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IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

VOLUME FIFTEEN 1982/83

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EDITORIAL

During 1982 members of the Society listened to a series of papers of varying historical interest. Attendances were up to standard and on occasions reflected a wider interest in a particular topic. We are always pleased to welcome non-members on such occasions.

The range of subjects was considerable: John Cennick in Ireland (an inspirational treatment by F.M. Harris); the Eighteenth Century Background in Ireland (an impromptu lecture by Joshua Thompson at the annual meeting when the advertised speaker failed to turn up); 'The Political Situation and Evangelism in Ireland' (a very personal view presented by Brian Judge of Dublin); an appraisal of two pastorates of the late C.S. Donald at Antrim Road Church, Belfast (by Walton Balmer, the church secretary); and an illuminating paper on the Rt. Hon. Robert Graham Glendinning, J.P., D.L. of Belfast (by Robert Fitzpatrick, always a valued contributor).

The society thanks these friends for their work and enthusiasm in preparing and delivering their papers.

Pastor J.R. Grant, Union Secretary, is the contributor of the article on The Baptist Corporations which appears in this issue. It is a brief but informative account of their varied and valuable work for the benefit of the denomination since 1902 and 1924 respectively. The society thanks him.

An interesting programme has been arranged for 1983. New members are always welcome. Current members and joining members pay £2.50 per year, which includes a copy of the Society's Journal, published annually in May.

Pastor Thompson's research at Oxford is going along very well. Th Society's thanks go to the Corporation Directors for their generous help with the History Project, and to the friends who have sent donations for this purpose. We hope others will assist us and encourage Pastor Thompson by contributing to the History Project Fund.

We are pleased that the Historical Society is succeeding in its task of stimulating interest in Baptist history. To know about our past, as Baptists, is to learn about ourselves. To study the experiences of Baptists of earlier generations is to be reminded in a unique way of the constancy of our Lord and His everlasting Gospel.

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE LIFE AND CAREER OF

ROBERT GRAHAM GLENDINNING

1844 - 1928

Few Irish Baptist churches have memorial plaques attached to their walls. Yet it was the existence of a rather splendid one in Great Victoria Street (on the left hand side near the choir seats as one faces the pulpit) that stimulated the attempt to discover something further to its précis of the life and contribution to the denomination of Robert Graham Glendinning.

All that is now offered is a series of glimpses at this remarkable man rather than a balanced historical view of his career. It is always difficult in a journal such as this to avoid writing "favoured son history" and to attempt to escape from one's Irish Baptist predilections and bias. In Glendinning's case the nature of the available source material makes it an impossibility. No personal papers are obtainable and Church Minutes and Union Records are essentially de-personalised. Thus it is difficult to achieve a balance among the various aspects of his career but perhaps it does furnish us with a case-study of the difficulties of writing the history of Irish Baptists.

Robert Graham Glendinning was born in 1844 in Brackagh, Co. Tyrone; the youngest child in a family of four boys and four girls. The family claimed Scottish descent, were Presbyterians (1) and owned a farm of 85 acres, that is the whole townland of Brackagh. Robert may well have attended school at Claggan and the family was connected with Claggan Presbyterian Church.

A cousin had emigrated to New York in 1842 and her family was persuaded to sell up and follow her. This connection encouraged the Glendinnings to go to America in 1855 when Robert was eleven years old. His stay in the United states was to have a deep influence upon him. He often used to tell how he joined the Union Army in the Civil War and how as a young soldier of 18 he was inspected by Abraham Lincoln while on guard duty at a prisoner of war camp. More relevant to this paper was his conversion and subsequent joining of a Baptist Church during this period. As explained by a great-niece, Mrs. Kathleen Shrosbee,

> "during his sojourn in America he became a confirmed strict Baptist and adhered to this sect throughout the rest of his life." (2)

Certainly when Glendinning joined Great Victoria Street Baptist Church in 1885 he did so on transfer from the Baptist Church, Washington Avenue, Brooklyn. In 1874 he had married Elizabeth Harden, (3) probably in the United States of America and had three children, Adele, Acheson Harden and Robert Graham. His wife died in 1882, reputedly through catching a chill after washing her hair. His eldest sister, Mary Ann, wife of an American, looked after the children but two of them caught diphtheria and in seeking a complete cure through a sea voyage, Glendinning brought Acheson with him on a return trip to Ireland; and after lodging in Bangor for a while

decided to return to America for the other children.

Thus by 1883 or 1884 Glendinning had returned to Ulster. With his brother Alexander and George McLeish, a Magherafelt man who had emigrated to the U.S.A., he established the linen manufacturing firm of Glendinning, McLeish and Company. The Belfast premises were at first in Adelaide Street and later in Murray Street beside the buildings of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution. McLeish ran a branch in New York and a Paris office was later established. The business flourished and there is no doubt that Glendinning was a prosperous man for the rest of his life; holding also directorships in the Milfort, Lambeg, and County Down weaving companies. Although his business career was in many ways typical of the rapid economic growth which characterised Belfast in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, his religious and later political affiliations were atypical.

On his return from the U.S.A. he attended Great Victoria Street Baptist Church, then pastored by William Usher. From the Church Minutes and the autobiographical memoirs of Paul Henry, the famous impressionist painter whose father had been minister prior to Usher, one gets the impression of Great Victoria Street as a Church composed of largely working-class members who found it difficult to make revenue meet expenditure. (4) Glendinning's commitment to the Church was to greatly alleviate this problem but never solve it. The extent of his financial support was to be significant but never as total as Mrs. Shrosbee suggests

> "..... Great Victoria Street, Belfast, which he was instrumental in building and for whose minister's stipend he was chiefly responsible". (5)

Even before his transfer of membership from New York to Great Victoria Street it appears that Glendinning was a major contributor to the cost of the new Sunday School building, the estimate for which was £350-£400. He was invited to lay one of two "memorial stones" in December 1884, even though he was not well enough known for the church secretary to record his name or initials properly.

The architect for the new "school-house" was William Hastings Junior. The family had been connected with Great Victoria Street since 1847 and Mary Hastings, William's sister, had become a member in 1876. She was an excellent linguist and a prominent member of "le cercle français" at Queen's College. It was to this educated woman that Robert Graham Glendinning was attracted in the period after 1884. They were married in 1886 and took up residence in Elmwood Avenue in the University area. There were to be four children from this second marriage and with three children from the first marriage the Glendinning family was to make a very significant contribution to the life of the Great Victoria Street congregation for the next forty-five years. As Mrs. Shrosbee commented

> "although he did not insist on their undergoing the total immersion which characterises the creed, he exercised enough influence on his children and grandchildren to make them attend faithfully the Sunday Services in Great Victoria Street, Belfast." (6)

In fact his son Acheson Harden was later to become a Deacon of the Church. To read the Church Minutes for the period 1884-1928 in search of insights into the contribution made by Glendinning is a

frustrating experience. His involvement was widespread but recorded references lack detail. The over-riding impression gained is of a man who was deeply committed to the maintenance of a Baptist witness in central Belfast. At the same time he wished to encourage the members of Great Victoria Street to be more aware of their responsibilities so that the total burden did not fall on himself and a few of the more prosperous members.

Evidence of how attempts were made to solve the Church's financial problems abounds, and often reflects contemporary Victorian attitudes, which if advocated one hundred years later would provoke considerable debate. Thus on Wednesday, 4th November 1885 there was a social meeting

> "to unite in thanking the Great King and Head of the Church for having crowned with such great success the efforts made in connection with the bazaar to clear off the debt which for some time had been burdening the Church ... A very pleasing incident of the evening was the presentation to the pastor made by Mr. Glendinning ... of a case of ferns". (7)

Glendinning by 1886 was involved as "a visitor", that is interviewing prospective candidates for baptism and membership and by 1888 was appointed a delegate to "the forthcoming meeting of the Irish Baptist Association in Coleraine". It is not known if he took his share of the "thirty shillings ... taken out of Church funds for usual travelling expenses for attending annual meetings". (8)

The growing respect in which he was held is indicated by the offer of the Secretaryship of the Church in October 1888; a post which he declined as he was also to decline the Treasurership in 1891. One can only speculate that his refusal to hold any administrative post, other than as Deacon, was the result of his business commitments and a general feeling that the Church should not become too dependent on him.

The pattern of support he offered to the Church is seen in the matter of providing a new manse in 1889.

> "a special meeting of members only was held ... to consider the generous offer of £400 towards the erection of a minister's residence for Great Victoria Street Baptist Church by a friend, who does not wish his name mentioned at present, provided the Church raise, not borrow, an additional £600 ... the time allowed to collect the money being till 1st April, 1891". (9)

I have no doubt that Glendinning was the anonymous donor (he had already substantially provided for the new school room in 1884) and that the business-like approach to the matter was entirely of his making. Yet he also offered a practical example ... "Brother Glendinning proposed to give a subscription on his own behalf of £100". (10)

By 1889 he had become a deacon of the church when the diaconate was increased to 9 and the term of office extended from 3 years to life.

The success in raising £1000 for the Manse Fund by April, 1891 was to result in the purchase of 40 Botanic Avenue, and Glendinning was appointed one of five trustees. In fact he left a legacy of investment in property from which the church received a steady income for the next half century. However from time to time he had to rescue the church from financial problems, and encouraged the setting up of a special emergency fund for this purpose.

His contribution to church life was always more than a purely monetary one. In February 1892 at

> "the usual quarterly members' tea meeting ... addresses were

delivered by the pastor (and) deacon Glendinning ... having special reference to the death of Mr. Spurgeon. The meeting was solemn and impressive throughout." (11)

Within two years of becoming a Trustee of the actual church building, Glendinning was involved in completing extensive renovations by June 1894.

