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IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

VOLUME TWO 1969/70

Price: 12/6 to non-members

IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

J O U R N A L

Volume Two - - - 1969/70

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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 if £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

There is in University College, Cork a very fine historical library within whose Irish section space has been allocated to historical works on the various churches and religious denominations in Ireland. Books dealing with the Church of Ireland occupy many shelves, so do Presbyterian histories, while Methodist and Quaker material is well represented, but there is only one book on Irish Baptist History.

The picture is typical, and anyone seeking information about the history either of Irish Baptists in general or of particular churches would look in vain in the best libraries in the country. Not that the respective libraries are at fault but rather that the works extant are very few indeed. It is therefore pleasing to record that orders for this Journal indicate at least as much interest in Irish Baptist history from libraries, colleges etc. as from within our own ranks, an indication it is hoped that a beginning, however small, has been made to fill a long felt gap.

Church secretaries will doubtless be aware of the paucity of their own local records from the circular sent to Irish Baptist churches from the editor of the Irish Index of Parish Registers. This will have served a useful purpose if it underlines the value for future historians of ample, well kept records, particularly church roll books, marriage registers and, where they are kept, records of persons baptised.

The present number of the Journal, besides papers read at the Society's meetings includes the text of an address delivered by Principal Kingdon at the College Commencement lecture in Orangefield on October 6th. This is printed at the welcome suggestion of the College Committee. Readers of the Journal may like to note that copies of the separately printed 'Man of Stature - Hugh D. Brown' by L. E. Deens and 'Alexander Carson of Tobermore' by R. A. Boggs are still available.

CHARLES HARDCASTLE OF WATERFORD

Until very recently it would have been impossible to have given a paper on Charles Hardcastle because of the paucity of material available. Until certain letters of Charles Hardcastle and his family circle were made available by Mrs. K. S. Wills of Kington Magna, Gillingham, Dorset, England the only sources for his life were the Waterford Church Book and the Baptist Magazine. Neither of these yields much information.

Mrs. Wills is the great grandaughter of Charles Hardcastle. Her grandmother was Martha, the elder daughter of Charles Hardcastle, who married, at a date not yet known, Edward Smyth. It would seem that we owe the preservation of the letters, which Mrs. Wills has made available, to Christopher Scroder, a member and deacon of the Waterford church during and after Hardcastle's pastorate, 1826-1847. The reasons for supposing this are two. Firstly, in an undated letter written by Scroder to Minnie Hardcastle when he was seventy-one years of age he states that he has preserved some letters of her father's written some sixty years previously. (His memory was probably not quite accurate since he would have been only eleven years of age at the time, and it would have been unlikely that a boy so young would have received letters from his pastor). Secondly, there is in the collection of letters a bill dated in 1842 for the repair of a watch belonging to Mr. Scroder. These two pieces of evidence make it reasonable to suppose that Mr.

Scroder was responsible for preserving the letters. As far as I can discover his marriage to Mary Copeland was without issue. It would seem likely that either before or after his death the letters passed from the Scroder family to Martha Smyth (nee Hardcastle) and from her they eventually came to Mrs. Wills. The truth or otherwise of this surmise I have yet to confirm with her. That this is not an unreasonable supposition may be judged from the fact that Susannah Williams, whom Charles Hardcastl married, was the cousin of Mary Scroder's mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Copeland, the widow of a Methodist minister, Rev. William Copeland, who died in 1822. Before her marriage Susannah Williams had lived with Mrs. Copeland, probably as her companion. It would therefore have been natural that the Scroder marriage being without issue, the letters of Charles Hardcastle should have been given to one of the surviving Hardcastle children.

The material which Mrs. Wills has made available at various times to Mrs. Watt of Waterford (who has since given it to me), Pastor Thompson of Belfast and myself has now been classified. There are fourteen letters of Hardcastle written between 1826 and 1847. Most of these were written to Miss Elizabeth Curtis, who appears to have been once a member of the Waterford congregation, but who had moved away from Waterford in search of employment either as a domestic servant or more probably a governess. One letter was written to Mary, his daughter, from Camberwell, London in March 1846. It is a tender letter of exhortation to her, after recovering from serious illness to 'believe and trust in Jesus that you may be safe and happy in his love'. There are also extensive notes in Hardcastle's hand of thirteen sermons preached between 1803 and 1846, together with a photograph of an oil painting of Hardcastle. Besides the Hardcastle series the next main series of letters is by Mrs. Elizabeth Copeland to her daughter, Mary Scroder. These yield one or two scraps of information about Hardcastle and his family, but no more. There are three letters of William Hardcastle, Charles Hardcastle's son, who died shortly after his father in 1847. One of these describes his father's last illness. Two other letters were written by Christopher Scroder, whom I have already mentioned. Particularly valuable is part of a letter dated October 5, 1865 (writer unknown, but obviously a member of the Hardcastle connection) to Mrs. Martha Smyth of Dublin. This gives

important information on the relationships between various families connected with the Waterford Baptist Church. Finally, apart from other miscellaneous items which need not concern us as they are not germane to the subject of this paper, there are three letters written by men who figure prominently in the history of the Baptist Irish Society. The first is to Charles Hardcastle from Christopher Anderson of Edinburgh dated in March 1846. The second is from Stephen Davis of Clonmel who was a superintendent minister of the Baptist Irish Society. It is dated July 21, 1847 and addressed, it would seem, to Edward Hardcastle. It is intended as a letter of consolation on the death of William, his brother. The third is from Thomas Berry of Athlone, another of the agents of the Baptist Irish Society. This is dated March 20, 1862, and conveys the news of the death of William Scroder to a recipient whose identity I have not yet been able to establish.

The value to the historian of what I might call the Wills collection is very considerable. In the first place it enables us to appreciate the fact that the Baptist Church at Waterford survived the lean and difficult years of the eighteenth century during which as Charles Kirtland wrote "the denomination lingered rather than lived"[1] more by intermarriage among a few Baptist families than by the accession of new blood won through direct outward-going evangelism. When Charles Hardcastle married Susannah Williams in February 1827 he married into a Baptist connection which I have so far been able to trace back to William Boulton (1690). Miss William's grandfather on her mother's side was a Coleman. To a member of this family the Waterford church owed one of its endowments. Her grandmother's name appears on a membership list, November 3, 1811. Her aunt was sister to Mrs. Hammet the mother of Mrs. Elizabeth Copeland, the widow of a Methodist minister who died in 1822 as I have already mentioned. Thus Elizabeth Copeland, who in her widowhood returned to the Baptist fold in which she had been reared, was a cousin of Mrs. Hardcastle. Hannah, another daughter of Mrs. Hammet married a Shearman. This name also occurs in The Waterford Book in an entry dated August 4, 1811. Mrs. Shearman or Sharman (as the name is spelt in the entry) was baptised and received into Church fellowship on the same day as Susannah Williams. Yet another daughter of Mrs. Hammet,

Mary, who was baptised and received into church fellowship on September 1, 1811 married the Rev. Thomas Clarke who began his services in Waterford on January 2, 1813 and was ordained as pastor over the church on April 5, 1814. Like Charles Hardcastle after him he found a bride among the membership. Also related in ways which I have not yet been able fully to determine was the Langley family of Ballyduff and the Scroder family of Waterford. The names of five Langleys appear on a membership list, dated November 3, 1811. The names of Mr. and Mrs. William Scroder are on the same list.

I have no doubt that further investigation will reveal yet more evidence of intermarriage. That it should have occurred so often was due to two factors. Firstly, at this period marriage outside the Baptist fold was actively discouraged, and indeed punished in some instances by the exercise of church discipline. Secondly, the Baptist community at Waterford, as elsewhere at this time, was a very clearly defined minority within a minority. It was part of the minority English ruling class, part of the 'Protestant ascendancy', as it has been called. But within that minority Baptists formed a very small and despised minority, whose day of glory during the Cromwellian era when they had exercised an important political influence had passed away, learning them to suffer under the hegemony of the Episcopalians. The sense of being a minority within a minority would undoubtedly have encouraged the development of a tight-knit, close-bred and inward-looking ecclesiastical community. Yet this tendency should not be exaggerated, for the Baptist community at Waterford was not completely without political or social influence; Christopher Scroder was made a freeman of Waterford in 1835, and a relative, Benjamin, also enjoyed this privilege before him. According to Mrs. Watt the Scroders owned a limekiln, which suggests that they were active in the business life of the city.

One can speculate as to the ethos of a close-knit, much inter-related, church community. It is surely not without significance that during the whole of Hardcastle's pastorate, from 1826 to 1847, the membership of the church remained more or less static at about twenty-five souls. One gets the impression that the church was an inward looking body which was content to hold its own by adding to the membership those of its children

who, having survived the perilous years of infancy and giving evidence of the work of grace in their souls, were baptised and added to the church. A sentence in a letter from Charles Hardcastle which was printed in the 'Irish Chronicle'[2] for August, 1843 rather confirms our impression. 'The addition of seven to our number in one year is quite an era.' (Baptist Magazine, 1843, p.451).

Moreover, it is likely that in such an inter-related church the exercise of discipline would prove difficult. The only case of discipline recorded in the Church Book during the whole of Hardcastle's pastorate occurred in 1842 when for some reason which was not specified it was resolved on December 18 to withdraw from fellowship with Mrs. Thomas Clarke, 'on the ground of conduct unbecoming the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ'. Mrs. Clarke was, as I have already mentioned, a sister of Mrs. Copeland and an aunt of Mrs. Hardcastle. One does not need much imagination to appreciate how delicately Hardcastle must have had to tread from time to time.

It has been necessary to spend some time on the background to Hardcastle's ministry so that we shall be able to appreciate the context in which it was exercised and thereby to gain an understanding of the way in which through many years of discouraging toil he discharged his God-given task of shepherding the flock and winning souls.

Charles Hardcastle was, according to Mrs. Wills, a native of Yorkshire. He was born on 22nd July, 1793. About his family we as yet know nothing, nor do we know anything of his spiritual pilgrimage before he came to Ireland to preach the Gospel. We do, however, know from the Church Book, that for the three years previous to his settlement in Waterford he acted as assistant to the Rev. Moses(?) Hutchings pastor of a Baptist church meeting at Dudley, Worcestershire. How Charles Hardcastle came to be invited to Waterford we have not been able to discover. He 'commenced his services', as the Church Book states, on October 16, 1825. The usual practice at this time was to invite a candidate for a vacant pastorate to supply for a number of Sundays. If his ministry proved acceptable to the members he would be given an invitation to the pastorate. On January 8, 1826 'At a Church Meeting it was agreed to invite Mr. C. Hardcastle to accept the pastoral office, some however,

being of [the] opinion that a further probationary period was desirable, it was decided to leave it at the option of Mr. Hardcastle .....'. On January 14 Hardcastle informed the members that in order to preserve the peace of the church, and in the hope that the invitation would be made unanimous, he would continue 'for some months as your supply, in the hope that we shall be eventually directed in every subsequent arrangement'. His prudence was justified for at a Church Meeting held on April 30, 1826 it was 'Unanimously resolved to request Mr. Hardcastle to accept the Pastoral Office .....'. On May 23 he wrote to intimate his acceptance of the pastorate. Charles Hardcastle thus became a member of that small band of ministers who came to Ireland from other parts of the British Isles during the first half of the nineteenth century, and to whom Irish Baptist churches owe so much.

Within less than a year of his acceptance of the pastorate Charles Hardcastle married Susannah Williams. As I have already pointed out she had been reared in the church. She had been a member since 1811. We receive a hint that the match was opposed by the bride's brother in a letter which Hardcastle wrote to his aunt on February 17th, 1827 immediately after the marriage. After describing the ceremony he adds:

> 'Mr. and Mrs. Williams favoured us with their presence, were very much more pleasant than we could have expected, they have since invited us to dine with them and so if our intercourse should not be quite of that unreservedly affectionate character we could wish, we are relieved of every apprehension of an unpleasant nature.
>
> Mr. Williams is married to a Miss Pope, his first cousin, theirs was an elopement to Gretna Green, about two years ago. Mr. Pope, his and Susan's uncle, is a man of a very large property report says £100,000, gained by his own industry as a Ship Owner, Broker and Agent. One of his sons was married the week before ourselves to a Dublin lady with £10,000 fortune. Mr. Pope Senior I have not yet been introduced to; from what I hear, he is not a man of cultivated mind or enlarged ideas, his business having for years engrossed his attention.'

Perhaps we may surmise that the marriage of Susannah Williams to a poor Baptist pastor would have been viewed with disfavour by her wealthy relatives. However, any opposition that there was on the part of Mrs. Hardcastle's two brothers was eventually overcome for in a letter to Miss Elizabeth Curtis,,dated April 25, 1845 Hardcastle writes that 'Mr. E.

Williams and family worship with us and what is more wonderful Mr. Josiah Williams worships in the morning with us quite regularly.'

