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IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

Volume Seven
1974-75

Irish Baptist Historical Society JOURNAL

VOLUME SEVEN . . . 1974/5

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EDITORIAL

Present readers will need little introduction to the contributors of the papers published herein, but for the benefit of those who come after, some background information may be useful.

Mr. E.B. O'Reilly A.C.I.S. has given the denomination many years of quiet but effective service, on the Council, as Treasurer of the Irish Baptist Orphan Society and in many other ways. His diligent research and personal recollections have filled out the account of the Belfast and District Baptist Council. His view that there is still a place amongst us for a body to replace the one he describes deserves considered attention.

Pastor L.E. Deens, doyen of Irish Baptists, president of the Society, has added to the historical background of our Basis of Doctrine the fruits of his many years of thought and experience. Pastor in succession of a number of churches but notably of Harcourt Street, Dublin, tutor in the Dublin College and later in the reconstituted College in Belfast, three times President of the Baptist Union of Ireland, an able and wise administrator he is held in esteem and affection not only in Ireland but in a much wider sphere.

Pastor Joshua Thompson, indefatigable Secretary of the Union, who records the recollections of Mr. George Young, finds time despite his many duties to act as treasurer of the Society. It would be as impossible to assess the value of his contribution to the life of the denomination as to measure the extent of his personal commitment to it. 'If you want a job done, ask a busy man,' it would have been an imposition to ask Pastor Thompson to add to his burdens the contribution of a paper to the Society - yet, characteristically, one did not even need to ask.

Lurgan was the traditional heartland of the Ulster linen industry, an area of small farms where enlightened landlords worked hand in hand with diligent settlers to introduce agricultural and industrial prosperity. Amongst these independent people was sited the church whose history two of our faithful members, Mr. W.J. Torrens and Mr. G. Wells, have recorded herein. The workmanlike job they have produced bears adequate testimony to their own competence and the calibre of the people they represent.

The Annual Meeting of the Society is held during Assembly Week in May, regular meetings at which papers are read and discussed at 3 Fitzwilliam Street, Belfast on the third Thursdays of March, June, September and December. Visitors are welcome at all these meetings.

H.D.G.

FOOTNOTE:

The following corrections should be noted in Volume 6 of the Journal (1973/74):

page 26	line 11	The figure should be £23,000 NOT £35,000
page 52	line 20	Pastor Irvine resigned in 1958 NOT 1956.

Belfast and District Baptist Council

It probably would be incorrect to state that the origin of the now defunct Belfast and District Baptist Council was "lost in antiquity", but, during my research, I was not able to trace Minute Book No. 1, which seems to have disappeared early in the twentieth century.

The first entry in Minute Book No. 2 recorded the proceedings of a meeting of the Council, which took place on 14th February, 1922 in Great Victoria Street Baptist Chapel, and which was chaired by Mr. J. M. Hughes. It might have been assumed therefore that the Council was formed shortly after the termination of World War No. 1, the armistice in connection with which was signed at 11.00 a.m. on 11th November, 1918, but a minute of 13th October, 1925 records the re-election of Mr. W.G. Frizelle as treasurer, and mentiones the fact that he then had completed 20 years service in that particular office. Assuming he was the first treasurer, the Council originated in 1905.

If the record of the beginning of the Council is somewhat obscure, that of its demise is clear, accurate and final - certainly final! The last meeting was held on 13th December, 1949 in the Baptist Union of Ireland premises, 3 Fitzwilliam Street, Belfast, the chairman being Pastor T. McNabb, (Mountpottinger Tabernacle).

So after approximately forty-five years unobtrusive, but faithful service to the Baptist cause within the somewhat limited sphere of its confined area, it was agreed that not any useful purpose would be served by continuing the Council, and it was consequently disbanded, almost without visible sign of sorrow and regret. One might be pardoned for suggesting that the last stanza from "The Burial of Sir John More" by Rev. Charles Wolfe might have been

appropriate to the solemn historic occasion:-

"Slowly and sadly we laid him down, from the field of his fame fresh and gory: We carved not a line and we raised not a stone, but we left him alone with his glory."

In the wisdom (or otherwise) of the Irish Baptist Historical Society, it was decided to rectify in some measure the omission referred to in the third line of the verse quoted, "we carved not a line", and to place on record a few facts relating to the aspirations, activities, and achievements of the Belfast and District Baptist Council.

The particulars of the Constitution and Rules of the Body have been preserved in a Baptist Union of Ireland Handbook issued 1929 and through the courtesy of the present esteemed and efficient General Secretary of the said Union, Pastor Joshua Thompson, were made available.

They followed a somewhat standard pattern for organisations of that nature but are none the less interesting on that account. There were eight rules, which read as follows;

1. That this association be called "The Belfast and District Baptist Council".
2. That this Council shall be a voluntary Union of Baptist Churches in Belfast and District, in membership with the Baptist Union of Ireland.
3. That the objects of the Council shall be -
   (a) to assist in the consolidation and extension of the Baptist Denomination in the City and District.
   (b) to afford opportunities for conference, for the public declaration of our distinctive principles, and for joint action on questions affecting the welfare of the Churches and community.
   (c) to bring the Ministers, Officebearers, and Members of our Churches into closer fellowship with one another.
4. That the membership of this Council shall consist of - (i) The Ministers and Officebearers of the Associated Churches; (2) Such personal Members as may be appointed by the Council, and who shall subscribe to its funds.
5. That the Officebearers of this Council, shall consist of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer to be elected annually, and that these Officebearers shall be the Executive Committee of the Council.

6. That for the purpose of carrying out the objects of this Council, Meetings shall be held on the second Tuesday of each month from October to May - nine to form a quorum. The Secretary shall have power to call a Special Meeting at any time that may be necessary. That the Meeting in October shall be called the Annual Meeting, when in addition to the ordinary business, a Report of the proceedings for the past year shall be presented.

7. That each Church in the Council shall contribute annually a sum of not less than five shillings, and personal members a sum of not less than one shilling towards the current working expenses. All monies to be forwarded to the Treasurer before the end of October. Members neglecting to do this shall not be entitled to vote.

8. That no alteration in these Rules shall be made without one month's notice having been given, in writing, to the Secretary, signed by the proposer; the consent of three-fourths of the Members present when the matter is discussed being necessary for such alteration.

At the beginning of 1923, it would appear that there were ten churches in membership - Belfast being represented by Antrim Road, Bloomfield, Cliftonpark, East End, Great Victoria Street, Grove, Mount-pottinger Tabernacle, and Shankill Road, while Bangor and Carrickfergus represented the District.

ASPIRATIONS:

The aspirations of the Council were laudable - to assist, to afford, to bring!

(a) To assist in consolidating and extending the Baptist denomination in the city and neighbourhood. In the convinced belief that the principle of believer's baptism by immersion, as a confession of faith in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God on Calvary, was the clear teaching of the New Testament, the Council aspired to spread this truth abroad. The aim was to present in each local church a constructive and unified testimony to "the faith once delivered to the saints" as outlined in the basis of doctrine of the Baptist Union of Ireland. The prayer and hope being that through the clear presentation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ souls would be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, become members of the one true Church, the Bride and Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and join a local church.

As a Church grew numerically, it was expected that it would seek to extend its pastures into adjacent neighbourhoods, where the Baptist witness was non-existent, or the number of resident Baptists was small. This would foster the extension of Christ's kingdom on earth in clear New Testament fashion "beginning at Jerusalem" and extending in ever widening circles, as do rippling waves after a stone is cast into the waters of a placid pool.

(b) To afford opportunities for conference, for the public declaration of our distinctive principles and for joint action on questions affecting the welfare of the Churches and community.
In pursuance of those objects the Council for many years organised and supervised annual Christmas and Easter Conference Meetings in one of the larger city churches and occasional day Conferences, upon request, in Churches outside Belfast. This afforded the opportunities to proclaim the distinctive principles of Baptist doctrine.
Committees were appointed to consider the attitude to be adopted relating to questions of social welfare as they arose from time to time, and to help churches generally in the arranging of evangelistic work.

(c) To bring the Ministers, Officebearers and Members of our Churches into closer fellowship with one another.
In addition to the conferences referred to, an annual Social was arranged intermittently (if one may be permitted to use an "Irishism"), thus providing scope for the ladies to join in less formal gatherings and promoting a sense of family friendship, which was helpful and gratifying.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS - CONFERENCES

The Council promoted conference meetings, and was responsible for all arrangements in connection with them. These took place on various occasions, sometimes at the request of a local church, and were held in different church buildings.

There were one-day conferences; also, for many years, annual conferences at Easter and Christmas, the latter including Boxing Day meetings. The main one was the Easter gathering, when the programme covered three days with two sessions each day and were usually held in Mountpottinger Tabernacle or Great Victoria Street Church. For a period from 1925 onwards monthly conferences were promoted and the themes presented covered a wide range of Christian doctrine.

It may be of interest to note, as an example taken at random, that the syllabus for the session 1926-27 was arranged as follows:-

(a) Inspiration of the Scriptures - Pastor Docherty (Cliftonpark)
(b) Trinity in Unity - Pastor Henderson (Great Victoria Street)
(c) Deity and Humanity of Lord Jesus - Pastor Burrows (Bangor)
(d) Personality of Holy Spirit - Pastor Ravey (Newtownards)
(e) Human Depravity and Personality of Devil - Pastor Willoughby (Mountpottinger)
(f) Substitionary Sacrifice - Pastor Bell (Tandragee)
(g) Justification by Faith - Pastor Freeman (Coleraine)
(h) Natural Immortality of the Soul - Pastor Ruddock (East End)

Speakers from across the Channel were invited to the Easter Meetings and on other special occasions and local Baptists were privileged to be blessed under the ministry of many outstanding gifted pastors, such as Messrs. H.T. Chilvers, W.A. Clyde, Dr. Evans, M. Robinson, J. Galbraith, J. Harrison, J. Harper, E.W. Mills, W.M. Robertson, J.F. Scroggie and W. Young.

OPEN-AIR:

Open-air work was chiefly the responsibility of the individual churches, but the Council encouraged this aspect of evangelical service as the following extract from the minutes of the monthly meeting held on 18th April 1944 would indicate:-

> *"Recommendation was read from Evangelistic Committee 'that letters be sent to our churches suggesting they co-operate with neighbouring Baptist churches for series of Open-Air meetings during summer months.' Pastors Forbes and G. Weir moved and seconded Recommendation be adopted - passed."*

There is a further reference to their interest as recorded by their willingness to support the Baptist Youth Fellowship in an united effort held

on the blitzed site in High Street, Belfast from 6th till 13th June, 1948.

