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IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

VOLUME FOURTEEN 1981/82

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JOURNAL

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Membership of the Society is open to persons interested in the history of Baptist Churches in Ireland. The membership subscription is £2.50 (in the British Isles) and entitles to the Society's Journal. For overseas members the annual subscription is $6.75 inclusive.

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EDITORIAL

In 1981 we had an interesting variety of papers. One on an Anglican inspector of schools; one on Irish Baptists and war; one on the Anabaptists of 16th century Europe; one on a few references to Baptists in a history of the Presbyterian Church; and one on the history of one of our most distinguished churches.

The Society thanks all thosr who contributed to its programme in 1981.

Two matters of special interest should be noted. Maurice Dowling, a tutor at the Irish Baptist College, Belfast, who was appointed Secretary (pro tem) to the Historical Society in 1979 , resigned with effect on 31 December, 1981. His successor, as Secretary/Treasurer of the Society, is Joshua Thompson, former General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Ireland, and presently engaged in historical research at Oxford University. Thanks are due to Mr. Dowling for his valuable services at the Society during the past years.

The Historical Society, with the blessing of the Baptist Union Council and the financial support of the Baptist Union Corporation, has assumed responsibility for the research into the history of Baptists in Ireland being done by Mr. Thompson at Oxford under the supervision of Dr. B.R. White of Regents Park College. This 'History Project' when completed will be a major contribution to Irish Baptist historical research, and involves the production and publication of the first history of Baptists in Ireland.

Irish Baptists have an interesting history. Since it was first founded the Historical Society has sought to collect material relevant to that history, and to encourage people to do some research that would help to complete the picture of Irish Baptist history. Over the years it is encouraging to see more amd more people willing to learn something about their denomination's past. The study of history can be a surprisingly refreshing and valuable experience, especially when the history deals with a subject close to our own hearts.

The activities of the Historical Society are commended to the interest and support of Baptists in Ireland and overseas.

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THE RADICAL REFORMATION

M. Dowling.

The 'Mennonite Encyclopedia' defines the term 'Radical Reformation' as 'a collective term for all those groups of religious innovators of the sixteenth century on the European continent who were neither Lutherans nor Zwinglians nor Calvinists.' This term has become current since 1962 when a book was published entitled 'The Radical Reformation', written by George H. Williams of Harvard Divinity School. Prior to this another distinguished historian, Roland H. Bainton, suggested the term 'left wing of the Reformation', where 'left' was applied to all those radical groups who were opposed to the idea of an established state-church (whether Catholic or Protestant) and whose theology differed in varying degrees from that of the major Reformers. In 1964 Leonard Verduin brought out his book, 'The Reformers and Their Stepchildren', in which he portrays the Anabaptists as the 'victims of a second marriage', namely the new marriage of mainline Protestantism to civil government, comparable to the age-old alliance of Church and State in Catholic countries. Verduin also speaks of 'Restitutionists', in other words those for whom 'Reformation' was an inadequate concept, since they considered that what was needed was not merely a reformation of the comtemporary Church but in fact a restitution of the original. Verduin rightly emphasises the great antagonism which existed between the major Protestant Reformers and the Radicals, but in my opinion he makes too little of the vast variety which existed among the latter and of the many unorthodox and even heretical views that some of them held. The term, 'Fourth Reformation', has also been coined, placing the Radicals next in line after the Lutherans, Zwinglians and Calvinists, but the differences between the Radicals and these three were far greater than this term would suggest, and it is not widely used.

'Radical Reformation' is useful as a broad, generic term for all those groups who in sixteenth century Europe opposed both Roman Catholicism and the 'Magisterial Reformation' (to use Williams' word for the Reformers who helped to produce a new territorial state-church and who relied on the power of the magistrate). The term is so broad, however, that it must be used with care. It covers a bewildering kaleidoscope of sects and opinions, and it is by no means interchangeable with 'Anabaptism', as we shall see later on; by no means did all of the Radicals practise believers' baptism. Furthermore, the Radicals must not be seen in isolation from other anti-papal groups that had existed since long before Luther posted his famous Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg in 1517. Europe at that time had seen and was still seeing many 'dissident' groups. These groups were as variegated as the Radicals of the sixteenth century. In the early thirteenth century the Albigensians were crushed for holding views contrary to those of the official Church. Since the eleventh or twelfth century the Waldensians represented an important force spreading some remarkably 'evangelical' ideas. In the fourteenth century England saw the revolutionary activities of John Wycliffe and the

Lollards, and in the early fifteenth John Hus in Bohemia caused a considerable stir, the repercussions of which lasted long after his death in 1415.

Thus there were 'Radicals' before the sixteenth century, and many of their ideas were echoed in the beliefs of the 'stepchildren of the Reformation'. But, having said that, we must also say that to speak of direct borrowing is an oversimplification. The Radicals of the Reformation were not slavishly following an old tradition of anti-papalism. While it is true that there was continuity with the past, it is also true that the 'Radical Reformation' was the product of the division of Christendom into two opposing camps, into neither of which the Radicals would fit.

Among the Radical Reformers Williams distinguishes three clearly separated groups, and we shall consider briefly each one in turn.
(a) The Anabaptists. These may be considered geographically, the most important groups being the Swiss, South German, Austrian, Moravian and those of the Netherlands. The Anabaptists rejected the practice of infant baptism as well as other practices and beliefs of the Roman Church on the one hand and the Magisterial Reformation on the other. Among themselves the Anabaptists varied greatly; from a biblical point of view some were far more orthodox than others; some were more revolutionary than others - they had their lunatic fringe, and indeed the phrase 'Maccabean Anabaptists' has been coined in connection with them; there were also those of a more contemplative nature, for whom the 'inner word' or 'inner Christ' was more important than any external forms.
(b) The second group which Williams distinguishes are the Spiritualists, who may be described as an extreme version of the contemplative Anabaptists. Common to all Spiritualists was the stress on the divine immediacy without the necessity of any material or human intermediaries, such as the elements of the sacraments, churches and even the Scriptures. It happened that certain individuals and groups laid claim to immediate enlightenment by the Holy Spirit.

(c) In the third main sector of the Radical Reformation the Evangelical Rationalists stressed the rational approach to Christianity. (Note that 'evangelical' is not to be understood according to our usage of this term. Here it refers to those who gave expression to some aspects of the Gospel in a decidedly rationalistic way). Some of these remained formally within the confines of the Roman Church; others, such as Michael Servetus, became itinerant teachers; others, such as Laelius Socinus and his nephew Faustus Socinus, established whole movements (in their case, Polish Unitarianism).

Thus the 'Radical Reformation' represents a bewildering variety of groups and individuals. Opinions varied widely on the significance and importance of the sacraments, on the doctrine of the Trinity, on the human nature of Jesus Christ, on the work of the Holy Spirit, on the interpretation of the Scriptures, on the freedom of the will and predestination, on the application of the ban, and on the nature of the millennial kingdom. In view of this it may seem strange that there should be a common denominator to all these groupings, or a coherence to the Radical Reformation as a whole. The common denominator, as has been suggested, is to be found in the Radicals' dissatisfaction with the Magisterial Reformation. It was realised that the emerging Protestant churches did not represent a return to primitive Christianity but were in fact in their particular areas taking on the role which the Roman Church

played in countries which she dominated. One of the Radicals spoke of his opponents as 'papists, whether they be from the old pope or the new'. The Radicals often thought of themselves as the woman of Rev. 12 who had to flee into the wilderness to escape the dragon, and the dragon was not by any means exclusively the Roman Church. They came to think of the schism between Magisterial Protestantism and Papal Catholicism as roughly equal to the Old Testament division between Judah and Israel (later, between Judea and Samaria). Both forms of territorial Christianity were, from the Radicals' point of view, still living under one version or another of the law, while they (in their many and varied ways) claimed to be the righteous remnant living by the covenant written on the heart. The Radical Reformation differed from both the Magisterial and Counter-Reformation in its impatience with mere reform. It advocated rather a radical break with the past and all its institutions, and looked for either the restoration of the primitive church or the assembling of a new church, all in an eschatological mood far more intense than anything found in normal Protestantism or Catholicism.

This new Church was neither to be introduced nor to be safeguarded by the sword of a 'Christian magistrate'. The Radicals abandoned the view that the Church was living in the sixth age of the world; since the time of Augustine this age had been thought of as the millennium of Rev. 20, during which the powers of Satan were being held in check (partially, at least) by Christian magistrates. The exponents of both Catholicism and the Magisterial Reformation regarded it as axiomatic that civil government should have a part to play in the propagation and the protection of what was considered to be the true faith. Rome had developed the doctrine of the 'two swords', supposedly based on Luke 22:38; one was spiritual, the other a military sword, both to be used in the service of the Church. The Magisterial Reformers in effect came to a similar conclusion. One of Luther's colleagues, Urbanus Rhegius, wrote: "God raises up the magistracy against heretics, faction-makers and schismatics in the Christian Church, in order that Hagar may be flogged by Sarah". Calvin practically elevated the magistrates to the rank of Christ's spiritual gifts to the Church; as far as he was concerned they were essential to the life of the Church, and he wrote: "Let no one be surprised that I attribute the task of constituting religion aright to human polity .... I approve of civil order which is directed to this end, namely, to prevent the true religion ... from being with impunity openly violated and polluted by public blasphemy". The Radical Reformers, in accordance with their concept of the Church as a spiritual entity, rejected the idea that force was a legitimate means of defending the faith. One of them wrote: "It is not fitting that they who love the Word of God in truth should constrain to the faith by tyrannical violence those who are outside, or to make those who share in their religion continue in it contrary to their own volition".

The Radicals thus believed that individuals could not and should not be coerced into the Church. The corollary of this was the belief that individuals, who were citizens of a particular town or area, were not to be regarded ipso facto as members of the Church. Both Roman Catholics and Magisterial Protestants considered that every child born was an addition to the Church as well as to the citizenry and had to be baptised accordingly. The Radicals rejected the identification of the Church with the body politic, an identification which had been in vogue since the time of Constantine over a thousand years before and which was an aspect of medieval religion that the Protestant Reformers not only did not reform but

in fact adapted to their own situation. The Radicals spread in complete disregard of territorial boundaries and local laws, considering Catholics and Protestants to be as much the object of their neo-apostolic mission as were Jews, Turks and pagans generally.

We shall now concentrate specifically on the Anabaptists. Within this grouping Williams distinguishes three main sections: the evangelical, the revolutionary and the contemplative Anabaptists. But before considering these in more detail it would be useful to look at the term 'Anabaptists' itself. This term is really a Greek word meaning 'rebaptiser', and was used in the Latin Church as early as the fourth century. From the beginning it was applied to those who rejected infant baptism and practised believers' baptism, and it was applied as a term of condemnation. In the fifth century the laws of the emperor Theodosius prescribed the death penalty fo anyone guilty of rebaptising. In the following century the emperor Justinian consolidated all the laws of the empire into what became known as the 'Code of Justinian', and this legal corpus became for both Catholics and Protestants the basis upon which rebaptisers were prosecuted.

Thus the term 'Anabaptist' was certainly not a product of the sixteenth century. Furthermore, it was not a term which those whom we call 'Anabaptists' applied to themselves. Since they rejected the validity of infant baptism they did not look upon themselves as 'rebaptisers'. As had been the case since the fourth century, it was a term of condemnation used by the enemies of those who practised believers' baptism, and in fact it came to be applied to any group which the Roman Church or the Protestant Reformers regarded as deviationists. Thus it happened that evangelical, biblical Anabaptists were tarred with the same brush as the lunatic fringe of the Radical Reformation.

We know that as early as 1532 the word 'Anabaptist' was current in English; Thomas More in his 'Confutation of Tindale's Works' speaks of 'pernitious and Anabaptistical opinions', obviously considering the two adjectives to be synonymous. On the Continent the term 'Anabaptista' was regularly used in Latin writings, and in German the word was transposed directly into 'Wiedertaufer'. Occasionally the term 'Katabaptist' was used: the origin of this term is uncertain and it did not become a common designation. Despite its vagueness, its original opprobrium and (according to the Anabaptists' theology) its inaccuracy, the term 'Anabaptist' has become so established that it would be pointless to try and discard it, provided it is not used indiscriminately.

No one man can be singled out as the originator of sixteenth-century Anabaptism, but most modern scholars pinpoint the emergence of evangelical Anabaptism at Zurich in the years 1524-25. At first the Reformation in Zurich had proceeded well under the direction of Ulrich Zwingli. But there were those in Zurich who did not consider that Zwingli had gone far enough, and they advocated a complete restitution of New Testament Christianity. The disagreement reached the point where a group of people separated themselves from the established civic Church to form a gathered Church of their own. What Williams calls 'the birthday of Anabaptism' occurred on January 21st, 1525, when an ex-priest, George Blaurock, was baptised by a layman, Conrad Grebel, in the house of another layman, Felix Mantz. Others were baptised on the same occasion, and in the following week a Church was formed in the village of Zollikon on Lake Zurich. There laymen preached and celebrated the Lord's Supper. But very soon the hand of the magistrate

began to be felt. Mantz and Blaurock were arrested along with twenty-five others: the two leaders were detained in prison for a time, but when released they resumed their preaching activities. In 1526 the Zurich council passed laws attaching the death penalty not only to acts of rebaptism but also to attendance at Anabaptist meetings. Mantz and Blaurock were arrested again; Mantz was sentenced to death by drowning and Blaurock was whipped and banished from the area. This kind of repression, however, was unable to stop the spread of Swiss Anabaptism, and the authorities of many Swiss towns were very disturbed. A group of them issued a declaration 'that such sect and sinning should not be tolerated within or without our confederacy, since their intent is to destroy not only the true, right, inward faith of Christian hearts, but also external and human order and laws of Christian and orderly government'. But in spite of this the 'Swiss Brethren', as they became known, spread rapidly.

Outside the Swiss Confederacy, central Europe saw a large amount of Anabaptist activity, and mention can be made only of the most prominent individuals. Balthasar Hubmaier was active in Southern Germany, Moravia and Austria; Like many representatives of the Radical Reformation he travelled about a great deal. Hubmaier was tortured in Zwingli's Zurich and after many wanderings and much hard work he was burnt at the stake in Catholic Vienna in 1528. One of those whom Hubmaier baptised was Hans Denck, who himself became an outstanding leader of the South German Anabaptists. Denck is generally classed among the spiritual Anabaptists, and he was very much influenced by medieval mysticism. Denck died of the plague in 1527. Another name which is prominent in the history of Central European Anabaptism is that of Hans Hut, who has been called the 'apostle of Upper Austria'. Hut also travelled a great deal, teaching and baptising. He was driven from one town to another, and in 1527 he died in prison under suspicious circumstances. Apart from these and many other outstanding names, there were many other people whose names have not been recorded but who were willing to undergo abuse, banishment, imprisonment, torture and death because they refused to conform to the beliefs and practices of one or other of the established Churches.

To remind ourselves of the attitude of the authorities to the Anabaptists, it would be useful and instructive to consider the decisions taken at the Diet of Speyer in 1529. At this Diet (which was a political and not a religious assembly) the Lutheran princes of North Germany objected against an attempt made by the Holy Roman Emperor to enforce upon them the authority of Rome. Those who raised this objection and refused to comply with the emperor's demands became known as 'Protestants'. I think that this is significant for two reasons; firstly, the term 'Protestant' was not applied to all sections of Christendom who repudiated the authority of Rome; indeed, it can hardly be said to have had anything more than a political significance right at the beginning, as the Lutherans were protesting not about the unbiblical teachings of Rome but about the political interference of the Holy Roman Emperor. Secondly, it is significant that these same 'Protestants' joined with their Catholic fellow-princes in sanctioning the application of the severest possible measures against the Anabaptists. Catholics and Protestants revived the ancient Code of Justinian, already mentioned, and the Diet decreed that 'every person who rebaptises or is rebaptised, whether it be man or woman, of responsible age, must be condemned and removed from natural life to death by means of fire, sword or similar means; ..... and on no account must they find mercy who are so-called preachers, pedlars and seditious

instigators of this vice of Anabaptism, and neither must anyone who persists in it or who falls into it a second time'. Such in a nutshell was the attitude of both Protestant and Catholic Europe to the Anabaptists.

The power of the authorities wreaked havoc among the Anabaptists, and were it not for their conviction that they had the truth they would not have been able to withstand the tremendous pressures put upon them. Undoubtedly the courage of their leaders was an important factor also. One of the most famous of these was Jakob Hutter. Hutter became in effect the chief pastor of the Tyrolean Anabaptists. In the Tyrol Anabaptism took root before Hutter had embraced it, but when he did so he emerged as its greatest leader there. Under Hutter's guidance groups of Anabaptists emigrated from the Tyrol to Moravia, while he himself remained in the Tyrol. Eventually Hutter himself made his way to Moravia, and in spite of considerable infighting among the Anabaptists there he proved able to lead them with a firm hand. The Hutterites, as his followers became known, were able in the comparative peace and security of Moravia to put into practice their leader's distinctive ideas, notably pacifism and community of goods. The Hutterites were driven out of Moravia in the seventeenth century, but in spite of many migrations they still constitute a recognisable body in North America. Jakob Hutter himself supervised the Moravian community in person for only two years (1533-35); he returned to the Tyrol and soon fell into the hands of his enemies. After prolonged torture he was burnt at the stake in Innsbruck in January, 1536.

Reference has been made to the lunatic fringe of the Radical Reformation. The years 1534-35 were to see the most notorious manifestation of this, namely the Munster episode. This was an incident which was to bring yet more abuse and persecution upon the Anabaptists, in spite of the attempts of many Anabaptists to deny any connection with the fanatics of Munster. In this episode we have an example of revolutionary or 'Maccabean' Anabaptism; the belief that the inauguration of God's kingdom upon earth was imminent was a feature common to many Anabaptists, but in Munster this belief was combined with the belief that God was using his people to introduce this kingdom by force. The city of Munster came under the domination of men whose concept of the kingdom of Christ was intolerant of all who failed to respond favourably to the new kingom. The Munsterite Anabaptists used the Old Testament as their model, and baptism for them was a badge of loyalty to their militant commonwealth. Under the authority of John Mathijs, John of Leiden and Bernard Rothmann, Munster saw the institution of polygamy and the death penalty for blasphemy, sedition, disobedience to parents or masters, adultery and grumbling. The city was besieged by the troops of the local Bishop; after fierce fighting it was captured and the leaders of the 'New Zion' were publicly tortured to death and their bodies left on display. Munster was held up by Protestants and Catholics as an example of the pernicious influence of Anabaptism. Zwingli's successor at Zurich, Henry Bullinger, said that 'God opened the eyes of governments by the revolution at Munster, and no one thereafter would trust Anabaptists who claimed to be innocent'.