Nine children were born to the Hardcastles, but only five seem to have survived beyond infancy and childhood. We need to remember the high rate of infant mortality at this period; it is probable that for four children to survive out of nine was an average expectation. Of the children who reached young adulthood John died of tuberculosis on Friday, February 27th, 1846, two months after his eighteenth birthday. His spiritual state, as his father confided to Elizabeth Curtis, gave great cause for concern because of 'the absence of those indications of genuine and decided piety which can alone extract the sting from such afflictions. Could I perceive those cheering symptons, I sometimes think that I could bow my head in humble acquiescence to the stroke which should remove him from our eyes, but to think of the converse of this is almost agonizing.' That Charles Hardcastle had reason to suppose that before he died his son had embraced by faith Christ Jesus is evident from the notes which he made of conversations with William between January 15th and February 27th, the day he died. These notes reveal that a very tender relationship existed between father and son. His father's prayers were answered and he was enabled to look to Christ as the refuge of his soul. On 24th February Hardcastle writes 'A whole family in Him! - Father of 9 childn - Wt a comfort to the Farl but especially to the childn to go.' An entry copied from the Registry book of the church records that the deceased was 'intelligent, ingenuous and at length it is confidently believed pious.'

Another son, William died shortly after his father in the same month, July 1847. Edward the only other surviving son later emigrated to New Zealand. Mary the eldest daughter married a Congregationalist minister named Bugby, and Martha married Edward Smyth. I have not been able to discover whether or not Minnie, the other surviving daughter, ever married.

Charles Hardcastle thus had his own share of life's sorrows. And the work of preaching the Gospel and of tending to the flock could not have been easy. The church did not increase significantly in size, for conversions were few. As far as I can discover there were no converts from Romanism during the course of his ministry. Certainly native Irish names are noticeable by their absence from the Waterford Church book at this time.

It could not have been easy to continue faithfully year after year seeing so little sign of outward success. At his death the membership of the church stood at only twenty.

Hardcastle's task was not made easier by the activities of the Brethren who at this period, as the Cork Church Book also demonstrates, were compassing heaven and earth in order to make proselytes. Writing to Miss Elizabeth Curtis who had decided to fellowship with the Brethren, on January 18, 1840 Hardcastle reminds her that she knows that 'my intercourse and knowledge of the Christian Brethren has been anything but pleasing and favourable. I have been pained at their censorious spirit, and at the efforts to withdraw believers from their christian associations, under their plea of their coming out from systems etc. - but still I cannot allow this to influence my judgment of what is right - if others seek to divide, let us endeavour to unite- if others disregard the precept, let us remember it is a divine injunction "speak not evil one of another B^{n}". In another letter, dated December 15, 1841, Hardcastle sadly reports that John Williams, Mrs. Hardcastle's brother had published an open letter against him. (He had withdrawn from church fellowship in February, 1838 in order to join the Brethren assembly at Birr), and explains what caused John Williams to take the action he did.

> 'Having heard of some very objectionable sentiments held by the B^{n} respecting the Moral Law in general and the Lord's Day in particular I thought it right to inquire of John if the report was correct - when he avowed the sentiments to be his, on which I told him that in future I sho^{d} be obliged to disist from my usual practice as adopted in his case and in yours, and no longer to advise any of my friends to unite with the B^{n} if they should be removed where no Baptist Church existed.'

Sometime afterwards Mr. Williams requested the use of the baptistery but though Hardcastle himself favoured granting the request he felt that it was right to bring the matter before 'some of our friends.' He found that several were 'averse to my compliance' and so he wrote to John Williams to inform him that as there was no unanimity among them his request would have to be declined. The result was that Williams issued a pamphlet against Hardcastle. 'Without making a single further enquiry, as to the reason etc. I heard no more until the printed pamphlet was sent me charging me with the sin of unchristian hostility to a few weak followers of Jesus'.

Hardcastle wisely made no reply to the charge.

A letter from Hardcastle to Miss Curtis dated July 11, 1844 rounds off this sad episode, which must have caused great disquiet in the family circle. It would appear that there were difficulties within the Brethren meeting at Waterford for Hardcastle writes: 'I have just heard a report that the Brethren have dissolved their fellowship here, which I think one of the wisest steps they could possible take. I hope their past experience will be very beneficial to them.' In the 'Irish Chronicle', September 1845 (B.M. 1845, p494) Hardcastle reports that 'a family formerly with the Brethren' are worshipping with the Baptists, 'two of whom have thoughts of uniting with us in fellowship'. The breach between himself and John Williams seems to have been healed at this time for he records that 'Mrs. H's brother has worshipped with us for some time.' And so a sad story seems to have had a happy conclusion.

An entry in the Church Book under the date October 28, 1838 records the Church meeting's agreement that Hardcastle should accept an invitation to undertake the superintendence of the Baptist Irish Society's schools in Ireland, provided that 'the Pulpit should be acceptably supplied during his necessary absence in the duties of that office.' Surprisingly enough I can find no evidence in the 'Irish Chronicle' from 1838 to 1847 that Hardcastle was ever an agent of the Society. Rather it appears that he was not in the employ of the Society between October, 1838 and May 1840. At the latter date the 'Irish Chronicle' contained a long letter from Hardcastle on the spiritual condition of Ireland, the editor's introduction to which states: 'He has had no direct connexion with the Baptist Irish Society, but as will be seen, he regards its operations with great interest.'

The letter just mentioned contains several statements of particular interest. After evaluating the recent temperance movement in the Roman Catholic Church he opines that

> 'great as the change has been in the episcopal church in England, it is exceeded by that which has taken place in this country. Instead of lamentable ignorance of leading theological truths, and great indifference in the discharge of their clerical functions, the ministers of this community have become enlightened, active, and laborious; adopting without scruple, wherever practicable, the forms and measures previously peculiar to dissenters; engaging in missions to instruct and stimulate their own people, and

to diffuse the light and truth of the gospel amongst the catholic population.' (Baptist Magazine, 1840, p278).

His remarks on the Brethren are pungent. One example must suffice.

'The remark of Dr. Cox, respecting a certain class in America, viz., "that all which is truly good about the whole system is old, and all that is really entitled to be considered new, has little besides its novelty to recommend it", appears so appropriate to "the Brethren" that I have transcribed it. Fully aware how strongly system is denied by them, I am yet bound to state, that I have never met with a class of professing christians whose sentiments and proceedings appeared more systematic or sectarian.' (Ibid. p280).

Hardcastle's comments on the churches, both Baptist and paedobaptist, which practised 'mutual exhortation in the meetings of the church', and which looked to James Haldane's church in Edinburgh for inspiration, are particularly interesting. They suggest reasons why the Tobermore Church, and certain churches in County Tyrone, were rather isolated from the associational life of the other Baptist churches in Ireland, most of which were directly under the care of the Baptist Irish Society. Because of their intrinsic interest they are worth quoting in full.

'The members of these churches are for the greater part exemplary for the correctness of their views on the leading points of divine truth, and their regard to Christian precepts; mellowing time has subdued some asperities, and rendered them less separate from their brethren who nearly approached them in sentiment; they only need, in the estimation of many, to invite somewhat more of zeal for the extension of the gospel, with their efforts for mutual edification, to bring them into more frequent intercourse and closer union with the other portion of the church of Christ to their reciprocal benefit. Observation, though it is limited, induces me to express the opinion, that their practice of mutual exhortation, often leading them and others to dispense with the pastoral office, or to assign it to one not "wholly given" to its duties, has confined their influence and usefulness within much narrower limits than they might have filled; and indeed, to use the ordinary phrase, that it has not worked so well, as its strenuous supporters anticipated.' (Ibid, p250).

The foregoing quotations suggest two questions which could yield profitable answers. First, how far did the ideas of William Kelly and the Haldanes prepare the way for the emergence of Brethrenism? Second, how far is the 'Brethrenism' of some of our Northern Baptist churches due to the influence of the Haldanes through Alexander Carson and how far is it due to Brethrenism itself?

In December 1841 Charles Hardcastle, as secretary of the Southern Baptist Association, wrote a report for the editor of the 'Irish Chronicle' on the quarterly meeting of the association held at Limerick in the previous month. He makes a strong plea 'that the friends of Ireland must direct their attention to the providing suitable places of worship in this country, if they are to realize the permanent fruit of their labours'. (Baptist Magazine, 1842, p106). Unfortunately his plea was not heeded, with the result that some churches formed in the nineteenth century were obliged to disband when their rented premises were withdrawn from their use.

Charles Hardcastle showed the manner of man he was during the time of the 'Great Hunger', as Miss Woodham Smith has so graphically described the Potato Famine. Although the Church Book makes scarcely any mention of the Famine, we know from other sources that Hardcastle was active in the relief of the starving poor. He served on a famine committee which was set up at Waterford, and which was composed of representatives of both Catholic and Protestant churches. He and his wife assiduously visited the sick and the dying. As a result of this ministry they both contracted typhus from which they both died. Mrs. Hardcastle died on March 11, 1847 after an illness of several days. Her obituary in the Church Book records that 'Having exerted herself more than her strength could bear during a season of great calamity and privation to the poor, she caught fever prevailing at that time and sunk under the disease.' The next entry July 1st records the death of her husband. We know from a letter dated 28th June written to Christopher Scroder who was then at Sidmouth, Devon that he suffered greatly. 'He is', writes William, his son, 'in Typhus Fever - very dangerously ill - cupped and blistered last night with two doctors attending.' Prayers were offered for Charles Hardcastle's recovery in all the churches of the city, including the Roman Catholic, so greatly was he esteemed by the population at large. After his death the citizens of Waterford subscribed £400 for the education of his four orphan children. That such a considerable sum should have been raised during a time of general economic distress is itself proof of the affectionate regard in which Mr. Hardcastle was held in the city.

The obituary written in the Church Book includes a tribute by a person

unknown which will form a fitting conclusion to this paper.

> 'He was a man of great prudence, of quiet but persevering zeal, of eminent integrity and strict conscienciousness (sic). Most bland and gentle in his manners he was very firm in all cases where principle was concerned and when necessary he could administer rebuke with great seriousness and effect. In council his patience and gentleness of spirit, his truthfulness and impartiality, has holiness and sacred regard to the interest of the Saviour's cause, his utter forgetfulness of self in the desire to maintain brotherly love and promote the cause dear to his heart rendered his advice almost irresistible. Without question he was a man eminently large hearted and with a sound and discriminating judgment, he was as free from mere sectarianism as any one I ever knew.'

D. P. KINGDON

REFERENCES

1. Charles Kirtland, Historical sketch of the Baptist denomination in Ireland (1868), p92.
2. The section of the London published Baptist Magazine which recorded church news from Ireland was sub-titled the 'Irish Chronicle'.

THE ORIGIN OF THE IRISH BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSION

The aim of this paper is to record the events leading up to and surrounding the formation of the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission. To do this involves some attempt to understand the relations between Irish Baptists and the English Baptist Union, and, more particularly, between Irish Baptists and the renowned Baptist Missionary Society. The paper is in the nature of a preliminary investigation of source material readily available to the writer. This consists of Assembly and Committee minutes, correspondence, and sundry articles in the Irish Baptist Magazine.

There is evidence that Baptist churches in Ireland had a practical missionary interest prior to 1812. The Rev. John Saffrey, in a letter to the Baptist Magazine (October 1813) told of a visit he and Mr. Barcley of Kilwinning, Scotland, paid to Ireland that year in the interests of the Baptist Missionary Society. He wrote, 'We solicited subscriptions for the translations only, and obtained, I believe, a larger sum than has before been collected.'

The Irish Baptist Churches at that time were 'few and small', according to Saffrey, 'and in danger of Arminianism on the one hand and Sandemanianism on the other.' Their state and the dire spiritual need of Ireland as a whole excited the compassion of Saffrey, Andrew Fuller, Joseph Ivimey and other Particular Baptist leaders in England, and as a direct result the

Baptist Irish Society was formed in London by them on April 19, 1814 'for the propagation of the Gospel in Ireland.' The Baptist Missionary Society headed the first list of donations for the new Society with a contribution of £21. Thus the sacrificial interest of the Irish Churches in the BMS bore fruit in the founding of the Baptist Irish Society, which for many years brought notable help in men and money to the Irish Churches, and which led in 1888 to the formation of the indigenous Irish Baptist Home Mission.