By this stage Glendinning had become a respected figure in Irish Baptist Association circles. He had been a delegate to their meetings from 1888 and obviously made an immediate impact for he was elected President of the Associaton in 1890. In the 1890's he showed a major concern for evangelization in the North of Ireland and with H.H. Graham, secretary of the Regent Street Church, and Robert McIntosh he was granted £60 by the Irish Baptist Home Mission "towards the support of an evangelist under their control ..." (12)

This concern was brought before the membership of Great Victoria Street and in 1895

"on the motion of Brother Glendinning a committee ... was appointed to consider ... a plan for ... carrying on the work at the mission stations of the church". (13)

These were stated to be at Milltown, Conlig and Urney Street. Much of the evangelistic work appears to have been financially underwritten by Glendinning. He acted anonymously in this respect as in his general support of the work in Great Victoria Street and throughout the denomination. H.H. Graham often acted as "the happy medium of many of his benefactions to the different worthy causes he had at heart". (14) This was the method used in 1891 in giving the £400 to the Manse Fund where Graham actually handed over the cheque at the public meeting. The result of such giving was that

"in him the grace of giving was exemplified to a degree that has made every church of our Faith and order in this land his debtor." (15)

However remarkable were his personal circumstances, his business acumen and his great contribution to the work of the Irish Baptist denomination in general and the Great Victoria Street Church in particular; the most noteworthy feature of his career to an Irish Baptist historian is his involvement in politics between 1906-1910. He was "the only native Baptist representative ... (Ireland) has ever returned to parliament". (16) Baptists were generally wary of open political commitment. Irish Baptists were particularly aware of the inherent dangers of a situation which had since 1886 been complicated by the Home Rule issue, - an issue which had proved to be somewhat divisive in the Regent Street Church and which had probably turned many Irish Baptist voters away from earlier Gladstonian Liberal affiliations.

In the absence of personal papers it is difficult to assess why Glendinning entered the political arena in 1906, and to discover his political philosophy. Although labelled as a 'Liberal' it is more accurate to describe him as a 'Liberal-Unionist' or 'Russellite'. The hostile 'Northern Whig' explained Glendinning's position as

"A Liberal of the old school ... beguiled by the sophistries of the late Sir Thomas Russell ... The declared policy of the Russellite movement was to obtain a full Liberal land reform programme under a Unionist government by joining forces for that purpose (and that purpose only) with the Nationalist party". (17)

Although a manufacturer himself Glendinning's background was a farming one and he retained a great sympathy with the tenant-farmers, believing that Wyndham's Land Purchase Scheme of 1903 imposed too great a financial strain upon those who wished to buy out their land. He stated that "no land in Ulster was worth 30 years' purchase".

There were however factors other than the land question which may have influenced his entry into politics. Between 1895 and 1905 the presence of a Conservative and Unionist government at Westminister meant there was no prospect of 'Home Rule' for Ireland. The absence of an external threat led to increasing division between conservatives and liberal unionists, particularly on the land question but also on the grounds that "official Unionist and Orange Leaders disregarded working-class interests and were too ready to yield to catholic and nationalist pressure". (18)

On this platform T.H. Sloan, a shipyard worker, backed by the Belfast Protestant Association, had won the South Belfast seat in the by-election of 1902 and sat until 1910 as an independent unionist. His election split the Orange Order as the Belfast Grand Lodge was dominated by the leaders of the Belfast Conservative Association, whose candidate, Dunbar-Buller, had been defeated by Sloan. The subsequent forming of the independent Orange Order in 1903 and its rapid domination by Robert Lindsay Crawford prepared the way for Glendinning's successful entry to politics. The new order had grown rapidly with 55 lodges active within a year and at a

> "more important demonstration (12th July, 1904), far bigger than that of the old order, ... held at Ballymoney ... Crawford ... made a lengthy speech attacking William Moore, the unionist member of parliament in North Antrim, for his attitude to the Land Purchase Act of 1903. He defended the order's association with Russellites and radicals in the opposition to bills on education, alcoholic licences and Chinese labour in South Africa. Crawford's speech made a marked impression on the constituency and by strengthening the independent unionist opposition, contributed to Moore's defeat in the general election in 1906". (19)

That Glendinning was to have the support of the independent Orange Order and the Belfast Protestant association for his candidature in the general election is evident from the assistance which Sloan gave him as a speaker in the campaign and the fact that he was accompanied by Rev. D.D. Boyle, Presbyterian minister of St.James' Church, Ballymoney and Grand Chaplain of the new order, at the counting of the votes. As an opponent of the conservative unionists he was also to have influential support from the well-known liberal, Rev. J.B. Armour of Ballymoney, of whom it was said,

> "If he was not in the forefront of the battle, lest his outspoken declarations of the past should tell against Mr. Glendinning and identify him with Home Rule and Rome, he was much in the background, and the stand he had made contributed materially to making victory possible". (20)

Glendinning therefore entered the 1906 general election as the candidate of the 'North Antrim Reform Association', standing as a Liberal Unionist. His major interest was land reform but his associations with the independent Orange Order and T.H. Sloan as well as his support from Armour broadened his appeal to those who wished to end clerical influences in education and see some devolution of powers from Westminster to Ireland especially in financial matters. At no time however could the label of 'Home Ruler' be applied to him.

To the surprise of many Glendinning defeated the sitting member, William Moore (21), by 3,767 votes to 2,969.

"the visionary land programme, and the personal popularity of the independent candidate, combined with the assumption that 'Home Rule was dead', had been sufficient to sway the electors". (22)

After the election victory Glendinning with the other 'Russellite' candidates formed the Ulster Liberal Association. Although committed to the Union they worked closely with the Westminster Liberals in particular with Augustine Birrell, the Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1907. In 1909 they were responsible for bringing Lloyd George to Belfast when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Glendinning's political views probably account for the only direct reference to contemporary political events to be found in the Great Victoria Street Church records between 1883 and 1928 for in 1909 the church,

"urges the government to make the Licencing clauses of the Finance Bill ... applicable to Ireland". (23)

His political record in the Commons has as yet still to be traced through the pages of Hansard. In general he would appear to have been disappointed by the lack of progress made by the Liberals in Irish affairs and to have no desire to be associated with the drift within Liberalism and by T.W. Russell, towards 'Home Rule'. Thus by 1910, according to the 'Northern Whig',

"Mr. Glendinning himself was disillusioned, he saw that he had been misled and by the time the general election of May, 1910, came round, he had had enough of politics". (24)

His political services were recognised by Asquith's Liberal government in 1911, when he was appointed to the Privy Council in Ireland. (25)

In 1914 he was made Deputy Lieutenant of the County and City of Belfast by Lord Pirrie, a political ally of the 1906-1910 period. These honours were an external reflection of the esteem he was held in within his own denomination on this appointment as Privy Councillor,

"... That Christian men should be called to these high offices of State, is as it should be; and we are much gratified that this honour should have come to one who has been so long connected with our church, and who has always taken such a deep and generous interest in its welfare and work". (26)

Throughout the period of his political involvement his interest in the affairs of the local church had been constant. He acted as chairman of meetings of the church during vacancies in the pastorate or at meetings of missionary interest;

"Mr. Glendinning to preside at the meeting to be addressed by Mr. Rough in Chinese costume". (27)

His practical support continued in numerous ways, for example he contributed "ten shillings to make up the loss after the C.E. collection box ... had been rifled during Christmas week." (28)

Although removed from active politics after 1910 he continued to hold strong political views especially on the question of partition. These were expressed in correspondence with Armour in 1923. Unfortunately only Armour's reply is extant. Having thanked Glendinning for a subscription of ten guineas Armour continued

" ... your view of the state of matters in Ireland are mine. The man largely responsible ... is Carson. He came to break all laws and he arranged for bringing in arms to Larne, not for shooting crows but for shooting the King's soldiers unless they took his side. The Sein Feiners took a leaf out of his book with a result which is apparent on every hand

..." (29)

It can only be assumed that the criticism of Carson was shared by Glendinning. It was probably an unpopular view in Ulster in 1923 but obviously in the past Armour and Glendinning had suffered for similar view.

" ... you and I are able now to appear publicly without being pelted with rotten eggs". (30)

In 1923 Glendinning was 79 years old and thus Armour comments - "your say what appears very strange to me that you are nearing my age ... Be your age what it may be, you have gained the respect of all who are not politically insane." (31)

Apart from his political commitments it is worth commenting that Glendinning had other interests largely untypical of Irish Baptists of his time. He might be called a 'clubman' in that he was a member of the National Liberal Club, London; and of the Reform Club, Belfast. In addition he listed motoring and golf as his recreations in "Who's Who", and

"a devoted adherent of Freemasonry he was a P.M. (Past Master) of Excelsiro Lodge, 109 and a generous supporter of the various Masonic charities". (32)

Throughout the 1920's he was in indifferent health but "despite his great age was able to be present at the ceremony connected with the laying of the foundation stone of the new Parliament Buildings at Stormont". (33)

His death in June 1928 produced the following tribute from the erstwhile hostile 'Northern Whig',

"No man in the linen industry earned a finer reputation in integrity and high commercial ideals, and no man in the whole business world was more popular personally. His was indeed a kindly and gentle nature. With hosts of personal friends of every class, it is doubtful if he had (at any rate in later life) a single personal enemy. Always ready to help a colleague in need, he was equally ready and generous in his benefactions to the sick and the poor, although he never made a parade of his philanthropy". (34)

As his fellow Baptists put it

"though he was never one who paraded his piety, yet, in his company one instinctively felt that ... (he) belonged to that select number who practice the presence of God". (35)

"granted a long and distinguished life, honoured by his King, and loved and respected by a wide circle of friends, his equal shall not be met with in this generation". (36)

Unusual as it has been for Irish Baptists to erect memorials to their dead, surely this man deserved the tribute to him which still dully gleams from the wall of the Church in Great Victoria Street.

