Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

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

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




https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology




https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb

***PayPal*** https://paypal.me/robbradshaw

---

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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_irish-baptist-historical-society-journal_old-series.php

# IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

VOLUME FIVE 1972/73

*Price: 12/6 to non-members*

# Irish Baptist Historical Society

# JOURNAL

Volume Five - - 1973/74

*  *  *

© Copyright 1973 Irish Baptist Historical Society

Price 63p to non-members

Membership of the Society is open to person interested in the history of Baptist Churches in Ireland. The membership subscription is £1.00 (in the British Isles) and entitles to the Society's Journal. For overseas members the annual subscription is $3.50 inclusive.

*Published at the Offices of the Baptist Union of Ireland, 3 Fitzwilliam Street, Belfast, BT9 6AW, Northern Ireland.*

# Contents


Editorial ... 4

'The Waterford Church Book 1805-1914'

R J FITZPATRICK BA ... 5

'Recollections of Some Prominent Irish Baptists'

( i) W G FRIZELLE — H D GRIBBON B.Com.Sc. Ph.D., ... 18

(ii) ALEXANDER McCAY — G R BENNETT ... 23

'Fifty years of Belfast Work'

RECORDED BY THE LATE PASTOR DAVID BURROWS ... 38

'Church Discipline'

J F BRADLEY ... 48

# Editorial

Within the general field of Baptist history it is the later development of work, and particularly of churches, in Ireland which is reflected in this year's contributions to the Journal. There are references to some of the churches in the south of the country which survived the eighteenth century, to pre-Famine expansion in rural areas north and south, followed by post-Famine decline, and finally to the notable expansion in and around Belfast which marked the early decades of the present century. This is the bread and butter material of which history is made. More difficult to convey in the space available to the contributors are the views and feelings of those about whom they write. The opening of a church in the historic city of Londonderry must have been a thrilling event to those who took part, not easily grasped by those of us who have the choice of several within a short bus ride. On a rather different level it is hard for the present generation, even of country dwellers, to appreciate the dilemma of the Tobermore member who needed to rent land if he and his family were to live yet had to abide by a code not binding on his neighbours in tendering to a landlord for it. But it is not impossible to read between the lines, and gratitude must be expressed to the present contributors for providing both the material and the guidance to enable us to do so.

H.D.G.

# The Waterford Church Book - 1805-1914

Although of a plain and unprepossessing appearance, the Waterford Church book is an invaluable source for the study of 19th Century Irish Baptist History. Bound with stiff cardboard it contains some 136 foolscap pages of church records from June 1805 to December 1914. The record is reasonably continuous, the most noticeable gap being from 1815-1825. At the back there are some pages of rougly drawn accounts of the period 1807-1811 and one page of notes on marriages affecting some of the church families e.g. Coleman, Boulton, Scroder, Shearman. In addition there is one lose page, with valuable details of the 18th century pastorate, written originally before 1839 and added to later.

It would be wrong to attempt to reconstruct a history of the Waterford Church based upon such limited evidence and I do not propose to do this. However some indications may be made as to the nature of the pastorate, membership, finance, buildings and property, and practices of the Waterford Church, based on the evidence of the Church Book.

We know from B.J. White's article [1] on Thomas Patient, that Patient was leading the Baptist cause in Waterford as early as April 1650. The first pastor referred to is a Mr. Foster 1653.[2] No further details are given of this period except that *'the Meeting House was erected not long after'* in Stephen St. and was *'hidden from public view by a dwelling house,*

*can only be entered through a long and obscure passage' ....'it was deemed necessary in those troublous times to have the building thus secluded for the sake of greater security to the worshippers.'* 3

Samuel Fowkes is mentioned as minister 1716-1744. He visited Wexford and is said to have been imprisoned there for preaching. Peter Brown was pastor 1746-1755 - "judicious" of a "high character" and according to his diary there were 115 members in his time. It is worth noting how this refutes the usual assumption of a defunct or struggling Baptist witness in 18th century Ireland. From 1758-1763 the pastor was Henry Phillips of whom nothing is known except that he left for Dublin (or Salisbury).

James Edwards A.M. from Monmouth was minister 1766-1786. He is mentioned as a good scholar and he is buried in the local churchyard of St. Johns. (his tombstone inscription is recorded inside front cover). Thomas Lewis succeeded him, having been appointed assistant to Edwards in 1785. Perhaps another comment on the strength of the 18th century church! Lewis resigned the pastorate in 1804 and died in 1839 aged 89.

It is from this juncture that the Church Book dates and the continuity of the witness is easily traced from 1806 to 1914. It is therefore possible to list the ministers of the church from 1716 to the present, a feat which can perhaps only be matched by the Cork Church. Some of the more noteworthy occupants of the pastoral office can be mentioned. Benjamin Dickinson (1806-1810) of whom it is recorded *'while preaching from these word ... for we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ ... He had proceeded about a 1/4 of an hour in his sermon and was desiring his congregation to take these things into their serious consideration when it pleased his blessed master to take him to himself .'*

Thomas Clarke (1813-1825) married a Miss Mary Hammett in April 1814 and the rather pathetic entry that follows is *'on Thursday the 30th November 1815 died Hammett Clarke the son of Mary and Thomas Clarke !* His resignation was on grounds of declining health but he survied until June 1863 and the comment on him was *'entered into business and resided at Waterford till his death.'* He was to prove troublesome in 1851 when the church

received a letter from him claiming some rights to *'the emolurents connected with the pastoral office'* and offering his service as minister. He was told in no uncertain terms he had *'no claim whatever on, or connection with the Baptist cause in Waterford'*

Charles Hardcastle's ministry from 1826 to 1847 was obviously the most important in the first half of the 19th century just as John Douglas's from 1874 to 1891 was to be in the second half. Details of Hardcastle's ministry cannot be gleaned from the church book and for a broader picture of the man and his work we are indebted to Principal Kingdon. [4]

The fluctuating nature of the work can be understood in following the church's difficulties in obtaining a replacement for Hardcastle. *'From July to November (1847), the church was supplied irregularly by different ministers and some sabbaths, there being no one to preach, a sermon was read in the morning by one of the members and there was no service on such evenings, consequently the attendance became very small.'* Even when the church issued a call to the pastorate all did not go smoothly. Rev. I.D. Casewell of Evesham, called by the church in January 1848, after spending some 6 weeks in Waterford, on leaving for Evesham *'was taken ill on the passage and after his return home continued so much indisposed that he was obliged to decline the invitation.'*

On numerous occasions the pulpit was supplied by men from south west England and Wales and especially from the College at Haverford West, it being no further from Waterford than was Dublin.

The difficult and discouraging nature of the work was indicated by Wilshere's ministry (1851-1861). In 1861 he offered *'to resign if the members thought a new minister would be more efficient.'* He had become *'discouraged by the stagnant and unpromising condition of the cause* and *felt bound to resign in the hope that a change would be beneficial to himself and to the church'*. His letter points out other factors; the ending of a £50 annuity allowed by Boyce's trustees since 1855; the illness of his family; *'the increasing demands made upon me by their needs of education and support and the uncertain character of my income.'*

He points out the stagnation of the cause in contrast to *'the general awakening in other parts of Ireland and the improved condition of several of our Irish Baptist Churches.'* He notes *'the unusual interest shown in the preaching of some strangers by the people of Waterford.'* He had declined other openings in years gone by *'because I could not see any possibility of ... a successor'*. Indeed he had persuaded the Irish society to support the work whether he stayed or not. Although the church wanted financial assistance from the Baptist Irish Society it wanted to retain its complete independence in the choice of a Pastor. The Baptist Irish Society offered £30 p.a. in aid of a pastor's salary.

From this time the pastorate tended to be filled by younger men coming to the church from College and indeed even leaving the church to complete their studies. For example William McKinney of Carrickfergus came as pastor in November 1865 and left for London in May 1867 *'to attend college !* His membership was transferred to the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1868. Charles Willoughby (1907-1912) left the church for 6 months to complete a university course (M.A.)

The difficulty of filling the pastoral office was recognised afresh in 1870 when after Thomas's resignation the church was actually closed from 30th June to 17th July. In these circumstances the Baptist Irish Society *'agreed to send a supply, they receiving the minister's income and defraying his expenses. The Minister to be subject to the approval of the church . Mr. Edward Love from Regents Park College accordingly came over to preach his first sermon on Lord's Day 17th July.'*

A greater degree of stability came to the church when John Douglas of Portadown, *'late from Regent's (Park) College'* became pastor October 1874. For the first time the laconic comment is found *A tea meeting and recognition service was held 6.30 p.m. - 10.00 p.m.'* In the period of his ministry 1874-1891there are recorded various evidences of a lively although small church, some of these will be mentioned later by September 1891 he had moved with his wife and five children to take up the pastorate at Broad St. Nottingham. He was presented with *'an illuminated address and drawing room clock.'*

The Church was not always so blessed in its choice of a pastor. In June 30th, 1895 *'Mr. John Lloyd, Senior student Rockfeller (?) House Dublin was this day unanimously invited to become Pastor, which invitation he heartily accepted.'* However by March 1896 *'considerable friction having arisen in the church owing to the line of action taken up by Pastor J.Lloyd towards some of the members, the office-bearers were requested to ascertain the views of the members as to whether he should continue as Pastor or not. This was done by circular, every member voted, the result was that the majority decided that Mr. Lloyd should be called upon to resign...; he at firstrefused to do so, but at length had to yield to the wish of the majority.....some of the members subscribed the sum of £15 as a money grant to Mr.Lloyd but not as a matter of any right to it on his part.'*

The church evidently was very conscious of its obligations to its minister especially financially and equally conscious of its limited resources in this respect. However in 1899 it was resolved to raise the pastor's salary to £150 p.a. and when J.H. Boyd (1896-1901) resigned on taking up the Deputation secretaryship of the Irish Baptist Home Mission he was *'presented with a purse of sovereigns (13).'* Willoughby received a similar gift in 1912 on moving to Athlone.

The church book finishes its record of holders of the pastoral office thus, *'In November 1912 Mr. Louis E. Deens of Dublin a student of the Irish Baptist College, having supplied the pulpit for some weeks it was unanimously and cordially agreed.to invite him to accept the pastorate and this he agreed to do and commenced his ministry on the first Sunday of January 1913.'*

The Church book sheds some interesting light on the doctrine and practice of the Waterford Church. There are four principal statements on this subject. One is a comment on the position in the 18th century; one an important restatement of the rules dated April 9th, 1807; one dated February 1848 on the subject of "open" or "close" communion; and finally a "Revised Constitution" dated 2nd March 1898.

The first of these; on the 18th century position is interesting in that it emphasises the church's Calvinistic position *'viz Divine election, original sin, regeneration, justification by the Righteousness of Christ, sanctification, adoption, perseverance and judgement to come,*

*together with the congregational order of the Churches'.* (This may be compared with the Arminian position held in Cork at the time).

The 1807 Rules somewhat elaborate this position and add a section on *'Moral and religious conduct'* based on *'a conviction of the importance of these things, together with their growing declension among our own denomination in this Kingdom.'* Specifically mentioned is *'avoiding the sins of the time and place where we are by a non-complyance (sic) with the fashionable and sinful amusements and entertainments of the age, such as cardplaying, dice, billiards and frequenting assemblies, theatres, operas, masquerades, balls etc. Horse races etc.'*

In 1848, in the rather unstable conditions that existed after Hardcastle's death, the question of "open" or "close" communion was raised. The correspondence on the issue is difficult to follow but it is obvious that the deacon W.E. Scroder was strongly opposed to any move away from closed communion while at least 16 out of the membership of 20 were in favour of a change. The church's letter to Scroder is copied into the Church Book but Scroder's letter to the church, which was originally attached, is now missing. There is mention of *'a lengthened correspondence'* over the issue. The practice from this time was to admit to communion those who were evidently walking in fellowship with our Lord but who *'conscientiously differ from us on the point in question'* (i.e. believers' baptism.) W.E. Scroder remained a member until August 1849 when he left for New York.

