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IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

VOLUME ONE 1968/69

Price: 12/6 to non-members

IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

J O U R N A L

Volume One - - - 1968/69

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Editor: H. D. Gribbon, B.Com.Sc., Ph.D.

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Price 12/6d. to non-members

Membership of the Society is open to persons interested in the history of Baptist Churches in Ireland. The membership subscription is £1. 0. 0. (in the British Isles) and entitles to the Society's Journal. For overseas members the annual subscription is $ 3.50 inclusive.

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EDITORIAL

The Irish Baptist Historical Society was established in 1968 to encourage the study of Irish Baptist history and to assist in the preservation of important records and documents known to exist. Its objects are thus both scholarly and practical.

As in all bodies of the kind much depends on the enthusiasm of individual members, and it is to such enthusiasm that the Society owes the four papers which make up this its first annual Journal. These papers were read at the Society's quarterly meetings in 1968 and are here gathered together, primarily for the interest of members but also to make available to a wider public the results of work currently being done in the field of Irish Baptist history. The contributors would be amongst the first to admit how much remains to be done, how many gaps there are in the accounts herewith presented. If readers have points of criticism to raise or additional information to contribute these will be much appreciated.

THE CORK CHURCH BOOK 1653-1875

I propose to begin by describing the book, commenting in passing on its historical setting, then to tell you something of its contents. Discussion of the book's significance for Irish Baptist history will make a fitting conclusion.

The book, then is in two parts, historical and contemporary, the historical part having been written by Joseph Fowke about 1756 and dealing with events from 1653 until that date, the contemporary part covering the period from 1757 until 1875 written, up to 1764 by Joseph Fowke and thereafter by several different hands. There are gaps in both parts, one of twenty years from about 1680 until about 1700 when the Church virtually disappeared, one of fourteen years between 1798 and 1812 and another of twenty years between 1820 and 1840. The later gaps indicate disorganisation rather than cessation of church life.

Joseph Fowke, mentioned a moment ago, was born in 1713, son of Samuel Fowke, pastor of the Waterford Church and, on his mother's side, great-grandson of Col. Lawrence, one of Cromwell's army commanders. He was baptised in Dublin in 1728 and, although trained for the ministry, entered commerce in partnership with his older brother. He represented their firm in Lisbon until 1755 at or about which date he returned to Ireland and took up residence in Cork. When he joined the Baptists in Cork he found that most of the church records had been destroyed by fire

in 1729 and accordingly set about reconstructing as much as he could from what remained, assisted by the recollections of the oldest members. He seems to have acted as Secretary from 1757, was elected a deacon in 1762 and died in 1780. Perhaps the most interesting parts of the Cork church book, which he originated, are the work of this man's industry, including three membership lists - 1729, 1757 and 1774, a copy of a letter recording the Baptist churches in Ireland with their leaders in 1653, and a catalogue of books on Baptist principles and doctrine written between 1618 and 1738. This last contains much biographical material about authors which may or may not be available elsewhere.

The contemporary part of the book is a day to day record of church affairs - business meetings, applications for membership, correspondence, discussions about calling a pastor, discussions on financial problems, letters sent with delegates to Assembly meetings, and so on. It also contains a brief marriage register which records three marriages between 1841 and 1845, and a register of births 1829-63 with twenty-nine entries. From this contemporary part of the book we can gather quite a lot about the activity in Ireland of the Baptist Irish Society, about the organisation of Assembly meetings, about local theological differences of opinion and about the Education Fund operated apparently by the church in Swift's Alley, Dublin, on behalf of the denomination as a whole - a precursor of our College. Some of the difficulties of Irish Baptist work have a curiously modern ring - about ministerial recognition for instance!

As to the book's historical setting, it opens during the Cromwellian period when, after the Civil War, a sort of peace had been restored in Ireland. Of the three major divisions of the population the Roman Catholics had experienced the frightful descent from the near success of the 1641 Rebellion to the harshness of their treatment at the hands of Cromwell. Many had lost their lands, many had been transplanted 'to Hell or Connaught'. Numerous and bitter, they awaited their opportunity to get their own back. The representatives of the establishment, the Anglican Church party, the Old English, were in eclipse. Some of them, like the Vicar of Bray, had sided with the Commonwealth, without enthus-

iasm but in the hope of saving something from the wreckage; they now awaited the turn of events in England which would, they hoped, bring them into ascendancy again. For the moment, Independents and Anabaptists held practically all military and civil positions of authority, were in process of taking over confiscated land and establishing themselves as a minority alien group in a land which was not to have time to absorb them. On the Restoration in 1660 their brief hey-day was over.

In the north the Presbyterians who had come over from Scotland in considerable numbers were able to maintain much of the position they had won, but in the south the non-conformists went through what Fowkes describes as 'the troublesome times'. Those who had not been able to acquire land or business interests went back to England, those who remained bowed to the storm.

Little is recorded of the events of 1688-90. Elsewhere one gets the impression of the tremendous relief which the Williamite victory brought to the Protestant population who had seen Roman Catholics under James II becoming steadily bolder and taking over more and more government positions. But in the 'Glorious Revolution', apart from the Presbyterians in the north, non-conformists were too few to influence the course of events - though they benefited from them. When Anne succeeded William III and during the reigns of the early Georges the steady ascendancy of the Anglican party continued unchecked.

Beckett points out of the period with which much of the book is concerned that 'Travellers in 18th century Ireland, almost without exception, noted the poverty of the country and its inhabitants'.[1] It was indeed a century of frustration and mis-government; economic conditions improved with incredible slowness until, toward the end, Ireland experienced the short but hopeful flowering of Grattan's 1782-1800 parliament. Religious toleration, the removal of disabilities from non-conformists and ultimately the relaxation of the penal laws proceeded at the same snail's pace. It was one of Ireland's greatest tragedies that impatient elements forced the 1798 rebellion and, in failing, took her destiny out of her own hands for the next 120 years. As a background to all this, England's wars 1702-13, 1756-63, the struggle for American independence,

and the French Revolutionary war had their side effects in Ireland, interrupting trade, making government nervous of armed landings round the coasts and suspicious of any suggestion of disaffection whether on political grounds or not.

With the Act of Union in 1800, the Baptist cause in Ireland came into closer contact with the stronger Baptist organisation in England, leading to the formation of the Baptist Irish Society and to the first real advance since Commonwealth days. The famine 1845-48 passes largely unremarked in the Cork record as do the political changes of the first half of the 19th century. As we shall see, the brethren in Cork had reason to be preoccupied during these years with their own affairs.

Turning to the contents of the book, we learn first that the church at Cork owed its foundation to Major Edward Riggs, Justice of the Peace and one of a number of Commissioners sent over from England to assist in the settlement of the country at the end of the Civil War. Major Riggs settled near Cork in 1651. He was a person of some standing and a Member of William III's 1692 and 1695 Parliaments.[2] The first Baptist meetings were held in his home some seven miles outside Cork. By 1653 Pastor Coleman, of whose background little is known, was in charge of a small body meeting in a house in Coleman's Alley.

Major Riggs married in 1677 a young woman (his third wife) born 1652 of Baptist parents who had settled in Ireland at the end of the Civil War. It was she who did a great deal to sustain the Baptist work and to revive it after the period of persecution 1680 (when Mr. Coleman died) to 1700. The book records nothing of Cork in this period and we have not time to deal with information from other sources. However, the appointment of Joseph Pettit to the pastorate and the opening of what seems to have been the first church building took place around 1704 and ushered in a happier chapter.

Joseph Fowke gives details of several worthies in this early period of whom probably the best known was Thomas Delaune. This young man became a convert from the church of Rome largely through the instrumentality of Major Riggs and associated with the Baptists in Cork for a number of years. Then he moved to England where he married Hanna Hutchinson whose

father had been pastor in Ormonde before the Restoration. Delaune moved to London where he kept a grammar school and preached occasionally, but what brought him to the attention of the authorities was a work which he published in defence of Dissenters in general and Baptists in particular. He was arrested in 1683, required to pay an impossible fine and on his inability to pay sent to Newgate whose dreadful conditions he endured for more than a year. He died there in 1685. With economy of words which heighten the tragedy he records, Fowke says, 'He left a wife and two small children who also died, having no subsistence elsewhere'.

Not all those mentioned are praised, as shown by this somewhat later account of the family of Thomas Downs, shoemaker, which I give verbatim:-

'Thomas Downs was received a member of this congregation in Mr. Pettit's time and behaved an honest man to his death, but by the increase of his family, by sickness and the smallness of the profits arising from his trade he was reduced to request assistance frequently from the church and to borrow money from some of the members. When Mr. Downs died in the year 1741 his widow Mary was left in the most distressed circumstances, with two children viz. Ann and Southwell Downs. In some little time Mrs. Downs by the interest of Mrs. Falkiner and Mrs. Goddard (two worthy members of this church) got into a good family to be nurse to the present Mr. John Pragwell who was then an infant. This infant was sent for by his grandfather Caldwell to be reared in Bristol as his own father and mother were dead, and Mrs. Downs went over with him. During her absence Ann the daughter was maintained by Mrs. Raines and Mrs. Francis and the boy was maintained for about two years by Mr. Gibbons who prevailed on John Curtan to perfect him in his trade. By this time Mrs. Downs had so far insinuated herself into favour with Mr. Caldwell that he permitted her to send for her children who were now grown up to the age of seventeen or eighteen. At their departure from Cork Mr. Gibbons applied to several of the members who generously contributed sufficient to clothe them decently and he himself paid their passage and provided their sea provisions out of his own pocket.

'Miss Ann had not been long in Bristol before young Mr. Caldwell took a liking to her and by the management of the mother and brother they were married, the old gentleman being at this time confined to his bed and almost blind in the decline of life. In a few days after the marriage the old man died, leaving his son a fine estate and a large sum of ready money which he did not long enjoy for in a few years he also died leaving only one daughter entitled to five hundred a year and his wife guardian with a large legacy, so that she lives now in most plentiful circumstances. But what we have to remark from

this sketch of history is that, considering the extraordinary kindness of the people and the particular generous treatment of Mr. Gibbons it might naturally be expected that these women would have remembered the church to which they were formerly related. Application has been made to them on some particular occasions representing the wants of some poor members who could not easily be relieved since the death of Mrs. Riggs and some other principal members, but no answer was given to the letters wrote, not the least acknowledgment of former civilities; nay, when one of our present members applied for the payment of money lent to Mr. Downs in distress he was refused and told by Mrs. Caldwell that she was not obliged to pay her father's debts. All these circumstances put together form an instance of ingratitude we hope very rarely paralleled. A woman whom Providence has raised to a sphere far beyond what she could with any reason expect, so as to drive in her coach and live in splendour - yet can entirely disregard her former benefactors and forget that little fold in which she was nursed and kindly reared!'

Here we have in embryo both the Benevolent Fund and the Orphan Society, against a background of romance, good fortune and ingratitude - and a link, only one of many, between Cork and Bristol.

