the congregation of Strict Baptists meeting in Ebenezer Baptist Chapel in Barnstaple to minister the Word of God to them and this he did right up to the time of his death seventy years later [5] and yet at the same time he maintained a high profile among the Brethren. In his 99th year he attended the annual meeting for believers and stood on his feet exactly one hour - he gave out the opening hymn, prayed, read several portions of Scripture and then spoke with much vigour. [6]

The ink on the first issue of the Irish Baptist Magazine had barely dried when its pages were liberally sprinkled with references to the Brethren Movement. One of the earliest, if not the earliest, articles appeared in March 1877. It was an account of the annual meeting of members and communicants of the Baptist Church in Stratford-on-Avon addressed by the minister the Rev. Samuel Burn. In the course of his address the Rev. Burn told how he had been reading about two species of wildfowl to be found in one of the wilder districts of the American continent. These two species known as canvas-backs and widgeons were equally fond of the wild celery root which grew profusely in those parts. He described how the canvas-backs plunged their bills into the water, laboriously tore up the celery root and then were too exhausted for a time to eat the meal they had secured. In that interval of exhaustion the widgeons approached and stole away the food of the other birds. 'Now,' said Mr.Burn, 'is there any sect which resembles these plundering widgeons?' His question was immediately answered from all parts of the building by cries 'The Plymouth Brethren,' and a great deal of appreciative laughter. Clearly the Brethren had been very active carrying on their characteristic work in Stratford, but no less than five other speakers who participated in that meeting asserted that the Baptists of Stratford were not ignorant of their devices, or likely to be misled by them. One of the speakers said he had been told by a member of the Brethren movement that Mr Spurgeon

and his people could not be regarded as brethren in Christ, but must be classed with those whom the Saviour would spue out of his mouth. However, the vigorous denunciations and good-humoured ridicule were regarded as the most interesting part of the meeting. [7]

In the same issue of the magazine, in an article entitled 'Plymouth Brethrenism' the Rev H.C. Leonard, M.A., pastor of the Baptist Church in Bournemouth challenged what he called 'the unscriptural pretensions of Brethrenism'. Leonard asserted:

1. A true christian church welcomes to its fellowship all whom Christ has received as distinct from the Brethren who reject the holiest and most useful of men if they do not agree with them.

2. A true christian church receives the Scriptures as a sufficient guide in contrast to the Brethren who claim a peculiar and exclusive inspiration by their use of the phrase 'the presidency of the Holy Ghost in the assembly'.

3. A true christian church is modelled after the Apostolic Churches of the New Testament, this the Brethren have set aside and have expressly said that it should not be imitated.

4. A true Christian Church recognises its mission to the world whereas the Brethren announce that their mission is not to the world but to the church. [8]

It is inevitable that all opponents of Brethrenism must focus on the same topics, and therefore to that extent there must be considerable overlap in terms of the matters they deal with and how those subjects are approached.

The first Irish Baptist to take up the cudgels against the Brethren, at least in the pages of the Irish Baptist magazine, was the Rev.William Ramsay, then pastor of the Clough church. In a series of four articles he posed the question 'Will "Brethrenism" bear the test of Scripture?' In these articles he dealt with such matters as:

1. Is the Presidency of the Holy Spirit as held by the 'Brethren' scriptural? [9]
2. Is 'Open Ministry' scriptural? [10]
3. Is the teaching of the 'Brethren' on Ministerial support scriptural? [11]

In Irish Baptist circles the attacks against Brethrenism were led largely by two brothers. They were James and Haldane Carson, sons of the Tubbermore manse. More about James in a moment or two. Haldane Carson followed in his father's footsteps in that he succeeded his famous father, Dr. Alexander Carson, as pastor of the Tubbermore church. But his appointment was challenged by one of his elders who ultimately set up a rival Baptist Church in the town even though the elder concerned was motivated by Brethren tendencies. Haldane Carson stayed only for a short time in Tubbermore, moving to Perth in Scotland as pastor of the Baptist church there. However it wasn't too long before he received a unanimous invitation to return to Tubbermore. He accepted that invitation to the pastorate and served the Lord there for many years. He also became a regular contributor to the pages of the Irish Baptist Magazine. He seems to have had a special interest in the Church of the New Testament and he wrote frequently on various aspects of the church's life. It comes as no surprise therefore to find that in the years 1879 and 1880 he wrote a series of seven articles entitled 'The Brethren: Their worship and the word of God at open variance'. As is so typical of the time Haldane Carson wrote on such topics as:

1. The meetings of the Brethren are not churches.
2. The worship of the Brethren has no law.

3 & 4. The Brethren are without office-bearers.

5 & 6. Brethrenism, in its services is the substitution of a present and personal inspiration for the inspiration of the Bible.

7. Their pretensions and their practice are not always in harmony.

In the first of his articles in which no punches are pulled as even the title suggests, 'The Brethren: Their worship and the Word of God at open variance', Carson takes issue with the claim of the Brethren that all which they believe and practise is in accord with the Word of God. He challenges

such an assertion and says 'the time has come when the high pretensions of Brethrenism with reference to scripture must be unmasked, and the naked truth exposed to view. The early Brethren writers adopted the view that the church was ruined and that no attempt should be made to reform it. Any thought of having an organised body with an authorised government was regarded as a futile step since according to their view of scripture matters were only to get worse and worse. The only answer was to have gatherings or assemblies. Carson maintained that the meetings of the Brethren were not churches. To Carson the New Testament taught that believers were to be brought together in an orderly association - a church - they were not simply called out of the world. He scathingly rejects the idea that the Brethren have a monopoly on Matthew 18 v.20 'For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them', as though when we claim Christ is in the midst we may ignore such matters as order and organisation. To him such comments as 'gathering to the name of Christ' and 'meeting around the risen Saviour' is pious talk which disregards the teaching of the Word of God. [12]

In his second article in which he asserts that the worship of the Brethren has no law he begins by asking a question, 'How is an organised association or church distinguished from a mere gathering'?, and then answers 'In everything it does it is ruled by law'. Clearly Carson means by this that the risen Saviour instructed His disciples that their converts were not only to be discipled and baptised but they were to be 'taught to obey everything I have commanded you'. To Carson the New Testament churches lived under the teaching of God's word, it was the rule or law for their churches as well as their lives. This stands in marked contrast to the meetings of the Brethren who have no organisation and can, therefore, have no law. Also the Brethren concept of the presidency of the Holy Spirit opens the door to everyone doing as he feels called upon to do and so becomes subject to his emotions, impressions and inspirations. One Brethren writer is quoted as saying, 'We search in vain in the New Testament for any church government except the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost'. How different is the teaching of the New Testament where the Holy Spirit not only presides in the church but He governs the church through the laws of His own enactment! Carson quotes McIntosh (presumably C.H.M.) who says that the promised presence of Christ, again referring to Matthew 18 v.20, is 'all-sufficient for the guidance of saints in the day of ruin...not only for personal salvation, but for all the exigencies

of the assembly - for worship, communion, ministry, discipline, government, everything'. Carson concludes that the outcome of such a practice is either anarchy or tyranny, sometimes the first and sometimes the second. [13]

In the two articles sub-titled 'The Brethren are without Office-bearers' Carson holds that the New Testament pattern was pastors to rule and deacons to serve. He sets out extensive scriptural evidence for his claims dealing with each separately and then together. He then challenges the Brethren, 'Where are the pastors and teachers of Brethrenism?' Not only do they ignore or set aside the Word of God but they denounce pastors as hirelings, even though they are chosen in strictest conformity to the requirements of the Word. Rather the Brethren held that 'an assembly belonging to any denomination of the present day forgets the presidency of the Holy Ghost, and a man fills His place' or 'The choosing of pastors is a daring encroachment on the authority of the Holy Ghost'. Carson rightly points out that the teaching of the New Testament and of I Peter 5: 1-2 was, we believe, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit guilty of contradicting Himself, telling the church to do something which would usurp His presidency? What are the Brethren doing when they reject such a scripture but flying in the face of the Spirit of God? Is it strange that men claiming to possess such powers should seek to annihilate the office of the pastor? [14]

In a continuing article on this topic, Carson argued against those in Brethren circles who held that because the church was in ruins and because there were no apostles or apostolic delegates then it was not possible to have office-bearers and that God would lead and guide His children if they walked in humility and obedience. But Carson vigorously contended that the scriptures made provision for and, by implication, placed the responsibility on the church members to chose both elders and deacons. He suggests that the Brethren have confounded the election with the ordination of pastors. In this article he returns to attack McIntosh on the basis of his exposition of the phrase 'There am I in their midst' (Matt.18 v.20) when he said 'This is enough, there is not a pope, a priest, a parson or a president in their midst...God was there to keep order. To set up man to keep order in God's assembly, is sheer unbelief and an open insult to the Divine presence.' But Carson will have none of it. He declares that Christ had promised to be present, not president and that it is clear from the New Testament that the presence of Christ and the rule of the

overseers is not thought to be incompatible, but rather that they exist together. Carson is scornful of the outcome. It has resulted in a 'headless gathering'; in a ministry of those who had a duty to learn and not to teach; and in the exercise of arbitrary power. [15]

In his final pair of articles on the general subject of 'the Brethren and their worship' Carson deals with the conduct of worship and accuses the Brethren of setting aside the Word of God in favour of immediate divine revelation. The teaching of the Holy Spirit is not simply through or by the Word but is over and above the Word. The Spirit is not only the 'government' but the 'sole government in the Church'. He quotes extensively from those who had been or were still among Brethren underlining the divisions of opinion which had arisen and the resulting carving up of assemblies and reminds us that as Baptists we believe that the Word of God is the sole and ultimate guide both in faith and in practice. [16]

But not content with his assault on the worship of the Brethren, Carson launched an attack on what he termed 'their pretensions and their practice are not always in harmony.' In this he claimed that they denounce party, and are themselves a sect, and secondly that they condemn party names and yet bear one. It was hard hitting and no holds barred! [17]

The articles written by Haldane Carson were obviously appreciated by John La Touche, Esq., J.P., D.L., of Harristown who generously made arrangements so that the papers on Brethrenism which had appeared in the Irish Baptist Magazine might be issued in the form of a cheap pamphlet. [18]

Did you know that the fundamental principles of 'Phrenology' are the only principles capable of being reconciled with the immateriality and immortality of the soul? Such was the claim made by Dr James C. L. Carson, a Doctor of Medicine, who as well as practising his craft in Coleraine took time to rail against the Brethren movement of his day. By the way 'phrenology', for the uninitiated, is the study of cranial bumps!

In a wide ranging and scathing attack on 'The Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren' he went further than warning of the influences of Brethrenism, he labelled the deviations as heresies. In keeping with the times in which the

debate took place it seems that the pages of the Coleraine Chronicle must have been constantly peppered with articles and letters from the pen of Dr Carson and from his respondents. One focus of his attack was the writings of C. H. McIntosh, especially the latter's *Notes on Leviticus*. Carson accused him of propounding doctrines which impugned the humanity of Christ, the righteousness of Christ and argued that C. H. M. held a Socinian view of the atonement which eliminated the substitutionary aspect from the death of Christ.