The Revised constitution of 1898 attempted to draw together the principles laid down in the earlier statements on doctrine, *'a new generation having arisen ... many of whom are unquainted with the principles believed and taught by the church.'*

Apart from these formal statements, the church Book offers little information on church practice. However in December 1849 the practice of deputing members to visit persons applying for membership was dropped. It was only to be followed *'in cases of doubt re. the character and conversion of a candidate. In all other cases a letter of application from the candidate and the testimony of the pastor shall be deemed sufficient.'* Scrutiny of applicants for membership, baptism or communion was searching. In May 1854 the

question of Mrs. Baskin and her daughter Ellen (aged 13) was raised. *'As the views and feelings of the church were in favour of this young person's admission, the mother and daughter were received as suitable candidates for baptism. Ellen Baskin's views upon personal religion and baptism seemed quite as satisfactory as the Mother's.'* They were both baptised on May 18th and received into the church on June 4th.

In 1861 *'Emily Brooks (daughter of two members) was ... mentioned as a probable condidate for baptism, but as her father did not think it right to encourage further proceedings at present it was resolved that she should be noticed and encouraged in the hope of leading her to an early decision for Christ and His church.'*

Discipline was exercised on several occasions notably for non-attendance but there is also this note for December 3rd 1844. *'Lawrence Buckley having acted in a very inconsistent manner in his family and domestic relationship and having also been detected in falsehoods and calumanies the Pastor and deacons admonished him on the 14th of September, but as he gave no evidence of repentance, although he presented himself at the Lord's table today - he was not allowed to commune.'*

There was obviously a plurality of deacons in Hardcastle's time but it was not until September 1891 that an elder was appointed. He was Mr. Edward Bowman, of whom it is recorded in 1889 that, *'having joined in 1841 and retired to join the Brethren in 1849, (probably as he had been in conflict with Scroder over the question of communion, 'he was cordially received into fellowship again at his own request.'*

*'Part of the duties of the office to be to speak to and exhort any new members that may join.'*

In 1901 Bowman *'resigned his office of eldership owing to advanced years, after a faithful discharge of its duties for ten years.'* No mention of a replacement is made in the remainder of the period covered by the church book.

The membership of the church never again reached the exceptionally high figure of 115 mentioned in Brown's diary. [5] Indeed the 19th century lists (1805, 1811 ( 2 lists) 1842, 1847, 1849, 1851, 1861, 1865, 1868, 1870, 1875, 1880, 1882, 1884, 1886, 1889, 1892, 1893, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1901, 1903) show a variation between 10 and 44. There was a continual struggle to combat the effects of emigration. The destinations were world-wide, from Britain to New Zealand. Seldom are we given any reasons for this or comment upon it, so common a feature it must have been of life in 19th century Ireland. One exception is an entry for April 1897 - *'Mr. and Mrs. Bennett left Waterford for Manchester having been driven thither by the dispute in the Irish Bacon trade .'*

Some entries give a little colour to the general picture of the membership.

February 1838 -*'John Williams withdrew from membership having united himself to a society of Christians in Birr denominated the Brethren'.* ' A Dr. Evans was a member and Captains Harpur and Winter (probably naval rather than military figures), on the other hand the impact of the Church on the local Catholic population leading to conversion and membership was slight. In 1879 *'Mary McCarthy and Mary Stafford were baptized (formerly R.C.'s) having been in regular attendance and under instruction for several months.'* This reference, however, seems unique.On some occasions there were sudden sports of growth in the membership. The most noticeable being from July 27th to September 14th 1884 when there were 10 baptisms, 7 being admitted to membership, usually on the Sunday following the baptism. Perhaps these additions were due to the lasting effects of Moody and Sankey's visit to the town the previous year, and there was a similar growth in 1898. The factors involved must have been complex for even the posting of a regiment could greatly affect the membership - June 9th 1869 - *' Brothers Wm. Skinner (Thos.) Wiseman and Robt. Ogilvie (?) were received by letters from the Baptist Church Granville St. Halifax - they were all of the band of the 30th Regiment.'* However by February 1870 they left *'the regiment having changed.'* [6]

Some members exercised a very practical ministry. Of Miss Martha Sherran who died in 1872 it is recorded *'several of our young ministers had a home in her house for years .'* - Evans (1861-1864), McKinney (1865-1867) and Thomas (1868-1870). In 1859 a Mrs. McNamara *'was received into communion having become a teacher of the Ragged School in this city!*

The roughly drawn accounts at the back of the book indicate that in the period 1807-1810 members paid subscriptions on a quarterly basis. The total collected annually being in the region of £20-£30. This was augmented by rents on certain houses which produced another £78.00. From this income certain expenses had to be deducted, notably the ground rent on the meeting house £10.00. However there was also in 1807, *'Militia tax £1.18, Incumbent money 9s.6 and parish rate and lamps 10s. 10d!*

The upkeep of the church's property was a continual problem - In 1828 *'to stop the annual repairing of the roof (probably thatched) it was resolved to put on a new one £46.4.11 was spent on this. During this work 2 rooms were put on the rear of the dwelling house (adjacent to the church). It was hoped there might on occasions be the possibility of supplementing the pastoral income by letting these. The rooms cost £32.12.2d, the money was lent by Hardcastle to the Church.'*

In the period 1830-1838 there was the difficulty of settling Josiah Coleman's legacy of £200. This having been accomplished the church tackled the major problem of the condition of their own building.

*'The meeting house having stood for 92 years. The floor flagged and very - damp in wet weather, and pews had become greatly decayed. It was resolved to attempt their renewal.'* The Church Book contains a sketch plan of the church and allocation of pews before the renewals, and then one as altered.

However by 1876 the position of the building in Stephen Street had made it entirely unsuitable. The appeal for funds for a new building made the following points

*'within the last thirty years ... the street in which our chapel is situated has greatly gone down in importance and respectability, so that it has now become one of the lowest in the city ... In addition to this, the poor Roman Catholics of the immediate neighbourhood who have a superstitious dread of entering the building themselves, think little of insulting the people whom they see coming to our meetings; and for some time past we have had to keep a policeman on beat during the hours of evening service, to prevent disturbance.'*

Kirtland the ex-secretary of the British and Irish Baptist Home Mission backed up the appeal.

*'The wretched locality in which the present chapel stands and the spirit of deadly opposition which is manifested by the surrounding population must combine to hinder any large measure of success. People will not go to be mobbed and insulted.'*

Also mentioned *'was the difficulty of ascent up the hill on which the street is built.'*

The old meeting house premises, including the dwelling house, were auctioned in 1877 for £210.

The funds for the new premises in Catherine Street were raised as follows.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *English subscriptions* | *£ 209* | |
| *Irish " * | *152* | |
| *Sale of Old Chapel* | *196* | *(deduction for fees?)* |
| *Government Loan* | *120* | |
| | *£ 678* | |

The new building was opened May 17th 1877. By 1893 improvements to this building were needed - *'to be ... made into a permanent looking structure.'* The improvements were to include building a brick wall on the outside of the chapel a new front on a level with

the road, a three-light window, a slate roof over the existing iron one and a new porch at the side. This was to cost £120. £70 of this was promised by the Irish Baptist Home Mission. There is a marginal note in heavy black ink '*but not paid*' and then '*paid about 1900.*' By 1897 it was '*resolved to purchase incandescent gas burners for the chapel*'. Improvement continued. May 1903 - '*the old system of heating being unsatisfactory. 5 new gas stoves were set in the floor ... at a cost of £10.5.0.*'

The whole property was insured with '*the Sun Coy.*' for a total of £1000 at a premium of 15/=.

In 1909 a tender was accepted for the building of a new chapel on the site of the old. This time the cost was £1350 of which the church raised £250. '*The Brethren meeting at Catherine Street offered us use of their premises during rebuilding*' with such co-operation the new chapel in Catherine Street was opened October 25th, 1910.

Finally we can glean some information on the relationship of the church to Christian work in general; and that of the Baptist cause in Ireland in particular. We know from Dr. Gribbon's work on the Cork Church Book that the Baptist Association had held meetings in Waterford in 1758. The first one mentioned by the Church Book is that of 1812. Held from 15th to 17th of May. The venue is unknown but the Waterford Church had raised the following issue '*that certain highly respectable characters had withdrawn themselves from the church on account of the admission of Methodists to Fellowship.*' Therefore the Association took the following step '*Resolved that any person who we believe is truly converted to God, if they apply for baptism and church fellowship shall be received into the communion of our Churches.*' Mention is also made of letters sent from the church to the Association meeting in November 1842 at Abbeyleix, and in August 1843, 1844 and 1845 at Dublin. There is no indication that meetings were held at Waterford again until October 1898 when the 2nd annual

meetings of the Southern Baptist Association were held on October 11th and 12th - *'the catering was efficiently done at Mr. Waddell's Dining Rooms, the Quay.'* The Southern Baptist Association met again in Waterford immediately after the opening of the new building in 1910. This time they *'met for dinner in the Imperial Hotel.'*

In an even wider sphere there are two mentions of Moody and Sankey's visits. First in 1875 it is recorded that evangelistic meetings (were) held January, February (and) March on evenings through (the) week consequent on *'Messrs. Moody and Sankey's visit to Ireland. All denominations united in several places of worship, enquirers and prayer meetings held and much good done.'* Second in 1883 that *'Messrs. Moody and Sankey visited Waterford for 4 days and held meetings in the skating rink which were very largely attended by people for 20 miles round. Some having come fully 60 miles. As many as 1500 people attended some of the meetings. Many were converted and a great spirit of revival prevailed.'*

In conclusion the Church Book may be taken as positive evidence of the survival of a Baptist witness in Waterford during the 18th century. It is another reputation of the hypothesis that the Baptist cause in Ireland established in Cromwellian times died out to be re-established in the 19th century. In addition it is a record of an uphill struggle for survival in the 19th century but also of a determination that there should be maintained a faithful witness to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in Waterford in spite of all difficulties. This has been achieved and the latest news of the induction of a new pastor to shepherd the flock confirms that this supreme aim has been accomplished.

May this paper fulfill the intent expressed inside the front cover of the Church Book.

*'This book is the property of the Baptist Church meeting for worship in Stephen Street, Waterford. It is designed to preserve from oblivion occurences connected with that church.'*

REFERENCES

1. B.J. White - "Thomas Patient in England and Ireland" Irish Baptist Historical Society Journal Vol. II (1970) pg. 39.

2. Loose page in Waterford Church Book.

3. Quotation from a printed handout of 1876 seeking funds for re-building - a copy is inserted in the Church Book.

4. D.P. Kingdon - "Charles Hardcastle of Waterford" Irish Baptist Historical Journal, Vol. II (1970)

5. From the loose page of the Waterford Church Book mentioned in the first paragraph of the present article.

6. Also mentioned are R.I.F. - Lincoln Militia 47th Regt. of infantry "The Buffs".

# 'Recollections of Some Prominent Irish Baptists'

## W.G. FRIZELLE

William George Frizelle was born at Drumreagh, Coalisland, Co. Tyrone on April 11, 1853. He was the eldest son of Robert Frizelle, one of a numerous family, probably of Scots origin, settled in that part of Tyrone. His mother was Sarah Ann Lipsey whose family, possibly of Huguenot stock, were associated with the local linen bleaching industry. Robert Frizelle, who was employed in Stevenson's corn mill in Coalisland, is said to have been a Primitive Methodist but possibly he was not very active in that body, at any rate the family followed their mother in adherence to the Church of Ireland.

Little is known of the early education of W.G. Frizelle save that he enjoyed his years in the national school and that after leaving it he made steady progress in his studies both practical and academic whilst 'serving his time' with the linen manufacturing firm of Stevenson at Moygashel. Employment at Moygashel meant that he had to leave home. He went to live with his uncle William near Killyman and became so attached to the place that in later life he always referred to Killyman rather than Drumreagh as 'the old home'. Now began a long association with the Dungannon district about which more will be said later. It was in Dungannon in 1869, at the age of sixteen, that he was converted. The details are unknown and it would be unwise to assume any Baptist connection so early. So far as is known he remained with the Church of Ireland but early became

involved in Christian work, with Presbyterians and others.