Methodists appeared in Cork about 1746 and are referred to in this record with no great favour. Allegations that the civil authorities spurred on the mob to attack them do not receive support here, but clearly there was little attempt to restrain those who broke up the meetings. Baptists at first received the newcomers as fellowlabourers in the Lord's service but later came to regard them with less enthusiasm. One incident well worth noting concerns a Mrs. Bentley who, though not at the time a Baptist, had become convinced of the truth of believer's baptism. Fowke says -

'She was a considerable time convinced of her duty, and having a high opinion of Mr. Charles Wesley she communicated her design to him, requesting that he might be the administrator. This gentleman in conversation with her and Mr. Gibbons had often talked in high strains of the ordinance of believer's baptism and declared he had baptised several adult persons in Bristol according to the primitive institution i.e. by immersion on profession of faith and repentance. Mrs. Bentley, declaring her full conviction on this subject, earnestly requested that he would administer the ordinance, to which he freely consented; and being of opinion as he said that it looked more like the primitive practice to perform it in a river /rather/ than in a baptistry desired Mr. Gibbons to go with him to look out for a convenient place, which accordingly he did and they found a very convenient place, about a mile beyond Killigrohan. This step being taken

> Mr. Wesley was desired to fix the day, which he promised from time to time, still finding some excuse for his delay yet positively assured Mrs. Bentley he would baptise her before he left Cork. On this assurance she rested though very uneasy and dissatisfied in the frequent disappointment she met with. However, a short time before he left Cork he seemed sanguine in his resolution and expressed himself warmly on the prospect of great comfort and joy in the administration, but after having led us on with false assurances he on a sudden pretended a call to leave Cork and on Mrs. Bentley's pressing entreaty to him to perform his promise said he had not then the leisure but that Mr. Gibbons might do it as well. From the time of his departure she laboured under some uneasiness on account of the delay, and her husband having some suspicions of her design grew outrageous and uttered many threats both against her and Mr. Gibbons if he should baptise her, so that prudential reasons on the one part and a fit of gout on the other occasioned a delay. In the meantime Mr. John Wesley came to Cork, on which occasion Mr. Gibbons advised her to apply to him, which she did accordingly. But when she mentioned to him her scruples concerning infant sprinkling and proof from Scripture concerning believer's baptism, instead of calmly reasoning on the subject he turned her away with an abrupt and short reply viz. that what she called conviction was no other than the delusion of the devil.'

Of more direct Baptist interest are the membership lists of 1729, 1757 and 1774. The first of these shows sixteen men and thirty-one women members of the church, total forty-seven. Forty-eight men and twenty-eight women were added between 1729 and 1751 but since dates of death and removal are not recorded it is impossible to check progress year by year. In 1757 however there were thirty-seven men and twenty-three women, total sixty, in membership, which had reduced to forty-six in 1774 and to thirty-four in 1780. Membership remained around this level during the first half of the nineteenth century.

There is much of interest about particulars of individual members which we have not time to deal with, but on general matters it may be noted that as a rule the lists record opposite each person's name the date and place of baptism or the church from which he or she had been transferred. There is a final column headed 'Events' which contains such entries as 'Died 1741', 'Removed to Ormonde', 'Removed and not heard of', 'gone to London', 'gone to Waterford', 'suspended', 'went privateering', 'gone to America', 'excommunicated', 'Proceeded to sea', 'Methodist', 'Conformed' (this of Riggs Falkiner who, in order to accept public office

had subscribed to the Test Act); but the most common of course was simply 'Died'.

The names themselves have something to say. In the earlier lists they are either English or, occasionally, Welsh. Then one or two Irish names creep in - Carty, Casey, McCarthy. Toward the end the Irish include for example the very obvious Timothy Hanrahan and Patrick Sullivan, but these never form more than a very small proportion of the whole. It may be appropriate here to mention the social background of the members, though for some of the information one must look at the details recorded in the property deeds of the church. The spectrum was very wide indeed, from the well-off to the very poor, employer and employee, well read and illiterate. Occupations include - clothier, merchant, brewer, ironmonger, woollen draper, shopkeeper, gent., banker, skinner, shoemaker, ship's carpenter, doctor, clerk, hosier and wool comber. Backgrounds were just as varied, some brought up Baptists, some Episcopalians, some Presbyterians, some few, Roman Catholics - all bound together by personal conviction of the basic truths of the Gospel and the validity of the ordinances as still practised amongst us.

Assembly Meetings or 'Association' meetings as they were then called are first mentioned in connection with Waterford in 1758 though the reference makes it clear that they had by that time become well established. They are later recorded as having been held at Dublin, Cloughjordan, Rahue, and Cork between 1758 and 1770. It was the practice for each church to send 'Messengers' with a letter reporting their state and at the end of the meetings a letter was drawn up for transmission to the churches containing news, exhortation, and an account of business dealt with. The business transacted at some of these meetings is interesting. In 1758 it included the ordination of a Mr. Philips who had been called to the pastorate of the Waterford church; in 1774 the Cork church recommended a young man for assistance from the Education Fund and it was agreed to make the necessary recommendation to the Trustees; in 1793 the Association declined to ordain two men who, though held in high esteem, had not been called by particular churches. The 1816 record gives a picture of the manner in which these meetings were conducted:-

'The Association this year was held at Cloughjordan, Friday, May 30th; none of our members were able to attend. The following is a copy of the Minutes. "Br. Rogers an itinerant of the Baptist Irish Society preached from 1 Cor. 22 &23 [sic.]. Saturday June 1; Br. Clarke delivered an appropriate discourse on baptism at the side of the water; Br. Hassell baptised. Lord's Day June 2nd; Brs. West of Dublin and Rogers preached a double lecture; Br. Hassell administered the Lord's supper. Monday, met to transact business of the Association. Tuesday June 4th; met at 12 o'clock, a double lecture was preached by Br. Clarke and Br. McCarthy, another of the itinerants; the circular letter was read, unanimously approved and ordered to be printed; the congregation [was] large and we hope the presence of the Lord was with us. Resolved that the newly raised church at Ferban be received into communion with us and likewise the newly raised church at Clonmel [This was a re-establishment of a church existing in 1653.]; that we recommend to all our churches to establish Sunday Schools and penny-a-week Societies for their support; that we strongly advise the church at Cork to use their best means to raise themselves from their awful state of supineness; that, having read the letter from the church at Waterford and heard the report of the Messengers we rejoice at the pleasing prospect before them; that we request the Baptist Society for Ireland to send an Itinerant to assist Br. McCarthy in his extension circuit; that the next Association be held at Waterford the Friday before Whitsunday and that Br. Hassell preach on the Lord's Day."'

The reference to Cork was noted, and resented. Next year we read:-

'1817: The Association this year was held at Waterford. Three of our brethren attended to represent the church of Cork viz. Brs. George Young, Ebenezer Osborn and Samuel C. Austin. Met on Friday 23rd May, the following is a copy of the Minutes:-

"The Revd. Thomas Clarke, pastor of the church of Waterford was chosen Moderator, Mr. George Young of Cork, Secretary.

The letters from the different churches were read by the Secretary.

An application from a Society of Baptists at Rhenamore, Co. Tipperary to be admitted into our communion was received and their request agreed to. A Declaration of Faith from a Society at Sligo was referred to the consideration of a committee of three. In the evening Br. McCarthy preached from Ps. 49 v. 8.

Saturday 24th: Prayer meeting at half past seven in the morning; met at ten for business. The services of Mr. Davisham have been acceptable in the church of Dublin and they have expressed their gratitude to him. With regard to the Minute of last year relative to the church of Cork it is the opinion of this Association that it was unwarranted and injudicious and we regret both its having been passed and the publicity given to it. We are at the same time free to say that if Messengers

from Cork had attended, such information would have been given by them as would have prevented its occurrence. It is recommended that the several ministers attend to the catechetical instruction of the children, and we highly approve the conduct of Br. Richards at Cork in this respect. It is also recommended that Sunday Schools be established by our several churches, the example of the churches in Dublin and Thurles in this respect is commended. We recommend to the several churches the exercise of pure discipline, and as an associated body we pledge ourselves to assist in carrying the same into effect. Resolved that the next Association be held at Dublin, it being more convenient than Rahue, the place in rotation; that the Friday sermon be preached by Mr. Clarke and the Association sermon on Sunday by Mr. Richards Resolved that Mr. West be requested to draw up the general letter for next year and the subject be "Church Discipline". Resolved that the General letter this year be printed."'

To revert to affairs in Cork, the church first worshipped in premises in Mill Street from about 1704 to 1763 when they moved to Marlborough Street. Marlborough Street served them for 130 years, i.e., until 1892 when they moved to their present building in King Street (now, by interpretation, MacCurtain Street). They also came to own, under the will of Mrs. Ann Riggs who died 1741, a burying ground in the South Liberties of the city. The upkeep of this place and of the wall surrounding it was a continual source of anxiety. Funds were derived from burial charges - church members 2/8½d.; husbands, wives, children or relations of members 2/8½d.; others 5/5d. (These were the equivalents in Irish currency of 2/6d. and 5/-d. sterling respectively.) The church also owned land in the parish of Mallow, Co. Cork, the income from which enabled them to supplement the income of their pastors. This property came to them from the Falkiner family and was held until 1848 at least. Some indication of their financial state in 1754, at least their own opinion of it, may be gained from a letter which is worth recording for its own sake because of the unusual circumstances in which it was written. Pastor Gibbons had been ill for a long time when the church decided to write to Mr. Needham of Bristol as follows:- (I quote only parts from a rather long epistle.)

'It may seem strange to you that a people at this distance and in great measure unknown to you should present you with an invitation to come over to them and be their minister ..... Our pastor, Mr. Ebenezer Gibbons is at this time confined to his bed, brought very low by a complication of disorders so that the doors of our house have been shut (a very

melancholy sight to us) for near six weeks, nor do we see any probability of his being ever able to exercise again in public ..... No congregation of Baptists in this kingdom are so well able to provide for the subsistence of a minister; our predecessors have been generous to the cause for, besides a decent meeting house and burying ground our present pastor, a single man, has near £60 per annum and on his demise, with which we are daily threatened we should with ease make up £80 per annum which in this plentiful country we suppose to be a comfortable maintenance ..... During our pastor's life our subscriptions for you, sir, as a supply for the ensuing year amount to a little more than £50; this, with your charges of coming over our deacons will punctually pay ..... In England you are well supplied with ministers; at present the Baptists in Ireland feel a sensible want of them. We hope therefore you will take this our unanimous call into serious consideration and give us your answer as soon as possible. We subscribe ourselves your brethren in the faith of the Gospel.
Cork, February, 1764.
Stephen Mills, Joseph Fowke, William Stockdale, Thomas Casey, John Osborne, Thomas Trayer, William Francis, John and Joseph Francis, John Devereaux, William Harrington, John Emerson, John Austin, John Thompson.'