Robert Fitzpatrick

****

1. His older brother Alexander was an elder in Mountpottinger Presbyterian Church, Belfast.
2. "Glendinning Memoirs" by Kathleen Shrosbee held by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.
3. Her family home was Richmond House Lodge on the Malone Road, Belfast. Now the premises of Richmond Lodge School.
4. In connection with the church's financial problems in May 1890 it was recorded that of a total membership of 172, "40 ... on account of pecuniary circumstances, were not able to contribute anything". In fact Usher agreed to a cut in salary from £200 to £160 per annum.
5. Shrosbee memoir.
6. Shrosbee Memoir.
7. Great Victoria Street Baptist Church Minutes, 4th November, 1885. Financial problems were a constant embarrassment. In 1888 'the treasurer intimated he would resign, the reason ... being that he could not continue to make advances to the church funds'.
8. Church Minutes, 3rd June, 1888.
9. Church Minutes, 10th April, 1889.
10. As for 9 above.
11. Church Minutes, 7th February, 1892.
12. Church Minutes, 1st May, 1895.
13. Church Minutes, 7th July, 1895.
14. H.H. Graham in 'The Irish Baptist Magazine', July 1928.
15. C.S. Donald in "The Irish Baptist Magazine', July 1928.
16. D.W. Bebbington, "Baptist Members of Parliament, 1847-1914", in 'The Baptist Quarterly', April 1981, p.59.
17. 'The Northern Whig', June 9, 1928.
18. J.W. Boyle 'The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order, 1901-1910', in Irish Historical Studies, September 1962, p.117.
19. As for 18 above, p.128.
20. W.S. Armour, 'Armour of Ballymoney', published 1934, p.181.
21. Later Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland.
22. 'The Northern Whig', June 9th, 1928.
23. Church Minutes 1909.
24. As for 22 above.
25. On the occasion of George V's Coronation.
26. Church Minutes, 28th June, 1911.
27. Church Minutes, 1911.
28. Church Minutes, 1911.
29. Letter from R.B. Armour to R.G. Glendinning, 6th February, 1923.
30. As for 29 above.
31. As for 29 above.
32. 'Belfast Newsletter", 9th June, 1928.
33. As for 32 above.
34. 'The Northern Whig', 9th June, 1928k.
35. As for 15 above.
36. As for 14 above.

THERE WAS A MAN SENT FROM GOD WHOSE NAME WAS

CHARLES DONALD

1855 - 1940

Belfast in the year 1800 had a population of roughly 20,000 people. The southern boundary was where the City Hall now stands and its northern limits in the vicinity of the present Co-operative Society Store at Frederick Street. To the west beyond the Upper Library Street/Millfield line and Divis Street there were fields and open country and the River Lagan was nature's boundary to the east. By 1820 Belfast had spread slightly beyond its early limits, mainly along the two roads to Antrim. On one of these, via Shankhill, shops and small businesses had reached Peter's Hill and on the other via Millfield, Carrick Hill (now Upper Library Street) and Carrickfergus Street (now North Queen Street) there were new rows of small housing and the town's military barracks. By 1841 the population was 75,000. The period 1860 to 1870 was the key decade in Belfast's industrial growth. The population rose by more than 40 per cent from 121,602 to 174,412, the largest increase since 1800 and in 1901 reached 349,000.

There was a continuous influx of people from the countryside as men and women came in the 1850's and '60's from the shattered post-famine countryside to work in the rapidly expanding textile factories, engineering works and shipyards. Nineteenth century Belfast offered more opportunities for women's work than many British cities, especially from mid-century with the rapid expansion of the linen industry. As a result there were substantially more women in Belfast than men. In 1841 there were 38,000 females and 32,000 males; in 1901 the ratio was 188,000 to 162,000. Belfast grew more rapidly than any other city in the British Isles during this period, it was the last of the Industrial Revolution cities, its prosperity resting principally on the textile, engineering and shipbuilding trades which by 1901 employed almost one third of the work force.

Against this background in 1866 the Great Victoria Street Church building was opened and the Victoria Hall in Victoria Street which had been used for worship by the congregation during the previous five years was retained for the purpose of worship and a second Baptist Church in the town was formed. Ground was obtained at the junction of Regent Street and Trinity Street and a new building erected there with opening services held on 1 June 1873.

In 1891 the minister of the Church, Rev. Edward T. Mateer, left to go to London and a call was extended to Rev. Charles Donald.

Charles Smith Donald had been born in Glasgow in 1855 and was educated at Glasgow University where he took a five years Arts Course followed by three years in the classes of the Baptist Union of Scotland under Rev. Dr. Coats of Govan, Rev. Dr. Culross of Glasgow and Rev. Dr. Flett of Paisley. Mr. Donald ministered at Crosshill, Glasgow for nine year previous to 1891 and had married Agnes Cassils, daughter of Mr and Mrs Hugh McInnes on 26th December, 1882.

A welcome meeting for the new Pastor was held on Thursday evening 5th November, 1891. The Belfast Newsletter recorded that 350 had been present for tea. The chair had been taken by the senior deacon - Mr. Thomas McIvor who said that guided as he realised the

Church had been, by its one Great Head, they had chosen the right man .... a man who, from all he could learn was fully competent to lead and direct the Church, and who had laboured zealously for nine years in the Crosshill district of Glasgow. Dr. Usher, Great Victoria Street, brought what has been described as a practical address based upon the words in Acts 23, 11 'Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome'. When it came Mr. Donald's turn to respond he indicated the lines upon which he intended carrying on the work of the Lord in Belfast. He concluded by urging the members to support him by their sympathy and prayers, and so unitedly to labour for the extension of Christ's Kingdom and the glory of His name in this district of our great city.

The Irish Baptist magazine for December 1891 which carried this report also commented "We are pleased to learn that the new pastor (of Regent Street) has made a 'right good start'. From all accounts he seems to be a man of the right stamp, determined faithfully to preach a full Gospel. The friends have loyally and lovingly gathered round him, and believing that God has sent him among them, they are asking and expecting blessed results .... Very heartily do we commend Brother Donald to our goodly fellowship".

Pastor Donald's ministry was most successful and God's blessing rested in abundance upon the pastor and people. The increase in the Church under Pastor Donald's ministry was phenomenal. In a period of two and half years almost two hundred had been added by baptism to the Church. The congregation had been composed almost exclusively of the labouring and artisan classes at the time the building was erected, but the increase in numbers and prosperity compelled the Church to face the necessity of erecting a new building since enlargement of the Regent Street premises was not possible. The building was sold in December 1895 and the congregation met in Clifton Street Orange Hall until the new premises were completed. During this period the attendances were maintained.

Some idea of the speed of work in former days can be gauged from the fact that construction of the new buildings at Antrimville commenced in November 1896 and the schoolroom which was completed first was available for services on Sunday 16th May, 1897. Throughout the period of the erection of the Church building Pastor Donald was on the site every morning before the workmen arrived and there he got down on his knees to pray that the result of that building might be the birthplace of many souls to the glory of God and the upbuilding of God's people in days of declension. Making premises available at the earliest moment for holding services was to facilitate the congregation and after a special speaker had conducted the morning service, Pastor Donald conducted the evening service and preached what has been described as an appropriate discourse from Exodus 15,13 'Thou in thy mercy has led forth the people which thou hadst redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation'.

The erection of the Chapel was completed soon after and the opening services were held on Sunday, 10th October, 1897 when the preacher was Pastor C. Spurgeon, Greenwich, son of C.H. Spurgeon. In the morning the building was completely filled and an overflow meeting was held in the Church hall. Mr. Spurgeon, basing his remarks on Acts 2, 42 'And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers' said he looked upon the occasion of the opening of the Church for the worship of God as a very important one. He went on to say that it would have been utterly impossible for him to be present on that occasion to open such a house if there had not been a band of men and women with the gift of

continuance and the spirit of stedfastness. Six months after the opening of the new building the Church roll stood at 362 members. The Sunday School in 1897 was the largest in the denomination with 25 teachers and 211 scholars. In addition there were 13 teachers and 180 scholars at Fairfax Street.

On 24th April, 1907 after fifteen and a half years successful ministry Pastor Donald resigned, having accepted the invitation of the Committee of the Baptist Union of Scotland to the Church at Rutherglen, Glasgow.

The report in The Irish Baptist Magazine for July 1907 stated that Pastor Donald 'received a most hearty send off, accompanied by a purse of sovereigns, from the members of the Church and congregation, who parted from him with deep regret, and he carries with him their heartiest good wishes for his future success'.

Two short pastorates followed and in 1914 Pastor Donald was accorded a very hearty and unanimous call back to Antrim Road which he accepted and commenced his ministry on 20th September, 1914. At a social meeting on 21st September Pastor J.D. Gilmore, Dublin congratulated the Church on having secured the services of such a devout man of God. The letter of commendation from the Baptist Union of Scotland at the time bears tribute to the quality of his service at Rutherglen. Part of the letter reads as follows - 'When he (Pastor Donald) entered on the pastorate of the Rutherglen Church he found it burdened with debt and weakened by divisions, but largely by his patience, fortitude, and discretion during the past seven years the situation has been transformed so that the Church now numbers 175 members and the property is nearly free from debt. We have found Mr. Donald brotherly and helpful, ready to take his part in Association and Union work, and the experience he has gained will no doubt be freely put at the disposal of his brethren'.

A few months after his return to Antrim Road a contributor to The Irish Baptist Magazine in February 1915 writing under the nom de plume of 'Ben Madigan' - not inappropriate in relation to Antrim Road - had this to say "I had the privilege of worshipping in the Antrim Road Church on a recent Sabbath and was glad to see Pastor Donald in his old place. It is more than a score of years since I first heard my dear friend preach in the old chapel in Regent Street. The intervening years have brought many changes. New hands grasped mine in the vestibule, new voices led the praise, new faces lined the pews. The living links that bind the present to the past were few and far between. Amid the changes one thing remains unchanged - the message from the pulpit. Pastor Donald preaches today in the beautiful sanctuary on the Antrim Road the same old gospel of redeeming love that charmed and comforted the men and women of a quarter of a century ago and imparts cheer and solace to the men and women of today. Time has dealt kindly with the Pastor. There is the suggestion of a snowflake on brow and beard, but there is all the mental and physical alertness of the old days. The years have not impaired but matured his preaching powers. There is an added tenderness in tone, and an added intensity in appeal as of a man to whom the years have brought fuller revelations of the pathos and tragedy of human life, of the inestimable value of the human soul, and of the love of God".