W.G. Frizelle's business career prospered from the start and at Moygashel he acquired a very thorough knowledge of all aspects of linen weaving. Stevensons bought some of their yarn from the spinning mill of Messrs. Kirk in Keady, and young Mr. Frizelle must have had occasion to go there sometimes. He also went on other occasions, walking the sixteen miles from Dungannon to meet Mary Jane Broomfield of Crosskeys whom he married in Keady in September 1880. They set up home at Parkmount Cottage, Moygashel and began to raise a family. In business Mr. Frizelle prospered too, becoming manager of the weaving factory soon after his marriage.

Perhaps at this time, perhaps a little earlier, Mr. Frizelle's interest in Baptist work began to develop. He used to speak of a party in one of the socially acceptable homes in Dungannon where, as his contribution to the evening, he gave his testimony! (Incidentally, young Mr. Robert Stevenson stayed at Parkmount Cottage with the Frizelle family whilst 'serving his time' at Moygashel, returning to Dungannon at weekends where his family lived at Northland Row. Mr. Frizelle was thus on social as well as business terms with the Stevensons). His association with the Church of Ireland appears to have ceased shortly after his marriage for, in October 1883 he was baptised in Lisnagleer, although he did not join the church. Instead, he attended Baptist meetings held in Dungannon by a Mr. Alex Patterson. During this time too, he was associated with his wife's brother Mr. Thomas Broomfield in evangelical work in Co. Armagh.

There were born in the home at Moygashel one son and three daughters. The eldest daughter married George M. Reid who had been pastor of the Baptist Church in Lurgan 1904-09 and was later pastor of a succession of Baptist churches in the U.S.A. The son, Thomas B. Frizelle became a Baptist minister in California. The youngest daughter

married the late H.A. Johnston whose memory is much respected in present Irish Baptist circles.

In 1889 Mr. Frizelle left Stevensons, to the great regret of the firm, and moved to Armagh to take over the running of the weaving factory of Messrs. McCrum at Milford, the family setting up home in a house in Scotch Street, Armagh, where his second son was born. A little later he moved again, this time to the Umgola weaving factory of Messrs John Compton & Son and the family took up residence in 'Comptonville' a pleasant house delightfully situated on the outskirts of the city of Armagh. Here another son was born. Finally, there was a brief return to Dungannon while Mr. Frizelle worked for the firm of Messrs. Dickson, just beside the railway station, and the last son was born at Beech Valley, a house standing in its own grounds some distance outside the town. His family complete, W.G. Frizelle turned his back on the country and, toward the end of the century moved to Belfast.

His first employment was with Messrs. Ewart, but Mr. Frizelle did not see eye to eye with Mr. Lavens Ewart and soon transferred to the Brookfield Linen Company, managing first their small factory in Agnes Street and later the weaving section of the Crumlin Road mill. It should perhaps be said that the frequent changes of employment which have been noted were not due to any instability or inefficiency on the part of Mr. Frizelle. On the contrary, he was an expert at his trade and in later life set and marked the United Kingdom examination papers on linen weaving required to be passed by textile factory trainees. He was what today would probably be called a management consultant and his services were much in demand during the 1880 and early 1890's when the linen trade was going through a period of depression. It is known that he declined offers to work for firms besides those mentioned.

In Belfast Mr. Frizelle became particularly involved in Baptist work. He joined the Regent Street church and with them moved to Antrim Road in 1897. It was whilst a member of Antrim Road and living in Cliftonpark Avenue that his dear wife died during the typhoid epidemic of 1898 (October 2), leaving him with a family of four sons and three daughters of whom the eldest, a daughter, was eighteen and the youngest a son of about seven. Mr. Frizelle later re-married, there were several moves within the Cliftonville-Oldpark suburb area as the family grew up, married and moved out. The last home, in Alliance Avenue he called 'Drumreagh' doubtless with recollections in mind of his earliest boyhood. Meantime, in 1901 a number of Antrim Road members, including W.G. Frizelle broke away to form the new church in Cliftonpark Avenue (on a site which had previously been a forge). Mr. Frizelle served the new church as treasurer and deacon for thirty years. His services to the denomination were recognised when he was made president of the Union in 1912, and his own enthusiasm for the Lord's work found further expression in the part he took in the formation in 1916 of the Irish Baptist Orphan Society, at whose inaugural meeting he presided. This latter interest he retained for the rest of his life, and, as one colleague put it *'Mr. Frizelle lived for the Orphan Society.'* He had other interests too. He became a member of the Bible Society and was its chairman in 1928, and he was an enthusiastic supporter of the new Baptist Churches now beginning to spring up in the suburbs of Belfast. Both Glengormley and Monkstown in particular owe him much. One of his favourite Saturday afternoon occupations was to traverse the local Belfast tram routes looking for suitable sites for new church buildings.

As to recreation, Mr. Frizelle was a good amateur book binder and bound all his copies of the Irish Baptist. Although not a member of the Orange Order he liked to watch the procession on July 12 and could recite all the Orange songs -

as one might expect from one who lived so long in *'the county Tyrone in the town of Dungannon.'*

W.G. Frizelle was deeply attached to his family and, after they were settled in homes of their own inaugurated an unusual and interesting family custom - a 'round robin' letter which went from one household to another, each member of the family adding to it in turn. This practice continued right up to the time of his death.

He died in his 83 rd year, on April 6, 1936. A memorial service was held in Antrim Road on April 26 at which tributes were paid to his memory and portions read from two of his favourite psalms - 103rd and 107th. Many remain of those who knew him in denominational life- most will remember the fatherly figure, the neatly trimmed beard and the voice with its hint of Tyrone.

This brief biography has been put together, principally from the re-collections of his daughter, Mrs. E.M. Johnston, Newcastle and from material collected by his grand-daughter Miss Margaret Johnston, so that when those who knew him personally have gone some record may remain for the inspiration and instruction of those still to come.

*'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men.'*

H.D. Gribbon

ALEXANDER McCAY

When Dr. Gribbon first asked me to obtain information in order to provide a pen picture of the late Alexander McCay of Londonderry I felt reasonably optimistic. There came to mind quite a number of possible sources of information which would amply supplement my own personal knowledge of the good man, and, of course, I viewed myself solely as an intermediary who would pass these on to be cohesively presented by an abler pen than mine. Unfortunately I was to be sadly disillusioned in various ways and for different reasons. My phone calls, letters and conversations failed to elicit the concrete factual truth of many aspects of Mr. McCay's life and this was particularly true of his early days. Some who might have helped in this, one a relative, were recently called home. All whom I contacted knew the man well. Some much better than I did. All however were equally vague as to the many things we would now like to know with certainty. The prevailing unrest in the country and, particularly, in Londonderry added to the difficulties of enquiry and I deemed it unsuitable to go there and elsewhere in the County of Donegal in the quest, so his appearance in this account is somewhat like that of the Old Testament prophet Elijah the Tishbite in this respect; the background of each is unknown yet well-known by the kind of men they were, one from the mountains of Gilead, the other from the mountains of Donegal.

At a more favourable time more details may yet be obtained, but for the present we are thrown back on reminiscences of a personal and often humorous character and the records

of the man and his work in connection with the denomination as we find them in the Irish Baptist Magazine and even these must be curtailed in their survey. It is comforting to remember that the full record is in heaven where there are no misunderstandings and no service to our Lord overlooked or wrongly presented. This is but an attempt at an interpretation, however brief and inadequate, of an outstanding figure in the Baptist denomination. Inevitably in doing this I will be writing subjectively as well as objectively. In the process of investigation I have been getting to know Alexander McCay as I never got to know him when he was still here with us. And I met with him frequently. With older and wiser eyes I can reconcile apparent contradictions and view seeming eccentricities as things to be emulated. He was not infallible as none of us are. He had his foibles and could make mistakes, and seemed reluctant to admit them, but in a roundabout way would let you know that he had come to see your point of view and agreed with it. Perhaps this attitude was adopted for the general good of all and should be viewed in that light. But he was a grand old man and I deeply regret that I did not avail myself of the wisdom of his years and Christian experience as I so surely could have done had my eyes and ears been open. You will understand as I proceed. One thing is abundantly clear, we must see him in the time that he lived and take into account every circumstance and aspect of his life as lived in those days.

Born in 1844, four years after the penny postage was instituted, when railways were in their infancy, a year before Maynooth College was endowed which was the same year as the Famine in Ireland, two years before the repeal of the Corn Laws, three before the Ten Hours Factory Bill passed and the British Museum opened. Why the

whole world has changed since then in a way which we cannot grasp. The oldest among us cannot go back that far and can but faintly grasp what those times were like, much less the younger generation. Socially, economically, politically, scientifically the world was entirely different. Sometimes the expression comes up about *'the good old days,'* in some respects they were very good, in others they were very bad. All this has bearing upon the seeming contradictions and eccentricities of the man we are thinking about. Leaving that general aspect of things with its constantly changing facade let us come to the permanent reality, the abiding Word of the Living God.

Born in 1844 Alexander McCay was born fifteen years before the 1859 Revival. Was that when he was brought to Christ? Educated privately, had that any great spiritual influence in his life? Where did he come by his Baptist principles? Did Spurgeon's printed sermons have anything to do with it? Or his parents and their views or influence? These are all questions to which I have no answer. Dr. Gribbon quite recently told me that Mr. McCay had spoken to his grandfather of a number of Baptists meeting together in meetings in Letterkenny. Possibly they had in mind the forming of a church there, they seemed to have been informal gatherings nevertheless. Robert Galbraith who was pastor of the Londonderry church when the homecall came, wrote, *'He was devoted to the Home Mission and the Home Mission Agents with a deep intensity. I am not giving any secret away when I tell you that a week or so before he left us he said to me "I pray for the day when there shall blaze on every Irish hill and in every Irish home Christ's Gospel light." and how often he expressed the longing, in the years of our acquaintance, that one day his native County Donegal would have a Baptist witness.'* I want to bring in here two

quotations at widely different times from the ubiquitous Pastor Louis Deens. It is the second one which gives a partial answer to the reason why there are no answers to the questions I have raised. This one I take first. I find it in strange association with the coming into being of the Irish Baptist Historical Society just four years ago in the June issue of the 'Irish Baptist' under the heading 'Then and Now 1913-68. Some Recollections of the Reflections on Personalities of the Past.' After giving reasons for having been asked to write in this vein Mr. Deens refers to the difficulties saying the chief of which is the problem of selection. *'Recollections of the personalities of the Twenties and Thirties are so numerous and so vivid that I could write at length about them without any difficulty, but I know I must resist this temptation. After all whilst there are still those amongst us who would be glad to be reminded of men they knew and experiences they shared it is not to be expected that others of tender years will be equally interested in the ancient history.'* Now I ask you, is not that a queer combination in the same magazine? Further on in the article there is but a brief reference to the subject of our talk tonight, but it is a very significant one. *'There was Alexander McCay, J.P., of Londonderry whose munificent bequest to the Union helped so much to put several of our Funds on a firm foundation.'*

The other quotation goes back to the year 1917. Mr. Deens writes that for many reasons the Annual Meetings of the Baptist Union of Ireland were suspended that year. They were to have been in Dublin. The various Committees met in Belfast (here I quote), *'On Wednesday the 30th the Home Mission Committee Meeting commenced at 11.00 a.m. when the Chair was occupied by Alexander McCay, Esq., J.P. of Londonderry and twenty-three members were present. Our venerable brother Pastor T. Whiteside opened the proceedings with prayer and after the Minutes were read and confirmed the items on a lengthy Agenda were taken one by one and disposed of in a much shorter time that the most sanguine*