Munster attracted a considerable amount of attention to itself at the time, and a great deal has been written on the subject since then. The oponents of the Anabaptists have emphasised the points of indentification between them and the fanatical Munsterites; other writers, on the other hand, have attempted to dissociate the Munsterites from all Anabaptist ties. The fact of the matter is that Munster was connected with the rise and spread of European Anabaptism, but it was very much an extreme episode

and far from typical of the communities established by Radicals.

One person upon whom Munster made a tremendous impression was Menno Simons. Before the Munster incident he was a Catholic priest, and he was familiar with the teachings of the Reformers and the Anabaptists, and he was having great doubts about some of the teachings of the Roman Church, notably infant baptism. Manno was thoroughly opposed to militant Anabaptism, and in 1535 he wrote a pamphlet entitled 'The Blasphemy of John of Leiden'. But the fate which befell the Munsterites and the persecutions which were intensified against Anabaptists because of that disaster stirred his conscience, and he came to the conclusion that he could render a service to such misguided people. Menno formally left the Roman Church and embraced Anabaptist views in 1536, and he proceeded to travel extensively through the Low Countries and Germany. In spite of a price on his head, Menno was able to become the pastor and leader which the Anabaptists in those areas needed, and his contribution was most marked in Holland. The 'Mennonite Encyclopedia' says of him that 'he prevented the collapse of the northern wing of the Anabaptist movement in the days of its greatest trial and built it up on the right biblical foundation'. Mennonite communities became firmly established in Holland, despite opposition. Like their founder, they stressed the idea of a community of believers, committed to a new life, sealed by adult baptism, very tightly knit (for example, marriage outside the community was forbidden), withdrawn from the secular world and all its follies (they distrusted learning and refused to take part in politics or to bear arms). The strictness of the Mennonites became proverbial. Their rigid application of the ban became a distinctive feature of their community life, and it led to the separation of a major group of more liberally minded Mennonites, the Waterlanders. The Mennonites found their way to many parts of Europe, Russia and the Americas; today they are still to be found in various parts of the world, particularly in the U.S.A.

During the early years of the Radical Reformation Anabaptist ideas filtered across to England, mainly from Holland. The ideas would have found a fertile soil in the vestiges of Lollardy, which had by no means disappeared, and in many cases it would be impossible to distingusih whether a person had embraced old Lollard or 'new' Anabaptist ideas. The word was certainly used to refer to those who had refused to comply with Henry's reforms, and a large number of both Dutch and English Anabaptists were executed. After Henry, the government of Edward VI continued the suppression of Anabaptism, while promoting a Magisterial Reformation of its own. A few Anabaptists were burned during Edward's reign, but on the whole the movement flourished more so than during Henry's. During the reign of Mary the persecution of Anabaptists can scarcely be distinguished from that of non-Catholics in general, but under Elizabeth Anabaptism became once more distinguishable from English Protestantism. In 1560 Elizabeth issued a decree ordering Anabaptists to conform or else leave the country, on pain of imprisonment and confiscation of goods. In spite of this, Anabaptists continued to make their way to England from the Continent, believing that they were choosing the lesser of two evils. In 1575 the ancient law "De haeretico comburendo" ("On the need to burn the heretic") was revived. This law was introduced in 1401 and was aimed specifically against the Lollards; now it was applied to the Anabaptists. That year a group of Flemish Anabaptists in Aldersgate was broken up by the authorities. Some twenty were condemned to death, but only two were burnt at the stake; the rest had their sentences commuted.

After about 1580 the lot of English Anabaptists became somewhat easier. Other Separatist groups began to emerge, notably the Brownists. Robert Browne, like the Anabaptists, believed that the magistrate's duty was to keep the civil peace, and that only when this was threatened could he interfere in ecclesiastical matters; Browne was anxious to see the Church in England established as a freely covenanted, disciplined fellowship apart from the state. The Brownists and other Separatists were labelled 'Anabaptists' by their enemies, but the English Separatist movement was certainly not an offshoot of Continental Anabaptism. There is a link between Continental Anabaptism and the rise of the English Baptist movement, in that John Smyth, the Father of the English General Baptists, in 1608 baptised himself and his congregation in Holland. No doubt contact with the Dutch Mennonites helped to persuade Smyth and the others of the rightness of believers' baptism, but there was no question of them being absorbed by the Mennonites. Thomas Helwys led part of this English congregation back to London where they established the first known Baptist church on English soil in 1612. Thus the English Baptist movement has only slight connections with Continental Anabaptism. Certainly the many unorthodox features of Anabaptist theology were not adopted by English Baptists. If the two movements resembled one another with regard to the practice of believers' baptism and their attitude to the role of the magistrates, there were also many points of disagreement.

Anabaptist Beliefs

This brings me to look briefly at what the Anabaptists did believe and teach. In common with other elements of the Radical Reformation, they repudiated the claims of civil rulers to have authority over the Church. This attitude was connected with their rejection of infant baptism. The Anabaptists rejected the baptism of infants not only because they believed that the latter were not fit subjects for New Testament baptism but because they believed also that infant baptism was used by Catholics and Protestants as a means of enforcing the sacral society. The practice of baptising infants blurred the distinction between Church and citizenry which the Anabaptists sought to emphasise. As one of them put it, "They (i.e., the Magisterial Reformers) fight for infant baptism not out of love for the children .... but in order that they may uphold a false Christendom, which they all got by setting up such a baptism. For Satan realises that as soon as a fellowship of believers is set up, in which obedience to Christ is manifest, then his darkness cannot stand any longer before the light, for it then becomes apparent that his 'gospel' and his 'Christendom' are 'the abomination of desolation.'" For the Anabaptists, believers' baptism was not only the fulfilment of a New Testament injunction, but also the sign whereby true believers separated themselves formally from the 'fallen' Church and became part of a body which represented the true Church. The 'Hutterite Chronicle', a collection of very early Anabaptist accounts of their own history, describes that 'birthday of Anabaptism' in these terms: "After the prayer, George .... arose and asked Conrad to baptise him, for the sake of God, with the true Christian baptism upon his faith and knowledge. And when he knelt down with that request and desire, Conrad baptised him ... After that was done the others similarly desired George to baptise them, which he also did upon their request. Thus they together gave themselves to the name of the Lord in the high fear of God. Each confirmed the other in the service of the Gospel, and they began to teach and keep the faith. Therewith began the

separation from the world and its evil works". This last sentence is particularly significant. Regarding the significance of baptism, that same Conrad Grebel wrote (before he himself was baptised), "Baptism is described in the Scriptures to mean that the sins of the one to be baptised (who is repenting and believing both before and after) are washed away through faith and the blood of Christ: that it means that he must be and has become dead to sin and is walking in newness of life and spirit, and that one will assuredly be saved if he lives out the meaning (of baptism) by the inner baptism according to faith". Some of Grebel's expressions we would question, but at least he is convinced that baptism is for believers only. Menno Simons wrote that believers "receive holy baptism as a token of obedience which proceeds from faith, an evidence before God and his Church that they firmly believe in the remission of sins through Christ Jesus". (We should note in passing that baptism was by affusion at this stage; immersion was not the standard practice of the sixteenth-century Anabaptists).

Among the Anabaptists there was considerable variation of opinion regarding the significance of baptism. Some stressed more than others the idea of 'inner' baptism. Hans Denck was one who spoke in terms of an 'outer' and an 'inner' baptism: the former was not necessary for salvation but the latter was. Denck in fact developed a baptismal theology of three levels or intensities; there was the baptism which was the individual's experience of conversion, and out of this inward baptism comes the willingness to join with kindred souls in a covenant of the good conscience with God by means of water baptism. The inner baptism was, as has been said, the more important, and it involved a period of contemplative suffering and an anguished repentance of sin. The third level of Christian baptism involved an outward suffering, being mortified in the world as Christ was. The language of Denck and his followers is reminiscent of that of the medieval mystics, but it was not as extreme as that of the Spiritualists of the Radical Reformation (for example Caspar Schwenkfeld) who interiorised and spiritualised the concept of baptism to such an extent that the external rite was of very minor significance.

Concerning the Lord's supper, the Anabaptists belonged to the same stream as Zwingli who, in sharp conflict with Luther, interpreted the eucharist as a memorial. Those who, like Zwingli, denied any sacramental significance in the eucharist became known, oddly enough, as 'Sacramentalist' or 'Sacramentarians', and this was one of the many labels attached to the Anabaptists. In 1527 an Anabaptist declaration of faith was produced, known as the 'Schleitheim Articles', and it spoke of the Lord's Supper as the breaking of "one bread in the remembrance of the broken body of Christ" and the drinking of the cup "as a remembrance of the shed blood of Christ". Many Anabaptists, however, went further than the idea of the Lord's supper as a bare token and stressed the idea of an 'inner communion' comparable to 'inner baptism'. Again, they were not as extreme as the Spiritualists, some of whom spoke of the believer partaking of the celestial flesh of Christ, and for this the elements of bread and wine were not necessary.

Mention has been made of the use of the ban in Mennonite communities. Excommunication was the only means available to the Anabaptists for removing undesirable elements from their midst, because they believed that the Church had no right to use imprisonment or execution in order to safeguard her truth. The 'Schleitheim Articles' said, 'The ban shall be

employed with all those who have given themselves to the Lord .... and who permit themselves to be called brethren and sisters, and yet who slip sometimes and fall into error and sin, being inadvertently overtaken. The same shall be admonished twice in secret and the third time openly disciplined or banned, according to the command of Christ". In practice there arose various opinions on the application of the ban - as regards the extent of sins that should be punished in this way, and whether the ban demanded an avoidance of the banned one by all members of the community, including husband or wife. One of the Mennonite leaders, Leenaert Bouwens, was notoriously strict on this point, and he supported the application of the ban without previous warnings. There were instances when elders or those commissioned by them entered the house of a banned husband and forcibly removed his wife and children from him. Such extremes were not the rule, however, and Menno Simons himself, although extremely strict, was of the opinion that banning did not have to involve marital avoidance. The Anabaptist use of the ban sprang from a conviction that the Church was a community of believers separated from the world and that it was an identifiable community. To tolerate grave sin and error within the confines of the Church would eventually make their communities as mixed as the Catholic and Protestant Churches which they criticised.

The Anabaptists were originally intensely evangelistic. Their very often enforced migrations brought large numbers of people into contact with them, and apart from this they were convinced that the 'Great Commission' applied to their own day. Menno Simons once said, "We desire with ardent hearts, even at the cost of life and limb, that the holy Gospel of Jesus Christ and his Apostles may be taught and preached through all the world, as the Lord Jesus Christ commanded". The Magisterial Reformers adopted the principle, enshrined in the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, that the ruler should determine the religion of the people in his domain. The Anabaptists, on the other hand, had from the beginning the mobility which the teritorial state churches lacked, and they made use of it. The Hutterites in particular had a magnificent record, sending their missionaries all over Germany, Austria and Switzerland, often two by two, throughout the sixteenth century and later. Many were executed. Among the Anabaptists as a whole there were many itinerant evangelists. Leenaert Bouwens, mentioned above in connection with the ban, was one of the outstanding evangelists of Holland, and he claimed to have baptised over 10,000 people in many places in Northern Europe. The weight of official reaction was, however, continually being applied against the Anabaptists, with every conceivable refinement of cruelty. By countless imprisonments and executions Anabaptist evangelistic zeal was slowly throttled and in many regions extinguished.

By and large the Anabaptists were not great theologians. They mistrusted theological speculation and disputation, regarding these as remote from life and a hindrance to true Christian piety. Anabaptists frequently referred to the theologians as 'Scribes' and regarded them as their enemies. But they could hardly avoid giving expressions of their theological views, even if these were on a fairly simple level and became at times a simplistic and somewhat over-literalistic handling of the Scriptures. As is to be expected, there was a great variety of theological expression on many points among the Anabaptists.

On the subject of free will, the Anabaptists generally rejected the premise that the human will is unable of itself to turn to God. Menno

Simons believed that all persons might choose whether to follow the enticements of Satan or to obey the commandments of God. Balthasar Hubmaier, on the other hand, held that originally Adam had been completely free to choose between good and evil and that through his disobedience he lost this freedom of choice for himself and his descendants. But man's soul was still capable of rejecting the grace of God. Hans Denck said that God forces no one; he said that "for the sake of human free will he must permit sin".

Most Anabaptists believed that Christ's sacrifice had a universal application. They taught that God fulfilled his promise to Abraham (that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed) by effectuating in Christ the removal of the sins of the whole world.

Some Anabaptist formulations of Christology were suspect. Melchior Hofmann is famous in connection with the views which he taught regarding the Incarnation. He spoke of celestial flesh, a single divine nature coming down from heaven. He said, "the eternal Word of God did not take our nature and flesh from the Virgin Mary but himself became flesh; our Lord Christ has not two but only one nature". Menno Simons adopted similar views and they became very widespread among the Dutch Anabaptists. Menno said that Christ "did not become flesh of Mary but in Mary", and he went on to say, "Christ Jesus, as to his origin, is no earthly man, that is, a fruit of the flesh and blood of Adam. He is a heavenly fruit or man". Menno quoted passages such as John 1:4 and 6:2 to explain the doctrine of the heavenly flesh with regard to the eucharist. Since Christ's followers were partaking of his heavenly flesh in communion, they had to exclude all impure and unworthy persons. This issue was discussed at an Anabaptist conference in Strasbourg in 1555, where it was urged that the matter should not be allowed to cause division; we should, it was said, "not attempt to know more than can be known", and "reason should be subordinate to the obedience of Christ".

A doctrine that is often associated with the Anabaptists and the Radical Reformation in general is that of the sleep of the soul. This teaching (also know as 'psychopannychism') held that at death the human soul passes into a state of sleep from which it will not awake until Christ appears for judgment. In 1542 Calvin produced a treatise against this doctrine, and he counted the Anabaptists among those who held to it. However, he was possibly using the term 'Anabaptist' very loosely. The fact is that the evidence is insufficient for us to decide on the extent to which psychopannychism was held among the Anabaptists.

If one were to summarise the contribution which the Anabaptists made to the history of the Church, we would have to pinpoint their emphasis on the principle of a gathered Church. However uncertain their theology may have been on other points, we owe them a debt because they reminded the world that the Church was never intended to be a mixture of wheat and tares (as Calvin and many others taught) but a community of believers existing in the world. They thus made an important contribution to the principle of religious liberty, repudiating the idea that the State had the right to punish people for holding particular views. The Anabaptists were far more radical in their approach to the problems of the Church. They saw that what was needed was not a new lease of life to be given to a moribund Christendom but the restitution of the Apostolic Church which had 'fallen' in the era of Constantine. They were in advance of their time, and many

had to pay the penalty for this. But gradually they were able to establish themselves in various parts of the world, and many others learned from them. The lessons which they taught are still with us today, and one does not have to look very far to realise the danger of identifying the Gospel with a particular political belief, or of identifying the people of God with a particular body of citizens. The Anabaptists taught that the Church could only hope to survive and thrive if she insisted on her unique composition, namely of men and women united first of all to Christ and as a result added by Him to His Church.

With acknowledgments to:-

G.H Williams 'The Radical Reformation'

The Mennonite Encyclopedia (4 vols.) on all individuals and subjects mentioned.

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Some References To Baptists

In J.S.Reid's

' History Of The Presbyterian Church In Ireland '

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by

R. L. HUTCHINSON.

James Seaton Reid was Professor of Ecclesiastical and Civil History in the University of Glasgow and a Member of the Royal Irish Academy. As he explains in the preface to the work he undertook to write this history as at that time "no history has yet appeared of any branch of the Protestant Church in Ireland."(1.) It was, therefore, a pioneering work and one based on a careful and thorough examination of original documents. "Every accessible source of information has been explored in search of materials."(2.) Furthermore he tried to be as objective as possible, "I am not aware", he writes, "of having unnecessarily obtruded my sentiments, or employed language which ought to be offensive to those who cannot adopt my views." (3). In short, he set out to write a comprehensive, scholarly, objective history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

The first volume was published in 1833 and carried the story from its origins up to the year 1645. The second volume was published four years later and continued the story up to 1709. The third volume, did not appear until 1853. Reid had died in March 1851 before completing it, but all his work, papers and documents were passed on to W.D. Killen and it was he who finalised the work for publication. It continued the History up to 1841 and in a later edition up to 1867. We can therefore see that the greater part of the work, and the part completed entirely by Reid himself is devoted to the 17th century. His main concern is obviously with the Presbyterian Churh so that although there are references to Baptists, these references are few. They also, again obviously because of his own commitment to presbyterianism and in spite of his profession to not "obtrude his sentiments", are not usually complimentary. They also leave many questions unanswered, which would be of interest to Baptists, as he wants to get on with the Presbyterian story. What then is the relevance of the work for Baptists? It does shed some light on Baptists in Ireland in the 17th century and as this is the important period of Baptist origins, and material is scarce, few though these references are, and critical as they are, they are welcome. Before I examine these references I propose to sketch in the historical background.

By the beginning of the 17th century the Irish problem was already over 400 years old. England had first become involved in Ireland in the 12th century, when some Norman lords were invited over by an Irish chieftain to help him with his quarrels. The Pope gave the King of England the title 'Lord of Ireland'. In the reign of Henry VIII, he took upon

himself the title, King of Ireland. His problem, as that of his predeceessors, was how to make his rule effective in Ireland. For most of the time it was limited to the area round Dublin known as the Pale. It was almost constantly being challenged by the native Irish chieftains, who resented not only this encroachment by a foreign ruler, but also that ruler's attempt to impose a different religion. For, since the Reformation, and Henry vIII's break with Rome in the 1530's, English rule was also indentified as Protestant rule by the Catholic Irish.