Pastor Donald continued to minister with great acceptance to the needs of the congregation. The recollections of a few of those who attended the Church during these years will be referred to later. A milestone in the life of the Church and the ministry of Pastor Donald

was marked at the Church anniversary services on 6 November 1932. Pastor Donald had completed fifty years in the ministry, thirty four of those had been spent at Antrim Road. The report of the occasion noted that Mr. Donald had received numerous congratulations. The special preacher was Rev. F.John Scroggie, well known to the religious life of Ulster and an outstanding personality at Portstewart convention gatherings. Mr. Scroggie took as his text at the morning service when the Church was crowded to its utmost capacity, Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 2, 'And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no'.

Almost twelve months later, in September 1933 at the age of 78 years Pastor Donald preached his farewell sermon to a large and deeply interested congregation. He took as his text Acts 20, 32 'Now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified'. Pastor Donald said that Dr. Maclaren commenting on the passage stated that partings permitted and demanded the laying bare of the depths of the heart. That was a true word and a deep one and it fittingly described the scene which lay around his text. Pastor Donald continued 'as Dr. Maclaren stated, it was an occasion that had not only permitted, but demanded, the use of heartfelt speech. It had been said that where tides meet there was only broken water, and no thoughtful reader of the New Testament story could fail to see the brokenness was there. One could easily imagine with what depth of emotion both St. Paul and those who had heard him had recalled the words of David when he said 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul'. There were three of these comforts mentioned in this story, namely, God, His word and prayer. It was of these he would speak to them that morning in the light of the circumstances of the story and of their own'.

Pastor Donald having dealt with the text in these relationships, went on to address his words of farewell to the congregation. He said it had been his privilege to be the minister of the Church for the long period of thirty five years. During that time he had seen many changes in that Church, and in the city of Belfast. Of those who had been in that Church when he came there remained few. Most of them had passed to the higher service of the Church above. As for the city the changes had been many, mostly in the way of progress and improvement. He looked back with grateful heart for the many kindnesses he had received from the members of that Church and congregation, and for the love and loyalty of those who had been closely associated with him in the work there. He would fail in his duty if he did not also acknowledge his indebtedness to his better half for much valued help in carrying on the work of the Church.

The time had now come, however, when the responsibilities of an important Church like that should rest on younger shoulders. Hence the services of that day. He would ever remember them in prayer, and count it a privilege to do so. He sincerely trusted that whoever was appointed to the oversight of the Church there every one of them would rally round and give him the unswerving loyalty which every Pastor had the right to expect and receive. It was his fervent wish that for that Church the best was yet to be. Might it always stand in that city and community as a true and faithful witness for God, and the word of His grace. On Tuesday evening, 12 September (1933) a meeting was held in the Church hall to make tangible recognition of the retirement of Pastor and Mrs. Donald. A very large number of members and friends assembled to pay a parting tribute. Mr. F.W. Carson who

chaired the meeting expressed the appreciation of the members for the long and faithful services rendered by the Pastor. A report of the meeting spoke of the happy and felicitious speeches by Pastors Willoughby, Shields, Fraser and Burrows which contributed to the enjoyment. Gifts were presented to both Pastor and Mrs. Donald. In his reply Pastor Donald expressed thankfulness for the generosity of the people, and to God for His unceasing blessing during the time in which they had been associated with the Church. The report concludes with the statement that the meeting had been one of the most enjoyable in the history of the Church.

A newspaper article the day before Pastor Donald concluded his ministry referred to the fact that he was 'respected and beloved, not only by his own Church, but by the other Protestant Churches in the city of Belfast'. The article concluded 'It has given much satisfaction to his congregation and wide circle of friends to learn that Mr. and Mrs. Donald have decided to live in Belfast and it is hoped that for many years they may be spared to enjoy their well earned leisure'.

A former member of the Church who was received into membership in 1921 remembers Pastor Donald in those days as a small man with white hair and a neat white beard. He seems to have always been very well dressed - dapper is the word that has been used to describe his appearance. Pastor Donald always wore a frock coat with white shirt and white tie. On Sundays and when attending funerals he wore a top hat.

Pastor Donald took a serious view of the Church building as being consecrated for the worship of God. He believed the Church building was the House of God at all times. He was known to reprimand anyone he found running in the Church or going across the platform or taking a short cut in front of the Communion table.

He was also concerned for the spiritual growth of his congregation particularly the young people. He did not agree with young people 'running' to special meetings down town every night when they were being held. He was known to point out that they were receiving 'pre digested' food - what someone else had studied and was handing out. He told his own Church young people 'every Christian should study and feed on God's word'.

In 1923 a number of young men who attended the Church were converted and Pastor Donald arranged for a weekly cottage meeting to be held in the home of a member of the congregation off York Road. He felt the opportunity of leading this work would be helpful to these young men in their Christian witness. One of these young men was Stewart Neill. Mr. Neill recalls that Pastor Donald told him to call at the Manse after the first meeting and tell him how they had managed. Mr. Neill says he will always remember that visit to the Manse. After telling about all the people who had been packed into the kitchen with others sitting on the stairs, Pastor Donald asked 'What did you talk about?' Mr. Neil replied 'The blood, Pastor!' He replied 'Did you say precious blood for only the precious blood of God's son could save sinners'. The inaugural meeting of the Christian Endeavour Society took place in August 1922. Pastor Donald had some advice to offer to those who were taking on the leadership. He said "even if there are only two or three present at the appointed time, open the meeting; Start a hymn or bow in prayer. Do not wait for latecomers". He was a stickler for promptness!

Several instances of his concern for anyone in trouble or in

need of pastoral ministration give an insight into another aspect of his pastoral work. Dr. Hugh Skillen was a general practitioner in the district, on occasions if he was attending a patient whom he did not think had too long to live he would ask if their minister had visited recently and especially in the Docks area many had no Church connection. Dr. Skillen would call on a local minister but sometimes they were not interested. However, as soon as Dr. Skillen would call to tell Pastor Donald, he would immediately put on his hat and coat and with his Bible in his hand accompany the doctor in the car without a question.

On another occasion a very faithful adherent of the Church called at the Manse at 10.30 p.m. one night, a relative was seriously ill in Purdysburn Hospital. Again Pastor Donald set out with the adherent and walked to Purdysburn Hospital where the dying man was led to Christ and then they walked all the way back again, getting home around 5.00 a.m.

One recollection of Pastor Donald which has stuck in the minds of those who remember him well concerns a particular practice. A former member recalled that more than once Pastor Donald scared the wits out of the Church caretaker who would have been at the Church at 5.30 a.m. each Sunday morning to stoke up the boiler for the morning service and happened to see Pastor Donald rising from a pew where he had been praying for those who sat in that pew and were going through a difficult experience or as another former member has described it 'he knelt and prayed in the pew where the members sat who were in sorrow or trouble of any kind'. Mr. Stewart Neill tells that Pastor Donald himself said 'Maybe you think I'm foolish but I feel I have the ear of God all to myself'.

Prayer and fasting seem to have gone hand in hand with sermon preparation. He ate very little each Saturday spending his whole day in preparation for the Sunday Services. Then on Sunday mornings he would only have a glass of water but he did not have a meal until after the evening service. Pastor Donald explained it this way 'I always want to be at my best when ministering the Word of God and I have proved my mind is most alert when I am hungry'.

Another person with vivid memories of Pastor Donald is Rev. J.C. Wright, who for many years has been associated with the Unevangelised Fields Mission. Mr. Wright as a missionary had attempted in 1934 to reach the untamed Kayapo Indians of the Amazon and it was his brother Fred who was one of the three Freds all killed by this same tribe in 1935.

Mr. Wright recalls that the family, although Presbyterian, attended the Antrim Road Sunday School and Day School and their home on the Cavehill Road was regularly visited by Pastor Donald. Those visits made a tremendous impression on Mr. Wright. He states that even as a boy he regarded Pastor Donald as a wonderful man of God, while looking back now he can also see him as being a true shepherd. None of the Wright family was a professing Christian. He has an abiding recollection of every member of the family, eleven children together with his father and mother all on their knees as Pastor Donald prayed. He never left the home without reading the Scriptures and praying. Mr. Wright's elder brother, was the first Captain of the 26th Belfast Company of the Boys Brigade which was founded in 1919 with the support of Pastor Donald. I believe we have here the perfect example of the caring pastor, of the impression made by the visits to the home and the results which followed in due time faithful witness.

The children in the congregation were not overlooked by Pastor Donald. The recollections of one lady who grew up in the Church are most interesting, she said 'he did not preach at us children - he taught us as well'. She had what she described as 'only the ordinary elementary school education' and finds it a source of amusement when she is asked in this context 'How then do you know so much Latin, Greek and Shakespeare?' Her reply is 'I learnt it in Church!' She explains - Pastor Donald would stop in the middle of his talk to explain - Spiro - I breathe, That's why Churches have spires. A breathing or the ascending of prayer to Heaven. Among the Shakespearian quotes which she remembers are 'who steals my purse steals trash .... but he who filches from me my good name .... Othello. 'To thine own self be true and it must follow as .... thou cans't not then be false to any man'.

One story which Pastor Donald told that is still remembered dealt with the creation story. When God had finished creating he thought his mountains very bare. The oak refused His request to cover them 'I need lots of soil for my roots'. The rose refused 'Too windy and would blow my petals off'. The honeysuckle could not oblige 'I need something to curl my tendrils round'. He asked the heather. 'Well I don't have bright colour and my perfume is faint but I'll do my best' and so we have the purple headed mountains. The application was that children too can spread beauty and happiness when often important people fail to do so.