Mr. Needham declined; Pastor Richards succeeded Mr. Gibbons who died later that same year, 1764.

We have time to look at only a couple of items from the account of Mr. Richards' pastorate. First, the classes he held for the young people from 1792 to 1798. These were very different from those familiar to us. In the first year there were lectures on geography and science; in the second geography and astronomy combined with a series on the parables; in 1794 and 1795 ethics, botany, geography and history and the parables again; the following year geometry, biography and zoology; in 1798 there were lectures on the British Constitution, anthology and on various heresies. Comment on the series of lectures is as follows:- 'These means of improvement continued for more than seven years, were well attended, and both minister and young people were all life, ardour and unanimity: and various young persons, not Baptists but of different persuasions regularly attended and bore a part. The number was nearly forty.'

Mr. Richards had been pastor for 55 years and must have been about 80 years of age when, in 1819, it was proposed than an assistant should be called. He expressed considerable apprehension, less on general grounds than because he believed the man the church had in mind was Calvinist

in outlook whereas he was Arminian. However, in 1820 the church called Mr. Charles T. Keen (who may have been pastor in Newry) and the call was accepted.

Here we have the gap of twenty years mentioned earlier for, after a few blank pages following Mr. Keen's letter of acceptance the next date mentioned is 19th January, 1840, at which time the church was without a pastor.

Mr. Frederick Trestrail was called in 1840 but left in 1844 on becoming Secretary of the Baptist Irish Society. He was succeeded by Mr. G. N. Watson who resigned in 1846. Among the items of business recorded during this period are the following:-

(a) The public admonition of the church treasurer for failure to do his work conscientiously.

(b) After considerable discussion, the decision to observe 'closed' Communion.

(c) The regular appointment of two members, a man and a woman to go round the sick and absent. The former was generally but not always a deacon.

(d) The first and quite early reference to the Brethren, in 1845. This was in connection with one of that body who had left them and desired fellowship in Marlborough Street.

Mr. R. Bentley was called to the pastorate in 1846, resigned in 1848, and was succeeded by Mr. B. C. Young who held the pastoral office, for four years until 1852.

The whole period of the 1850's and 1860's was most difficult. There were financial, doctrinal, practical and personal problems. The long standing problem of 'open' or 'closed' communion was again thrashed out, also the frequency of observing the Lord's supper - each Lord's day or once a month. Services were suspended on a number of occasions and the church re-formed in 1863 when they adopted the title 'The Open Communion Baptist Church meeting at Marlborough Street, Cork'.

This was not the end of their troubles, and during the pastorate of Mr. Thomas Hudson who served the church for some years after 1863 numbers shrank to very small proportions. The church was re-formed again, on Strict Baptist principles in 1871 and the record closes in 1875 with arrangements being made for the work to be carried on following the resignation of the then pastor, T. E. Skuse. There is much to be learned,

and avoided, in these last thirty years.

Now, to conclude, I must say something about the significance of the Cork Church book in relation to Irish Baptist history. So far as I know it is unique. Compared with other manuscript material used in the compilation of published Irish histories its value will I believe quickly be recognised in the world of scholarship when it sees the light of day. There is the greatest possible ignorance, even among those without excuse for it, about Irish Baptists their numbers, beliefs, practices and history. A lot of this is our own fault, but clearly the time is long overdue for us to stand up and be counted as Baptists rather than simply as one of the 'other denominations'. Publication of the Cork church book will be a major step in that direction.

Not only is this book a unique record of the Cork body but it sheds light on other churches and people. No later work on Irish Baptist history will be possible without its use; on occasions Baptist history in Great Britain will be incomplete without some of the references it contains.

Time and again in the Cork book, particularly in the Appendix, there are references to men of other denominations who have, on conviction, come over to the Baptist position; and it is the best men who have come in this way, thinking men, sincere men. Despite upbringing, despite self-interest, despite many other hindrances, we have thus continually received fresh blood from outside our own ranks. In 1737 a writer in Cork, commenting on what he regarded as dissident religious groups said - 'The Anabaptists had never power to do mischief and as from the peculiarity of their scheme and the uncomfortableness of their dipping they never will, it would be unjust to suspect them, because hitherto they have appeared an inoffensive people.'[3]

'The peculiarity of their scheme and the uncomfortableness of their dipping'! There have been and are those who would have us modify our insistence on believer's baptism as a qualification for membership of the local church. There are those who would have us accommodate some of our views to suit more modern philosophies. Not only would any weakening of our position be scripturally unsound, not only does history show

how misdirected would be any such popularising movement, but these things are here shown to be themselves one of our greatest sources of strength.

Examination of a record like this inevitably prompts comparison with present-day conditions. The people you will read about in this book were not plaster saints. There was the brother who had to be disciplined because he came to have too strong a liking for spiritous liquor, (though there was no objection to a brewer as a church member), there were several whose attendance fell away until it was recorded 'Has not attended for years'; there was one brother whose parsimony was so notorious that it found a place in the record. Equally, there were good, devout, hard working, self sacrificing men and women. But what distinguishes them from many of our congregations was the vigour and variety of their church life. To these people membership of the local church really meant something, it was woven into the context of their everyday lives more closely than is usually the case with us. Our problems to-day involve a seeking after fresh methods of approach to people, ways of keeping the interest of teenagers, outlets in the work of the church for the energies of the ordinary church member. I wonder whether, instead of seeking modern expedients, we might not profitably look more closely at the activities and methods of those, particularly in Cork, who have gone before.

H. D. GRIBBON.

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IRISH BAPTISTS AND THE REVIVAL OF 1859 WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TOBERMORE

It is profitable, when considering the past outpourings of God's Spirit upon His people, to study them not only in broad outline and in detail but also within a particular circumscribed situation. If this is done one can begin to appreciate the magnitude and the depth of such movements. I propose, therefore, to look first at the 1859 Revival in general, then to consider its effect upon Irish Baptists, and finally to present to you what I have learned of its effects in one local Church, Tobermore.

1. THE REVIVAL OF 1859

The 1859 Revival really began in 1858 in North America, if that is not too Irish a way of putting it!

As early as November 1857 there was a quickening work of God's Spirit among Methodists in the city of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. From 300 to 400 souls professed conversion within the space of a few days. The account of this awakening was read by hundreds of pastors in the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was then one of the most evangelistically minded Churches in the United States. In various places a spiritual quickening became manifest, and a concern for revival spread to ministers and churches of most denominations.

In New York, a lay missionary, Jeremiah Lamphier, attached to the Master Church of the Dutch Reformed Body invited others to join him in a weekly noon-day prayer meeting. On Wednesday, 23rd September, 1857 when Lamphier opened the doors at 12 noon, he enjoyed his own company for half an hour before anyone joined him, but before one o'clock came there were six people present. By 7th October there were fifty intercessors and it was decided to hold the meeting daily instead of weekly. At this point news of the awakening in Hamilton began to reach New York, so that a marked stimulus was given to prayer for a gracious revival of religion. Within six months 10,000 business men were gathering daily in New York City for prayer; within two years a million converts had been added to the American churches.[1]

The first part of the British Isles to enjoy a similar visitation was, of course, Ulster. The human agent, at the beginning of the movement was, however, an Englishwoman. In November 1856 a Mrs. Colville visited Ballymena. Her testimony was a remarkable one. She had one day been awakened suddenly by sovereign grace to see her need of salvation through the blood of Christ. Immediately after her conversion she began to tell others the glad tidings of salvation. Her relations were so annoyed by her witness that she was obliged to leave her home, but persecution served only to fan the flames of her ardour and she sought full-time service for her Master. In course of time she became a missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society. Her work (presumably she was on deputation) brought her to Ulster and especially to County Antrim where she went from door to door declaring the message which had brought peace to her heart.

One day she visited a home in Ballymena in which a young woman lay lying. She spoke to this woman and her young companions of the way to life and did not forbear to point out that they were strangers to converting grace and still 'in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity'. Mrs. Colville's words were overheard by a young man, James McQuilkin, into whose heart the Holy Spirit sent the sacred arrows of conviction. He made his way home in deep anxiety of soul. He was afraid that Mrs. Colville was not as strongly Calvinistic as he was and when,

later he asked her whether she was a Calvinist or not she replied -

> 'I would not wish to be more or less a Calvinist than our Lord and his Apostles. But', she continued, 'I do not care to talk on mere points of doctrine. I would rather speak of the experience of salvation in the soul. If one were to tell me what he knows of the state of his heart towards God I think I could tell him whether he knows the Lord Jesus savingly.'[2]

After some weeks of spiritual agony young McQuilkin found peace and joy in believing. During the long winter of 1857-58 he and three other recent converts gave themselves to prayer for revival in the old schoolhouse at Kells near Ballymena.

When reports of the awakening in America reached Ulster an intense concern that the province might enjoy a like manifestation began to be evidenced. Between Ulster and the tens of thousands of Scotch-Irish in America there was an intimate connection. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church sent an official deputation of two men, Professor William Gibson and Rev. William McClure to visit the centres of the revival in America.[3]

The actual outbreak of the revival in Ulster came in direct connection with the Kells prayer-meeting. At Christmas 1858 Samual Campbell, a convert of the Kells prayer group returned to his home in a nearby village and told his family what God had done in his soul. He read the scriptures and prayed so powerfully with them that his mother disturbed the sleeping family later that night with her cries to God for mercy. Both Mrs. Campbell and a daughter came into the experience of salvation that night, as did another brother after three weeks of awful conviction. A second visit of Samuel Campbell spread the work to a related family, with the result that there was created in the district an interest in spiritual things.

On 14th March 1859 a special meeting was held in the first Presbyterian Church, Ahoghill. Such large crowds attended that 'it was deemed prudent to dismiss the meeting lest there be a fatal accident from the falling of the galleries which threatened to give way under the alarming pressure'. A layman thereupon addressed the crowd outside the church - some three thousand who were standing in chilling rain. Moved

by his fervour and apostolic language, hundreds fell on their knees in the mud of the streets. Thus for the first time there were scores of people 'prostrated' under intense conviction of sin. These 'prostrations' drew the fire of the critics of the movement, but it ought to be emphasised that the majority of the transformations of character and life were accomplished without unusual physical accompaniment.[4]

From Ahoghill the revival spread with great rapidity to other parts of Ulster; 1859 proved to be an 'Annus Mirabilus' in which it is estimated that no less than 100,000 persons professed conversion.

