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EDITORIAL

This issue of the Journal offers a balance between local church history, economic and social history, autobiography, original research and book reviews. As ever the Society acknowledges its debt to the various contributors of these worthwhile additions to the fund of knowledge about Irish Baptists. To have the past recalled and brought to life is not only a work of necessity but also a source of instruction and inspiration.

The Society owes much to the members and friends in Ireland who give their support and encouragment so freely and generously. The fellowship shared at the regular meetings of the Society by those who are able to attend is a bonus more members might share.

It is pleasant to record that the Journal still enjoys a circulation much wider than our own constituency in Ireland. There are people overseas who are interested in the history of our churches and from time to time enquiries reach the Secretary from various parts of the world concerning churches and individuals. These are answered as far as possible within the constraints imposed by time and expense.

The attention of readers is drawn to the books reviewed in this issue - especially the one on English Baptists of the seventeenth century. This book may be obtained through the bookroom at 3 Fitzwilliam Street, Belfast.

In conclusion, the Editor's grateful thanks goes to Miss Irene Grant for her accurate and efficient preparation of the copy for this issue of the Journal.

CONTENTS

1. Editorial

2. Irish Baptists in the Nineteenth Century: Economic and Social Background 4

3. A Medley of Memories 19

4. The Cloghjordan Correspondence of 1822-3 28

5. Hamilton Road Baptist Church, Bangor, Co.Down 38

6. Understanding Our Roots - Report 42

7. Book Reviews: 43

The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century
Baptists in the Twentieth Century
"To Each His Task"

IRISH BAPTISTS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY:

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Ideally, for a study of this kind one would like adequate official statistics, but denominational material was first included in the Irish census only in 1861, and although the information was collected, nothing published after 1861 distinguished Baptists from 'Other Denominations'. To a large extent therefore we are thrown back on our own resources. This means that what is available is what agents of the Baptist Irish Society (1.) chose to include in the section 'Irish Chronicle' of the Baptist Magazine. After 1865 it includes what churches chose to report to the editor of the Irish Baptist Magazine and he decided to publish. Invaluable material comes from surviving manuscript records of a few churches - Cork, Waterford, Lisnagleer, Tobermore and Ballymena. Tragically we seem to be without anything from Dublin. A difficulty with church records is that they so seldom include addresses for the people mentioned and therefore it is usually impossible to trace individuals in directories, valuation lists etc. Individuals are often identified, by occupation at least, in trust deeds and similar legal documents, and these are particularly useful, save that one must not draw the conclusion that trustees were typical of a congregation as a whole; more often they were the officers or leaders. On one subject however we are on fairly firm grounds - numbers.

In 1800 the population of Ireland was probably around 5 million, in 1821 6,800,000 and still rising. It reached its maximum of something over 8 million on the eve of the great famine (1845-49), declining thereafter to just over 5 million in 1881 and about 4.5 million by the end of the century. If, as seems likely, Baptists numbered around 500 at the beginning of the century, reached 2000 in 1818 (2.) and 5000 by the 1890s, it is clear that the growth rate was higher than the national average and (b) that the denomination continued to grow even when population as a whole was falling. (I am including for statistical purposes all those who would have returned themselves as Baptists on the enumerators' forms, not just baptised believers in church membership.) It is equally clear that the handful of Baptists who formed the five churches existing in 1800 must be distinguished from the people who joined to form the thirty or more additional churches added by 1841, and that these were different again from the even larger number who joined in the second half of the century.

* * *

The churches of 1800 were - Cloughjordan, Cork, Dublin, Rahue and Waterford, all in the south/south-east of the country and all believed to be at a fairly low ebb. Their members were descendants of the once numerous and influential anabaptist element of the Commonwealth civil and military establishment, long since fallen on hard times. It is most unlikely that they included any major landowners, although the Baptists at Rahue were a farming community where the Bagnalls at least still held land (3.), and there were one or two large farmers at Cloughjordan. Excluded by legislation (4.) from office under the crown for most of the eighteenth century, they seem mainly to have been tradesmen, merchants, self-employed or, more rarely, members of the professions. At Cork, for instance the members included a block and pump maker, a victualler, a linen-draper, a woollen draper, a brewer, an ironmonger, a hat manufacturer and a pewterer (5.) - small employers who prospered during the Napoleonic wars when Irish ports supplied grain, provisions and sailcloth to Britain and Britain's armed forces. Waterford, similarly situated on the south

coast, had some well established families in membership - two of the Scroders were freemen of the city, the Boltons were on the Council (6.). Of the church in Dublin, Andrew Fuller observed in 1804 that some members 'were sadly conformed in their manners to the dissipation common amongst those who were wholly men of the world' (7.) - a fault more of affluence than adversity; Warburton says that the Baptists in Dublin maintained a boys' and girls' school (8.), while the Education Fund which the Dublin church administered had in 1802 a credit balance of £759 - a substantial sum for the period (9.). Connected with the several churches there were of course dependents, widows particularly, whilst salaries paid to ministers were never munificent. Nevertheless, putting all this together, one gets the impression of a people, small in number, mainly urban, not wealthy yet, at a time when there was much conspicuous poverty in Ireland, well able to hold up their heads in the community.