EVANGELISM:

Much of the work of the Council was undertaken by the Evangeliatic Committee appointed from among its members. From time to time, it engaged evangelists who conducted Gospel Missions in many of our churches upon request by a particular Fellowship.

One of the earliest of such appointments was Pastor J. Hodge (at one time at Ballykeel Church). He served with acceptance, though of a humorous nature and rather unorthodox in method. One Lord's Day at the morning service in a city church, he startled the congregation by announcing, *"it's the custom to sing the doxology at the end of the service, so we will now commence with it."* - they did!

Pastor Hodge was followed by Mr. Jack Atkinson (East End Church) who accepted the position as from 1st October, 1927 at the agreed salary of £104 per annum, which was increased to £120 per annum in December 1927. His resignation was accepted with regret at the meeting held on 8th October, 1929.

During this two-year period he conducted missions in most, if not all, of the Belfast churches also in many provincial and country churches, and, invariably blessing attended the preaching of the Word. The Holy Spirit used him to the salvation of many precious souls.

He was then in his late "teens" and was affectionately known as "The Boy Preacher". In passing it is interesting to note that there was another gifted young teenaged brother in our denomination in those days, who had also strong claims to the title of "Boy Preacher", a Mr. William Brown, of the Shankill Road congregation.

Others who acted as evangelists under the auspices of the Council acceptably and successfully, and later were called to the pastorate of churches in Northern Ireland, included stalwarts such as Mr. H.H. Orr (Kilrea, Great Victoria Street, East End, and Rathcoole), Mr. W. McCrea (Lisburn, before emigrating to Canada) and Mr. J. Irvine (Church Street East, Dungannon and Newcastle).

There are occasional references to decisions for Christ Jesus, for example - Easter Conference 1925 "three young men made profession of Salvation at the closing meeting", and, Special week of meetings for the deepening of Spiritual Life under the auspices of the Council held 16th-22nd

February, 1948 in Cliftonpark Church, "The Secretary . . . is pleased to record that one soul decided for Christ during this series of meetings".

EXTENSION:

During the 1922/23 session, an approach was made to the Baptist Union Committee, the headquarters then being situated in Dublin, for approval, under a Forward Movement, to raise funds for the possible opening up of work in the York Road area. (The Union could not, owing to financial difficulties make any grant for Forward work).

The matter was pursued, but difficulty in securing a suitable site, especially where a measure of local support could have been anticipated, caused the Council to transfer their investigation to the south side of the city. After prolonged negotiations, a site in Haypark Avenue, off Ormeau Road, in the Ballynafeigh district, was purchased on 30th December, 1924 - from the beginning of that year meetings had been held in the Ballynafeigh Orange Hall, the average attendance being forty. A building was erected and the opening services held on December 19, 1925, Pastors Jardine and Docherty, with Messrs. W.G. Frizelle, J. Guthrie and F.W. Carson taking part. The formation of the local church occurred during the following year - Mr. E.G. Combe taking a leading part in the flourishing work for many years.

Despite the apparent closing of the door in the York Road area, it was felt that there must be a fruitful field for expansion in the northern sector of the linen metropolis, and in June 1929 it was agreed to apply for a tent belonging to the friends of the Northern Baptist Association, to be erected in the Glengormley area, which at that time was more rural than urban. Pastor W.P. Rankin, a product of Mountpottinger Tabernacle, was asked to superintend the work. The mission proved successful, souls were saved, and as a result the work was continued by means of cottage meetings conducted chiefly by some of the Cliftonpark believers. A plot of ground was purchased in June 1930, a building erected, the opening meetings being held on Saturday, 7th May, 1932, *"The congregation numbered about 250 to 300, and the total offering was over £27. A school had been inaugurated with about 29 scholars on the Sunday, and four teachers."* About this period the Baptist Union Executive offered to take over from the Council *"the ground, the building, the liability already incurred by the Council, and the subsequent control*

of all that pertained to the carrying on of the Baptist witness in the ground and the building." Unanimously agreed that the proposal be gratefully accepted. (Minute Special Meeting, Friday 26/2/32 Cliftonpark). The Church was formed in 1937.

To a lesser degree, the Council was consulted, and shared in the promotion of Baptist witness, which eventually resulted in the formation of local assemblies in the following districts; Lisburn, Newtownards, Portadown and Warrenpoint.

SOCIAL WORK:

St. James in his epistle enunciates the principle that "faith without works is dead", and the considerate care of the Council for our less fortunate brethren was evidenced in the practical work of the Coal Fund Committee (1935) and the Assistance Committee (1934), each of which operated separately for many years, but were finally amalgamated in October 1949.

The function of the Assistance Committee was to provide sustenance and clothing to needy applicants from the local churches; the articles supplied having been provided by donations in cash or kind by the churches and sympathetic friends.

It may be of interest to recall the reason for the origin of the Coal Fund - a minute of 8th January, 1935 read as follows:

"That the acceptance of Coal Relief tickets from the Lord Mayor's Fund raised by questionable functions and degrading methods is not compatible with our Baptist ideals, and we therefore respectfully suggest to the Council that an independent fund of our own should be inaugurated to take its place in time for Christmas 1935." At the following monthly meeting the matter was considered and after a lengthy discussion, Mr. H.A. Johnston proposed and Mr. Boggs seconded and it was passed that the minute in question be adopted as the unanimous resolution of the Council.

In the early thirties (one time known as "the hungry thirties"), the receipt of two bags of coal in mid-winter free of charge was a boon in many homes. The deliveries continued until 1942/3, when the coal merchant involved *"was unable to deliver coal as per their tender which the Council had accepted and it was decided to send £1 against each coal ticket issued."* This practice appears to have continued

until the dissolution of the Council, though the unit of supply was increased to 4 bags in 1943. There were 27 homes from six churches receiving the commodity towards the end of 1948, the total expenditure amounting to £27.

MORAL ISSUES:

Acting as a "watch-dog" over the moral questions affecting the community, the operations of the Council in this respect are revealed by the following minutes:-

"8th December, 1936 - At this stage of the Meeting Pastor Gardiner directed attention to the evil of gambling, and presented the following resolutions adopted by the Belfast Council of Christian churches, which in turn were adopted by the (Belfast and District Baptist) Council:-

(2) That Sunday 7th February, 1937 be observed as an "Anti-Gambling" Day.

(3) That a United Anti-Gambling Demonstration be held in the Assembly Hall on Tuesday, 9th February, 1937. The speakers to be the Revs. Peter Green and E. Benson Perkins (or such other representative speakers as may be available.)

(4) (a) That a Campaign of Education against the evils of gambling be undertaken ... through Youth Organisations and Sunday Schools."

At the same meeting a further resolution was passed; *"We, the Belfast and District Baptist Council, representing all the Baptist Churches in Belfast and District, hereby protest against the film 'Green Pastures'; we believe the representation of God as depicted in this film to be both impious and blasphemous, and we are certain as such it will have an evil effect on the community. We therefore urge that whatever steps necessary may be taken to prohibit the showing of this film in Belfast.*

The Secretary was instructed to send a copy of the resolution to the Minister of Home Affairs, the Town Clerk, and the four local papers.";

"10th March 1942 - Mr. Forbes read copy of Resolution adopted by the Ballymena Church Council re opening of Wet Canteens in Munition factories etc. The following Resolution proposed by Pastor Forbes and seconded by Mr. Boggs was passed unanimously:-

"The Belfast and District Baptist Council view with great concern the issue of a recent order in Council establishing Wet Canteens in munition centres where civil workers are employed. The provision of drink bars for women in factories and the introduction of them into camps and cantonments of women engaged in the Auxiliary Services is also a matter calling for vigorous protest. After careful consideration the council wishes to record its strong disapproval and is of the opinion that the Imperial Government has no mandate from the country to act as drink salesman for the nation's Womanhood."

Thus as representatives of "the salt of the earth" the Council sought to protest against the corrupting forces of evil in the community.

GENERAL:

As the headquarters of the Baptist Union of Ireland was domiciled in Dublin prior to the year 1946, when it was removed to 3 Fitzwilliam Street, Belfast, the Council co-operated with the Union and undertook the arranging of the matters relating to the Northern churches.

The liaison was harmonious, and when the annual Assembly of the Union took place in Belfast in the month of May in any particular year, the Council was responsible for seeing that facilities were made available during the period of the meetings, including allocating the supply of local pulpits by visiting pastors on the Sunday before the Union meetings.

Strict etiquette was observed in these South-North negotations, for, though the Union was the governing Body and therefore had the authority to impose its decisions on the Council, it chose rather to request than to order, even to the extent of inviting the Council to invite the Union to hold the Assembly Annual Meetings in Belfast. A minute of 9th December, 1930 illustrates this in quaint fashion, as it reads:-

"Annual Assembly of B. U.O.I. Secretary reported that Pastor Fraser had written to ask if the Council would kindly invite the Union to Belfast for the Meetings of May 1931. Mr. Guthrie proposed and Mr. Johnston seconded, that the Council heartily invite the Baptist Union, as requested and that the Secretary ask the Great Victoria Street Church for the hospitality, which they so constantly extend to the Council, for that occasion also. Passed."

One notable achievement of the Council was the re-forming of the Local Preachers' Association in 1930, and this organisation continued to flourish as a denominational asset for many years. At the February 1930 meeting Mr. Hughes gave a report *"intimating that 45 names had been sent in expressing willingness to join. It was proposed by Mr. Frizelle, seconded by Mr. Arnold, and passed that Mr. Hughes and Mr. Combe proceed to form the association, and Mr. Frizelle intimated that he would pass over the papers in connection with the old Association."*

THE END OF THE JOURNEY:

In an effort to make the monthly meetings more interesting, it was agreed on 12th December, 1944 to act upon a suggestion from the Evangelistic Committee that after the business session (which should commence promptly at 8.15 and as far as possible finish by 8.45) an address be given or paper read and discussion follow on vital subjects. The result was improved attendances, but numbers began to decrease again during the 1948-49 session.

At September 1949 meeting, 13 were present, representing 7 churches and 4 apologies were read. In October 1949 6 churches were represented from a total of 19. 2 personal members attended from a total of 6 and 1 apology was received. In November 1949, 6 members from 5 churches and 2 personal members attended with one apology being recorded. At this meeting, it was decided that the *"Question of consideration of closing of Council and all relevant matters be noted on circulars summoning the December meeting."* Mr. S. Neill seconding the motion proposed by Mr. W. E. Graham, the acting-secretary.