The bond between the BMS and Irish Baptists had many facets. We find, for example, after the Irish Baptist Association of Churches (which was in existence when John Saffrey visited Ireland in 1813) was reorganised in July 1862, it voted at the Association meetings in Dublin three years later to form an Irish Auxiliary of the BMS. From this time onwards regular missionary deputations visited Ireland in the interests of the BMS, and regular financial support was sent to the Society from the Irish Churches. (E.g. from available figures, 1905 - £315; 1909 - £624; 1915 - £908; 1920 - £1043). A Medical Missionary Auxiliary of the BMS was formed in 1914 after a visit to Belfast by Dr. Fletcher Moorshead. The Churches were also interested in the Baptist Translations Society and the Zenana Society operated by the BMS. Only a few Irish Baptists served on the missionfield with the BMS - notable among them was Mr. Robert Haldane Carson Graham, who was a grandson of Dr. Alexander Carson of Tobermore. Converted and baptised in Coleraine in 1879 he underwent a three year course of special training at the Pastors' College, London and sailed for the Congo Mission of the BMS in 1886 in company with Mr. H. Ross Phillips, whose father was pastor of the Grange Church. Most of his missionary career of 37 years was spent at San Salvador. For a time he was Principal of the Institute at Kimpese in which American and British Baptists united for the training of Congolese workers. A linguist and musician Mr. Graham composed a number of hymns which found a place in the Congo Hymn Book. He died in August 1933 whilst on holiday at Portrush.

The Irish Baptist Magazine for years embodied a BMS supplement and the BMS Missionary Herald had a wide circulation in the Churches. Thus the Churches were well informed about this great Society and were affectionately attached to it. Irish interest and support was further stimulated by the

fact that Dr. W. Y. Fullerton, who was born in Bradbury Place, Belfast, and a wellknown evangelist and sometime pastor of the famous Melbourne Hall, Leicester, was home secretary of the BMS from 1912 until his death in 1932. To understand how this longstanding bond between the Irish Churches and the BMS was weakened and how this genuine interest was sapped is basic to an understanding of why the IBFM came into existence.

Historically Irish Baptists have been strongly conservative in outlook and theology. They reacted against the 'new German theology' and the findings of the 'Higher Critics' in the closing decades of the 19th Century. Under the vigorous leadership of Rev. Hugh D. Brown, pastor of the Harcourt Street Church, Dublin, and close friend of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the churches in the Association gradually formulated a credal statement, and in the heat of the 'Downgrade Controversy' which the churches followed with keen interest, favoured the attempts made to persuade the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland (to which the Irish Baptist Association had been affiliated since 1865) to adopt an evangelical doctrinal basis. When the Council of that Union in its Declaration of February 21, 1888, disclaimed any authority to formulate any new and additional standard of theological belief (beyond the doctrinal beliefs of the Churches and Associations of which the Union was composed) as a bond of union to which assent would be required, and instead outlined what was commonly believed in the churches, the Editor of the Irish Baptist Magazine commented:

> 'Though avowedly designed to allay "the uneasiness produced in the churches" by the down grade controversy, we fear this Declaration will tend rather in the contrary direction. It contains no statement of what doctrines the Council themselves believe, and while announcing what is commonly believed in the churches it adds a note to the effect that certain members in the Union have all along rejected the usual meaning - that is the natural and obvious meaning - of our Saviour's teaching on the question of future punishment. And if unusual and diametrically opposite meanings are to be sanctioned by the Union in relation to this particular doctrine, must not the same latitude be granted respecting the other fundamental doctrines which are said to be 'commonly believed' by the churches? As a matter of fact, is not this latitude of interpretation boldly claimed by certain members of the Council, and, if so, can anyone be surprised to find that uneasiness in the churches is not abated but intensified?' (The Irish Baptist Magazine: March, 1888, p49).

It is significant that the Editor, in the previous issue, had himself written an article entitled 'Brief Outline of Baptist Principles' in which he enunciated 'the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel and of Protestantism'.

The 'new theology' never gained a foothold in the Irish Churches, which developed a deep suspicion of an 'educated ministry' as 'modernism' made steady advances in denominations which laid stress on a formal ministerial training. Sadly enough this suspicion still lingers on to-day, and over the years has been an inhibiting factor in certain areas of Baptist influence and witness. The writings and influence of C. H. Spurgeon buttressed the opposition of the Irish Churches to 'modernism'. Through the downgrade controversy and Hugh D. Brown's active support of C. H. Spurgeon the Irish Churches became more and more aware of the growing doctrinal divergence between themselves and many English Baptists. (It is a strange irony that just at this time the English Union passed the direction of the Irish Mission over to an Irish Committee and pledged financial support to the work in Ireland). This awareness led the Irish Baptist Association to examine its links with the English Union. In 1895 the Irish Baptist Association was renamed 'The Baptist Union of Ireland' and a revised constitution was adopted. The import of this change of name is seen in the Notice of Motion given at the 1894 Assembly of the Association -

> 'That in order to express our independent position and freedom from all external control we form ourselves into a Society entitled "The Baptist Union of Ireland", thus, ending our existence as "The Irish Baptist Association".'

There is no question that the desire for clearcut independence was doctrinal in its origin. Apparently at the 1895 Assembly the affiliation with the English Union was discontinued - though this is by no means clear from the records. Ten years later the question of affiliation was still alive for the 1906 Assembly adopted the following resolution:

> 'That inasmuch as the Council of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland has recently incorporated the deity and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ in its declaration of principle, we now consider this an appropriate and fitting time to once more become affiliated with the aforesaid Union.'

The following year the Assembly heard a letter from Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, secretary of the English Union in reply to the proposed re-affiliation. Mr. Shakespeare's letter (which I cannot trace) gave rise to 'a most interest-

ing and lengthy discussion' on the principle of independency, and the matter was deferred for twelve months. The following year (1908) the Committee of the Baptist Union of Ireland recommended the Assembly that 'no steps be taken to re-affiliate'. This recommendation followed correspondence with the Baptist Unions of Scotland and Wales in which those two Unions 'made clear the grounds on which they maintained their independence'. The 1908 Assembly resolved:

> 'That we retain our independence as a Union, it being at the same time understood that it is quite open for individual members or Associations or Churches to become members of the English Union.'

This was a characteristically Irish reaction to English 'diplomacy', and stands in marked contrast to the Welsh and Scots who adopted a more tolerant attitude towards their English brethren, preferring to preserve the existing links while maintaining their independence and autonomy. The official link between the two Unions was thus severed and has never been renewed. From here onwards the Irish Churches tended to become more and more isolated from the mainstream of Baptist life in Great Britain, though several churches until quite recently maintained dual affiliation with the two Unions. Their dis-affiliation may, I think, be fairly attributed to pressure within the Irish Union which has expressed fundamental dissent from the modern ecumenical movement as embodied in the World Council of Churches, chiefly on doctrinal grounds.

Love for and loyalty to the BMS, however, did not succumb so easily or so quickly. Nevertheless, Hugh D. Brown and other leaders foresaw that the tensions created by doctrinal debate between evangelicals and 'liberals' would eventually precipitate a crisis in the relations between the Irish Churches and the BMS, particularly when the influence of 'liberal theological views' would become apparent in the policies and personnel of the Society - as they feared might happen. An attempt was made as early as the 1894 Assembly to avert such a crisis by persuading the Churches to accept responsibility for a BMS mission station - the idea being that the station would be manned and financed by the Irish Churches. The BMS Committee welcomed the proposal, but it failed to gain support at the Assembly 'in view of the needs of the home field'. It is fair to comment that the Churches were preoccupied with the burden of keeping the Home

Mission work viable, and this burden was to continue until after World War II. Repeated in 1900 the proposal again failed to find acceptance.

At the 1898 Assembly rules were adopted for the BMS Irish Auxiliary, designed to encourage the Churches to contribute more generously and systematically to overseas missionary enterprise and to channel their gifts through the Auxiliary Treasurer rather than direct to BMS headquarters. This latter objective was only partially achieved, many churches preferring to continue direct contact with the Society.

The idea of the Churches assuming responsibility for a part of the BMS field was mooted yet once more, this time at the 1904 Assembly. This led to a definite proposal being laid before the 1905 Assembly in the following terms:

> 'That having listened to the cheering news concerning blessing in Orissa under the ministry of Daniel Das as reported by the Rev. Herberlet, missionary in charge of the district, and the commendatory letters from Mr. Baynes, the Union hereby resolves to allocate whatever sum is subscribed by the Churches through the Irish Auxiliary of the BMS over and above £180 per annum to be definitely earmarked for a new missionary departure in that district of Sambalpur, Orissa, and instructs the Secretary to convey a copy of this resolution to Mr. Baynes and to urge increased sympathy and liberality for this effort upon the Churches in Ireland.'

This resolution was accepted. The Assembly had listened to 'the cheering news' from the lips of the Rev. G. Anstie Smith, who attended it as a BMS deputation. As many of the Churches sent their contributions direct to the BMS in London and not through the Treasurer of the Irish Auxiliary, this resolution with its £180 excess was doomed to fail - indeed in its timidity it was almost farcical. So Sambalpur dropped into oblivion as far as the Irish Churches were concerned, and the attempt to forestall a crisis of confidence in the BMS was again abortive.

The missionary interest of the Churches, nevertheless, continued to grow, Pastor Hugh Gunn, the secretary of the Irish Auxiliary of the BMS, reported to the 1907 Assembly 'an increase in the subscriptions of seventeen churches'. (Irish Baptist Magazine, August 1907, p113). It is interesting that at the missionary meeting held during the 1907 Assembly one of the speakers was Mr. R. S. Hosford of Argentina - a member of the Cork Church and an official of the Bank of London and South America who was

instrumental in commencing a number of Baptist churches in Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, and whose work was to form part of the IBFM interests in later years. The visit of Rev. J. R. M. Stephens in 1908 to Belfast and the northern churches was a great success and gave a real impetus to missionary interest. Mr. Stephens had been a BMS missionary in the Congo for 13 years, and had just been appointed secretary of the Bible Translation Auxiliary of the BMS. A list of deputation meetings arranged for Rev. Joseph Cornish, BMS Organising secretary, in May and June 1909, following the Assembly at which he spoke, shows that 30 churches participated. Mr. Cornish was a favourite deputation speaker, well-known in the churches. The then editor of the Irish Baptist Magazine wrote of him, 'His smiling and winning presence is an asset to the Society - indeed we do not doubt he is irresistible and conquers by a smile, where otherwise failure would result. He must have just smiled away that debt of £13,000, and when he told us so pleasantly and naturally that the Missionary Society required one hundred new missionaries we felt sure they would be forthcoming.' (Irish Baptist Magazine, June 1909, p85). Contributions in that year went up from £300 to £481. Five churches only made no return. The 1909 Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution in the following terms:

> 'That inasmuch as the British and Foreign Bible Society continues to withhold its aid from versions of Scripture, translated by Baptist missionaries, though granted to other denominations; and as the Bible Translation Society was established to carry on the work from which the British and Foreign Bible Society withdrew its pecuniary assistance seventy years ago, and as it is doing the full work of a Bible Society in publishing faithful and true translations of the Scriptures, in supporting native translators, and maintaining colporteurs, and as it is the Auxiliary of the Baptist Missionary Society which deals with that part of its work in the translation and publication of the Holy Scriptures.
> Resolved that this Association of Baptist Churches heartily commends the Bible Translation Society to the sympathy and support of the churches and respectfully commends each church to adopt measures by which the Society's claim shall become better known and its funds largely increased.'

The wording of this resolution leads me to believe that it was probably prepared by the BMS for approval by the various Associations, and was adopted by the Baptist Union of Ireland without emendation. The normal resolution hammered out in debate was never so elegantly worded, unless

it came by way of notice of motion. And the reference to the Union as an Association was surely a Freudian slip! Nevertheless the resolution was approved unanimously and the Bible Translation Society did receive support from the Churches.

During these years the churches were kept informed of the ongoing work of the BMS through the excellent Quarterly Record which was bound in with each copy of the Irish Baptist Magazine, as well as through the regular deputation missionaries. Contributions continued to rise. The Secretary of the Irish Union in February 1911 noted changes in the rules of the BMS which would give the Irish Churches a better representation on the BMS committee. It is interesting to note that this representation is still valid to-day, though the climate of opinion in our Churches prevents the use of it. (The President and Secretary of our Union, together with the College Principal are ex-officio members of the BMS General Committee, and the Union has the right to elect one member to the Committee.)

In 1911 Mr. W. E. French, B.Sc., secretary of the Harcourt Street Auxiliary, was accepted for work in India by the BMS.

The report of the 1911 Assembly makes interesting reading, and shows that Hugh D. Brown was still anxious to devise a scheme whereby the Irish Churches would accept responsibility for a specific section of the BMS field. Mr. Robert Arnold, then secretary of the Irish Auxiliary, having presented his report, Pastor Brown 'strongly urged that all contributions from the Churches to the BMS should pass through Mr. Arnold's hands, and then in his own incisive and eloquent way recommended the Churches to concentrate their energies upon a particular and definite sphere in the great mission field, mentioning specially the new work opening up in the Patna State, and stating that such action on the part of the Irish Churches would be in complete harmony with the wishes of the Missionary Committee.' (Mr. Brown, as President of the Irish Baptist College, was currently a member of the Committee). He then moved:

> 'That we resolve by God's aiding grace to help on the new forward movement in the Patna State, and commend this special district in India to the sympathy - prayerful and financial - of the Irish Baptist Churches, and that all monies not otherwise earmarked be forwarded for this object through the Irish Secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society.'