Turning now to the group of northern churches which owed their existence directly or indirectly to the influence of Dr. Alexander Carson and the Haldane brothers - Tobermore, Grange, Cairndaisy and Coleraine, founded in 1807, 1809, 1814 and 1830 respectively, certain similarities distinguished them and marked them off from their southern brethren. First, they had no connection with the Cromwellian period and no previous history of Baptist attachment; second, they were in the main rural rather than urban; and third, they had come to the Baptist position on doctrine and church government from Presbyterianism (in the case of Coleraine through Independency). As to economic and social background, the members of the first three were almost uniformly small tenant farmers, and of Coleraine part farmers and part townsmen. Small tenant farmers in south Derry were not, in the early nineteenth century, the poorest in Ireland, but not far from it. On indifferent land with a high proportion of bog and gravel the average small holding produced perhaps £15 per year from oats, potatoes and flax which, after payment of at least one third in rent, left £10 to maintain a family (10.). Fortunately the women could contribute earnings from the spinning wheel and there was generally, one year with another, some margin on rough cattle. Referring to the three hundred members of the Tobermore church in 1840 a visitor said 'all of whom indeed are very poor' (11.). Conditions at Grange, something over twenty miles away on the eastern side of the Bann, were not dissimilar, though farms were rather larger and land better. An early pastor referred to the members there as 'plain men and chiefly of the farming class'. (12.) The early history of the Coleraine church is confused (13.), but the first Baptists seem to have been associated with an Independent congregation, established 1795, who were joined by some forty families separating in 1809 from a Presbyterian church on the west or Killowen side of the town. At a time when the matter was exercising minds in Edinburgh and Tobermore (14.) the question of believers' baptism became increasingly divisive until, in 1830, the Independents left for a new site nearby. There remained effectively a Baptist church occupying the old building until the present one was erected in 1842 at the junction of Abbey Street and Dipper's Lane. This background and the few names which are known from the earliest days indicate the urban origins of some members from the western, industrial side of the town; the rural origin of others is attested by the comment of 1842 that 'a considerable number of the brethren reside in the county' (15.). In a reasonably prosperous farming area the implication is that Coleraine Baptists were a rather more representative cross-section of the community than either of the other groups so far discussed - part rural, part urban, some on low industrial wages, some from good farms, a manufacturer, a surgeon, a shop-keeper and almost certainly a couple of handloom weavers and their wives - which is much what one would expect from a market town of some 5000 souls in an Ulster agricultural/linen manufacturing countryside.

In 1823 George Benn described the various churches in Belfast, dealing at length with the episcopalian and presbyterian establishments, the two seceding meeting-houses, the three methodist chapels, the Independents' meeting-house, the 'excellent well-proportioned building' of the Covenanters and the 'neat

house' of the Quakers. He finished '... and in King Street the most inconsiderable congregation in the town, called Baptists, have a small place of worship'. (16.) Well, I suppose flattery was hardly called for in connection with the little group who in 1811 rented premises in an old semi-industrial area at the then edge of the town. Dane Skilling identifies them with immigrants from the country coming to look for work (17.), and certainly Belfast at the time was in the middle of a cotton boom. Probably therefore the first Baptists in Belfast were of mainly working-class background; certainly they were convinced Baptists, as otherwise why establish their own place of worship with so many others to choose from? They had prospered to the extent of being able in 1840 to pay their minister the respectable salary of £75 per year (18.). In 1844 they moved to Academy Street where the membership included four soldiers from the nearby army barracks (19.). Immediately before the famine, in 1845, they were 25 in number and in all probability, up to that date, the working-class industrial element predominated.

Continuing in the early years of the century, some details are known about a scattered group of churches in the midlands and west of Ireland by the Baptist Irish Society. The first seems to have been at Thurles in 1815 (20.), others followed in rapid succession - Athlone, Clonmel, Ferbane, Boyle, Abbeyleix, Sligo, Ballina, Easkey, Coolaney, Ballymahon, Moate, and Limerick, to mention only some of them. In 1836 it was said that the Baptist Irish Society had collected twelve small churches with 174 members (21.). In the west, wherever possible the Society used Irish speakers whose cottage or open-air meetings were designed to attract the generality of those attending the fairs and markets in small towns and villages. In consequence a high proportion of the members of these early churches were converts from catholicism, some few, particularly in the midlands, from other protestant denominations (22.). With rare exception, a common feature was their agricultural background and poverty. It was on the Irish western seaboard from Donegal to Kerry that the smallest farm holdings on the poorest land and the most overcrowded conditions were to be found: from this area itinerant preachers referred constantly to the miserable living conditions of the people. As to the members helping to provide for themselves a small building in Ballina, the pastor of the church there said in 1836 'few... are in any measure able to assist with their pecuniary support; they rather need our assistance' (23.). Another report refers to 'the poor people of Kilcooly Hills' (24.).