The Council met for the last time on Tuesday, 13th December, 1949 in 3 Fitzwilliam Street, Belfast, those who attending being Messrs. W.E. Graham (Antrim Road), William Lowry (Orangefield), S. Neill (Glengormley), William Patrick (Bloomfield), J. Kyle (Personal), Pastors F.H. Forbes (Windsor), R.W. Kerr (Antrim Road), Minnis Mills (Orangefield), and T. McNabb (Cliftonpark,).

It was moved by Pastor Kerr, seconded by Mr. S. Neill, and passed unanimously -

"In view of the prolonged lack of interest in the work of the Council and believing the Council as such has outlived its usefulness the affairs of the Council be wound up as from 31/12/1949."

An official letter to be sent to the Baptist Union of Ireland, to the churches, and to the Irish Baptist Magazine. The credit balances in hand were reported to be General Fund £5. 19. 3, Coal Fund £43. 1. 6, Assistance Fund £8. 1. 6. - the latter amount was transferred to the Coal Fund, which it was agreed should be continued, and should be administered by the existing officebearers at the time of the dissolution of the Council, Pastor T. McNabb (Chairman), R.G. Marshall (Secretary), W.E. Graham (Treasurer).

"THE END OF THE WAY"

"To have attained, to have fulfilled
The purpose of our GOD Most High,
To have accomplished all GOD willed,
Must the ALMIGHTY glorify.

E.B. O'REILLY.

ADDENDUM:

Belfast and District Baptish Council - Chairmen:

14/2/22	Pastor C.S. Donald
10/10/22	J.M. Hughes
23	R. Jordan
24	Pastor S. Ruddock
25	J. Templeton
26	Pastor C. Willoughby
27	J. Guthrie
28	W.J. Chambers
29	Pastor D. Burrows
30	J.F. Pepper
31	Pastor W.P. Rankin
32	R.W. Graham
33	Pastor R.W. Kerr
34	J. Scott
35	D.H. Doggart
36	Pastor C.H.C. Robbins
37	E. Davison
38	Pastor T.R. Gardiner
39	S. Neill
40	Pastor H. Fraser
41	R.A.L. Mann
42	Pastor W. Weir
43	J. Nesbitt
44	Pastor F.H. Forbes
45	E.B. O'Reilly
46	Pastor W. Wilson
47	T.E. Bell
48	Pastor T. McNabb

Secretaries: 1920-25

Pastor L.E. Deens
Pastor J.W.S. Fraser
J.F. Pepper (vice Pastor R.J. Rice)
Pastor S. Ruddock
J. Guthrie
Pastor A.L. Smith
S. Neill
R.G. Marshall

Treasurers:

W.G. Frizelle 1905 (?) - 1935
A. Boggs 1935 - 45
G.H. Douglas 1945 - 49.

History of Lurgan Baptist Church (1878 - 1974)

"In the Beginning"

According to existing records, the earliest mention of organised Christian worship in the Lurgan district goes back to around 1400 A.D., when a group of Episcopalians gathered in a church building just outside the boundaries of our present town.

In 1654 the Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers, established a meeting, which was followed about 30 years later by a Presbyterian cause. The year 1778 saw the beginning of the Methodist Church in the town.[1]

The first mention of Baptist witness in Lurgan seems to be that found in the Irish Baptist Magazine for October 1878. There we read, *"For some time our devoted friend, Rev. S.J. Banks of Banbridge has been doing, aided by a goodly band of earnest brethren, missionary work in Lurgan. Open air meetings, tract distribution, house to house visitation and preaching in the Mechanics Institute have been the means used, and with considerable success. The Committee of the Home Mission have taken a public hall in one of the best situations in the town, we have no doubt of the result. A good church and congregation will be gathered."*

During the next 3 years the work in Lurgan was carried on in the form of a Mission outpost by the Pastor and members of the Banbridge Church. Some time in 1881 a Mr. Baird erected a hall in Union Street (opposite the present Salvation Army Hall). This building is now a dwelling house known as No. 111 Union Street. This was rented to the believers who worshipped in the Mechanics Institute[2] and, just before moving into it early in 1882, they had formed theyselves into a Baptist

Church. This hall was complete with baptistry, pulpit and gallery and seated about 150 people.[3]

From the formation of the Church in 1881 until 1885, the Rev. S.J. Banks was responsible for supplying Lurgan with speakers and these mostly from his own congregation. One account of these years states, *"the young Church at Lurgan is in a prosperous condition and the congregations are both large and interesting."*[4]

The only foundation members whose names are known to us today are Messrs. Carson, McCrory, McNeice, Dowey and Patterson.

PASTOR F.J. RYAN 1885-1890

"The Lord added to the Church"

Sometimes referred to as the "Rev." Ryan he took over the work of Lurgan Baptist Church in 1885. Ballykeel Baptist Church also seems to have been under his care at the same time.

One report would suggest that the Lurgan Church had only 10 members when he became its Pastor, but a year later the membership had been increased to 46, and 5 sub-stations were in operation.[5] The fact that so many preaching outposts were being manned at the same time gives some indication of the activity of the Church in those early days.

During Pastor Ryan's stay in Lurgan he had fellowship with the Presbyterian and Methodist clergy in the town, and they seem to have helped the Pastor in his public work.

In 1889 a Band of Hope was formed as part of the work with 40 names on the roll as foundation members.[6] At a social evening in January 1890, the members and some friends presented the Pastor with a silver lever watch as a mark of their esteem.

In April of the same year (1890) Pastor Ryan held his farewell services in the Chapel in Union Street - the building was well filled.

He left Lurgan a few days later.

PASTOR BOYD 1892 - 1896

"The ship covered with the waves"

Pastor Boyd took up the work in Lurgan in January 1892. Since Pastor

Ryan left the Church in 1890 things had been allowed to drift and there was even talk among the members of closing the Chapel in Union Street altogether. God used Pastor Boyd to bring the spirit of revival into the Church again, and quite a few new members were added to the Assembly, in fact it has been left on record that he was God's instrument in saving the Baptist witness in Lurgan from extinction.[7]

One year after coming to Lurgan the attendance at the evening meeting was almost doubled each Lord's Day and efforts were made to obtain the Town Hall for the evening services.

We have an account of an open air Gospel meeting held on "the hillside" at which over 700 people were present. The reference here is possibly to Kitchen Hill, not far from the Chapel in Union Street.[8]

Towards the close of his ministry, Pastor Boyd urged the church members to seek a new building in which to worship. With this object in view he made a personal appeal through the Baptist Magazine in 1896 for £1000 to erect such a building, and he had the joy of seeing the site of the present Chapel in Windsor Avenue actually bought before his work in Lurgan finished.

He accepted a call to the Church in Waterford and at his farewell meeting he was presented with an illuminated address and a purse of sovereigns.

He left Lurgan in October 1896.

PASTOR FENTON BURY, B.A. 1896 - 1903

"They builded and finished it."

Pastor Bury began his ministry in Lurgan in November 1896 and from the beginning of his Pastorate was recognised in the town and district as a man of God.

It was during his stay in Lurgan that the foundation stone of the present Chapel in Windsor Avenue was laid by Mrs. R.G. Glendinning from Belfast on the 14th May, 1898. The building was opened for worship on Lord's Day, 19th February, 1899 by the Pastor's brother from Dublin, Principal A.G. Bury. He preached twice that day; in the morning

from Isaiah 58:11 and in the evening from Romans 5:1. The Chapel which held about 300 was packed for the evening meeting and many were turned away. Mrs. Hugh Brown, mother of the famous Baptist preacher, presented the church with an inscribed silver communion set.[9] A handbill announcing the opening meetings is still in the possession of the church secretary. It was preserved by the late Mrs. Annie Geddis who was married in the Union Street Chapel by Pastor Boyd.

The Irish Baptist Magazine for April 1899 says, *"Subscribers to the new chapel will be glad to learn that it is situated in the very best part of the town. The building is erected in a new thoroughfare, formerly the main entrance to Lord Lurgan's demesne. Mr. Bury and his friends deserve great credit for selecting such a commanding site, and they deserve the hearty financial support of our denomination. When it is remembered the low estate of the cause in Lurgan some years ago, it seems almost incredible that such progress could have been made within the last few years."*

The new Chapel cost less than £1000. The sum of £500 was still needed to complete the payment for the building when opened.

In the last year of his ministry, Pastor Bury persuaded the Lurgan Church to purchase a portable wooden hall capable of seating about 200. This hall was erected in Bleary, a few miles outside the town, in 1903 and for a few years was used for Gospel work in that district.

Mr. Bury left Lurgan the same year (1903) after receiving a call from Shankill Baptist Church, Belfast. Later he left Ireland and became a minister in the Church of England. He died suddenly on November 24th, 1935 at the age of 70 after having preached twice the previous day as Vicar of Burton Joyce.[10]

His son still corresponds with one of our local doctors.

PASTOR G.M. REID 1904-1910

"Marriage is honourable"

Pastor Reid was called to the Lurgan Church sometime in 1904; the membership of the Assembly at this time was 79. While in Lurgan he married the organist of Antrim Road Baptist Church, Belfast; a daughter was born to them during his Pastorate here.

Church administration in those days seems to have been conducted in a manner which would cause present-day members to raise their eyebrows! On one occasion a sale of work was organised and held in the local Y.W.C.A., now known as 62 High Street, but owing to some misgivings in the Assembly this was never repeated.[11]

It was not uncommon for a church business meeting to be held on the Lord's Day after the morning service, at which deacons were elected. Baptisms also took place at the morning service and, in some cases, those baptised in the morning were received into membership that evening.

It would seem that some private baptisms took place during Pastor Reid's ministry. This resulted in one brother bringing the issue up at a church business meeting, but as he failed to prove from Scripture that the practice was wrong, no action was taken.[12] The Pastor and his family left Lurgan for the United States in 1910.

PASTOR WM. CAMPBELL 1911-1914

"Exceedingly tossed with a tempest"

After Pastor Reid left the Lurgan Church in 1910 the Irish Baptist Home Mission sent a Mr. Wm. Campbell to help in the work here. His ministry was so owned by the Lord that the church decided to ask him to take over the Pastorate from 1911.

Those in the congregation today who remember him say he preached well, and in open air work his voice could be heard for miles over the countryside. Some thought his manner could be abrupt at times and he showed scant patience with any who distracted his attention while preaching.