*had thought possible.'* Mr. McCay saved time as he saved everything else, even to a point that those who did not know the other side of him thought and spoke of him as mean, niggardly, a bad landlord, a miser. I think of him as a living example of the fulfilment of John Wesley's injunction, *'Earn all you can, Save all you can, Give all you can.'* His husbanding of everything that could be converted into money, so often taken by others as hoarding of wealth was matched by an unobtrusive generosity and care for others, and the supreme desire to do something great, in humble dependence and faith in the Lord, for His Kingdom and the spread of the Gospel. This parsimony and frugality of living was applied in some senses to his own way of life and yet, paradoxically, there was expenditure he considered helpful if not altogether necessary. His home if not luxurious was good, comfortable and orderly. What he had was kept spic and span. He had a fine collection of shells. He was fond of gardening and had a small greenhouse which was full of exotic plants and flowers - a good many of the cactus variety. In our small world of today these are fairly common sights, then they were rarities. He would tell me the names of them, the distant parts of the world from which they had come, and of course I never remembered their names or their places of origin. Years after in the wild northern regions of the Argentine where grew enormous cactus plants covering the great expanses of desert I would mutter, *'Mr. McCay, you would need to have the buildings of the Botanic Gardens of Belfast to house some of these!'* After our survey in the garden we would go to have tea. The fire in the grate was diminutive, just enough to take the chill out of the room even though the day might be cold. Tea over, and the table cleared, I as distributor of the magazine would write the names of the receivers of it from his list which he read out one by one. If it was the time for the renewal of subscriptions a reminder slip was put inside the cover and, as we went through the list, again and again he would say, *'Don't put any slip in that one.'* He knew them all and those to whom even a subscription

to the magazine might be a burden. He made himself responsible for these. I have earlier made a comparison between him and an Old Testament prophet, it would not be stretching it too far to compare him with the patriarchs. He was the father of the Baptist family in Fountain Street, Londonderry. His wider range of interest in the Lord's work took him far afield in thought and prayerful support and practical help, especially in the case of the Home Mission but also in the matters of the Baptist Union generally. He held fast to his loyalties to the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Baptist Missionary Society. Like many another of our elder statesmen of those days he did not forget the work of the Baptist Irish Society and the generous help poured into our cause in Ireland by our brethren across the Irish Sea in the days of that Union's greatness. Ireland was their Home Mission and we are grateful that we still have many brethren there who are our friends and companions in our common witness to the truth of the Gospel of Christ as it is revealed in the inspired, infallible Word of God. Nevertheless the Londonderry Baptist Church was in a peculiar sense his own child. Let me quote from a comparatively recent copy of the 'Irish Baptist' on 'Our Churches' series. *'It was opened for public worship on the 27th February, 1898, but for many years earlier a group of Christian people eager to worship God according to the tenets of their faith had been meeting in the Masonic Hall and were known as Particular Baptists. In 1897 the decision was taken to erect a chapel in Fountain Street. The inspiration of this worthy ambition was a prominent Derry businessman whose name will always be associated with the Church. He was Mr. Alexander McCay, J.P. who died in 1936 and left the bulk of his fortune to further the work of the Home Mission. At a meeting in Mr. McCay's home the following simple document, expressive of the faith and charity of the founders, was drawn up and signed. "We the undersigned with others are engaged together in the erection of this Baptist chapel for the worship of God and maintenance of Christian ordinances as we believe in*

*accordance with the spirit and teaching of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are on fraternal terms and hold fellowship with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Our desire and prayer is that through this effort together with the preaching of the Gospel God shall be glorified and sinners saved through the precious blood of the Lamb. September 1897." A copy of this document was placed in a glass jar and deposited over the North East coign adjoining the entrance door.'* The Editor of The Irish Baptist magazine of the time regarded the building of the new Baptist chapel as a significant development and in an article in the magazine of October 1897 he wrote, *'A chain of Baptist churches is slowly but surely being erected across this land. We hear with joy the fact the Maiden City is forging another link in that chain.'*

Sunday, 27th February, 1898 saw the fulfilment of cherished dreams when the doors of the new chapel were opened for public worship. The occasion was graced by the presence of Pastor Charles Spurgeon, son of the great Charles Haddon Spurgeon, whose address at the first service was entitled, 'Because of Him.' Surely an appropriate reflection of the motives of those early Baptist brethren. A later edition of the 'Irish Baptist' records in the Church Notices the following, *'Londonderry 1898. On Lord's Day, May 8th the first baptismal service was held when eleven brethren and two sisters were immersed by the pastor. It was a time of gladness and power, the chapel was crowded, the entire service in every part being solemn, orderly and truly becoming. Pastor E.T. Mateer preached a powerful and graciously convincing sermon from the three commands Matthew 3:15 - Believe, Baptise, Break Bread. After the service a remark was made that it was a great day for Derry, but it was more, it was a day when God was greatly honoured by the loving obedience of His sons and daughters. It was a choice season of glad service as the sunlit faces of those immersed and those of all the brethren unmistakably indicated. Long may the spirit of power and glory rest upon each.'* I recognised here the words of

Alexander McCay. If I had any doubt the following paragraph would settle it. It is most interesting as some visiting brethren at a much later date raised the question of the site, why did the Baptists in Derry build in a side street? Here is the paragraph, *'The internal arrangements of the building are found in every detail to be eminently suitable, having a homely attractive cheerfulness where one loves to worship the one God and Father Who as truly as in the olden days we believe guided the design, erection and position of this house of prayer.'* There follows notes of rejoicing and in later numbers of the magazine of the same year the news of Summer tent work in different places, a tent having been purchased to hold three hundred people, the meetings well attended, souls blessed, great accessions to the congregation, Bible Class formed, a thriving church; and these comments from the man who under God was largely responsible for its initiation. The Lord grant that His servants here may continue as they have begun with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people.

I have referred to the times in which Mr. McCay lived in a general and comprehensive way. What about Baptist work in our land in those days? How many Baptists in Northern Ireland know that even in 1917 and for I know not how long afterwards that the largest membership of any church of the denomination was that of Harcourt Street, Dublin? It took courage and grace to stand for New Testament principles in those days, and the Lord greatly blessed the men who had the courage. Even the titles of the Presidential Addresses are illuminating in this connection. You scarcely need to read between the lines to get the message. Listen to them. 1877/78 R.H. Carson, Tobermore, 'The presence of Christ with us.' 1878/79 S.J. Banks, Banbridge, 'Love as brethren.' 1882/83 R.K. Eccles, Dublin, 'We are few'. 1884/85 W. Ussher, Belfast, 'What is our Mission?' 1887/88 H.D. Brown, Dublin 'A plea for primitive Christianity.' 1888/89 H.A. Gribbon, Coleraine, 'The Grace of God'. 1889/90 E.T. Mateer, Belfast, 'Conditions and progress and power in the heavenly life and service.' 1890/91 R.J. Glendinning, Belfast, 'The duty of Christian forbearance.'

1892/93 A. McCaig, Brannockstown, afterwards, of course, the Principal of Spurgeon's College, 'Primitive Christianity.'
1893/94 T.R. Warner, Dublin, 'Our position and practice.'
1897/98 C.S. Donald, Belfast, 'Our mission, methods and message'.
Reference has also been made to some words of an article by Mr. Deens that it is not to be expected that others of tender years will be equally interested in ancient history. The question arises, Is there any way in which they can be made to take an interest in these things? But that is away out of my province.

Now, having endeavoured to give a fair balance to the very remarkable man we have been thinking about, I want to pass on a few snippets, both humorous and serious. A scripture examination was being held. I don't know how it came up, or how I came to be in it. A question on the paper I decided to answer in a way that would please the examiners. I spiritualised on an incident in one of the Gospels, and I had more than a suspicion that that got me the second prize. Mrs. Jack, the widow of a friend who was for many years an elder in the Church got the first prize. She was then Miss Violet Roulstone. Both prizes were Weymouth's version of the New Testament, one a better quality than the other. A strange thing happened. Mr. McCay asked me to put something on the flyleaf and then he would sign it. After pondering it I put the usual, 'Awarded to G.R. Bennett as second prize in scripture examination', or something to that effect. I passed it to him and without him saying anything I knew he was disappointed. He was looking for some sign of spiritual life and it wasn't there. Without a word he signed it and added a text, but so great was the impression made on me that I couldn't bear to see that flyleaf of the New Testament. I did nothing about it for a long time, but I finally tore it out and destroyed it. The only part I kept was the bottom with his signature and the text. I have it here with me tonight to show you.

It was again Mr. Deens who told me the story of how Mr. McCay and the then pastor of the Derry Church went together on a holiday on one occasion. He believed that holidays were also a necessary adjunct of life. Mr. McCay bore all the expenses of the holiday for both of them, the travel, the place where they stopped, the incidentals, everything. It was on the way home that the pastor said, *'This holiday has cost me nothing. I must buy something.'* He bought a newspaper to look at on the train, probably it cost him one penny. As they were about to leave the carriage at the end of the journey Mr. McCay said, *'You are forgetting your newspaper.'* The pastor said, *'We've finished with it. We've both seen what it contains.'* Mr. McCay quietly picked it up, folded it, and put it in his pocket, saying, *'I get so much for every pound weight of old newspaper.'* I retold the story to a couple of persons a few days later, One remarked, *That's economy gone mad, carried to excess.'* I wonder, I wonder. The very wording quoted in this mixed up article used at the times of the plans for the Derry Church, *'A chain of Baptist Churches is slowly and surely being erected across our land'*, rang a bell in my memory of a not altogether different character, who I think was a Yorkshire man, I cannot remember the details perhaps the agile brain and vivid memory of Mr. Deens will again help us out. Turned down for missionary work abroad he applied himself industriously to the making of money, lived a frugal kind of existence, and by his liberal giving to missionary work was enabled to forge a chain of mission stations across Africa. He was reputed to have said, *'I would rather live on a crust of bread than that the heathen should be without the Gospel.'* Could there be any connections or are these just the meanderings of an old man's mind which he should keep to himself? There undoubtedly was the same impelling force of the Spirit moving both men in the same direction of spreading the Gospel.

At the Jubilee services of the Londonderry Church in 1948

Stanley Andrews, the son of a former pastor, who was then himself pastor of the Coates Memorial Baptist Church in Paisley was invited for the occasion. At the Monday evening social he and I shared the platform with a few others who were representatives of the different branches of the work. Stanley, turning to me when speaking of our earlier days, said, *'There were giants in those days'*, and among other things referred to the custom Mr. McCay had of re-using old envelopes. In some words like these he said, *'Long before the Government learned and taught us to economise in this way during the late war Mr. McCay had been practising this very thing.'* I tell for the first time what I refrained from saying that night. When I was going to London, the Foreign Mission Committee, having insisted on my taking some medical training, had accepted responsibility for general expenses. I was to find the travel and any other incidental expenses. I took an adamant attitude at home that I would have no further sacrifices on my mother's part, *'But what will you do?'* she asked. My answer was that if the Lord wanted me to go He would send the money. I'm not recounting how one and another of the Lord's dear people helped, but just that one of those re-used envelopes was handed in by Mr. McCay himself to my mother at our door with just these words, *'That's for Bertie.'* It contained a generous gift. When going away to South America he asked me to call in and see him. He took me up to his attic and showed me two very well preserved and characteristically cared - for pieces of travelling equipment - a good leather trunk and a suitcase also strong and in good condition. *'Would any of those be of service to you on your journey? You can have your choice.'* I chose the trunk. *'Right,'* he said, *'I will send both of them down to you.'* That was so like him. He always seemed to be probing, seeking to find indications of his own thoughts being confirmed, his prayers being answered, and surprising you with his thoughtfulness. He was the father of the flock, dominant in all the affairs of the Church and yet not dominating. The same shrewdness that characterised his business life was a prominent feature of

his spiritual aims and activities. He had probed me about the College, about his County Donegal, but I had gone in a different direction. As he wasn't quite open with me I didn't divulge to him that the Lord had had some difficulty in getting me to go to South America.

Across the street from the Church he bought two houses. One of them had been a public house. He said to my father, *'I bought those houses and someday I am going to have them made into a Mission Hall.'* My father's answer was direct, *'Why someday, why not now?'* Mr. McCay gave no reply, but in no time the workmen were busy and in 1923 the hall was opened. He had been probing again and got the right answer.