II IRISH BAPTISTS AND THE 1859 REVIVAL

Irish Baptists, while not numerous, did share in the blessing of the '59 Revival. In Ballymena, a town much stirred by the Revival, a Baptist church came into being as a direct outcome of it. Many of the converts of the Revival, reading the scriptures with a new found sense of their binding authority, became persuaded of the truth of believer's baptism. The writer of the 'Irish Chronicle' in the Baptist Magazine for 1861 (p.32) stated: 'The extent to which attention has been directed to the Ordinance of Baptism is very remarkable ..... the great question "what must we do to be saved?" had been attended by the inquiry respecting the ordinances of Christ "what saith the Scriptures?"' R. H. Carson of Tobermore in March 1860 told the committee of the Baptist Irish Society that he had never preached less on baptism 'But it is a remarkable feature of the Revival here and throughout the country generally, that when persons are brought to Christ, so intensely anxious are they to follow Him, and so free of prejudice have their minds become that, going to the scriptures, they learn of themselves, and that immediately the path of duty.'[5]

The founder of the Baptist cause at Ballymena was a former minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Rev. J. G. McVicker. When the light concerning baptism entered his mind, he did not hesitate to be baptised. Obliged to leave his own communion he preached freely in and around Ballymena. He gathered a congregation together and many people were converted under his ministry. Within two years a church of 120 members had been established, and a building costing about £1,100 erected.[6]

Immediately following the Revival the church at Coleraine experienced great blessing under the ministry of the Rev. T. W. Medhurst. He settled in Coleraine in September 1860, bringing to an end a period of seven years in which the church had been without a pastor. A year after his settlement he was able to record: 'Since I commenced my pastoral duties here, I have baptised fifty-two believers into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Fifty-seven persons have been added to the fellowship of the Church, which now numbers one hundred and twenty-nine members.'[7]

The effect of the Revival upon Baptist witness was threefold. Firstly, it served to strengthen the churches, especially in the north, and to aid them in some measure of recovery from the desolating effects of the Famine years. Secondly, it opened the way for the wider dissemination of Baptist principles, although some advantage was undoubtedly lost because of the increase of Brethrenism after the Revival. Thirdly, through the agency of the Revival new workers were raised up to serve the Baptist cause. Charles Kirtland wrote:

> 'Among its permanent results are new stations and churches, and an increase of evangelists, who are preaching and teaching Christ in nearly one hundred different places.'[8]

III THE REVIVAL AND THE TOBERMORE CHURCH

First a word about the source material. This is contained in a Church Book, in which are recorded the annual letters of the Rev. R.H. Carson to the Secretary of the Baptist Irish Society. These form a series which runs from 1850 to 1894, when Carson retired after a pastorate lasting over forty-five years. The series is complete save for the year 1864 when for some reason no letter was written or what is more likely, recorded. There is also a series of letters to the Secretary of the revived Baptist Irish Association beginning in June 1863, but from these no significant new information can be gathered.

R. H. Carson, the son of the founder of the Tobermore church, Dr. Alexander Carson, was pastor of the church for two periods. After a short pastorate 1844-47 which embraced the Famine period he had removed to Perth in Scotland leaving behind him a church of about 250 members, a

number which then declined rapidly until in 1849 there were only about 130 in fellowship. This fall was brought about by several factors, death, emigration, and the lack of a pastor ('the want of ministerial labour' as the deacons describe it). Also, at this time, many left the membership to join other ecclesiastical bodies, or ceased to attend a place of worship at all. The deacons recognised that lack of a pastor was a key factor in the bringing about of the low state of spiritual life that existed in 1849. The neglect of discipline they saw as another cause of the church's debility, 'Discipline has been greatly neglected and much corruption has found entrance among us' they record.[9]

The letter containing this information also mentions the return to the district of R. H. Carson. Evidently the climate of Perth had proved trying to his health and he was obliged to return home to his native Co. Derry. The deacons desired Mr. Carson to resume the pastorate (it had not been filled since he left), but they recognised that the church at Tobermore could not unaided support him and his family. They therefore wrote to the Secretary of the Baptist Irish Society, Mr. Trestrail, requesting temporary financial help to enable the church to call Mr. Carson again to the pastorate.

Mr. Trestrail replied that the Society's funds were very straitened but suggested that the deacons should attempt to get an allowance 'from the Company who hold the property in your neighbourhood, or we might help through some member here'. The Company concerned was evidently the Drapers' Company of London since in a letter to Trestrail dated October 20th, 1849, the deacons mention a deputation to its local agent. A letter from Trestrail in reply informed the deacons that his committee had decided to make a grant of £25 for the current year. Carson accepted the call of the church to the pastorate on the condition that his stipend be increased as soon as circumstances permitted but, as it transpired, he was obliged for a number of years to run a small farm to supplement his income from the Baptist Irish Society and the Tobermore Church.

From this point begins the series of annual reports that Mr. Carson was required to make to the committee of the Baptist Irish Society. The picture of Carson that emerges from these reports is of an honest and

frank man who was not prepared to gild the lily in order to impress a committee. If anything, as he confessed, he was inclined to take a pessimistic view. Yet though often cast down and disappointed, he was a very faithful man who was deeply concerned to see the church grow not only numerically but also spiritually.

In the first annual letter, for 1849-50, submitted on this occasion by the deacons it was reported that the Sunday School, allowed to lapse while the church was pastorless, had been restarted. More than one hundred children now attended each Sunday. The membership of the church stood at 152. Discipline was being restored, for some who had been long time members of the church had been excluded.

From 1850 to 1859 there seems to have been a steady improvement in the spiritual life of the church; attendances at the services increased, preaching stations were opened, and despite some set-backs the number in fellowship showed an increase. In the year March 1850 - March 1851 there was a clear increase of eleven members, but in the following year a decrease of five. By March 1856 Carson was able to write that 'Altogether, the cause at Tobermore is in a more prosperous condition than at any previous period of my ministry here'. In the previous year thirteen had been admitted into the fellowship by baptism on profession of their faith, and two by transfer. Two had been 'dismissed' (transferred) and three restored, whilst four had died making a clear increase of twelve. The number on the roll now stood at 168.

In March 1858 there were one hundred and seventy-six members, a clear increase for the year of eight. What is significant is that Carson could report that some hardened listeners had been converted. By March 1859 the membership of the church had grown to one hundred and ninety-two, sixteen members having been received in the previous year of working. In this letter we have the first notice of the Revival, and the effect that the news of its coming to America had upon the Tobermore church. The account is most interesting.

> 'For some months after making my last annual return, we had no additions to our number. Indeed matters seemed to have come to a stand-still. The church was peaceful, but was not enlarged; the Sabbath School was steady, but yielded no converts; the

congregation was attentive, but there were no enquirers. Just at this time we began to hear of the glorious revival in America; and suddenly, as by a touch of the Divine hand, we found ourselves earnestly desiring something of the kind at Tobermore. In consequence of this feeling I brought the matter before the church and congregation and concluded by inviting such as felt its importance to remain for prayer and consultation. A few did remain, and in deep humiliation before God, and with many tears we talked together and poured out our souls at the throne of grace. The result was a Prayer Meeting, appointed for the following Friday night and it was agreed that if the Lord seemed to favour the movement it should be continued throughout the season. It was founded and to this day our meeting lives to bless the Lord. Indeed one fortnight after we commenced our meeting I had two earnest enquirers after Christ, and ere many weeks had passed, not fewer than six souls professed themselves fruits of the blessed movement. Then for some months there were no further conversions, but significantly, the interest in our Revival Prayer Meeting is not in the least sated. On the contrary it is very much increased.'

In the next annual letter, dated March 1860, Carson reported the coming of revival to Tobermore. Early in July 1859 the awakening reached the district with the result that eighty-two souls were added to the church in nine months. During the early part of this period Carson was obliged, for his health's sake, to seek recuperation at Portstewart, which may help to explain why so many cases requiring discipline later occurred.

Carson was, however, well aware of the danger that in a season of excitement some might be received to communion who were emotionally moved but not spiritually renewed -

'While by no means unaware that some whom we have lately received may decline from the way of righteousness, it is yet with heart-felt thankfulness we record the fact that up to the present moment we have not been called upon to exercise discipline in a single instance. I will not assert that our recent additions are to an individual all that we could deem them to be. There are "babes" as well as "young men" among them, but babes that I think are seeking the "sincere milk" of the word, that they may grow thereby.'

We cannot take time to notice each individual case of conversion that Carson describes, but it is worth mentioning the case of a female drunkard who was converted and transformed by the grace of God. When it was suggested to her than on account of her former character she might wish to be baptised privately she replied 'No, that is just the reason why my baptism must be public. I was a reproach to Christ before all men.

I must now honour him in the presence of all.'

The effect of the Revival can be measured to a certain extent by the increase in membership of the Church between March 1859 and March 1860. In this period ninety-nine were admitted into fellowship, a clear increase of seventy-nine, bringing the numbers on the church roll to two hundred and sixty-nine. The clear increase of seventy-nine compared with an increase of only ten for the previous year. There were never less than one hundred at the prayer meeting, sometimes as many as two hundred.

In March 1861 Carson could again record that there had been no exclusions in the previous year. He shows his pastoral insight when he comments:

> 'Times of great awakening are not always times of cool deliberation in making profession of the gospel; nor need it at all excite surprise when persons thus gathered from the world are sometimes found after all not to belong to Christ.'

No doubt because of the great increase of interest in the subject of baptism there was also a great increase in opposition to the Baptists from paedobaptist ministers.

> 'Here, as at Coleraine, Ballymena and elsewhere, we are meeting with very considerable opposition. Some of the brethren from England who visited this country during the Revival, imagined we had friends and allies in the Irish Presbyterians. Ah! they little knew the parties with whom we have to deal. No doubt, to a foreign Baptist, merely passing through the country, and not therefore likely to communicate much infection, there may have been a show of friendship. But let any of our brethren settle down as we have done, and by the simple exhibition of God's truth succeed in drawing the people together, or to the smallest extent interfere with the interests of Presbyterianism, and if the result is not the bitterest and most deadly antagonism, I shall confess myself utterly ignorant of the state of matters.'

This letter is followed by the record of several cases of discipline. The first concerns swearing profanely and lying, the second walking in an Orange procession, the third a similar offence. The next cases related to the stealing of apples, intoxication with strong drink, and the frequenting of public houses.

Exclusions from church fellowship now became more numerous. Four were excluded in the year March 1861 - March 1862, three in 1862, three in 1864. In a letter to the Baptist Irish Association, dated June 28th,

1863, Carson notes that the expulsions had been confined almost entirely to the converts of the Revival season.

> 'Reaction, after so remarkable a movement, was to be anticipated; and we are not without some fear, speaking generally that its extent has not yet been reached.' In June 1864 he returns to the same theme. 'Still we dare not hope that the reaction from the Revival Movement of 1859 has reached its termination. Even now there are one or two converts of that season about whom we have our fears, and whose course we are carefully watching with a view to their expulsion if found unworthy.' In March 1865 he writes 'I begin to hope that the reaction for evil consequent on the great Revival Movement has passed away.....'

By this time the membership of the Church had declined from two hundred and sixty-nine in March 1860 to two hundred and twenty-three in March 1865.