Mr. Arnold seconded the resolution. A vigorous and healthy discussion then ensued in which a large number of the brethren took part, including Pastor D. J. Hiley, who as a member of the BMS Committee said, 'I cannot think of anything more in harmony with the Committee's wish. It is helpful to every man to localise his interests and his power. I think it would be a very wise thing to adopt this resolution.' The Chairman put the resolution to the meeting, and it was carried with much enthusiasm. There is no evidence of any attempt to follow up this resolution and no mention is made of it in the 1912 Assembly minutes.

The finances of the BMS were causing concern at this time and Dr. W. Y. Fullerton introduced his 'Apportionment Scheme' the essence of which was that every Auxiliary should be responsible for a certain set sum, the apportionment being based upon an average of the contributions of the previous three years.

In 1913 (June) Dr. Haldane C. Gilmore, son of Pastor J. D. Gilmore (secretary of the Baptist Union of Ireland), went to Congo with the BMS for a period of twelve months to relieve a Dr. Gamble at San Salvador. The 1913 Assembly voted him the balance of the W. R. Adams legacy (£55.4.0.) towards his passage. Mr. W. E. French, who had gone to India in 1911 sent home regular reports of his work and these were published in the Irish Baptist Magazine. Dr. Gilmore also reported from San Salvador to the churches through the magazine.

A branch of the League of Ropeholders was formed among the Irish Churches in 1914, and a brief letter from W. Y. Fullerton was published in the Irish Baptist Magazine in 1915 encouraging the young people 'to do a little extra, love a little more, and pray a little oftener than ever.'

World War I brought much sorrow to the Churches with its heavy loss of life, but did not disrupt the life and work of the Churches to the same extent as World War II did twenty years later. Figures for giving to the BMS reported to the 1915 Assembly were markedly up on the previous year - BMS £663; Translation Society £109; Medical £69; Zenana £69 (a total of £910). Missionary deputations were carried on as usual.

The pattern I have outlined of the missionary interest in the Churches continued for the next few years, and no further attempt appears to have been made to have Irish Baptists adopt, man and finance a partic-

ular field under the BMS. The moving spirit in the efforts to concentrate Irish Baptist missionary outreach through the BMS, Hugh D. Brown, passed away in April, 1918, and with his removal events in relation to the BMS moved quickly towards a crisis.

Doctrinal differences between Irish and English Baptists were heightened in 1919 by the publication of Rev. J. H. Shakespear's book, The Churches at the Crossroads , in which he advocated a Free Church federation and discussed the possibility of a union between the Free Churches and the Church of England. On the question of the 'historic episcopacy' Shakespeare implied that Free Church ministers would have to submit to episcopal re-ordination. Though he devoted only a single page of his book to this crucial question it was this that sparked off a violent controversy. The Irish Baptist Magazine published in full a leader from the British Weekly which examined The Churches at the Crossroads very critically. A photograph of Mr. Shakespeare was included in the article for good measure! (Irish Baptist Magazine, January/February, 1919, pp6-7). Needless to say Irish Baptists had no problem about deciding where they stood, and although Mr. Shakespeare's views did not represent, but rather misrepresented the views of English Baptists, his book served to deepen and intensify the suspicions of those who felt that all was not well with Baptists 'across the water'.

The 'troubled times' of 1920 and 1921 in Ireland were matched by doctrinal controversy between evangelicals and 'modernists' in the British Isles. While the former did not get much publicity in the Irish Baptist Magazine, echoes of the doctrinal battle rang through every page. H. Wheeler Robinson was criticised for an article in the Baptist Times in which he pleaded the merit of the Apocryphal books and deplored the acceptance of the 'narrower' canon by Protestantism. (Irish Baptist Magazine, May/June 1919, pp41-42). Acid comment was made on a statement by the writer of the British International Sunday School Lesson in which he used the term 'myth' to describe the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. There was a fierce controversy in the Baptist Times over the same issue at the time. The manifesto of the Baptist Bible Union, which was formed in July, 1918, as a protest against the proposed federation of the Free Churches on a doctrinal basis, was printed in full. (Irish Baptist

Magazine, March 1920, pp22-23 and p28). Extracts were given of addresses by the Rev. James Mountain on the authority and infallibility of the Bible. The Fraternal Address of the Southern Baptist Convention was printed in full during the visit of Dr. J. B. Gambrell and Dr. E. Y. Mullins to Ireland. It had sections on 'The Word of God' and 'Christian Unity' which were heartily endorsed by Irish Baptists. (Irish Baptist Magazine, September/October 1920, pp100-103). Pastor J. Pearson Harrison who was called to Harcourt Street Church, Dublin, in September, 1921, wrote an article for the magazine entitled 'Can We Trust the Bible?' (Irish Baptist Magazine, January/February 1922, pp13-14). A significant editorial in the March/April 1922 issue referred to an article by Dr. A. C. Dixon which had appeared in the Western Recorder . The editor mildly reproves Dr. Dixon for his assessment of various British Baptist leaders in the article which he then reproduces so that readers may judge for themselves. Of interest to us here is Dixon's assessment of Dr. W. Y. Fullerton, secretary of the BMS. But first, the editor writes,

> 'Our good brother, the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, Dr. W. Y. Fullerton, comes in for some heavy knocks. Forty years ago we heard our beloved brother preaching in a Gospel tent in the Liberties of Dublin. It was a glorious evangelical message and won many hearts for Christ. He is as sound and enthusiastic to-day. To blame him for suffering with "the secretarial fever in making himself all things to all men" is strange. Evidently Paul himself could have been blamed on the same lines when he said, "I made myself servant unto all that I might gain the more", and again, "I am made all things to all men."

Dixon's description of Fullerton read as follows:

> 'Dr. W. Y. Fullerton, Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Union, was in years gone by a flaming evangelist, winning hundreds to Christ through mighty Gospel sermons, and was a great joy to the heart of Charles H. Spurgeon. Since becoming secretary, however, he seems to have caught the secretarial fever, which heats brain and heart with a fervent purpose to keep together all elements in the denomination. As secretary he must make himself all things to all men, if he may by all means keep Baptists united in the great world Missionary movement. He now thinks that the differences between Charles H. Spurgeon and his 'Downgrade' opponents were so slight that if Dr. J. H. Shakespeare, with his superb generalship, had been secretary at that time, there would have been no disruption. It is evident that under the aegis of Dr. Fullerton orthodoxy and modernism find equal protection at home and abroad.'

The reading of this assessment by Dr. A. C. Dixon, made after 8 years in London as pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, threw Irish Baptists into a state of ferment as it had done these in England and the United States. Action was soon to follow.

Pastor Samuel Ruddock had asked a question at the 1921 Assembly about the control of funds given by the Churches to the Missionary Auxiliary. At the 1922 Assembly Pastor Richard Hodgett presented the following resolution:

> 'That all monies contributed by the Irish Churches for the Baptist Missionary Society be sent by the Churches through a Central Office in Ireland, and that the Baptist Union of Ireland Committee shall direct that this money be allocated to such Missionaries and Mission Stations as it considers would meet with the approval of the Churches.'

An editorial in the Irish Baptist Magazine drew particular attention to this motion which had been passed with applause.

> 'The days in which we live are difficult days, and we believe that just for this very reason Irish Baptists without exception desire to be scrupulously faithful and loyal to the revealed Truth of God. Some of the statements published in certain quarters have created not a little concern and anxiety amongst many of our members, but we believe that the adoption of this resolution makes it possible for the most scrupulous to continue to support the denominational Missionary Society without fear. We appeal to all the Churches to co-operate heartily in carrying out the terms of the resolution. Isolated action by the Churches is to be deplored. If we act in concert any protest which the times may demand and which we may be led to utter will be all the stronger and more effective.' (Irish Baptist Magazine, July/August 1922, p66).

As events turned out there was a falling off in subscriptions to the BMS from the Churches 'due no doubt', as the Assembly report put it, 'to the growing uneasiness as to its theological position.' Most of the Churches had sent their contributions direct to the BMS as before, only a very small amount had been sent through the central office.

At the 1923 Assembly Pastor F. W. Gracey gave an address at the Missionary meeting in which he dealt with the relationship of Irish Baptists to the Baptist Missionary Society. The Assembly invited Mr. Gracey to write an article on the subject for circulation. This was done and appeared in the magazine (September/October 1923). The two ommissions in the text give the Sambalpur proposal and the Hodgett Resolution (see above).

'For some time past there has been considerable fear amongst us that our renowned and beloved "BMS" was not immune from the evil of "modernism". We have had our misgivings concerning one or two of the missionaries on the field; and we may be disappointed that the Home Committee has not quieted our minds by its handling of the criticism it has suffered in the matter.

In the Assembly of our Union last year the perplexing question was before us, and again this year it confronts us more sternly than ever - what is our attitude as Irish Baptists to be? Can we go on with the BMS as before, or are we to break from the Society altogether?

Now, it is not out of place to remember that this trouble is part of a greater evil which has assailed the whole Church of Christ in these "perilous times" which precede our Lord's return. The leaven of "modernism" has spread with such success throughout Christendom that it was inevitable that, sooner or later, the foreign mission fields should be affected by the deadly growth. Therefore, what exercises our minds towards God is also troubling the true members of the Body of Christ throughout the world.

To the glorified Head of the Body, our Lord Jesus Christ, we look for guidance and help. And when we have "trembled for the ark of God", how reassuring is our Lord's unchanged commission: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore....; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world". Wherever, therefore, in these days of apostacy, hearts beat in loyal response to His all-conquering love, the answer of a humble but confident "Yes" is given to the age-long inquiry. "When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?"

Our fathers and leaders a generation ago in the Irish Baptist Union, as believers in the whole Word of God and "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints", were reluctantly forced to withdraw from the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland because they would not follow the English leaders on "the down-grade" then in regard to the fundamentals of the faith. And twenty years ago the very crisis now upon us in connection with the "regions beyond" was anticipated.....

Now the crisis has come. Last year, as our Missionary Secretary, Mr. R. Arnold, reports several Churches have discontinued their support of the Baptist Missionary Society, and there is a further falling off threatened.

There are, it seems to some of us, two grave perils at this stage. One, the danger of going heedlessly on in unqualified support of certain men and theories for which we, as a Union, give no quarter whatsoever in our own Churches. We stand for the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His atoning sacrifice as the

only salvation for man. We can have no other statement of belief, therefore, in regard to work abroad, nor can we suffer compromise with those who deny the everlasting Gospel.

Howbeit, there is another danger. Beyond all question the BMS has on its staff some of the truest and most honoured of God's missionary servants, men and women whom it is a joy to remember before the Throne of Grace, and of whose fellowship in witness and sacrifice for the Lord Jesus Christ we may not deem ourselves worthy. Are we, then, to turn away from these, deny them any little support or prayerful sympathy and help we may have it in our power to give them, because that a few (and surely it is a very few!) of their colleagues and fellow workers have denied the faith?

We think that there is a middle course between the Scylla and Charybdis of this present and avowedly difficult passage of spiritual life. At our meetings in Belfast last year, after careful consideration and earnest prayer for guidance, a resolution was agreed to which provided the via media.....

Until such times, therefore, as we can see our way to a foreign mission policy for the taking over of a portion of the foreign mission field as our own let us stand by our present resolution, thus witnessing emphatically against error on the field, and yet expressing lovingly and loyally our unfailing remembrance of those missionaries in whom we trust.'

At the 1923 Assembly Pastor Hodgett gave Notice of Motion - 'That at the next Annual Meeting of the Baptist Union of Ireland I will move that it be considered whether the Irish Baptists can take over the control of a definite portion of the Foreign Mission field and found an Irish Baptist Missionary Society.' Events were to move very fast before the 1924 Assembly met.

At three large meetings held in June 1921 in London by the Bible League a resolution was passed asking the Missionary Societies not to send forth "as missionaries any who deny or doubt that every writing of the Old and New Testaments is God-breathed, through men who spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." This resolution was sent by the Bible League to all Missionary Societies, and according to a report in the Bible Call of February 1922, 44 Societies "replied approving the resolution and giving an assurance that they would exercise all vigilance in complying with its terms", while three Societies declined to give the assurance sought. One of these was the BMS.

In an article on 'The Present Missionary Outlook' printed in the January 26, 1923, issue of the Baptist Times and reprinted in leaflet form and widely distributed, Dr. Fullerton expressed determined resistance to the efforts of those who could not sanction support of the Mission while it refused to give the assurance sought by the Bible League.