When it comes to the pastoral office Carson is uncompromising, he says 'the existence of the Pastoral Office is so plainly taught in Scripture that I am surprised any person would think of questioning it'. [19] He is forthright in his opinion that to fail to appoint a pastor/elder was to commit a sin in the face of high heaven and such a course of action could not possibly prosper. [20] For him there should be a plurality of elders or pastors, at least one of whom should be supported adequately to allow him to give himself to labouring in the word and doctrine. In this connection he spoke approvingly of Mrs C.H.Spurgeon's Book Fund which had been set up to help provide 'tools' for pastors. In his chapter entitled 'The Pastoral Office' he provides us with a long digression (pages 94-129 - i.e.35 pages) - the whole chapter runs from pages 79 to 136 - i.e. 57 pages. In it Carson expounds at length on the duty of teaching, on predestination and election, the Trinity, Transubstantiation and on such practical matters in preaching as, avoiding repetition, speaking with a natural voice and honesty. In the final part of the chapter he does challenge the idea that the pastor must be drawn from the congregation in which he is to minister and he draws a distinction as to the method of appointing deacons and the way in which elders were appointed in the New Testament. [21]

In a chapter entitled 'The Presidency of the Holy Spirit' Carson takes issue with those in the Brethren movement who asserted the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost had been usurped by a man filling His place. His attack is directed against the notion that if the Holy Spirit is president then there is no need for human instrument, and also he demonstrates evidence of the divisions which occurred among the Brethren which proved to be a contradiction of their claim that the Holy Spirit was presiding. Carson also reminds us that God has made provision for His church in that He has given pastors and teachers, that elders had been given the oversight of the church at Ephesus by the Holy Spirit, and the various qualifications for offices in the New Testament

Church are an undeniable proof that the officers so designated are to be chosen by fellow believers. He makes the telling remark 'if the choice rested with the Holy Spirit, he would require no instructions. Just think of the Holy Spirit requiring a printed list of qualifications to guide Him in His choice!' [22] Carson accuses the Brethren of so elevating and emphasising the work of the Holy Spirit that the individual speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is infallible and the place of Scripture is thereby downgraded. He accuses them of teaching that elders in the New Testament Churches were selected or chosen by the apostles and his delegates Timothy and Titus, whereas in fact their responsibility was to ordain as elders those who had been selected and chosen by the members of the local churches.

F. Roy Coad in his book entitled *A History of the Brethren Movement* makes reference to James Carson's book. He says of it, '1877 saw the publication of a book which became enormously popular. Dr James C. L. Carson was a Northern Ireland medical man, the son of a distinguished divine, who adopted a number of hobby-horses, which he rode with vigour. Among them were the advocacy of phrenology, the abolition of capital punishment, and (although he was a supporter of the revival) the baiting of the Brethren. This latter he indulged in *The Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren*. W. B. Neatby wrote a book entitled *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* - (2nd edition 1902), this became the standard work on the Brethren for a long time. It is claimed that Neatby who himself was no uncritical advocate for the Brethren dismissed Carson's book with the aside - 'Dr James Carson's book, which is much worse than William Reid's, and which I forbear to characterise'. Dr William Reid, a Scottish Presbyterian minister had written *Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted* and Coad labels it as 'bitterly hostile and unreliable'. He also uses the same description of Carson's book and he says of it, 'the book makes amusing reading for the idler of today, but in its day it was vicious. No man who had any connexion with Brethren could be spared, even Newton's withdrawn tracts were taken out of the limbo into which their author had consigned them, to be made the basis of a violent attack upon that ill-used man'. It seems that the years 1877/1880 saw the publishing of several books on the subject of Brethrenism, not only the book by James Carson, but also that of Reid to which I have referred already and also one written by the Rev Thomas Croskery of Londonderry entitled *Plymouth Brethrenism: a refutation of its Principles and Doctrines*. Neatby dismisses all these books

with the comment 'The writers that have made this subject their special province are general extremely untrustworthy. They are commonly passionately prejudiced against the Brethren. For the most part they make the writings of altogether unrepresentative men the basis of their attack, and even these men they have misrepresented'. Carson was plainly a compulsive controversialist: not only do the back pages of his book quote at great length all the adulatory reviews of his various writings, as was the custom of the time, but he also quoted extracts from adverse reviews and answered them at great length. [23]

The Rev. John Douglas was brought up in the Magherafelt area, attended the Baptist Church in Tubbermore and was trained for the ministry under Alexander Carson. It was Carson's practice to take young men into his home and guide them and train them and so prepare them for the pastoral ministry. John Douglas became pastor of the Baptist Church in Portadown. [24] Later he moved to the pastorate at Stow Hill Baptist Church in Newport, Monmouth and it was from there that he wrote in the October 1878 issue of *The Irish Baptist Magazine* to tell of a visit to the Great Victoria Street church soon after the resignation of the pastor, the Rev. S. A. Swaine. There he baptised two candidates. But he makes an interesting comment, 'though "rumour with her thousand tongues" had ventured to insinuate that this church was afflicted with Plymouth heresy, I could not discover the slightest symptom of the dire disease. The order of public worship is precisely that of the Baptist Church at Tubbermore, founded by the late renowned Dr Carson, and now under the pastorate of his highly gifted son, Rev. R. H.Carson.' [25]

In the course of his presidential address at the meetings of the Irish Baptist Association in 1880 the Rev. John Dickson of Donaghmore spoke against the view held by the Plymouth Brethren concerning the presidency of the Holy Spirit. Dickson claimed that the theory had not only disproved itself in practice but that it was utterly without foundation in the Word of God and was indeed just as anti-scriptural as the more popular idea of the presidency of clergyism. [26] In an earlier article John Dickson had argued for the permanency of the order of Elders and Deacons within the church and that such an order was designed to continue until the Lord comes. However Brethrenism had substituted the idea of the presidency of the Holy Spirit and

this gave rise to a tendency to claim the authority and the prompting of the Holy Ghost for promiscuous, unedifying and sometimes conflictive talking. [27]

The contention between the Baptists and the 'Christian Brethren' in Ballymena prompted Dr. Richard K. Eccles, pastor of Hill Street Baptist Church, Ballymena, to respond to the challenges in the pages of the *Irish Baptist Magazine*. This he did in an article entitled 'Baptist or Brother - which?' In it he took up the cudgels for the use of the term 'Baptist' and against such charges as are sometimes levelled at us in terms of so-called 'one-man ministry' and that 'on the Lord's day Baptists do not meet to break bread, but to hear a preacher.' Dr. Eccles not only answered the charges but also had something to say about the Brethren practice of open ministry at the Lord's Table. [28]

When the Baptist church meeting at Lower Abbey Street in Dublin called Hugh D. Brown as their pastor in November 1884 they were inviting a man who had been raised under the influences of the Church of Ireland but had left that church because he rejected the idea of baptismal regeneration. Later he was baptised by immersion as a believer by the Plymouth Brethren, but he never identified himself with that movement, in part at least, because of their doctrine of the church. However, as is evident from his Presidential address to the Irish Baptist Association in 1887 he was strongly anti-clerical urging his listeners to abjure the use of official garb and clerical titles. It seems, as Doctor Thompson has suggested, that his anti-clericalism was chiefly a reaction against episcopalianism, but it also owed something to his contacts with the Brethren to which his brother Vere belonged. Another factor that may have influenced him greatly was his close friendship with C.H.Spurgeon who also tended to avoid clerical titles and clerical dress. Hugh D. Brown did acknowledge that it was 'extremely difficult to steer an even course between the Scylla of Clericalism and the Charybdis of Brethrenism'. [29] However, sometime after the move of pastor and people from Lower Abbey Street to Harcourt Street the church adopted a bye-law that their pastor should not use the title 'Reverend'. [30]

It was in the early years of this century that we meet up again with references to the Brethren and their influence in Irish Baptist circles. In a paper read to the monthly meeting of the Irish Baptist Local Preachers'

Association in 1912, and published the same year in booklet form, Isaac P.Bell, then pastor of the East End Church,Belfast, spoke on the topic of Church Government. In the course of his address he examined five different systems of government. One of these he calls 'the Chaotical System' and while he does not specifically mention the Brethren there is no question as to the target of his attention. He acknowledged the difficulty in trying to deal with a system which does not have a recognised standard or an authoritative statement regarding its nature. Bell points out the inconsistency of claiming that the Holy Spirit is present in 'the Morning Meeting' which prevents prior arrangements being made, yet other special subjects for christians may be announced weeks in advance. The claim that the Holy Spirit is president at 'the Morning Meeting' also seems to be contradicted by the fact that even the crudest convert, unskilled in handling the word of God has perfect liberty to edify or horrify the most mature of believers and experienced students of God's word. It also means that no man has the right or power to terminate such self-appointed ministers of God's word lest they be found encroaching on the jurisdiction of the Holy Spirit. Bell rightly challenges the notion that 'the Morning Meeting' is the only occasion which is under the control of the Holy Spirit. The promise of Christ is 'where the two or three are gathered together in my Name there am I in the midst'. Scripture does not make the distinction which the Brethren and some others would wish to make. [31]

If the Holy Spirit is only president at 'the Morning Meeting' or at the Lord's Table, what does that say about our other services, or about what happens before or after the Lord's Table - business as usual! Have we considered the implications?

Alexander Jardine in an address given in April 1930 and later published in a booklet under the title *My conversion and why I am a Baptist*, tells of how as a young christian he faced the dilemma as to whether he would join the Baptists or the Brethren following his decision to leave the Presbyterian Church in which he had been raised. He speaks of features among the Brethren which attracted him to that group - these he listed as:

1. their preaching of the Gospel.
2. their practice of baptising believers only.

3. their practice of breaking bread on the first day of the week, and only those who are saved should be at the Table.

4. their unwillingness to raise money in an unscriptural way.

One can only comment that the same characteristics were also true of Irish Baptists! However he cites one thing that he held against the Brethren, namely, while the New Testament clearly taught and recognised eldership or the pastoral office the Brethren gave it no place. He also felt that there was a real lack of christian liberty among the Brethren and this was evidenced by the fragmentation of the Brethren movement, each group having its fair share of godly men. Again Jardine criticised the idea of 'the Brethren's Morning Meeting' pointing out that the open meeting in Corinth was the opportunity for gifted men, but not for any brother. He claims that this is as plain to him as John 3 v.16. For Alexander Jardine a New Testament church is a church of saved, baptised believers. A New Testament church breaks bread every Lord's day, it has elders or pastors recognised, chosen to feed the flock of God. It has deacons to attend to the financial side of things. A New Testament church only carries on the work through saved people, and its work should be supported financially by God's people. [32]

One area in which the influence of Brethrenism showed itself in Irish Baptist circles was its outright opposition to the pastoral office. This influence has beset Irish Baptists over many years and in some cases it has resulted in men leaving our ministry to join the Brethren, in church members being seduced and forsaking the Baptists, and in some instances efforts have been made to subvert individual churches. However, others remained within the Baptist family but maintained a view much more akin to that held by the Brethren movement. This has led to on-going tension in some of our churches and at times even within our Union of churches. That influence is still present with us today, though to a lesser extent, especially with regard to what is usually termed 'the one-man ministry'. [33]

Another aspect of this particular influence was to produce an anti-education lobby within our churches which not only militated against the work of the College but also exalted the value of an untrained ministry. One writer was led to comment 'If Prelacy and Presbytery have unduly exalted,

Brethrenism has not simply lowered, it has wholly annihilated the pastoral rule'. [34]

The influence of Brethrenism on Irish Baptists cannot be lightly dismissed. It did have a dramatic effect on such men as J. G. McVicker, who had defected from the Reformed Presbyterian Church to become the first pastor of the newly -formed Baptist Church in Ballymena. That church had been born out of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Ballymena district during the '59 revival. Strange as it may seem this pattern was also followed by R. M. Henry who came from the same background as McVicker, joined the Baptists, and became pastor of the Great Victoria Street Church. But for both these men their sojourn among Baptists was only temporary and both were to join the ranks of the Brethren. More recently Sam Jardine, son of Alexander Jardine, and one time pastor of Mountpottinger Tabernacle did not persist in the 'faith' of his father but resigned from the 'Tab' and forsook the Baptists in order to serve the Lord as a Brethren evangelist. Sandy Lyttle, at one time pastor in the Dunseverick Church likewise left the Baptists to join the ranks of the Brethren.

More insidious was the fact that there were those among the leadership of some of our churches who remained in such positions and yet were strongly inclined towards what was essentially Brethren rather than Baptist practice especially in the assertion of the presidency of the Holy Spirit. It must be said that such a situation is not unknown today. This is particularly true in two or three areas, firstly in the conduct of the observance of the Lord's Supper where no one is permitted to preside at the Lord's Table. Secondly in the matter of eldership, where it seems that the insistence on a plurality of elders has sometimes led to the weakening of the pastoral office. Finally, why is it that there are those in our churches who seem to studiously avoid the use of the word 'church' and prefer to use the term 'assembly' Is it because of the influence of Brethren thinking which holds that the church is in ruins and therefore they wish to distance themselves from it? These are matters to which we need to give careful thought and attention, both as to the implications of such practices as may have developed, but above all to ask 'What saith the Scriptures?'