At the end of Elizabeth's reign there had been a serious rebellion by the Ulster chieftians, Hugh O'Neill, and Rory O'Donnell. It was eventually suppressed, and it led to a new opportunity for England to extend its control in Ireland. James I became king in 1603 and within a few years O'Neill and O'Donnell fled as they saw their position weaken. Their lands were confiscated and the Plantation of Ulster was carried out. Protestant settlers from Scotland and England were offered lands in counties Londonderry, Donegal, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Armagh and Cavan, and since then Ulster has had its protestant character. At the same time unofficial plantation, not officially sponsored by the government, took place in Antrim and Down. Because of their proximity to Scotland, many of the settlers were Scottish and they brought with them their presbyterian views, which Knox had established there earlier, in the 16th century.

This brings us to our first references to Baptists in Reid's History. In 1630 the Presbyterians in Antrim found themselves faced with opposition. In Reid's words, "They were soon assailed by a party of Separatists from London, who, hearing of the religious freedom enjoyed in Ulster, and the success of the Gospel, expected to make converts among so zealous and religious a people. They accordingly removed hither, and settled for a time in the town of Antrim. Here they soon became known, by their refusing to frequent the public assemblies for worship on the Sabbath as well as the devotional meetings held on the other days of the week. When conferred with in relation to their religious views, they did not appear to be well informed, or at least they concealed their peculiar tenets". (4). (Although in a footnote Reid does say that they were probably of the Baptist persuasion).

There are a number of interesting points about this reference. First, is the early date of the incident, 1630. If Reid is correct in describing these people as Baptist, then we can trace our history further back than we previously thought. I think that it has been generally assumed up to now that Baptists arrived in Ireland in the 1650's, at the time of Cromwell and Puritan rule in England. The Church at Cork was founded by Major Riggs who settled near Cork in 1651 (5) and there were Baptists in Waterford in 1650.(6). David Kingdon has written, "We can trace our history... back to its source in the 1650's. (7). Now we have a reference to Baptists in Antrim in 1630.

Secondly, if this date is correct then the Baptist church must have been very missionary minded in its infancy. According to Underwood (8), the first Baptist church on English soil was founded in 1612 at Spitalfields outside the walls of the city of London. This was a General Baptist Church as it accepted Arminian views, (which were very unpopular at the time) but by 1626 it had 4 sister churches. The Particular or Calvinistic Baptists, it appears, did not form a church until 1633 at the earliest. There were others who may have held Baptist views without belonging to a properly

constituted Baptist Church. But if Reid is correct then it seems that Baptists had no sooner been established in England than they were engaging in missionary activity in Ireland.

Thirdly, it seems that they met with only limited success. Reid says, "they failed, however, in effecting any break in the peace and unity by which the brethren and their people were then happily distinguished" (9). So it would appear that the Presbyterians in the town were not seriously troubled by them.

However, later in his History these Baptists at Antrim reappear and this brings us to the second important reference. In 1642 the Presbytery at Antrim "was directed to check the progress of certain errors originating in the same quarter, from which the church had been troubled nearly twenty years before. Two Baptist preachers at Antrim, where a few separatists still lingered, began to vent their peculiar principles condemnatory of infant baptism, and of a regular ministry or government in the Church, and verging towards, if not altogether favouring Antinomianism" (10). It is interesting to note that in spite of Reid's earlier comment that these Baptists had failed, yet they and their beliefs had persisted, or 'lingered on'. They seem to have constituted a small group and, visited by these two preachers, made some converts. Reid says, "They were countenanced by several persons with whom they held separate assemblies on the exclusive principles characteristic of that denomination" (11).

They must have made sufficient progress to seriously worry the presbyterian clergy because the Presbytery now apponted two men to investigate the matter. The result was that the Presbytery asked a Mr. Blair to visit the presbyterian congregations and warn the people about the dangers of the Baptist views, and also "all ministers are appointed in public to give warning to the people against those snares" (12). The Presbytery also summoned the two Baptist preachers to appear before them, one Thomas Cornwall, and the other a man called Vernon, "but none did appear" (13). Reid obviously shares the Presbytery's view that these Baptists were dangerous, particularly for their rejection of infant baptism and Antinomianism. However the conclusion was that "these opinions did not spread" (14). Once again it is interesting that this took place in 1642, several years before Cromwell and his army arrived in Ireland.

This was not quite the end of the story of the Baptists in Antrim, for 10 years later in 1651 another controversy arose. By this time a great deal had happened in Ireland. In 1641 a rebellion broke out as many of the dispossessed Catholics tried to regain land that had been taken from them in the plantations. They were taking advantage of the unsettled situation in England where the country was drifting towards Civil War between the King and Parliament. But that was the beginning of a very turbulent and complicated decade in Ireland's history. Order was only finally restored when Oliver Cromwell arrived in 1649 at the head of an army which put down the rebellion and restored law and order once and for all.

At Antrim in 1651, there were active a Mr. Taylor and a Mr. Weeks, ministers belonging to the army, who were spreading the views of the Independents in church government. Mr. Taylor, an Independent, seems to have been the leader and attracted quite a following among both people and some clergy. Mr. Weeks shared Taylor's views on church government but also favoured "Anabaptistical principles". He seems to have been less well

educated than Taylor but a blunt and forthright speaker. These two men challenged the presbyterian clergy to a public dispute in Antrim. The presbyterians complained about the way in which the dispute was arranged but it eventually went ahead. Taylor gave a clear statement of what he believed Scripture taught about the nature of the Church - "for visible saints, or such as in ground of charity had positive holiness" (15). The Presbyterian case was then put, and the debate seems to have ended amicably enough with both sides satisfied that they had won.

I think that these are all the references to Baptists in Antrim, and although they give us little detail at least they open up the possibility of Baptist work there, twenty years or so before the arrival of the main Baptist assault, and perhaps this area might be explored more.

The English Civil War provided an opportunity for the advancement of the Baptist cause. Charles I and Archbishop Land, who had been trying to enforce conformity to the state church, were removed. There was freedom to spread one's views. But after their success in the Civil War, the Puritans began to reveal serious differences. They had divided into various group, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and others such as the Fifth Monarchy Men and began to vie with one another. Baptists appear in influential positions especially within the army. In 1651 the administration of Ireland was put in the hands of a number of commissioners among whom was General Fleetwood and he was sympathetic to the Baptists.

Reid has some interesting references to Baptists at this time, most of them not very complimentary. He describes them as propagating their "peculiar tenets with intolerant zeal" and of spreading dissension among the Independent churches wherever they settled" (16). Thomas Patient is singled out and described as being the most "forward" of them. He had accompanied Cromwell's army as one of its chaplains and resided at head-quarters at Kilkenny in 1650 and at Waterford the following year, although B.R. White's article says Patient was leading the Baptist cause in Waterford as early as April 1650 (17).

Reid goes on to say how a Doctor Harding, a Baptist preacher residing at Bandon, challenged two presbyterian clergy to a public disputation on the subject of infant baptism, on Thursday 26th May, 1653. This was a fairly common practice at the time and one which had apparently helped to further the Baptist cause in England. "In this year (1653) it appears that Baptist Churches, though consisting of very few members had been organised at Dublin, Kilkenny, Clonmel, Waterford, Cork with some friends at Bandon and Kinsale, Limerick, Kerry and Galway" (18). They had as yet made little progress in Ulster, the only notice of their adherents there being the following:- "In the north, near Carrickfergus are several lately received by Brother Read, who were baptized by Brother Patient, who we understand are valuable, but want some able brethren to establish them" (19).

This Thomas Patient appears to have been very active and influential in the Baptist cause. He became chaplain to one of the Commissioners responsible for the administration of the country. He was appointed also to the office of state preacher and for a time was minister of Christ Church in Dublin.

It was at this time that the Baptists reached the height of their influence. The system of ruling the country by commissioners was changed

and Fleetwood became the Lord Deputy. He continued to favour Baptists although he was not one himself. Reid says that under his influence, one of his 'favourites' a Mr. Claudius Gilbert was settled as pastor of the church at Limerick (20).

However it does seem unfortunate that Reid has very little good to say of these Baptists. He writes that "Influenced by these violent preachers, who denounced in the strongest terms the tenets of the Presbyterians, the new Deputy and Commissioners resolved to silence the presbyterian ministers in Ulster" (21).

This was the high point of the Baptists' influence for within a few years Henry Cromwell was appointed as Lord Deputy. He was Oliver Cromwell's younger son and perhaps the more politically able. The Puritan revolution had run into severe difficulties in England. It was torn by internal divisions and unable to find a suitable alternative form of government to the monarchy which they had abolished. They were also conscious of the constant threat from a revival of royalism. So Henry Cromwell came to Ireland with the main object of ending internal squabbles and consolidating support within the army and administration behind his father. His arrival severely limited Baptist influence. Reid writes that when Cromwell was appointed to Ireland in April 1655 he brought over with him several Independent ministers, "Whom he settled either as Fellows in Trinity College or as preachers in the city churches" (22) and hoped that these would counteract the influence of Patient. By 1656 some of the Baptists at least had apparently become reconciled to Henry Cromwell, who wrote, "I have since my return been more courted by the Anabaptists than formerly" (23).

By the end of the period of the Protectorate the Baptist cause in Ireland was in decline. Beckett writes, "that though they still had some hold on the army, their political power was declining, and they counted for little in the events of 1659-60" (24). In 1660 the Monarchy was restored and so was the Church of Ireland as the State Church. In January 1661 a proclamation was made against meetings of papists, presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Quakers and other fanatical persons (25). Reid says that the convention which met in 1660, drew up a list of Anabaptists who were enjoying salaries "whereof there was a large number", and "these were degraded from their preaching and deprived of their salaries, who a little before had ruled all" (26).

From this survey of Baptist references in Reid's work a number of points emerge. First, it appears that there was some kind of Baptist witness in Ireland as early as 1630, although we have little information about its precise nature. Secondly, the great period of Baptist growth in Ireland was in the 1650's. It was at this time that the first distinctly Baptist Churches were definitely formed. Thirdly, the Baptist cause was advanced and supported as a consequence of its influence within the army and government administration. Its success had much to do with the political situation in England at that time, and when that situation changed with the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, so did Baptist fortunes. Fourthly, the picture which Reid paints of Baptists in the 17th century, is of a people who had dangerous ideas, were arrogant in the propagation of them and divided churches. Neither he, nor his sources are impartial, but it does give us cause for self-examination. Were our Baptist ancestors really like that? Is that how others see us to-day?

Finally, Reid's information about Baptists is all too scanty. It still leaves us with many questions unanswered and with much more work to do.

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THE STORY OF THE

HARCOURT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

DUBLIN

Told By One Of Its Members

* * * * * * * * * *

There is reason to believe that when Cromwell's troops arrived in Ireland in the mid 1640's they found some Baptists already established there. Not much is known of those pioneers, who they were, whence or why they had come. It is certain though that their number and their influence were both considerably increased by the advent of the new army which included many Baptists amongst its leading men. Since then there had always been a Baptist church in Dublin when our story opens in 1887.

In that year the church was a very small and struggling one. It had known better days. From time to time it had been served by out-standing men who subsequently won world recognition for their gifts, but it was now without a pastor. The congregation had been reduced to thirty, and it worshipped in a very neglected building in Lower Abbey Street in the centre of the city. It looked as if its days were numbered, that after two centuries, the Baptist testimony would die out. In the providence of God, however, this was not to be.

A young man began to attend the services. He was Hugh Dunlop Brown, a graduate of Trinity College, and a barrister-at-law, the son of wealthy parents who were Episcopalians, but of strong evangelical traditions and convictions. He had recently been led to Christ by an older brother, and the new, close, study of the Scriptures into which this had led him had shown him, amongst other things, that infant baptism could not be justified from the New Testament. The subjects, and the method, of the ordinance were both wrong. Convinced of this he felt that he could not conscientiously remain in the Church of Ireland, but must identify himself with those who practised the immersion of believers. After a brief period with the Brethren he visited the Abbey Street Church. The members there were quick to recognise his worth. They invited him to accept responsibility for the preaching, and his ministry was so much appreciated, and the congregations so greatly increased, that after three years, in 1884, he was formally invited to accept the pastorate. This he did, and a contemporary account in the Irish Baptist magazine records that he threw himself into the work with such enthusiasm that the Chapel was quickly renovated and beautified, a new American organ provided, and the service of

praise enlivened. The attendances continued to grow until the obvious inadequacies of the building compelled the Pastor to recommend to the church that it seek a new site suitable for the erection of a more modern building, more convenient to the south side of the city where most of the members resided. His recommendation was accepted and acted upon, with the result that (to quote again from the Irish Baptist magazine of that time)

> "By a remarkable series of Providential steps a most eligible site was at length secured in Harcourt Street, the main thoroughfare between the city on the one side and the fashionable suburbs of Rathmines and Rathgar on the other."

The foundation stone of the new chapel was laid on April 26th, 1887 by Mrs. Brown, the Pastor's widowed mother. It was she who generously met the total cost of the new building, over six thousand pounds, a very substantial sum of money in those days. The opening services began with a public meeting on November 11th of the same year and continued to the 23rd of the month, with evangelistic addresses and Bible Readings by prominent evangelical preachers from Great Britain.

For a detailed description of the completed building we are again indebted to the source from which we have already quoted twice:

> "The building is a model of artistic design and graceful proportion. It comprises a main building and gallery, with accommodation for about 500, a front lecture-room, a rear lecture-room, vestries for pastor and elders, a ladies' common room, and apartments for the caretaker. The front lecture-room separates the main building from the street and will effectually prevent interruption which might be caused by noise outside. With the same object there are double windows throughout the building. The roof is of open timber, supported by graceful arched ribs, resting on carved Bath stone corbals. The principal timbers used in the joinery work are pitch pine, Californian red wood and Norway firs. The Baptistery is formed of white enamelled tiles, the steps leading down to it being of Portland stone. An arrangement of revolving shutters admits of the exclusion from or the inclusion within the main building of the front lecture-room, and by this means accommodation is provided for about 300 people. The windows are of tinted Cathedral plate, and, when lighted up at night, present a most attractive appearance. The walls are of red brick, with granite and terra cotta dressings. The front of the building stands back about eight feet from the pavement, the intervening space being enclosed by a wrought iron railing. There are two main entrances from Harcourt Street, and also an entrance in the rear from Charlotte Street, which runs parallel to the main thoroughfare. The chapel is cushioned throughout in crimson velvet pile, and all the fittings are of a superior description. Its acoustic properties are excellent."

The Harcourt Street Baptist Church was formally constituted at the first church meeting which was held in the chapel a week prior to the opening services. This meeting was attended by 19 brethren and 19 sisters who all subscribed to this Constitution and Basis of Doctrine:-

> "We, the undersigned, saved through grace and immersed into the likeness of Christ's death and resurrection, do hereby unite together

in church fellowship so that, as a holy brotherhood, we may advance the truth of God, proclaim the riches of His Sovereign mercy to the lost and perishing, and help, by sympathy and counsel, one another in the Christlike and Heavenly life. We solemnly undertake, by the Spirit's aid, to bear one another's burdens, and in the exercise of a tender-hearted, tolerant, forgiving, kindliness, to avoid everything of harsh and ungenerous criticism, recognizing in each other fellow members of that mystical Body of which our Risen Saviour is the Head. We seek to maintain a primitive simplicity, purity of worship and communion, regarding it as an essential feature in the teaching of Jesus Christ that redeemed souls should walk in newness of life and holy separation from the world and invite only to the Lord's Table those whose sins are forgiven through the Blood of Jesus, and whose lives are in harmony with that great truth.

While desiring to extend to all believers the fullest and freest liberty of conscience we yet expect from all church members adhesion to the following doctrines of the faith as understood in a simple, straight forward, and evangelical sense:-

The Inspiration and all sufficiency of Holy Scripture
The Trinity in Unity of the Godhead
The Fall of Man through Sin
The perfect Divinity and perfect humanity of our Saviour
The Justification of the sinner through faith in the Lord Jesus
The Atonement through the blood shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ
The personality of the devil
The Resurrection of the Body
The Immortality of the Soul
The Everlasting Security of the believer
The Everlasting Punishment of those who die impenitent
The perpetuity of the ordinances of Baptism and Breaking of Bread
The obligation resting on all saved souls to live soberly, godly, and righteously in this present world.

Whilst repudiating in the strongest possible way any conception of an exclusive ministry we yet distinctly assert our conviction that order and office are both essential and scriptural; and, while recognising most fully that God alone can qualify or ordain, we yet hold that a practical recognition of a brother's suitability for office on the part of the church members is necessary before he occupies such a position, and to this principle we expect an assent from all incoming members.

We believe and gladly recognize that the labourer is worthy of his hire.

We believe that elders and deacons existed in the New Testament church.

While loving all Christians as such we cannot admit to church membership any unbaptized believers, or any one holding that sinless perfection is attainable in the flesh.
We hold strongly to the personal and pre-millenial advent of the Lord Jesus, but do not demand an assent to this as a pre-requisite for membership.

We desire to live in harmony with all followers of our common Lord, and hope that the establishment of His church may tend alone to the furtherance of His glory, the edification and comfort of the Lord's dear people, the salvation of the lost, and the overthrow of unholiness and error, and, looking up to God alone for strength and blessing, we pledge ourselves solemnly to work together each according to his or her personal ability, for the attainment of these objects in love and brotherhood of thought and speech".

This document was then signed by all present, and following on this a formal invitation was extended to Mr Brown to become the Pastor of the new church. This he accepted, and the members then proceeded to elect four elders and three deacons from amongst themselves. It was one of the characteristics of this pastor that all through his ministry he strongly insisted on the necessity for and the importance of these offices in the life of a church. When, later, the membership of the church had greatly increased, the number of elders rose to double figures, and many of these sat with the Pastor on the platform as he conducted the Sunday Services. As already mentioned, he had earlier felt a drawing towards the Brethren, and he always maintained that it was there he learned how essential these offices are.