Another children's address was based on the 'twelve sweet peas' of the 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my Shepherd - The Pastor
I shall not want - Provision.... You can complete the remainder for yourself.

My correspondent concludes "You will appreciate by now that there was something rather special about the old man (he talks over the children's heads, said the deacon) who could hold the attention of children like me, my brothers and sisters, and instil teaching into us that has lasted our lifetimes".

Another former member of the Church recalls that one of Pastor Donald's favourite children's addresses was based on the story of the three Hebrew young men in the fiery furnace. Pastor Donald's points were -

They would not bow
They would not budge
They would not burn.

So much for the recollections of some of those who knew Pastor Donald intimately. How can one assess his own position on the Scriptures. Two articles which he wrote will serve by way of illustration.

The October 1915 issue of the Irish Baptist Magazine contained notes by Pastor Donald of an address to Sunday School Teachers and Workers - He wrote 'I feel sure that those who made this suggestion (that he should speak to Sunday School Teachers and Workers) did not mean to imply that the Sunday School Teacher was not a worker - we all know that he is, and a very important one, too. I rather think that the idea at the back of their minds was the Sunday School work stands in a class by itself, and demands special treatment. With such a view I entirely agree, and this gives me my starting point - The greatness of the work. It certainly is great, perhaps the greatest that the Christian Church can touch, for, if we gain the young for Christ, then the problem of the Church's future is solved .... therefore .... take your work seriously, by which I mean as something you have received from the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself ....

If we regard our work as a trust from Christ - we will prepare for it thoroughly - gather your manna daily, unlike the Old Testament sort, this will keep; saturate your mind with the lesson. As Dr. Adam Clarke used to say, 'Study yourself to death, then pray yourself alive again' - It is not likely that a teacher who has spent much time and labour in the preparation of his lesson is going to throw all that away by not giving himself the pleasure of teaching it. On the other hand, it is to be feared that the teacher who neglects this preparation will find himself indifferent whether he attends his class or not.

As to the question of - method in teaching, I should say there is no fixed rule. It is a case of 'every man in his own order!' - As an illustration of how not to do it ..... a teacher was endeavouring to explain to his class of boys the relation between the Old and New Testaments. He proceeded thus 'The New Testament, boys, is a kind of compendium of the Old'. It began to dawn on the teacher that his scholars might not quite understand the meaning of 'compendium' so he tried again. 'The New Testament, lads, is a sort of synopsis of the Old'. It was evident however from the expression of their faces that the boys were not much further on the way of understanding what their teacher was trying to tell them, so he had another try: 'What I want to explain, boys, is that the New Testament is a sort of epitome of the Old Testament'. Surely if this is what the teacher meant to say, the sensible thing to do was say it, and be done with it.

It is a good thing also to draw out the scholars' interest in the lesson by judicious questions. It sustains attention and reveals how much they are really taking in. Sometimes that revelation is rather surprising. A lady teacher had been endeavouring to bring out the lesson of the Pharisee's hypocrisy from the Saviour's words 'Ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel'. Having explained thoroughly as she thought, the meaning of the lesson, she asked the question 'What was the Pharisee's besetting sin?" and received the startling reply, 'Eating camels, mem!" The inference is that we we should take nothing for granted in this connection. Don't be afraid to repeat .... The final goal of all our teaching must be - the winning of the children to Christ ... the vital thing for us ever to keep in view is: Does it lead souls to Christ? For this great quest, we shall find in the remembrance of that partnership all the stimulus we need to be faithful, constant and earnest 'till He come!' In conclusion there follows a truly remarkable prayer 'I pray that God will lead you on from strength to strength, for that is the path of the just. May you march like pilgrims towards heaven, singing all the way. The lark may serve as a picture, and as an example of what we all should be. We should be mounting: our motto might well be, 'Higher! higher! higher!' As we mount, we should sing, and our song should grow louder, clearer, more full of heaven. Upward brother!, Sing as thou soarest. Upward, sing till thou art dissolved in glory. Amen.'

In 1934 Pastor Donald wrote an article for The Irish Baptist, Spurgeon Centenary issue. In the article he recalls several occasions when he heard the Prince of Preachers preach - 'a privilege', he wrote 'for which I never cease to give God thanks'. He considered those occasions to be unforgettable experiences and I believe these excerpts give insight into the things which he himself held dear. I quote from Pastor Donald's article. "The service in Glasgow (in St. Andrews Hall) was held in the largest hall in that city, 4,000 being present. The occasion was during the annual meetings of the English and

Scottish Baptist Unions combined. The time was about the beginning of the 'Downgrade' Controversy. The text was: 'How long will it be ere ye believe me?' Even at this time of day, and knowing what we do of the Downgrade movement, one can readily imagine how Spurgeon would handle a word like that. It was a great message, delivered with all the faithfulness and fearlessness so characteristic of the man. One phrase specially lives in my memory. With withering scorn he thundered forth against those who 'dared to impugn the veracity of the Eternal'. In one of the Press reports of that service it was remarked how refreshing it was in these days of so much halting speech in our pulpits, to listen to one who evidently knew what he believed and was not afraid to preach it". Then there was the open air Service held at the height of one holiday season at Rothesay. Twenty thousand had gathered on the Chapel Hill. The provosts's house stood at the base of the hill. Spurgeon's 'pulpit' was the top of the portico over the main door which faced the rising ground in front. Pastor Donald recalls "what a sight that crowd was: and what a sound as they sang the well know lines of the 64th Paraphrase, with which the service opened -

To him that loved the souls of men,
And washed us in his blood,
To royal honours raised our head
And made us priests to God.

Pastor Donald recalled that Spurgeon's message was a ringing Gospel appeal throughout telling as Pastor Donald put it the old, old story of Jesus and his love, based on the New Testament story of the healing of the woman bowed with an infirmity.

A full programme in his own Church did not deter Pastor Donald from making a significant contribution to the life and work of the denomination. Pastor Donald was elected President of the Baptist Union of Ireland in 1897 when he chose as the title of his presidential address 'Our Mission, Message and Methods!' The Irish Baptist College has always had keen support from the Antrim Road Church. Pastor Donald was a member of the original committee appointed in 1901 and from 1921 until his death in 1940 he served as President. It is of interest to note that he was succeeded by another member of Antrim Road, Mr. Frank W. Carson who continued as President until 1954.

Only a year after his retirement Pastor Donald suffered the loss of his wife and then he went to reside in Kelvin Parade with the Stevenson family (a son, Rev. A.D. Stevenson formerly of Old George Street, Plymouth). A daughter of the family, Mrs. Eileen Tate recalls how Pastor Donald resided with the family for six years until he was called home. Mrs. Tate has described him as a gracious gentleman and how it was a pleasure and delight to have him in the home. Pastor Donald passed into the presence of his Lord and Master on Sunday, 3 November 1940. The funeral service was held in the Antrim Road Church on Thursday, 7th November and a memorial service was held in the Church on Sunday, 10th November.

Walton C. Balmer

JOHN CENNICK IN IRELAND

1746 - 1755

John Cennick was the man used by God to bring the revival to Ireland in the 18th century. He had been born in 1718 in Reading in a strict Anglican home. The dying testimony of an elderly aunt made a deep impression on his young mind but it was after seeking his fortune and being apprenticed in London in his teenage years that he fell under a prolonged period of conviction of sin and was brought to the saving knowledge of Christ in September 1737 in St. Lawrence's church in Reading. He became a close friend of Wesley and Whitefield in Oxford. At the age of 20 he was invited by Whitefield to take charge of the Kingswood school near Bristol. Shortly after going there, the preacher failed to turn up for one of the open-air services and he was prevailed on to take his place. He preached with power and great acceptance and continued to be asked to do so. John Wesley however took exception to his Calvinistic doctrine and accused him of attempting to split the work. He was innocent of any such charge and had not intentionally preached against the Arminian doctrines of the Wesleys, but had preached the gospel of the grace of God from the scriptures in such a way that it had been taken as Calvinistic. There was an unhappy division and Cennick sided with the Calvinistic party led by Whitefield and Howell Harris.

He was preaching one day in 1745 at the 'soul-trap', Whitefield's Tabernacle in Moorfields, when he was heard by two young men from Dublin, Antisel Taylor and John Hynd. They had come to London intending to join the army and were so impressed by Cennick's preaching that they wrote to tell their Dublin friends of the great things they had seen and heard. They invited Cennick to cross the Irish Sea but they received a cautious reply for he had no desire to go off on a wildgoose chase. He said, 'If you will return to your friends in Dublin and relate what you have seen and felt of the power of the gospel of Christ and shall find people earnest to hear me and who will join with you to invite me over, I will come'. The invitation speedily came, 'subscribed by many of the chiefest of the Baptists and some other Dissenters and Churchmen'. He set out from his headquarters in the village of Tytherton in Wiltshire and arrived at Holyhead, waiting there for a week for a favourable wind. The wind persisted in being contrary and he regretfully had to return, feeling that Satan had hindered his journey.

Early in December 1745 he decided to leave Whitefield and join the Moravians. We cannot investigate the reasons for his decision here but Howell Harris said that he believed the Cennick's convictions were from the Saviour. At the end of the year he left to visit the Moravians in Germany. He was deeply impressed by what he saw and the people he met. Among them was their leader the great Count Zinzendorf who was approached by Cennick concerning his intentions to preach in Ireland. The Count did not give him any encouragement, apparently because of the distinctive internal organisation and missionary theology of the Moravians at that time. 'He permitted me to follow my convictions without immediately sending me, only he wished me success'. He arrived back in London on May 26th, 1746. During his entire stay on the Continent he confessed 'that there was no day

passed wherein I did not think of Ireland and always felt my heart melt with eagerness when I thought of going thither'. This was despite the fact that he had earlier admitted entertaining a strong prejudice against the Irish people and it was only Mr. Taylor's frequent pleading letters that had prevailed on him.