FOOTNOTES

1. The Irish Baptist Magazine (IBM) September 1886, p. 1.
2. F. F. Bruce, *In retrospect: Remembrance of things past*, Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow (1980), p. 314.
3. John Phillips, *Only One Life: The Biography of Stephen F. Olford*, Neptune N. J. (1995), p. 158.
4. E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church*, Pickering & Inglis, London (1931), p. 360.
5. Ibid. - p. 368-370.
6. Hy. Pickering (Ed.), *Chief Men among the Brethren*, Pickering & Inglis, London (1931), p. 30.
7. IBM March 1877, p. 26.
8. Ibid., March 1877, p. 27/8.
9. IBM, May 1877, p. 42f.
10. Ibid., June 1877, p. 48ff and August 1877, p. 61ff.
11. Ibid., March 1878, p. 36ff.
12. Rev. R. H. Carson, IBM, November 1879, p. 166ff.
13. Ibid., December 1879, p. 179ff.
14. Ibid., January 1880, p. 12ff.
15. Ibid., February 1880, p. 25ff.
16. Ibid., March 1880, p. 42ff. and May 1880, p. 75ff.
17. Ibid., July 1880, p. 109ff.
18. IBM, October 1880, p. 171.
19. Dr James C. L. Carson, *The Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren* London (1877), p. 79.
20. Ibid., p. 81.
21. Ibid., p. 130ff.
22. Ibid., p. 140.
23. Paternoster Press, Exeter (1968), pp. 226-7.
24. IBM, August 1877, p. 64.
25. IBM, October 1878, p. 156.
26. IBM, October 1880, p. 161.

27. IBM, June 1879, p. 93.

28. IBM, October 1880, p. 166ff.

29. J. Thompson, *Century of Grace: The Baptist Union of Ireland, A Short History 1895-1995*, Belfast (1995), p. 93.

30. Ibid., p. 94.

31. Isaac P. Bell, *Church Government*, Belfast (1912), pp. 9-12.

32. Alexander Jardine, *My conversion and why I am a Baptist*, Belfast (1930), p. 12-13.

33. J. Thompson, op. cit., p. 25.

34. Ibid., p. 87.

PROMINENT IRISH BAPTISTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

by H. D. Gribbon

The apparent simplicity of this paper's title conceals several problems. What do we mean by 'prominent' - prominent in Ireland, prominent amongst Baptists here or elsewhere, prominent in local government, in business or in some other field? And how do we define 'Irish'? Some leading men in our eighteenth century churches had come from England or Wales, many more had parents or grandparents of British origin. We do not possess adequate biographical material on which to base a proper judgement, but I have selected half a dozen names which I propose to discuss and hope that amongst them some at least properly come within the intention of the title. First, however, there is need for some background material.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century Baptists, with other dissenters and Catholics, were at best, second-class citizens. The pendulum of official favour to Baptists and Independents which had swung toward them during Cromwellian and Commonwealth times had reversed its course with the Restoration of 1660 and by 1700 had gone to the opposite extreme. An Act of 1704, the Test Act, required that in addition to an oath of loyalty to the sovereign, any person holding any position, civil or military, under the crown must 'within three months of taking office produce a certificate of having received the sacrament of the Lord's supper according to the usage of the Church of Ireland ... in some public church upon the Lord's day ...'[1] This provision was not immediately or uniformly applied but in 1710 political change led to its widespread reinforcement. The years between 1710 and 1714 saw increasing animosity between the established church and dissenters, mainly the Presbyterians, and in the latter year the *regium donum* was suspended, but 1715 saw, if not a turn of the tide, at least some appreciation of a common interest in the face of threatened Jacobite insurrection. From

that point onward, while agitation for the repeal of the Test Act was conducted with varying degrees of urgency, active persecution of dissenters was discouraged by the senior clergy. The *regium donum* was restored at the end of 1714 or the beginning of 1715 and it is of interest that in February 1716 there were estimated to be still some half dozen Protestant dissenters in the Irish House of Commons. Finally, although the Test Act was not repealed until 1780 an Indemnity Act was passed in 1719 under which office holders who had failed to take the Test were allowed until 25 March 1720 to do so. This Act was renewed in 1725 and again, almost annually, thereafter. In other words, after 1719 and certainly after 1725, in practice, the Test Act no longer prevented dissenters from holding public office. I do not apologise for what may seem a rather lengthy digression: its relevance will appear shortly.

Ann Riggs

Of prominent Irish Baptists, the first name on my list is that of a lady, Mrs Ann Riggs, the widow of Major Edward Riggs whose large house, Riggsdale, was about seven miles outside Cork. He had settled there on coming from England in 1651 as a commissioner for the disposal of land forfeited by Irish landowners following the rebellion of 1641 and the subsequent civil war. We know nothing of Mrs Riggs during her husband's lifetime, (he died in 1707) but her story thereafter is recorded by Joseph Fowke in the Cork Church Book and I give it, with minor omissions, almost verbatim.

'Perhaps there was never a woman whose history deserves more to be recorded, as she was a chief means of establishing a Baptist church in Cork. She was born in Lower Ormond, her father Mr Allen of Kildowney. Both her parents were Baptists, lived in good circumstances and took great care of her education. She was born about the year 1652 so that it is probable her parents came over during Cromwell's Protectorship, many of the same profession having settled about that time in the same county and formed a considerable society. The remains of their posterity still continue in those parts and have a meeting at Cloughkeating under the pastoral care of Rev Mr James North. This lady was the third wife of Major Riggs who at sixty years of age paid his address to her and married her when she was twenty-five years old. Soon after marriage she was conducted to Riggsdale where she continued for the most part till her death. The Major died about ninety years old, leaving her

possessed of a good part of his Irish estate which might amount to twelve hundred pounds per annum. His children and her children were Edward Riggs who was appointed one of the Commissioners of Revenue of Ireland and possessed his father's English estates, Thomas Riggs to whom the Major left one hundred pounds per annum and Ruth Riggs who was married to Mr Caleb Falkiner, banker in Cork. Another daughter married a Mr Nevill, a gentleman of considerable estate, also Judith Riggs, remarkable for her early piety of whom there is a brief account in print published by Rev Abdiel Edwards, pastor of the Baptist church in Dublin. As the Major left a great part of his fortune to his widow it is natural to conclude he had a high opinion of her prudence and in fact it appears no woman could make a better wife, no woman had a greater spirit or capacity to manage so large a fortune. When her eldest son Edward came to proper years and had a family she generously gave up at least one third of the Irish estate to him; she also gave largely to her other children and when by the improvidence of some of the family they were reduced she still went on assisting them, portioned her grand-children and ... left an annuity for ever to be distributed among any of the branches of the family that should be reduced.

'It is remarkable at this day that not one of her posterity adheres to the profession of their ancestors except Mr Riggs Falkiner who is at present a member and deacon with us and whom God has blessed in so remarkable a manner that he alone of her children and grand-children is in any considerable repute. Though by her bounty to her children and grand-children she reduced her income to about five hundred pounds per annum yet this did not prevent her generosity from extending to other purposes. The poor all around her of every denomination were partakers of her bounty, especially in time of any grievous calamity, in sickness or severe seasons; if any minister recommended an object she rejoiced and thanked him for the opportunity he gave her to do good. She was, according to the apostle's admonition "good unto all but especially unto the household of faith". Those of the Baptist persuasion experienced a paternal regard. She was generous to the ministers, not only entertaining them kindly on stated occasions, but giving them constant tokens of her regard; she spoke encouragingly to them and assisted them and their families with presents: when any of the meeting houses was out of repair or wanted re-building she generously contributed.

'The church of Cork was no doubt remarkable distinguished. She was the chief means of settling a stated pastor among them and raising a decent house of worship. As far as lay in her power she provided for their future establishment, and as they were sometimes molested in the burial of their dead, she purchased a burying ground for them and had it walled round in a very decent manner. One thing ought to be remarked of her bounty, that she did all the good in her power during her lifetime, not waiting as some others have done to a death-bed when riches have no longer any tempting charms, and the possessor full of the fears of an approaching summons thinks to atone for his crimes by leaving a part to pious uses...

'She died at Riggsdale in the year 1741 in the 89th year of her age, having seen the third and fourth generation of her descendants, her death greatly lamented by her neighbours and friends but especially by the poor who lost a generous benefactor. As to her person, she was tall and well made; in her countenance there was more of kindness and penetration than of delicacy and softness. In her youth she had been active and sprightly. She had, in general, an excellent constitution which enabled her with cheerfulness to go through the several offices of life in a uniform and steady manner.' [2]

Fowke goes on to record in several pages Pastor Gibbon's eulogy of the lady, which is fulsome in the extreme and which I will spare you, as I have some of his more ornate passages. It is clear however that Mrs Riggs was born in Ireland, lived her whole life there, was a Baptist, and was prominent in the Cork church and indeed in local circles outside her own denomination.

Samuel Fowke

The father of Joseph Fowke, already mentioned, was Samuel Fowke, [3] born in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire in the latter part of the seventeenth century, probably of Baptist parents. He may have trained for the ministry, at any rate when he accepted an invitation to Ireland he came with the recommendation of Stennet and Keach. [4] I have not seen any account of his early years in Ireland but think it likely that, based in Dublin, he travelled around the churches as an evangelist. Kilkenny was without a pastor and he seems to have settled there for a few years as his wife subsequently said that he was a supporter of the Baptist work there. In 1712 he married Ann Geal of Kilkenny. Although

only twenty years of age she was already a strong Baptist, grand-daughter of Col. Lawrence, Cromwellian governor of Waterford. After about two months, that is in August 1712, Samuel Fowke was called to the church at Waterford and moved there with his bride almost immediately. They lived in Waterford 'above thirty years' that is until 1746. There is a discrepancy between his wife's date for the removal to Waterford and the 1716 date given in the Waterford Church Book for the commencement of Joseph Fowke's ministry there. It may be that in the first four years he was serving as an evangelist rather than pastor and that it was then, as recorded, he visited Enniscorthy, Clonmel, Lismortagh and Wexford, in the last of which he was brought before a justice of the peace for preaching and was imprisoned 'in the latter end of Queen Anne's reign', which probably means 1713. The imprisonment fortunately was brief and by 1716 his pastorate commenced.

Samuel and Ann Fowke were not without means. Ann records that 'my father's parents were the chief support of the Baptist Church in Kilkenny' and 'Since I can remember my grand-father [John Geale] paid the rent of the meeting house in Kilkenny'. Ann's father served in the cavalry during the Williamite war, at Limerick and elsewhere: he must have been of reasonable standing to have been accepted as suitor for Col. Lawrence's daughter. Ann would presumably have a dowry when she married. Certainly she had sufficient capital to turn part of their home in Waterford into a shop and to stock it with goods. Samuel Fowke's financial position, initially, is less certain but 1730 he was able to build four houses, with the intention that the rents would provide some income for the church. During the two years of building however he complained that he was left with only £11 per year to maintain himself and wife and family and had to rely on the earnings of the shop. Some ten years later he embarked on another building venture. His wife says 'with no less zeal he applied himself to forward the building of a new meeting-house, which he lived to see finished...' This was the building in Stephen Street which remained in use until the move to Catherine Street in 1887. Although Samuel Fowke lived to see the building completed he may not have lived to see it furnished and in use. Ann says he died 17 February 1745, but this is "old-style" dating which under "new style" becomes 1746. An account of 1839 records the meeting-house as having been in use 92 years i.e. from 1747 and a note in the Waterford Church Book suggests that this date is correct. So Samuel missed the opening ceremony by a year.

Before dealing with Samuel Fowke's family there are one or two matters of interest to be related about him. He had some skill as an amateur surgeon. His wife writes, 'He learned the use of the lance, both in bleeding and opening of wounds, on purpose to render himself useful to his tenants and poor neighbours who were not able to pay a chirurgeon...' She later says that he had quite a practice, 'many people preferring him to those regularly qualified, including a few in better circumstances.' Strangely, she does not say anything about his preaching, although she records, with approval, other preachers and sermons she has heard. Did she disapprove of his theology? She does not explain his resignation from the pastorate in 1744 or give any details of illness preceding his death in 1746. One is left to assume that the two things were connected. His death must have been fairly sudden for she records that he was with the family at Thomastown in August 1745. One facet of her husband's character she does mention, reflecting an age when the drinking of wine was almost universal amongst all classes of society, 'He was one of the first that quitted the glass and was very happy in knowing when he had enough.'