To complete the pre-famine picture, reference must be made to a number of churches in the north, sometimes established by but more often simply receiving assistance from the Baptist Irish Society. Typical was Conlig in Co. Down of whose members Mr. Mulhern wrote in 1840 'They are poor people, living by manufacturing industry and utterly unable themselves to bear the cost of erecting a (meeting) house' (25.) When a building was provided, the £7 collection at the opening meeting was thought commendable 'considering the poverty of the people' (26.). Similarly at Ballymoney where in 1844 an effort was being made to raise funds for a place of worship - 'From a people so poor the collection was encouraging; it amounted to six guineas' (27.). The figures seven pounds and six guineas were in fact quite respectable in the light of the wages of day labourers (such as one member and his wife at Conlig) (28.), when in work, of little over 4p per day. Elsewhere in Antrim and Down were Newry (1801), Broughshane (in existence 1824) and Ballinafern (in existence 1836), of whose members nothing is known, although it seems a reasonable assumption that they were primarily agricultural and from the small tenant/labourer class. Also in the north was a group of small churches in Tyrone of whose beginnings little is known save their dates of formation which ranged from 1807 to 1845. Omagh (Camowen), Ballygawley, Knockconny, Mullycar, Aghaveay, Blackfort, Seskinore, Crilly, Dungannon and Cookstown (29.), and with them one should perhaps include Letterkenny in Donegal. Beyond the fact that there were connections between Coleraine, Tobermore, Omagh and Letterkenny and therefore some presumed Carson

influence (30.), our knowledge ends. Almost certainly, for reasons to be discussed later, their members were drawn from the lower end of the agricultural spectrum, with ancillary earnings from handloom weaving but, unlike their southern counterparts, with protestant rather than catholic background.

To sum up then, on the eve of the famine Irish Baptists consisted of several distinct groups. The oldest established were of mainly urban provenance, relatively prosperous, of English backgrounds, with English connections. In that they were nonconformist rather than episcopalian they could hardly be described as of the ascendency class yet economically and socially such was their affiliation. And they were in constant movement. The church books of Cork and Waterford show many transfers of members amongst the five churches and almost as many between Britain and Ireland. Military and naval officers were regular visitors, like Col. Anthony Marshall and his wife who joined the Cork church in 1841 but were later posted to the Cape of Good Hope (31.). In Dublin the new meeting-house in Lower Abbey Street was opened in 1840, the members having contributed £357 toward the cost; a further £59 was raised at the opening meeting (32.). (Compare Conlig's £7). A second group was mainly agricultural in background ranging from substantial farmers of the midlands, with probable Cromwellian antecedents, to the good farmers around Coleraine and the small tenants of Antrim, south Derry and Tyrone. The majority in the north were of plantation Scottish stock, hardy, industrious, with in their bones the protestant ethic that hard work for its own sake is a good thing, and in their homes the philosophy of the 'Cotter's Saturday Night'. Almost certainly there was much reliance in the first half of the century on earnings from the spinning wheel and loom. Then there were the small churches west of the Shannon, most of whose members were of the poorest class. (In 1834 the addition of a 'respectable farmer' to the church at Coolaney was considered worthy of note.) (33.) Largely catholic in background, without ancillary earnings from linen, they were the most vulnerable to the failure of the potato on which so many of them relied. Finally, there were the members of Belfast and Conlig, mainly industrial, with a disposition to eschew any English or Scottish origins, by no means wealthy but of characteristic independence.

* * *

During the great famine of 1845-49 something like a quarter of the population of Ireland either perished from starvation and disease or emigrated to Britain or North America (34.). This is not the place to discuss the tragedy, and I mention it only because of its varied effect on different geographical areas and different levels of society. Worst hit was Connaught, with Kerry, Donegal and west Cork; less severely affected were the midlands and south coast; almost untouched, directly, was the eastern coastal strip which included Belfast and Dublin, Drogheda and Wexford. Ulster suffered with the rest, particularly Armagh, Cavan and Tyrone, but in Ulster where the potatoes failed many people were able to buy food from linen or other industrial earnings. Again, speaking generally, it was the rural poor who suffered most, cottiers, landless labourers or occupiers of the tiny plots into which the land had been subdivided under population pressure in the absence of any other source of livelihood. Amongst these people a whole class virtually disappeared. It is not possible to know whether any Baptists died of actual starvation though at Ballina in 1846 it was said 'several of our own people find it difficult to procure one wretched meal in the day.' (35.) A later comment on Abbeyleix in 1847 says 'The Baptists were mostly of the suffering class being chiefly small farmers who lost their all in the failure of the potato.' (36.) There must have been deaths from plague (including the pastor's wife, Mrs. Hardcastle, at Waterford, who caught it whilst ministering to the starving poor), (37.) but the greatest losses were from emigration. This is interesting for two reasons, first because it says something of the people who had been brought into the

membership of the small churches formed by the Baptist Irish Society - not the totally destitute so many of whom perished, not those with absolutely no resources, but those with sufficient to scrape together to pay a family's passage from the nearest port; it is interesting, too, because it altered the balance among Irish Baptists as a whole, from rural to urban, from south and west toward the north and east. The churches in Connaught and Tyrone were decimated; many in the midlands were so weakened that their demise was only a matter of time. And of course, emigration did not stop in 1849 but continued unchecked through the remainder of the century, those who remained fearing a recurrence of the potato blight (38.) and those who had gone sending encouragement and remittances to persuade others to join them.

There were other discouraging factors too. The Ulster rural economy had depended a great deal on handloom weaving, but in 1850 the first power looms appeared in Belfast, and it was clear that the days of the handloom were numbered. On the land a gradual transition from arable to livestock farming brought additional pressure to bear on the smaller men. Meantime the country towns were affected in another way since the extension of railways meant that British goods brought to Irish ports by the growing cross-channel steamship services could penetrate to all parts of Ireland at the expense of local products. In time, new linen factories would provide employment for women and girls and in Belfast at anyrate the shipyards and engineering works steady jobs for men, but the early 1850s were on the whole fairly depressing for the sort of people who composed most of the Irish Baptist churches. It was to be religious expansion rather than an improved economy which transformed the later years of the decade.