On one occasion he said, *'I am going to some meetings in Belfast, is there any book you would like me to bring you?'* - another surprising example of his thoughtfulness. He was another peruser of second-hand bookshops. *'What would you like?' 'Oh',* I replied, *'bring me something of Spurgeon or MacLaren.' 'Och', he replied, 'there was no end to Spurgeon.'* He brought me a book of Alexander MacLaren's sermons! Spurgeon was too long-winded and that was bordering on the intolerable with Alexander McCay. Pastor Frank Forbes used to relish telling of one Sunday he preached in Derry. At the close of the evening service McCay said to him,*'I should be the first to thank you for that message, but man, you did weary me this morning.'*

He often came off with pithy remarks and sometimes got his answer. Nobody was more difficult to get started at public speaking than myself, and when I did get started my skeletons had not much flesh on them, so the messages if not a combination of skeletons were fuller and richer of material rather than getting across one principle thought. At the close of one meeting he said to me, *'Don't tell us all you know in one night.'* I understood him perfectly but my answer was as sharp as his. *'There's plenty more in the book.'* There is so much more I could write if I had that gift but already this has got to an enormous length. I want to bring it to a close with two

quotations; one once again from Mr. Deens at the time of Mr. McCay's death. He refers to him having taken over the Treasurer-ship of the Home Mission from Mr. Henry Gribbon. *'This was an honorary post but with Mr. McCay it certainly was not a nominal one. His attention to every detail was meticulous. Nothing was too small for his interest. What he undertook to do he believed in doing well. Perhaps the most vivid memory of our dear friend which will remain with many will be that of his appearance on the platform of the Home Mission meeting last May. He was prevailed upon to say a few words and most of us expected that they would be an appeal for the Mission he loved but instead he launched out in an impassioned and thrilling appeal to the young people present to surrender to Christ and dedicate their lives to His service - an appeal that will never be forgotten by those who heard it. Very shortly before he died he sent a postcard to Pastor Gracey which was characteristic of the man. Part of it read, "Illness is a terribly severe hint that the tide is ebbing to a better and sinless shore. Life worthwhile when our dear Lord is all in all." Well, he has reached that better shore now and he has left behind the memory of one who was an honoured leader, a wise counsellor, a generous helper, and was withal one of the humblest and most brotherly of men.'*

I have had the whole of Alexander McCay's Presidential address to the Union Assembly photostat copied. It makes thrilling reading. I would love to see it re-issued in booklet form for its message is thoroughly relevant. It is rather longer than the usual Presidential addresses we now listen to which is rare, coming from a man already described as having no liking for long-winded preaching. But this was a special occasion. If Alexander McCay ever aspired to the office, of one thing I am sure, he would keep it perfectly hidden and thrust it from him until he was sure of the divine call. God would have to bring him there and he did bring him there, and when he got there he had something to say and he said it. His theme was the Kingdom of Heaven. I am going to read just the closing part of that Presidential Address and I hope that

day it will be re-issued complete in booklet form.

*'But Lord what shall I do? (speaking of the Lord his King) I kiss Thy sceptre. I yield every fibre of my manhood to Thee. I have other lords - sin and self and ambition and pride and greed. So help me God I turn my back upon them all. Thou art the Lord, O Jesus, Thou shalt reign over me. And a man who crowns Christ King is the covenanted foe of everything that spoils humanity. Listen to him. He says to you, "Brother go on preaching Me, lo I am with you alway." A powerful Christ, a gracious Christ, a personal reign. He says to you, "Brother go back to your warehouse, your business or your work. I will teach you to do all as unto me." Ready to act at His command always in everything. I am sick of barren orthodoxies, fossilised creeds and counterfeit sanctities without the living power of the Spirit of Christ. Do you zealously and contentiously dispute about them splitting hairs and questions theological, yet your inner spirit is not right with God, your conduct your integrity your uprightness, your sobriety are all called in question? To obey is better than sacrifice. Oh see to it that your inner life, your inner spirit is ripe with the meekness and the lowliness of Jesus. Remember it is not the man who wields the sword of a keen intellect so much as the man who stoops and bends and serves and waits. He that would be chief among you, let him be your servant. There is no other road to distinction in the Kingdom of Christ save the common uphill one of loyal service. The religion of Jesus in its spiritual perception and that unconquerable attachment to His person which He creates is the miracle of all the ages.*

*The cardinal virtue is absolute devotion to the person of Jesus. This and this alone makes saints, heroes or martyrs in the Kingdom of God. How blessed it is when the springs of our consecrated being well up at the Throne and merge in the River of God. Then the rule is perfect it is absolute because it is the rule of love. Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom that cannot be moved let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear for our God is a consuming fire. Christianity today depends infinitely more on our apprehension of its founder than upon the formal acceptance of His doctrine. His doctrines are right, they are essential, but without a Christian spirit they are utterly useless. They are cold as ice, apart from a personal attachment, a passion for the Beloved Himself. The spirit of Christ in a man is more than doctrine it is the very life of God. You may bury Christ in creeds but you cannot keep Him there. He bursts all barriers. He is the life and light of the world.'*

G.R. BENNETT

# 'Fifty years of Belfast Work'

BAPTIST PROGRESS IN BELFAST AND DISTRICT DURING THE LAST SEVENTY YEARS
A recording by the late Pastor David Burrows made in January, 1959.

I wish in this talk to relate from my own personal recollections of how many Baptist Churches came into existence during this period. That there was a distinct revival of interest in our Baptist witness and teaching around the turn of the Century can not be denied as the facts will show. At the beginning of the last decade of the 19th Century there were only two Baptist Churches in Belfast and one in Carrickfergus and there was no Church at all on the East side of the City but there were some Baptists living over there and in 1892 they decided that the time had come to form a new Baptist Church on the East side of the city. So a notice was inserted in the Belfast Evening Telegraph inviting individuals to attend a meeting in Sandra Street Schoolroom off the Newtownards Road to consider the matter. This meeting apparently was a great success and it was decided at once to form a congregation. The foundation members were enrolled with Mr. Bryan Webb as the first Secretary of the Church. The Church services, I think, were continued in this schoolroom for some time but as the summer approached a tent was procured and this tent was pitched in Templemore Avenue on vacant ground now occupied by the Public Elementary School. Here all the meetings, the Sunday services and all the meetings of the Church were conducted until the end of the summer when the weather got too bad for the tent. The meetings were then transferred to the

Mountpottinger YMCA on the Mountpottinger Road. The building now known as the Mountpottinger Citadel of the Salvation Army. At this time the members began to look around for a site for a new Church building and finally the site at the corner of Paxton Street in the upper end of Templemore Avenue was decided upon and there the fine building, known ever since as the Mountpottinger Baptist Tabernacle, was erected. At the beginning of the Church the members decided that in order to make any progress they needed to have a minister of their own so a call was made out in favour of Mr. Robert Clarke then a successful evangelist working with the Irish Evangelisation Society. Mr. Clarke accepted the call and commenced his work at once. The Tabernacle was erected and for four or five years Mr. Clarke's ministry was a great success. At the end of that time however he received a call from the Baptist Church in Galashiels in Scotland and he accepted and the Church was left without their first pastor. Next they called the Rev. R. Foster Jeffrey of Folkstone Baptist Church in England. Mr. Jeffrey was a very cultured preacher and a very lovable man but he lacked one essential qualification without which no Baptist minister seems to succeed in the North of Ireland. That lack was earnest zeal as an evangelist and the plain proclaimation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So after two years Mr. Jeffrey went back to England and the Church was left vacant again. At that time Pastor Alexander Jardine who had been working very successfully in County Armagh and had been the means of establishing a new Church at Fivemilehill, three miles from Bessbrook, and was also Pastor of the Church at Poyntzpass, decided that he would go out and do evangelistic work and he came to Great Victoria Street to hold a mission when the Rev. Hugh Gunn was the minister there. The Mountpottinger people heard Mr. Jardine and decided that he was the man they were looking for. He received a unanimous call which he accepted and began his ministry in May, 1901. From the very beginning God's blessing rested upon his labours and very soon the congregation filled the Tabernacle, and two new transepts had to be added to accommodate the people. His ministry lasted twelve years and the membership grew to be the

largest of any Church in the Baptist Union of Ireland. I have dwelt at considerable length on the history of this Church but then it was the pioneer Church at this part of the City. I must now return to the year 1895 and to the little village of Milltown near Shaw's Bridge about three miles from the centre of Belfast. There was, and I am glad to say there still is, a building in this village known as Zion Schoolhouse. It was a building consisting only of one room which was almost square and would seat about seventy people. The building was used by the Methodist body but for some reason they had given up its use and it came into the hands of a Mr. James Taylor, a most godly man then living in the village and he was a member of the Great Victoria Street Baptist Church. Mr. Taylor opened the hall for meetings on Sunday evenings and brought out speakers from Belfast to preach the Gospel. About this time also there was a mission held in the Great Victoria Street Church, the preacher being a young English man who had formerly been Pastor of the Baptist Church in Athlone. This young man was a very attractive speaker and could present the Gospel in a most charming way, and better still God's blessing rested upon his labours and wherever he went he had many conversions. Mr. Taylor hearing him in this mission decided to ask him to come out to Zion to conduct a mission there. He consented and from the very beginning of the mission the power of God came down upon the people, there was great conviction of sin and night after night many precious souls were found anxious to be saved and many of them even wept their way to the foot of the Cross. After two or three weeks the meetings were transferred to the Dining Hall of the Messrs. John Shaw Brown's factory at Edenderry, a village about a mile from Milltown and here also many souls were saved. One of the striking features of the mission was that among the converts were several whole families, father, mother and several grown-up sons and daughters all being brought to know the Lord and there was

great rejoicing. In all my long experience I have never seen more joy among young converts than in connection with this mission. It reminds me always of what we read in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles when Philip went down to Samaria to preach the Gospel in that City, we read, *'and there was much joy in that City.'* The Evangelist, whose name by the way was Frank Greville Eland, not only preached the Gospel and saw people saved but he felt it his duty to teach the young converts the truths of the Word of God especially in connection with the New Testament church teaching. Here the young converts heard almost for the first time the truth of Believers' Baptism and learned that it was their duty and privilege to follow their Lord in the waters of baptism. Many applications for baptism were received and on one night in Great Victoria Street Baptist Church twenty-nine believers passed through the waters. A fortnight later about thirteen or fourteen others followed and now the question arose about the formation of a New Testament church in Milltown. So it was decided that a Church should be formed in Zion and I think about forty foundation members were enrolled. The Church had for its first pastor a Mr. J.M. Brisby who remained with them about three years and then left to go to Scotland. In 1902 Pastor James Shields accepted a call to the Church and remained its faithful minister for thirty-five years. I am glad to say that the Church is still flourishing under the present pastoral care of Pastor R.W. Graham.

Our next step takes us appropriately enough to the Shankill Road for these two churches, Milltown and Shankill, were very closely connected in their origin. They were both formed in the same year, 1896 within a few weeks of each other and they were formed through the instrumentality of the same man, F.G. Eland. There was at that time a small mission hall in Urney Street off the Shankill Road and Mr. Eland was invited to go there to hold some meetings. He went and the same results followed as in the other places. Souls were saved and they made application for baptism and insisted on being formed into the new Baptist church. Thus

the Shankill Church was formed and had its first meeting in the Old Tennent Street School nearly opposite the place where the present Shankill Church building stands. Moreover this Church offered a call to Mr. Eland to become their first pastor. He accepted but only remained with them about one year. After he left to reside in America with his mother I heard of him from time to time carrying on the Christian ministry in America and about twenty years or so ago I heard that he had passed away to be with the Lord. No one can deny that he has as his memorial here in Belfast these two churches, Milltown and Shankill.

My story has now come almost to the end of the 19th Century and from a Baptist point of view it certainly went out in a blaze of glory. At the beginning of the last decade no new church had been formed in the district for twenty-five years and now in these last ten years three new churches were formed in Belfast and seven more in other parts of the country thus making an average of one each year for this period. It may now be asked if this interest continued into the twentieth Century and the answer is it most certainly did.