A goodly number were saved and baptised under his ministry, although not all joined the Assembly. At one baptismal service when the number of gowns proved insufficient one brother, still with us, obeyed his Lord wearing what was then known as a "swallow tail" coat, kindly bestowed by an older member![13]

Pastor L.E. Deens relates how once he preached in Lurgan during the Pastor's absence. Returning after the morning service, Mr. Campbell's landlady said to him, *"Mr. Deens you're not like our Pastor."* On asking what way he differed, the landlady replied, *"Well Mr. Campbell had always to change his under vest after preaching."* Pastor Deens evidently

deemed it wiser to restrict his physical activities in the pulpit rather than suffer the inconvenience of carrying a spare vest around with him on his preaching engagements![14]

Shortly after Mr. Campbell settled in Lurgan, the Church decided to sell the Chapel to the Baptist Corporation for the sum of £620.

During his stay in Lurgan the Pastor fell from his bicycle and was taken into hospital with a broken leg. Here he came into contact with a young nurse whom he eventually married.

After receiving a call from Bangor Baptist Church he left Lurgan in 1914.

His wife was a Presbyterian and later in life Mr. Campbell left the Baptist denomination and became a Presbyterian minister. After taking this step he preached on at least one occasion to a Presbyterian congregation in the town. A lady who heard him then and was unaware of his previous Baptist connection was heard to remark, "that man's no Presbyterian."

PASTOR A.T. PATTERSON 1914-1918

"He abode with them and wrought"

Pastor A.T. Patterson was called to the Lurgan church in November 1914. Some idea of the financial position of the Assembly at this time will be gleaned from the fact that the income for the year 1914, including envelopes amounted to around £60.[15]

In order to maintain a reasonable standard of living Pastor Patterson was compelled to engage in secular employment on the Queen's Island in Belfast. For various reasons this failed to meet with the approval of some members of the church and after some time he retired from the "Island" and devoted his full time to church work.[16]

It was through a Bible object lesson given by the Pastor at a children's meeting in Windsor Avenue about the year 1916 that the writer first heard the Gospel presented in a way he could understand. When the Pastor decided to leave Lurgan, the deacons for some unexplained reason thought it unwise to proceed with a previous wish expressed by the Assembly to show their appreciation of his work in a tangible form. Nevertheless the Church sent him a letter which expressed regret at his resignation and wishing him God's blessing on his future labours. He left Lurgan in 1918 to work with the Evangelisation Society in London.

PASTOR F.H. FORBES 1918-1925

"Where prayer was wont to be made"

Pastor Forbes accepted the call to Lurgan in 1918 when the membership was 54, and the financial state of the church was anything but healthy.

To remedy this a new system of giving was suggested, which it was said would put the church on "a good financial footing". Fifteen members were to give one shilling each per week; 15 others, sixpence each; 12 threepence and the remaining 12 members three halfpence each! [17] In retrospect, this standard for giving might well cause some of us to smile, but those were hard times and for some even this meant sacrifice.

Outside preaching stations were a regular feature of the work during the Pastor's stay in Lurgan and on more than one occasion he was seen to mount a push bicycle with a portable organ strapped on his back for open air work in the country.

What would seem today an amusing situation arose when it was decided at a business meeting in 1919 to spread a layer of tar outside the Chapel to keep down weeds, "the cost not to exceed £1". Three months later it was reported at another meeting that nothing had been done about this. A committee was then formed to make sure that the work was carried out. Four months later it was reported by the Committee that the work had been halted as the tar was finished and they had no authority to go beyond the allotted sum of £1. A weary church gave the required authority!! [18]

In September/October 1921, Rev. W.P. Nicholson conducted a very fruitful mission in the town. On at least one occasion he preached from the Windsor Avenue pulpit.

The Pastor's ministry was a great blessing to many of the young converts from the mission who attended the church.

A male voice choir was formed to lead the praise in the services. About half of its members were fully conversant with the finer points of music, the others played their part by making "a joyful noise unto the Lord!"

Those were troubled times in Ulster and curfew was in force, yet the spirit of revival was abroad and all night prayer meetings were held in the Chapel which were well attended. In March 1923 the church became self supporting. A few months later the Pastor's salary was increased to £4 per week! [19]

It was during Mr. Forbes stay in Lurgan that the church suffered a very grievous loss by the accidental drowning in Bangor of Mr. Reggie Archer, a godly young man who was a deacon and also the church secretary.

On August 1st, 1923 Miss Turnbull, a member of the church was joined in marriage to Pastor Kyle Paisley of Armagh Baptist Church.[20] The wedding ceremony was performed in the Lurgan Chapel by Pastor I.P. Bell from Tandragee Baptist. The result of this union was the birth of a baby boy known today throughout the world as the Rev. Ian Paisley, M.P.

Pastor Forbes left Lurgan for the church at Ballykeel in August 1925.

PASTOR S. CARSER 1925-1937

"Strife and division"

At a church meeting held on August 31st, 1925 in Windsor Avenue, Mr. Peter Connolly from England was given a unanimous call to Lurgan. As he was unable to take up the work for another 10 months it was decided at the same meeting to invite Mr. Sam Carser, from Belfast, to fill the pulpit for that period.[21] During this 10 months' period a sharp difference arose between the members as to the suitability of Mr. Connolly as permanent Pastor. This resulted in about 30 members who favoured Mr. Connolly leaving Windsor Avenue and meeting for worship in the basement of the Town Hall.

This group formed itself into a Baptist Church and was received into the Baptist Union in May 1927. The remaining members in Windsor Avenue then invited Mr. Carser to take over the Pastorate of the church permanently. This he did until May 1937 when by a majority vote the church requested his resignation.[22] Pastor Carser was an excellent preacher and quite a few souls were saved during his ministry. It was during his pastorate that elders were first appointed in the Lurgan Church: these were Mr. John Magill who has now gone to his reward, and Mr. Samuel Cairns who is still with us.

Mr. Carser left Lurgan in May 1937 and later became the Pastor of Bloomfield Baptist Church, Belfast.

(P.S. The church in the Town Hall continued for about 13 years and ceased to function in February 1940. One of the group who left the Windsor Avenue assembly in 1926 was the church secretary. He took the

minute books with him; these were returned to the Windsor Avenue church about 45 years later.)

PASTOR S. JARDINE 1937-1941

"An holy man of God passeth by"

At a church meeting held on 29th September, 1937, Mr. Sam Jardine of Belfast was given a call to take up the Pastorate of the Church. A welcome meeting was held for him on 17th December of the same year.

Pastor Jardine was a fine preacher and recognised by all in the town as a godly man. He was well known for his work of visitation and pointed many to the Lord in this way.

The church at this time had withdrawn from the Baptist Union and Pastor Jardine took a firm stand against any suggestion of rejoining it.[23] It was left on record that 2 years after coming to Lurgan his salary was increased by 5 shillings per week! During his Pastorate the debt on the Chapel was cleared and the church received the deeds from the Baptist Corporation.

Some time in 1939 he persuaded the church to write to the Town Hall assembly and suggest re-union. This letter stated, *"We wish you one and all to know that within scriptural and reasonable bounds the door of fellowship in our church is wide open. We say scriptural and reasonable to obviate any further misunderstanding. The present status of the church is free and non-union, maintaining the principles of the New Testament as interpreted by Baptists. Your coming amongst us will involve your acceptance of the present ministry, officeship and already constituted minutes of the assembly.*

We assure you most heartily that upon receiving the names of those desiring to enter into fellowship with us no time will be lost in obtaining the approval of the members, and that most desirable work of re-union being carried into execution. As this letter states the whole present position from our view point, please note that it is our final finding and conclusion on the matter after prayerful consideration. That it may prove mutually satisfactory is our sincere desire."

Signed, S. Jardine and S McCormick.[24]

The Town Hall assembly objected to the terms laid down on 3 main points. Firstly they were being called upon to surrender their membership of the Baptist Union of Ireland; secondly the church in Windsor Avenue demanded the right to pick and choose from the Town Hall assembly members thirdly, instead of being a matter for negotiation between 2 Christian churches, the letter had stated that *"this is our final finding and conclusion on the matter."*[25]

This one and only attempt at re-union failed and, after receiving a call to Belfast, Pastor Jardine left Lurgan in 1941. Later he became a Brethren evangelist.

PASTOR F.W.G. HUTCHINSON 1944-1946

"Contentions among you"

Mr. Hutchinson was called to the church in Lurgan on February 23rd, 1944. At the same meeting it was decided to make application to re-join the Baptist Union.

It was during his stay that the house known as 99 Hill Street was bought by the church for £750. At a church meeting held in March 1946 the Pastor stated that he had heard there was a certain amount of dissatisfaction among the members regarding his ministry and because of this he had decided to resign as Pastor of the Church. At this stage various opinions were expressed regarding his preaching and work by the members, many testifying to blessing and help received through him, others suggested he had not shown real interest in the various departments of the church.

When his resignation was put to the church it was found that 24 were not in favour of accepting it, while 20 were in favour - 6 members abstained from voting. Nevertheless the Pastor remained firm in his determination to resign.[26]

He married a young nurse while in Lurgan. The wedding took place in Great Victoria Street Baptist Church. Much to the dismay of the hardliners in the Lurgan assembly he donned a clerical collar for this happy occasion![27] His ministry was the shortest in the history of the Lurgan church, just a little over two years. He left at the end of May 1946 to take up a Baptist Pastorate in Scotland.

PASTOR R.G. McCLEMENTS 1947-1951

"A succourer to many"

Pastor McClements accepted a call to the work in Lurgan and commenced his ministry in August 1947. During the first 4 months of his Pastorate he made at least 250 visits to the homes of members and also visited many adherents.

At a church meeting shortly after he had taken up the work testimony was given by many members of rich blessing received through his ministry in the various departments of the work. In the 12 months following his call 27 people were baptised and 16 added to the church.

He conducted 3 missions during the first 18 months of his work in Lurgan - in Dollingstown, Bannfoot and at a spot called Johnies Turn.[28] At each of these efforts souls were led to the Lord Jesus. It was during Pastor McClements' stay in Lurgan that the Women's Missionary Auxiliary was formed, although it was not incorporated into the work of the church until 3 years later.

The manse in Hill Street was sold about this time and the present one in Windsor Avenue purchased by the church for £1800.

Mr. McClements' wife who was a great help to him in the work passed away during a later Pastorate in Ballykeel. Although they had left Lurgan some years prior to her death, this sad event came as a great shock to their many friends in the town. They were both loved and respected in Lurgan and when he decided to accept a call to Cliftonpark Avenue Baptist Church, Belfast in 1951, his departure was keenly felt even by those of other congregations in the town.