So concerned had Carson and his deacons become about the lack of spiritual power that they called for special conference and prayer together, but though in 1864 there was a little quickening it did not continue. In the next few years Carson's constant lament is of a condition of spiritual drought in the church. By March 1869, ten years after the Revival, when there was not a single addition to the membership, Carson gloomily records,

> 'As it now appears, and so far as we here are concerned, that movement was anything but a blessing. Out of some eighty or ninety individuals received at that time, scarcely one remains to us at this moment. And what is worse than their exclusion or withdrawal - their evil conduct, or their spiritual apathy, did not fail to leave its mark behind. I have often wished they could have been all taken away in one day. They have been our Achan in the camp; and till we see the last of them, or nearly so, I scarcely venture to hope for success.'

The steady decline in membership continued, and by March 1872 the number on the roll had dropped to one hundred and sixty-nine. Special prayer meetings were called to beseech God for the return of His Spirit, but still the decline continued. In March 1874 the membership had decreased to one hundred and fifty-four. But by the following March a better day had dawned. The importunate cries of the faithful were beginning to be answered.

At first the band of wrestlers was not only small, but apparently without the sympathy of the great bulk of the people. Then an agent of the Irish Evangelisation Society held some gospel meetings at Mr. Carson's

invitation in the Tobermore church and there was a remarkable response to the preaching of the gospel. Amongst others three of Carson's children were converted; before the church year closed in March 1875 fifty-four members had been added, mainly young people. In the following year a further forty-two were added, bringing the membership to two hundred and thirty.

Significantly, there appears to have been no reaction following these conversions such as took place after 1860; between 1875 and 1894 there were only two exclusions. Even taking into account the more tolerant attitude which had developed towards some of the more trivial offences of members, yet it nevertheless seems certain that the numerically smaller increase of 1875-6 was much more lasting than the spectacular increase of 1859-60.

It remains to make a few concluding observations.

1. Revival does not necessarily solve problems. It may solve some, but it can create others, especially if great vigilance is not exercised in receiving professed converts into church membership. One wonders whether Carson's absence through illness for part of 1859 was not a contributory factor, in that without his leadership there was a less careful examination of applicants.

2. One would like to know whether the reaction that occurred at Tobermore after the Revival was duplicated elsewhere. Was this a general experience? There is some evidence to suggest that it may have been quite widespread. Professor Barkley of Assembly's College has pointed out that there was a gradual decline in the practice of catechising after the '59 Revival which may suggest that in the religious excitement of the Revival people lost their desire for solid, doctrinal Christianity.[10]

3. The experience of Tobermore in 1859 may be of value to us over one hundred years later for it is clear that when there has been a notable movement of God's Spirit in conversion, whether in revival or during a major evangelistic campaign, there is a duty on the local church to provide opportunity for those newly brought into fellowship to be thoroughly instructed in 'the things most surely believed amongst us'. It is not reasonable to assume that people who may perhaps have been brought into

touch with the Gospel for the first time, people who are in a spiritual sense the lambs of the flock, will become strong Christians without regular hand feeding.

D. P. KINGDON.

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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE GRANGE BAPTIST CHURCH

Grange, the fourth oldest Baptist church in the north of Ireland, meets in an unpretentious building on an elevated site overlooking Loughs Neagh and Beg. An old Quaker settlement, four and a half miles from Randalstown, six from Portglenone and seven from Ballymena, it is part of that district greatly affected by the remarkable work of grace known popularly as the '59 Revival. But the church itself was in existence long before that, and to appreciate the events giving rise to its formation, one must first study the situation in the Irish Presbyterian Church at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

There had been a general defection on the part of its ministers from the Gospel of Jesus Christ and, as a consequence, the Church was dry and dead. Arianism became dominant in some quarters, notably in the Belfast Academical Institution which was recognised by both the Synod of Ulster and the Seceders as providing an acceptable training, including lectures on theological subjects. Its general certificate was accepted as equivalent to a university degree.[1] The churches at Grange and Duneane formed a joint charge and had not escaped the blighting effects of the heresy. The aged minister, Rev. Mr. Scott, who served them both, was not an avowed Arian but was, nevertheless, under its influence and has been described as being 'Sadly defective in exhibiting the character of Christ; and while admitting generally, the introduction and prevalence of sin among men, he

seems to have had no distinct idea of the awful enormity of sin or of the means necessary to remove it.'[2] His sermons have also been described as 'few in number and, consequently, frequently repeated.'[3]

It is significant, however, that, at this time, two men were being prepared by God to influence not merely the course of events at Grange but a large part of the Protestant religious life of Ireland. One was the justly celebrated Dr. Alexander Carson of Tobermore and the other, the renowned Dr. Henry Cooke, who drove Arianism from the Synod of Ulster.

Carson was a wonderful scholar and graduated from the University of Glasgow at the early age of eighteen (1794). He secured first honours in a large class which included Ralph Wardlaw and John Brown of Langton.[4] He entered his life's work at Tobermore immediately and remained there for fifty years until his death at the age of sixty-eight (Aug. 24th 1844). Unable to introduce a godly discipline into the life of his church, he appealed for help to the Synod of Ulster. The Synod refused. Carson therefore gave himself to the study of God's word on the subject of church government and discovered that the independent form of church government is the least likely to be abused and the most likely to remain under the control of the Holy Spirit. He, therefore, led his church out of the Synod of Ulster and in 1805, published his reasons for doing so.[5] A truly remarkable career followed which cannot be dealt with now. Henry Cooke, on the other hand, was to champion another great scriptural truth, the Divinity of Christ, and to render invaluable service to the Church of Jesus Christ and all lovers of sound doctrine. As in the earlier age God raised up Athanasius to oppose the Arian heresy[6] so, centuries later, Henry Cooke was faced with a similar task. Invincible courage characterised them both.

When Mr. Scott resigned from Grange and Duneane churches in 1804, the churches were separated. Cooke went to the latter in 1808 as assistant minister and was greatly used of God there. The presbytery, however, after furnishing supplies to Grange throughout 1805, abandoned the congregation and it was left to fend for itself as best it could. For nine long years connections with the presbytery remained severed during which time certain important events took place.

Firt there was the advent of a stranger named Douglas whose coming

caused a sensation in the entire district. An examination of this man's life and labours in the area is calculated both to excite admiration and call forth pity and contempt. Described as a handsome man with graceful manners, a fascinating conversationalist, he appears to have been singularly gifted in the public ministry of God's word. An account of his preaching may be quoted here though it smacks a little of exaggeration:-

> 'His address, when engaged in public speaking, was of that witching kind which quietly steals away the mind and leads it, unconsciously to itself, to think only with the Speaker; while, under the more spirit-stirring appeals which he occasionally addressed to his audience, the first impulse of his hearers was simply to act as the speaker recommended. Added to all, he preached to sinners the unsearchable riches of Christ, and, with masterly eloquence, unfolded the glories of the Cross.'[7]

Suffice it to say that his preaching did do an enormous amount of good especially in such places as Carnmoney, Donegore and Grange, and seems, in the latter instance, to have contributed to that enquiry after truth which led to the formation of an Independent Church there.

Success, however, intoxicated the man, and as one writer bluntly puts it,

> 'He appears to have considered himself competent to enter on any adventure, however hazardous or immoral, with impunity; and he seems to have been tempted to do so by the fallacious belief that his own dexterity, aided by his popularity, was equal to carry him through any difficulty with success. In this, however, he was justly doomed to disappointment.'

What were these adventures which the writer mentions?

1. The first was the indiscriminate administration of the Lord's Supper to a promiscuous assembly, independently of all church order and arrangement. Although no evidence existed to prove his membership of any church; although there was no church in the particular areas where he administered the ordinance, we are told that, 'with cool formality he appointed elders pro tem and proceeded to dispense the Sacrament'.

2. Secondly, he desired to join the Freemasons in another place. He actually succeeded in imposing himself upon the Brotherhood for a time but, their suspicions aroused, the members commissioned an investigation which eventually uncovered the truth, viz., that he had not at any time been a Freemason - and he was thus exposed as an impostor. The desirability or otherwise of a Christian's membership in such an order need not detain us here. The fact is that Douglas had deliberately posed as something he was not, and being exposed as an impostor and trickster, lost the confidence of many friends.

3. The most perfidious act perpetrated by Douglas was his courtship of a young lady described as 'amiable' and 'most respectably connected'. The couple were at length engaged to be married and all arrangements for the wedding were far advanced when investigation proved beyond doubt that the man was already married and had children. Expelled from the district after an unsuccessful attempt to abduct, or elope with, the lady, he finally left Ireland in 1808 and was unheard of subsequently.[8]

That God in His sovereignty should use such a man and bless such a ministry may well be a mystery to many but suffice it to say that the people of Grange, aroused by the preached word and moved to seek the Saviour, resolved never again to sit under a cold and lifeless ministry such as once they had done under Mr. Scott.

These good people, having read Carson's reasons for leaving the Synod of Ulster and finding themselves as sheep without a shepherd, resolved to write to the Doctor in an effort to arrange for the services of an evangelical preacher at Grange. Dr. Carson advised them to apply to the famous Haldane brothers Robert and James, who had recently commenced training young men for the Christian ministry in Scotland. The Haldanes were the nephews of Admiral Duncan and were men of independent fortune. Both had been converted early in life and immediately became involved in Christian work. Their tastes for sound evangelical Calvinism were acquired in the circle that moved about John Erskine in Edinburgh and John Newton in London and both were intensely interested in foreign mission work at a time when even the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church had declined to promote work among the heathen. Turning to Home Mission work they found that the influence of modernism which had prevented Roberts's departure as a missionary to India was also strong against evengelical preaching at home. They therefore seceded and became leaders in the Independent movement, retaining their love for the doctrines of grace but espousing congregationalist principles of church government.

James Haldane was an evangelist and the soundness of his theology may be gauged by a perusal of his book on the Atonement or his exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians. His brother Robert was not a preacher of any note but was a theologian and writer of outstanding ability. He is chiefly remembered for his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans which ranks with those of Calvin and Hodge, and for his defence of the canon of Holy Scripture.

In 1816 he visited Geneva which had by that time 'discarded the faith of her fathers and a deep darkness shrouded that once-radiant fount of protestant truth'. 'Infidel philosophers like Gibbon and Voltaire found a congenial home in her neighbourhood. Her noble school of Theology was corrupted by an insiduous Unitarianism. The Bible was entirely set aside as a text-book, Plato and Seneca taking the place of Christ and Paul.'[9] But through a providential meeting with a student, Robert Haldane commenced a thrice-weekly study of the Scriptures, and what was originally designed as a six-week visit to the Continent became a 3-year sojourn in Geneva during which time one after another of his theological students received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Many of them became famous in their own right. J. H. Merle D'Aubigne went to Berlin and became a notable preacher besides issuing his classic History of the Reformation, Henri Pyt became a missionary of the Bearn and the Pyrenees, whilst Frederic Monod became the chief founder of the Free Churches in France. Bonifas became a theologian of note, Louis Gaussen wrote his great work on the inspiration of the Scriptures and Caesar Malan exercised large influence in America and other lands.