He now rode from London to Holyhead on horseback and had a good voyage which only lasted 28 hours. 'I shall never forget what I felt when I first stepped ashore. I could not refrain from tears but prayed the Lord to stand by me in this strange country and not suffer me to come in vain'. It was June 3rd, 1746. After a day of visitation with Taylor, who was somewhat hurt and estranged by Cennick's failure to come before, and with others who had previously asked for his ministry, arrangements were made for Cennick to preach on the following day. An old meeting-house, belonging to the Baptists in Skinner's Alley which had been prepared for his expected coming in the previous year, was borrowed for the service. He preached the first time to about 150 people. He records 'now my heart rejoiced with joy unspeakable. I felt the Lamb with me and spoke with the power of God and with His blessing'.

Mr. Benjamin La Trobe, a young Baptist probationer, fresh from his studies at Glasgow University, met and heard Cennick, was impressed and finally united with him in his work. He eventually joined the Moravians and his descendants have held important posts in the work of the Moravian church ever since. Dublin was a city filled with heresy. Cennick indentified, 'Socinians, Arians, New Light and other opponents to the Godhead of the Lord Jesus and of the free salvation through faith in his name'. He preached on average twice a day and the majority of his hearers were Roman Catholics. The first Sunday folk were turned away in their hundreds. One Saturday evening two catholic men were leaving the service and one was heard to ask the other how he liked the discourse. 'I believe the Pope himself could not preach as well', he replied. The people who wanted a seat at Skinner's Alley had to come three hours before time. The windows had to be removed. The people were packed round the doors. On Sundays they even had to squat on the roofs of the neighbouring houses. They perched on every window-sill and wall. Cennick had to climb through a window and clamber over the heads of the people into the pulpit. A Carmelite priest remarked, 'I have studied 7 years and am reckoned a tolerable preacher but I never knew in all my peregrinations one that God has blessed with such talents as yourself. If you make any stay in this town you will make as many conversions as St. Francis Xavier among the wild pagans. God preserve you!'

He also conducted services in Bride's Alley for 200 keen young churchmen who met with the Archbishop's approval. He held special services for young men in private homes. He visited every house in the neighbourhood and discovered folk of many persuasions. He talked to churchmen, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, separatists, Bradilonians, and Muggletonians. They all greeted him with smiles of welcome on the streets. But he had not been in Dublin long before the hounds of persecution were snapping at his heels. Pamphlets were printed and handed out in Dublin opposing Cennick. One was a poem ridiculing his doctrine and manner of preaching. In particular there was what Cennick called 'a foolish but bitter thing' printed by James McConnel and circulated among the Presbyterians. This man had appeared in Dublin a few days after John's arrival and seemed to be his friend. He brought Cennick a bundle of papers to read which recorded his experiences and evidences of heaven but which really contained nothing more than the account of his change of belief from the Arminian to the Calvinistic system. Cennick said, 'Dear Mr.

McConnel, if you have nothing else to show when you come to the gate of heaven than this, I am afraid that you will never enter in'. This statement, together with Cennick reproving him for impure jokes turned his friendship to enmity and he wrote the booklet in that spirit. Cennick adds that McConnel was obliged to get a church minister as bitter as himself to correct his writing. He said that McConnel did not know the difference between the Moravians and the Methodists for he constantly confused the two. What he had to say was chiefly taken from Gilbert Tennant's book which had been sent to Dublin in great quantities to prejudice the dissenters against Cennick and his doctrine. The rest, says Cennick, 'was lies and calumnies and some true matters, basely misrepresented'.

A certain Father Duggan wrote two different pamphlets entitled, 'The Lady's Letter to Mr. Cennick' and 'The Lady's Reply'. One of Cennick's friends answered the first but Cennick dissuaded him from replying to the second. Father Lyons assured his flock gravely that Cennick was not a real man at all but the devil in human form. In the meantime things were going well at the meetings at Skinner's Alley where he was preaching twice a day. The attendance was usually more than a thousand and once came to 1323. Often 7 or 8 Roman priests came, many clergy, together with a number of teachers of religion and students. At one of the services a number of men burst in with drawn swords and broke up the meeting. Cennick was made the butt of music hall jokes and songs of the day. If he had ventured out alone he would have been torn to pieces. The mobs were increasing. Cennick writes, 'It was dangerous for our people to go out after the meetings were ended. If some religious soldiers had not guarded me home every night, at whose head was one Patterson, an officer, it would have been with great difficulty we could have escaped but these got me in their midst and with their swords drawn brought me to my lodgings; but we were pelted with dirt, stones and bricks on all sides, by perhaps a mob of 15 or 20,000'. The climax came at Christmas time when he ventured in a sermon to denounce Mariolatry. 'I curse and blaspheme all the gods in heaven but the Babe that lay in Mary's lap, the Babe that lay in swaddling clothes'. The quickwitted Irish caught the phrase and dubbed him 'Swaddling John' or 'Swaddling Jack'.

Near the middle of July 1746 he was heard by a christian grocer from Ballymena who invited him to visit the north of Ireland. He resolved to go but could not for the present. Only July 28th he and his people were warned to quit the Skinner's Alley meeting house or pay half a guinea per week during the pleasure of the owners. This was stirred by a Mr. Samuel Edwards who pretended a right to it because his father Mr. Oswald Edwards had been the preacher there. But there was so much interest from the betterminded Baptists that he was persuaded to drop his demand for the present. Incidentally, there is one account which records that Mr. Edwards was of Unitarian opinions and whose whole congregation there could be comfortably seated in one pew. But one day he uttered a solemn prophecy in the middle of his sermon, 'Now but few come to this place to hear but when I am gone a man of quite different principles from what I have taught shall preach in this house and his hearers shall be so numerous that neither the meetinghouse nor the burying ground shall be able to contain them'. This had now come true. From August 6th for the following week Cennick visited Ballymena accompanied by Messrs. La Trobe and Taylor. But he ran into terrible mob opposition which we will recount a little later.

He continued to preach in Dublin with great crowds and continued opposition. On September 22nd he left from Dublin for England promising to return. No organised society had been formed in Dublin because the Moravians in London had not given their permission to form one. He was away for almost a year and on March 20th, 1747 La Trobe organised them into a society. When he returned in 1747 it numbered 520.

During his absence two problems had arisen in the work, of which he had heard and for which he was thus prepared. The Baptists had been active and had distributed books among the people persuading them of the necessity of believer's baptism by immersion only. This was under the influence of Mr. La Trobe but it disturbed those who had come from the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic chapels and despite his efforts to placate them many left the congregation. The other problem was in connection with a Mr. Thomas Williams who had been associated with the Methodists in England. He came to Dublin while La Trobe was in Waterford and ingratiated himself with the people. He said he was one of the Moravian Brethren but although the majority welcomed him a few opposed it saying that it was most unusual for him to arrive without a letter of commendation and they urged a wait until Mr. La Trobe returned. However, he chose to preach in a nearby yard. He told many bad things about the Moravians, disputed their doctrines and in general spread confusion. He organised a Methodist society and sent word to the Wesleys seeking a reconciliation with them and asking for their help in the work in Dublin. Soon afterwards two preachers were sent along followed on August 9th by John Wesley himself and a month later by Charles. The Methodists had occupied a former Lutheran church in Marlborough but found the premises unsuitable. So Charles Wesley and Mr. Williams were searching for other accommodation when on September 29th they met Mr. Edwards who told them he disliked his tenants at Skinner's Alley and was determined to raise their rent. He asked if the Methodists were willing to take the hall for £16 a year if Cennick and his society refused it. Charles answered, 'if they had the first offer and did not accept it, we should be glad of the next refusal'.

Subsequently the Moravians wre ordered to leave the premises or begin paying double the rent. They were evicted on Christmas Eve. The Methodists soon established themselves in the Skinner's Alley meetinghouse and on March 29th 1748 John Wesley had preached there. Meanwhile Cennick preached in private homes until they secured a new place in Big Butter (Booter?) Lane on March 15th, 1748. On March 23rd he left with his wife for London again. He returned on May 7th and preached with great success. He and his wife moved into a room in the new building in June where they lived until they moved to the north of Ireland on June 23rd. As the church began to thrive in its new premises a certain Church of Ireland clergyman published a book entitled 'The Moravian Heresy' in which he accused Cennick of three crimes. One was teetotalism; secondly, of belonging to a sect which suffered from mysterious disease inflicted by the devil and the third, of antinomian doctrine. This accusation had often been brought against him in Wiltshire but it was now repeated. It was of course totally untrue. So he preached, 'Whenever I see men living sinful lives and yet prating of faith, I would say, show it by your fruits and know that as yet you have neither part nor lot in the matter'.

Having accepted Joseph Deane's invitation in 1746 to visit Ballymena he came within sight of the town and felt himself suddenly overcome by a spirit of deep depression but opening his Moravian daily textbook he read the words, 'Go swift messengers to a nation scattered and peeled, a nation meted out and trodden down' and then, 'Go, guarded by a thousand angels, go your way with the near presence of Emmanuel'. To him they were words that prophesied of trouble. 'I believe', he said to La Trobe, 'as sure as we are here that there will be persecution'. As soon as he arrived in the town he met two Presbyterian ministers at a hotel. 'I suppose you think that the people here are not properly taught', said one. Cennick replied, 'I don't know how you may look upon it but I have no such ideas. I am a servant of Jesus Christ and go where I am invited. I know not if here the people hear the gospel or not; but I am sure, if you are a minister of Christ, I shall do you no harm but perhaps help you a little. If you have not preached the gospel purely I am come to do it and the people need it'.