* * *

On 7th October, 1857 C.H. Spurgeon preached at the Crystal Palace to a crowd estimated at 24000.(39.) This was neither the beginning, nor the peak, of a remarkable career which made a considerable impact upon the popular conception of Baptists, within the British Isles. He visited Ireland on at least two occasions, preaching in Dublin and Belfast.(40.) In rural Ireland 'to change one's religion' was a step of the greatest magnitude and unpopularity; when submission to the ordinance of believers' baptism was added as a further deterrent, understandably those prepared to take the step were few indeed. The conspicuous success of Spurgeon's ministry, and the publicity attending it, made a change to or adoption of the Baptist position just a little more acceptable intellectually and socially. In 1859 there occurred in Ulster the phenomenon since familiar as 'the '59 Revival'. The details have been chronicled elsewhere and need not be repeated here.(41.) Importantly, however, religious concern spread across the whole protestant spectrum in a widening circle with mid-Antrim as its centre; religion became a talking point; meetings even in remote villages were recorded in the newspapers; church membership and activity amongst all the protestant denominations showed a notable increase. Nor did it all stop at the end of 1859. According to records at both Coleraine and Tobermore scores of men and women were converted, baptised and joined the respective fellowships in 1859, 1860,1861 and 1862; by 1863, so far as numbers were concerned, the ripples were dying away. In this period Baptist churches were formed at Ballymena,(42.) Carrickfergus,(43.) Portadown, Londonderry, Ballykeel, Portglenone and Dunfanaghy. Tandragee followed a little later in 1864. The membership of Tobermore rose from 176 in 1858 to 269 in 1860,(44.) that of the church in Belfast from 40 to 128 between the same dates.(45.)

Significantly, for the purposes of this paper, the people who were converted and joined Baptist churches during and immediately after the '59 Revival were drawn from a much broader section of society than those who had responded to the evangelistic efforts of the Baptist Irish Society. One can be certain of only a few individuals - David McKelvey, H.A. Gribbon, James Weatherup and possibly Alexander McCay, for instance, but from a look at the

records of Ballymena, Coleraine and Tobermore, with some knowledge of Belfast and Londonderry one is struck by the representative nature of those who joined at this particular period - not only small farmers but men with farms of respectable size, not simply unskilled labourers but people of managerial status, the occasional shop owner, the rather rarer mill owner or manager. At least one clergyman was involved - R.M. Henry. Paul Henry writes of him - 'He, like my grandfather had been a Presbyterian minister, but the strong evangelical conscience which swept Ireland in 1859 had not left him untouched. After much thought and, I do not doubt, many prayers, he rose in his pulpit one day and announced to an astonished congregation that he felt it would be unfair to continue in his present position as their clergyman owing to his changed views and some fundamental differences in regard to baptism, and he left the church.'(46.) He was incidentally pastor of Great Victoria Street for some years, before he moved even further to the theologically 'left'.

A summary of the then occupations of Baptists appears in the 1861 census (see Appendix) which also shows a degree of literacy comparing favourably with the major denominations Unfortunately Baptists are not separately distinguished in 1871 or later, but one gets the impression that the upward social move resulting on the one hand from the losses of the famine years and on the other from the acquisitions following the '59 Revival were at least maintained. This is not to say that the change was marked, nor was it uniform,(47.) but overall it was sufficient to have a bearing on later developments.

The effects of the '59 Revival do not seem to have been felt in the southern provinces. At Athlone in March 1861 for instance poverty was still a main topic since, by report 'The potatoes are double the usual price at this season, fuel is also scarce and dear and the poor are in a sad state; even some of our people, comfortable last year are suffering. A brother of the Rahue church writes to me to say that on account of the failure of his potatoes he is in distress.'(48.) Meantime Cork maintained its strength with fortuitous additions - in February 1850 'W.H. Patton of H.M. ship 'Superb' now lying at Queenstown harbour', in May, 1851 a theological student (and his wife) from the Established church, and in October, 1851 a lady from Sweden temporarily in the city.(49.) Waterford must have had difficulty in keeping track of its members since, in the years 1851 to 1871, apart from movements within Ireland, the church received people from Bolton, Dunstable, Cardigan, Edinburgh, Rochdale, Coningsly, Holywell (Flintshire), Appledore (Devon), Llanelly, Maesberllan (Breconshire), Glasgow, London, Wales and Australia.(50.) It is impossible to know the business upon which the people concerned travelled. Some were certainly military, like James Kearney a private in the 47th Infantry Regiment received in 1851 and the three members of the band of the 30th Regiment transferred from the Baptist church in Halifax in 1869, others may well have been concerned with the shipping and commerce of the port. On the whole it seems likely that the lower middle-class, commercial element remained the most important. Reverting to the north, the church at Academy Street, Belfast had grown beyond the capacity of the building and in 1861 took a lease of Victoria Hall in May Street. Thence in 1864 the majority moved to the present site in Great Victoria Street.(51.) In 1873 the remainder moved to a new building in Regent Street to become the second Baptist church in Belfast.(52.) Bearing in mind that names appearing in trust deeds must not be taken as necessarily representative of a congregation, one may note that in the 1860s Belfast had in membership an architect, two engineers, a couple of merchants and a commercial traveller,(53.) also that the move from Academy Street to the recently laid-out Great Victoria Street was deliberately from an industrial to a residential area of mainly artisan housing. At Conlig on the other hand there is little if any evidence of social change; of seven marriages recorded between 1864 and 1877 the bridegrooms (at least five of whom, and possibly all, were church members) consisted of three labourers, two weavers, one stone-cutter and one watchmaker.(54.)