These developments were probably widely discussed at the 1923 Assembly, the minutes of which embody the enigmatic sentence - "Pastor Ruddock then spoke emphasising the necessity of withholding all support from BMS until satisfactory reply is given by BMS in connection with points of difficulty now in existence." Subsequently the Baptist Union of Ireland Committee asked the President, (Pastor Charles Willoughby), Pastor F. W. Gracey and Pastor R. Hodgett to meet the BMS Committee "with a view to seeing if a satisfactory pronouncement could be made regarding the relationship of its agents to the Bible and its teaching." The deputation reported as follows:

> 'Your deputation on three separate occasions met the Secretaries of the Baptist Missionary Society, (W. Y. Fullerton and C. E. Wilson) on Thursday and Friday 18th and 19th October, 1923.
>
> We feel it right to acknowledge that we were most courteously received and that the conversations were full, free and frank on both sides. The BMS officials evinced every readiness to supply us with information, and answer every enquiry. The replies to our questions were transparently honest.
>
> We sought for and obtained information as to the method of accepting candidates for the Mission Field, and the manner of dealing with such missionaries as in course of time alter their theological views and opinions. Much of the information that was given us was of a personal character, and we are not permitted to publish the details, but, whilst we should like other methods of dealing with these matters, we were impressed with the thoroughness of the steps taken to safeguard the evangelical position. We were solemnly assured that there was not on the mission field, to the knowledge of the officials, a BMS missionary untrue to the evangelical faith, including loyalty to the Scriptures and the person and work of Christ. A number of illustrations were given to us of how the Committee dispensed from time to time with those who had forsaken the evangelical position. In at least one case brought to our notice, charges were made against a certain missionary's attitude to Christ and His Gospel, but on the missionary being

personally interrogated at the Mission House, the charges were not only proved to be without foundation, but the missionary testified that his contact with heathendom had driven him more resolutely to the Cross.

Your deputation was also deeply impressed by the fact that the BMS alone of all the Societies gives a literal translation of the Scriptures of the original languages to the people, and by so doing has suffered financial loss by being unable to receive a grant from the British and Foreign Bible Society.

From the evidence submitted to us we are satisfied that the message of the Cross is sufficiently safeguarded to warrant the continuance of Irish Baptist support of the BMS, and that separation or division would not be justified. With regard to the Scriptures the BMS has now issued two statements, which are being disseminated in pamphlet form, in which the following strong assertions are made:-

> "In response to the inquiries of certain churches which support the Baptist Missionary Society, the Committee, having carefully considered the charges publicly made, record their conviction that the Missionaries of the Society to-day, as in the past, have given full proof of their loyalty to the Deity, Atonement, Resurrection and Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of their vital experience of His saving grace and power. To the Baptist Missionary Society Jesus Christ is central and supreme."

The Baptist Missionary Society stands for and teaches the Divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, without hesitation or qualification. But inheriting at once the Faith and Freedom of our fathers it does not bind itself to any particular theory of inspiration.

From its candidates it requires a reverent acceptance of Christ's witness to the Scriptures and the Scripture's witness to itself. And while upholding the right of private interpretation the Society impresses on candidates the need of the teaching of the Holy Spirit to a true and spiritual understanding of the Word of God, which is to be received as the inspired record of God's revelation to man and the final authority for the Missionary Message.

We requested that it be incorporated in the foregoing, a specific statement that the Bible is the Word of God, and while the Secretaries could not promise that this would be done they consented to receive our request, and bring it to the notice of the proper Committee.

We have further to add that the Secretaries have offered to facilitate (our) the Irish Baptist Union becoming responsible for a definite section of the Mission Field.

> We feel that there is an urgent and imperative duty resting upon the members of the Irish Churches to pray earnestly for the Baptist Missionary Society, its Committee, officials, and missionaries that the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word may be manifested.'

In presenting the report to the Baptist Union of Ireland Committee Mr. Hodgett "gave a very clear, full and convincing statement detailing step by step the Deputation's reception at the Mission House, and the complete removal of many suspicions which had been created by rumours and unfortunate reports." The subcommittee also submitted a supplementary report in the following terms:

> 'Your deputation in its last Report informed you that it had requested the BMS for a statement that the Bible is the Word of God.
>
> The Candidates Board of the BMS have replied to us that in using the expression "The Word of God" in their published statement they mean the Bible. The Candidates Board reported to the General Committee that it had given us this assurance and the Report was adopted by that Committee.
>
> We are humbly grateful that the Lord has been graciously pleased to answer the prayers of our Irish Churches in this manner.'

The Report and Supplement were unanimously adopted by the Committee. Both the Report and Supplement had been sent to all the Irish Churches with a covering letter signed by the Union Secretary. This letter gave the churches clear alternatives:

(1) To cease contributing to Foreign Missionary Work, and thus disobey our Lord.

(2) To support unsectarian and interdenominational Societies which would not accept our Doctrinal Basis nor interpret the ordinances of our Lord as we do.

(3) To establish and maintain an Irish Baptist Foreign Mission Station.

The response from the Churches was confused; twenty-nine replied - ten had sufficient confidence in the BMS to send their contributions to it direct to be used at its discretion; thirteen had not this confidence; ten were satisfied with the Resolution of the 1922 Assembly (three of them agreeing to it as a temporary measure); seven were not satisfied with this arrangement; nine favoured the Baptist Union of Ireland undertaking foreign mission work in a field for which it would be entirely responsible; these churches promised support to the extent of £96! The request for help in defraying

the deputation's expenses to London produced £6. 18. 0. - Pastor James Shields for Milltown Church commented, 'Those who sent the deputation should bear the expense.' This could hardly be termed 'guidance' for the Committee in going to the 1924 Assembly. It was clear, however, that there was a growing spirit of unrest and discontent among the Churches. The 1924 Assembly would be crucial and would demand a solution to the problem. And so it proved. Pastor Hodgett spoke to his Notice of Motion given the previous year and was given permission to withdraw it. This move it would seem was designed to allow the Assembly to discuss the whole situation vis-a-vis the BMS. This the delegates proceeded to do with customary verve. The Assembly Minute Book records it thus:

'Pastor Ruddock opened the discussion with a lengthy statement embodying communications personal and otherwise in relation to the standing of the BMS and its missionaries.

Pastor Jardine followed with extracts from correspondence particularly in relation with Rev. J. Jardine.

Pastor Shields then spoke in support of the previous speakers and was followed by Mr. Corbett, Pastor Burrows and Mr. Dunlop.

Pastor Ruddock then read and moved a resolution which was ruled out of order by the Chair.

Pastor Hodgett said he was in honour bound to oppose the motion, which opposition he could not state in the time at his disposal. The President also spoke.

Mr. Spurgeon asked for the Chairman's ruling on Pastor Ruddock's motion. Further discussion ensued.

.....Pastor Hodgett spoke on behalf of those in the Union representing the BMS acknowledging the graciousness of the spirit which prevailed on the previous day, and stated the deputation's position and work leading up to the issuing of its report to the Irish churches.

He then moved the following resolution:-

That it be an instruction to the Executive to make the Irish Baptist Foreign Missionary Auxiliary active.

I That steps be taken to alter the title of the Baptist Missionary Society, Irish Auxiliary to the Irish Baptist Foreign Missionary Society.

II That the rules of the present Irish Auxiliary be altered to correspond with the above title.

III That an organising secretary with a treasurer be appointed with the power to appeal to the Churches for contributions in the name of the IBFMS either by boxes and cards bearing the inscription or by collections in the churches.

IV That for the present the Committee of the IBFMS be empowered to distribute the funds so raised to such missionaries and mission stations as it considers would meet with the approval of Irish Baptists.

V That this arrangement is to be considered as laying the foundation for our Irish Baptist Foreign Missionary field.

Pastor Ruddock enjoyed the privilege of seconding the motion and spoke on the deputation's faithfulness and acknowledging the motion as the only present possible way out, expressing the hope that the Assembly would adopt the Resolution.

The Chairman, Pastor Jardine, Pastor Shields also spoke in support of the motion and of their implicit confidence in the deputation and the Irish brethren. Others also took part in further discussion.

The motion was then put to the Assembly and was carried.'

The Assembly then went on unanimously and enthusiastically to re-affirm the Basis of Doctrine, and 'ordered that copies be sent to various (news)papers "to show the world just where we stand".'

Thus Irish Baptists launched a separate missionary enterprise. On September 17, 1924 the Baptist Union of Ireland Committee appointed a committee of 15, and approved a draft constitution for the new Society and gave notice to the Churches that at the 1925 Assembly a resolution would be moved to name the new Society the 'Irish Baptist Foreign Mission'. The Constitution of the IBFM as approved by the 1925 Assembly defined the aim of the Mission as 'the establishment and control of Irish Baptist Foreign Mission fields, staffed by missionaries who accept and adhere to the Basis of Doctrine of the Baptist Union of Ireland.'

In the years that followed it was soon realised that the development of such a missionary enterprise would be fraught with difficulty. What those problems were and how they were faced, however, is another story.

J. THOMPSON

THOMAS PATIENT IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND

This paper seeks to survey Thomas Patient's[1] life and work as a pioneer leader among the Particular (or Calvinistic) Baptists. It is especially concerned with his work in Ireland during the 1650's as one aspect of a wider study I hope soon to complete of Baptist witness in Ireland during the latter half of the Great Rebellion.

If the work and witness of Thomas Patient in Ireland are properly to be understood it will first be necessary to trace the earlier part of his spiritual pilgrimage and to examine his links with the London Particular Baptist community.

Thomas Patient described the gradual development of his convictions about Baptism in 'the Epistle to the Christian Reader' prefixed to the only book he seems ever to have published, The doctrine of baptism and the distinction of the covenants (1654)[2]. His first concern after his conversion was, he records, 'to make my calling and election sure ... till the Lord had put that great question out of doubt ... I found little disposition to search narrowly into other truths'. Once his mind was settled on this issue, however, he began to ponder questions concerned with the will of Christ for his Church. As a consequence of this, he soon became convinced that the government of the Church of England by bishops, its liturgy and its mixture of converted and unconverted members, were contrary to Scripture and, therefore, that he could no longer continue

in communion with it. At the same time he discovered (this must have been in the 1630's) that there were 'many godly Christians going to New England' and, since he shared their views on matters of faith and order, he decided to join them.

It seems possible that he had already become uneasy about the rightness of infant baptism even before crossing the Atlantic and certainly, once he arrived in New England, he went into the matter very seriously. As he listened there to the preachers debating the matter he became gradually, and a little reluctantly, convinced that in the arguments he heard the Scriptures were 'generally wrested and abused, contrary to their native tendancy (sic) and proper drift and scope'. When he had got so far he confessed that he knew that if he finally came to oppose infant baptism, 'I should be generally dispised and slighted of all the godly in that Countrie and not only be frustrated of Communion and Fellowship with them, but must expect to suffer imprisonment, confiscation of goods, and banishment at least'. Freedom, in New England, both then and for many years to come, did not mean freedom for Baptists[3].

Finally, Thomas Patient overcame his fears, persevered with his studies and, apparently in 1641 or 1642, concluded that infant baptism was opposed to the word and the will of God. When it became known that he both held and argued for such views a warrent was issued for his arrest[4] 'upon vehement suspicion, not only of holding, but also of fomenting the error that baptism of infants is no ordinance of God, and hindering his child from baptism'. By the time the presentment was made, 14.10.1642, Thomas Patient had fled. But he did not go without having made some converts to his views: at least five others appear to have been infected[5].

Thomas Patient in London

How Patient with, presumably, his wife and at least one child, secured a passage home to England is not known. He next appears in history as a signatory, representing the same congregation as William Kiffin[6], of the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644. Henceforward, until his death in 1666, Thomas Patient was to be closely linked with

with the London leadership of the denomination. During the 1640's he shared an unsuccessful mission in Kent with him[7] and, according to 'Gangraena' Edwards[8], on at least one occasion, joined with Kiffin in anointing a sick woman with oil according to James 5.14. In 1646 Patient was one of the signatories of the new edition of the 1644 Confession. In February 1647 Kiffin, Patient, Hanserd Knollys and another Baptist named Gorton[9], were being examined by a Presbyterian-dominated 'Committee for Complaints' when it came out that Patient had been ordained 'in a House in Bell-Alley in Colleman Street.'[10] Three years later he joined Kiffin, John Spilsbury and John Pearson in signing the Epistle Dedicatory to A way to Sion (1650) by Daniel King, an evangelist active in the West Midlands. Earlier in the same year he had been associated with a larger group of the London leaders in the production of a pamphlet entitled Heart-bleedings for professors abominations,[11] warning their co-religionists against the Ranters and Quakers. The group of men who were bound together by these and a number of other publications represented a rather larger group who, working in different parts of the British Isles in the 1650's, were to build up a number of associations by organisation, by visitation of key gatherings and by correspondence.[12]

Thomas Patient in Ireland

It seems probable that Patient sailed for Ireland early in 1650[13] where he was to be closely associated with at least three other men without whose contribution no account of the Particular Baptists in Ireland during this period could be complete: William Allen,[14] Christopher Blackwood and John Vernon.[15]

Patient's arrival in Ireland was first proved by his letter to Oliver Cromwell which was dispatched from Kilkenny (which had fallen to the English 28 March) and dated 15 April 1650.[16] While in passing Patient noted that he had been at the army headquarters in Kilkenny since 'a little before my Lady Ireton came over' and that he expected to be in Dublin with his wife that summer, the letter seems primarily to have been intended as a piece of exhortation: 'I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, still keep a close watch over your own heart ... to

see a need of godly repentance daily, and humiliation, and fresh strength from Christ, by which you may be kept and preserved in a fresh, sweet and comfortable communion with God; for his presence will be all your happiness'.