Now Deane was a Presbyterian and it is believed that he had a shop at the corner of Mill Street. He had gone out to meet Cennick and his friends at Turlymoil Hill about 7 miles out of town. He said that he had not arranged any meetings but his minister Mr. Brown had heard of his coming and would like to see him first. The Presbyterians were disinclined to extend to any other religious body privileges which they sought for themselves. Through numbers and influence they established their own interests and exerted a jurisdiction inconsistent with their legal standing. They thought they had the right to dominate the country. He first preached on market day Saturday August 9th, 'about 50 persons heard in a careless manner'. He gave notice of two more on Sunday, one in the morning at 8 and another in the evening, arranged so as not to interfere with the regular services in the town. At the 8 o'clock meeting the main beam supporting the loft in which about a 100 had gathered broke, causing much confusion but no injury. Undaunted he led his flock to the open ground in front of the market house and then preached his message. There can be no doubt that the success of this venture led Cennick to announce the service in the evening by which time the Presbyterian minister and his elders were very uneasy. He was an unknown quantity. Perhaps he was a secret papist, in which case death to him. Perhaps a churchman then he must be removed. The Church of Ireland was very weak. Cennick noted, 'On the morning of Sunday August 10th I had an opportunity of seeing how weak the Church of England is in those parts where often not more than 6 or 10 come to hear divine service - the minister of Ballyeaston preached for 7 years to his clerk.

Cennick reported on the events at the evening meeting. 'The minister and elders of the Scotch congregation let Captain Adair the lord of the manor know that I was preaching in the street. As he was in drink he was the more rash and came on horseback with his footman into the midst of the company which was ready to break up, I having finished my discourse in peace and pronounced the usual blessing. He rode up to me and struck me several times with his whip with all his force and as his horse startled that he could not push at me with his sword which he had drawn, he bid his footman knock me down, who obeyed him and with his fist beat upon my head so violently that I reeled and should have fallen but the poor people caught me and ran in between the horse and me till I got into the house where I fell on a heap of turf while he passed by me swearing he would kill me and if any house in the town would venture to harbour me he would pull it down. I had lost my hat in the hurry and to hide me the people had put upon me a

ragged greatcoat and helped me over the walls and gardens into where my hat was brought to me and here my dear companions with many weeping poor people met me and bewailed my misfortune'. He thus returned to Dublin. He continued to receive invitations to pay a return visit where a hall would be provided for him but he declined. The reason was that he was detained by the problems of the Dublin situation.

He was to return. 'About May 1748 Mr. Deane called to me in Dublin and said that many longed for my coming. One man had said that 'the ministers in the country had left the old way and no more preached Christ and now I am going I don't know where to hear the word of God'. This time he left accompanied by Jonathan Binns. He first preached on June 24th 1748, 8 miles beyond Newry in Co. Down. He arrived in Ballymena on June 26th on a Sunday and instead of preaching on a Presbyterian estate where captain Adair had forbidden preaching, he hired a field on the outskirts near Ballee. Two military captains with a band of drummers sought to drown the meeting. In vain he implored them to desist. He had a powerful voice and could preach for hours without becoming hoarse. He waited patiently for half an hour. Again and again the drums rolled. A drunken schoolmaster pulled him from his place. An elder raised his staff to strike Cennick but the crowd cried that 'an elder must be no striker'. Jonathan Binns urged him to retreat but Cennick stuck to his guns. 'I believe that God has much people in this place'. At last his friends took him to a friendly Quaker's house and finally found him another field where he preached in peace. This man was Wiliam Harper of Ballee an elder from Connor. He said that if he was a servant of Christ and meant well he could preach on his land and two or three hundred stayed on to hear him.

On Sunday July 14th 1748 he preached at 8 a.m. to over 2,000 and in the forenoon again to a similar number and in the evening to a company of between 5 and 6,000 including hundreds of Roman Catholics who flocked to him in spite of all the threats of their priests. On Monday morning he preached at the Slatt and in the evening at Kellswater. On Tuesday at Brockleymount and at Knocken near Broughshane; on Wednesday, at Ballyminstra and Ballycosh; on Thursday at Carnlea and Ballee; on Friday at Rasharkin and Ballybollen. These services were in the fields or on hillsides or in some sheltered hollow where the folk could conveniently sit. From the very first he gained their attention and with direct earnestness and passionate pleading touched their hearts. They hung on his words; they came streaming down from the glens and the remote scattered hamlets. The churches were deserted when he was preaching and the priests had to say Mass by themselves. The crowds included invalids who had not left their beds for years; the blind led by their friends, the lame who hobbled on crutches, and others brought on horseback or carried on chairs. Around Ballymena, as a centre, 50 preaching places were established. All kinds of people sought his spiritual advice. Self righteous Pharisees, brokendown gamblers, fallen women, flagrant and secret sinners. Far into the night he was often occupied in giving them loving and sympathetic counsel and prayer. In the Catholic areas it was in vain that the priests pronounced a heavy curse on all who went to hear him. Not even the penalties inflicted e.g. a two days fast every week for a whole year and a bath three times a week in the Lough could deter them. When he was ill in bed his room was filled with enquirers seeking the way of salvation that he scarcely had time to eat. In addition, he was one of the first to organise children's meetings, especially at Ballee on the hills in a place known as the 'cathedral'. 'On Sunday September 4th 1748 I had 2 or 300 present on the open field the boys sitting on one side and the girls on the other

in pretty order'. It was a child on one occasion who unexpectedly vindicated him when the charge was made that Cennick ascribed too much glory to the Son and thus robbed the Father of His glory. 'But look', cried the boy, as he pointed to the text, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth' and then added, 'Mr. Cennick is right'.

He was invited to preach in Cullybacky by the Presbyterian minister Mr. McCreight. The fact that he had been denied a hearing in Ballymena drew the crowds to hear him. On Sunday July 3rd an estimated crowd of 10,000 gathered in a field at Ballee to hear him. He returned to Dublin on August 8th to see Dr. Stone, Archbishop of Armagh the Primate, in order to obtain his promise of protection. He told him that he had been made a prisoner at large until November because he had declined to swear on oath. Dr. Stone said that if this occurred he would see to it that he was freed. They set out that very night again for the north. He extended the work to Ballywee near Doagh. He was joined by his wife, held his first children's meeting in Ballee, took a house at Crebilly on October 4th and moved into it in December. He preached at Lisnamara and at Armoy (Ardmey) where he was called before the local JP Mr Hugh Boyd of Ballycastle. On November 14th he went to Crebilly in deep snow and formed the first society with 6 people. Before a year had gone by it had grown to 600. It was from this society that the societies at Grogan, Gloonen and Doagh were formed. In December they hired a large barn which they turned into a meetinghouse. The household included Mr and Mrs Cennick, an old servant and his co-preacher Mr. Turton. They were very poor indeed but the locals helped them with foodstuff and fuel. He continued to work in the northern counties in early 1749 visiting counties Derry, Tyrone and Armagh in early January. Then he made a four day trip to Dublin in the middle of the month. He again itinerated except for a visit to Dublin for some weeks in late February and early March. He worked on in the north until May 16th. He then left for England, being away for about 6 months.

During this time he appealed to Dr. Rider, Bishop of Down and Connor for protection, meeting him at Rasharkin. The Bishop welcomed him to dinner and said, 'You shall have fair play in my diocese'. When his clergy complained that Cennick was emptying their churches the good man replied 'preach what Cennick preaches, preach Christ crucified and then the people will not have to go to Cennick to hear the gospel'. At Ballybollen, near Ballymena, he preached a sermon which set the countryside ablaze. It is believed that either the locals or the Danes of old had built a fort there. (The remnants still survive.) Here in the reign of Charles II the Scot Alexander Peden had preached. 'O fort, I charge thee in the name of the Lord, never let anyone preach here until a bony wee lad shall come frae England and preach the pure gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ'. Hear him preach, 'Ye drunkards and rioters, ye lovers of feasting and banqueting, come ye to the marriage feast of the Lamb. Jesus invites you to drink freely of the fountain of life and to eat of the hidden manna. Ye who are fond of music, come and hearken to our Saviour, for His voice is sweet; all the music of angels is nothing else but the echo of His love and forgiveness. Do you love a concert? Come up and you shall see ten thousand harping upon their harps before the Lamb that was slain and millions of trumpets blowing to the honour of His Name. Do you esteem songs? O get your lips touched with a coal from off the altar and you shall join in the song of Moses and the Lamb upon Mount Zion'.

At Ballynahone he preached to 10,000 and after the service was overwhelmed with invitations to preach. At Moneymore the Presbyterians asked him to stop and be their minister. At Ballynahone

the Catholics said that if he would only settle there they would never go to Mass again. At Careeny in Derry a Roman Catholic priest confessed that Cennick was right in his doctrine and shed tears at the meeting. At Lisnamará he was invited by the rector to preach in the parish church. At New Mills the people rushed from their hovels, barred his way, offered him milk and said, 'If you can't stop to preach at least come into our houses to pray'. The first time he went to Glenavy near Ballinderry the road was lined with people for two miles. At Castle Dawson, at the close of a service in the barrack yard, Mr Justice Downey, the local clergyman and several other prominent gentlemen came up and publicly kissed the preacher. Many of the innkeepers gave him free board and lodging. The news that he was staying in the village was good for business. Father O'Leary, the priest of Ballinderry was an eccentric character and was very envious of Cennick. He called himself the red, roving, ranting rector of Moira, Magheralin and Dromore. He said he would pocket the money and drink the liquor which Cennick refused.

As the revival spread he laboured on in preaching. He often addressed thousands in the open air with the rain coming down in torrents soaking him to the skin. He preached in old barns, in disused cloth mills and in village cockpits. He slept in the old ruined church at Portmore where Jeremy Taylor had written his 'Holy Living and Holy Dying'. He sat on the roadside, cold and lonely, munching his meagre lunch of bread and cheese. If he had the money he hired a horse; if not he would walk 20 miles to preach. When among friends and talking about spiritual things people fell to their knees almost instinctively. But he rebuked the people for their drunken ways, their brutal sports, their cold formality and their empty gabble. He rebuked the Presbyterian minister at the Grange. The minister said that he hoped he had the Spirit. 'No sir, don't hope you have it, for I assure you you have it not', replied Cennick. 'How do you know?' 'Because you are a drunkard almost daily; you are a slanderer for you have secretly told many of your hearers that I was a rogue; you are also a liar for you have in public and private said that I am a Jesuit. Now a person in whom the Holy Ghost dwells cannot do such things'. He often sought retirement and quietness in the lonely bogs because he grew weary of the people's constant chatter, although he loved them. 'It would be well if they thought as much as they talked'.