It is now time to record the effects of certain developments in America - the civil war, and the emergence of Messrs. Moody and Sankey. As a result of the first the supply of cotton to the mills of Europe was considerably reduced and at times in the 1860s completely cut off. The demand for linen in substitution transformed the industry in Ulster; Belfast was the principle beneficiary of the boom which extended into the 1870s and produced the city which our parents and grandparents knew; not only the huge mills on the Shankill, Crumlin and Falls Roads, not only the dozens of making-up factories and warehouses wherever they could be fitted in, not only the imposing headquarters buildings in Donegall Square, Linenhall Street, Bedford Street and Ormeau Avenue, but a vast expansion of good working-class housing, which also provided for the thriving shipyards and engineering works. Elsewhere in Ulster the linen towns saw old mills extended and new mills built - in the Lagan Valley, Banbridge, Lurgan, Portadown, Ballymena, Dungannon, Londonderry and Cookstown - to mention only some of them. This was Ulster's industrial heyday, a time of optimism and activity, of mill girls singing in the streets and even farmers satisfied with the price of flax and the sales of provisions. Moody and Sankey visited Ireland on four occasions between 1867 and 1892. The Irish Baptist Magazine records something of the fervour of the evangelistic meetings held not only in Ulster but in Dublin, Limerick, Cork and Waterford.(55.) The Waterford Church Book describes the meetings in that city, mentions a number of converts but does not record that any of them joined the Baptist church; nor do numbers in membership in Limerick and Cork in 1892 (56.) suggest that either had experienced any recent influx. Nevertheless it must be noted that the number of members of Irish Baptist churches rather more than doubled between 1865 and 1891 (57.) and it is hard to escape the conclusion that this was connected with the evangelistic efforts of those days. Significantly perhaps, the church at Regent Street which had started from the remnant left in Victoria Hall in 1864 had grown by 1887 to 264 and was thus referred to in 1896 on their move to Antrim Road '...the membership being composed almost exclusively of the labouring and artisan classes....' (58.) When it is remembered that Mountpottinger, drawing from the same stratum of society and starting in 1891 with 46 members, increased within five years to 197, (59.) it seems not unreasonable to conclude that, compared with 1859, the movement of the last quarter of the century appealed to and drew from a rather narrower section of society - people interested in and able to travel to the huge meetings held by the evangelists, meetings where, in contrast to 1859, singing held a more prominent place than prayer. In other words, and not to labour the point, the people who joined during these years were predominantly of 'blue collar' background. And they brought some of their preferences with them - perhaps 'Sacred Songs and Solos' tells its own tale! Outside Belfast, churches were founded at Lurgan, Clough, Dungannon, Killyleagh, Fivemilehill, Lisnagleer, Gortmerron and Milltown.

Part of the increased membership between 1865 and 1891 must be attributed, of course, to Dublin where Hugh D. Brown became pastor in 1884 and was responsible for the transfer of most of the congregation from Lower Abbey Street to Harcourt Street in 1887. Within seven years numbers there had increased tenfold. One of the reasons for the move was that some, possibly a majority of the congregation of Lower Abbey Street lived on the south side of the city, a trend which was continued and accentuated when in 1891 the remainder established themselves as a separate church in Phibsboro on the north side. The point of all this is that the southern suburbs of Rathmines and Rathgar were the socially acceptable parts of Dublin and that Hugh D. Brown, from a wealthy family in the area, with his good Trinity law degree, commanding presence and warm personality naturally attracted thence people of his own social and intellectual milieu. Already the Dublin church possessed, through the Warner family, connections going back to Commonwealth times; (60.) amongst the members were business people and civil servants, including the Surveyor of Customs for Dublin; (61.) during

Hugh D. Brown's ministry Harcourt Street could count at least three J.P.'s in membership, and through its pastor's personal friendship with C.H. Spurgeon and its position in Ireland's capital city was undoubtedly the most influential church in the denomination, and with 337 members in 1892, by far the largest. (62.)

Elsewhere in the south the several small churches continued their circumscribed existence. D.P. Kingdon has already commented on intermarriage within the Waterford church; (63.) in 1892 the wedding of Mr. W.F. Godbey and Miss F.E. Curtis, both children of deacons, contributed further to the tangle; their migration to Aberystwith in 1893 also followed precedent. (64.) Athlone continued an honoured tradition of 'marrying into the regiment' when in 1876 Rebecca Walsh at 19 years of age married a corporal in the Army Service Corps and in 1887 Annie Doran, a weaver's daughter married a private soldier from the Berkshire Regiment, the latter being one of the few cases where a parent was recorded other than as 'Farmer'. Brides were recorded variously as 'Teacher', 'Draper's Assistant', 'Spinster' and 'Lady' - this last being the daughter of a Baptist Minister! (65.) At Moate English names persisted - Samuel Lowe (of Cromwellian origins), Benjamin Greene ('a worthy representative of one of the oldest Baptist families in the country') (66.) and Joseph Pegg, wool buyer, (67.) possibly associated with the English-established woollen mill in Athlone. At Brannockstown John La Touche, the outstanding example of a Baptist who was at the same time a major landowner and county magnate, opened in 1882 the small but most architecturally pleasing Baptist church building in Ireland. (68.) His co-trustees were substantial farmers in the neighbourhood, (69.) currently tenants but shortly to become owners under the Land Purchase Acts.