One other item of business remained to be dealt with at this meeting. A letter from the Pastor was read:-

"Dear Friends,

I have much pleasure in offering you the free use of Harcourt Street Chapel for three years from the present date on the simple conditions that the Basis of Doctrine entered in the Minute Book of the Church be observed, and that the Head Rent, taxes, and annual premium of fire insurance, be paid by you.

The Head Rent is paid up to Dec. 31 and amounts for 1888 to £14.10s. and £29 per annum subsequently. The Fire Insurance premium is paid up to Dec. 1888.

With Christian regards, and earnest prayer that God may be glorified and sinners blessed.

H. D. BROWN."

Needless to say, the members gratefully accepted this offer, and warmly thanked Mr. Brown for his generosity.

Such was the modest beginning of the Harcourt Street Baptist Church.

The Pastorate thus begun continued for slightly over thirty years, and was richly owned and blessed by God. Conditions in Dublin at that time were of course very different from what they are today. Queen Victoria was still on the throne during the opening years of the period, and the standards of her day are openly derided today. Hers was a conventional and conformist age, ours is a rebellious and permissive one. People still went to church in large numbers in those days, and Sunday evening congregations were generally larger then, and different from, the morning ones.

Today most denominations report diminishing membership and much reduced congregations. Modernism was virtually unknown then in most church circles. It was only making its appearance on the horizon. Today it has established itself firmly in many churches, and has succeeded in ousting

the Gospel from many pulpits. Conditions such as those which prevailed towards the end of the nineteenth century would seem to us, almost a century later, to provide a very favourable climate for Christian work, and this they certainly did to some extent, but this does not suffice to explain the truly remarkable growth of the infant church during the next few years. In the first year over 60 were baptized, and the additions to the membership, many of whom came from paedo-baptist denominations, were of all orders of society, including many leading citizens in the fields of commerce, industry, medicine, and law. In 1889, two years after the formation of the church, the membership had trebled. In 1902, thirteen years later, the Annual Report showed a total of almost 400 baptized believers on the rolls. Twenty-seven of these had been baptized during the year just ended, bringing the total number of baptisms since the chapel opened to 659. In 1904 the membership figure had passed the 400 mark, representing 257 families, and it continued somewhere about this figure for the next ten years.

How is this exceptional growth and progress to be accounted for? Since the favourable social conditions are not a sufficient explanation to what can it be attributed? In a letter which was written in 1904 the Pastor himself attributed it to the grace of God and the loyal support of his members. He put the sovereign grace of God first because none knew better than he that 'Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it', that 'Paul may plant and Apollos may water but God giveth the increase! But, Calvinist though he was, he also knew that human instrumentality had its part to play in the work of God, and, as one writer said of his ministry in Lower Abbey Street 'he had the gift of awakening the dormant energies of his fellow members'. The list of the activities of those members both within and without the chapel in Harcourt Street during the years under review is an impressive one, as one of the Annual Reports at the turn of the century will show. It incorporates accounts of the work of the Sunday School, of a Sunday evening meeting for soldiers, of a Thursday evening meeting for young women, and a fortnightly meeting for young men, of work carried on in four out stations, Lusk, Dundrum, Whorton Hall in Harolds Cross, and in a little chapel in Lower Gardiner Street. This latter building was located in a tenement house district, not far removed from a notorious red-light quarter. Sunday services were held here, and some weeknight meetings. This chapel was later sold. It passed into the hands of the Seventh-day Adventists, but more recently was destroyed with a number of other buildings as part of a reconstruction scheme carried out by the Dublin Corporation. The same Annual Report also included a report from the Harcourt Street Evangelization Society which, at one point in its history, employed three evangelists who were available to conduct missions wherever opportunity was offered them for tent or other meetings. Another Report was from the Dorcas Society. This was a group of lady members who held an afternoon meeting once a week at which help of various kinds was given to the women who attended it, some of whom were members of the church and others not. In its early days the church also provided and maintained a Home for elderly ladies of the congregation who would otherwise have had to live alone. This house was close to the Gardiner Street property and was in existence for several years, but when or why it was given up is not made clear from the Church Minute Book.

The church's responsibility in the matter of Foreign Missions was not forgotten either. Four native workers of the Baptist Missionary Society in India were supported, as also was a hospital bed in San Salvador.

When, however, we have given full credit to the church members for their devoted work there can be no doubt whatsoever that under God, on the human level, it was the Pastor's personality and gifts which attracted outsiders, both Christians and non-Christians, to the chapel, and made the church the power it was in the religious life of Dublin. He was, indeed, a big man, physically, mentally, and spiritually. On the platform he was a gripping and powerful preacher. Ordinarily his sermons took the form of Bible exposition. From time to time he would announce a series of sermons on particular books of the Bible. As a Baptist with very strong convictions he preached and published a number of sermons on Believer's Immersion. These were widely circulated and evoked equally strong retorts from outraged defenders of infant sprinkling. Sometimes, when he felt that the occasion called for it, he would preach on a topic occupying public attention at the moment. For instance, when R.J. Campbell launched his New Theology he preached against it, basing his sermon on Luke 5:39 "No man also, having drunk old wine straight way desireth new, for he saith the old is better." On another occasion he preached strongly against Charles M. Sheldon's novel 'What would Jesus do?' which had just been published. He took exception to the book because he felt that it was likely to give readers a wrong impression of what the New Testament Gospel is. It seemed to him to emphasize works and conduct rather than faith in Christ's redeeming work. It must be admitted though that some who heard that sermon thought it not quite fair. The author wrote his book, not to teach unsaved people the way of salvation, but to remind professing christians of what their ethical standards should be. Off the platform the preacher was a very simple, lovable, man, one who responded quickly and gratefully to any appreciation or affection that was shown him. A man of considerable wealth himself, he numbered many of the same class among his personal friends, but he was equally interested in, and attentive to, the most humble members of his flock.

In addition to his regular pastoral and preaching labours his unflagging energy also found expression in other ways. He was a great admirer and close friend of C.H. Spurgeon and he followed his lead in two matters. Spurgeon compiled his own hymnbook for use in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and the Harcourt Street pastor also compiled a hymnbook, the Harcourt Hymnal. The publication of the book synchronized with the opening of the chapel, and it went through several editions, an enlarged edition being published after his death as "The Irish Baptist Hymnal". The preface to the first edition shows that, despite hiw own strong and uncompromising theological convictions he could appreciate and was prepared to use what he found good in other schools of thought.

> 'Certain sweet singers of ancient days are here brought into fellowship with those of modern date. Bernard, Watts, Cowper, Doddridge, Toplady, Addison, Newton and C. Wesley join in the utterance of praise with Kelly, Bonar, Denny, Deck, Faber, Havergal, Bliss and Crosby, and it is hoped that many, through the medium of this book, may find expression for the thanksgivings of grateful hearts unto the Triune God'.

Spurgeon also founded a College for the training of young men for the Gospel ministry, and here too H.D.B. followed his lead. The Irish Baptist College occupied a large house next door to the chapel. It was controlled by a Committee fifty per cent of which was nominated by the church and the

other fifty per cent by the Baptist Union of Ireland. Some of the students joined the church by transfer during their residence in Dublin and they were always a great help in its activities except when, as happened more than once, they took one of the lady members of the choir with them on their own departure from Dublin.

With the full programme to which he was committed in the church, his health, despite his fine physique, was not always at its best, and twice, for short periods, an Assistant Pastor was called in to share his burdens. One of these was Ambrose U.G. Bury, M.A., who later became pastor of the Brannockstown Church in Co. Kildare and Principal of the Irish Baptist College. Later still he went to Canada where he became a judge. Another was J.W. Pearce, an Englishman who surrendered the Pastorate of the Limerick Church to come to Mr. Brown's assistance and later returned there.

One other thing, which contributed much to the spiritual life of the church and also helped to awaken interest amongst those outside, was the number of evangelical preachers from across the water whom the Pastor invited over from time to time. This gave Dublin Christians the opportunity to hear outstanding men who might not otherwise have come their way. Amongst these visitors may be mentioned the two sons of C.H. Spurgeon, Thomas and Charles, F.B. Meyer, Frank White, Archibald Brown, and John Thomas of Liverpool. Every third year the Annual Assembly of the Union was held in Dublin, and Mr. Brown always arranged that one afternoon be kept free for a garden party which he gave in the Zoological Gardens in the Phoenix Park.

It is clear then that for many years the church was a veritable hive of industry, enjoying a large measure of Divine blessing. It would be wrong however to think that it lived in an atmosphere of continuous and unbroken revival. That it had its lean years as well as its fruitful ones may be gathered from some words in the Annual Report for 1908:-

> "We are thankful to report tokens of the Lord's blessing during the year of grace 1908. After long and prayerful waiting upon God the adverse tide has at last turned, and in spite of a very strict revision of the membership roll we can report an increase of twenty. Baptisms have been more frequent, while a very healthy and interested spirit of prayer has been manifested in the fellowship".

This last sentence is amplified a little further on in a reference to six new weekly prayer meetings which had been arranged to meet the emergency. Here is the unfailing secret of spiritual renewal.

And now, before we pass on to the next chapter in the history of the church - unfortunately a rather unhappy one - it is interesting to read in the Minute Book of the position that was taken in those years with regard to some problems of church practice which arise from time to time, even today.

The church had not been long formed when a letter was received from a candidate for church membership who stipulated that he could not join unless he was sure that only unfermented wine would be used at the Lord's Table. The reply was that this assurance could not be given. On another occasion a demand was apparently made for the exclusion of a certain person, an adherent, from the Table. This was also refused on the ground

other fifty per cent by the Baptist Union of Ireland. Some of the students joined the church by transfer during their residence in Dublin and they were always a great help in its activities except when, as happened more than once, they took one of the lady members of the choir with them on their own departure from Dublin.

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that the church was an open communion church. There are also a couple of decisions recorded in the Minute Book prohibiting certain activities in some of the Young People's meetings, whilst admitting at the same time that there was nothing objectionable in the activities if engaged in at other times in other places. Discipline and control were obviously more rigorously exercised then than now.

In 1914 the first World War broke out, and 45 young men from the Harcourt Street Church joined the forces. One was killed on active service, Llewylin Macdougald, who had been the church's organist for some years. It was in November of that year that Mr. Brown wrote this letter:-

My loved Friends,

Thirty years ago exactly the church invited me to become your Pastor, and, with much consciousness of shortcoming and failure, having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, and anything accomplished has been due to sovereign grace alone and the sympathetic co-operation and prayerfulness of a great cloud of witnesses now in Heaven, and its godly successors in you also.

An eminent Dublin physician has told me that if I want to avoid a succession of breakdowns it is imperative to find a 'curate', and accordingly I leave this matter to your kindly hearts, praying that the Holy Ghost may Himself guide and impulse your decisions. Surely He will, especially as so many are already waiting on the Father in earnest and believing prayer. I will gladly contribute at least £100, and, if need be, a larger sum, toward the salary of this Assistant Minister".

The church meeting at which this letter was read decided to invite Pastor Gracey of the Cork Church to come to Dublin as Assistant to Mr. Brown, but he did not feel that that was God's will for him. Very shortly afterwards Mr. Brown himself suggested that Pastor T.S. Metrustry of Londonderry should be asked if he would come. An invitation for a period of twelve months was accordingly extended to him and was accepted. At the expiration of the twelve months he was most heartily and earnestly invited to continue, and he agreed to remain on until at least March 1918.

It was now that the first serious friction disturbed the harmony of the church. Disagreement arose over the placing of a contract for the repair of the roof of the chapel and the installation of electric light. This led to some resignations, but, regrettably, it was followed almost immediately by much more serious trouble. To enlarge upon this would not serve any useful purpose. Details of the grounds of difference are not given in the church's Minute Book, but from what is recorded it would seem that before very long the spirit of Corinthian partisanship infected the membership. Some got the impression that Mr. Brown as the Senior Minister was not being given his proper place, whilst others were equally convinced that Mr. Metrustry was not being allowed the freedom of action which he should have. The upshot of the unhappy dispute was Mr. Brown's resignation from the church towards the end of 1917. Not long afterwards the illness from which he had suffered for over two and a half years took a more serious turn and he died in the Spring of 1918. Mr. Metrustry remained in office until March of that year as he had promised, but declined an invitation to continue longer.

The next few years were a very unsettled time for the church. At a meeting of the members in March 1919, after a vacancy of a full year, it was unanimously agreed to call Mr J.C. Rendall, M.A., a Scotsman, an ex-padre to the forces. He accepted the call, but after only eight months he resigned the Pastorate, explaining that he was convinced that the church required a type of ministry very different from his. In May 1921, after another full year without a Pastor, Mr. J. Pearson Harrison, an Australian pastor then settled in England, was called, and he accepted, but his term of office was also brief. He left early in 1924. Another year elapsed before the next effort was made to fill the vacancy. In February 1925 a church meeting was convened to consider the matter of the vacant pastorate. It was attended by only thirty-nine members, roughly one tenth of the number then on the roll, evidence in itself of the sad state into which the church had come. The question as to whether another attempt should be made to secure a pastor was first discussed, and it was decided, but only by a majority vote, that the effort should be made. That having been settled four names were put to the meeting, and it was decided that Mr. L.E. Deens, the pastor of the Cliftonpark Avenue Baptist Church in Belfast, should be invited to become the pastor. He was a Dublin man himself, a graduate of the Baptist College there, with twelve year's pastoral experience, six in a southern church and six in a northern one. He was also a personal friend of many of the Harcourt Street members. He hesitated to accept the call, indeed he definitely declined it, probably remembering that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. Pressure was put upon him to reconsider his decision, and ultimately it was agreed that he should go to Dublin for an experimental period of twelve months, a final decision to be deferred for the present. Before the expiration of that period he was unanimously invited to continue his ministry, and he remained for a further thirty-seven and a half years!

The immediate task awaiting him was one of re-building. After those years of wonderful blessing the church was almost back to where it started. A membership of thirty invited Mr. Brown to Lower Abbey Street, thirty-nine foundation members signed the Constitution at the first church meeting in the Harcourt Street chapel, and now it was a poorly attended church meeting of only thirty-nine which had called the new man. Actually there were almost three hundred names still on the church roll, survivors of the disruptions of the past few years. The first job was to find out where exactly each of these stood, and every one of them was visited at least once a year during the first three years of the new pastorate. A drastic revision of the roll was then undertaken which reduced the number to slightly over one hundred. The years that followed were on the whole uneventful. The usual activities of an evangelical church were all maintained, the Sunday morning worship service, a Sunday evening Gospel meeting, open air meetings, one or more weekly prayer meetings, Sunday School for the children, two Christian Endeavour Societies, two weekly women's meetings, a missionary work party, occasional Gospel missions, one conducted by the Pastor himself and others by well known preachers from England such as E.W. Mills, Godfrey Robinson, John Pritchard, and Alan Redpath. Two high-days in the church's annual calendar were the Full Attendance Sunday, followed later in the week by Thanksgiving Day. These were always well supported by the members, the latter indeed providing a substantial part of the church's annual income. For the children there were always two Christmas parties, complete with Santa Claus and Christmas tree. To one of these parties some disadvantaged children from a local institution were always invited. There were times when the going was hard,

times when dwindling attendances and apparent spiritual lukewarmness gave rise to discouragement and almost alarm, but there was always a core of dedicated men and women who believed in plodding on and praying through, and the state of the church today shows that their faith and hope were fully justified.

Here are some statistics which indicate the fluctuating fortunes of the church over the closing years in Harcourt Street and the opening years in Grosvenor. In 1940 the number on the roll was 121. In 1942 it had fallen to 101. In 1948 it was down to 98 and in 1950 it had fallen still further to 84. The declension would seem to have reached rock bottom then. In 1953 there was a slight rise to 88. In 1960 it had reached 96, in 1961 it stood at 107, and in 1963 when Pastor Deens retired and Pastor Judd succeeded him it had reached 110. The progress continued under the new Pastor. In 1969 the members numbered 150, in 1976 it was 145, and, according to this year's Assembly Handbook, it is now 146.

Some of the things that happened during the later years in Harcourt Street were of special interest at the time, and may be worth recalling. Four young men from the church went out into whole time Christian service. H.D. Macdonald, who had graduated from the College, continued his studies, earned a Doctorate in Divinity, and became Vice-Principal of the London Bible College, was baptized and married in the church. Desmond Jackson, also a graduate of the College, served over twenty years in one pastorate in London before his early death. E.G. Towson found his sphere in pastorates in Scotland, and Eric Humphries, who graduated from Trinity College, spent many years as a Christian teacher in Africa, both West and East.

Special services were held in 1937 to mark the silver jubilee of the church, and the Tercentenary of the coming of Baptists to Ireland was similarly marked in 1944. A service which attracted wide public attention was one in 1934. Mr. W. McDowell, a distinguished citizen of the United States, had been appointed Ambassador to the Irish Free State as it was then, but he had only been three weeks in Dublin when he died suddenly at a banquet in Dublin Castle. He was a Baptist, and the American Embassy asked for a funeral service to be held in the chapel. They decorated the auditorium with flowers and evergreens, and a large United States flag was suspended in front of the platform. The service was conducted by the Pastor, assisted by Principal T.H. Spurgeon, M.A., B.D. The chapel was filled for the occasion. Diplomatic representatives of nine countries, and many church dignatories from other denominations, signed the Attendance Book. The service was fully and widely reported in the Press, with several photographs of the more prominent members of the congregation taken as they were leaving the chapel.