That Joseph Fowke was a conscientious pastor of the church at Waterford may be inferred from his letter of 28 February 1736/7 to the pastor of the Baptist church in Boston, Massachusetts. The low spiritual state of his church is evidently a cause of concern, though not uncommon among other Irish churches at the time.

Samuel and Ann Fowke had, first, two sons, Joseph born 1713 and Lawrence 1714, then a daughter Hannah who died at 15 months, then four sons and two daughters, not named, all of whom died in infancy. Our interest is in Joseph. The first we hear of him is when he and Lawrence fell into Waterford harbour in 1722 and were nearly drowned before being rescued. The boys were then 9 and 8 years old respectively. They must have had their early schooling in Waterford, but as they grew up Joseph was earmarked for the ministry and Lawrence for a commercial career. Joseph was first put under the instruction of Joseph Pettit [5] which must have meant that he was sent to live with Pettit in Cork. But Pettit died in 1729 when Joseph was 16 and he was then sent to Dublin where 'he was admitted to the benefits of the Education Fund and studied under the ablest masters which this kingdom did afford. Accordingly he made a great proficiency in classical learning, philosophy and morals, and for some time preached occasionally in Dublin,

Westmeath, Ormond, Waterford etc.' But it was not all plain sailing. Ann records that in August 1730 she travelled to Dublin and found her eldest son very ill. She nursed him back to health and returned with him to Waterford. He finished his education however and in December 1731 she heard him preach what must have been one of his very early sermons. Thereafter he travelled around the various churches, perhaps awaiting a call to one of them - a call which never came.

Lawrence in 1733 went to Lisbon as assistant to a merchant there, no doubt one of the several Irish export/import concerns, but the merchant died and Lawrence transferred to another, so successfully that by 1741 he had been taken into partnership. Meantime Joseph married a Miss Ann Hendrick 'with whom he got a handsome fortune' and began to raise a family. His career as a preacher did not make any progress however: as his biographer explains, 'His principles being Arminian precluded him from any great encouragement as a preacher...' [6] Lawrence visited Ireland in 1745 and must have invited and encouraged his brother to come out to Lisbon, which he did in August 1746, taking his wife and family with him. By that date any hope he may have had of following his father in Waterford had been extinguished.

The brothers carried on a successful business in Lisbon for some nine years, that is until the earthquake which destroyed that city on 1 November 1755. At the time Lawrence was on business in England and Joseph in Lisbon had a narrow escape. [7] 'Mr Fowke had a wife and five children then in the city who were obliged to fly from a falling house, naked and helpless, through death and ruin, and yet escaped unhurt.' 'This great instance of God's goodness was not forgot by him; he made the 1st day of November an anniversary on which he assembled his family, read them the dismal account and offered up their solemn thanks-giving to Heaven for their miraculous escape.' [8]

After the earthquake Joseph returned to Ireland. His mother moved to Cork in 1756, and that was doubtless the occasion of Joseph moving there too, continuing the business interrupted at Lisbon. I do not know whether Lawrence also moved to Cork or whether he carried out an earlier intention to settle in London. [Lawrence had been baptised in Dublin in 1745 but did not join the church in Cork, so it is most likely that he remained in England.] Joseph who had been baptised in 1728 joined the Cork church and appears in

the membership list of 1757. He took a very full part in the life of the church becoming deacon, secretary and treasurer. He represented the Cork church at the Association meetings in Cloughkeating in 1760 and, finding that the records of the Cork church had been destroyed by fire in 1729 set himself the task of reconstructing them from the few remaining papers and the recollections of the oldest members. This was the origin of the invaluable Cork Church Book. His mother, Mrs Ann Fowke, died in 1762 and was buried in the Baptist burying ground. In 1765 his brother Lawrence died. He seems to have been unmarried or without a family for he left 'a large fortune' to Joseph. At this point Joseph Fowke, now 52 years of age, retired from business, putting it into the hands of his two elder sons, and devoting himself to books, church affairs and charitable work around Cork. His biographer says: 'on the death of Pastor Gibbons in 1764, he expressed a strong desire to get over from England a minister in the general scheme; he mentioned a famous gentleman and offered very liberal encouragement from himself; but the majority of the people differing from him declared for a Calvinist.' He gave his full support however to the man the church selected. 'As a member of the church to which he belonged he was indeed exemplary. Seeing it thrown by providence principally to his care, he thought himself obliged to give it all the assistance in his power, and during the course of twenty-four years, under the ministry of two successive pastors who differed widely from him in sentiment, he never lost sight of its benefit, but was the faithful treasurer of its revenues and promoter of its interests.'

His obituary in the *Hibernian Chronicle* of 25 May 1780 says: 'Died this day in Prince's Street, Joseph Fowke Esq. a gentleman universally regretted by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, particularly the industrious poor of this city, to whom he was a constant and liberal benefactor. Among the many services which must endear the recollection of his memory was his constant and unremitting attention to the Charitable Loan Fund of this city ...'[9] 'Mr Fowke's person was of middle size, large boned, muscular and well made. He was always thin in flesh, so that he was active and could bear fatigue a few days before his death much better than many who were not half his age. His hair before it silvered by time was dark, his complection fair, or rather a kind of fair sallow, his eyes grey, and his whole countenance composed to gravity and thoughtfulness.'

Samuel Fowke was therefore prominent as an early and substantial support of the Baptist work in Waterford. Although English in origin, his whole ministry was in Ireland. Joseph, born in Ireland, had a more varied career. He was prominent in the Cork church where his work was substantial and, in the compilation of the early part of the Cork Church Book, of lasting historical value.

Riggs Falkiner

The next name on my list has been mentioned already, that of Riggs Falkiner. [10] The Falkiners were wealthy merchants in Cork, probably Baptists: certainly Riggs Falkiner's father, Caleb, was a member of the Cork church, who had married Ruth Riggs, daughter of Major Edward and Mrs Ann Riggs. Caleb's brother Daniel was a banker, a partner in the bank of Burton and Falkiner which he joined in 1726 on the death of a previous partner. The bank however had lent more money than it possessed and when Burton died in 1733 it took all Daniel Falkiner's financial skill to ensure that the creditors were paid. Daniel himself seems to have escaped the collapse with his fortune largely intact, and in 1759 died a wealthy man.

Returning to Riggs Falkiner, he was baptised in 1729, aged around twenty, and joined the Cork church. he became a deacon before 1757. As already noted he was mentioned by the compiler of the church book, probably around 1760, as the only descendant of Mrs Ann Riggs still in fellowship with the church at that time. He was a trustee of certain church property from 1730 to 1770 at least. [11] Riggs married in 1737 Mary Barker, sister of Samuel Barker, M. P. for county Wexford, but it is significant that neither she nor any of their children joined the Baptist church. When she died in 1762 she was buried in the Baptist burying ground, as was their elder son. Caleb died in 1747 and it is reasonable to suppose that Riggs inherited the business which they had been carrying on in partnership. The business prospered and Riggs Falkiner earned the respect of the local community. He had, already, in 1735 been made a freeman of Cork (as was his father) and in 1749 was one of those responsible for installing the bells in the church at Shandon which 'sound so grand on the beautiful shores of the river Lee'. he was made a Justice of the Peace for the county in 1753. In 1760, following the example of his uncle Daniel, he went into banking. This was not particularly strange for, in the

eighteenth century it was quite usual for merchants who had accumulated cash balances to lend money at interest (before the days of building societies and gilt-edged bonds) rather than have it lying idle. Trouble came however when, on the basis of cash in hand or on loan, they issued promissory notes, the ancestors of our bank notes. If someone who owed money to a private bank became insolvent or if the primary trading enterprise met misfortune so that the promissory notes could not be met, the bank failed with loss to all concerned. This fate did not befall the bank run by Riggs Falkiner and his partner Stephen Mills, also a deacon in the Cork church - at least until the bank was in other hands in 1807. Stephen Mills had been an employee in the original business: he was probably a manager rather than a full financial partner in the bank. He died a comparatively young man aged 41 in 1770.

At this point an element of speculation enters the account. I think it is likely that the bank business took Riggs to Dublin for, in 1764, he re-married, his second wife being Anne Maturin, only daughter of Rev Dr G. J. Maturin, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin. For her he built a fine new house, Annmount, overlooking the upper reaches of Cork harbour. Then, in 1768, perhaps prompted by his wife, he was appointed to the Irish Parliament as member for Clonakilty. I use the word 'appointed' rather then 'elected' because Clonakilty was a borough and the votes of the handful of electors were totally at the disposal of the owner of the town, the Earl of Shannon. In the old Irish parliament representatives were elected from the counties by a system not totally different from our own, but the borough representatives from places as small, as they were then, as Clogher, Randalstown or Killybegs, were almost invariably nominated by the local landlord who controlled the votes of the few electors. Thus, the Earl of Shannon had in his gift no less than eighteen seats. Normally these were sold, or traded for some consideration or quid pro quo. Riggs Falkiner is believed to have obtained his seat because the Earl of Shannon owed him money. He sat for Clonakilty 1768-76 and for Castlemartyr 1776-88. In his totally undistinguished parliamentary career he must have followed the wishes of his patron exactly. At any rate he was rewarded in 1778 by advancement to a baronetcy, becoming Sir Riggs Falkiner.

He retired from parliament in 1788, being reported in ill-health, but he lived until 1797/98. Of his career in these last nine or ten years we know very little. He had bought 157 acres of land near Cork and acquired a further 720

acres as a mortgage debt, he had also joined the Dublin Society whose main interest was in agricultural improvement. Perhaps Sir Riggs Falkiner in his retirement became involved in farming or estate management. He remained a banker of course but the day-to-day running of the business must have been largely in the hands of the new partners who joined the firm in 1786. His last years however were not entirely happy. His second wife predeceased him, and he had to embark on litigation to defend his title to land, a very fruitful source of trouble in Ireland. His will, drawn up in 1796, left the bulk of his property to his second son Samuel, who also inherited the title. He made bequests to the two daughters of his first wife and to the two grand-daughters of his second wife including her 'harpsichord, globes and a small quantity of plate'. He left nothing to church or charitable objects.

Sir Riggs Falkiner was prominent, he was Irish or Anglo-Irish, but was he a Baptist? The question arises because in the Cork Church Book he appears on the membership list of 1757 but nor on that of 1774 or subsequently, and opposite his name in the earlier list appears the word 'Conformed', which can only mean that he had, at some time between the two dates, ceased to be a member of the Cork church and had joined the Church of Ireland. When did this take place and why? The least likely explanation is that he had changed his views on theology, church order and infant baptism. A possible explanation is that on taking up some public office or duty he had had to submit to the Test Act. Now, he had been made a Justice of the Peace in 1753, a much more meaningful office then than in the present century, but this was before the compilation of the list of 1757. His appointment to parliament in 1768 could have been the occasion, but when his uncle Daniel became a Member in 1728 the formula was, 'He made and subscribed the Declaration and took and subscribed the Oath of Abjuration according to the laws made for the purpose'. There is nothing here about the Test Act, which Riggs could have avoided under the Act of 1725. The most likely explanation is to be sought in the timing of the addition of the word 'Conformed' to the 1757 list. The Cork Church Book was compiled up to June 1764 by Joseph Fowke and thereafter by another hand or hands. 'Conformed' is not in Joseph Fowke's handwriting. Riggs Falkiner's second marriage took place in October 1764. It would be difficult even to-day to envisage a cathedral dean in an Anglican wedding ceremony giving away his daughter to a Baptist - in the eighteenth century, impossible. If that reading of the situation is correct, then Riggs Falkiner did

not abandon his Baptist beliefs in favour of nominal Anglicanism either for doctrinal or for official reasons but to secure the girl.

In slight support one can refer to the funeral sermon preached by Pastor Richards on the death of Stephen Mills in 1770. Referring to Mills' business career he said, 'He was in business with Riggs Falkiner, now a Burgess in Parliament, who from a long acquaintance with his integrity committed to him the entire trust and management of the business ... A great trust was committed to him while he was very young and his faithfulness in the discharge of it was observable in the experience of many years, on account of which his truly honourable partner greatly feels and mourns the loss'. I have quoted this at length lest the reference to 'partner' might be taken to mean his wife who apparently survived him. Note that while the writer does not call Riggs Falkiner a brother or fellow-member, the terms he uses do not suggest animosity between the church and the ex-member. Where in the Church Book some explanation might have been given, two pages have been removed. I think the notation 'Conformed' was inserted post-October 1764 and whatever the outward seeming, Riggs Falkiner in his heart remained a Baptist.