But the closed-communion principles of Thomas Patient and his friends brought not peace but a sword to Ireland as John Rogers, an Independent and one soon to be known for the enthusiasm of his Fifth Monarchy convictions, quickly learned. It appears that in the congregation which he led in Dublin there was a small group of perhaps seven or eight who had been baptised as believers and who were convinced that this, and not infant baptism, was right. To them the church at Waterford, now led by Thomas Patient, sent a letter and a deputation. The letter, dated 14 January 1651/2, was brought by John Vernon and William Allen.[17]

In it the Baptists who were enjoying church fellowship with Rogers and the Dublin Independents were sharply rebuked: 'we hear that you doe not walke up orderly together, but are joyned in fellowship with such as do fundamentally differ in judgement and practise; to wit, such as agree not with you about the true state of a visible Church, nor the fundamental Ordinances thereof'. They pointed out that such misapplied Christian charity which welcomed into fellowship one who had not been baptised as a believer could lead to the admission of 'all manner of disobedience into your Society upon the same ground, which is a total destroying the end of Church-fellowship, which is to bring up every member to a visible subjection to all the Lawes of Christ their King, or else cast them out of that Society as old leaven'. These arguments were expanded and underlined in the rest of the letter and seem to have been effective in separating the group from Rogers's church and in persuading them to form their own.[18]

John Rogers's own reaction was entirely characteristic of the baffled disgust with which the closed-membership and closed communion policy (it is doubtful whether in practice, <u>at this period</u>, any distinction was made between the two) was greeted by other Christians at the time. His own parting shot was to warn his readers darkly:[19] 'I fear that Religion, which lyes so much in the Form, or outside, will doe but little service in the day of the Lord, to shelter us from heat and

storme'. His comment can be compared with the similar views of William Erbery[20] and with those of Colonel John Jones writing, it is believed, to Morgan Lloyd, from Dublin on September 15 that same year.

Jones reported that[21] Colonel Jerome Sankey 'not being assured of the faith of his parents to make his infant washing effectuall, nor haveing the verety of that conveyed unto him but by tradition, which he conceieved (sic) not to be a firm foundacon for him to depend upon, in point of obedience in spiritual things, fell againe into the water 2 dayes since, and was taken up by Mr. Patience'. This report is not only interesting for the nature of the doubts about his baptism as an infant attributed to Sankey but also for Jones's own comments which followed: evidently he had himself smarted from the claims to spiritual superiority implied by and perhaps made explicit by, some Baptists at the time: 'Lett every man doe as he is persuaded in his owne heart, but let noe man despise his brother that hath not attained to his light, or withdraw his communion with him, because he submitts not his judgmt to him; the comunion and fellowship of saints in the ordinances of Xt is one of the most principall parts of the Sts privilidges and enjoyment in the flesh, and the greatest Tirany that can be exercised upon any member of Xt is to debar him from those Privilidges and enjoymts upon the acct of being different in judgmt or upon any account for which our heavenly father will not keepe him out of heaven, and yt in (is?) ye prejudice I have agt these men who otherwise are very precious praying people'.

I have quoted these two sides of the question at length because the issue was a most vital one for Thomas Patient and his friends. This was not a matter of local option, or of the convictions shared by one group of Baptists in Ireland: the whole Calvinistic Baptist body at this time was committed to this policy. Congregations like Broadmead, Bristol, leaders such as John Bunyan, Henry Jessey and John Toombes were, however outstanding in themselves, uncharacteristic of the mainstream of the denomination. When John Miles in Wales or Thomas Patient in Ireland insisted on closed-membership, upon believer's baptism by immersion before admission to church membership and the Lord's Supper, they were following a nationwide policy and not personal preference or expediency. To stress this is necessary for, traditionally in Baptist historiography, it has not

been recognised that this was so and that this gave the Particular Baptists who accepted the policy a self-conscious sense of denominational membership at a date earlier than is usually recognised by students of the period.[22]

Meanwhile, Patient is next found not at Kilkenny or Waterford but at Dublin where, in December 1652, he was appointed to be one of those who were to preach in turn on Sunday in Christ Church Cathedral.[23] Patient was then provided with a house and with a piece of waste land nearby which was to be converted by him into a garden. In the following year the first Baptist meeting house in Ireland was erected in Swift's Alley, Dublin under his auspices[24] to house the congregation which had presumably grown from the original splinter from Rogers' Independent Church. The Baptist church in Dublin seems to have grown very fast and it also seems that even the wife of the Provost of Trinity College, Dr. Samuel Winter, was almost won over.[25] There was certainly a sharp reaction to its initial success and, in 1653, the Council was informed that[26] 'several persons of unquiet spirits and lewd conversation have of late used many uncivil demeanours towards Mr. Patient and others who walk with him in the worship of God, railing at and cursing them, and casting stones at them, and some of the said evil persons intended to destroy them by shooting at them'.

On 1 June 1653 a letter signed by Thomas Patient and other leaders of the Irish Baptist churches was sent to London with John Vernon.[27] This letter lamented a recent failure of correspondence between London and Ireland and made four proposals for strengthening the bonds of fellowship between the various scattered Particular Baptist congregations. First, they suggested a national day of fasting and prayer every month. Secondly, they suggested the resumption of brotherly correspondence. Thirdly, they asked for a list of all the congregations in communion with the London leaders. Finally, they suggested that the Londoners should send out two or more representatives to visit and instruct local congregations up and down the land. All these suggestions were adopted although only the first seems to have been wholly new.

When the news reached Ireland at the end of 1653 that Cromwell had accepted the title of Lord Protector many of the Baptists were profoundly

disturbed: to them it seemed a step back towards monarchy and it also seemed a title which could only be rightly applied to Christ. When their uneasiness became known William Kiffin, John Spilsbury and Joseph Fansom (Sansom?) wrote to warn them that any violence would do more harm than good to the cause they all had at heart.[28]

According to the joint but independent testimony of Henry Cromwell and Jenkin Lloyd[29] Kiffin's letter was successful in cooling any rebellious ardour among the Irish Baptists. There was even a report that support for Patient's own congregation was declining gradually among the more substantial inhabitants of Dublin but it is difficult to judge just how much weight to give this.[30]

Patient's own personal stock appears to have remained high. He seems to have been regularly one of those appointed[31] to examine ministers of religion who applied for positions of responsibility in Ireland.

In 1655 it was reported to Henry Cromwell[32] that not only had Patient and Colonel Axtell laughed heartily (and disloyally) at news of an accident which had overtaken the Lord Protector but also that they still maintained their strict communion position by excommunicating a godly man whose only sin was that he had joined Dr. Samuel Winter's congregation (presumably) for one occasion. Towards the end of the year William Allen's wife died and the funeral sermon was preached by Thomas Patient who had expected Henry Cromwell to be present:[33] 'the subject of his discourse was of presumption, and pressing the necessity and excellency of their ordinance of rebaptization'.

The end of this period of coolness between Henry Cromwell, who was now ruling Ireland for his father, and the Baptists was marked by a passage in one of his letters dated 22 October 1656,[34] 'I have since my return been more courted by the Anabaptists than formerly. Mr. Patient and some others, whoe had not bin with me of a longe time before came to visit me, and expressed much of their satisfaction with my management of thinges here, and that their people had much liberty as they could desire, and much to the same purpose.' No doubt this good relationship was cemented by an address from[35] 'divers of the baptized Christians in Dublin and elsewhere' to the Lord Protector probably in 1657 after the news had broken of Oliver Cromwell's refusal of a proposal that he should accept

the English throne. This was signed by Patient and a hundred and eighteen other men on behalf of themselves 'and their brethren in Ireland'. It promised their loyalty and their prayers.

In fact Thomas Patient himself appears to have continued in high favour with the authorities and, as late as 8 July 1659,[36] he was officially listed as chaplain to the General Officers - the staff of the Irish Army. What happened to him during the last months in Ireland as power slipped back into the hands of Charles Stuart we do not know.

Thomas Patient on Baptism

While it has been interesting to trace Thomas Patient's close links with the London Baptist leadership in general and with William Kiffin in particular and while it has been important to notice the part he played both as a Baptist leader in Ireland and as an unpaid member of the Cromwelliam establishment it is still worth reviewing his own positive teaching about Baptism.

Here he partially followed the teaching given in the 1644 Confession, articles XXXIX, XL and XLI.[37] As had been asserted in 1644 he insisted that any preacher was qualified to administer baptism:[38] 'a disciple enabled to bring down God to a soul, and to bring a soul again up to God, is a lawful Minister of baptism'. In 1644 Article XL had insisted upon immersion as the mode of true baptism and had taught that this meant three things: 'first, the washing the whole soule in the bloud of Christ: Secondly, that interest the Saints have in the death, buriall, and resurrection; thirdly ... that as certainly as the body is buried under water, and riseth againe, so certainely shall the bodies of the Saints be raised by the power of Christ, in the day of the resurrection, to reigne with Christ'.

The first meaning is omitted by Patient: the idea of washing has been wholly replaced by the ideas of death and burial and identification with Christ. According to him, by submitting to this rite, a man[39] 'doth hereby visibly and clearly resemble the burial of Cjrist, and his being buried, in respect of the old man, the former lusts and corruptions ... to be taken away and seen no more' and, equally, 'as hereby he holds forth the Resurrection of Christ, so doth he also his own ... so as to

reckon himself ... to walk in newness of life in this present world, being also begot into a lively hope, that in the world to come, he shall be raised and quickened both in soul and body, to a life everlasting'.

Even more interestingly Patient suggests that believer's baptism by immersion pictures the shape of the Christian life in terms of conflict, suffering and victory:[41] 'Now one end of Baptism is, to represent Christ's Sufferings, and our Sufferings with him, which is in a lively manner set out by dipping into water ... and therefore a believer, is to be dipped or plunged, all over into the River or water, to hold forth, That now must he resolve to take up the Cross of Christ and suffer; and not only so, but this being raised and delivered out of the water again by the hands of the Minister, doth hold forth, that so shall such believing souls be saved, and delivered out of all their afflictions'.

He also supplemented the teaching of the 1644 Confession at another point: in giving his reason why baptism must be done in the Triune Name, he summarised the type of confession which would qualify a candidate for baptism:[42] 'When the Soul shall come to the Preacher, and make known to him, that the Spirit hath experimentally made known unto him his lost and damnable estate by sin, and that the same Spirit hath discovered unto him, the great love of God the Father, in the gift of Christ, to be a propitiation for sin, as one dying for the chief of sinners, and that the Spirit of God hath made all this known to him, and hath wrought faith in his heart to believe it, and hath changed his heart from a Course of sin, to renewed obedience; for no soul can declare to a Minister the true work of Conversion, but he must in so doing discover his knowledge of the work of the Father, Son and Spirit, and into this doth the Minister baptize him'.

Toward the end of his book, after a lengthy review of the Scriptures and the arguments concerning the covenants of grace and works, he dealt with the objection of the man who, accepting his arguments, would be baptised and join the Baptists[43] 'were it not for their rigidness'. Patient made a useful distinction between what he called 'Church-union and Communion' and what he called 'personal Union and Communion'. Then he argued, from the examples of Peter and Cornelius and Paul and Ananaias, that[44] 'it is lawful for a baptized person to have fellowship in prayer and speaking with any such soul which he is persuaded of to be godly, and

that is not a professed enemy to any command of God'.[45] But, church union and communion was, he argued, a very different matter because for one congregation to own two different views of baptism[46] 'the sprinkling of Infants, and dipping of Believers' would involve a difference in fundamentals since 'this Ordinance of baptism is one of the essentials of a true visible Church'.

Since he could see believer's baptism by immersion so clearly he had no option but to charge other professing Christians with disobedience - in itself - to his way of thinking, a sufficient disqualification for church-membership.[47] His other argument against 'open' communion and membership was to argue that a consequence of accepting someone who had been baptised in infancy was the implied recognition of[48] 'that Church and Ministery, from which he had his supposed baptism'. This was a fairly powerful argument even to his Independent readers and hearers since many of them held no higher view of the prelatical Church of England from which most had received their infant baptism than he did.

But Thomas Patient had one or two other last shots in this controversy. He now turned to those like William Erbery, John Rogers and Philip Jones who all, if from rather different points of view, considered the Baptists laid far too much stress on the outward forms of God's ordinances. To the objection that some put too much trust in the outward ordinances he answered that the Baptists were not guilty of such an error for,[49] 'before we baptize any soul, we prove whether a true work of conversion be wrought in his heart or no; and whether he hath union with Christ'. Tartly he reminded his opponents that 'it is easie for a soule to forbear resting in duties, that doth not perform them'. Finally, he reminded his readers that even if some were,[50] 'so far left of God, that walk in the practice of Ordinances, as to rest in them, is that a ground for thee to excuse thee, to live in sinful neglect of them?'