Our next move brings us to the northern end of the City. In the year 1897 the Regent Street Church moved to its new home on the Antrim Road where a fine suite of buildings had been erected, a beautiful Church seating 650 people with the Manse at one side and the building at the back to be used for what was then called a National Day School. Some friends in the Antrim Road Church led by Mr. W.G. Frizelle considered that the time had come when a new church should be formed in the Crumlin Road area and they decided to erect a temporary building for their services after obtaining a site in Cliftonpark Avenue not far from the Crumlin Road end. This building was a wooden hall but the site was so restricted by buildings on either side that it could not be lighted in the ordinary way with windows the light had to be obtained from the roof by means of skylights. The mention of these brings to my mind an amusing incident that occurred. Mr. Frizelle had insisted that although it was only a temporary building a baptistry should be

installed and it was placed underneath the pulpit or platform and immediately above it there was one of these skylights. One day an inquisitive boy thought he would like to take a look inside the building through these skylights and after climbing up to the roof he stretched himself over the skylight and the glass gave way and he fell through plunk into the baptistry. Fortunately for him there had been a baptismal service the night before and the water had not been drained off otherwise he would certainly have received serious injury but the water broke his fall and he was nothing the worse. This amusing incident has often reminded me of the words of the Apostle Peter *'Whereunto baptism doth also now save us.'* Certainly for him the baptismal water saved him and let us hope that for him it did put away at least some of the filth of the flesh. I had the privilege with another friend of conducting another mission in this hall about fifty-four years ago and there we saw the hand of God at work and blessing as a result. The church grew steadily and in a few years time erected a permanent building on the same site which today is still lighted from the roof.

Now once more we cross the River Lagan over to the east end of the City. The Mountpottinger Church still continued as the only baptist church in the district until 1903 but in that year another was added to the number. There was in Templemore Avenue a building known, and still is known, as the Iron Mission Hall and in this hall there was a resident evangelist named Mr. Bert Shaw. He had come over from England to carry on the work there but after a couple of years he, and a couple of his friends with him, decided to go out and form a Baptist Church this time in the Bloomfield area. They found a meeting room over the Co-operative stores at the bottom of Ravenscroft Avenue quite close to what used to be the Holywood arches. There the Bloomfield Baptist Church was formed but very shortly afterwards a splendid site was obtained on the upper Newtownards Road almost opposite Grampian Avenue. This site stretched back almost to the edge of what was know as the County Down Railway but it fell away greatly at the back in slope. The Bloomfield friends decided to erect a corrugated iron hall for

the purposes of their services and beginning to build they found that they had to do some underbuilding to bring the building up to the level and after building the wall, the foundation wall, for some distance they discovered that by raising it a little bit further they could have a fine basement hall below the corrugated iron hall they wanted to erect. This they did and now they have two fine halls the upper part known as the Church building and the basement used for Sunday School and other meetings. The Church continued in these buildings for quite a number of years and then a splendid new Church building was erected on the front part of the site on this Upper Newtownards Road. There it stands today, a very fine building indeed and a splendid work is still being carried on in it. Thus the second Church in east Belfast came into existence.

In the following year another event took place. Mr. John F. Pepper came over to the lower end of the Newtownards Road and began Gospel meetings first in the open-air and afterwards in a little hall made out of an ordinary dwelling house in Foundary Street. There the Lord blessed the work and many precious souls were saved in a very needy district and after some time a second house was taken in and the hall enlarged. This church, the church that began here, was in many ways unique. It was from the beginning the work of one man, Mr. Pepper, and he continued to supervise the work until his death just a few weeks ago. Many of the converts in this hall were baptised and added to the Mountpottinger Tabernacle Church and in 1904 the Foundary Street friends decided to form a Church of their own and the Tabernacle friends bade them Godspeed as about forty of their members went out to form the new church which it was decided to call the East End Baptist Church. After some time it was evident that a new church building was needed and the friends began to look for a proper site. They endeavoured to find one on the north side of the Newtownards Road but no ground could be obtained there. Eventually it was decided to build on the waste ground at the lower end of Templemore Avenue quite close to the Newtownards Road and there in 1908 the building, the fine building, now known as East End Baptist Church was erected. This Church has been the scene of

great blessing from the Lord. On one occasion there were scenes of real revival as a movement spread from the Church throughout the district and brought many precious souls to the Saviour. The Church has continued to grow and is now a strong self-supporting Church and doing a great work in a very needy district. Thus number three in the twentieth Century was added to the number of the Belfast Churches.

Our next step takes us right outside the City and down to the seaside town of Bangor. In the year 1846 a Baptist Church was built in Conlig, a village midway between Bangor and Newtownards. It was formed chiefly by Welsh miners who were working at the lead mines at that village. But the mines having failed the congregation almost entirely went back to their native Wales and the Church was discontinued and there was no Baptist witness in the neighbourhood until 1908. At that time Pastor G.H. Boyd who was deputation Secretary for the Irish Baptist Home Mission went with his family to live in Bangor and he found it difficult for him and his children when there was no Baptist Church and he decided to form a Church and did so commencing services in the local Orange Hall. There was one member, one old member, of the Conlig Church still alive and he joined the new church with Mr. Boyd and his family. This Church continued in the Orange Hall for fourteen years. It had several pastors during that time but in the year 1922 the now Baptist Church on the Hamilton Road in Bangor was erected. This Church had its difficulties in earlier days and its progress was slow but eventually it gained ground and is now one of our best Churches.

For our next advance we must return to the mother Church at Mountpottinger Tabernacle. In the year 1914 quite a number of the members of the Tabernacle left the Church and formed a new Church. First of all meeting in premises on the Woodstock Road known as the Willowfield Unionist Hall. After about a year in that building the present Grove Baptist Church was built, and this young Church decided to send a call to the former minister of Mountpottinger Tabernacle the late Pastor Alexander Jardine. Mr. Jardine returned almost to the scene of his former labours and again the blessing

of God rested upon him and his work and for the next fifteen years or so he built up a splendid cause known as the Grove Baptist Church. Today this Church is still flourishing under the pastoral care of Pastor William Wilson. This Church has always been very active in the Lord's work and not content with holding meetings inside its own walls it established at least three mission stations, Tamar Street, Skipton Street and Church Street East. In the latter Pastor David Miskimmon took charge of the work and after carrying it on as a mission hall for a number of years in 1930 it was formed into a Baptist Church and still continues to do good work on the North side of the Newtownards Road.

In 1926 a further Church was formed in the Strandtown district and a building was erected in Belmont Avenue West. This Church was composed of some members from the Bloomfield Church and it has continued until the present time.

Also in the same year in 1926 another Church was formed in Haypark Avenue which continued to meet in a temporary hall until about two years when a splendid permanent building was erected on the same site. This Church has never had a settled pastorate. Nevertheless it has continued to do splendid work in this neighbourhood and is today a very flourishing cause.

We must now return to County Antrim and this takes us to the Lisburn Road end of Belfast where in 1931 the Church now known as Windsor Baptist Church was formed, composed mainly of members from the Great Victoria Street Church. After some years a fine building was erected in Malone Avenue. During its history the Church has had two pastors and now at 1st March, 1959 Pastor George F. Blayney takes up his ministry.

Next on our list comes the Glengormley Church which was formed in 1932 under the guidance and care of Mr. W.G. Frizelle that great pioneer of Baptist work. Today the Church is a strong self-supporting cause and in such a growing district seems to have a great future. It is hoped that before long a new Church Building will be erected.

We return next to the County Down again where in Carryduff a Church was formed in 1939 thus making three Churches formed in the 1930's. There seems to have been a great deal of lull in the progress in the 1940's but in the 1950's the progress began again with Cloughfern in 1952, Dundonald in 1953 and Newtownbreda in 1954.

I have come now to the end of the list with one exception. I forgot to mention Newtownards, a church which was formed in 1923. I had the great pleasure and privilege of baptising practically all the foundation members of this Church and it has been a great joy to me during the years to see its progress. It is hoped that in the near future a permanent Church building will be erected on a fine site on one of the leading streets in the town.

In bringing this recording to a conclusion there are two or three things that I want to emphasise. First of all, we began with three Churches in Belfast and district, Great Victoria Street, Regent Street and Carrickfergus but today we have twenty-four. Secondly I have only the bare outline of the formation of these Churches regarding their development and growth during the years I have not been able to say very much. In the third place I want to point out that in making this recording I have not been trying to exalt merely a denomination but to exalt the New Testament teaching regarding the Church of Christ and to express the hope that in the future the growth of this teaching may develop until many more New Testament Churches of our faith and order may be established.

And now I want to express my humble gratitude to Almighty God for His wonderful goodness to me in granting me so many happy years of service in connection with our denomination and to raise my Ebenezer to Him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift. To His Name be all praise and glory.

# 'Church Discipline'

The meaning of the word *'disco'* from which we derive our word discipline has two main meanings, *'instruction in the government of conduct and practice'* and *'the punishment inflicted by way of correction when conduct falls short of the standard laid down.'* These two aspects are called *'Formative Discipline'* and *'Corrective Discipline'* and both aspects are emphasised in the Minute Book of the Waterford Church for 9th April, 1807.

*'The interesting of believers in each others' felicity is a commendable practice and is ever proportionate to the prevalence of Christian love, brotherly kindness and fervent charity.*

*It is one of the principal features of their conduct who give themselves first unto the Lord and then to the service of his church according to his will. Nor is this any more than what is needful to the spiritual welfare and edification of each other, for as we profess to be members of that one mystical body of which Christ is the only head, it is our duty and will be for our interest to care for each other's welfare and growth in grace.*

*In order to this we must act agreeably to the economy Christ has established in his house and the power he has given to that house to put in execution the discipline thereof.*

*That which the Word of God declares as necessary to the above is reducible to two principles.*

1. *Soundness in faith*
2. *Holiness of life and conversation*

*Without these the profession of religion is an imaginary dream. For God cannot be honoured but by holding the mystery of*

*faith in a pure conscience of holding fast the form of sound words by a stedfast faith and a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ. Faith void of works is dead, inactive and fruitless. And a moral life separate from a principle of faith in Christ Jesus is of no value for "without faith it is impossible to please God." This being the case - the honour of God, the welfare of the Church - the happiness of Believers and the benefit of society at large are promoted thereby.*

*From a conviction of the importance of these things together with their growing declension among our own denomination in this kingdom, we feel ourselves concerned as individuals and as a body to seek for the removal of the causes by adopting such methods and living in the use of such means as under the blessing of God may be effectual thereunto. Even such as the Scripture enjoin.*

*REGULAR ATTENDANCE AND EXEMPLARY DEPORTMENT*

*Attendance upon the stated and occasional opportunities of public and social worship nor forsaking the assembling of ourselves together but constantly filling up our places in the house of God and maintaining His worship therein to the best of our capacity till death or evident calls in divine providence separate us from each other.*

*MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDUCT*

*To be subject to the Divine order and discipline which Christ has commanded in His Church, such as watching over one another in love, having our minds open to instruction, to bear reproof when necessary, to walk before God in our houses and in the Church according to His word. Avoiding the sins of the time and place where we are, by a non-compliance with the fashionable and sinful amusements, and entertainments of the age such as card playing, dice, billiards and the frequenting of assemblies, Theatres, Operas, Masquerades, Balls etc., Horse races etc. And as much as in us lies to bring up our children in the fear of God by teaching them his statutes and exemplifying his truths, as well as avoiding all improper connection with unbelievers, for what concord has Christ with Belial or he that believeth with an infidel.*

*It was resolved that should any member act inconsistent with these rules he or she must be treated with all the wisdom, affection and gentleness of Christ: But if all prove ineffectual and he or she continue refractory or incorrigible they will be considered no longer a member of this church having by such conduct excluded themselves.*

*Ratified by mutual consent April 9, 1807*

*Benjamin Dickinson* *Pastor*
*Josiah Coleman* *Deacon*

In this paper we will restrict our consideration to Corrective Discipline, first looking briefly at the acceptance of the autonomy of the local church in matters of discipline and secondly considering the procedure adopted within the local churches first of all with regard to personal and then general offences.

I THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

This principle is affirmed in an article in the Irish Baptist Magazine for July 1892 relating to the failure of the Presbyterian Assembly to exercise discipline.