Morgan Edwards

Next on my list is a man who was certainly prominent, certainly Baptist, but hardly Irish. My excuse for including him is that he was one of those footloose people who seem at home wherever they happen to be. Morgan Edwards was born in Wales in 1722, his parents members of the Established Church. [12] At age sixteen, in circumstances of which we know nothing save that it was 'on examination and conviction' he moved to the Baptist position. He does not seem to have lost the support of his parents for at age eighteen when he would normally be learning a trade, he was entered at Trosnant Academy [13] where he studied for two years before going to Bristol Baptist Academy in 1742. His formal ministerial training finished in 1744, but he was a scholar who doubtless continued studying throughout his adult life. As a subsequent account confirms he was thoroughly conversant with Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and used to say that Greek and Hebrew were the two eyes of a minister and that translations were but commentaries.

His first pastorate was in the small town of Boston in Lincolnshire where he stayed for seven years, removing in 1751 to Cork where he became assistant to the pastor, Ebenezer Gibbons, at that time in indifferent health. It is not clear why he should have come to Cork or indeed to Ireland. Further research may shed light on this. But he evidently fitted into the local scene, though he served the church for six years as assistant before being ordained, apparently at the Association meetings in Cork in 1757. He represented the Cork church at Association meetings in 1758 and 1759 but by the latter date must already have been preparing to move on. There is some suggestion of a cooling relationship with the Cork church in the record, 'Mr Morgan Edwards who for several years past has assisted our pastor in this place, being dismissed by the subscribing members, took Dublin in his way to England. We think ourselves obliged to do justice to our late brother, whose labours were very acceptable to a great part of the congregation, to declare that it was not for any immorality or misdemeanour that he was dismissed, but the necessity of our affairs seemed to require it. For many years past we have been in a declining condition, several useful members dropping off by death and no addition of any new members. Some were for ascribing this to the heavy manner in which Mr Edwards delivered himself, but whatever the cause there seemed to be a necessity to look out for a popular man who might be agreeable to other denominations.' It may also have been that Morgan Edwards' theology was too individualistic to suit all his hearers.

While in Ireland he married Mary Nunn, daughter of Joshua and Ruth Nunn, members of the Cork church since 1730, and she must have moved with her husband to his next pastorate in the Baptist church at Rye, Sussex. His stay there was almost exactly one year - February 1760 to February 1761 during which time he received an invitation to the Baptist church in Philadelphia. He accepted and arrived in America in May 1761 and almost immediately became pastor of the work there. It is possible that Morgan Edwards was more suited to academic than to pastoral work for during the ten years he was there, despite an expanding population, the work declined. He resigned in 1771 and moved to Delaware. During his stay in Philadelphia he had become an active member of the Philadelphia [Baptist] Association and was involved in the establishment of Rhode Island College, being instrumental in procuring its charter in 1764. He visited England in 1767-8 to collect money for the College. Rhode Island conferred its first degree in

1769 and in 1804 became known as Brown University, for many years the only degree-conferring institute in America controlled by Baptists. In Delaware Morgan Edwards preached in several vacant churches but did not resume the pastorate in any of them. During the American War of Independence 1775-81 his preaching was interrupted because of his well-known sympathy for the unpopular British side. Indeed, though he took no part in the struggle in 1776 he was placed under 'house arrest' by the Philadelphia Committee of Safety and his travel was limited to the vicinity of his Newark home.

After 1781 he seems to have become a teacher rather than a preacher, lecturing in divinity in Philadelphia, New Jersey, Delaware and elsewhere in New England. He had an MA from Philadelphia and was a fellow of Rhode Island College. But if his preaching diminished, his writing increased. He was the author of five pamphlets published between 1761 and 1770, and these were joined by four more published between 1792 and his death in 1795. He had proposed a plan to unite all the Baptist Associations in America into one composite Union, in the furtherance of which he visited the churches from New Hampshire to Georgia, also gathering material for a history of the whole. Neither the Union project nor the history reached fruition, but he left his successors forty-two manuscript volumes of sermons, twelve sermons to a volume, together with a further dozen smaller volumes on special subjects. For a man who travelled so extensively this was no mean achievement.

His first wife and most of his family predeceased him, but one son survived to provide material for the obituary from which most of the above information has been derived. A distinguished eighteenth century Baptist, does his service in Ireland and his Irish wife allow us to open the door sufficiently to justify his inclusion in this paper?

Oswald and Samuel Edwards

Oswald and Samuel Edwards, father and son, are included in my list for two very different reasons, the former because he was not so much prominent as remarkable, the latter because of his association with the General Baptists in England and the publication of his catechism in 1760.

Oswald Edwards was an enigma. Let me tell you first what other people have said about him and then what he said about himself. Whitley's *Index to Notable Baptists* says, 'Edwards, Oswald, Pastor at Dublin, succeeding Abdiel and John Edwards, brothers from Leominster. Irish leader 1722-1740, followed by son Samuel, author of a catechism.'

Dr Thompson in his paper 'The Irish Baptist Association in the Eighteenth Century' refers to a letter from Joseph Pettit in 1725 in which he mentions a 'strictly Arminian church' in Dublin of which Oswald Edwards was pastor. Later Dr Thompson refers to a letter from Dublin to the General Assembly of General Baptists in London in 1714 and says, 'The approach from Dublin does postulate the existence there of a General Baptist church in 1714. This was probably Oswald Edwards' "strict Arminian" church referred to by Pettit in 1725.'. [14]

Robert Dunlop in his 'Dublin Baptists from 1650 onwards' says, 'The eighteenth century was noted for doctrinal controversy, and the Baptists were not averse to public debate and pamphlet warfare. Oswald Edwards, described as an Anabaptist preacher, entered into a prolonged disputation with Quakers on baptism. He published several 'Strokes' at the foundation of Quakerism and on 17 September 1722 entered into public debate at Skinner's Alley. The exchanges were intense on both sides. The Quakers answered Edwards by contending that "his sophisms are detected, new notions exploded and arguments for water baptism refuted". Edwards countered with "a plain demonstration that the Quakers do not baptise with the Spirit; that they are not baptised with the Spirit, neither do they know what the baptism of the Spirit is". This immoderate language was typical of the time but still revealed a defensiveness and some lack of ecclesial charity,' [15]

In *The Irish Dissenting Tradition* (ed. Kevin Herlihy) there is the following: 'The pastor of the Skinner's Alley meeting was the combative Oswald Edwards who died in the early 1740s. An abstract of Edwards' will states that 'in case his ticket in the West Bridge Lottery should turn up £500, [he] bequeaths half for purchasing the ground and building a new meeting-house in Skinner's Alley'. [16] The will is dated 1740.

So, Oswald Edwards was certainly a pastor in Dublin 1722-1740; the commencement date could be rather earlier, the terminal date possibly a little later. He was Arminian in theology, a pamphleteer by practice and, rather oddly even for the eighteenth century, a participant in a public lottery. But there is another pamphlet bearing his name published in Dublin in 1740 and dealing with events which took place in 1733/1736. Is this the same Oswald Edwards or could the long arm of coincidence embrace two men of so distinctive name living and working in Dublin at the same time?

You may remember my earlier reference to the collapse in 1733 of Burton and Falkiners' Dublin bank. The effect on the business community was so severe and the affairs of the bank so complicated that the Irish parliament stepped in and passed a Bill for the protection and relief of the bank's creditors. [17] In the eighteenth century, before legislation of the Irish parliament became law it had to be submitted to the Privy Council in London and approved there before being returned to Ireland to receive the royal assent from the Lord Lieutenant. Submission to the Privy Council was sometimes a formality and approval a rubber stamp, but sometimes not. If a Bill was complicated or contentious some person or persons had to be sent over with it to answer any questions the Privy Council might raise. Burton's Bill was important, 'The whole credit of this country depends on the success of that Bill ...' and someone was sent to London to explain its complexities, the person being Oswald Edwards.

The Act which reached the statute book contained four sections of interest to us. First, it appointed some half dozen trustees (legal luminaries) to oversee its operation; second, it empowered the trustees to appoint either one or two registrars to see that all monies due to the bank were paid in and that creditors' claims were authenticated; it fixed the basis of the fees to be paid to the registrars; and it prescribed an oath to carry out their duties properly to be sworn before the Lord Chancellor. The registrars appointed were Robert Roberts and Oswald Edwards.

Unfortunately all did not go well between the two registrars. We have only one side of the story, but it seems that Edwards did all the work and Roberts got all the money. After some years and failing redress, Edwards produced a pamphlet: *The case of Oswald Edwards, being an impartial and*

faithful Account of the several and great services he has done for the Creditors of the Bank lately kept by Samuel Burton and Daniel Falkiner, Esqrs. and of the ill-natur'd and ungenerous Treatment which he has had from Robert Roberts Esq. The pamphlet, consisting of 27 pages of complaint and recrimination, is dated 21 May 1740. Is this our Oswald Edwards? There is nothing in the pamphlet which identifies him, but on the title page where one might find some quotation, perhaps from the classics, there are four quotations from scripture - II Cor 12:11; Eccles. 9:14-15; Psalm 35:11; Eccles. 7:7. During the course of the pamphlet he quotes John 7:51 and Acts 25:16, also 'God knows the hearts of all men, and all the hidden things of dishonesty' for which he does not give a biblical reference. Elsewhere he writes, 'I wish he would remember his catechism "to keep his tongue from slandering".' This could be the pen of Oswald Edwards the preacher. Speaking of himself he says, 'I had some understanding of accounts and especially in the books of banks, with which I had been conversant for the space of above twenty years.' The Oswald Edwards in whom we are interested was in Dublin for about twenty years. After giving evidence before the Privy Council he seems to have stayed on in England for some time and had to be recalled. Of his recall he says, 'Why did he [Robert Roberts] call me from the business I had there to do for my family in making interest among my friends in several parts of the country...' 'It is well known I had consignments from Chichester and Portsmouth of several ships with wheat, malt, hops, flour etc. to the amount of near one hundred a year, and I might have made interest in other places for more.' This is the business of a small dealer in an English country town and seems to have nothing to do with our Oswald Edwards. But his predecessors in Dublin were Abdiel and John Edwards from Leominster. Is it possible they were also relations, with farming interests? From the pamphlet one learns that a reason why the writer was not paid what he expected for his wind-up activity was his failure to take the prescribed oath before the Lord Chancellor. This oath, printed in the statute, is quite innocuous and could have been taken without offending against Matt. 5:35-36. So why did he not take it? Did the Lord Chancellor require him to take the oath on a Bible? These are interesting questions to which I wish I knew the answer. Finally, and to finish with the pamphlet, the writer says: 'It is well-known that I am in low circumstances...' This is not necessarily inconsistent with the office of a Baptist pastor.

Our first dated reference to Samuel Edwards is July 1746 in connection with a visit to Dublin by John Cennick, the noted Moravian evangelist. Cennick held meetings in the Skinner's Alley meeting-house and Samuel Edward's thought that the Baptists should have payment for its use 'because his father Oswald Edwards had been the preacher there'. [18] This would have been some five years after Oswald Edwards' death. Under what circumstances his son succeeded him we do not know. But Samuel Edwards was evidently a minister in Dublin for in 1749 he received £20 from the Education Fund for boarding and instructing William Bolton, a candidate for the ministry. In 1750 he boarded him and in part at least educated him. [19] Presumably he himself got at least part of his theological training from his father for his theology was Arminian as subsequently appeared.

'About 1754 John Johnson a Baptist from Cheshire crossed to Dublin where there was a General Baptist church, lately under Oswald Edwards now under Samuel Edwards.' [20]

He attended the Association Meeting in Dublin in 1759, and evidently preached at the following meeting in Cloughkeating in 1760, for Joseph Fowke recorded, 'The former [Rev. Samuel Edwards] generally pleased the most judicious; he is equal to any of our ministers in correctness and is a pattern to all in his earnestness and zeal for the gospel.' In the same year he submitted to the General Assembly of General Baptists in England a catechism the compilation of which they had approved in 1759 and which when published received their approval. There does not seem to be a copy of the catechism in the Angus Library, but we can assume that it was firmly based on Arminian principles.