This same Robert Haldane, in response to the urgent appeals of the church at Grange, sent to them in the year 1807, Rev. George Gray who was duly settled as their minister (July 27th). He laboured with much acceptance and amongst other things, organised district meetings. The meeting house which had fallen into a state of dilapidation was repaired and housed a respectable congregation.

It must be borne in mind that, at this period, no denominational church existed at Grange. The people had been abandoned by the presbytery and had, since 1805, been meeting as best they could. There was now no celebration of the Lord's Supper and the question of baptism was only beginning to agitate the minds of some. Consequently, an Independent church was formed on the 17th July 1809, appointing four deacons and recognising Mr. Gray as their minister. The following September the church attended to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper for the first time.

Now, the question of baptism loomed large on the horizon and the interest of many was stimulated on the subject. Alexander Carson had been struck with the fact that many of the people in his district had become

interested in the doctrine of believer's baptism and he had actually determined to refute the teaching in a series of sermons. However, the more he studied the word of God on the subject the more convinced he became of the truth of believer's baptism and finally, his church became a Baptist church. Carson's magnum opus is, of course, Baptism, its mode and its subjects.

The Haldane brothers had also faced the same problem, James having seriously considered the mattter for about four years before being baptised in 1808. Within a year, his brother Robert had followed suit and from that time forward they staunchly upheld Baptist principles.

It is interesting to note that the course of events with regard to Dr. Carson and the Haldane brothers was reproduced in the life of the Grange Baptist Church i.e., a progression from Presbyterianism into Independency and through a prolonged study of the scriptures to an adoption of Baptist principles and practice.

The brothers Haldane issued a periodical entitled The Christian Magazine which was avidly read by many of the folk at Grange. Of particular interest was the series on the subject of baptism, which encouraged a group of the most influential members of the Grange church to study the subject for themselves. Progress was slow and frequent consultations with Mr. Gray were held. He, being an Independent, was a paedo-baptist and unable to help much in their enquiry. In fact, since the most active and influential members of his church were becoming convinced of the biblical basis of believer's baptism, Mr. Gray tendered his resignation in 1810. But as a man of God and exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit he carried with him the love and confidence of the people to whom he had ministered.

It is thus against a background of heretical teaching in the Presbyterian Church, of the rise and fall of one whose ministry was blessed of God but who, nevertheless brought himself into shame and disrepute, of a gradual discovery of the New Testament teaching regarding church government and the observance of the ordinances in a scriptural manner that we are to see the emergence of the Grange Baptist Church.

In the Spring of 1811, Rev. Mr. Rodgers commenced his ministry in the meeting-house and the Baptist church at Grange dates from that year.

Mr. Rodgers was a Baptist and his ministry was 'characterised by piety and faithfulness'.[10] During that ministry, which terminated in 1813, a considerable number of people had been baptised and when he removed to another sphere of usefulness, he carried with him as his predecessor had done, the love and esteem of the folk at Grange. We must bear in mind that the church, formerly Presbyterian, which had passed through paedo-baptist congregationalism into a Baptist position, still met in the old Presbyterian meeting-house. This was to present its own problems but not before the people culled the benefit of another fruitful aspect of Rodger's teaching. This was the doctrine of Christian liberty, and it seems that this particular truth stood the people of Grange in good stead through the many years that they were without a pastor. At this time, the doctrine of the church was also made abundantly clear and people realised as never before that each church is complete in and of itself and is called upon by God to ensure the preaching of the Word of God, the right administration of the ordinances and the exercise of a loving discipline. Although not all was achieved immediately, what they had grasped was soon put to the test.

Early in the year 1814, the Rev. Dr. Henery of Randalstown entered the meeting-house on a Sabbath morning before the congregation had arrived. He intended occupying the pulpit and conducting the services in his capacity as a minister of the Synod of Ulster. Though the congregation would have been perfectly correct had it ejected Dr. Henery, the people were unwilling to create a disturbance and quietly withdrew. The presbytery, having abandoned the church nine years previously, now proceeded to reorganise a congregation, and a Presbyterian minister was ultimately settled there.

The Baptist congregation, now without a home, proceeded to meet in the private houses of its members and for the space of twenty-three years gathered in this manner 'for the observance of the Christian ordinances and the edifying of itself in love'.[11] It is remarkable that the congregation though without pastoral oversight and lacking a permanent home of its own, not only maintained its existence but made progress which was 'uniformly steady, peaceful and prosperous'.[12]

Then in 1837 the church built its own meeting-house. Writing in the

Ordnance Survey Memoirs under date 24th March, 1837, Bleakley says,

> 'The Baptist Meeting-house is situated a little above the Presbyterian Meeting-house in the same townland. The house is not yet finished, nothing but the walls and roof. It is twenty-four feet by eighteen feet inside and of stone, slated, with six oblong windows no larger than the windows of a common farm-house and cost about £50, chiefly subscriptions of the congregation except £21 viz.:- £16 from Dublin plus £5 from Belfast. There is no regular minister. The members speak themselves and are about twenty in number. This is the first Baptist Meeting-house which has ever been erected in this part of the country. It is about thirty years since the Baptist congregation commenced in this parish and held their meetings through the houses in the neighbourhood.'[13]

This is confirmed by Mr. McMaster who was junior pastor of the church when he wrote a brief account of the work in 1853. Before enumerating some of the glorious gospel doctrines preached in the church in those early days he tells us that the teaching was confined to the brethren themselves - 'plain men and chiefly of the farming class'.[14] In McMaster's time the church consisted of fifty-three members having two pastors and four deacons.

Shortly after his settlement Mr. McMaster drew up a brief account of the work at Grange and sent it to a relative in Philadelphia to have it printed. Unhappily, a fire broke out in the printer's premises and the manuscript was, with many others, destroyed. Eventually, however, A brief history of the Baptist Church at Grange, Co. Antrim by Robert McMaster (Junior Pastor) was printed in Belfast in the year 1853.

The Revival of 1859 brought much blessing to Grange. Congregations were easily assembled and could only with difficulty be persuaded to disperse. Of course, not everyone could be expected to value the Revival and it may be interesting to hear the statement of one who obviously found the awakening distasteful. Dr. T. Cooper Boville, C.M.G., was born at the Grange on the 14th March 1860 and as a young man, emigrated to Canada where he eventually became Deputy Finance Minister, his signature appearing on all the Dominion Bank notes at that time. In a private type-written autobiographical statement he says concerning the period of his youth

> 'There had been a big Revival at the time and everybody I knew was religious. Prayer meetings were held in our house weekly. I saw the beginnings of them but never saw the end. Sunday was a desperately holy occasion, blinds down, all work suspended, no games allowed. The afternoon's enjoyment consisted in sitting around the parents and reading chapters out of the Bible verse about. Above

all, Sunday began at 7. p.m. Saturday. I still recall the row of shining boots neatly lined along the wall on Saturday before 7 p.m. for Church going on Sunday. I may say there were clandestine children's games of marbles behind the turf stacks.'[15]

This testimony is valuable in that it emphasises the abiding effects of the Revival, Boville was born in 1860 - one year after the Revival and it must have been some years before he came to form his opinion of the atmosphere it had left behind. To some extent of course . Boville was ascribing to the Revival conditions not uncommon in parts of Scotland and amongst the Ulster Scots in the north of Ireland, conditions which lasted into the closing decade of the century.

In 1879, one of Grange's outstanding ministers was inducted to the pastorate.[16] He was the Rev. Mr. Phillips whose father-in-law was Keeper of the Robes to Queen Victoria. Phillips was an exceptionally fine preacher and exercised a tremendous influence during his twenty-nine years' ministry at the Grange. He was elected President of the Baptist Union in 1885 only two years before the 'Downgrade Controversy' resulted in the withdrawal of the great C. H. Spurgeon from the English Union. His remains are buried in the Craigmore Churchyard awaiting the Resurrection. With his, lie the remains of a little coloured child brought to this country by the pastor's son, the Rev. H. Ross Phillips, veteran missionary to the Congo. Long after the death of Mr. Phillips, Junior, the family maintained contact with the church. A letter of greetings was sent by the Church to the Brethren in Christ of the Congo Baptist Mission on August, 26th, 1906 and at the services on the last Sunday in August 1930, Rev. Ross Phillips was the preacher.

Mr. Phillips died in 1908, after a prolonged illness during which time the Rev. Thomas Whiteside of Ballymena was invited to assist in the work. This he continued to do for quite a few years, usually sharing the task of pastoral oversight at Grange with the minister at Clough. Special meetings marked the centenary of the church in 1911. In 1920, it was decided at the May Meetings held in Dublin, that the churches at Ballymena, Clough and Grange should be grouped together, the pastors of Ballymena and Clough being responsible also for Grange. This, of course, had been the pattern since 1908, Mr. Whiteside sharing the responsibility with

Rev. Reid McCullough, B.A., of Clough. When Mr. T. Harvey was settled at Ballymena on January, 20th, 1913, he was also recognised as minister at Grange. In 1914, he is referred to as 'senior minister' exercising a joint-pastorate with Mr. Thomson of Clough. In January 1922, Pastor Richard Hodgett accepted a call to Ballymena and Grange and it was not until January 1929 that Grange once again had its own whole-time minister in the person of Mr. Cooke. Since that time, the church has been served by Pastors R.A. Boggs, T. Moffatt, T. P. O'Connor, W. F. Rossetter and A. G. Hanna. The present pastorate commenced on May 5th, 1967.

Having seen something of the history of the church itself it may not be amiss to consider some of the questions which arose from time to time to exercise the minds of the members. It is impossible to guage the prevailing theology during the whole life of the church, though we may be assured that the ministry of Mr. Gray for example would have been unashamedly Reformed. There are hints, however, here and there, of doctrines other than the doctrines of Grace which came in for special consideration.

From the time the Independent church was formed in 1809 and the first celebration of the Lord's Supper in September of that year, the church continued for many succeeding years to practise 'open communion'. But, certainly by the early 1850's, that had changed and the church practised 'strict communion', a practice followed until after the commencement of the twentieth century; nor was it easily abandoned though raised repeatedly by a few who found close communion distasteful. McMaster, in whose time strict communion was the rule, speaking of the church's former practice, says that the church 'acted on this principle of tacit compromise' for many years.[17] In a church business-meeting in 1902, one member drew attention to a breach of close communion which was then the rule of the church. Consistently, though unhappily, the church, in the days when it first practised open communion, also had an open memberhip, that is to say that baptism was not a prerequisite of church membership. This was the position until 1849, thirty-eight years after the formation of the church, when all members not previously baptised submitted to that Scriptural ordinance. From that time forward baptism was required of all

prospective members and it may well have been at that time that the church introduced what is usually called 'close communion'.

During 1897 the subject of 'exhortation by lay-members' seems to have cropped up and at a business-meeting it was proposed and passed, 'That we hold exhortation by lay-members as a part of worship and that the church appoint qualified members to have the right of exhorting at the regular meetings on the Lord's Day.'[18] This was later amended, the words relating to 'qualified members' being omitted on the vote of a considerable majority. In any event, the one member appointed declined to exercise his right.