PASTOR WM. MULLAN 1953

"A man sent from God"

In March 1953, Pastor Wm. Mullan of Bloomfield Baptist Church, Belfast, received a unanimous call to take up the work in Lurgan. He began his ministry in August of the same year. Almost from his first message the building was filled to capacity and, during the past 20 years, a great many souls have turned in faith to Christ, not only in Lurgan but in many places all over the world where he has gone with the Word, or where his taped messages have been relayed.

In 1958 the Chapel building was extended to accommodate another 200 people. During the extension work the services were held each Lord's Day

in the Town Hall. This work also included a kitchen, toilets and extra pews, the total cost being around £6400.[29] The architect was Mr. J. McCormick, D.A.,A.R.I.B.A., of Lurgan, one of our members. Regarding the opening of the extension a correspondent in the Christian Herald wrote, *"The members of Lurgan Baptist Church recently completed an extension to their church building which will provide accommodation for an extra 200 people. What must be a unique incident took place at the re-opening ceremony. The Pastor presented a beautifully inscribed Bible to the architect and one to the building contractor, remarking during the presentation that it had been his great joy and privilege to lead both men to Christ - the architect a few years ago and the contractor during the actual work on the extension."*

During Pastor Mullan's ministry, and to a great extent because of it, 15 young people have gone out from the Church into full time Christian service. Dr. and Mrs. Tom Geddis to Brazil, Miss Dorothy Foster to Chile, Miss Pat Harrison has gone to Ethiopia, and Mr. Jim Archer and his wife to France. The others are all engaged in various forms of Christian activity.

The Pastor's Tuesday evening Bible Class attracts hundreds of people each week. Many come from distant places and all denominations are represented. Many testify to great blessing received through the truths taught.

In 1962 the Pastor, accompanied by Pastor Jim Irvine and a few other friends, spent 2 weeks in the Holy Land. The places seen and information gleaned during this tour proved exceedingly useful in his subsequent ministry.

In 1965 a scheme was introduced by Mr. Wm. Russell, one of our Elders, to aid missionary funds. This called for volunteers who would subscribe one shilling per week over and above all other gifts to God's work. The scheme was called "Missionary Enterprise", the proceeds of which are divided among the various missionary societies at our annual Missionary Conference. Up to the end of 1973 almost £12,000 has been raised in this way.[30]

In 1966 the Pastor conducted a Gospel Mission in the Chapel. In the weeks preceding the mission £1000 had been given in voluntary subscriptions so that no collections need be taken during the meetings.

Use was made of a disused factory at the rear of the Chapel where closed

circuit television was installed. Free buses and cars were provided for those who wished to attend from a distance. About 1000 people attended each night and many were brought into saving contact with Jesus Christ.

In 1969 the church decided to purchase this factory building to accommodate the Sunday School. It has now been divided into separate classrooms and was first used by the School on September 12th, 1971. Under the superintendency of Mr. Wm. Russell the Sunday School is comprised of 187 scholars and 21 teachers. Mr. Gordon Wells leads the afternoon Bible Class.

About 2 years ago a plan was set on foot to enable members to render financial aid to those young people of our Assembly engaged in full time Christian work. Envelopes, each bearing the name of a particular worker, were placed in the vestibule to be used for this purpose. When collected each month these gifts are passed on to the workers thus named. On an average about £170 is raised each month in this way.

In a building a few miles outside the town which is specially equipped for the purpose, Mr. Mullan conducts a training school for young preachers. About 25 students attend each session. One has only to sit under their ministry to appreciate how thorough and rewarding this training is.

At a meeting held in June of last year, Mr. Mullan and his wife were each presented with a cheque to mark his 20th Anniversary as Pastor of the Church. A coloured brochure giving an interesting account of his conversion and subsequent labours in verse form was published and sold at this time. The proceeds were given to Miss Pat Harrison, a worker with the Middle East General Mission.

For the past 17 years every message delivered on the Lord's Day and at the Tuesday evening Bible Class has been recorded by Mr. Wm. Hewitt and his band of faithful workers. These tapes are sent out to distant parts of the earth and reports of missionaries and others feasting on the rich ministry from Lurgan reach us continually. Well over 400 new members have been added to the church during Mr. Mullan's ministry and many more baptised.[31]

For everything accomplished during the past years, we give God all the glory and look to Him alone for even greater things to come.

We praise God that in this year, 1974, our beloved Pastor is still with us. To God be the glory.

WM. TORRENS

G. WELLS

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Recollections of George Young, Colporteur

Taped and edited by J. Thompson

1. Background and Career:

George Young was born on 4 December, 1890 in Brandfield Street, Edinburgh. His father, Thomas, was a native of Edinburgh and a coach trimmer by trade. His mother, Annie, was formerly Annie Corkey, a member of a well-known Irish Presbyterian family and a native of Co. Armagh. Mrs. Young later joined the Methodists. Mr. Thomas Young belonged to the United Presbyterian Church.

When George was a small boy, his father was offered two jobs - one in Kensington, London, the other in Cork. For reasons unknown to George, his father accepted the job in Cork, and the family moved to Ireland around 1898.

After they settled in Cork the family attended the Methodist Church, but George himself was drawn to the Salvation Army whose meetings he enjoyed.

So far as he remembers Mr. Young was converted to Christ in his own home. He recalls being alone at home one day, kneeling down and asking the Lord to save him. He was about 12 years old at the time. About two years later he joined the Salvation Army Corps as a soldier and became an active worker. He had thoughts of going to the Salvation Army Training Home and becoming an officer.

He served his connection with the Salvation Army after conversations with a lady *'who had been to Switzerland and who was connected in some way with the pentecostal movement, though at that time they weren't formed into Churches.'*[1] Mr. Young never joined the pentecostal movement though he studied their literature. He broke with the Salvation Army over *'their teaching on falling away and being eternally*

lost." Though he had accepted this doctrine earlier he had come to believe *"that once a man was saved, he was saved eternally; that God's salvation is an eternal salvation.'* He arrived at this conviction apart from outside influences other than the Bible.

Mr. Young's first contact with Baptists was when he was 20 years' old. He relates the circumstances in his own words:

'It was in the Autumn of 1910 that a lady informed me of some prayer meetings which were being held in the Cork Baptist Chapel and suggested I should go.

I know I went to one anyway. It was held in the back room behind the chapel and was led by Pastor F. W. Gracey; he had just started in Cork that summer. I remember he was speaking on the word "power" in the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

'From that time I attended the services there occasionally and one Sunday Evening early in January 1911, as I entered the Chapel, one of the deacons told me they were having a baptismal service on the following Sunday Evening and asked me if I would like to be baptised. I had been thinking of it for some time.

'After the service I had a conversation with Pastor Gracey about it and it was arranged that I should be baptised on the following Sunday.

'At that baptismal service there was a large congregation. Mr. Gracey preached on "Baptism". His text was Ephesians 4:5 "one baptism" and the baptismal hymn was J.G. Deck's "Around Thy grave, Lord Jesus, In spirit here we stand." The other person baptised that evening was Miss Duggan of Mountmellick.'

Mr. Young continued to attend the services in the Baptist Church and became a member in December 1912. The following year he was appointed as a colporteur[2] by the Bible and Colportage Society of Ireland and was located in Clonakilty. In June 1917 this Society ran into financial difficulties and closed the work in Clonakilty, and Mr. Young returned to Cork. He recalls that Mr. Gracey was anxious for the Irish Baptist Home Mission to start colportage work, but the Mission Committee was not in a position to take on this extra commitment.

Mr. Young says, *'The matter was raised at the Annual Meetings of the*

Southern Baptist Association held in the Limerick Church in September 1917. They agreed to Mr. Gracey's proposal, and a small committee was formed with Pastor Spelman (Limerick) as secretary and Mr. Octavius Wallace of Dublin as treasurer to see it through. I was appointed their colporteur and started work in Cork in October 1917.'[3]

Pastor L.E. Deens recollects that he and Pastor Gracey raised most of the money required by the SBA to pay Mr. Young during the period before the Home Mission took him on to the Staff.[4] This was not an easy task in wartime and the political ferment in Ireland, so it is not surprising to find that on 21 August 1918 the Baptist Union of Ireland Finance Committee minutes record that -

'An application was received from the Southern Association asking aid for their Colporteur, Mr. Geo. Young. As the committee did not know the state of the Finances a grant would not, at present, be recommended.'

One assumes that the allusion in this minute to 'the state of the Finances' refers to the money available to the SBA for paying Mr. Young, rather than to the resources of the Home Mission which the Finance Committee would most certainly know.

This view seems to be borne out by a subsequent decision taken by the Home Mission Committee meeting in 45 Harcourt Street, Dublin on 16 September 1918.

'South and West Colporteur. On the motion of Mr. Glendinning, Seconded by Mr. Weatherup it was decided that if the Southern Association was agreeable Mr. Geo. Young who for the past twelve months had been working in the South and West, should now be taken over by the Home Mission at a salary of £72 per Annum and his expenses and that he should work under the supervision of Pastor F. W. Gracey of Cork.'

'Six members of the Financial Committee were present and approved of this arrangement.'

The SBA did agree, and Mr. Young took up his appointment with the Home Mission on 1 October 1918. He continued on the Mission staff until his retirement on 28 February 1969.

At the time of his appointment Mr. Young was located in Cork city and district. In the summer of 1919 he went to Athlone for ten weeks, returning to resume his work in Co. Cork. In 1910 he spent three months in Waterford. Then in June 1921 Mr. Young went to Armagh to do colportage work in association with the newly-formed Baptist Church there and its pastor, J. Kyle Paisley. He remained for one year, helping in the Church work and distributing bibles in the city and surrounding districts.

Often significant changes in the direction of one's life and service are caused by events beyond one's control or to which one attaches no importance at the time. This was the case when Mr. Young's father opted for the job in Cork rather than London. So in 1922, when in Armagh, Mr. Young had a severe attack of influenza, which in those days was a much more serious disease than it is today with modern prophylactics. He was confined to bed for some weeks, and then suffered a relapse; it was some time before he finally recovered.

As a direct result of this illness the Home Mission Committee agreed to his return to Cork. Mr. Young recollects that this decision was taken reluctantly. *'I don't think'*, he says, *'it was their object to let me go back to the south, because I know Pastor Hodgett had arranged for me to go to Ballymena and had even found accommodation for me. But that was the time I took sick and I wasn't able to go there.'* This decision decided the sphere of Mr. Young's service for the remainder of his active life. He never worked in the north again.