A brief look at the north must conclude this part of the paper. After the linen boom of the 1870s Ulster experienced, between 1880 and 1895 the effects of the so-called 'great depression'. Agriculture seems to have suffered most, and a visitor to the Grange church wrote in 1882 'I am made painfully familiar with an amount of poverty I am unable adequately to describe. Providentially potatoes and meal are cheap'.(70.) A general comment of 1886 speaks of 'the unceasing drain of emigration' (71.) while at Lisnagleer in 1887/8, with some 60 members, annual income was down to around £55 but had returned to £80 in 1895, signalling the beginning of better times.(72.) The fact that in 1894 Lisnagleer erected extra stabling in the churchyard (73.) tells us something else of significance - that some members at least came from beyond walking distance, and were well above the poverty line. But in farming long term changes were at work independent of booms and slumps. An address at the Annual Meetings held in Coleraine in 1894 on the topic 'Hindrances to the growth of our village churches' included the following:- 'Thirty years ago we had numbers of large farmers who gave employment to one, two or more families the entire season, but all this has passed away. However we may try to account for it, that class of farmers has almost disappeared....'(74.) It is true that the speaker misread the causes, but he correctly identified the effects of a change from arable to pasture farming and the introduction of a more efficient, that is labour-saving, agriculture. From henceforth village churches were going to have increasing difficulty in keeping up their numbers. Higher wages and better living conditions were already in evidence but growth was problematical.

In the cities and manufacturing towns, however, the picture was brighter and the social spectrum widening, Coleraine had two mill owners, a surgeon and at least one lawyer;(75.) at Carrickfergus a leading figure was John Weatherup, director of a local spinning mill who also played a very active part in the civic life of the community; a fellow church member was David Pasley, manager of a branch of the Northern Bank.(76.) In 1886 the Medical Officer of Health for Belfast was Brigade Surgeon, Lieut. Col. Robert Waters, C.B., J.P. who, after a distinguished army career had returned to Tobermore and, despite his official duties elsewhere, retained his interest in and membership of Tobermore Baptist Church.(77.) A member at Tandragee and contributor to the Irish Baptist

Magazine was solicitor E.D. Atkinson.(78.), whilst at Banbridge the membership included Thomas Card B.A., solicitor to the Town Commissioners of Banbridge and Dromore.(79.) Londonderry of course had the prominent merchant Alexander McCay, J.P.,(80.) and Regent Street the Collector of Customs Mr. J. Foryster.(81.) The Great Victoria Street church in Belfast had probably the largest business representation including David McKelvey,(82.) Henry McClelland,(83.) H.H. Graham (84.) and R.G. Glendinning, linen manufacturer who became in 1906 the sole Irish Baptist M.P. at Westminster.(85.) Other names and many other occupations and professions could doubtless be added, but these are sufficient to make the point that whilst most Irish Baptists were of humbler origin the denomination was not without some representatives of the professional and business classes.

Bearing in mind that even by 1900 Irish Baptists formed only about .1 per cent of the population, it seems a reasonable conclusion that during the nineteenth century the denomination changed from being a tiny enclave, a minority within a minority, to a still insignificant community but at least socially and economically more representative of the population as a whole.

* * *

I should like to round out the picture by mentioning some of the things which were more prominent in denominational life a hundred years ago than they are today.

Pastor Boggs showed me a little booklet written in 1850 by George L. Carson, surgeon of Coleraine and son Dr. Alexander Carson, in which he described at length, and mourned, the loss of his two sisters Eliza and Susan both of whom had died in their 'teens. (He himself died in his 50s). One could describe the booklet as pure Victorian sentimentality. Yet it gave expression to feelings which over and over again affected almost every family in our community, not simply in time of plague or famine, but in the ordinary course. Victorian families tended as we know to be ten or a dozen strong, but it was rare for more than a proportion of them to reach middle age. Infant mortality, even of appalling dimensions, was not unexpected or really deeply felt, but it was the death toll, from tuberculosis particularly, of young people known and loved in the age group thirteen to twenty-five, which was particularly keenly felt - and produced in acute form theological questionings which we experience much less often. Another issue which has even more markedly fallen into the denominational background is temperance. The Victorians have been accused of hypocrisy in holding up hands of horror at the drinking habits of the lower classes whilst condoning the less public excesses of those higher up the social pyramid. But who could fail to be moved by the continual drunkenness seen daily in every town and village - encouraged by cheap liquor and farcical licensing regulations? Irish Baptists did not establish any denominational temperance society but vigorously supported, in most if not all churches, the various temperance and total abstinence organisations already in existence, forming their own Bands of Hope in association with the Irish Temperance League.

Irish Baptists of the last century were no less accustomed than we are to living in times of political violence - whether Repeal, Catholic Emancipation, the Fenian Movement, the Land War, sectarian confrontation or political assassination. All of this Baptists from time to time deplored in personal or at anyrate non-official sentiments. But on Home Rule there was a consensus. In 1892 the view was expressed in the Irish Baptist Magazine '... the Baptists of Ireland are, almost to a man, opposed to Home Rule'. Then in 1893 a circular must have been sent around the churches seeking their individual views, for the Magazine records replies from at least twenty-one of them almost all expressing strong objection to Mr. Gladstones' Bill; only from Limerick was the reply in any way equivocal. That churches should have met to discuss and pass resolutions on a political issue may seem strange to us indeed.