Two matters of importance were raised in 1903; first, the desirability of more psalm-singing in the Sabbath morning service. These were days when instrumental music was not used and the congregation may have felt that additional psalm-singing brought them more into line with their covenanting forefathers. Secondly, the need for a definite basis of doctrine was recognised, but it seems that some time was allowed to elapse before the matter was finalised. Also in 1903 Mr. Gilmore, Secretary of the Irish Baptist Home Mission, took out a Fire Insurance Policy for £200 on the Grange building 'without', as the Minute has it, 'definite authorisation'. Accordingly, the Church met in March of that year and decided to accept the policy and pay the 3/- premium due.[19] This, however, proved to some a continual thorn in the flesh and they repeatedly raised the matter in the business-meetings urging that insurance was unscriptural.

Discipline seems to have played quite a major part in the life of the church and frequent revisions of the Roll were made. Absenteeism was not regarded lightly and frequent offenders were visited by the office-bearers in order to bring about amendment. The Minutes available from the close of the last century often contain lists of names removed for one reason or another, betraying the Church's belief that a small body of Christians fully committed to the work of the local church is, without doubt, preferable to a larger body where a percentage is, in reality, not fully interested.

The financial position of the church toward the end of the nineteenth century may be illustrated by the income for 1896 - £23. 10s. 0d. The year had opened with a credit balance of 3s. 6d. and closed with

£1. 14s. 8½d.; the relevant Minute reads 'This large balance on hand was due to late subscriptions'. In those days, the Pastor's salary was £24. Os. Od. per year and he was paid through the Home Mission, though it was usual for ministers of that time also to be paid in kind.

For many years the Church had recognised, as McMaster puts it, 'the scriptural obligation of supporting its own poor, independently of Poor Laws or workhouses and it accordingly provides for the necessary maintenance of all such'.[20] There was accordingly, the Communion and Poor Fund Account, sometimes referred to as 'Sacremental and Poor Fund Account'. One wonders how much was required for the 'necessary maintenance' of the poor in McMaster's day (1850) when we read that in 1907, one beneficiary received 1s. 6d. and that was for a fortnight!!

In recording our praise and thanksgiving to God for all the benefits he has bestowed upon the Grange Baptist Church we confess our unfeigned admiration for those who have gone before, hoping to build on the foundations they have laid, a superstructure that will be for the praise of our Redeemer. We trust we shall learn by their mistakes, benefit by their experience and be motivated by the same desire 'To glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever'.

R. RODGERS.

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NOTES FROM THE HISTORY OF THE TANDRAGEE CHURCH

Details are lacking about the earliest beginnings of the work in Tandragee. It is known however that in the 1860's a young man of Baptist persuasion, John Bradshaw[1] had been preaching there and that in 1863 an application was submitted to the Committee of the Baptist Irish Society[2] for a missionary to be sent to Tandragee so that the seed sown should be nourished and if possible a church of baptised believers formed.

In response to this application another young man, John Taylor, not yet thirty years of age was sent to Tandragee on the recommendation of Pastor J. Douglas, missionary of the Baptist Irish Society, at that time stationed in Portadown and Pastor W. S. Eccles of Banbridge.

John Taylor was born at Creevy, Co. Down in 1834 into a typical Scots-Irish Presbyterian family. With his parents he attended the Secession Kirk at Boardmills where he received a careful orthodox religious upbringing. It is possible that an older brother was expected to succeed to the farm; at any rate John Taylor began a business career as a linen agent in an area bordering Down and Armagh where there were many linen handloom weavers. At twenty-three he married Miss J. Skelly who proved to be an excellent wife and partner to him both then and in his later work of preaching the Gospel. The turning point in both their lives came during the 1859 Revival when each experienced personal salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

For some time Mr. Taylor continued in his secular career, but he also began to tell others of his own spiritual experience and to point out their need for repentance and faith. As yet he had no conviction about baptism and indeed is known to have preached against believer's baptism. But on one occasion he heard Pastor Douglas conversing with a christian companion about the ordinance and himself became convinced that baptism of believers by immersion was the scriptural pattern. He was baptised in 1863 by Pastor H. H. Bourne of Portadown.

On coming to Tandragee Pastor Taylor preached his first sermon in the open air, seated on the stone steps along the mall at the top of the hill in the town. His text was - 'And sitting down they watched Him there'. At that time there was no meeting place but very soon a room was acquired nearby and made ready for meetings.

According to the old Minute Book the church was formed on 29th February, 1864; the record gives the basis of membership as follows:-

'At a church meeting held in Tandragee on 29th February, 1864, Resolved that none but baptised believers be admitted members of this Tandragee Baptist Church, but unbaptised believers may be admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper in fellowship with the Church'.

At the first morning service seventeen persons were present, five of whom had been baptised; to these were added a further twelve during the first year of the church's existence in Tandragee.

A story has been handed down about those early days in the upper room. One Lord's Day morning in 1867 footsteps were heard on the stairs leading to the room in which the church was meeting and a voice calling out - 'I am coming, I am coming, I am coming to join you'. It was Mr. Edward Dawson Atkinson, a local solicitor. Apparently the rector in the Episcopal Church which Mr. Atkinson attended had that morning been preaching against believer's baptism, but his arguments had an effect opposite to that intended; Mr. Atkinson became convinced that the Baptist position was correct, left the service and came to the small group meeting in Church Street. He became a tower of strength down the years, particularly in connection with the church's legal work which he did gratis.

The work flourished in those early days and about two and a half

years after the formation of the church the members decided to leave the little room which had now become too small and to build themselves a meeting house, provided they could get a site. They seem to have had good reason to think this would not prove too difficult for at a church meeting on 11th October, 1866 with thirteen members present it was decided -

(1) 'That we accept from His Grace the Duke of Manchester a site for a Baptist Chapel in whatever part of the town he may choose to give it.'

(2) 'That we commence at once to solicit subscriptions towards the building of the said Chapel by means of letter and personal solicitation.' It was also decided that during the progress of the building work 'no debt is to be incurred and no obligation undertaken save such as we have money in hand to discharge; no known enemy of Christ to be solicited for help.'

The Duke of Manchester leased to them for ninety-one years at 30 shillings per year the piece of ground (1 rood 27 perches) on which the present building stands. It was decided that the Chapel be 60 feet x 30 feet with walls of stone from the nearby Tullyhue quarry. The slated roof was to be supported by pine beams and sheeted inside with pine boards. At first the amount of money collected enabled only the walls to be built, then the work ceased, but not for long. A generous thank-offering from Mr. E. D. Atkinson in recognition of his son's success in a law examination in Dublin enabled the roof to be completed. The same roof is still in perfect condition after more than one hundred years.

One of the old members often told how during building operations water for mixing the mortar was obtained from a well on the site, whose whereabouts are at present unknown. After a while, like the brook Cherith, the well dried up, which would have meant drawing water from the Cusher river a mile or more distant. So the friends decided to hold a prayer meeting. During the night there was neither dew nor rain, yet in the morning the well was full and there was no further shortage.

Another old member's theme song concerned the windows of the church. According to him the plan was to put in small windows. Mr. Henry White of Messrs. White, Tomkins & Courage Ltd., who lived at Grange Hill nearby, and belonged to the Society of Friends was passing. On seeing their intention he shouted to Pastor Taylor - 'Put in large ones'. Back came the answer - 'We can't afford them'. 'Put them in and I'll pay for them' said Mr. White. So we have the large windows.

At last, toward the end of 1867, the meetinghouse was opened free of debt, although there was still minor work to be done and some items remained until as late as 1871.

The thank-offering received at the opening of the meetinghouse totalled £10 which was divided equally among the Missionary Societies of the Baptists, Brethren, Wesleyans, Presbyterians and the Established Church. At the church meeting held on 23rd December, 1867 it was also decided -

> 'That the Pastor be given £2. 10. 0. quarterly (raised to £5 commencing 1st January, 1872) besides what may be in hands at the expiration of said year. That our sister E. Duffy do receive the weekly allowance of 6d. out of Lord's Day offering. That as far at least as membership is concerned we have nothing whatsoever to do with Sam Wilson'.

A little later it was decided to build a manse for which apparently there was some money in hand for in November 1870 it was agreed at a church meeting to take up a thank-offering on the first Lord's Day of 1871 'to finish the work in connection with the Chapel and the house'. The total cost of meetinghouse and manse was approximately £1,000.

More adjoining land was then acquired for a cemetery. The Minutes of 14th October, 1875 read:- 'That we obtain just as much ground as will afford ample accommodation for the burial of our dead and that we endeavour to have the whole property included in a lease'. A subsequent Minute of 14th March, 1881 states that 'the quantity of ground alloted to each application in connection with the Baptist Church be nine feet square.' So the whole ground, ¾ acre, for church, manse, garden and cemetery was most kindly leased by the Duke of Manchester to John Taylor and others for a term of 1,000 years from 1st November, 1876 at the yearly rent of £2. 10. 0. In the lease, we are referred to as the denomination of protestant dissenters called Baptists and the lease further states that should the property be used for any other purpose, at the end of six months it would revert back to the Duke of Manchester.

It would seem that this Duke was more sympathetic than some of his predecessors to gospel preaching in the neighbourhood, for when John Wesley was in the district around Tandragee it is reported that he had to sleep in an old mud shed in the townland of Terryhoogan about two miles away. When his use of it became known to the contemporary Duke (or his Agent) orders

were given for the hut to be demolished.

During the early period Pastor Taylor had to superintend all the work (including the building) collect money and preach five times a week. The result was a nervous breakdown from which he never fully recovered. Nevertheless he exercised a long and fruitful ministry. Pastor Taylor knew no weariness in soul winning and seemed never to lose heart or give up praying for the wanderers. Over and over again his heart was made to sing for joy in seeing those that he had longed and prayed for over the years coming to the Saviour. Through his preaching and example, he was instrumental in leading hundreds to Jesus Christ and baptised over three hundred and sixty five persons during the first thirty years of his ministry in Tandragee. This is the most eloquent testimony we have to the fact that God blessed the word preached by him.