From 1922-1925 he continued in Colportage and open-air evangelism in Cork City and district. From March to June in 1925 he was located at Clonmel, where after sporadic attempts over the years services had been re-started in May 1922 by Pastor C.J. Mates. In addition to his literature work Mr. Young for the four months in Clonmel conducted a service each Monday evening and visited Waterford fortnightly to take the Sunday services there.

In 1932 he was moved from Cork to Dublin on a three months' assignment and stayed for thirty-seven years! In a tribute to Mr. Young on the occasion of his retirement Pastor L.E. Deens wrote('Irish Baptist' Vol. 91 No. 3)

> *"During these years he has engaged in a consistent door-to-door witness that would not have been maintained by many*

a lesser man. It is not the sort of work that hits the headlines. It doesn't bring earthly glory because by human standards it is without eye-catching success. But we Irish Baptists owe a great deal to this faithful man of God who as our representative has carried on this witness in times and under conditions that have often been hard and discouraging."

At the time of the interview on which this paper is based Mr. Young and his wife were living quietly in retirement in Finglas, Dublin.

2. Memories

The Cork Church when Mr. Young joined it had very few men in membership, and the congregation was comprised mainly of women. Outstanding among these ladies were the Misses Bergin, Miss Carney, Miss Carrie Walsh and the Misses Temple. Among the men were Mr. Daniel Sexton, an ex-Roman Catholic who had been converted some years previously, a Mr. Sommerville and a Mr. Christie.

One of the Miss Bergens married Pastor Albert Quigley who was in Lisnagleer Church and had responsibility for Dungannon, Knockconny and Mullycar Churches. (I.B. Hist. Soc. Quarterly Vol. 4 p.14) The Bergen family had been connected with the Cork Baptist Church for several generations. One of them, a brother of the sisters Mr. Young knew, was an outstanding Gaelic scholar who lived in Dublin but seems not to have continued his Baptist connection there. Pastor Deens recalls seeing Osborne Bergen often in Dublin, though he never met him personally. Osborne Bergen had studied in Germany and was an intimate friend of Dr. Kuno Meyer, another Gaelic scholar of repute.

Miss Susie Bergen, one of Osborne's sisters, was visited in Dublin by Pastor Deens during an illness that proved fatal. Mr. Deens regards one of those visits as an outstanding memory of his long ministry. To quote him -

'I called to see her one day. She was very low, and could hardly speak. She had cancer in the throat. I asked her, "Would you like me to read you something?", and I took up the Bible. She said "I'd like you to read me hymn number so and so in Alexander." I was a bit surprised but I took up the hymn book - it was there beside the bed - and read the hymn "My goal is God Himself". It was a most touching experience.'[5]

There was some friction in the Cork Church during the early days of Pastor Gracey's ministry when Mr. Young was attending occasionally and before he became a member. Mr. Young was, of course, ignorant of the causes of the friction -

'But it appears that Mr. Gracey wasn't satisfied with the men who were deacons. He didn't think that they were suitable, and that they had the Scriptural qualifications of a deacon. I believe they had a number of meetings at that time about, but the result was anyway he swept them all off. The whole lot of them ... (there was) a church meeting and the whole lot, I think, were dismissed ... From that day until the day that I lift Cork we never had any deacons or elders.'

'... When Mr. Gracey went to Cork the first note he struck was "revival". He started prayer meetings for revival - (one held) on the Thursday afternoons specially for revival ... continued on during the whole of his time there.'

Mr. Young carried on <u>open-air work</u> in Cork for years on Sunday evenings at a location in Grand Parade in the city centre. This witness to the gospel was shared by various evangelicals, notably the Salvation Army. Some others, Church of Ireland and Brethren, had a Sunday afternoon open-air service for some time at the opposite end of Grand Parade.

'I remember on one occasion the Lord Mayor of Cork, Alderman Sir Edward Fitzgerald who was very much opposed to open-air work, made some statement about it. Probably at a (City) Council Meeting or something like that. That Sunday we didn't know what was going to happen but we went on anyway to where we used to stand at the end of Grand Parade and the whole place all around was crowded with people. Tremendous crowds. Of course there were a lot of police as well. We started and had our meeting, went through just as usual, and there wasn't a word said (against us).'

This was the more remarkable because the men who held the afternoon open-air service at the opposite end of Grand Parade had had 'a pretty rough time of it.' They had been shouted down.

Mr. Young recalls that <u>the political atmosphere</u> at the time interfered with his work in two ways - travel was difficult and people were afraid of strangers calling at their doors. Since his return to Cork

In 1918 Mr. Young had been accustomed to working an area, mainly rural, within a radius of 15 to 20 miles from the city. He met with a good response from the people. 'They were just simple country people, very friendly.' Purchases of literature were good, and there were opportunities for religious conversations. He experienced little reaction from the parish priests.

The arrival of the 'Black and Tans' heightened the political tensions. The IRA were 'carrying on' in the city and also in the country areas. Mr. Young says -

> *'It was difficult, very difficult, for travelling, I remember cycling one day, oh I must have been gone over 24 miles, and I met very few people on the road. I was never interfered with by the military, or the "Black and Tans" or the IRA. Although I was moving about from time to time it was getting difficult because people, if you knocked at the door of their home or house, some of them wouldn't open. They were afraid to open it, you see. 'So then we thought it was better that I should go to some quieter part of the country. Mr. Gracey approached the "Dungannon Committee" (about a possible move.)'*[6]

As has already been mentioned Mr. Young was transferred to Waterford, returning briefly to Cork, then going to Athlone where he combined pastoral care of the Athlone and Moate Churches and his colportage work. About 12 to 15 people attended the Sunday afternoon service in Moate in those days. The leading light was a farmer called Ben Green who had been a Baptist for many years.

Mr. Young remembers the pastor of the Armagh Church, J.Kyle Paisley (father of Ian R.K. Paisley) as *'a very fine fellow and a good Gospel preacher who while he was (in Armagh) conducted a number of missions around the district.'* He recalls helping in one of these missions held in Killylea Orange Hall. They were fruitful efforts in terms of conversions at a time when the Spirit of God was moving in Ulster. Rev. W.P. Nicholson had an outstanding mission in nearby Portadown about the same time.

In 1925 Mr. Young was sent to Clonmel.

'There was a building, yes, it was a very, very old building. I was told it was built in Cromwell's time. Originally it had been used by the local Baptist Church, but I don't know anything about that. I know the Church existed for some years. Then the building fell into the hands of the Brethren. There was a gentleman living near Clonmel called Mandeville. He used to carry on the Brethren meetings. Then I think when he passed away the Brethren meetings were closed.'

Pastor Deens described a visit he made to Clonmel in 1913 in these words,

'Mr. Gilmore was with me in Waterford for my first Sunday there, and he remained over in order that he might accompany me to Clonmel on the Monday. On our arrival in Clonmel we had an hour to spare. He decided to call on the Presbyterian minister and introduce ourselves to him. But we got rather a cold reception. He told us quite bluntly that in his opinion we had no right to be in Clonmel at all because there were no Baptists there. The building, however, was definitely a Baptist building in those days, and the meetings were continued, monthly I think, despite his criticism and opposition. The average attendance was small. The chief local worker in connection with the meetings in those days was a Methodist Evangelical, I forget his name. He was a very keen Christian and did his best to keep those meetings going.'

Mr. Young states that when he went to Clonmel the Methodist minister's wife, Mrs. Bullier, used to attend the Baptist meetings regularly and invited him to her home. Her husband was the Rev. John Bullier who was also friendly and attended the meetings occasionally. Mr. and Mrs. Bullier later gave hospitality to Rev. Boyd Morrison of the Russian Missionary Society whom Mr. Young had invited to

Clonmel to address a meeting. Mr. Young also had a friendly reception from the Presbyterian Minister.

These recollections of Mr. Young and Pastor Deens suggest that the hiatus in the Baptist work in Clonmel was much shorter than Mr. Young had believed.

Of the building itself it would appear that the title deeds were lost. Pastor Gracey told Mr. Young that the church had only prescriptive rights. Mr. Youngs says,

> *'As far as I know the ground in which the chapel was built must have belonged to Mr. Morton Jackson, a local gentleman. The street in which it was in was Morton Street and I think he had a claim on it ... The building has now been demolished.'*

The Baptist Meetings in the Clonmel building were continued until after World War II by Mr. A.W. Tweedall who was a Home Mission worker in Waterford.[7]

3. Doctrinal Stance:

During the interview Mr. Young had referred to his early Methodist connections, his association with the Salvation Army and his belief in the Arminian view of salvation. He parted company officially with the Salvation Army when he accepted the eternal security of the believer after studying the Biblical doctrine. Invited to expand a little of his doctrinal views he said,

> *'When I became a Baptist I also became a Calvinist and I have remained one ever since. I believe strongly in "the five points" of Calvinism.' (These beliefs) helped me in my work because I knew that God had a purpose for his world and that he was using me and others like me in calling out the elect. I believe in the free offer (of salvation).'*

Mr. Young's belief in the sovereign purposes of God strengthened him and enabled him to continue in his work despite the periods when there were no evident signs of fruitfulness.

He never found himself in conflict with other Irish Baptists who were less Calvinistic than himself, with pastors or colleagues on the

Home Mission staff. On the contrary he *'got on well with every one of them'* and enjoyed their genuine fellowship in the Lord.

4. Present Opportunities:

A part of Home Mission work during the years Mr. Young served on the staff was in giving spiritual support and teaching to isolated Christians and Protestants in the South and West, particularly after the political partition of Ireland and the consequent rapid decline in the Protestant population in the South and West. This was done in face of the fact that there was no hope of forming local Baptist churches; and, indeed, in a situation where it was an expensive struggle to keep existing Baptist causes alive, for example, in Athlone and Waterford. Mr. Young felt that such work was worthwhile.

However, with the contemporary situation in which Roman Catholics generally are willing to read the Bible and engage in conversation about spiritual issues, Mr. Young feels the Home Mission should focus its efforts in evangelism and church-planting on the major urban areas, while maintaining what work exists in rural districts. The experiment with the recently formed Grace Baptist Church in Dublin is promising. The use of Youth Clubs in Limerick, Cork and Dublin he welcomed as a good method of contacting Roman Catholic young people. Evangelism through personal encounters on the streets and house visitation he thinks are more viable than ever. The interest in oriential mysticism (e.g. the Divine Light Mission in Dublin), the existence of cults like Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, the influence of organisations like the 'Children of God' and the charismatic movement all signify an 'openness' to new ideas on the part of Irish Catholics. This situation offers scope for the more informal methods introduced in recent years by the Home Mission.