*'Presbyterianism not Perfect*

*We are somewhat surprised at the action or rather inaction of the Assembly in regard to the instrumental music question.*

*What was to be done? If the ecclesiastical machine was in good working order there ought to have been swift retribution for the transgressors, but after a little desultory discussion the lame and impotent conclusion (from a Presbyterian point of view) was reached that the Assembly "do pass from the matter." We commend this fact to the attention of those among our Congregational Churches, and there are many, who are somewhat enamoured of the Presbyterian system mainly because it is supposed to supply a superior and central authority which their own system lacks. Many think also that if we had a dash of Presbyterianism we could better deal with doctrinal declension but we have only to look to see how little real authority the Assembly is able to exercise.*

*We are not blind to the faults of Independency in its practical working, but plainly Presbyterianism is not perfect, while the Scripturalness of Independency raises it, in our opinion high above Presbyterianism.'*

The autonomy of the local church was strongly upheld by R.H. Carson of Tubbermore in 1853. A member of the Tubbermore Church was received into fellowship by a Church in Belfast without obtaining a letter of dismission from his former church. Subsequently the Belfast church had some queries regarding the spiritual state of this man and wrote to Mr. Carson on the matter. His reply is contained in the Tubbermore Minute Book as follows:-

Letter from Mr. Carson to Mr. Eccles

Tubbermore 24th November, 1853

*'My dear Brother,*

*I received two or three days since your letter respecting Mr. X and without seeing any of the parties to whom you refer, I drop a line in reply.*

*Personally I have nothing against the individual in question and as Pastor of the Church here, I must decline criminating him before the Bar of a sister community. He is now your own member, and you must deal with him according to your own law. In receiving him without our letter you violated the law of Christ (Romans 16:1ff) and now I suppose you must wait his manifestation among yourselves. It was with us the score should have been settled, as with us the whole occurred; and our approval should have been required prior to his admission into any sister church. Had this been done our course would have been simply to state that he could not on the ground of personal character, sit in our fellowship. We are not only not called upon, but we would be descending from our true position did we consent to become witnesses in the case. You received Mr. X not only without consulting us, but knowing that we would not receive him; and now you ask us to appear for his discipline; if we are not fit to be heard as judges we shall not certainly come forward as witnesses in the case.*

*Tubbermore. I could not do so without placing the Church here in a false position; and this I cannot do. In the case in question you had certainly a right to fix your own course, as our churches are independent of each other; but this right, you must remember, is equally ours in the same matter.*

*Heartily wishing your ——— peace and prosperity.*

*I am, ever most truly and affectionally yours in Jesus our Lord.*

*(Signed) R.H. CARSON'*

It is interesting that although the following letter was subsequently sent giving the required details it will be noticed that Mr. Carson was not a signatory.

*'The Church at Tubbermore to the Church of Christ in Belfast under the pastoral care of Revd. Wm. S. Eccles.*

*Dear Brethren,*

*Having been requested by your through your respected Pastor to state whether or not, we could receive to our Fellowship Mr. X late of Tubbermore, now of Belfast; we beg to reply to say that, on the ground of personal character, as a Church we could not.*

*Signed on behalf of the Church*

*William McConway )*
*Samuel Hunter )*
*Robert Baird ) DEACONS '*
*James Graham )*
*Kennedy Black )*

## II CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH

The need for corrective discipline and the forms it should take was stressed by R.H. Carson of Tubbermore in first Annual Letter to the Secretary of the Baptist Irish Society written on 18th March 1850 shortly after he returned from Perth.

*'The cause in Tobermore was indeed in a deplorable state - a state which must soon have ended in its complete annihilation. The truth is it was about utterly to sink, and must have sunk had it not pleased the Lord to interfere on its behalf. The resolution of the committee to lend a helping hand to the few brethren remaining, I believe, saved it from destruction, and it is hoped may yet be instrumental in raising it to its former prosperity. The Church and congregation had decreased considerably more than one half from*

*the time I left for Perth; while many of those remaining had become sadly careless in attendance on the means of grace. Besides in the church, discipline was very much neglected and corruption and disorder were the immediate consequences. Over this state of things the right-hearted Brethren dear to me in the Lord - mourned from week to week, but in the absence of ministerial rule they knew not how to remedy. Accustomed to constant oversight from their formation as a church they felt in wanting it as children without a Father.*

*Since returning to Tubbermore I have, as my health - which up to a late period was very weak - would permit been earnestly engaged in correcting abuses, and subduing disorder. Several unworthy persons have been excluded from our fellowship and some personal disputes have been amicably terminated. In these respects matters are now almost to my mind so that I hope directly to start on clear grounds in the field of labour.'*

In the next year in the Annual letter dated 28th March, 1851 Mr. Carson could write

*'Since the lamented removal of my late beloved father the church has never been, I believe, in all respects in so good a state. My efforts at the restoration of discipline, referred to in my last report, having been crowned with the most entire success. Order is re-established, harmony restored, and the laws of the kingdom of Christ carried out, not only with the concurrence but at the earnest desire of the whole body. This tone is most encouraging, most delightful, indeed without it I could not proceed a single step in my work.'*

It will be seen that Mr. Carson divided corrective discipline into the two accepted categories when he wrote *'Several unworthy persons have been excluded from our fellowship and some personal disputes have been amicably terminated.'* i.e. general and personal matters. Let us consider these in the reverse order in which he placed them.

1. Personal

All the following cases occurred at Tubbermore under the ministry of R.H. Carson and one is impressed by the faithful yet judicious

way in which they were handled.

October 20th, 1850

Decision. Sister X in complaint brother Y.

*'We the undersigned having heard the case of sisterX, with all the evidence she could adduce, having heard also the defence of brother Y with all his evidence; and having carefully and prayerfully weighed the whole; have unanimously and with a clear mind come to the following decisions:-*

1. *That Mrs. X speaks the truth when she states she expected the disputed articles.*
2. *That this expectation was properly enough based on an arrangement which we believe her mother at one time to have made.*
3. *That, however, there is no evidence that the old woman confirmed this arrangement at her death although she had opportunity of doing so, but evidence rather to the contrary.*
4. *That even where ....., had the arrangement in question been confirmed by Mrs. X's mother at her death it has since been overturned by the act of her father in whom according to Scripture Ephesians 5:22-23 all authority in temporal things rests.*
5. *That for the course taken by Mrs. X'x father, Mr. Y. is not responsible since we have had no evidence to show that in taking it the former was unduly influenced by the latter and may therefore have but acted out the suggestions of his own mind.*
6. *That these things considered we cannot find in favour of Mrs. X. This decision we now solemnly declare we have come to as in the sight of God and with the strictest impartiality.*

*Signed* R.H. CARSON WILLIAM McCONWAY
ROBERT BEARD SAMUEL HUNTER '

In 1860 a member of the church preferred a charge of *'unbrotherly conduct by two other members in that they did take a written decision against their brother in favour of a person against whom their brother had claimed compensation for injury alleged to have been done to his field of pototoes after a time of heavy rain.'* Eight brethren were commissioned to look into the matter and they reported to the church on the 10th January, 1860 that the two brethren had acted very unfaithfully towards their brother and un-

befitted themselves as members of the Church of Christ though they say they do not see how they erred in what they have done.'

The brethren concerned were impenitent when visited by three brethren so the church appointed the Pastor and another member to visit them. As a result the two brethren wrote the following letter.

*January 23rd, 1860*

*Dear Sir,*

*Having been led on further consideration of the matter, to see that we should not have entered into the case between Mr. A and Mr. B, believing we were not the proper parties to settle it, we hereby wish you to throw aside our decision and to act independently of it altogether.*

*And by so doing oblige yours respectfully*

*Mr. X* *Mr. Y*

This note was laid before the church on Lord's Day the 29th inst. and accepted as satisfactory.

In 1861 a member of Tubbermore church was accused by his natural brother who was a Presbyterian of coveting his farm of land which was closely connected with his own place. Six brethren were asked to enquire into the matter and reported *'After taking all the circumstances connected with both sides of the question into account, and fairly, we trust considering them Mr. A (the Baptist) in our judgement has transgressed the law laid down by Jesus Christ for the guidance of his followers in the part he has acted towards Mr. B. (the Presbyterian).'*

The church meeting on 25th March 1861 asked the brethren who enquired into the matter to visit the offender with the *'intention of making him sensible of the sin he had committed.'* They reported that he asserted *'he advanced the money on his brother's land to hinder another person from getting it and that he did this with clear conscience and that his conscience is still free from blame in the matter, although it appears ill in the eyes of the country and has brought reproach on the church and has given us much trouble, but he does not feel that he has committed*

*sin against God. We all the one after the other endeavoured to bring his sin before him in various ways supporting arguments from the Word of God, but to no good effect. He always when pushed reverted to the act of his giving the money through a good motive. This man was quite inconsistent with himself in almost every particular, which he urged in his own favour. He on one or two occasions admitted that he thought he had done wrong but he immediately after destroyed these admissions. Evidently he does not appear to see the sin into which he has fallen and therefore he has not repented. We are unanimous in this belief.'*

On 7th April 1861 the church appointed two other brethren to visit him. When they saw him on Lord's Day morning 14th *'he was evidently broken down from conviction of sin in the matter and as evidence of his repentance he said he would prefer losing the one half of the sum of money he had paid as part of his brother's land price, than have further to do with it.'* On this information being brought before the church on the evening of the same Sabbath the two brethren were again desired to see the offending brother and to say that he would be required to forfeit the entire sum which he advanced if necessary and that he should at once inform his brother of his intention to do so, and personally express his sorrow for the unbrotherly course he had pursued towards him in this transaction.

In their presence he told his brother of his submission to the church's requests and *'in a becoming way expressed regret for the unguarded step he took in the matter of his farm and the opposite party responded.'*

This report was accepted as satisfactory by the church on Lord's Day 21st April, 1861.

In 1862 there were mutual recriminations between three members because one of them had *'applied to their landlord's agent at Moneymore by a letter for all the turf bog which they and several other parties occupy in that part and that he had stated in the letter that there were eight or ten families wasting and destroying the turf bog who never paid any rent to the landlord.'*

The brethren investigating the complaint found there were faults on both sides. On 12th October, 1862 the church accepted their report and the five brethren who had carried out the investigation were requested to visit the offenders to *'bring them to a sense of their sin in the matter and report accordingly at the next church meeting.'* The report of these men was *'Agreeable to your resolution of last Sabbath evening here the 12th instant we saw those brethren whose differences were brought before you on that day and they acknowledge that they concur in the decision to which you came in their respective cases. They not only express sorrow for what they did but say that they will as far as in them lies remedy what they have done in those matters. Brother A on his part said he would recall the letter of application which he put forward for the turf bog of those parties that had given him so much annoyance. Brothers C and D on their part without hesitation said they would try to satisfy Brother A for the wrong they did him either by compensation or by making up part of the fence in question.'*

In 1864 one brother accused another of assault and the latter accused the first of provocation. Four brethren appointed to investigate the matter found that there were faults on both sides. Two brethren were then deputed to visit the defaulting brethren with a view to bringing them to repentance. They reported as follows

*'Brother A (the one accused of assault) appears a penitent indeed for having assaulted Mr. B and readily confessed his sin against God and also against his brother, and this he did in our presence and to Mr. B whom he injured and asked for his forgiveness; but as to Mr. B he neither expressed sorrow for his sin in the matter nor does he appear in any way to feel for the part he had in the unhappy affair between himself and his brother.'*

The church on hearing the above report resolved on 21st August, 1864 that Mr. A should be retained and that Mr. B should be excluded publicly on the next Sabbath day 21st August, 1864.

In 1869 we find the following in the Tubbermore Minute Book

*'Brother A against Brother B. In this case Brother A claims the sum of 12 pounds sterling with interest being the balance of his wife's portion which portion he says was originally 30 pounds sterling was secured to him by promissory notes with explanatory statement.*

*This claim Brother B disputes and disowns and he does so First on the ground that his sister's portion at first was not thirty pounds but twenty and*
*Secondly because as he avers though thirty pounds it has been met and more than met by service done and goods given, not otherwise accounted for.*

*We the undersigned having been appointed by the Church to investigate the matter and finally to decide between the parties have after the most searching enquiry and after having seen all documents and heard all that could be said on both sides come to the following conclusion which we give as our solemn and final judgment i.e. First that Mrs. A's portion originally was not £20 but £30*
*Secondly that the items in account furnished by Brother B placed before us by the church for investigating if founded in justice are met and more than met by counter-claims preferred by Mr. A.*
*And thirdly that therefore to Brother A a balance of twelve pounds still remains due.*

*Signed* *HUGH CHAMBERS*
*ROBERT FULTON*
*WM. McCREADY* '

2. General Offences

In consulting the Minute Books of the Tubbermore, Waterford and Great Victoria Street churches the following are some of the sins which have necessitated disciplinary action by the churches.