V. THE MIGRATION.

In the second half of the nineteen thirties it became clear that the church was suffering all the disadvantages of being a downtown one. Members who resided in the suburbs were less willing to travel to it, and visitors were fewer. Recognizing this, the thoughts of the Pastor and some of the office-bearers turned towards a building in the Rathgar district

known as Grosvenor Hall. This was a really fine church building, occupied at that time by a dwindling group of Brethren. It had been built by British Baptists some years before the Harcourt Street building was erected, in the hope that it would reach and serve a public not then touched by the Lower Abbey Street Church. That hope had not been realized, and the building passed, first, into the hands of an evangelical interdenominational body, and later to the assembly of Brethren which was now facing extinction. The Pastor and Church Secretary discussed the possibility and the advisability of acquiring the Hall, but agreed that no move should be made until it became clearer that it would be in the will of God. This was about 1935, and three years later an adherent phoned the Pastor to let him know that the Hall was up for sale, and that, already another religious body in the city had made an offer for it. Immediate steps were taken to get in touch with the vendors. They confirmed what the Pastor had been told. When they learned that the Baptists might consider purchasing the building they said they would prefer to sell to them, but there was a stipulation in their Trust Deeds which they must observe. It laid down that if the Hall were ever sold it must be to the highest bidder. They disclosed what the others had offered, the Harcourt Street representatives immediately offered £500 more, subject to subsequent confirmation by the church, and the offer was accepted there and then. The church's approval was forthcoming in due time, only one member objecting.

Everything seemed to be settled, but the dissentient, an elderly man and one of the foundation members of the church, announced that he would have recourse to the law to prevent the sale of the Harcourt Street chapel. In some alarm the Trust Deed governing the chapel was re-examined. It was found that the Deed explicitly allowed the church to sell the building if for any reason it was considered wise to do so, but again on one condition. This was that the proceeds of the sale must be devoted to the provision of another Baptist place of worship within the boundary of the City of Dublin. Now the interesting point about this is, that in 1935, when the wisdom of making the move was first mooted, Grosvenor Hall was outside the City boundary. The move could not have been legally made at that time, but in the interval since then the City of Dublin had been extended and the purchase of the Hall was now quite legitimate. Not unreasonably the members took this as encouraging evidence that they were following the Divine leading in making the change.

The decision to purchase was made in 1938 but it was 1942 before the removal took place. It was found difficult to get a purchaser for the chapel, and it was considered wiser to continue to occupy it rather than leave it vacant. The opening services in the Grosvenor Road Baptist Church, the name given to the new building, were held in 1942, and the church had passed another milestone in its journey. The name was different but it was the same church.

Mr. Deens continued in the Pastorate for another 21 years, retiring in September 1963. The work of the church continued much as in Harcourt Street. A good deal of attention was given to the young people and this paid dividends. One of the office-bearers placed a field at their disposal where hockey was played every Saturday afternoon during the winter. Another member opened his tennis court to them during the summer months. Gospel missions were held every four or five years because it was found that even when these did not issue in conversions amongst outsiders they were useful in bringing many of the young people around the church to

decision for Christ. Several of these young people have continued as loyal and active members of the church to this day. Experiments were made in new methods of evangelism. On one Sunday evening each month during the winter the Pastor preached on some more or less controversial subject such as Christian Science, Spiritualism, Evolution, treating the subject from the Christian standpoint. At the close of the service all who were interested were invited to adjourn to the church hall where there was a free for all discussion, the Pastor presiding and summing up at the end. Something similar was attempted at a monthly meeting which was held on a weeknight in a room rented in a city cafe. Here there were no hymns or prayers or scripture readings, but the subject for discussion, whatever it was, always allowed for the Gospel to be brought in and pressed home. The help of prominent Christian citizens was enlisted to chair these discussions and several were interested in the venture and gladly co-operated. In these ways contact was made with many who would not otherwise have been reached, but it must be acknowledged that it is not known that anybody professed conversion or sought baptism or church membership as a result of them.

It was quite a big event in the church's history when a pipe organ was first installed in 1950.

The organ had been donated to the Waterford Protestant Hall many years previously but had been practically never used there. The committee of the hall was anxious to dispose of it for use in Christian work elsewhere, and they let the church have it for a nominal sum. It was dismantled in Waterford and transferred to Dublin by two members of the church accompanied by a local organ builder who subsequently reconditioned it and rebuilt it in Grosvenor Road. It has since been considerably extended. Naturally organist, choir, and congregation were all glad when it was ready to replace the American organ previously in use. Certainly it greatly enriched the musical part of the services.

Mr. Deens resigned the Pastorate in 1963 having given nine months notice of his intention so to do. Happily there was no long interval before the church succeeded in finding a successor. Pastor Alec Judd, B.D., had already been called and had accepted the call and he was ready to take over immediately. He was a graduate of the London Bible College, still in his first pastorate in Woodstock Road, Oxford. He remained twelve years during which the church continued to grow, as is shown by the statistics already quoted. He left to take up a challenging vacancy in Toxteth, Liverpool. He was followed by Pastor Archibald Macmillan, B.D., a Scotsman, whose first pastorate was in the Shetland Islands. He is now happily and acceptably settled and acclimatised. These two ministries, one quite recent and one current, must await another chronicler to bring this story up to date.

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"The Story of the Harcourt Street Baptist Church" was written by Pastor L.E. Deens and read by him to a meeting of the Irish Baptist Historical Society held in 3 Fitzwilliam Street, Belfast on Tuesday 15th December, 1981.

BILLY MOORE

by

Alan Barker

The subject of this paper is a man named Billy Moore, who was employed for 18 years in the early 19th century by the Baptist Society, as a Scripture Reader and Inspector of Schools in the province of Connaught. My source of information about him is one book, namely 'A Memoir of Wm. Moore', written by a Mr. F. Westlander, who was a personal friend and great admirer of Billy's.

William Moore began and ended his life in the humble rank of a peasant. He was for many years employed as a Scripture Reader, and, through his zealous efforts in the service of the Master, was a means of bringing very many of all classes and denominations to a knowledge of the truth. He was born in the town of Boyle, Co. Roscommon, in 1752. Later, his family moved to Ballymote in Co. Sligo, where Billy's father gained the tenancy of a farm from Lord Shelbourne. A year after the move to Co. Sligo, Billy and his 4 brothers and sisters were left fatherless. Thereafter they were cared for by their grandfather, to whom the farm was then transferred. It should have been transferred to Billy, but the agent deemed that Billy was too young to sign his name on the lease. At that time, however, he heard that Mr. Percival, father of the late M.P. for Sligo, was encouraging Protestants to settle on his property, and Billy applied to him for land. He was then given a farm at a village called Ballinacarrow.

In all parts of Ireland, at that time, peasants were in the habit of marrying at a very early age, and more particularly so in Connaught. Thus it happened that at the age of 20, Billy married a girl of 14 named Bacon. Twelve children were the fruit of their marriage, and so he needed a larger farm, which he succeeded in obtaining from a Col. Fitzgerald at Turlough, near Castlebar, Co. Mayo. They were only settled there for 2 years when the French landed in that neighbourhood, and the Moores were glad to return to Sligo, even though by so doing they sustained a great loss.

At all times, and in all situations, Billy lived on the most friendly terms with his neighbours. He was a man of a peculiarly kind and friendly disposition, very good-tempered, and of a remarkably intelligent mind. These qualities, combined with a great deal of Irish humour, and a thorough acquaintance with the Irish language, led to his being respected and liked, and were a great means of his usefulness in the sphere in which he so faithfully worked. Being one of the common people, he knew their feelings, habits, and prejudices, and could therefore suit himself to them in a way

which was impossible to anyone not brought up amongst them. Seeing that his way of life was similar to theirs, he joined in the domestic circle without restraint or inconvenience on either side, and had access to the hearts of the people, as one who met with them as equals. Often the good old man sat up the greater part of a night reading and explaining the Bible to the assembled family of his host. At other times he entered into conversation after retiring to rest, which so interested his companions that they have lain awake the whole night, desiring to gain the most from his visit. He had such a tender, feeling heart, that he entered into all their anxieties and troubles, whether temporal or spiritual, and knew how to speak a word in season to all. Billy had been brought up strictly by his father and grandfather, who would not allow their children to attend a dance or a hurling-match on a Sunday, even as spectators. But seeing that these parents died early, the young people were no longer restrained from joining in these amusements. However, Billy often lamented greatly over his sins, even to tears, and at times would willingly undergo anything to atone for them, and make resolutions to leave them, during his childhood and youth. He always continued to be religiously disposed, but as he said himself, it was in ignorance. He was led to clear views on the subject in the following manner:

When the French landed in Ireland, very near to where he lived, and rebellion prevailed to such an extent, he was very affected by the boasting of his popish neighbours, who confidently claimed that they would soon see the Protestants exterminated, and their religion triumphant. This claim was supported by many prophecies which were common among the poor, ignorant peasantry, and were more particularly circulated and emphasised in times of public commotion. Among these prophecies, there was one Irish verse which foretold that much Protestant blood would be shed in that neighbourhood, and it seemed to be fulfilled when the French landed very near the place which it indicated. He began to fear that popery was really about to be established on the ruins of the Protestant church in Ireland, and, if so, he thought that it must be the true church, as he believed that God would not permit error to gain the ascendancy. This brought him to plead earnestly with God to enable him to see what was the true religion. At that time it was not always an easy matter to find an Anglican clergyman who was well versed in the controversy between the two churches, and who was able to satisfy the enquiries of a mind earnestly and ardently seeking the truth. Billy's doubts were raised, and he could not be satisfied with anything short of the blessed truth which Christ came down to make known to perishing sinners. In this quarter, then, he found no satisfaction, but having been brought up in the Protestant church, he knew where truth is to be found - in the written word of the God of truth. To the Bible, therefore, he went with earnest, heartfelt prayer, often prostrating himself on his face before God, pleading with him to grant that knowledge which he desired above all things. One day he took his Bible to a lonely field, where he was far from any interruption, and after fervently praying for instruction, opened the Word to seek for it, not knowing in what particular part he was likely to find an answer to his doubts. He opened the Book, as we say by chance, at the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, which struck him at once as referring to the great Romish apostasy. His mind was thereby quite convinced about the subject of his anxiety, and he felt a great desire to see a history of Rome, which he thought would enable him better to understand the subject of that remarkable prophecy and warning. He succeeded in getting an old one, which gave him great

delight to study, enabling him to explain the chapter more adequately. From this time, he steadily and anxiously searched the Scriptures for his learning; and, naturally, he paid more attention to the popish controversy, as it was this which had first stirred him to think seriously about religion.

Before proceeding to narrate some details of his work with the Baptist Society, a brief note about Billy's churchmanship would be in place. Although he was a peasant, yet he was very intelligent, and evidently took seriously the doctrinal confessions of the Established Church - for Billy was an Anglican to his dying day. Later, in his work with the Baptist Society, he practised the old Puritan method of engaging in 'law-work', using the Law in a thoroughly Biblical way to produce a consciousness of sin against God, before preaching Christ as the sinner's Saviour. He became more and more convinced about the doctrines of election and reprobation, and constantly rejoiced that the Lord was using his efforts to call many of his sheep to himself. With respect to the doctrine of the last things, he subscribed to the pre-millennial viewpoint, and indulged in some tentative date-fixing, thinking that the establishment of an earthly millenial Kingdom was possible in the year 1848. It is of interest that J.N. Darby also gave this date for the beginning of the millennium. As we conclude this section, we must remark upon the anomalous situation of having a paedo-baptist working under the auspices of the Baptist Society. But more of that anon.

In the year 1814, when he had been married for 42 years, and had attained to the age of 62, Billy lost his wife. It was earlier in that year that the Rev. Messrs. Ivimey and Anderson had taken a tour through the province of Connaught, and had employed the first Reader of the Irish Scriptures - a man named Pat Feeney, who was stationed at Tubbercurry. It will be of interest to record what little is written about him. He is described as a poor man, and was a Roman Catholic Schoolmaster in a village between Sligo and Castlebar, who was in the habit of reading to his neighbours as they went to mass. One winter, the poor people came to his house from two miles around, bringing their own candles. When he read to them the account of the rich man and Lazarus, they were so pleased that they called out, 'Read it again. Read it again'. This man was the first to be employed as a Reader of the Irish Scriptures, and from this trivial event arose the system of Scripture Readers in Ireland.

Shortly after Pat Feeney's appointment to Tubbercurry in 1814, Billy was himself employed as the first itinerant Scripture Reader and Inspector of Schools, in November of the same year. For this task he was well qualified, due to his familiarity with the Irish language. Although his was an itinerant work, no mention is made in his monthly reports as to his mode of travel, nor yet does his biographer say anything about it. We can only assume that he travelled mostly on foot, and possibly used a horse when one was available. At the beginning of this endeavour, the plan of the Committee of the Baptist Society was simply to establish two schools in the neighbourhood of Sligo. By the year 1830, a total of 57 Readers were employed, reading the Scriptures in either English or Irish as the occasion demanded.

The idea that Billy should seek employment with the Society was proposed to him by a man named Thady Conlan, who was well known for the

active part he took in translating the Bible into Irish. He was an old acquaintance of Billy's, and was a convert from the church of Rome. At first, Billy said that it appeared to him to be useless to undertake such an employment, as he thought that the people would not listen to the Bible, and that he would be taking money for doing nothing. But to this objection Thady replied, "If, by your means, one poor soul is brought from the darkness of popery, your time, and their money, will be well employed". This true and forceful argument induced him to engage with the Society, which engagement was long and actively useful, being one of the first to establish Scriptural schools in Ireland. The Society's agent, Mr. Wilson, was a most worthy, pious man, possessing a truly Christian spirit, free from that sectarian bitterness which we too often see mixed up with much that is good and valuable among dissenters, to the great hindrance of their usefulness. He went heart and hand with every one whom he believed to be a sincere servant of God. He lived in the town of Sligo, and under his superintendence, Billy laboured devotedly at his post for 18 years. Their fellowship in the work was broken when Mr. Wilson died from cholera, which at that time ravaged the population of Sligo. During those 18 years, the results of Billy's labours were such as would hardly be believed by any who did not know him. Considerably upwards of 100 Roman Catholics were converted through his instrumentality, amongst whom were 15 priests, who proved their sincerity by sacrificing their worldly prospects, and many of them by facing fearful opposition. He was also the means of leading a great number of ignorant Protestants from the error of their ways. This was the case in both the upper and lower classes, for his worth was known and appreciated by many of the former in the counties which he frequented. Although he was welcomed as a guest by several, where he often spent days in reading and explaining the Scriptures in their drawing-rooms, yet he never, for a moment, forgot his high calling by presuming on the attentions he received, on the one hand, or by showing a servile desire to please, on the other. He was superior to earthly distinctions, and was the same simple and zealous Christian in all companies, and at all times. One great object was always in his view - the glory of God in the salvation of sinners.

We turn now to an account of some of Billy's earliest converts - a family by the name of H . The father and mother, who were wealthy farmers, were very strict Roman Catholics, and their family, consisting of three sons, was pious, according to their own understanding. This was especially true of Bartley, the eldest. He had been on a pilgrimage to Bal, in Co. Mayo, where he cut himself so badly by going on his knees on the gravel and stones around the 'holy well', that as a result he was confined to bed for 6 months. During that time he came across a copy of the 'Lives of the Saints', and having read of the things which others had endured in the cause of religion, he was quite ashamed of his own performances, and decided to give up everything else, and go about the world living upon alms. Having made himself a sackcloth shirt, he set off. In the course of his rambles he came to a school, of which Thady Conlan was the master, where they were reading the Bible in Irish. He stood awhile and listened, and when they had finished, he offered Thady tenpence, all that he then possessed, for the book, promising to pay the rest when he could. Thady refused the money, but gave him the Bible, offering to teach Bartley to read it. Billy Moore was present at the time, and after Bartley had attended to his two instructors for about a fortnight, he was not only able to read the Bible, but was made wise to salvation. The report of this

reached Bartley's parents, who were greatly enraged, and sent their second son, Con, to enquire into the truth of the report. Bartley thereupon induced Con to stay and examine the reasons for his change, with the result that within a week, Con too was saved. When the parents heard of the second defection, they could not believe it, and so sent their last son, John, to bring them an account of his brothers. John's conversations with them were blessed to the opening of his eyes to the truth of the gospel. When the parents heard of the dereliction of all their family, they were so outraged that the boys were afraid to return home. After some time Bartley dared to return home, and slipped into the house in the evening, sitting down on a creepy by the fire. When his parents noticed him they said, 'Is that you, Bartley?', and then began to reprove him in the most violent way, saying that he was not only gone to perdition himself, but had brought his brothers with him. They continued to verbally assault him with the fearful curses and blasphemies which are usual amongst those deluded people on such occasions. His father took up a loy to attack him, when his wife intervened, telling him to let their son go to the devil if he wished, but not to have his blood to answer for. Bartley then took cover behind some cattle which were tied in the house, and so avoided the intended stroke. He then pleaded with his parents to listen to what he would read them from the Bible, saying that then perhaps they would not be so angry with him. They consented, and listened to one part after another with such interest, that they were up almost all night. Before morning, the light of gospel truth had dawned on their souls. From that time, the whole family went on their way rejoicing, and remained true to the end of their days. As the old father approached his death, he said one day to Billy that he would die happy but for two things. One, that he knew he would not be buried with his people, being regarded as a heretic, and the other that he had never had the Lord's Supper, according to the Lord's command. Billy replied, "I don't blame you: the patriarchs desired to be buried with their fathers, and Jacob had his bones brought up from Egypt; but as for me, I don't care where my body is put, for I know that it will be raised at the resurrection". "Well", said the old man, "that will never trouble me again". On the second matter, Billy said, "I'll tell you what I'll do about that. I shall be coming this way in about ten days, so I will bring bread and wine with me, and although I am not an ordained minister, I will give you the sacrament". The old man replied that there was no-one from whom he would rather receive it. When Billy returned as promised, there were 14 communicants, all of whom had been saved through Billy's witness, who partook with him of the Lord's Supper. Although he was not ill at the time he took the Supper, the old man went home to heaven about two weeks later, slipping away quite quietly at the age of 92. His wife, who was a simple woman, quite uneducated, survived him by only three years. When she thought that death was near, she sent for Billy to be with her at the last. He came, but she appeared to recover in a few days, so he left her, promising to return soon. However, death did not wait for his return. When the poor woman was evidently near the end, she was confronted by some of her close relations with the threatenings so commonly used to frighten into what is called dying within the pale of the Catholic Church. They told her that she would not be buried with the other members of her family; that as a heretic she was doomed to utter perdition; and urged, in short, everything which bigotry and ignorance could suggest, and which so often overwhelm the weak and fearful. Her own brother abused her violently, saying that she must send for the priest, and not disgrace the whole family. But he could not move her, and when he had given her up in despair, his son, who had been present all the time, said that his father

had been too harsh, and that he would go back and see what coaxing would do. He then told her that she could keep her own opinions, and that it would do her no harm just to let the priest put a little oil on her, which would avoid the family being scandalized, and enable her to be buried with her own people. In spite of all their efforts, and although she was weak in body, both from age and sickness - being 88 years old, and never having been of a strong mind - she did not sink under their threats or persuasion. Then yet another relation came in, a very violent-tempered and bigoted woman, who attacked her with reproaches and threats. When wearied with her violence, and feeling unequal to reply to her tormentor, the poor old creature called to a little grandchild of hers, who lived in the house, and asked her to help her turn her face towards the wall, so that she would be less disturbed by their attempts to wear her down. After some time, she called the little girl, and told her that she had been greatly comforted, and that she had been thinking of something which she wished her to write down. She then dictated a hymn, which she had composed whilst trying to shut out the verbal abuse of her assailants. The little girl wrote it down, and gave it to Billy when he next came that way. When translated from the Irish in which she composed it, it runs thus;

Behold me here, a mark for scorn and shame,
A common byword for their sport and game,
Because I left the broad and beaten way,
In which the worldly wicked love to stray.
If scandalized, why should I grieve or care,
As 'tis for Christ that I this burden bear;
And I but barely taste the bitter cup,
The dregs of which Himself has swallowed up.
Sure lies and falsehoods from their mouths proceed
Who quote the Book, yet know not what they read;
Who vainly say, "Since she did not prevail,
The priest to whisper, and procure his seal,
God is at war with her - destroys her peace,
Nor ever can she now obtain his Grace".
Ah no! Believe me this is not the way
That into glory will the saints convey,
But by free grace, and not by money given,
Nor yet by their own works they enter heaven.
Myself, but a wretched worm, confess
Worthy of death, deserving nothing less.
If I in judgment before God should come,
I should receive an everlasting doom;
But where sin did most abound,
Grace and mercy were superior found.
My God and Father Thou art He,
Who paid my ransom, and hath set me free,
From death to life, without a flaw
Restored me from the bondage of the law..
Thou art the King, and Priest likewise,
Who made for us the one great sacrifice.