Thomas Patient's last years

As far as we can now know it seems that Thomas Patient returned to England at about the time of the restoration of King Charles II. He was in Bristol helping to lead the closed-membership Baptist church there[51] from at least December 1662 until April 1664 and was in trouble with the

authorities for being at 'an unlawful assembly'. He then returned to London and began work once more as a colleague of William Kiffin[52] but died of the plague soon afterwards in 1666.

His career, in consequence of his close personal identification with the policies of the London leaders of the first generation of Particular Baptists, underlines the importance of the capital as the headquarters of their strategy. On the other hand it may be that his tendency to move into opposition to Cromwell - a policy completely opposed to the course followed by his friend and colleague William Kiffin - was the result of the influence of the large number of Baptist army officers by whom he was surrounded in Ireland.

B. R. WHITE

REFERENCES

1. The article 'Patient or Patience, Thomas' in the Dictionary of National Biography is the best available survey of his career but must be used with care since it is spattered with errors. The two most serious are the suggestions that he had formerly been an ordained minister of the Church of England and that he 'was chosen by Parliament' to serve in Dublin with an income of £200 p.a. Neither is correct.
2. Principal Kingdon tells me that he has found a second copy of this work in Ireland. The first is to be found in Dr. Williams's Library, London.
3. See my 'Isaac Backus and Baptist History', Baptist History and Heritage, V.1., Jan. 1970 for references to persecution and to early baptismal controversy.
4. G. F. Dow, Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts, 1911-21. Volume 1, 52.
5. Ibid.
6. See, 'How did William Kiffin join the Baptists? 'Baptist Quarterly, XXXIII, 5.Jan.1970 and 'William Kiffin - Baptist Pioneer and Citizen of London', Baptist History and Heritage, II.2.
7. Luke Howard, A Looking-glass for Baptists, London 1671.5.
8. Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, I, second pagination, 6,44. Were these two accounts of the same incident?

9. This was, presumably, Samuel Gorton. See: Gangraena, II., 143f, 249, and G. D. Langdon Jr., Pilgrim Colony, Yale 1966,63.

10. Anon., Hinc illae lachrymae or the impietie of impunitie, London 1648,3f.

11. E. B. Underhill, Confessions of faith etc., (Hanserd Knollys Society), London 1854,293-310. Thomason's copy is dated 28 February 1650.

12. See 'The organisation of the Particular Baptists 1644-1660', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XVII, 2.

13. It is unlikely that Patient was in Ireland before the end of December 1649 since he signed both A way to Sion and Heartbleedings, Presumably, before leaving London.

14. P. N. Hardacre, 'William Allen, Cromwellian Agitator and "Fanatic"', Baptist Quarterly, XIX,7.

15. I hope to prepare finished outlines of the biographies of both these men before long.

16. E. B. Underhill, Confessions of Faith etc., (Hanserd Knollys Society) London 1854,311-14.

17. John Rogers, Ohel or Beth-shemesh, London 1653,302-8.

18. It is just possible that this group had earlier met independently as a Baptist congregation and had then joined John Rogers' congregation.

19. John Rogers, op.cit., 308.

20. See 'William Erbery and the Baptists', Baptist Quarterly, XXIII, 3.July.1969.

21. Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, New Series, I 1860-61,216.

22. J. E. C. Hill, 'History and Denominational History', Baptist Quarterly, XXII. 2 April 1967, especially 68f.

23. St. John D. Seymour, The Puritans in Ireland 1647-1661, London 1912, 33f. This book, reprinted in 1969, has especial value since the destruction of the records upon which it draws in the Dublin Public Record Office during the 'Troubles'. On 21 July 1655 the order of 1652 was repeated and, in the same month, a weekly Monday lecture whose team also included Patient was added.

24. The Baptist Irish Society, London 1845, lx. The narrative in lxii-lxiii suggests that Patient may have received a state stipend but, in fact, according to Seymour, op.cit., 218 n.2, 'there is no evidence that he received at any time a salary from the Government'.

25. J. W., The Life and death of ... Dr. Samuel Winter, London 1671,50f.

26. Seymour, op.cit., 60.

27. Joseph Ivimey, History of the English Baptists, London 1811,I.240-52.

28. Underhill, op.cit.,322-6.

29. John Thurloe, State Papers (edited by T. Birch), London 1742, II, 149,164.

30. Ibid., 213.

31. Seymour, op.cit.,60f.

32. John Thurloe, op.cit.,IV.90f.

33. Ibid.,328.

34. Ibid.,I.731.

35. Underhill, op.cit.,339-42.

36. Cal.S.P.D. Ireland, 1659-60,13.

37. W. L. Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, Chicago 1959,167.

38. Thomas Patient, The doctrine of baptism and the distinction of the covenants, London 1654,6.

39. Ibid.,11.

40. Ibid.,12.

41. Ibid.,13.

42. Ibid.,16.

43. Ibid.,164.

44. Ibid.,165.

45. The last clause opens up the possibility that anyone who argued against the Baptist position could be excluded from 'personal Union and Communion'.

46. Patient, op.cit.,169

47. Ibid.,171f where the wording closely reflects part of the letter dispatched in 1652 to the Baptist members of John Rogers' flock.

48. Ibid.,172.

49. Ibid.,175.

50. Ibid., 176.

51. I owe this information in large measure to the Revd Roger Hayden of Northampton who is preparing a new edition of the Broadmead Records and who cites the Bristol Sessions Book (1653-1671) and the 'Issac (sic) James MSS' which are in the possession of Broadmead.

52. See the D.N.B. article l.c.

IRISH BAPTISTS, URBAN AND RURAL

The meeting on June 5 was conducted as a forum at which the following proposition was discussed:- 'It has been a weakness of Irish Baptists that our churches have been urban rather than rural.'

Speakers had been invited to open up the topic - R. A. Boggs, A. Russell, J. Thompson, G. H. Weir - after which general discussion took place. The meeting came to the conclusion that whilst the strongest churches numerically were urban, the strongest denominationally were rural. Speakers stressed the sense of community within country as compared with town churches and noted in rural areas the extreme difficulty of crossing denominational boundaries. It was also probably true that in country districts there was a deeply rooted historical prejudice against Baptists because of their original association with the Cromwellian settlement.

A list of the churches which existed immediately before the Famine (1845-47) was discussed and compared with the position to-day. It was thought that the changes noted illustrated not so much Baptist decline in rural areas as the wholesale elimination of many small communities during and immediately after the Famine.

It was remarked that the formation of most of the present rural churches in the north owed nothing to design, that is, they were not

planted during the Cromwellian period as were Cork, Waterford, Limerick and Athlone; rather they arose from much later events - defections within the Presbyterian community, the 1859 Revival and so on. Surprisingly little is unfortunately known about the beginning of many of them.

In conclusion it was felt that with rural depopulation continuing country churches would find conditions no easier in the future. Some difficulties were however of our own making - the use of hymn books redolent with Victorian sentimentality, the refusal to be involved with other denominations in dealing with social and community problems - but these would be overcome. It was also regarded as important that the Home Mission should give more though to work directed specifically to country districts.

Ed.

THE THEOLOGY OF ALEXANDER CARSON

Alexander Carson is not only the one significant theologian that Irish Baptists have had, but he is also, in my opinion, to be classed with a Baptist theologian as outstanding as A. H. Strong. In view of the fact that Baptists have produced very few great theologians Alexander Carson's theology ought to be of especial interest to us today since in his own time he was recognised as a theologian of outstanding ability. A writer in the Scottish Guardian said of him: 'As a profound and accurate thinker, an able metaphysician, a clear reasoner, a deep theologian, Dr. Carson can stand the ground against any rivalship.'[1] The Orthodox Presbyterian magazine paid him this tribute: 'On matters of Church order, it is well known we differ from him: but, as a scholar, we honour him - as a Christian brother we embrace. In the knowledge of the philosophy of language, he is far in advance of the present age; and with respect to metaphysical acuteness and powers of reasoning, he has been called "the Jonathan Edwards of the nineteenth century." His character as a philosophic theologian, and a profound, original, independent thinker, stands in the very highest rank; and he is only justly designated when called one of the most philosophic reasoners of the present age.'[2] (taken from 'press opinions printed' at end of Vol.II).

However, despite these encomiums, the works of Alexander Carson are read today only by those, who like myself, have a deep interest in Baptist

history and theology. The only works of Carson that are at all widley read today are his classic work on 'Baptism - its Mode and Subjects' and his commentary on the book of Esther, entitled 'God's Providence unfolded in the Book of Esther.' The five volumes of his collected works, on the other hand, lie unread gathering the dust of the years in obscure corners of libraries.

Why, we may ask, is the work of Alexander Carson so generally neglected today. Several reasons suggest themselves.

Firstly, Carson was a controversial theologian who employed his pen in discussion of what he considered to be the burning issues of his day. Since many of these issues, such as the Unitarian controversy, have long since been regulated by the passage of time to the limbo of extinct theological volcanoes, Carson's theological works have a datedqair. The ground on which he fought his battles has shifted; the issue today has to be joined at other places. Thus while his controversial works have an historical, it can hardly be claimed that they have a contemporary, interest.

Secondly, the controversial nature of Carson's theological writing makes it difficult to read him since he is dealing, point by point, with the opinions of his chosen combatants. Under the necessity of meeting and controverting the views of his opponents his writing was bound to be shaped by the requirements of theological controversy with the result that it somewhat lacks the force and vigour which would make it interesting to read today.

Thirdly, Carson is neglected as a theologian because he wrote no work of systematic theology. Had he written a Baptist systematic theology as he was well equipped to do there can be little doubt that he would have enjoyed a wider contemporary readership. The fact that his one substantial work of Baptist apologetic is still read, and has indeed recently been reprinted, proves, I think, the point that I have been making. Alexander Carson undoubtedly suffers neglect today because he was, unfortunately, an occasional rather than a systematic theologian.

Characteristics of his Writing

The fact that Alexander Carson was a controversial theologian is largely responsible for the characteristics of his writing. Though he did not, as some do, enjoy controversy, he was nonetheless impelled to engage

in it when he considered that the honour of God demanded that he should. He can be very forceful in his denunciations of error, yet he never stoops to misrepresentation or abuse. This is especially the case when he engages in controversy with Roman Catholic writers. His biographer, George C. Moore, claims 'that he approved not the gross terms of censure and crimination generally used by its /i.e. Romanism's/ opponents. He always thought that such modes of procedure, when arrayed against ignorance and superstition, only effected the retardation of truth. The ignorance and the moral enmity of its deluded votaries he endeavoured to dissipate and annihilate by the exhibition of gospel light and of heaven - begotten love. His strong terms and his severe rebukes were reserved for the unshackled sons and daughters of the Reformation. When his fellow-disciples of the Protestant faith diverged from the "old paths", to them, without reserve, he spoke strongly.'[3]

Carson's theological works are marked also by a virile logic. He is merciless when exposing the inconsistent logic of his opponents. For example in his tract entitled 'The Doctrine of Transubstantiation, subversive of the foundations of human belief', to illustrate the axiom that one piece of matter cannot become another piece of matter identically different from it, from which it follows that if 'the bread be converted into a human body, the body made of bread cannot be the body made of the substance of the Virgin'. (II p76) he offers the following parable:

> 'Suppose, then, that one of the four Queen Anne's farthings has been pawned, and that the pawnbroker, instead of returning the original farthing, gives an imitation of the most perfect kind. The owner finds out the truth, and applies to a court of justice to recover his farthing, the value of which consists, not in its matter, nor form, nor quantity, nor qualities; but in its being identically one of the four farthings coined in the reign of Queen Anne. Mr. O'Connell appears for defendant, and admits that his client has the original farthing, but defends him on the principle that the farthing returned was really and 'bonafide' converted into the original farthing; yet that there are not now five farthings, as the one transubstantiated is actually the identical farthing that is still in the pawnbroker's desk..... All the gravity of the judge - all the solemnity of a court of justice, cannot restrain roars of laughter.' (II p77).

Carson's English style, even when he is obliged to consider the minutest particulars of his oponents argument, is always clear and forceful. His sentences are generally short and succinct, his meaning is seldom in doubt. Though a very learned man Carson wrote plain English for plain people since his aim was not to parade his scholarship but to present the truth simply and clearly.