5. Conclusion:

Mr. Young has been an reader all his life. Asked about his favourite authors and how their writing had influenced his work as a colporteur he answered -

> *'My reading has been very varied. I've read all sorts of authors... I don't know that they had any great effect one way or the other upon the work. Of all the authors I have read Oswald Chambers is my*

favourite, so much so that when our son was born
we called him "Oswald"!'

To speak with Mr. Young is to gain the impression of a fine Christian man, whose dedication and faithfulness in his life work of distributing the scriptures and of personal witness to the saving work of Christ, are to the glory of God. His contribution to the corporate witness of Irish Baptists for over 51 years will be remembered with deep gratitude.

J. THOMPSON

NOTES:

1. Quotes in the text by Mr. Young and Pastor Deens are taken from the tape-recorded interview with Mr. Young at which Pastor Deens was present. The interview took place at Mr. Young's home,52 Clancy Avenue, Finglas, Dublin, on October 8, 1974.

2. 'Colporteur': The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines a colporteur as a 'book-hawker especially one employed by Society to distribute Bibles.'

3. Irish Baptist, November 1917 P.181.
'Colportage Committee:
This Committee, whose members are, Pastor H.E. Spelman (Hon. Secretary), Mr. O. Wallace, M.A., (Hon. Treasurer), Pastors L.E. Deens and F.W. Gracey, has appointed Mr. George Young (formerly connected with the Bible and Colportage Society) as a Colporteur for six months from 1st October, at a salary of £5 per month.
Mr. Young is already busy at work in County Cork and finding much encouragement in the sale of Gospel portions etc.
Mr. Young comes to this work with experience and zeal gained through over two years' itinerary around Clonakilty. He has been a member of the Cork Church for nearly five years.
We ask for the prayerful sympathy of all Irish Baptists in this forward movement which the Southern brethren feel God has led them to take, in reliance upon Him to bless our brother's labours, and provide the necessary means.
The Cory Fund Trustees (Harcourt Street, Dublin) have given a donation of £10 to this work, and the Churches at Limerick, Waterford and Cork, are expected to raise £5 each.
Further information can be had from the Secretary, Pastor H.E. Spelman, 2 Hayden Villas, Limerick.'

4. Irish Baptist, January 1918, p.10.
Colportage Notes
'....His (Mr. Young's) November report is a document of no little interest. During the month he travelled 228 miles, visiting 304 families - 287 of them Roman Catholics - and making 227 sales, mostly of Testaments or Scripture portions besides giving away a number of tracts.
Who can measure the ultimate result of this quiet spreading of the Scriptures of Truth among people who to such a large extent are ignorant of the pure message of the gospel.
We desire to acknowledge the following special donations towards the Colportage Fund:-

The Cory Trust	£10.0. 0.
Pastor J.D. Gilmore	1.0. 0.
Mrs. Bluett, Italy	10.0. 0.
Cork Church	5.0. 0.
Alex McCay	5.0. 0.

5. This hymn does not appear in 'Alexander's Hymns', but is included in the Keswick Hymn Book (No. 279).

6. What Pastor Gracey called 'the Dungannon Committee' was seemingly the Northern Field Committee of the Irish Baptist Home Mission - a small group of well known Baptist leaders among whom were Pastor Richard Hodgett, Mr. W.G. Frizzelle and Mr. Robert Arnold. This committee operated from Mr. Frizzelle's home in Dungannon - hence the name.

7. The writer of this paper has researched minutes and gathered some information about the history of the Clonmel Church in Co. Tipperary, which indicates that Mr. Young's recollections need some clarification. It is hoped to prepare a brief article from this material for publication later.

The Basis of Doctrine of the Baptist Union of Ireland

By way of preliminary remarks I want first of all to apologise for the fact that I haven't been able to find time to prepare a formal paper on the subject to be considered at this evening's meeting. I have given a good deal of thought to the subject and have taken a fair amount of trouble in trying to get my material together, but I haven't been able to find the time to transcribe it and I will ask you to bear with me as I speak more or less extemporaneously.

And the second thing that I would like to say by way of introduction is that the address is going to be brief; it is going to be very personal in the sense that it will be the expression of my own personal views, views which I would hesitate to attribute to anybody else; and I hope that there will be a full discussion later on (and I am going to give time for that) of some of the issues that I shall raise.

I have divided what I wish to say under three headings. First of all I want to spend a little time in passing on what I have been able to discover concerning the history of our Irish Baptist Basis of Doctrine; then, having done that, I am going to have the temerity to subject that sacred document to a pretty searching examination; and then, finally, to finish up with a couple of words of general application.

Now, first of all, regarding the history of our Irish Baptist Basis of Doctrine: when I undertook to speak on this subject this evening I didn't anticipate that I would have had any difficulty at all in discovering the facts regarding the history of the Basis of Doctrine. But I must confess that my initial investigations into old magazines and old Minute Books yielded very little information; however Mr. Thompson came to my help and guided me to some sources that had escaped me. The result of our combined investigation was still very disappointing, but here are the facts which we did succeed in unearthing. I take it for granted that most if not all who are here this evening

are aware that before the Baptist Union of Ireland was formed the Baptist churches in Ireland were grouped in an Association, the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland, and the earliest records that I have been able to find of its Basis of Doctrine, if it had one at all, is in the Minutes of the meetings which were held in Belfast in the year 1876. At that meeting the Constitution and Rules of the Association were considered, amended and unanimously adopted; and the striking thing to me in that connection is that, although there were about twenty-two paragraphs in the revised Constitution there's not a reference from beginning to end to doctrine, or a Basis of Doctrine. The next extract that I felt would be sufficiently important and interesting to leave with this meeting refers to the meetings which were held in 1888. These meetings were held in Coleraine, and we are told in a Minute Book that Pastor Hugh D. Brown brought before the Association a proposition embodying a Declaration of Form of Doctrine to be the basis of the Irish Baptist Association. That would seem to indicate that prior to that no such Basis of Doctrine had been in existence. The Declaration was proposed, we are told in the Minute Book, by Pastor Brown and was accompanied with a full explanation of and reason for its introduction at that particular time. You will notice from the date that this was contemporary with the famous Downgrade Controversy in England, in which C.H. Spurgeon figured so prominently. At the meeting in Coleraine in 1888 Pastor Brown introduced his suggestion, but I was interested to find in the Minute Book that there was some opposition to it. Pastor Ryan, we are told, not agreeing with creeds, proposed an amendment which was seconded by brother Storey, and was followed by a full discussion on both sides of the important question. Brethren Hugh D. Brown, W.J. Robinson, Dr. Wishart, F.J. Ryan, R.H. Carson, Matthew Simpson, J. Storey and J. Dickinson, all took part in the discussion. In a very kindly spirit they expressed firmly their individual points of view, and afterwards the whole question was referred to a sub-committee which met as appointed and, we are told, calmly and prayerfully considered the whole matter; after which the following resolution, proposed by Pastor Hugh D. Brown, seconded by elder W.J. Robinson and supported by Pastor Usher, was passed unanimously. This is the resolution:-

"That we, the members of the Irish Baptist Association, having regard to statements made that the following doctrines were denied among Baptists, namely, the inspiration and all-sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, the Trinity in Unity of the Godhead, the Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the eternal punishment of those who die impenitent, we as an Association do hereby record collectively and individually our thorough repudiation of the errors imputed to us. We rejoice that such unscriptural and dangerous teaching has no place amongst us or sympathy from us. We take this opportunity of affirming our undivided loyalty to every utterance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

We pass on now to the next interesting reference. At the annual meetings in 1894 - this was prior, of course, to the formation of the Irish Union - there was some discussion on the Rules of the Constitution of the Association. It was agreed to appoint a Committee to revise and consolidate the rules, and this Committee reported at the 1895 meetings. At the 1895 meetings Dr. H.D. Gribbon's grandfather brought a resolution which was unanimously adopted. The resolution was to the effect that in order to express our independent position and freedom from all external control we form ourselves into a society entitled the Baptist Union of Ireland, thus ending our existence as the Irish Baptist Association. In 1896, the following year - what were really the second annual meetings of the Baptist Union of Ireland - were held, and the Minutes of the Assembly record that Pastor Hugh D. Brown moved that the following words be inserted in the Basis of Doctrine:-

"the justification of the sinner through faith in the Lord Jesus, the personality of the devil, the immortality of the soul, and the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the responsibility of all saved souls to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age."

This was seconded, and on being put to the meeting it was unanimously carried, on the understanding that the word "natural" would be inserted before the words "immortality of the soul". Now,

one thing that strikes me immediately about that particular resolution is that it assumes the existence of a Basis of Doctrine to which I have been unable to find any previous reference. And the second thing that strikes me about it is that if you removed the words that Pastor Brown succeeded in having added to or inserted in the Basis of Doctrine, if you remove those words from the Basis of Doctrine in its present form, it's a very stupid Basis indeed that is left.

But that's all I'll say about the actual history of the Basis of Doctrine for I want to spend a little more time on the contents.

At first glance our Basis of Doctrine seems to be a very comprehensive one. I have made a list of the subjects that are referred to or touched on - the Scriptures, the Godhead, the person of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the need for and the way of salvation, the devil, the natural immortality of the soul, eschatology, ideology, and Christian duty. And I would ask you to suffer a few comments on each of these.

I have two main criticisms of our Irish Baptist Basis of Doctrine. The first is that in my opinion it is obviously dated and selective in the particular doctrines that have been included; and it seems to me to be quite obvious that to a great extent it was inspired by the famous Downgrade Controversy across the water, and that it was intended to be a repudiation of the errors which had been attributed to certain members of the British Union.

The second thing is that the formulation of the different points in the Basis of Doctrine seems to me to leave a great deal to be desired. And I would like to amplify those two statements and try to illustrate them. The Basis was obviously intended to exclude modernism and to ensure the substantial orthodoxy of members of the Union; but I think that a closer examination will show that it doesn't succeed very well in achieving this purpose. Look for a moment at what it says about the Scriptures - *"The verbal inspiration of the Scriptures as originally given."* Now personally I rather regret the inclusion of that word "verbal". I know that it is susceptible to an interpretation, a quite legitimate interpretation, but I am also aware that it carries the wrong implications where some people are concerned. To talk about the *"verbal inspiration"* of the Scriptures in some quarters is to encourage the idea

of divine dictation, leaving the individual author a mere amanuensis and of course careful reading of the Scriptures will reveal immediately that that way of understanding "inspiration" is not adequate. I would prefer that the word "verbal" were left out. I think that the Basis of Doctrine makes it clear that we stand for the full and final authority of Scripture. We have done enough to safeguard our position, and no more is required. Another phrase that is used in connection with the Scriptures is *"the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures as originally given."* ("As originally given" - nobody has ever seen them) To include that phrase is a bit of *'a priori'* reasoning. The man who coined it had his own convictions to begin with, and in order to safeguard his own convictions and buttress them he thought it necessary to bring in this phrase about *"as originally given"*; but if you ask for supporting evidence he couldn't have produced it. That's one detail that I think could be improved in a revised standard version of the Irish Baptist Basis of Doctrine.