It is good to know that two of the old woman's three sons were later employed as Scripture Readers.

Another convert is worth mentioning. She lived in a place under a mountain called Nephin. The Irish name of her townland, when translated, means 'The Valley of Darkness'. By the grace of God she was brought out of gross spiritual darkness into the glorious light of the gospel. Her name

was Mary, she was poor and shabbily dressed, and at the time of her first meeting with Billy, she was 15 years old. In company with a friend she visited a house one night, only to find that Billy was there, reading an Irish Bible with the man of the house. She was so interested by what she heard, that she remained unobserved in a corner, after the other members of the family had retired to bed, and listened to the two men as they continued to read and talk the whole night. In the morning, when Billy was leaving, she told him what an impression had been made upon her by all that she had heard, and asked him to call at her own house. Billy promised to do as Mary asked, but forgot all about it until he met her some time afterwards. She reminded him of his promise, whereupon he did call at her father's house. Billy thought that Mary was too young to understand very much, so he arranged for the clergyman of her parish to take her into one of his schools, where she learned to read English and Irish. Some time after this, her friends persuaded her to go to confession, although she was very reluctant to do so. When she was on her knees, the priest asked her how long it was since she had been to confession. She answered him. He then asked her what sins she had committed since the last confession. She told him, that, having once broken the law of God, she could make no restitution. "But", said the priest, "I can forgive you your sins". She answered that he could not, nor could he forgive his own; that Christ alone could forgive sins. "O", said he, "you are become a preacher, I see". "No", she replied, "nor have I ever heard one; those are the words of the New Testament". "Have you, then, been reading the Testament?" "No, but I have been hearing it read". He then told her, that unless she promised never to read it or hear it read, he would have nothing more to say to her. She answered that that was a promise she could never make to anyone, and left the room.

This story was related in his report to the Society, and was then published as a tract. A man in Mary's neighbourhood obtained a copy, and brought it to the priest. The latter was so enraged by it that he cursed the whole family in the chapel on the following Sunday. The family were thrown into great consternation. The mother begged the father to go to the priest, and to try and make it up with him. He refused, saying that he wouldn't know how to set about it. He thereupon urged Mary to go to the priest, seeing that she had brought all this on them. Mary went to the priest, who met her with a whip in his hand - an instrument in common use amongst Irish priests. He then drew a copy of the tract from his pocket. "Is that you, you devil?" said he. She replied, "I renounce the devil, but it is me". He then began calling down all sorts of curses upon her. She said to him that a clergyman ought to speak about God, but that he had had the devil's name upon his lips five times since he had been speaking to her.

Priest: Did you see the tract?
Mary: What is it? Will you be so good as to read it to me?
Priest: I would see you to the devil first. Do you know Billy Moore?
Mary: Yes.
Priest: You may thank him for this.
Mary: And for more than that.
Priest: He is the greatest enemy you have.
Mary: He is no man's enemy; and if you saw him coming here, I'm sure you would make him welcome. But I came here to ask why you cursed us today at mass.

The priest's brother and two sisters, who were present, advised her to

confess to him at once, and it would be all over; but she declared that she would never bow her knee to any human being. They then said she need not kneel, but may confess standing; but she said that would not do either; that she would confess to him alone against whom she had offended. She then said that she would pray that God would enlighten whichever of them was in the wrong; to which the priest's sisters said Amen, and she left the house.

The bulk of my source material for this paper is composed of verbatim records of Billy's journals, annual reports to the Society, and a variety of personal letters. From these I now propose to extract various matters of interest, which will all add to our knowledge of this remarkable man.

In his Journal dated May 4th,1817, he gives his reaction to the report that the Pope had issued a Bull against the schools in Ireland. He wrote, "Since I heard the report about the Bull I have been more strengthened than before. I see that it is not the time to draw back, but to persevere. Where the Lord has one lost sheep he will find it out. There is a beggar woman who came to me three times last week, who has heard the word, and told me that she would beg about this neighbourhood to be convenient to hear, and to have her fatherless children brought up in the knowledge of the truth. Last Sabbath, after reading and some controversy, a woman said to me, "As you are an old man, I beg you to instruct me in the knowledge of salvation, as I do not care what the priests will say". What can the Pope's bull do more than successive priests have done already, threatening anyone who has a Testament in his house, or who sends his children to our schools? Out of 90 Testaments which I have given away, not one has been returned to me, nor one scholar withdrawn from school these two years past".

The next extract is from the journal for June 22nd, 1818. A message had been sent to Billy, asking him to be at a certain house on the approaching Sabbath, where there would be many people to meet him. He went two days before the Sabbath, to find that a local man had just died. During the deceased man's illness Con H had read the Scriptures often, and as a result the dying man was clearly convinced that his only hope of acceptance with God was through the merits of a crucified redeemer. However, after Con had left him, his wife and friends sent for the priest, seeing that there were no hopes of his recovery. Although he objected to the priest being called, he was too weak to prevent his wife from doing as she intended. The priest came, but knowing that the man was very poor, would not enter the house until seven shillings and sixpence was first handed to him. Shortly before the man died, Con visited him again. As soon as Con entered, he held up both his hands and cried out, "Con, Con, what shall I do?" "Why", said Con, "did the priest refuse to anoint you?" "No, he came and rubbed something on to me, but I would rather see a cow boy coming in to me". Con then read, and told him that as his faith and only hope was in and through the merits of Jesus, that anything forced on him had no power over him. This so consoled the old man that he died an hour later, resting in Christ. On the day of the funeral, Billy went along. He was not long there when he was called aside by a man, and then some others who knew the man's intention followed them. They all sat down and Billy began reading to them from the Testament. The priest arrived and began the mass. He had his congregation, and Billy had his, and even though the distance between them was no more than twenty yards, no-one left

Billy to attend to the mass. The priest got two and sixpence for the mass, and seven and six for the ointment, which gave Billy the opportunity of pressing upon his hearers that a soul's salvation was sold by the priest for ten shillings. He also directed their attention to Peter's second epistle, and showed that the priests were identical with those who are spoken of as making merchandise of men's souls. On the Sabbath day appointed for the meeting men and women came from all directions, some from five miles away. Using an Irish Bible, they got off to an early start, and did not finish until sunset. Everyone thought that the day was too short, so attentive were they to the Word. They were evidently beginning to think for themselves, as they were not afraid to openly express their opinions about the priest.

The following incident is recorded in the Journal for April 10th, 1821. During August of the previous year, Billy was in Ballymote on a market day. A lad came to him and asked if he could read Irish. The lad said that he had a copy of Luke's Gospel in Irish, and that he wanted to be able to read it himself. Billy stood in the street with the lad, and spent a good while with him, giving him a start at reading himself. He had never heard the Scripture before, and so Billy told him that when he could read the Gospel which he had, he would present him with a complete New Testament. This encounter had slipped Billy's memory until early in April, 1821, the same lad called on him in company with one of the Society's Sabbath readers. He was delighted to have met with Billy again, because he was keen to receive the promised copy of the New Testament. He was also very anxious to tell Billy of the effects which the single Gospel had produced in him. He told Billy that in two months he had learned to read the Gospel perfectly, and that as a result he had stopped attending mass, never intending to go again. He said that from what he had read he had seen enough to convince him that Roman Catholics were, of all people, the most to be pitied. Billy told him that when he had read the Gospel of John, he would see the spirit of the gospel more clearly. When asked whether any of his neighbours had heard him read, he replied that all of them had, with the greatest pleasure. Apparently that single gospel was the first that had ever been seen in that neighbourhood. He told Billy that his absence from mass over the preceding six months had not caused any enquiry on the part of the priest, but that this was probably due to the fact that he lived more than two miles away from the chapel. Billy then said to him: "You say that you have renounced Popery. Did you sit down and count the cost before you did so? You will be hated and exposed by your nearest friends and neighbours, and, without mercy, given over to the devil by the priest. Added to that, there is not a single Protestant where you live to stand by you." The lad replied that he understood all that had been said, and that should worse come to him, he was prepared to run the hazard, depending only on the Lord. Before he left Billy's company, he listened for a long time as he was instructed in the Word, and was then given a complete Irish Bible. What good came out of a copy of a single gospel!

The following interesting narrative comes from the Journal for June 19th, 1821. Billy was walking at one time in a very wild part of Tireragh, and met a very sour-looking character who greeted him in Irish. He then asked Billy where he was travelling from.

B. From Easky.

O'C. What sort of fair is it?

B. The fair had not begun when I passed through.

Then looking at him suspiciously O'C said, "Where were you then?" Billy mentioned where.

O'C. What were you doing there?

B. Inspecting schools.

The man then looked at Billy very disrespectfully and asked,"Are you an inspector of schools?"

B. Yes, I am.

O'C. Are you a Protestant?

B. Yes, I am.

"Then," said his companion sneeringly, "You have a mighty sweet tongue of Irish." He thereby insinuated that Billy had not always been a Protestant, as Irish is not so generally spoken by them as by the Roman Catholics. He then added, "Should you be a Protestant?"

"What's your name?" said Billy.

"I'm of the seed of the O'Connor's," was the boastful reply.

B. Well, every man of your name should be Protestants.

O'C. Why's that?

B. Why, every man of your name should be Christians.

O'C. Well, don't you think I'm a Christian?

B. I don't know, until you tell me your Christian faith.

O'C. Why, to be sure, what's any man's Christian faith?

B. I'm a Protestant, and my faith differs from yours.

O'C. Well, I pay my clergy, and do what they bid me.

B. Is that your Christian faith?

O'C. Yes.

B. And if they bid you go to hell, would you think it right to do as they bid you?

O'C paused awhile and said "No".

"Now", said Billy, "suppose we two were strangers on this road, and that we met a man, and asked him the way to Collooney, and that he answered 'straight on', (as it is), and that after going a little further we met another and asked him, and he told us that was not the way, but to turn, and go over the mountain over there; And that we believed the liar instead of the honest man, and went rambling over the mountain until night came, and we fell down the edge of a precipice and perished." Billy then applied what he had said, by comparing the first man to the Scriptures, where Christ tells us, "I am the way, the truth, and the life", and that the priest was the second man who turned us out of the way, and whilst trying to find our way in the dark, we perished. He pointed out to him that no man could come to God but through Jesus Christ. Billy then asked the man if he could read. He answered gruffly, "I can, then".

B. Can you read Irish?

O'C. I can, then.

B. Have you read the Scriptures?

O'C. No.

B. Why not?

O'C. Because the priest won't allow me.

B. That's just what you pay him for, to direct you to hell.

They continued talking, and O'C became more civil and attentive. After walking a good while together they came to a stile, where O'C stopped, and standing for a while, before he climbed over, he told Billy that he had come a mile and a half out of his way with him, and that he never heard such words out of any one's mouth. When he pointed out to Billy where he lived, the latter could see that he had to go back by a very difficult mountain road to reach his home. Upon parting, Billy said that he would be coming back that way in about a fortnight, and that he would bring O'C a

Testament in his mother tongue. When Billy returned to that part of the country, he found that the man with whom he had had the conversation was brother to a local priest, and that just four days after their encounter he had taken ill, and died, refusing on his death-bed to have any priest come to him. His neighbours thought that he was mad, especially as for the few days which preceded his death he was preaching to them all of the delusion they were under, and the deceptions of the priests. What a striking instance of the truth that Billy used to express, that though in the wildest and most lonely mountains, scattered up and down, the Lord will find his sheep. This man, who at first received God's messenger with such moroseness, nevertheless in one short interview was brought out of darkness into marvellous light. It has to be recorded that when Billy firstmet O'C on the road, he took his walking-stick off his shoulder to be ready to defend himself, should he be attacked, as he quite expected to be struck once the stranger discovered who he was.

Another encounter of a different sort also took place in the year 1821. It concerns a man named Q, who was particularly opposed to Billy Moore. Q was a popish schoolmaster, and was in the habit of holding forth among the people on Pastorini's prophecies. This work was greatly studied for some years in Ireland, and seemed to give much additional energy to crime, as it filled the minds of the people with the confident hope that all the Protestants would shortly be exterminated. This idea was quite generally prevalent, and especially that the desired massacre should taken place in the year 1825. One day Q was dealing out his prophecies at the local forge. Forges were generally a favourite place of rendezvous for the politicians, idlers, and gossips of the neighbourhood. The smith knew Billy, and said, "I wish Billy Moore was here till you would hear what he would say." "I wish he was here", said Q. "Well", said the smith, "the first time he comes to the country I will send for you". When Billy subsequently came, the smith sent for Q, and then brought both men to his house, in order to talk together free from the disturbance of the crowded forge. Billy began at once with some passages from the book of Revelation, and Q listened very attentively. Although the details of what was discussed that day were not recorded at the time, it is known that before the two men parted Q was so convinced by Billy that he applied himself to studying the Scriptures. He had the assistance of Billy from time to time, and became a decided convert, withstanding great local opposition, until he was provided with employment in a distant part of the country under a Mr. Blest, the agent for the London Hibernian Society. After his conversion Q confessed to Billy that for two years he had constantly carried a large knife with the intention of stabbing him when he could get the opportunity, because he was so bitterly opposed to him.

Next an extract from the Journal of May 19th, 1823. On a Sabbath day Billy passed through a congregation assembling for mass. One of his neighbours who was there asked him to go to mass with him. Billy told him that if he knew where he was going, that he wouldn't go for the whole world. He told his neighbour that he was going to see the greatest sin that was ever committed; to see Christ crucified afresh and put to open shame; to be told that the priest would bring Christ down from his throne of glory, flesh and blood, soul and divinity, really, truly, and substantially, and then to swallow him. Others were there listening to Billy, and then after quite a time they went off to mass - all except an 80 year old man who stayed to hear more from Billy. Having listened very attentively he said that he was now unsure about going to mass. "You may

go", said Billy, "but take note of what you see and what you have heard, and read your Bible. Some time afterwards he met Billy's son, and told him that there was nothing in this world that he would wish more, than to have Billy with him at the hour of death. When the old man was nearing the end of life, Billy was away from home, so his son was requested to send him as soon as he returned. Providentially Billy arrived the night before the priest was to be sent for. He asked the old man's wife and children not to force him to have the priest to call, to which they agreed. When a Col. Percival called on the old man and asked him if he wanted the priest to come, he replied that he would rather have Billy Moore than all the priests on the face of the earth, for it was he who showed him the faithful High Priest on whom he depended for salvation. In his Journal for July 19th, 1824, Billy relates the following: Every converted papist has the fortitude of a martyr. There is an instance of this in a poor woman who never learned a letter, and who performed the stations of Croagh Patrick, Lough Dearg, and many more. Hearing the gospel, after many conversations with Billy, the Lord opened her understanding, and sealed the truth on her heart. Once she went to a mountain village to visit a sick neighbour. When she arrived at the house, all eyes were fixed on her, because they knew what she was. Addressing the company of neighbours she said, "You all know that I was as devoted to my religion as any of you, attending to all the fastings, pilgrimages, and devotions in my state of ignorance". She then explained the gospel plan, and contrasted it with her former religion, in as plain and simple a way as could not be bettered. There was no-one who could gainsay her, and they all left as meek as lambs. Although illiterate and poor, this woman made a point of calling daily wherever she had an opportunity of witnessing for the Lord, without any fear.

Funerals always presented a great opportunity to preach the word to the common people. At one such, in Foxford, three former Roman Catholics attended, as was their custom. As soon as they arrived, they were thronged with a crowd of about 300 men and women, who were pushing and striving to get as near to the three as possible. In response to a question, Patrick H----- took the lead and ably explained the gospel from the Scriptures, contrasting it with the errors of popery being well acquainted with all its abominations. When he was nearly exhausted one of his companions took over. He said, "Neighbours, I want to put this whole issue to your consciences. When the priest gives you the wafer, does he not say that if any receive it clear and free of sin, it is eternal salvation to him? If not, that it is to his eternal damnation? Now then, search your consciences: dare any man or priest say that he is free from sin? The priest, therefore, gives you the wafer to your peril, and seeing that you know that you are not free from sin, you receive to your eternal damnation. If you live and die believing that error, you cannot be saved." During all of this, there was not a murmur from anyone, nor yet was there a frown to be seen. It is thrilling to know that these three men, at one time, would have thought that they would have been serving God by murdering any one who spoke as they now spoke. Such men, being well-known neighbours of their hearers, gained a ready ear from them, that no Gospel Minister would have enjoyed.