The record of the Association Meeting in Cork in [1762] includes the following: 'The church at Rahue though small in number and though not able to support a minister yet are hard to please and we are sorry to say have been so weak as to refuse a supply from Mr Samuel Edwards of whose character for learning, sobriety and zeal the present messengers and brethren have a high opinion grounded on personal acquaintance and long experience...' In later reference to the proceedings at that meeting Joseph Fowke records, 'It was proposed pretty warmly by one of the messengers that it should be recommended to the several churches to encourage our worthy brother the

Rev. Mr Samuel Edwards of Dublin to exercise his gifts occasionally, especially as there is so great a want of ministers among the Baptists at present, but this motion did not produce a resolution (though everyone present greatly approved the talents and character of said Edwards) because the mentioning such a thing in the church letter might give offence to some who were prejudiced against him in Dublin and Westmeath'. [21] We do not hear any more of Samuel Edwards after 1762. Did he remain in Ireland or did he remove to England? The answer to these questions and the whereabouts of his catechism may yet emerge. But that he was prominent in Irish Baptist work in the eighteenth century cannot be in doubt.

The people dealt with in this paper were by no means the only prominent Baptists in eighteenth century Ireland. Among those who might have been included are Joseph Pettit and Walter Richards, for instance. The present selection has obviously been based not only on who the prominent Baptists were, but on those about whom a reasonable amount of information exists. It must be hoped that further research will enable a more balanced selection to be presented at some future date.

FOOTNOTES

1. J. C. Beckett, *Protestant Dissent in Ireland 1687-1780*, (London, 1948) p. 46.

2. Cork Church Book, I/6-8.

3. Information about Samuel Fowke comes almost entirely from a booklet: [Ann Fowkes] *A Memoir of Mistress Ann Fowkes (nee Geale) ... with some recollections of her family 1641-1774 written by herself* (Dublin, 1892). Information about Joseph Fowke is partly from the same booklet, also from the Cork Church Book and from Joshua Thompson, 'The Irish Baptist Association in the Eighteenth Century', Ir. Bapt. Hist. Soc. Jn. vol. 17 (1984-85), pp. 18-29.

4. Joseph Stennett (1663-1713), Benjamin Keach (1640-1704).

5. Of Mr Pettit's instructional activity the Cork Church Book (II/2) records: 'He was conscious of the importance of watching over the youthful age and therefore encouraged the parents in his congregation not only to instruct their children at home but to send them once or twice a week to the meeting-house where he attended himself, heard their catechism and explained the principal doctrines ... Those who lodged in his house had peculiar advantages for besides the instruction above-mentioned he took great care to perfect their orthography and form some degree of correctness in their mother tongue.'

6. Cork Church Book, VI/39.

7. There is some lack of clarity in the accounts which could place Joseph in London and Lawrence in Lisbon but almost certainly the account given above is correct.

8. loc. cit.

9. The Fund was established from the profits of a Free Debating Society of which he was the principal speaker.

10. There is much published material about Riggs Falkiner mainly from banking, parliamentary and Cork historical sources, too abundant to be itemised here. The only non-published material is from the Cork Church Book and from a trust deed of land in Drumsligagh, parish of Mallow, Co. Cork, 1710-1892. I have been unable to find reference to his place of burial.

11. A 1730 lease cites both Caleb and Riggs Falkiner as trustees, the latter described simply as 'merchant'.

12. Morgan Edwards' career is well-documented in: *Baptist Annual Register 1794-97*, pp. 308-14; Thomas R. McKibbins and Kenneth L. Smith, *Life and Works of Morgan Edwards*, (New York, 1980); E. B. Weeks and M. B. Warren, biographical notes in their 1984 edition of Morgan Edward's' *Materials towards a history of the Baptists*. I am indebted to the librarian at Regent's Park College, Oxford for these references. he is also mentioned in Dr Thompson's article (note 3), p. 21 and in the Cork Church Book.

13. This was a Baptist establishment whose syllabus included 'first the teaching of Welsh, secondly, an introduction to the root languages of Holy Scripture, and thirdly, an introduction into the various branches of learning which are profitable for the work of the ministry.

14. Ir. Bapt. Hist. Soc. Jn. vol. 17 (1984-85), pp. 18-29

15. Ir. Bapt. Hist. Soc. Jn. vol. 21 (1988-89), pp. 8

16. *The Irish Dissenting Tradition 1650-1750*, ed. Kevin Herlihy (Dublin. 1995), pp. 54, 73-9.

17. 7 Geo.II (Ir.), c.26 [1733]

18. F. M. Harris, 'John Cennick in Ireland 1746-1755', Ir.Bapt.Hist.Soc.Jn. vol. 6 (1973-74), p. 23

19. H. D. Gribbon, 'Some lesser known sources of Irish Baptist history' Ir. Bapt. Hist. Soc. Jn. vol.6 (1973-74), p. 63.

20. Robert Dawburn, 'The "Johnsonian Baptists" 'The Baptist Quarterly vol.3, p.58.

21. Joshua Thompson, op.cit. pp.21-24.

REMINISCENCES OF A RETIRED MISSIONARY

by Mary Sloan

A dictionary definition of 'reminiscence' is 'an account of something remembered or the recurrence to the mind of the past'.

Since I never kept a diary I am relying mostly upon my memory together with a little help from [my husband] Sam's diaries which basically record meetings held and where, messages given, places and people visited, of fairs where bookstalls were set up and so forth.

Retirement for me implies a change of circumstances, of location, a change of pace and limitations caused by the passing of the years, what I call moving into a lower gear, yet still always available in the service of the Master.

Early Impressions

Usually the best place to start is at the beginning. However, I would like to go further back than that to the time when my parents were planning to get married and agreed that, should the Lord bless them with a family, they would be given to Him from the start. In due course I arrived. Pastor James Shields visited our home to dedicate the baby. The other three children followed later and many of you here to-night know the outcome of our parents' promise. Almighty God did that even before it was made - even as He reminded Jeremiah when He said, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you'. I thank God for the wonderful parents He gave us. For their love for each other, for us and for the Lord and His kingdom - for their prayers, teaching and example of willing service to the King of kings.

Each of us was saved early in life, baptised in our teenage years, enjoying the blessings of Antrim Road Baptist Church, Belfast pastored by the late C. S. Donald. Many life-long friendships were formed then and continue to this day.

Our home welcomed many missionaries, especially from Peru - including the Oehrings, Creightons (with their first child of 18 months), Stuart McNairn and Miss Smith of EUSA. My mother had the Hosfords staying with her for some time. Our church, too, had a constant flow of missionary speakers, and, indeed, my first autograph album includes several signatures of well-known missionaries.

Early Experiences

A group of ladies met fortnightly in our home to pray for our missionaries and others working in different fields and this formed the nucleus of what became known as the WMA - now included in today's Baptist Women. My training and work experience as a nursery nurse in England - away from home and Christian fellowship apart from friends I made in the small Baptist church I attended on my Sunday evenings off about twice a month, was a blessing in many ways for the Lord's presence became very real to me in an affluent, mainly indifferent society, though there was one saintly grandmother whom I met a few times . She had a great burden for unsaved loved ones. Years later I met her daughter, Rosemary, and her husband and family on board ship returning to Chile where they worked in Santiago with the South American Missionary Society. You can imagine how Rosemary and I rejoiced together.

A New Dimension to Life

Back to Belfast and to the Royal Victoria Hospital in 1947 was the next turn in the road where the discipline, training, and opportunity for witness in the workplace, and a move to Great Victoria Street Church, brought a new dimension to life. Students from the Missionary Training School often sat near the front and included Billy McManus, Sam Sloan and Hugh Mitchell whom I nursed prior to his and his fiancée's (Sadie Porter) departure for Peru

in 1948. Billy and Sam had gone out in July 1947. Little did I know then that I would be following them a few years later.

The Way to Peru

I met Sam in 1952 when he came home on furlough bringing Austin Reid with him to join his two older brothers Oliver and Paul in the W. A. Hostel for missionaries' children until the time their parents would return from Peru. on furlough. Our romance is for another day. Suffice it to say we married in June 1953 just before Sam's furlough ended. The knot was well tied by Pastor TJ McNabb, ably assisted by Pastor Eric Gurr, Pastor Lyttle of Dunseverick and Dr Joshua Thompson Mission Secretary. A week later Sam sailed for Peru and I went back to London to complete my studies.

I sailed to Peru with Miss Sadie Minnis, a member of our Grove Church, Belfast and a missionary in Chile, on 1st April 1954. Almost four weeks later Sam met us accompanied by Bob Harris of the Southern Baptist Mission at Lima docks and took me through customs, an experience which is still a vivid memory, Seemingly I was mistaken for a woman contraband dealer they were looking out for, so all my carefully packed equipment, clothing etc. were ransacked. In the end they realised their mistake but we needed another large suitcase to get everything back. It was impossible. Ever after I had butterflies in my stomach when dealing with customs officers, at least on an official basis: I did look after their wives and the babies. Dear pity those who were caught: fixed fines existed but much more was often demanded which did not reach its proper destination.

We spent a few precious days in Bob and Mary Harris' home while making a start on the paper work to get my residence permit - to be ready two weeks later. Then we went to stay with two elderly Evangelical Union of South American missionaries in Ica, some four hours' bus journey south of Lima. We expected to collect my visa when we returned to Lima two weeks later, but almost nothing had been done. By then the Mitchell family, including 18 month old David, had arrived en route for Ireland, so with Hugh's Irish charm and a little pressure and persuasion, the document was ready. We set out by bus one afternoon, reaching Arequipa the following evening after dark - a 26-hour journey - where we were welcomed by the EUSA family of

missionaries there where "Gran" Pritchard mothered every-one. Gran had left her Yorkshire home some forty years earlier, returning once, I think. What Nurse Sloan was to Ilave and our missionaries, Gran was to Arequipa. She was actually a single lady and she cared for the great, the good and the godless. She was a midwife, and one of those legendary characters of yesteryear: She received an MBE for services rendered to the expatriate community in the city, especially the womenfolk. The British Vice-Consulate was based in Arequipa, the Consul had lived there for many years and was a great help to many ex-pats.

"Home at last"...

Finally after three days adjusting to the altitude we set out one early morning travelling by train to Puno, a 12-hour journey, climbing up to the vast Andean high plains, skirting salt lakes covered with pink flamingos, the snow peaks making a wonderful contrast thousands of feet higher up. John McVicker greeted us at the station when we arrived about 6.30 pm, and having collected our baggage, took us home to Mary and the children. Ronnie was about four months old then, Lex a toddler. We sat down to a sumptuous Irish tea, plenty of chat and tender loving care and sleep. I remember waking next day with the early morning sunshine streaming through the curtains. Pulling them back I had my first sight of Lake Titicaca, gleaming and sparkling blue with a back drop of snow white peaks rising into the sky, the green papyrus grass where the reed boats lay tied up - and I knew I had come home at last.

After a day or two of fellowship with Mary and John, Nurse Sloan arrived to meet us, do some shopping and return to Ilave with us in Sam's recently acquired Ford pickup. That journey introduced me to Peruvian country roads and to Aunt Dottie's home where Sofia Zernuto who helped her and Edna Martinez, Aunt Dottie's foster child had prepared another welcome - the fatted calf as it were was ready to eat and I was introduced to Peruvian food - and became acquainted with washing and toilet facilities where water was available from a few standing pipes in the town, drainage was non-existent except for open sewers the alternative being to pay someone to carry everything down to the river, or, as in Yunguyo where cess pits could be dug.