(A) Absence

This is the most frequent of all offences. Each church minute book consulted reveals the constant repetition of this failure.

In some cases the churches themselves were not without blame for lack of care. The need for pastoral oversight was emphasized by a note in the Great Victoria Street Minute Book for 10th July, 1870. *'At a meeting of this church this day it was arranged that in consequences of the protracted absence of the pastor in America it would be necessary that the Church Roll should be revised and that a special meeting of the church for this and other matters should be held July 11th.'* On several occasions when members were finally visited after a considerable period of absence it was discovered that there had been legitimate reasons for the absence such as sickness, poverty etc. and families had been in these difficulties without anyone from the church having visited them to discover their need. The following minute from the Great Victoria Street Church for Wednesday 25th February, 1880 illustrates this. *'Miss X - absence caused in first instance to an attack of fever and as none of the members called upon her during her illness and for a long time afterwards she felt hurt. This feeling, however, has now been removed and she purposes resuming her attendance as usual. Decided to retain her name.'*

The same church in an endeavour to oversee the work held a meeting on Lord's Day 21st November 1880 and the minute reads *'The church met after the morning service when it was announced as had been intimated on the previous Lord's Day that the Pastor and deacons (subject to the approval of the church) had decided upon the issuing of communion tickets and the formation of a Roll Book to correspond so that the attendance of the members at the Communion of the Lord's Supper might be registered. It was hoped by this means to have a better supervision of the members of the church as cases of continued absence would at once be seen and the necessary steps taken for visitation. When the matter was fully explained to the church it was decided unanimously to adopt this plan and to have tickets ready by the beginning of the new year.'* Although the decision of the meeting was unanimous, as late as 10th September, 1882 one lady resigned from the church giving as one of her reasons that she felt strong objection to communion tickets. This decision by the church increased the secretarial work and as a result an Assistant Secretary

was appointed on 2nd February, 1881 to carry out the work entailed by the Communion Tickets and Roll. In spite of all the work involved it does not appear to have solved the problem. A minute dated 5th October, 1881 reads *'The Roll of the Church was then read over and it appearing that there are several members who have absented themselves in some cases for years and in others for a considerable time, it was resolved that the consideration of these names be taken up at a special meeting to be held on 19th inst.'* During the year 1881 eleven members were excluded from the fellowship because of non-attendance.

(B) Dancing

*'On 1st February, 1863 a member of the Tubbermore Church was excluded for "having been in the habit of attending nightly meetings called dancings where the ungodly congregate themselves for the purpose in some instances of indulging in drink and other sinful pleasures. This young man has been active in getting up one of these meetings lately in Colrmore and does not at all appear to see the sinful nature of them. In fact he is quite ignorant of how a believer should behave in the world!"'*

(C) Doctrine

In 1856 a member of the Tubbermore Church issed a pamphlet on Baptism and as a result the church printed the following leaflet:-

WILLIAM GARDNER

AND

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT TUBBERMORE

*At a church meeting held in the Baptist chapel, Tubbermore, on Lord's Day 17th instant, the following Resolution, with reference to the above case, were unanimously adopted:*
*Resolved - That having fully and patiently examined the sentiments of WILLIAM GARDNER, as set forth in his late Tract on the subject of Baptism, and as expressed verbally, to our Pastor, and to a Deputation of four Brethren from ourselves; and having, without effect, admonished him of the error in which he is taken, We do forthwith proceed to exclude him from our communion.*

*Resolved - That this act of Discipline in otherwords, the exclusion of WILLIAM GARDNER from our fellowship, is the result, not of his holding the Baptism of Infants - since he has always been known to hold that doctrine - and yet, till now, has been retained among us, but of his maintaining, in relation to Baptism generally, views and sentiments altogether subversive of the gospel. We separate him, simply and solely because he is a perverter of the "truth as it is in Jesus"; denying the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, and pointing to Baptism as "the gate of heaven". Such by the law of Christ we are required to reject - Titus 3:10.*

*Resolved - That we have learned with astonishment and sorrow, that by some professing Christians in this quarter, the production of W. GARDNER is approved, commended and circulated. At this we would neither feel surprise nor regret, had that production been simply a defence of Infant Sprinkling. But containing as it does the most soul-destroying heresy, the most manifest and dangerous perversions of the Gospels, we cannot but be amazed and grieved that it should receive the countenance and support of any whom we were accustomed to regard as followers of Christ.*

*(Signed) R.H. CARSON Pastor '*

(D) Domestic Relationships

In Waterford in 1854 a man was excluded from the Communion for *'having acted in a very inconsistent manner in his family domestic relationships and having been detected in falsehoods and calumnies.'* No precise details of the offences were given.

(E) Fraud

The Treasurer of one of the Irish Baptist Churches had to resign from office and membership *'in consequence of financial difficulties which left him unable to refund church funds in his charge'.*

In 1863 at Tubbermore a sister refused to meet a deputation from the church but they reported *'we have had the clearest evidence of her having defrauded persons with whom she had dealings and also of her trying to contract debt without any view of paying it.'* As a result she was excluded on 1st March, 1863.

(F) Immoral Conduct

Several cases of exclusion from membership due to moral offences are recorded but naturally the minutes do not give details of such cases, recording only the decision to exclude the offenders.

(G) Intemperance

This, after absence, is probably the most frequent reason given for exclusion. In dealing with these cases there always appeared to be the willingness to give forgiveness and restoration if the offender was truly repentant. In October 1854 we read the following in the Minute Book of the Tubbermore Church. *'Brother X seen under the influence of strong drink. After full examination the charge was found correct, and a severe rebuke having been administered to the erring brother, he freely confessed his sin, and was of course at once restored to the confidence of the church.'*

Such a gracious approach was however sometimes abused. In the Minute Book of the Great Victoria Church for Lord's Day 22nd February 1880 we read of a brother visited because of this offence who acknowledged his sin and asked the church to forgive him and not to cut him off. *'Under the circumstances two brethren were appointed to convey to our brother its willingness to forgive with the hope that he would seek forgiveness from God and sin no more in this direction. However, when the messengers went to see him they found him in a very different frame of mind from that in which he was seen by the first messengers and that it was but too apparent he had not given over his besetting sin - under these circumstances and with great sorrow it was decided by the church to separate our brother from the fellowship of the church with the earnest hope that this act of discipline will eventuate in his restoration.'*

(H) Lying

On 24th August, 1862 at Tubbermore an application for membership was objected to by a sister on the grounds that the brother concerned had told a lie against her. Six brethren were appointed to investigate the matter and reported that *'we believe that Mr. X did not on the occasion in question tell a lie on sister Y as alleged by her. And we further beg to say that we consider the church should proceed to receive young Mr. X into its communion.'*

As a result of this recommendation the brother was recieved into membership and seven brethren were appointed to visit Sister Y and they reported back to the church *'Having duly examined into the things set forth in the above resolution we beg to say that the charges which sister Y preferred against young Mr. X being untrue according to the decision of this church it follows that as a matter of fact the said Sister Y is guilty of an offence against Mr.X similar to that which she endeavoured to fix upon him, namely false accusation. And had it not been shown that Mr. X was innocent he could not have been received into this church. Therefore what would hinder his being united to us demands that we shall exclude her from our communion. This rule must be allowed to act in both these cases alike. In the next place it has been proved to our satisfaction that sister Y on two distinct occasions has not had a proper regard for the truth and in the third place she has in our opinion been unfaithful to the church and also as a servant. We then taking all these things into account feel ourselves called on to recommend that she be excluded from our communion as a Church of Christ.'* This recommendation was accepted by the church and she was excluded from the Church on 14th September, 1862.

(I) Profane Swearing

In January, 1853 and June 1861 in the Tubbermore Church brethren were accused of profane swearing. On being visited both confessed their sin. One professed his contrition and declared himself grateful for the interference of the church; the other said the sin had caused him much sorrow and that he trusted God had pardoned his sin. In both cases the admonition having been given and the culprit being repentant no action was taken by the church.

(J) Participating in Orange Processions

In June 1861 three brethren of the Tubbermore Church were charged with *'appearing with an Orange Procession on the high road leading between Tubbermore and Desertmartin.'* They all admitted having been with the procession but they said without considering that it was sinful. On reflection it appeared that their conscience did tell them that they had acted improperly and inconsistent with their profession as Christians. They were sorry for having brought

a slur on the cause of Christ and have expressed a hope that they shall not again act similarly. This report was received as satisfactory by the Church.

(K) Stealing

On 25th August, 1861 a member of the Tubbermore Church was charged with stealing apples from an orchard. In the report submitted to the Church the accused *'admitted being guilty of the theft and he though he said it was no harm until the owner of the fruit caught him and then he felt sorry for being found in so disgraceful an act, and added that he then repented of the sin which he had committed; but we believe from the conversation we had with this boy that he does not feel truly sorry towards God for breaking his holy law nor does it appear to us that he understands how he should behave himself as a professed servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.'* Accordingly the accused was excluded from the Church on 2nd September, 1861.

At Tubbermore in May 1863 a member and his daughter who was also a member of the church were accused *'that with several other parties they did illegally and forcibly take a cow or heifer which was a matter of dispute between the daughter and the [illegible] In addition when they took it they did much injury to the [illegible] of the owner whose life was endangered.'* As a result of [illegible] made to the church the father and daughter were excluded on [illegible] May, 1863.

III THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH DISCIPLINE WAS EXERCISED

In studying the records of the Waterford, Tubbermore and Great Victoria Street Churches the following general principles seem to have been followed in the exercise of discipline.

1. All Decisions were made by the Church Assembled Together.

The decision whether or not discipline should be exercised was invariably made by the Church meeting together and was not in the hands of the officers of the church.

This necessitated frequent meetings of the church and one is surprised in view of the present attitude of the local churches as to how the churches in the 19th century were willing; to meet to deal with such questions. In the Great Victoria StreetChurch

during the period 5th November 1865 to 7th January 1866 i.e. two months there were no less than seven church meetings to deal mainly with cases of discipline. Again in the period 3rd November 1880 to 22nd December 1880 i.e. seven weeks there were no less than six meetings.

2. The Investigation of Charges

The investigation of cases necessitating discipline was not limited to Pastors, Elders of Deacons. By making a list of the officers of the churches it is quite easily seen that cases were investigated by the ordinary members as well as the officers.

3. The Purpose for which Discipline was Exercised

Undoubtedly the essential purpose of dealing with the offender was to seek his spiritual good by bringing to him an awareness of his sin and seeking to lead him to repentance. If there was a genuine repentance no exclusion took place and the offender was assured of the forgiveness of the church.

4. The Manner of Exercising Discipline

One is impressed with the love, care, patience and understanding in which discipline was exercised. This is particularly so in the Tubbermore church during the ministry of R.H. Carson. Care was taken in gathering the facts and when a decision had been made this was sent by messengers to the offender.

5. Handing Over to Satan

J.J. Goadby in his book *'By-paths of Baptist History'* says p.245 *'The ordinance of excommunication'* was always regarded as one of the solemn and impressive character. The elder *'by the authority of the church, and in the name of the Lord Jesus delivered the offender to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord'*

In no case of discipline recorded in the minutes I have consulted has there been mention of any *'handing over to Satan'* but churches have limited themselves to exclusion from the fellowship.

A year after his return to Tubbermore R.H. Carson could say *'My efforts at the restoration of discipline, referred to in my last report, having been crowned with the most entire success. Order is re-established, harmony restored and the laws of Christ carried out, not only with the concurrence but at the earnest desire of the whole body. This tone is most encouraging, most delightful, indeed without it I could not proceed a single step in my work.'* May this account of the exercise of discipline in our churches during the 19th century encourage us to seek the same spiritual condition.

J.F. BRADLEY