Before recording the circumstances of Billy's break with the Society, listen to his comment on several different topics:
When asked if any would be condemned when they implicitly followed their clergy, he replied, "The Bible says, 'If the blind lead the blind, BOTH shall fall into the ditch'".

Then, at a Methodist class-meeting he heard many describe the happy state of mind they had enjoyed - some for weeks, some for months - free from any motions of sin. When it came to his turn to speak, he said, "This is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;" at the same time laying his hand on his heart.
Speaking once about miracles, and about the alleged miracle of transubstantiation, he said that when miracles occurred they were for the purpose of convincing the senses where faith was deficient, NOT of exercising faith in opposition to the senses.

A man said to him once, "You are very unmannerly, Billy, for you never call us Catholics anything but Papists". "Well", he replied, "I will look up the Bible, and if I see any reason to call you Catholics, then I will call you that;" so, turning to the Book of Revelation he read, "By her sorceries ALL NATIONS are deceived". "O yes," he said, "you are Catholic in this; I now see you have a right to be called Catholic in your sorceries".

Mr. Wilson, under whose superintendence Billy had worked so long, died, as noted earlier, of cholera, in the year 1832. His place was filled by one of quite a different spirit and conduct, and who was soon dismissed by the Society. During his brief tenure the new man, whose name is not given in the memoirs, dismissed any teachers or readers who would not submit to believer's baptism. However, many to whom their positions were of great importance, did submit simply to retain them. Billy had often engaged in controversial discussions with members of the Baptist churches on the subject of baptism, but he used to say, "They never could get the old head under the water".
The object of the successor to Mr. Wilson was to establish Baptist churches. When he first met Billy, he told him that he only brought his converts half-way to heaven, but that he would bring his the whole way. Billy replied by saying that he, or the Lord through him, brought them to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and he defied him to bring them further. The new man established 10 Baptist churches, but Billy said of them that they would be as the old saying, keeping shop and nothing in it.

During his years of labour with the Society, Billy had been paid £40 per annum, as against the £30 paid to all other full-time readers. This was in recognition of Billy's age and the uniqueness of his talents for such work as he undertook. When he was dismissed from the employment of the Society, he was offered £10 per annum as a kind of pension, but Col. Percival advised him not to accept it, saying that he would accept financial responsibility for him for the rest of his life.

Billy spent most of his last days with one of his daughters, first at Templehouse, and latterly on an island in Lough Arrow, called Anaghgoula. On the morning of Sunday, March 15th, 1840, he breathed his last, whilst in a tranquil sleep. Thus ended the earthly labours of a great man of God. His remains were laid to rest in the churchyard of Ballymote church, in the burial-place of his family, where his last resting-place is only marked by a yew-tree, which his friend, Mr. G. L'Estrange, planted on his grave.

Now, a few observations:

1. Are we too timorous today? Ought we not be more outspoken than we are?
2. We must never despise people of Billy Moore's age who offer themselves for Christian service. Perhaps we tend to err at the other end of the scale, and thrust out folk who are too young, and lack the experience of life.
3. Conditions in Connaught today are very different from what they were in the early 1800's. But God is the same, and we must cry to Him to bring another wave of blessing in our day.
4. What do we say about the employment of paedo-baptists in the service of a Baptist Mission? Ought not the original objective to have been the planting of baptistic churches?

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IRISH BAPTISTS AND WAR

by

PHILIP COLLARD.

I wish to deal with my subject in three ways. Firstly, I will consider the Irish Baptist involvement with the English Army in the seventeenth century. Secondly, I will (very briefly indeed) look at the contribution and comment of Irish Baptists in two world wars (1914-18; 1939-45). Finally, there will be a consideration of the problem of war and the Christians attitude.

1. THE CROMWELLIAN ARMY AND BAPTISTS IN IRELAND

"In 1645 two men in Ulster - Cornwall and Verner - caused serious trouble, a way North of Ireland men still have, by defying accredited authority. This was an ecclesiastical matter, and their offence consisted in that they affirmed there was no scriptural evidence for infant sprinkling. For this heresy in due course they were summoned before the Presbytery, but one of them disappeared, and the other altogether repudiated such a spiritual authority. Tradition seems to suggest that they came southwards, but this much appears evident, that when the Cromwellians came to Dublin in 1650, they found, not founded, a church of our faith and order. Of course, their advent meant a great accession and stimulant to Baptist principles". (1)

What we do know is that by October, 1651 there were at least two gathered congregations of Independents in Dublin. (2) One was established by Samuel Winter, (who had come to Dublin as chaplain to the parliamentary commissioners) and which met in St. Nicholas's church and indeed flourished throughout the decade. The other congregation met in Christ Church cathedral, where John Rodgers was the pastor. (3)

A difference in the membership of these two congregations was clearly discernible! John Rodger's congregation included Dublin's military governor, Hewson and other important Cromwellian army officers. While Samuel White's congregation included the Cromwellian alderman of Dublin and other leading civilians. These differences became important in 1653 when John Rodgers, confronted with an offensive by some Baptists, decided to return to England. Many members of his congregation at Christ Church cathedral, including the important army officers, now decided to embrace Baptism and then became bitter opponents of the Independents meeting at St. Nichalas church under the leadership of Samuel White! White's church in turn increasingly sided with civilian rule!

Thus "By 1653 religious extremism - Baptism in particular - was identified with the oppressions of Ireland's military government". (4)

The subsequent increase and influence of Baptists was very rapid! Some have suggested this was because the 'Lord Deputy' of Ireland was Charles Fleetwood and that he was an active supporter of the Baptists.

This was probably not so. However Charles Fleetwood was a religious Independent and like Oliver Cromwell he did set great store by liberty of conscience, regarding it as a chief gain of the wars. Though "he might wring his hands at the spectacle of saint contending against saint in Ireland, he would not curtail religious freedom". (5) He was warned that if he did not make a firm stand against the Baptists he would be used as major General Harrison had been by the Fifth Monarchists in England. However Charles Fleetwood was a tolerant man and he allowed the Baptists to dominate his government.

Two ministers who arrived in Ireland after 1649 with the British Army, Thomas Patient and Christopher Blackwood, were very successful in spreading Baptist principles. Patient had begun to question episcopacy before the civil war in England and on becoming dissatisfied he emigrated to New England.

"Reading the 'Old Book' in the woods and with the wild Indians he found fresh light breaking forth therefrom and ultimately conceived it his duty to be baptised. A course of thirteen sermons by a learned divine in favour of Infant Baptism led largely to this result, and Patient himself, with a touch of dry humour, remarks that at the end of the thirteenth sermon he arose, and was baptised. For this wilfully obstinate act he was severely punished by the Independents, and if my memory serves me rightly, whipped for having violated their ecclesiastical traditions. Then having left old England and the Anglicans seeking freedom to worship God, he now was forced for the same reason to quit New England and the Independents, and coming home, found his ministry and liberty in Ireland". (6)

By April 1650 he was at Kilkenny (7) where the military governers, Lawerence and Axtell respectivily were converted. Patient moved to Dublin in 1652. He was incidently (unlike most other ministers) a part of the military establishment and was paid the grand sum of #11.45 per month.

Christopher Blackwood was at one time the rector of Staplehurst in Kent, he then became an army chaplain and in 1653 was appointed official preacher at Kilkenny.

By 1653 Baptists were making great headway in Ireland with congregations at Bandon, Carrickfergus, Clonmel, Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny, Kinsale, Limerick, Waterford and Wexford. (8) Baptist activity was making most headway in the English garrisons. Besides the official appointed preachers, there was much good work done by laymen, i.e. John Draper, Edward Hutchinson and John Chambers. It was the Baptists' great success in the English Army which transformed them into a major political force. It was Captain John Vernon and Adjutant-General William Allen who in 1652 had carried the Baptist message from Waterford to John Rodgers' congregation in Dublin. In 1653 it was noted that most of the Irish Baptists 'have relation to the Armie and therefore are subject to be called away'. (9) Tours of duty by Baptist soldiers allowed a thorough evangelization of the country.

In many garrisons the Baptist cause was patronized by the military governor. In 1655 twelve military governors, plus members of the civil administration were said to be Baptists. These sympathetic officers had power over religious matters, being asked to procure ministers for Ireland. Christopher Blackwood settled at Kilkenny through the influence of governor

Axtell. Colonel Lawerence arranged for Thomas Patient to officiate at Waterford. John Hunt (previous assistant to Christopher Blackwood) settled at Maryborough through the influence of Blackwood and governor Axtell.

The military government which prevailed in most Irish towns until 1656 gave Baptist army officers a wonderful opportunity to advance their cause. By 1654 it was felt by many that to be a Baptist was the key to advancement in the army. This fact encouraged many to become Baptists so that 'the officers bowed down to the idol called baptism to obtain promotion'. (10) In May 1654, Sir Archibald Johnson heard that all the army officers in Ireland were Anabaptists . (11)

Baptist sympathizers also obtained other offices with influence over ecclesiastical affairs. Some rose to the position of 'Justice of the Peace' and in Galway one Baptist was elevated to the position of Mayor.

It has been suggested that there were two reasons why the Baptist cause spread so rapidly between 1652 and 1654.

The first reason was religious. "The Baptist exclusive doctrine attracted soldiers who were anxious to retain their distinctive identity as the elect in a country of unregenerate papists. Propaganda about the English mission in Ireland had encouraged chiliastic fervour in the army". (12) There was also the fact of the plague, which had the effect of making the soldiers fearful of spiritual backsliding.

The second reason was political.

One of the early converts to the Baptist cause was William Allen, who in 1647 had been an army agitator. (13) The Baptist cause was attracting political radicals who were interested in gaining political importance! This situation was clearly revealed when in 1654 widespread dissatisfaction developed in the army about the creation of the 'Protectorate'.

Oliver Cromwell was aware of the political dimension that Baptists had now acquired and in July 1655 Cromwell's younger son Henry was commissioned as 'Major-General' and added to the Irish ruling council. Henry Cromwell set out to reduce the power of the Baptists. This was achieved by reducing the power from the military, (i.e. the Baptist supporters) and restoring it to the civilians (i.e. mainly opponents of the Baptist cause). The implications of Henry Cromwell's rule was seen in the first large-scale disbanding of the army troops.

At the start of 1656 official favour was withdrawn from the Baptists. Some of their preachers had their government salaries stopped or reduced, others were moved from large towns to remoter areas where their influence was reduced. (Christopher Blackwood and Peter Row lost their salaries, James Knight was moved from Limerick to County Kerry and his salary was reduced).

In November 1656 the leading Baptist army officers Allen, Axtell, Barrow and Vernon resigned their commissions and returned to England. After their resignations in 1656 the army officers stopped using the Baptist Churches and by 1660 the Baptist cause was no longer as influential as previously it had been. The cause continued in Dublin, where Christopher Blackwood still had a congregation after 1660 and where William

Lamb preached in 1674.

Thus we can see an early involvement by Irish Baptists with the English Army.

2. THE CONTRIBUTION AND COMMENTS OF IRISH BAPTISTS DURING TWO WORLD WARS (1914-1918 and 1939-1945)

A. Contribution on the 'War Front'.

Many young men from our churches showed a remarkable manifestation of heroism and self-sacrifice on behalf of 'King and Country'.

"From almost all our churches bands of young men have gone forth at the call of King and Country. We have not been able to secure the names of all who have responded from our Irish Churches; but we give on this page a goodly list and would ask that each one might be especially and definitely remembered daily at the Throne of Grace, that those who are the Lord's children may be kept loyal and true ..... The photograph which we show is that of the six sons of Pastor George Marshall, late of Tobermore, five of whom are at present serving with the colours. The sixth one would be with them too but has not yet reached the required age". (The list of young men were approx. 170 in number, from 24 churches and of various ranks). (14)

"Many were killed in action, showing great courage and real christian character. Lieut. James Mackay, B.Sc, 1st Gordon Highlanders, who was killed near Hooge on 25th September, belonged to one of the most devoted families in the Mountpottinger Baptist Church .... The following extract from his letter to a friend gives a view of his sense of duty:- "It may be that I be compelled to give the Supreme Sacrifice. Well, surely much better to go out doing ones duty than to stay at home and slack, when one clearly sees the proper path to follow". (15)

It was not only the young men who made a contribution on the War Front, the woman too played their part.

"Four years of war - and never before have women played so large a part in shaping their country's destiny! You pass on the street, girls in the navy-blue uniforms of the W.R.N.S., the khaki of the A.T.S., or the blue-grey of the W.A.A.F. Many of them are our own countrywomen, but thousands of others have come across the water to help us.

"Can you picture the conditions under which these girls work? The life in camp or hostel is a great change from comfortable home surroundings. Yet they gladly take their place as clerical workers, cooks and orderlies, transport drivers and mechanics, thus releasing men for more specialised duties. Some face the loneliness and boredom of keeping constant watch over the sea and skies, living in small groups in isolated places. Upon their faithfulness depends the safety of our land.

"The chaplains are already ministering to the men in the forces, and it is clearly impossible for them to make individual contact with the thousands of girls under their care. Realising this, a start was made in England in December, 1939, when the Archbishop of Canterbury called

together a group of responsible women, and inaugurated the Committee of the Churches' Work for Women in the Forces. (C.W.W.F.) In recent months the work has been extended to Northern Ireland, and a local committee formed. Representatives from the different churches attend, as well as the Senior Chaplains of the three Services. Mrs. Arthur Ross is Chairman and Mrs. I. Neill attends on behalf of the Baptist Union of Ireland. Miss Honor Brown has been appointed as District Organiser and it is hoped to find other qualified workers shortly". (16)

B. Contribution on the 'Home Front'

Many churches organized help for those who were serving in His Majesty's Forces. "All those members and adherents of the Antrim Road Baptist Church in Belfast who have volunteered for service in His Majesty's Forces, would receive a Christmas parcel containing woollies, soap, chocolate, a spiritual guide and a letter of good wishes from the church written by Rev. T.R. Gardiner, MA.

The willing lady workers, aided by our enthuasiastic Christian Endeavourers, gave generously of the money, wool and skill and Miss J. Mullen was enabled to send off in good time those welcome gifts to the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen stationed on and around our coasts, who a few months ago were worshipping with us".

The Irish Baptist College were not idle during these dark days and sought to win people for the Saviour. "It had been felt that the College should in common with all other Institutions do its 'little bit' in this momentous crisis of war, and also Gospel opportunity. Acordingly the classes have been suspended for some months in order that the students may devote their energies to special Gospel efforts among the military. At a recent Sunday meeting at the Curragh Camp over 30 men professed to accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, and it is of supreme importance that every nerve should be strained to win these brave fellows for Jesus Christ before they go forth to meet danger and possibly death. We wish it to be distinctly understood that these classes will commence again as soon as we feel that this direct responsibility no longer burdens us.

"Brethren, pray that great power and blessing may rest upon the ministry of these young men in their desire to advance the Kingdom of our Blessed Saviour". (17).

All Baptist churches were constant in prayer for those who were in positions of danger and a remarkable answer to prayer was reported in the Irish Baptist Magazine.

"CORK. - "While They Are Yet Speaking". On the morning of the 27th June, the Steamship Kenmare of Cork was making her way thither along the south cost of Ireland. All went well until that bane of all vessels nowadays - the German Submarine - made its appearance. It lookedpretty badly for the steamship, shot after shot being fired at her from the hostile craft. Fourteen shells in all were fired, all but one missing the vessel entirely, and that one merely cutting through a rope. The vessel drew away and the rest of the voyage was completed in safety. Not many vessels escape thus easily, and on all sides, in Queenstown, Cork, and other places, might be heard exclamations of wonder at the ship's

marvellous deliverance.

"That very morning at the Lord's Day morning service in the Baptist Chapel, Cork, the Pastor preached from the text "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear". Then afterwards at the Lord's Table the congregaion offered up prayer on behalf of those members who are, directly or indirectly, engaged in serving their country.

"The Chief Engineer of the SS. Kenmare, a member of the church, was one of those for whom prayer was thus offered. This was about ten minutes past one. At that very hour the submarine opened her attack!

"Praise ye the Lord!" (18)

Irish Baptists were glad to see the contribution made by King George in his decision to abstain from alcohol, during the war and the following was printed in the Irish Baptist Magazine in May 1915.

DRINK AND THE WAR. THE KING'S NOBLE LEAD.

God bless the King! and so say all of us. King George has proved himself to be a man, a man fit to govern and to lead. Unquestionably the most important event of the past month has been the decision of the King to abstain from alcohol himself and to prohibit the use of it in the Royal household during the duration of th war. In acting thus, the King has once more shown his remarkable faculty for interpreting and expressing the feeling of the nation, but he has done much more than that. He has set an example which will do more than any legislation to check the evil of intemperance.

The Rev. F.B. Meyer, in an appeal to 10,000 Ministers, says:- "The King has instituted one of the best moral and ethical movements of the age, and his example to Britain in voluntarily abstaining from alcohol during the war in order to encourage workers throughout the land is going to have a vast influence on the Empire. The Churches should take the lead in doing everything possible to extend the King's example, and to ten thousand Free Church Ministers I have sent this letter:-

'The King's noble lead to the Empire for total abstinence during the war is already producing far-reaching results, but it is profoundly important that we should do everything in our power to accentuate and spread the influence of the Royal example. Our Free Churches cover vast areas of the population and the effect of their concerted action would be prodigious. It seems to me essential that the Churches should offer a strong lead in this".

Irish Baptists, obviously wishing to follow the lead of the King published in the Irish Baptist Magazine an advert, for Coleman's R.T.B., that is, Renowned Temperance Beverage! (20)

One would presume that good sales resulted!