But there are some matters even more important than that, and more peculiar than that. Take the way in which the subject of the Godhead is treated in our Basis of Doctrine. There is one reference to *"the Trinity in Unity of the Godhead"*. That of course is a technical formula intended to repudiate the error of the Unitarian and it does that quite effectively. But I would ask you to notice that, having referred to the *"Trinity in Unity of the Godhead"* the references in the Basis of Doctrine to the individual members of the Trinity are very inadequate. There is a slight reference to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ; there is a very brief totally inadequate reference to the Holy Spirit; also, and this to me is the most striking fact of all, there isn't a reference from beginning to end to God the Father himself. His work in creation, His work in providence, His attribute of love; all these things are passed over in absolute silence, and in my mind that constitutes a very grave defect in its treatment of this particular subject.

Regarding its treatment of the Holy Spirit, the Basis of Doctrine affirms our belief in the personality of the Spirit, but there is no reference to or exposition of the part played by the Spirit in

the work of our salvation, and the work of our sanctification; no reference whatsoever; the absolute necessity of the Spirit's presence and the Spirit's power in all our Christian service is passed over in complete silence.

And when we come to the reference to our Lord Jesus Christ, the person of Christ, the two natures are recognised, emphasised, but the reference to His work is surely inadequate. *"The substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ"* - that's all that's said about His work. Now I sincerely hope that nobody will misunderstand me, but it seems to me that here we have an example, an illustration, of what has been a very real weakness in much evangelical Gospel preaching in our community. Unquestionably the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and its expiation of human sin is basic in the Gospel; but at the same time it's only one element in, one part of, the work that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished on our behalf. The redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ began with the incarnation, was continued in His life of utter dedication to and identification with the will of God, and it was that utter dedication to and identification with the will of God which brought Him to the cross; and having died on the cross His work was not finished by any manner of means; *"and the third day He rose again"* and subsequently He ascended to the glory where He exercises His present ministry of intercession. And I am quite convinced of this in my own mind, that the too-exclusive emphasis on the cross, and some of the crude presentations of Christ's work on our behalf on the cross, are responsibile for creating a good deal of doubt in many minds and in leading some to a rejection of the Christian Gospel of grace. There is no reference to Christ's virgin birth; there is no reference to His sinless life; there is no reference to His triumphant resurrection; there is no reference to His ascension and His heavenly intercession. So that on several grounds I count its reference to the Lord Jesus Christ as inadequate.

We pass on now to the subject of the way of salvation, man's need of salvation and the way in which salvation comes. And here there's just the brief reference I've already given you to the substitutionary

sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, followed by an affirmation that the justification of the sinner comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And here again I would submit that the treatment of the subject is hardly adequate; indeed it's quite superficial. Justification is not the whole of salvation, and to single it out for exclusive mention fails to do justice to the full magnitude and glory of Christ's redeeming work. I can't divest myself of the unhappy feeling that very often the preaching of justification through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as it is understood by some, and presented by some, leads to very shallow professions of faith, leads to a Christian discipleship that is not at all satisfactory. Salvation is more than justification. Justification is setting the sinner into a right relationship with God. That's only the beginning of salvation. Salvation in its totality is not merely salvation from Hell and from the eternal consequences of our sin. New Testament salvation is salvation of the whole man and primarily it is salvation from sin itself. And that is where the doctrine of the ministry of the Holy Spirit comes in.

I don't know why it is often considered that the personality of the devil is of sufficient importance to require particular notice, particular reference. I don't propose to say anything on that because I know very little about the Devil. I know that the forces of evil are numerous and active in the world, and anybody who reads theology these days knows that belief in the personality and in the activity of the devil is returning to the minds of a good many. C.S. Lewis has contributed to this. There was a time when people dismissed all talk about the devil, ridiculed it; but in view of the developments in secular history people who hesitated to accept Scriptural teaching on the subject some years ago are beginning to realise now and to accept that there may be a great deal more in it of truth than they suspected.

The *"natural immortality of the soul."* This almost certainly was included to make clear our repudiation of a couple of popular errors of that day. The famous theologian, F.D. Maurice had started a theological riot by his teaching that the word *"eternal"* in the

Greek has nothing to do with time.

He maintained that the word *"eternal"* had reference to quality rather than quantity. *"This is life eternal that we should know God and His Son Jesus Christ, whom God sent."* Life eternal is something different from and more than, infinitely more than, continued endless existence. It's life of a special quality; life, as somebody has said, that is life indeed. And if that is the sense in which the adjective *"eternal"* is to be understood in the case of *"eternal life"* then *"eternal punishment"* has nothing whatever to do with time, it's rather the word that signifies the final punishment, the ultimate loss, a punishment nothing worse than which can be imagined. But F.D. Maurice's teaching was rejected and the poor man was hounded mercilessly because he had had the temerity to make that suggestion. His teaching was taken up by others. Canan Farrar for instance, who wrote *'Eric or Little by Little' and 'Eternal Hope'*. He wrote *'Eternal Hope'* but he also wrote boys' school stories which probably brought him more money than his theological ventures. He wasn't a universalist; he didn't believe and he didn't preach that all men would ultimately and inevitably be saved, but he did believe that death did not finally determine man's eternal destiny. There would be further opportunity for spiritual education and for salvation for those who had missed whatever opportunities came their way during their lifetime. There were others who rejected the doctrine of eternal conscious punishment in favour of conditional immortality. It was to repudiate their error that the clause was included about the *"natural immortality of the soul."* (Will you tell me what on earth anybody really knows about the "natural immortality" of the soul?)

The other glaring omission from our Basis of Doctrine is on the subject of ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church. All that I can find in the present Basis of Doctrine bearing on this particular subject is *"the binding character of the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and the immersion of believers as the only Christian baptism."* But those are only two of our distinctive doctrines. There's nothing there about the constitution or the organisation of a New

Testament church; nothing there about the place and function of officers in a New Testament church. They were far more concerned in those days apparently with exposing and condemning some theories of the modernists than they were with criticising the peculiarities of the Plymouth brethren. Any Basis of Doctrine that is distinctively Baptist should have something to say about the organisation of a Baptist church and the necessity for proper pastoral oversight.

Well now, with those comments I've taken time enough. I will finish with just a couple of brief final words on the general subject of Bases, B-A-S-E-S, of Doctrine; are they any good at all? Well, I do believe, I do accept, that a Basis of Doctrine is useful and necessary. It is something to which inquirers can be pointed, that presents our doctrinal position and indicates where we stand; those are the truths which we accept ourselves and which we commend to others in the hope that they will be accepted by them also. I believe that it has its place from that point of view. But having said that, I want to express very strongly my own conviction that it's utterly wrong to demand the acceptance of and subscription to a Basis of Doctrine as a qualification for church membership. A young convert who knows little or nothing about the Bible and less about church doctrine applies for membership of one of our churches, and according to the Constitution of the church, before he can be accepted he must accept the Basis of Doctrine. But undoubtedly most young converts don't understand it, know nothing about it, most of them. I've told the story before that in my first church at Waterford, simultaneously I had applications for church membership from two different candidates, one was a farmer's boy, a country yokel, practically illiterate; and the other was the wife of the church secretary, a lady with a Methodist background, quite well informed. Well, I was obliged by the Constitution of the church to read the Basis of Doctrine to both the candidates. When I read it to the farmer's boy there was no difficulty at all, he accepted it straight away. I read it to the lady and she said, *"Mr. Deens, I can't accept that, 'the eternal security of the believer'.* She said, *'I come from a Methodist background and I can't accept that. I believe you can be saved and I believe you can fall away.'* Because she was

intelligent enough to know what the thing referred to and because she was honest enough to say she didn't accept it, her application for membership had to be rejected. Now, I think that's completely wrong. Many of you will know that for a number of years past I was pastor at Grosvenor Road and I've had young people come in applying for church membership and I read them the Basis of Doctrine. I read it to them and I said to them, *"Now that Basis of Doctrine represents what we believe to be the plain teaching of Scripture. It isn't reasonable to expect that you will understand it all tonight, but if you give me your word of honour that if the day should ever come when, intelligently and deliberately you feel obliged to reject any part of it, you will be honest enough to say so."* I felt that by following this course I sufficiently safeguarded the orthodoxy of our congregation.

Well, I've taken a longer time than I intended to take, but all the same I think we still have sufficient time for some discussion.

L.E. DEENS.

Editorial Note:

Pastor Deen's talk was recorded on tape which did not reproduce it particularly well. A few phrases have been missed in the transcription and occasional link words have been added to preserve the sense, but otherwise the above is a verbatim record of his address to the Society on 19 December, 1974.

Review

B.R. White, Ed. Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660. Part 2 - The West Country and Ireland (Baptist Historical Society.)

In the Cork Church Book is a transcript of a letter from the Irish Churches to their brethren in England and Wales dated 1653. The transcription was made in 1758 and was thus earlier than that recorded by John Rippon in The Baptist Annual register, 1790-93. The writing is difficult however and the spelling of names inaccurate. Dr. White has now gone back to the original of this letter, and of two others recorded by Rippon, and has produced in pages 110-124 of the Association Records the complete extant correspondence which took place in June and July 1653.

Although the total amount of material is scant it is of particular value as comprising substantially the only first hand record of Baptist affairs in Ireland at the mid-seventeenth century. Dr. White has added extensive footnotes which are themselves a mine of information.

The correspondence refers to churches at Dublin, Waterford, Clonmel, Kilkenny, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Wexford, Kerry and Carrickfergus. There are names given for some 11 members at Waterford, 8 at Kilkenny and 10 at Dublin beside a few others from the other churches. The writers are concerned equally with their own spiritual state and with their need for pastoral care and numerical strengthening. Also apparent is the close connection which existed between the brethren in England and Wales and those who considered themselves as in fact they were an outpost in an alien land. That some survived the troubled times past 1660 and through the early years of the eighteenth century is a story yet to be written.

Copies of the Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland - Part 2 are available from The Baptist Historical Society, 4 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4AB, at £1 plus postage.