Consideration of his Theology

Alexander Carson's theology may be broadly characterised as 'evangelical Calvinism'. Of evangelical Calvinism Arthur Stone has written that it is 'aggressive in its outlook. Holding fast to the sovereignty of God's grace, it still seeks to spread the gospel to every creature, realising that God has promised to ingather His people by the power of His Holy Spirit, and to bring them to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.'[4] (Evangelical Calvinism, p10). Carson certainly was no inward-looking, stultified hyper-Calvinist. He was a keen advocate of missions to the heathen countries of the world who often preached on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society. The first volume of his collected works contains a sermon entitled 'The Propagation of the Gospel, with encouragements to the Vigorous Prosecution of the Work', originally delivered in Surrey Chapel, London, on October 12, 1842 at a meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society. The text on which the sermon is based is Luke XIX.13 'Occupy till I come'. With an eye on his hyper-Calvinistic brethren he says:

> 'Sometimes people talk foolishly, as if to employ the means which God has appointed to effect an end, is to take the thing out of the hands of God. But surely, to employ means that God has not appointed, neglecting the means which he has appointed, is to take the thing out of the hands of God.
>
> Fellow christians, then, I call your attention to your duty, and to your honourable service. God has not thought proper to convey the knowledge of salvation to men by his Spirit, without the use of means - he has not employed the ministry of angels, but that of men - he has not appointed to this high service the rulers of this world; but he has committed it to the zeal and devotedness of his disciples.' (I p429-430).

Such sentiments are as far removed from hyper-Calvinism as the East if from

the West.

As an evangelical Calvinist Carson strongly maintained the Scriptural doctrine of the total depravity of man. He did not, of course, maintain that man was as sinful as he might be, but that he was affected by sin in every part of his being so that in and of himself he is not only unable to please God but is offensive to him, an enemy of God and a child of wrath. He complains that many divines attempt to play down the Scriptural doctrine of depravity.

> 'They may', he says, 'not so flatly deny the guilt of human nature as the philosophers, but most of them will explain and soften it in such a manner as to represent man still in a tolerably secure state. If he does these things, and avoids those, he may still live, notwithstanding any injury he has received by the fall. If he has fallen, he is not so much damaged but that he may raise himself, if he properly exerts his remaining strength, or with due attention, employs the help offered to him. But every modification of this kind is contrary to the apostle's conclusion from the guilt of men. The guilt of all men is such as utterly to prevent their justification by law. "Thereford," says the apostle, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight".' (I, p38).

Consistently with his evangelical Calvinism Alexander Carson strongly argues that the duty of faith in the atonement of Christ should be urged upon the sinner. It is at this point, of course, that the Arminian and the hyper-Calvinist differ so markedly from the evangelical Calvinist. Both attempt to reduce the seeming inconsistency of the data of Scripture to a neat logical scheme. Confronted with the fact that in Scripture sinners are commanded to repent and believe the Gospel the Arminian argues that the command supposes the sinner's ability to repent and believe. He is commanded therefore he has the ability to comply. Faced with the same data the hyper-Calvinist argues to an opposite conclusion. The sinner, he maintains, has no ability within himself to repent and believe, therefore he ought not to be commanded to do so until he gives evidence of being regenerate. The logic of this position is that the Gospel should only be preached to the converted.

Carson is prepared to adopt neither the Arminian nor the hyper-Calvinistic position. He is content to live with the tension which exists between the sinner's inability to believe apart from the work of the Holy Spirit within him, and the undoubted fact that in the New Testament sinners

are commanded to repent and to believe the Gospel

> 'According to my doctrine', he writes, 'he cannot believe till God opens the eyes of his understanding; he cannot do good works till he believes. Is he not, then, to pray for this faith? Is he justifiable to remain in his present state. I answer he is not justifiable to remain in his present state. It is his first duty to believe. His inability to believe results from his unwillingness to believe. You will not, says Christ, come unto me, that you may have life. As long as he is in this state the Scriptures keep the gospel before him; charge him to believe it; condemn him if he believes it not..... The Scriptures assure us that faith is the gift of God; they assure us, nevertheless, that the want of it is man's sin. How it is beyond man's powers, and yet his duty, is not for me, by metaphysical arguments, to establish. I leave this to him from whom I have learned it.' (I, p108).

Alexander Carson also upheld the doctrine of particular redemption or as it sometimes is inaccurately called, limited atonement. If such a view of the atonement is not common among Irish Baptists today it was the prevailing view in Carson's time. He strongly asserts God's sovereignty in respect to the extent, or better, the intent of the atonement.

> 'The sovereignty of God is also seen in this plan, as it respects those for whom he gave his son. The greater part of those who profess the atonement, cannot bear the thought that it was not made for every individual of the human race. But if it was not merited by any, he might, as a sovereign, give his son for all, or some, or none, as seemed good in his sight. If it was merited, salvation is not of grace, but of debt. To charge God with partiality in having mercy upon some of his enemies and leaving others to perish, denies his sovereignty and supposes merit in those who are overlooked..... If there is anything plainly taught in Scripture, it is that the sacrifice of Christ was made for those only who shall eventually be saved by it. If the wisdom of men cannot reconcile this with their views of what is right, let them be prepared to dispute the matter with the Almighty in the day of judgment.' (I, p125).

Agreeable with his view of the atonement is Carson's insistence that it is unconditional. In other words, it is not by exercising faith that a <u>possible</u> atonement becomes for the believing sinner an <u>actual</u> atonement. On the contrary faith is the instrument by which the <u>already</u> procured blessings of the atonement are secured to him. Let Carson's own words make this clear:

> '... a conditional atonement is no atonement in the proper

> sense of the word; for an atonement must expiate the sins atoned for, just as a payment cancels a debt. Where, then, there has been an actual atonement made, the sins atoned for never can be punished again, no more than a debt once paid can be charged a second time. It would be unjust in God to charge the debt to the account of man that was fully paid by man's surety. It may be alleged that one man may pay another man's debts upon certain conditions; and that if those conditions are not fulfilled, the debt will still be chargeable upon the debtor, But it is evident that, in such a case the surety either does not actually pay the debt till the conditions are fulfilled, or if he has conditionally paid it, he is refunded before it is chargeable upon the debtor. In every such case, the debt is not really paid. But Jesus has paid the debt. He has already made atonement; and if they for whom he died are not absolved, the debt is charged a second time. He can never be refunded. His blood has been shed; and there is no possibility that what he suffered can be now either more or less. They, then, who suspend the efficacy of the atonement of Christ upon conditions to be complied with by man, in effect deny that atonement has been truly made.' (I, p58-59).

Carson's view of faith is interesting in that he does not accept the usual distinction between believing in the head, i.e. merely intellectual belief, and believing with the heart i.e. trusting in Christ, or as we tend to say today, active commitment to Him. In particular he objects to the distinction, often drawn by orthodox divines, between believing that Christ died and believing that Christ died for me. 'Saving faith they make something very different. It is not that Christ died for all that believe, but that Christ died for them in particular.' (I, p92). Carson rejects this view of faith for two reasons. First, because of its inconsistency. The divines who advocate it believe, as he does, that Christ died for none 'but for those who shall eventually be saved.' Yet inconsistently they urge all men to believe that Christ died for them when with respect to most of them it is manifest that He did not, since they do not believe. 'All men are called on in Scripture to believe the gospel, but there is no instance in Scripture in which all men are called upon to believe that Christ died for them.' (ibid, p92-93).

Second, men are condemned not for refusing to believe that Christ died for them, but for refusing to believe in Him.

> 'When an unbeliever shall come before the judgment-seat, can he be condemned for not believing that Christ died for him, seeing Christ did not die for him, and the Scriptures did

not say that he died for him? Will it be inconsistently replied, that if he had believed that Christ died for him, then he would have died for him? Is not this supposing that he is a believer? But it can never be true of any that shall eventually perish, that Christ died for them, nor can it be duty for such to believe that he died for them.' (I, p93).

Carson draws his distinction not between the head and the heart, as many do on the basis of Romans X.4-11, since as he points out the Scriptures take the heart for the understanding, (I, p98) but between not understanding or understanding the Gospel. Those who 'in every age appear to believe, but, by falling away, discover that they never really believed that Jesus is the Christ' prove, in fact, that 'They understand not what they profess to believe, consequently what they believe is not saving truth.' (I, p96). That Carson is right can, I think, be demonstrated from Matthew 13:23 where he that 'received seed unto good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit.....' whereas the other three types of hearer are not said to understand at all. As Carson points out the distinction drawn in Romans 10:9-10 'is not between the faith of the head and the faith of the heart, but between genuine faith, and the confession of that faith'. (ibid, p98).

In Carson's discussion of faith we have an echo of the controversy caused by the intellectualistic view of faith taught by Robert Sandeman. Sandeman's view of faith was that it consisted in belief upon testimony. Sandeman's teaching as it was taken up and spread by his followers undoubtedly caused a great deal of spiritual deadness in that it tended to divorce faith from active trust in the Redeemer. However, Carson seems to have felt that the orthodox divines who opposed the "historical" faith of Sandeman to what might be called "vital faith" or heart trust over-reacted and introduced a false distinction between faith of the head and faith of the heart. In my opinion he was right in his assessment of the situation, since he correctly saw that in Scripture the heart is the seat of man's personal, which includes his intellectual, life, not merely the centre of his emotions. Certainly many of our problems today, particularly in respect of both the necessity and the content of ministerial training, stem from a false dichotomy between head (which can be neglected) and heart (which must be cultivated).

One of Carson's most valuable contributions to Baptist theology are

his works entitled Reasons for Separating from the Synod of Ulster and his Reply to Mr. Brown's Vindication of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government. The former was probably published in 1804, the latter was issued in 1807.

In his Reasons for Separating from the Synod of Ulster he admits that a systematic account of church polity is not to be found in the New Testament but he argues that it is wrong to infer from this lack that 'no form of church government is revealed' (Vol.IV, p82). No Scripture doctrine, he points out, is delivered systematically; it has to be 'gathered' from Scripture and systematized. All that we can expect is that the form of church polity will be revealed indirectly 'as it would be absurd to expect that an apostle, after forming a church in any place would, in a subsequent letter, give them express directions for the formation of a church, seeing this was already done.' (ibid, p85). Carson maintains that the evidence of the New Testament furnishes us only with information about the government of a particular gathered church. 'There are', he writes, 'laws sufficient in the New Testament for the government and conducting of an Independent Church, but not a single rule, or precept, or example for the government of a number of churches combined.' (p68).

Carson sees the positive values of the Independent form of church government as (i) suiting every age, country and circumstances (p29), (ii) encouraging enterprise and zeal (p26), (iii) demanding responsible church membership. (While Independency is suitable for all ages 'it will always be found to fail, when members are admitted, not of the character of the members of apostolical churches'.) (pp27-28), (iv) as best enabling reformation to be carried out, and doctrinal purity to be preserved.

Carson's Reply to Mr. Brown's Vindication is a lengthy work which occupies pp129-553 of the fourth volume of his collected works. Time forbids that we examine its arguments in detail. Suffice it to say that it is one of the most searching examinations of the case for the Presbyterian form of church government that has ever come from a Baptist pen.

Carson was a strong defender of the orthodox doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. His writings on this subject were so valued

by Thomas Chalmers that he used them as a text-book on the subject in his theology class at New College, Edinburgh. At a time when German rationalistic criticism was beginning to find an entrance into the British Isles Alexander Carson was among the first evangelical theologians to perceive its drift.

Against unitarian denials of the deity of our Lord, Carson strenuously upheld His proper deity by means of a painstaking and acute exegesis of the New Testament texts bearing upon the subject.

In the era of Romish controversy he was particularly devastating when handling the subject of trans-substantiation and the Roman claim to be the true church on the ground of the miracles alleged to have been performed by the saints of the Catholic church. In respect to the latter he points out the 'miracles' of Rome far from proving that she is the true church of Christ prove the contrary. He points out that the magicians of Pharaoh were able to work 'miracles', and that in the Book of Revelation miracles are performed by the host of ante-Christ (Revelation 16:14).

> 'It cannot be denied, that Roman Catholic priests often effect cures that are not to be accounted for by natural causes. I admit then, Sir, the reality of your miracle; yet so far from looking on it as a star to guide me to the Church of Rome, I will prove it to be an ignis fatuus of the Devil, to lead the ignorant to destruction.' (II, p138).

As against the appeal to miracles to authenticate the claims of Rome Carson insists that, 'The Scriptures not miracles, are the standing test of truth.' (II, p148).

Alexander Carson is the one great theologian amongst the ranks of Irish Baptists. Whether his strong evangelical Calvinism would make him welcome in all Irish Baptist pulpits today is a moot point. However that may be he would have all of us do what he consistently strove to do - shape our doctrines according to the Word of God. Because he was so concerned to form his views by a close and careful study of Scripture he is not afraid to differ from even the most orthodox divines at points where he considers that they have not done justice to the teaching of Scripture. Not all of his views would command our support, especially when he strays from exegesis into a consideration of political issues. For instance, how many of us would today have been prepared as he was, to fight for the continuance of the established church in Ireland?' 'I consider', he wrote, 'the Church of

England, as the strongest bulwark of religious liberty. I am fully convinced that liberty of conscience in this country will not long survive the demolition of the Establishment.' (II, p188).

But notwithstanding such blemishes - and they are few indeed - what was once said of John Bunyan can with equal justice be said of Alexander Carson the theologian - 'Prick him anywhere and his blood is ~~sublime~~ biblline'.

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