In England there were issues of social concern, like slavery, child labour

and immorality, which engaged the attention of Baptists but, publicly at least, not of Irish Baptists. The latter tended to be rather narrower, not to say parochial, in their interests. But they worked harder than we do, for longer hours; holidays were the exception, not the rule, and frugality was a virtue in its own right. On the other hand there was far more financial reliance on Great Britain than there need have been by most Irish Baptist bodies, though this view perhaps reflects the intervening half century or more of political independence and, like much else - television, the ability to fly from Aldergrove to half the world, or the facilities of the Baptist Union office for which I am indebted in the compilation of this paper, they would have known nothing about.

H.D. Gribbon.

Numbers of Baptists in Ireland per census Reports.

1861	4237
1871	4957
1881	4879
1891	5150
1901	7062

Number of Baptists in Ireland by counties and cities, 1861.

Leinster		Connaught	
Carlow County	2	Galway Town	2
Dublin City	185	Galway County	16
Dublin Suburbs	74	Leitrim County	15
Dulin County	28	Mayo County	13
Kildare County	9	Roscommon County	8
Kilkenny City	1	Sligo County	65
Kilkenny County	15		119
King's County	46		
Longford County	-		
Louth County	2		
Meath County	1		
Queen's County	-		
Westmeath	73		
Wexford	8		
Wicklow	11		
	455	Ulster	
Munster		Antrim County	859
Clare County	-	Armagh County	35
Cork City	66	Belfast Town	227
Cork County	62	Cavan County	2
Kerry County	5	Donegal County	136
Limerick City	13	Down County	319
Limerick County	1	Fermanagh County	9
Tipperary County	17	Londonderry County	1534
Waterford City	52	Monaghan County	6
Waterford County	9	Tyrone County	311
	225		3438

Ireland : TOTAL 4237

H.C. 1863, lix, 11

Proportion per cent of each religious profession five years old and upward who could neither read nor write. April 1861.

Ireland	
Established Church	16.0
Roman Catholic	45.8
Presbyterian	11.1
Methodist	9.0
Independants	6.8
Baptists	9.2
Quakers	4.1
Others	11.8

H.C. 1863, lix, 39

Number of Baptists in 1861 in each town containing 1500 inhabitants or more.

Antrim	10	Kingstown	6
Athlone	17	Letterkenny	71
Athy	1	Limavady	1
Balbriggan	6	Limerick	13
Ballina	7	Lisburn	11
Ballymena	84	Londonderry	72
Banbridge	67	Lurgan	1
Bandon	3	Mallow	1
Bangor	1	Moate	18
Belfast	227	Monaghan	6
Birr	10	Newbridge	3
Boyle	1	New Ross	5
Carrickfergus	31	Newtownards	15
Clonakilty	4	Portadown	21
Clonmel	1	Queenstown	1
Coleraine	132	Ranelagh	8
Cookstown	8	Rathmines	25
Cork	66	Roscommon	1
Donaghadee	4	Sandymount	3
Donegal	3	Sligo	7
Dublin	185	Strabane	1
Dundalk	1	Thurles	1
Dungannon	2	Tramore	1
Enniskillen	1	Warrenpoint	1
Fermoy	15	Waterford	52
Galway	2	Wexford	1
Goldenbridge	1	Youghal	5
Haroldscross	1		
Holywood	7		
Kells	1		
Kilkenny	1		
			1251

H.C. 1863, lix, 17

Analysis from table of occupations by religious professions; 1861. Baptists

Agriculture	530	(including 315 farmers, 174 farm labourers)
Industry	583	(including 170 linen weavers, 60 weavers unspecified, 51 labourers)
Out-workers	146	(including 54 dressmakers, 62 seamstresses)
Transport	121	(including 101 sailors)
Business	37	
Professions	14	
Government	31	
Education	35	
Retailing	143	(including food processing)
Service	121	(including 100 domestic servants)
Others	69	
	1830	

H.C. 1863, lix, 715

FOOTNOTES

Contractions - Baptist Magazine: BM; Irish Baptist Magazine: IBM;
- Journal of the Irish Baptist Historical Society: IBHS Jour.