...in Yunguyo

We celebrated our first wedding anniversary with Dottie leaving next morning for Yunguyo but stopping at Corpa country church for a mid-day Bible study and prayer meeting. Brother Faustino Cotrado was in charge and became a colporteur a few years later. His young daughter joined us and helped me considerably for a year. She returned to the Mitchells when they came back, then I had Nurse Sloan's Sofia for a year. She returned to Ilave after Dottie's home leave. With these girls to help in the house I was able to give time to language learning,. However, there were frequent interruptions for Sam had told folks in the town his wife was a nurse and midwife. To help me with conversation I had a local teacher: I think her limited English improved more than my Spanish! We became good friends and, through her, had contact with her prosperous brother in Puno which years later led to our bringing his daughter Miriam to Britain for further education. Miriam found the Lord while we visited my sister Joan Thomas at Capernwray and was baptised later at Mountpottinger. Mavis Creelman's mother took her when we returned to Peru. Finally Miriam went home, married a young man who professed salvation but sadly appeared not to be so - he left his young wife and two small children, went to the States to visit his sister and that was that. Miriam's father insisted on a divorce but Miriam refused completely, choosing to live in poverty instead. In time her father relented and life was a little easier. Her faith grew during those years; she always believed Orlando would come back to her - which he did. Not only was there reconciliation, but Orlando trusted Christ. The family lives in Houston, Texas now: the son is twenty-one, and he with his younger sister plus two friends came to Britain two years ago. They spent two weeks at Capernwray and two with us. Miriam's children are both Christians, their friends were not. A little girl was born into the family after the reconciliation. We keep in touch, of course.

Language study as such finally came to an end while we were on holiday in Mejia together with Mr Billy Hunter who attempted to polish up my grammar and pronunciation, finally setting an exam paper which I managed to pass, thus allowing me to move from a probationer missionary status to one in full standing. A very sincere thanks to Mr Hunter for all the work he has done over the years to prepare folks like me to communicate the Gospel with others. During the remainder of my first term I was able to take on the

work of the small Sunday School and see a little of the work begun in Yanapata but the room which was used in the home of a brother became too cramped. Another brother donated a small plot of ground; the believers made the mud bricks, gave what they could to buy wooden beams and roofing materials, then built a simple place in which to worship. Pastor Thompson was with us for the dedication and opening - a very short time later the opposition destroyed everything. Believers were falsely accused of damaging the local chapel; there was persecution, imprisonment and much else. For very many months after the church members and their families walked the five miles to Yunguyo to worship until a suitable site was found nearer their homes.

Meanwhile friends attending the Yunguyo Sunday night gospel meeting began coming in the morning also and before we came home on furlough the Yanapata believers had built once more on another site while in Yunguyo Sam held a baptismal service at the lake after which a church was constituted in the town. The McVicker family took over from us: during their time there our next-door neighbour finally found the Lord and ever since has made an enormous contribution to the work of the Gospel - teaching the Aymara Sunday school and looking after some of the Spanish work, too. She was an excellent interpreter also, both for Sam and others and for me in my nursing and health education classes. Lourdes Brew keeps a supportive eye on her these days. She became like a younger sister to me. We laughed, wept and prayed together through the years. During our second term the church grew, we needed more space - we had a building fund - and a property in the middle of the town became available. The church took a very large room which was eventually widened and had a big door on to the street. A new ceramic tile floor and baptistery were installed. Meanwhile we made the rest of the property habitable, adding a garage and a room in which to see and treat patients. I became involved at the initial stages of the developing community secondary school, which provided education beyond primary level for the vast numbers of young folk, whose parents were unable to send them to colleges in Puno. I taught English and learned much about the Peruvian education system. What was more important, I made valuable contacts with the older teenagers. Some of the girls came to the women's group in the church where we made items to sell for church funds, had a Bible study and prayer time. Amongst them was a girl called Lourdes, whose mother had been a patient and her grandmother also, who came to our services occasionally suffered intractable pain, finally

going to Tacna to a family member. While in hospital Hugh Mitchell visited her, she found Christ and went to be with Him some time later. I'd love to tell you about Norca, Rosa, Lily and many more who received the Gospel gladly through the years as a result of midwifery and nursing contacts. I thank God that in all my time amongst the womenfolk and no matter how difficult or dangerous to life the situation was, He took care of my patient and me. At home one can call out a doctor, send for an ambulance or get a patient to hospital in no time, whereas it meant a four-hour journey by truck or Landrover to Puno.

Aymara Migration

Gavino Cama of Yanapata went to Tacna in 1953 to look for work. Later, he brought his family as well, attending the Spanish -speaking "Buen Pastor" church where Stanley and Kathleen Reid ministered. Other Aymara speakers found their way to the church also, eventually Gavino approached the Reids asking if they might hold an Aymara service. Kathleen agreed to play the harmonium for them, provided he looked after the rest of the programme. That was the birth of the work amongst the vast numbers of people from Aymara-land who have gone there over the years from our sierra churches taking the Gospel message with them, providing a better education for their children so that today there are grandparents who speak Aymara and grand-children who are fully educated in Spanish. Mr Creighton gave my mother an atlas of Peru about 1930 in which the population of the whole state or Department of Tacna including Tarata and other small towns and villages amounted to 35,000 inhabitants. By contrast today Tacna city alone boasts hundreds of thousands. While the Reids were living in Tacna and then in Moquegua the large copper mine was developed, providing work for vast numbers of people and there was an exodus from the altiplano, including believers from our churches, Doña Cotrado being one. She married a believer and together they gathered others starting a Bible study and Gospel witness in their home. The Reids and others visited the mining camp from time to time holding a bookstall and open-air witness. The Mitchells were also involved and were invited to preach to the American directors, technicians and others, a contact which later resulted in their valuable support for our Ilo camps.

Meanwhile...

Back in Yunguyo the work continued to grow. After Andrew Lovell joined us, theological education by extension was developed and the scheme was used in several of the churches. The believers wanted to learn more of the truth but their limited knowledge of Spanish made the task more difficult. The Wycliffe Translators had produced an Aymara New Testament, also a hymn book of original Aymara verse set to their own pentatonic music. These songs they could memorise, but the problem was they could read Spanish and not understand very much of what they read and they understood Aymara but could not read the text. Wycliffe appreciated the problem and prepared primers, developing a reading campaign. Marion Heslop and Fran McNeill came to us to initiate classes amongst our people and teach us how to organize them, We saw school-children helping their mothers, men helping women. One elderly believer was very anxious to learn to read, her husband did and they had family prayers together. I asked her why she was so keen. Her reply: "My husband is going blind and I will have to read to him instead." Wycliffe has always produced excellent Aymara material and we had wonderful fellowship with Marion and Fran when they stayed with us. They spent many days among the Indians chatting, preaching and teaching in Aymara as though it was their native tongue. We used large amounts of their literature, usually collecting it at Desaguardero frontier town during the big Friday fair day. Sebastian Pari has been a faithful servant of God there: we treasure precious memories of him and Maria his wife, of their warm welcome and generous hospitality. There was great rejoicing when the complete Aymara Bible was finally printed and available in Bolivia and Peru.

Pastor and Mrs Rowell's visit to us was a great delight and his ministry to our souls a feast of good things. They arrived just as word reached Eva Needham that her mother had died, which complicated plans as Eva felt sure she needed to go home together with the family. What a comfort Pastor and Mrs Rowell were to us all. We also welcomed Pastor Blayney and Mr Hunter to Yunguyo but health problems during that visit required a quick return to Lima via Tacna. We travelled by prayer as well as petrol on that occasion. Now when we see Pastor Blayney looking so fit and well still ministering the word of God I am thankful we got him safely back to his native soil.

Widened Horizons

While in Yunguyo the brethren on both sides of the Bolivian border felt it would be profitable to arrange an international get-together in the middle of the year and this became a regular feature of the work. It lasted three days with group prayer meetings and Bible studies as well as large meetings; hundreds gathered; many slept in lorries under tarpaulins; some travelled daily. At night after tea a Biblical film was projected on a large screen, there was time for getting acquainted and an opportunity to share in the ministry.

Memories of Ilave

We finally moved to Ilave after our furlough in 1974. The night before we left Yunguyo there was an urgent knock on our bedroom window which faced the street. No: it wasn't a patient, but a voice asking for our hose pipe to put out a fire a street or two away. No way would we let such a precious item go unaccompanied so I went as well. Happily there was a water tap within reach and soon the blaze was quenched. I returned home with the hose but quite wet, and fresh garments were all in suitcases. I dried out quite quickly while snatching an hour in bed.

That same year my dear mother went to be with the Lord but we had the joy of visiting her for four days. She was weak but alert and anxious for news of Peru. Joan arrived back from her trip to New Zealand less than a day later and Constance was already there. On Sunday some of the Capernwray staff visited her: She asked them to sing the chorus "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life". On Monday she slipped away, exactly six months before her 89th birthday, to meet her Good Shepherd.

Our four years in Ilave passed rapidly. We continued to build on the work of Stanley and Dorothy Black and others. Nurse Sloan, better known in Ilave as Miss Sarita, and the Mitchells having laid a good foundation. We had difficulties at that period because Peru was under the rule of a republican socialist government, Many large landowners lost their haciendas which were given to the people who could not manage the properties. The result for everyone was a disaster; there was a strong anti-American campaign as well; anyone who spoke English was deemed to be American. The Blacks arrived

in Ilave after a few days' absence to find the gates of the mission property with the words "Yankee go home" written across them. We, as a mission, were "persuaded" by the authorities that a modern market was needed in the town and the best place for it was on half of our ground and if not surrendered it would be requisitioned. The Council planned to erect this in memory of Nurse Sloan. They did, but so far Nurse Sloan's name is missing. The Ilave brethren were given half of the remaining site for a church. The original garage built by Hugh Mitchell was turned into a meeting place, then enlarged later to provide classrooms and living accommodation for Ken Needham's Bible School. Sam and I were alone in the Sierra for a long time so we often travelled in opposite directions - one going to Yunguyo churches or visiting the groups between Ilave and Mazo Cruz while the other headed to Puno, Juliaca and beyond. Later Mavis Cooke and Pam Brown were in Puno and the Lovells were based in Pomata. Two single storey houses connected by a large garage provided a home and medical accommodation for Peter and Betty Hughes. Together with Peter's medical work Betty developed a ministry among the women folk. However, little David's heart condition left them with no alternative but to go home. Their ministry was greatly appreciated by many people whom we met. Due to illness I had to stop midwifery activities but continued with Sunday School, women's work and visitation, travelling with Sam and helping the believers with their health problems. We welcomed Desmond Creelman to our ranks for part of his language study period and in late 1978 we celebrated with Mavis and Desmond on their wedding day. They returned in time for Christmas after a honeymoon in Mejia. Ilo camps followed, then we packed up ready for our move to Tarata after furlough.

Tarata and the Rios Family

As always, we enjoyed deputation, renewing fellowship in our churches and moving around family and friends. By October Orestes Rios had found a suitable home for us in Tarata and we moved: a simple matter you may think, but not in Peru. One must send a list of all contents to the Police Station, have it approved and numerous copies prepared, in order to leave one at each police control passed on the journey. The Lord brought great enrichment into our lives through the Rios family and their devotion to the Lord, the spread of the Gospel, their concern for souls, their exemplary family life and total commitment to the glory of God above all else. I cared for Bertha when Mark

was born. She said she couldn't understand why girls didn't want their mothers around when the babies were coming: her own mother had died when she was a young child and she found having me with her had been such a help, not just professionally, but as someone who really cared. Since then we have been looked upon as grandparents by the family, a privilege indeed and one we greatly cherish.

For about twenty years Orestes provided a large room, in his own home, except for the few years Mr and Mrs Reid were based here and rented a meeting room beside their upstairs flat. The church had a building fund, but with constant devaluation and rising prices it was impossible to consider even looking for a site. However premises have recently been donated by a former member which are eminently suitable.

While living in Tarata we spent several days in Tacna each month to cover the fast growing population there while Desmond and family were on leave. We were amazed at what the Creelmans had accomplished under God.

The Mission House in Tacna provided a place to meet Hugh and Sadie for fellowship, rest, discussion about camps etc. and later for the bookroom project and for study classes. John Brew lived there for some time; also missionaries taking part in the night Bible Institute stayed during their periods of teaching.

After their retirement from the Kilrea Church, John and Mary McVicker returned on a visit to Peru bringing great joy and encouragement to the believers and to us all, renewing friendships and memories as well as ministering to the churches with great blessing to the brethren.