He worked on as evangelist, itinerant preacher, organiser of societies, builder of churches and as pastor too. It continued until 3 months of his death. There were periods of absence from the north. From Janury 8th to August 8th 1750 he was in England. Each trip took him through Dublin where he visited and preached. From October 8th to 18th he was again in Dublin. The year ended with 9 others engaged full time in the work and four churches established. He was again in Dublin from January 30 to February 12th 1751 and again in the autumn from October 10 until November 7th. From March 18th to June 29 he was back in England. By the end of 1752 the work had reached the counties of Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh, Down, Antrim, Derry and Tyrone. He was away all of 1753 preaching in Dublin several times as well as Wales and West of England. He was again away from July to September 1754 but stayed there until April 1755 just three months before his early death.

He wore himself out with his labours. Zinzendorf called him 'Paul revived'. He never spared himself and his journal gives record

of increasing sickness. He was only four months past his 36th birthday when he left the north of Ireland. He wrote to his friend 'I think I have finished with the north of Ireland. I am leaving just at the right time. I am ready to go wherever the Saviour wants me but the best of all would be to go to the Lord Himself'. He went to Dublin for the last time, participated in the opening of the new building and preached the sermon on April 12th, 1755. He continued preaching there for two months until his journey to Holyhead and thence to London. Again large crowds attended his preaching and there was a new awakening in the whole place. On May 24th he wrote to a friend '... you cannot tell with what a poor heart I came hither to open the new church and yet after the deepest humiliation and confession before my Lord, both on my own and other's account, what a feeling he gave us of his forgiveness and divine presence with us in preaching. But I am kept here blind in regard of my time of setting out from hence. The cloud rests and I rest. When that moves the Lord's poor herdboy shall follow willingly (Num. 9:15-23) ... The best blessings he has light upon thee, keep thee in peace and in true poverty and in all thy labours his ears be open to thy sighs and complaints and his hand lead thee till I kiss thee above. In Him I am thine eternally...'

He arrived in London and died of a fever through travelling in the rain nonstop from Holyhead on July 4th, 1755. He is laid to rest in 'Sharon's garden' the burial ground in Chelsea owned by the Moravians. His funeral was attended by 800 people. Peter Boehler and James Hutton are buried in the same row. He was a striking an attractive personality. Rather below middle height and of handsome countenance. Those who knew him said that he was unfailingly humble and lived a life of communion with God. He had a cheerful faith in his crucified Saviour. He had a great zeal for Christ and a tender compassion for lost souls. The gospel was everywhere his grand subject. He had congregations established in Dublin, Gracehill, Gracefield, Ballinderry, and Kilwarlin. How he enjoyed what he had often preached about. 'O what wilt thou think when thou seest him and when it shall be told thee, this is thy Master! That is the face which was once marred more than any man's. That is the Lamb who took away thy sins. Those are the arms which were once bound to the Cross which now are stretched out to embrace and caress thee. That is the King's son who hath betrothed thee to himself in His loving kindness, mercy and righteousness. I say, what wilt thou think or what wilt thou do? I know thou wilt alight and cover thy face for joy and shame and fall down before him'. He put the following in his notebook

Now Lord at peace with Thee and all below
Let me depart and to Thy kingdom go;
I long to kiss that hand which once me blessed
Those feet that travelled to procure my rest;
Those lips that me confessed and that dear head
That bowed when on it all my sins were laid'.

F.M. Harris

THE BAPTIST CORPORATIONS

1902 & 1924

When the Irish churches became a separate and independent Baptist Union in 1895 they adopted the name THE BAPTIST UNION OF IRELAND. That historic development terminated their membership of The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland and placed a responsibility on the new Union and its leaders to make arrangements for the care of Trust Funds, the trusteeship of church properties and the fulfilling of certain legal obligations arising from these matters and affecting the interest of the churches in all parts of Ireland.

Such were the reasons for the incorporation in Dublin on 9th July, 1902 of THE BAPTIST UNION OF IRELAND CORPORATION, LIMITED, having its registered office at 45, Harcourt Street, Dublin.

The Memorandum and Articles of Association state the Company's aim as "the promotion of the interests of the Baptist Churches in Ireland". The Directors ("members of the Baptist Union of Ireland Committee" - nowadays known as the Union Council) conducted the Company's business and were responsible to "the Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of Ireland".

The partition of Ireland necessitated the forming of a second Corporation to fulfil a similar function for the churches in Northern Ireland. Therefore THE BAPTIST UNION OF IRELAND (NORTHERN) CORPORATION, LIMITED, with its registered office at 5 Adelaide Street, Belfast, was incorporated on 22nd February, 1924. Its Memorandum and Articles of Association are identical with its southern counterpart, except for a few verbal alterations necessary in the Northern Ireland context.

The Northern and Southern Corporations, as they are conveniently called, share the same DIRECTORS. Their names are listed in the Assembly Handbook and the B.U. Directory. These business and professional men give their expertise and time freely for the benefit of the churches. The agenda of their monthly meeting can include business in connection with funds and property for places as far apart and diverse as Cork and Comber, Dublin and Dunseverick, Limerick and Londonderry, Waterford and Warrenpoint.

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Corporations is held on the first Thursday in April following which the Secretary makes Annual Returns to the respective Registrar of Companies in Dublin and Belfast. The Annual Reports and Accounts are published in the Assembly Handbook and presented and discussed at the Assembly Business Session.

Probably the majority of members in the churches are unaware of the existence of the Corporations and the work that they do. This is most regrettable because the functions and resources of the Corporations are indispensible to the work of the Union.

A respected senior Director often remarks that we should be

grateful to God for the wisdom and foresight which He gave to the men who brought the Corporations into being for the good of the churches. He is quite right, as the following list of activities will show.

* Many churches have appointed the appropriate Corporation as TRUSTEE for their property, thus saving themselves the trouble and recurrent expense involved with the replacement of Individual Trustees. The Model Trust Clause, approved and used by the Corporations, protects the autonomy of the local church and, in all respects, leaves the church in full control of its premises.
* The Directors manage TRUST FUNDS, given by thoughtful and generous Baptists of bygone generations for the benefit of the denomination in succeeding generations, in accordance with the terms of the Trusts. These and other funds deposited with the Corporations amounted to £488,000 in 1982. It must be understood that these are not loose monies at the disposal of the Directors but are funds which have been entrusted to them and, therefore, are not available for purposes other than those specified in the Trusts.
* Applications to the LOAN AND BUILDING FUND, which assists churches with interest-free loans for major expenditure on churches, halls and manses, are processed by the Directors. The corpus of £21,000 is always fully expended. The fund grows as thank-offerings, gifts, and also interest-free loans are received from churches and individuals.
* Giving by Deed of Covenant is a financial life-line in most churches. Being a registered charity the Northern Corporation's COVENANTED SUBSCRIPTIONS SCHEME provides a service to the churches and especially their treasurers. Deeds of Covenant and refund of tax thereon amounted to almost £400,000 in 1982.
* In accordance with the powers of their respective Memorandum and Articles the Corporations hold property and funds in both parts of Ireland for the MINISTERS' HOUSING SCHEME in order to provide housing for Pastors and Missionaries and their wives in retirement. The Directors are grateful to a number of friends for cash gifts received and bequests of cash and property to the Scheme. The first property to be received was an outright gift to the Scheme from a gentleman who was unable to live alone in his home due to ill-health. It is in the Stranmillis area of Belfast and is a comfortable little house very suitable for a retired couple. A modest rent is charged.
* The BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE is always available to visit and advise churches on all aspects of building and maintenance of property. Many churches are truly grateful for help received from this committee.
* There is a modest income from certain Trustee Securities and some Ground Rents owned by the Corporations. When expenses are paid the Directors allocate the GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT SURPLUS for the benefit of the Union Departments. For example in 1981 they found it possible to give £11,200 to the Union General Expenses Account to help with administration, £5,000 to the College and £1,000 to the Youth Department.
* There is yet another benefit which is not appreciated sufficiently. When Union Accounts become overdrawn in the second half of every year the resources in the CORPORATION ACCOUNT off-set the debit and Bank overdraft interest is avoided.

* The CORPORATION SECRETARY services the work of both Corporations and can be contacted at the Union Offices. The Directors and he are at the service of the churches and are available to advise and visit them at any time.

J.R.Grant.

BOOK REVIEW

PLANTATION OF RENOWN: The Story of the La Touches of Harristown and The Baptist Church at Brannockstown, second edition, 1982, n.p.

Robert Dunlop has revised and enlarged his 1970 booklet into an absorbing piece of local history, which will provide others with a useful example of how to approach such a task. The text itself is both informative and stimulating and is enlivened by photographs and portraits, maps and facsimiles, which enhance its historical value. The chapter on the romance between John Ruskin and Rose La Touche, and that on the enlightened policies of John La Touche as one of the landlord class in Ireland of the famine and of agrarian agitation, give the booklet a wider value and interest.

The section on the Brannockstown Baptist Church in Co. Kildare has an interest of its own in view of the reviving fortunes of Baptist work in the midland area of Ireland in recent years.

'Plantation of Renown' ought to have a wide circulation among Irish Baptists and deserves to be read by others interested in the history of Baptists in the British Isles. It may be obtained through the Baptist Youth Bookroom, 3 Fitzwilliam Street, Belfast BT9 6AW, Northern Ireland. Price £1.25 (stg).