An article which Pastor Taylor wrote for the IRISH BAPTIST MAGAZINE reveals something of the spirit of the man:-

> 'Very soon after coming to Tandragee, when trying to make my way amongst the townspeople, I dropped into a home one morning where I found a pleasant-looking woman sitting by a cheery fire. After bidding good morning I took out my testament, read a few verses, and spoke to her earnestly about her need of salvation. She listened with marked attention and seemed to drink in every word. After prayer together she said she was so glad I had called, for she was in great distress of mind, and had been asking the Lord to send someome to speak to her about her soul. Soon after this her husband also professed conversion. They were both baptised and received into our fellowship.
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> 'For a length of time they met with us regularly and seemed to live most consistently. But in an evil day the husband obtained employment at a railway station where it was quite customary for the porters to tap the whiskey and porter barrels lying at the station awaiting delivery, which cost many of them their situation. With the others our brother too began to tipple, and so lost his employment, and of course we had to separate him from our fellowship. He then ceased meeting with us, and his wife, in sympathy with him ceased also. After some time they left the town, and for many years I lost sight of them. Occasionally I saw the husband, but for probably twenty years I had not seen the wife. But only a few weeks ago I went into the country to see an old member of our church who lived in the neighbourhood where these people had gone to reside, and asking him about them he said they were both living but Mrs. T. was poorly in health. "Has the husband," I asked, "ceased tippling?" "So far as I know," he said, "he has taken no drink for some years." So on my way home I called

at their house. I found the good woman preparing the mid-day meal, and as soon as her hand was free she grasped mine warmly, I said - "Do you know me?" "Yes, I do," she said, "you are Mr. Taylor," "Do you remember the first time we met?" "Indeed I do, I was in great distress of mind that morning but you put the truth into my mind and although I have had many changes since the Saviour never left me." "And do you really think you are trusting Him still?" "Yes, and if I should die to-night I have no fear; Jesus never left me, and I am going to Him." This she said with deep solemnity and quiet confidence. "I am delighted to hear your testimony, and now what about your husband?" "I am expecting him in every moment," she said. He very soon appeared, and gave me a hearty welcome. "I am so glad to hear your wife's testimony to the faithfulness of the Saviour," I said, "and now what about yourself?" "Well, I believe I am right again," "The station," I said, "was your ruin." "It was indeed," said he." "You sinned and fell sadly and wandered far and long; do you think you have really been restored?" "I believe I have, and it's time, I am 81." What more he said I cannot now remember, but he gave me reason to hope that after many years of sad backsliding the "root of the matter" is still in him. I cannot tell how the testimony of those two aged ones on whom I had long looked as "stony ground hearers" cheered my heart. I had gone some miles into the country that morning under great bodily weakness, and although I am naturally more like the pelican in the wilderness than the nightingale I came home singing all the way for the Lord had put gladness into my heart.'

Pastor Taylor was president of the Baptist Union of Ireland in 1881/82 and 1894/95. His name was a household word amongst Irish Baptists and his visits to the various churches were highly appreciated; but he was most loved and esteemed amongst his own people. In 1898 after nearly 35 years service and when his health was giving cause for concern Pastor Taylor retired, with many expressions of appreciation and regret from the church. However he continued to live in the town and to take an interest in the affairs of the church, a much loved figure, until his death in 1923.[3]

Some items extracted from the Minute Book of the church give an indication of the matters which gave cause for concern from time to time:-

18th July, 1867: 'It was resolved that owing to the very small attendance of the members they should be asked to remain for a little after the first service on the Lord's day to talk on the duty and privilage of the members attending church meetings, and the scriptural plan of the Gospel, supported with the desire that we may be all benefited and see it is our duty to give more largely to the Lord for His great goodness to us.'

13th February, 1871 - 'Resolved that Wm. Kew be separated from the fellowship of this church for disorderly conduct, drinking.'

26th February, 1871 - 'It was agreed unanimously that we encourage the revival of the Baptist Association in Ireland.'

5th November, 1871 - 'The case of Brother Shields charged with letting his field for the use of a Circus was brought before the church. Being viewed as a brother overtaken in fault, brethren Atkinson, Hall and Hamilton were appointed to confer with and if evidently penitent to restore him, but finding him rebellious, the case was postponed for a week, when he was again visited, but without effect. Finally after much prayer being made by the church for him, he showed a spirit of true repentance and was fully restored to the fellowship of the church only one member dissenting - Lord's Day, 26th November, 1871.'

2nd June, 1872 - 'In consequence of the continued absence of Eliza Duffy from Lord's Day services, Sister Shields and Brother Hall were requested to visit her, which resulted in her being in her place on the next Lord's Day but on the 11th August, 1872, it was resolved that 'in as much as Eliza Duffy habitually neglects public worship in this place, she shall no longer receive aid from Church funds.' This sister was the subject of a number of church meetings.

4th August, 1872 - 'After the observance of the Lord's Supper, Brother Annett put the following question, "Does or does not this church judge the conduct of certain brethren in going to witness the July celebrations a matter for church discipline". To which it was replied "we deem such conduct unworthy of the follower of Christ, that it expresses a low state of spirituality and is most injurious to the cause of the Saviour - That the evil of such conduct should be pointed out and Christians earnestly exhorted to refrain from such assemblies; but that as a church we could not judge such brethren as proper subjects for discipline." From the above judgment Brother Annett dissented.'

28th June, 1874 - Lord's Day. 'After having been previously admonished by several brethren without any effect it was resolved that Brother Spottiswood be excluded from church membership on account of his identification with Orangeism.'

His letter[4] dated 8th June, 1874 to the Rev. J. Taylor on the subject reads as follows:-

Dear Sir,

Having heard that the Church is about to expel me, for being a member of the Orange Institution I hereby save them the trouble by sending you my resignation, as I cease to be a member of the Baptist Church, I defy any man to point the finger of scorn at me on account of my conduct and if I must suffer for being an Orangeman, I am not ashamed to own the Cause. I could say a great deal about some of the members, but I decline as I leave God to Judge.

Yours,

W. Henry Spottiswood.

14th May, 1876 - 'To-day the report of our brethren with reference to A. Hardy was given to the Church from which it appeared that unkind feelings existed between him and our brother Irwin which he assigned as the reason of his absence and further that at the request of himself and his brother Robert Hardy, a Church Meeting be called for the following Monday evening in order that this whole matter might be talked over in a Christian manner and if possible a reconciliation effected.'

Monday Evening May, 15th 1876. 'The Church came together to consider the matters and dispute between our Brethren Hardy and Irwin. The causes of dissatisfaction were considered at great length when it appeared that the charges on both sides were based chiefly on hearsay and arose out of business transactions, all of which were explained to the full satisfaction of all present, and the result of which was the reconciliation of our disaffected brethren for which we sincerely thank God.'

14th January, 1877 - 'At a meeting of the church on Lord's Day, two brethren were appointed to visit Thomas Murphy with a view to ascertaining his intention respecting certain debts which he has incurred and which he seems reluctant to pay and to report to the church on Monday evening the 22nd inst.'

June 3rd, 1877 - 'At a meeting of the church on the above date it was resolved that Thomas Murphy and his wife be separated from the membership of this church - the former on account of a debt which he recklessly incurred and which he made no attempt to pay, the latter on account of removal to a distant locality.'

At a meeting of the church on Lord's Day 26th March, 1882, it was 'resolved that John Phillips be separated from the fellowship of this church on account of habitual non-attendance together with disorderly and sinful conduct.'

July, 29th 1883 - 'Our Brother Andrew Redpath having imbibed most unscriptural principles was called upon to send in his resignation as a member of the Church of Christ in this place which he did accordingly.'

September 28th, 1883 - 'Resolved that Robert Balmer, James Redpath and Samuel McKee having forsaken the principles of divine truth held by this Church and on their profession of which they were admitted to its membership, cannot any longer remain members and that their names be erased from the roll of membership.'

Pastor Taylor was succeeded by Pastor T. Moore-Smith, originally of Magherafelt but, when the church called him in 1898, ministering in Glasgow. The new man's removal expenses from Glasgow were aided to the extent of £5 and his salary, made up partly by the church and partly by the Home Mission, was £100 per annum. This, though not a princely sum would have represented about £750 to-day. Pastor T. Moore-Smith remained until 1903 when he

resigned and emigrated to the U.S.A. where it is reputed that he became a County Court Judge. During his stay in Tandragee, he bred Irish water Spaniels and at times he seemed more pre-occupied with them than with church work because occasionally he was late for Sunday School due to exercising the dogs!

Space forbids to mention all the men who exercised the pastoral office in the present century, beginning with Pastor Metrustry 1904-08, but the list includes such well remembered names as Pastor I. P. Bell 1914-30 and Pastor Albert Clarke 1932-45. The present pastorate commenced with the induction of Pastor A. G. Hanna in April 1965.

Church membership exceeded 100 in 1882-84 and again in 1892-93 but then began to fall. After 1900 it fluctuated in the range 46 (1921) to 68 (1966) and is at present 61.

So the Baptist witness in Tandragee has been maintained for just over one hundred years, and the message to-day is the same as that at the beginning - Jesus saves, keeps and satisfies.

R. A. HEAK.

REFERENCES

1. John Bradshaw later entered Spurgeon's College, London, for training for the ministry but died in April, 1865, before his training was complete. He was held in the highest esteem in Tandragee.
2. In 1865 the Baptist Irish Society was merged with its counterpart for evangelism in England, the Home Missionary Society, to become the British and Irish Baptist Home Mission. In 1888 the Irish side of the work became the responsibility of the recently formed Irish Baptist Home Mission.
3. An account of Pastor Taylor's life and work appears in the Irish Baptist Magazine for October 1892.
4. In possession of present Church Secretary.

THE SCHOOLS OF THE BAPTIST IRISH SOCIETY

The October, 1968, issue of The Baptist Quarterly, carries an article on "The Schools of the Baptist Irish Society" by Professor G. W. Rusling, M.A., B.D., Vice-Principal of Spurgeon's College. It is one of the papers read to the Summer School last June. Those who heard, or who have since read, Principal Kingdon's lectures on Baptist Evangelism in Nineteenth Century Ireland, will doubtless have had their appetites whetted for further information concerning these schools, and they will find Professor Rusling's article fascinating reading. He has done his research work with scholarly thoroughness. His paper runs to nine pages - close on 5,000 words - plus almost three pages of documentation, and it embodies an amount of detailed information of the greatest interest and value.

In a short review it is quite impossible to more than indicate the ground covered. The article concentrates on the second of the three principal objects for which the Baptist Irish Society was founded in 1814 - the establishment of schools. It quotes official government figures to show how sadly backward Irish education was in the early nineteeth century, and the efforts that were made by various agencies to meet the need. Treating of the Baptist contribution it gives statistics which show that the highest total of pupils in one year (1832-1833) was 10,000 and the largest number of schools just under 100. The organization and administration of these schools, and the content of teaching and method of staffing are treated of in satisfying detail, and the reasons which eventually led to the curtailment and conclusion of this work are set out in the closing part of the paper.

There is a world of difference, of course, between the Ireland of the early nineteenth century and the Ireland of the second half of the twentieth century, but this story has its challenge for present day Irish Baptists. The flexibility and adaptability of our forebears in their work is a rebuke to the excessive conservatism which unfortunately often blinds

us to the urgent need for a similar approach to the particular problems of our own day. The first concern of these Baptists was evangelism, but pursuing that they did not turn blind eyes to crying social problems or refuse to concern themselves with the urgent temporal and material needs of the people amongst whom they laboured. Can we not learn from them?

L. E. DEENS.