Farewells on Retirement

We faced the 1984 camp with heavy hearts knowing it would be our last, but once on site and busy there was no time to think long. We all enjoyed a particularly delicious meal on the last night together, after which a totally unexpected surprise presentation was made to us - a beautiful copper plate with an Ilo fishing trawler engraved on it together with the words "Ilo Camp

1984" and our names. The usual hectic early morning departures took place, then our own vehicle, piled high with baggage and a couple of campers as well as ourselves, headed home to Tarata and the last few weeks of packing up. Our final visits to the Tarata outstations and the Tacna churches left no time for the reality to sink in except when we visited dear Sister Dominga in her village a few kilometres above Tarata - a sweet saint who merits much more time than I can give. Suffice it to say she ranks with the widow in Mark 12:41-44 of whom Jesus said "She out of her poverty put in everything - all she had to live on" and in Dominga's case it also involved a long painful walk down the mountain road and back again on the Lord's day, though we did visit her home regularly for a time of fellowship and prayer. Her aged husband and maybe one or two more joined in.

We faced with trepidation the cost of transporting our belongings back to Britain, though we were sure the Lord would meet the need - and He did. All our boxes and luggage fitted on a truck to Ilo where it was stored in the Captain's locker on board ship on account of Hugh Mitchell's friendship with him. In Liverpool Duke's transport generously collected and delivered it to our home in Coleraine and we paid nothing. The Rios girls arranged a sort of car boot sale of small items for which the brethren were happy to pay a few coins towards the church building fund. Furniture was bought by other folk. Costly farewells were said in Tarata and Tacna and we flew to Lima where the Mitchell family met us. Our last sight of them was as we boarded the plane: parting was almost unbearable knowing the sons were still unbelievers. Please remember them and other MK's (missionary kids) who do not walk with the Lord.

After leaving Peru we spent three enjoyable months visiting friends, colleagues and family including Victor and Maureen McManus and Pastor and Mrs Rowell and our friend Pastor Ernst Winter in Canada. We reached Coleraine in early August where a fire blazed in the hearth, a cup of tea was waiting, fresh flowers bringing fragrance and colour into the rooms. Our thanks to Sam's family and my brother and Sybil for their loving ministry to us, and thanks to the many who met us and sent us off over the forty years we came and went. Eternity will reveal the extent to which the blessing and encouragement, the presence of friends and family have contributed to the advance of the Gospel in South Peru.

To Peru with Baptist Youth Team

Our return visit to Peru with the first team of young folk was an unexpected bonus and a joy to share with our young folk the potential for ministry in a third world situation. We try to keep in touch still. Arlene is here in Coleraine, Margaret supports Cliftonpark, Allison keeps Peru in view in Kilkeel, Alan has been in numerous situations, Yvonne has married. Teams continue to visit Peru and share with our missionary family so hopefully opening the way for direct involvement of some as missionaries on the Field themselves.

In Peru once more...

Spring time 1985-6 challenged us deeply as we saw the ewes and lambs gambolling in the fields knowing there were experienced shepherds caring for them and we thought of the many sheep without a shepherd in Peru. After prayer we approached the Mission who agreed to send us back to Tacna for two years, the Creelmans having come home. We were enabled to support the growing number of churches where Desmond and Mavis had ministered in Ilo camps, training classes for Sunday school teachers and local church missions.

Then Sam became ill and a speedy return home was advised. The morning we were due to leave Peru the heading of our devotional reading was simply, "Go and tell this people". These words brought us great comfort and consolation and continue to do so yet.

We left Lima in the full heat of January 1988 reaching the snow covered Northern Ireland 24 hours later. Sam was free of pain till we reached Heathrow where kindly staff took care of us till we flew to Aldergrove where Sam's sister and brother-in-law met us and took us to their home for a period. Arrangements were already in place for Sam's surgery at RVH a few days later - the rest is history. We are still together, proving the Lord's goodness and mercy each day with grace to help in time of need.

"Caritamaya"

When we travelled the road between Ilave and Puno we always passed a signpost pointing towards a distant community away across the plains which read "Caritamaya". I loved the sound of the word, often saying to Sam: "If the Lord intends us to live in Ireland I'd like to give our home that name". Eventually we found out the meaning, which is "shepherd's shelter" and that is where we live today though the postman knows it as 8 St Patrick's Avenue. With the Psalmist I can say: "How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge under the shadow of your wings" Psalm 36:7

Thank you for listening to my wanderings.

BOOK REVIEW

by Robert Dunlop

The Religion of Irish Dissent 1650-1800, ed. Kevin Herlihy.

The Irish Dissenting Tradition 1650-1750, ed. Kevin Herlihy.

Both paperback. Four Courts Press, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
£IR 14.95 each.

The appearance of these complementary studies of religious dissent in Ireland fills a substantial gap in historical data related to significant faith communities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Irish Protestant Dissent, in Herlihy's phrase is a "most neglected area in Irish religious history". These collections of papers provide an insight into the world of the "free church" bodies whose influence and significance were considerable. The historical, theological, sociological, ecclesiological and biographical perspectives provide a welcome overview of the ethos of distinctive and disparate denominations.

The main strands of Protestant Dissent are examined in the essays - Baptists, Independents, Presbyterians, Quakers, Methodists and Huguenots. In addition, there are helpful pen-portarits of lesser-known groups - Lutherans, Palatines and Moravians. By way of analysis and interpretation, the authors describe how several degrees of dissent emerged and created both homogeneous communities and those with a more symbiotic complexion.

Early Quakerism yields a fascinating statistical and sociological presence - in 1750 they had 101 meetings; 49 in Leinster, 31 in Ulster, 23in Munster and 1 in Connacht. Described as "unruly" they drew the attention of Henry Cromwell, who had a low opinion of them ... "their counterfeit simplicity renders them to me more dangerous". However as the Society of

Friends they underwent considerable cultural transmutation finding "their own way of being Irish", decimated nemerically by internal discipline, marrying "out" and emigration, Richard Harrison argues that by 1750 "their spirituality had become decidedly introspective and encouraged the cultivation of a group psychology". He heads his chapter "As a Garden Enclosed" and shows how Quakerism maintained a distinctive emphasis while flirting with official Protestantism and becoming commercially successful.

Kevin Herlihy, the general editor of both volumes, offers an inviting treatment of early Irish Baptists and unveils considerable information about their influence in Dublin and the garrison cities during the Cromwellian period. He traces the "Anabaptist" influence through and beyond the Commonwealth showing that "initially they held positions of respect and esteem in Cromwelliam Ireland which inspired confidence". This high profile disappeared after the Restoration and the fate of the "humble Baptists" became more provisional. Their separatist ecclesiology took them outside the established religious pale, and, consistent with their doctrine of the "gathered" church, their progress or decline was often determined by local circumstances. Their survival, Herlihy believes, "hinged greatly on the popularity of a local pastor able to build a stable base of financially contributing constituents".

Sourcing much of his research in the Cork Baptist Church Book, the Thurloe State Papers and the Memoirs of Ann Fowkes, he demonstrates how one section of Irish "nonconformity" with a distinctive doctrine of the church and sacraments struggled to survive and extend.

'A Narrative of the Case of Miles Crowly' makes for compulsive reading. It describes how a young Cork Roman Catholic, trained by the Jesuits, became a member of the despised Baptist community and was baptised "in a public manner" on 11 May 1760. His baptism was turned into a public spectacle attended by "a number of spectators so great that many of the genteelest sort were obliged to go off for want of room".

The Irish Huguenot story is already well-documented and recorded elsewhere, but in both volumes under review the issue of conformity and nonconformity among the French Calvinists in seventeenth century Ireland is opened up with clarity. R P Hylton's piece attempts to address the historic

bias in favour of the conformist congregations. He advances the idea that the French congregations who carried their dissenting tradition into exile are worthy of careful scrutiny. Hylton believes that "from its inception French Calvinism carried within itself the seeds of division" and that the Huguenot refugee was schizophrenic". The pull of the ecclesiastical establishment in Dublin was palpable in the experience of the *diaspora* and those who conformed created what Hylton calls a "paradoxical situation" where the Calvinist apparatus of an empowered consistory of pastors and elders "existed under an Anglican canopy". The Huguenots in Ireland represent an intriguing religious species, who having fled persecution in Europe diversified in the land of their adoption, and in the end were either assimilated into the Established Church or remained at one with their nonconformist heritage.

Glimpses into the spiritual ethos of the Palatines, who came mainly from the Rhinepfalz during the reign of Queen Anne, are provided by Vivien Hick's piece 'Solidarity among the Palatines'. They came to Ireland via London, where the Catholic element numbering around 4,000 was "given the choice of converting, of fighting for the British in Portugal, or returning to their homes in Germany". They took the third option, leaving their Lutheran and Calvinist compatriots to disperse. The main Irish settlement of Palatines was in west Limerick where many of them were attracted to John Wesley's preaching. Early societies were formed, especially in Rathkeale and Ballingrane. It was from the latter village that Philip Embury and Barbara Hock emigrated to found the first American Methodist church at New York in 1760.

Presbyterianism falls within the scope of this exploration, and, while the "mother kirk" in Scotland became the state church, the Irish version is firmly numbered with the Dissenters. Alan Ford's chapter, 'The Origins of Irish Dissent', traces the early struggles with prelacy and places the origins of Irish Dissent "in the horizontal setting of post-Reformation piety and religion". Here there is substantial treatment of the dissenting tradition within Irish Presbyterianism with all the implications of the "privy kirk". Not all the characteristics of dissent are either complimentary or positive.

These important volumes furnish a patchwork of religious bodies and sub-divisions which deserve serious treatment by church historians. Justice

has been done to a virile and influential section of Irish Christianity, and those who belong to the major episcopal churches will find the conclusions enlightening and challenging. We have, in these two books, serious engagement with the world of Irish religious dissent and an honest effort to describe their essential raison d'être. With judicious editing Kevin Herlihy has ensured that people of Book, Covenant, Kerygma, Koinonia and Diaspora will not be forgotten. Whether strident Independents, gentle Quakers, humble Baptists, enthusiastic Moravians or orderly Methodists - they deserve to be remembered!

REPORT TO ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 1997

The meetings of the Society attracted good attendances. Topics treated during the past year were- "Irish Baptist Attitudes to the first century of Brethrenism"; "Baptists on the Shankill" "Prominent Irish Baptists of the Eighteenth Century"; and "Reminiscences of a Retired Missionary". These papers and other articles of interest are published in the Society's Journal.

Adverse comments about the location of the meetings have been voiced by some members who have difficulty negotiating the several flights of stairs to the committee room at 117 Lisburn Road. The possibility of moving to another venue is being considered.

Since the last report, the cataloguing of archival material in the Society's care has got under way. The Secretary is grateful to the committee members for their practical help. This project will take some time to complete. When completed we will be able to respond more adequately to requests for access by responsible researchers.

The Society and the College have been co-operating in finding a suitable candidate to write a definitive history of the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission for publication. It is hoped this project, sponsored by Sir Ivan Neill, will get under way in September 1997 (DV).

Agreement has been reached between the Society and the Angus Library, Oxford, for the Secretary to computerize the valuable archive of Irish material held by the Library. Thanks are due to the Principal of Regent's Park College and his Librarian/Archivist for making this possible. The Secretary plans to spend two to three weeks in Oxford next summer for this purpose. Gifts towards the expense of this project from interested friends would be very welcome.

We are grateful to the Union Secretary and the Office staff for their help during the past year.

Irish Baptist Historical Society

(Formed 1968)

President: Dr H. D. Gribbon
Secretary: Dr J. Thompson

117 Lisburn Road
Belfast BT9 7AF

Telephone: (01232) 663108/9
Fax: (01232) 663616

Membership Renewal

Please renew my Membership of the Historical Society. I enclose my subscription of

£5.00 US $10 (sterling check)

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Postcode _____

Office Use

Membership No. _____

Membership card written

Journal sent _____ collected _____

Irish Baptist Historical Society

(Formed 1968)

President: Dr H. D. Gribbon
Secretary: Dr J. Thompson

117 Lisburn Road
Belfast BT9 7AF

Telephone: (01232) 663108/9
Fax: (01232) 663616

Application for Membership

Please enrol me as a Member of the Historical Society. I enclose my subscription of

£5.00 sterling US $10 (sterling check)

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Postcode _____

Office Use

Membership No. _____

Membership card written

Journal sent _____ collected _____