It must be said that the contributions on both the 'War Front' and 'Home Front', by Irish Baptists was very important and considerable. I have listed just a very few. The subject is vast and the stries must be legion. Every church must have members with first hand knowledge of both wars. Yet interestingly enough, there is really little recorded in past editions of the Irish Baptist Magazine in this area!

C. Comments of Irish Baptists during two World Wars.

On reading the copies of the Irish Baptist Magazine for the period of the two world wars I have been surprised that so little comment has been made. There are obviously a number of devotional articles telling for example of the need to pray etc, but comments about the war itself seem to be few, although the sympathy of Irish Baptists was clearly with the Allies!

The reasons could partly be that there was no conscription in Ireland and therefore the problem of 'conscientious objections' did not arise. Although in Glasgow one Baptist Church requested that a conscientious objector resign.

The managers of the Hillhead Baptist Church, Glasgow, have asked a conscientious objector member to resign, on the ground that his "attitude to the constituted authorities of the country" compromises the church, and consequently the only remedy for the position is resignation. So far as can be ascertained, this is the first instance in Scotland of an objector to military service on religious grounds being asked to withdraw from a church. (21)

The Rev. D. Henderson of Carson Memorial Baptist Church, Tobermore put pen to paper in a series of articles under the blanket title of 'Notable Utterances of Great Men'. One article had as its individual title, 'Duty is the demand of the passing hour'. - Goethe.

r "It is very gratifying to know that so many young men have responded to the call of duty in this great national crisis through which we are now passing, and I feel sure that 'when the boys come marching home' they will not regret having stood by their King and Country in this hour of tremendous stress and strain. It will be a source of peremial joy and indescribable pleasure to them to reflect upon the fact that they took part in the world's greatest and sanguinary war. It is said of Napoleon that after one of his great battles he had some medals struck off. They gave an account of the battles on one side and on the other side were these words. "I was there" ..... And so every young man who, in after life, can say, with reference to the war: "I was there", will be an object of interest, respect, and honour by his fellow countrymen".

"How proud we are to think that the pick of our nation are at the post of duty in our great military stores, in our mines, etc., as well as in the Army and Navy, all courageously doing their bit to destroy the clenched fist of the bully which has been held up in defiance of all the laws of God and humanity. And God helping them they will do it too! The Allies may for a time stagger under the terrific sledge-hammer blows of the German Army but they have powers of endurance and means of recuperation unknown to their antagonists, and when the force of their great strength has been

spent the Allies will make such demands upon them as will prevent the recurrence of such an awful outrage upon humanity and civilisation. And all because we have men who when convinced of their duty are willing to do it". (22)

Another article under the tide of "War is a terrible trade, but in the cause that is righteous sweet is the smell of powder" - Longfellow. Rev. D. Henderson wrote:-

"The battlefield has been spoken of as "The slaughter-house of mankind", and never were these words more expressive than they are at present. What a slaughter-house the Continent of Europe has been for the last year! Men have been cut down like sheep, hearts and homes have been desolated, and large tracts of land have been devastated. What a ghastly scene! How sickening and revolting! Now, in the midst of this awful clash of arms, depression and gloom are natural and almost inevitable were it not for the fact that so far as we are concerned our Cause is a righteous one. Never has the British Empire entered upon a war with cleaner hands and purer motives, and this enables us, as a nation, to grasp the sword with a firmness and confidence which is impossible to our enemies. The great war of the Continent is one of freedom versus tyranny. With us it is a matter of fighting through to the winning post, or of being trampled under foot by German hordes! Victory means freedom, defeat means tyranny! Freedom! oh, glorious word! The music of it. Why, it captivates and thrills the youngest breast and makes the aged feel young again. No price is too high to pay for it, and having obtained it and enjoyed its sweetness for so long, nothing under heaven could tempt us to part with it. Every patriot, every true Briton said "Amen" to the Prime Minister's declaration. He said that the country was determined to put into this war its last ounce of strength, its last farthing, and its last drop of blood in order that the object for which she entered it might be achieved. And she entered it to smash tyranny and to put freedom for herself and others on a stable and lasting basis". (23)

In September, 1915 the Irish Baptist Magazine had an article called "Lessons of the First Year of War".

"We have no hesitation in repeating some of the notable utterances delivered recently by Dr. Clifford in Westbourne Chapel and reported by "Philadelphos" in the Baptist Times. The Doctor, who has lost none of his fire and vigour, said:-

First of all, concerning ourselves and the action we had been led by God to take, it had become more and more clear that

THE COURSE WE TOOK WAS THE ONE AND ONLY COURSE WE COULD HAVE TAKEN.

During the twelve months great disclosures had been made as to the intention of Germany to bring about war. Evidence had accumulated, and had been collected, catalogued, weighed. For himself, recalling the fact that it was with some degree of misgiving and hesitation that he had felt compelled to declare for war, it gave him unspeakable joy that not one day out of the 365 had brought forth anything invalidating the fact that the action of Britain was the one and only course consistent with honour and righteousness. The time when our Cabinet met to consider the alternatives of peace and war was one of the great moments in human history. Having

regard to the momentous character of the issues hanging upon their decision, it might almost be said there never had been such a moment in the history of the race. The anxiety of the men responsible for making and declaring that dread decision must have been unutterable; yet, looking back at it, and at what has happened since, whatever doubt or misgiving there might have been must have passed away and the unalterable conviction arrived at that the right path had been chosen. This had been an unspeakable strength and solace to us as the days had passed. The Germans have admitted that it was they who drew the sword, and that but for them Austria would have found some means of maintaining peace. It was clear that they had been making preparations for war for a period extending over fourteen or fifteen years, and that to those preparations there had gone great thinking, prolonged inquiry, and scientific experiment, which had eventuated in the ruthless atrocities which had stained the German name. All the disclosures during the twelve months - and how many they were! - had but confirmed us in the conviction that we were on the side of right and of God, and that we were fighting for humanity, for freedom, for progress, and for the Kingdom of God."

3. A CONSIDERATION OF THE PROBLEM OF 'WAR AND THE CHRISTIAN'

1. A brief survey of the scripture evidence.

The fact that pacifists and non-pacifists both present texts from the Bible in support of their views illustrate well the dilemma which most Christians find themselves in when they seek to determine a truly Biblical attitude to war!

"The writers of the Old Testament accepted war as a normally recurring state of affairs, and regarded it as a duty imposed by God sometimes to stage war with the utmost cruelty and ferocity, as in the extermination of most of the original inhabitants of Palestine, and in the punishments of some longstanding enemies like Edom and Babylon". (24) The horrors of war are realistically presented and military force play a significant role in the Old Testament. There are however, qualifications to this general approval of war, which can be seen for example when David was not allowed to build the temple because of his having shed much blood. (1 Chron. 22v8).

The prophets were able to foresee a day, when wars and military force would cease and universal peace would reign ("they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain" Isa. 11v9) and also ("neither shall they learn war any more" Isa. 2v4). The prophet Isaiah spoke of, the 'Coming One' as "The Prince of Peace". Zechariah depicted 'Him' as riding into Jerusalem on an errand of peace.

When we come to the pages of the New Testament there is no suggestion that there is anything wrong in the soldier's calling as such. John the Baptist did not tell the soldiers in Luke 3v14 (when they were oppressed by a sense of guilt, and wanted to know how they should reveal the genuine character of their conversion) to change their occupation; Jesus also helped publicans and prostitutes. The praise Jesus gave was for the centurion's faith not his military ability and courage.

Jesus told parables about war, i.e., about a strong man being overcome

by a still stronger man (Luke 11v21f), about a king using military force against rebellious subjects (Matt. 22v7) and about a ruler counting the cost before engaging in battle (Luke 14v31f) when Jesus warns his disciples of danger in the days to come he says "Let him sell his cloak and buy a dagger" (Luke 22v36). Some take these words to be meant literally and others figuratively. When a disciple replied 'Look Lord, here are two swords", the answer of Jesus, 'Enough, Enough' may mean 'Enough for self-defence', (as the non-pacifists believe) or the words of Jesus could mean, 'Enough of that, you have misunderstood me (as the pacifists believe).

The words of Jesus 'I have not come to bring peace but a sword' (Matt. 10v34) does not mean in Aramaic that it was the purpose of Jesus to cause trouble! Rather he is telling his listeners what will be one unfortunate result of his mission. The seemingly opposite statement in Matt. 26v52 'All who take the sword will perish by the sword', is not a direct command to refrain from fighting, but a reminder of a well known, if often forgotten proverbial truth. 'It must be noted that Jesus did say, 'Do not resist one who is evil! (Matt. 5v39) but a careful examination of the contest would seem to suggest tht Jesus is saying in effect, do not resist one who is evil with measures that arise from an unloving, unforgiving, unrelating disposition.

It has been suggested by William Lillie that we can summarise the New Testament teaching about war in three statements. (25)
(a) "Our Lord and his disciples accepted the place of soldiers as part of the necessary machinery of government, just as they apparently accepted the place of slaves; and they held that wars were likely to continue in the future.
(b) Both our Lord's teaching and His claim to the devotion of all men indicate that one outcome of his Mission would be a world at peace, as the Old Testament prophets had foreseen.
(c) There is no unambiguous guidance as to whether a Christian can or cannot take part in war, nor, with the possible exception of the 'Resist not evil' passage, is there any teaching from which such guidance can be definitely deduced.

(Most would agree with a; the idea of a world at peace, as seen in b, show that the O.T. prophecies have not yet reached their final and complete fulfillment and as to c, some would agree and others would not).

2. Some comments from the early church Fathers.

Those early Church Fathers who wrote about the subject seemed to condemn war as inconsistent with Christianity. Basil in A.D. 350 wrote that soldiers were excluded from Communion for three years after their discharge from the army. Lactantius (A.D. 300) wrote, "It is not lawful for a just man to engage in warfare". (26) Justin Martyr said, "We who were filled with war and mutual slaughter of every wickedness have each of us in all the world changed our weapons for war ..... swords into plows and spears into agricultural implements". Origen of Alexandria wrote in AD 248, "We do not fight under the emperor, although he require it". Irenaeus referred to the prophecy of beating swords into plowshares to the Christians who do not know how to fight, but when struck, offered the other cheek!

Yet despite all this there were many Christians in the Roman Army before the third century. When Christianity became the state religion in 312 the church generally took the view that is was permissible to resist an unprovoked attack and that Christians may engage in such a defensive war. This view has generally held sway in the church at large with the exceptions of the Mennonites, Hutterites and Quakers. (The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a rise of pacifist sects), but these groups have been in the minority!

3. Some arguments for Pacifism.

William Lillie feels that there are five main arguments which support the pacifist's view. (27)

a. The example of our Lord.

This viewpoint is not determined from individual 'proof texts', but from the whole tenor of Jesus's life and his teaching. His way of meeting evil and violence was the way of non-resistance, of turning the other cheek and of returning good for evil. The main emphasis with this argument is on Christ's suffering and redemptive death, where he refused to meet the violence of his enemies, even though, being the Son of God, supernatural powers were available to him.

The non-pacifist would agree that the death of Jesus is an example to us, but that primarily it was an example of self-sacrifice on behalf of others. (This example is followed by those who give their lives in times of war).

b. The teaching of Matt. 5v39. "Do not resist one who is evil".

The suggestion is that Jesus clearly commanded his disciples to practice non-resistance and therefore even the legitimate right (as far as the world is concerned) is denied to the follower of Christ. This does not imply that God will protect those who do not resist the evil man, for example, if the British had refused in Christian obedience to resist Hitler, God would have saved Britain from Nazi domination! We have no confirmation of such from either Scripture or indeed history to support this viewpoint. God spared not his only Son and surely the nation or the individual who will follow Jesus in the path of non-resistance must be ready to share in suffering.

Non-pacifists would explain Matt. 5v39 by saying that Jesus was telling his disciples how to deal with personal wrongs, rather than wrongs done to the larger units of society.

c. The sixth commandment "Thou shalt not kill"

Some pacifists may reason that although its original meaning may have been, "Thou shalt not murder", Christ so filled it with a new significance that the follower of Christ is forbidden to take life under any circumstances at all! Albert Schweitzer would find in 'reverence for life', a basic Christian principle, which is also shared by Buddhists and many Hindus who refuse to kill animals even for food.

The non-pacifists would want to agree that the taking of a person's life is essentially evil, no sane person would wish to take the life of another unless there was the sincere belief that in so doing a greater good would be accomplished! It is for the sake of his friends that a man is ready to lay down his life in war as well as in crucifixion, but in so doing he has also to take the lives of others if what he seeks for his friends can only be achieved in this way.

d. Resultant good can never be the consequence of a modern war.

The argument here is that because of nuclear weapons being available on a global scale, the result of a modern war will be a balance of positive evil, in other words the world will be in a worse physical and moral condition than it was before the war began. Many people today are convinced that the consequences of a third world war would be disastrous to all participants!

The non-pacifists would argue that this consideration does not in fact prove that is is wrong to wage war. The decision to engage in warfare must always be a choice between two evils, opinions will differ as to which of the two is greater.

e. It is the duty of Christians to bear witness to 'a reverence of life'.

The pacifist may reason that sometimes a country has no real choice but is duty bound to be involved in war either a, to protect its subjects or b, to fulfil treaty obligations solemnly undertaken, but it is still, nevertheless, the duty of some to bear witness to 'non-resistance'. The decision to do this may to others appear illogical, and absurd, but the pacifist would still feel that he must still refuse to take part in war.

The non-pacifist would admit that this stance is an honourable one, providing the pacifist is prepared to bear (without criticism or complaint) such penalties as the country may impose upon him, as a part of his witness!

4. Some arguments against Pacifism.

William Lillie puts forward the notion that there are three main 'Christian' arguments against Pacifism. (28)

a. The right to defend oneself and one's property is a universally recognised right.

This right is guaranteed by the law of nature to individuals as well as to nations.

But the fact that a follower of Christ has a 'right' does not imply that he should necessarily exercise that right! For example a Chistian may (for the sake of peace) decide it to be good not to assert his right to defend his property or his person. He might refuse an inheritance to which he is legally entitled, because his acceptance would possibly cause a bitter family squabble.

b. It is a Christian duty to defend others who are being attacked.

This at first sight would appear to be a perfectly valid piece of reasoning. For example, if Britain maintains armed forces and has a treaty of mutual help with a less powerful country, it would be morally and indeed unchristian to refuse to go to the weaker country's help in time of danger. This argument is forwarded to suggest that the possibility of war is best kept at bay by political aggressors being aware of the strength of other countries' defences.

Against this view is the illustration of a question put to conscientious objectors during the 1914/1918 war. "Would you resist a man who attacked your mother or sister?" The intelligent answer would seem to be, "Of course I would, but I shouldn't deliberately try to kill him, and I don't go about armed and ready to kill potential attackers of my womenfolk!" Many people today seriously doubt whether the building up of armaments is the best way of preventing a third world war and, in consequence, of protecting others.

c. The Christian is bound up with the rest of his community.

There is therefore both the privileges and also the responsibilities of community life. When his community is in grave danger has the follower of Christ any right to retort, "As a Christian, I cannot share in the burdens of my fellow-citizens are undertaking for the survival of our community?" Surely there is something to be said for the Christian (who while penitent for the measure of wrong in every war situation) feels that he must of necessity be with his fellow-countrymen right in the middle of it, suffering as they suffer, fighting as they fight.

5. THE CHRISTIAN COMPROMISE.

The Church through the centuries has endeavoured to meet these two points of view by asserting that the only war in which a Christian can (with a clear conscience) be engaged is a JUST war. i.e. "A just war was a war with a just cause and using just means". The problem which confronted the church was that those who were about to start a war could (with a little ingenuity) present an apparently just cause for their situation. In more recent years the 'just means' has been the setting up and paying attention to certain acceptable recognisable rules i.e. the security, the safety of civilians and the proper care of prisoners etc. (These rules owe much to the Christian tradition!)

Yet having said this, in modern warfare it is so much more difficult to establish any 'codes of conduct'. The nation engaged in war desires victory, not the indiscriminate massacre of civilians, the devastation of large areas, the development of more horrible weapons and the lowered standards of honesty and sexual morality which are part and parcel of modern warfare. However, not wanting these things does not absolve the war-maker from moral responsibility for them!

6. CONCLUSION.

During a time of war the thinking Christian discovers himself to be in a tragic dilemma between two evils. This itself should present a challenge to further thinking and much prayer. The pacifist position for many

(although recognising that some sincere Christians hold this viewpoint) seems to be too simple.

"There is a temptation for us all to shut our eyes to the horrors of a future war, but Christians must use all their understanding and sympathy in seeing what a nuclear war would involve; John Hersey's Hiroshima gives a picture of what atomic war is on a small scale. The invention of nuclear weapons has both cancelled the possibility of using 'just means', and removed the likelihood of any balance of good resulting from a future war. These considerations must make those of us who cannot accept the pacifist position ask ourselves whether the situation in future may not be such that Christians should refuse to take part in a war in which their country uses nuclear weapons". (29)

It is surely now, that Christians can play their part in removing international wrongs, in the breaking down of barriers and in permeating the world with the Christian Gospel and Christian ideals!

1. H.D. Brown. Presidential address to Baptist Union of Ireland in 1914. The Past and Future of Baptists in Ireland.

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3. E. Rodgers. Some account of the life and opinions of a Fifth-Monarchy man p. 27.

4. T.C. Barnard op cit p. 100.

5. Ibid in loc.

6. H.D. Brown Presidential address etc.

7. B.R. White 'The organisation of the Particular Baptists 1644-660' Journal of Ecclesiastical History; vii (1966) p. 220.

8. Ivimey. A History of the English Baptists pp. 240/1.

9. Ibid in loc.

10. T.C. Barnard op. cit. p. 103.

11. Diary of Sir Archibald Johnson of Wariston (vol ii 1650-1654) editor. D.H. Fleming.

12. T.C. Barnard op. cit. p. 104.

13. Ivimey op. cit. p 240.

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20. Ibid

21. Irish Baptist Magazine Nov/Dec 1918

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24. William Lillie. "The Law of Christ". p. 29

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27. Ibid p. 32

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29. Ibid pp. 39/40