1. I.J.W. Oakley : 'A History of the Baptist Irish Society;' IBHS Jour., iii, 55
2. J. Warburton : History of the City of Dublin (London, 1818), II, 829.
3. J. Sheehan, : South Westmeath : farm and folk (Dublin, 1978), p.63; Griffith Valuation, 1854, Union of Tullamore, Parish of Rahugh, pp. 198-202.
4. Under 2 Ann (Ir.), c.6, 1704 any person holding any position, civil or military, under the crown was required within three months of taking up office, to produce a certificate of having received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper 'according to the usage of the Church of Ireland....' Repealed 1780.
5. From membership lists in the Cork Church Book, and Richard Lucas, Cork directory for the year 1787 (Cork, 1788).
6. D.P. Kingdon, 'Charles Hardcastle of Waterford', IBHS Jour., ii, 8, and Pigots' Directory, 1820.
7. John Ryland, The work of faith ... illustrated in the life and death of Rev. Andrew Fuller (2nd ed. London, 1818), p.243.
8. Warburton. loc. cit.
9. MS, 'Accounts of the Education and other Funds belonging to the Baptist Congregation meeting in Swift's Abbey, Dublin.' Micro-film P. 5647 in National Library, Dublin.
10. G.V. Sampson, Memoir explanatory of the chart and survey of the county of Londonderry (London, 1814) p. 312.
11. BM, 1840, p. 502
12. Robert McMaster, History of the Baptist church at Grange (Belfast; 1853), p.16.
13. The traditional date 1795 is clearly incorrect for a Baptist church, although some Baptists may have been involved with the first Independents. Alternative dates, 1800, 1805 and 1830 receive support from:- IBM, August 1896; Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Parish of Coleraine, Blakely's memoir, Sep. 1835; T.H. Mullin, Coleraine in modern times (Belfast, 1979), p. 110; MS notes of late H.B. Gribbon.
14. G. Yuille (ed.) History of the Baptists in Scotland (Glasgow, 1926), p. 58. R.A. Boggs, Alexander Carson of Tobermore (Belfast, 1969) pp. 18-20.
15. BM, 1842, p. 107.
16. George Benn, History of the Town of Belfast (Belfast, 1823), p. 117.
17. Dane Skilling, 'History of Great Victoria Street Church, Belfast' in Irish Baptist, Nov. 1947 et seq.
18. BM, 1840, p. 343.
19. BM, 1844, p. 495.
20. BM, 1815, p. 207.
21. BM, 1836, p. 36.
22. It seems possible that some remnants of the old Cromwellian planted Baptists survived at, for instance, Athlone, and Moate, accounting for the re-emergence of certain English names associated with that period. A comment from the pastor at Athlone in 1840 may refer to people of substance coming into membership '... my congregation there improves a little and it seems to be composed of a description of persons that the clergy and landlords will not be able to frighten away.' BM, 1840, p. 450.
23. BM, 1836, p. 168.
24. BM, 1849, p. 63.
25. BM, 1840, p. 449.
26. BM, 1843, p. 71.
27. BM, 1844, p. 495.

28. BM, 1845, p. 282.
29. D.P. Kingdon, Baptist Evangelism in 19th century Ireland (Belfast, 1965), p. 17.
30. Ordnance Survey Memoir, parish Cappagh, Co. Tyrone says that the Baptist meeting-house at Camowen was built by Mr. Buchanan who was at the time the memoir was written (1837) consul at New York. Ordnance Survey Memoir, parish Coleraine, Co. Londonderry (1835) says that the Baptist churches at Coleraine, Letterkenny and Omagh have combined to support an itinerant preacher. Carson's correspondence from Tobermore includes letters indicating a close friendship with Buchanan. (per R.A. Boggs).
31. Cork Church Book, pp. 186, 193.
32. BM, 1844, p. 167.
33. BM, 1834, p. 399.
34. Cecil Woodham-Smith, The Great Hunger (London, 1962).
35. BM, 1846, p. 383.
36. IBM, 1878, p. 18.
37. Waterford Church Book, 11 March 1847.
38. The spraying of potato crops against blight was unknown before 1882.
39. Encyclopedia Brittanica (11th ed.), vol. 25, p.742.
40. L.E. Deens; 'Moody, Spurgeon and Irish Baptists'IBHS Jour., xi, 32-3.
41. J.T. Carson, God's River in Spate (Belfast, 1958).
42. Incorporating the previously existing group at Broughshane.
43. This was in fact the third time a Baptist church had been established in Carrickfergus, both the Cromwellian foundation and that of 1844 having had but brief existence.
44. D.P. Kingdon, 'Irish Baptists and the Revival of 1859', IBHS Jour., i. 25.
45. Dane Skilling, op cit.
46. Paul Henry, Further Reminiscences (Belfast, 1973), p. 25.
47. At Conlig in 1861 one of the members is recorded as having died 'in the Union-house'. A Coleraine comment apparently reflecting on this says 'We entirely support our own poor and would think it a disgrace were one of our members to be an inmate of a workhouse'. BM, 1861, pp. 129, 253.
48. BM, 1861, p. 201.
49. One of these from the Cork Church Book is worth noting in detail, Mr. James Reid of George's Street 'was preparing for the ministry in the Established Church and in settling his theological views began to doubt some of the dogmas taught in the Prayer Book. Having been brought into contact wih the pastor of the Baptist church he was led to see the scripturalness of the views held by the Baptists'. Mr. Reid was baptised and joined the Cork church in May 1851. In June his wife followed him. Unfortunately they remained with the church less than a year for '... through the visit of a gentleman who was driven into the cove by stress of weather Brother Reid has received an invitation to go to St. Helena to engage in the double capacity of classical tutor and missionary and would depart thither via America in a short time'. On 7 March 1852 'The church adopted the resolution very cordially and only regretted losing friends who had endeared themselves to the little society.'
50. Waterford Church Book.
51. Dane Skilling, op cit.
52. Centenary brochure issued by Antrim Road Baptist Church.
53. Trust Deeds in Baptist Union Office.
54. Marriage Register in Baptist Union Office.
55. L.E. Deens, op. cit.
56. Membership in 1892 was 24 and 28 respectively.
57. Baptist Union of Ireland, Assembly 1982 Handbook, p. 30.
58. IBM, 1896, p. 107.
59. Graham Hibbert, Mountpottinger Baptist Tabernacle, 1891 - 1977 (Belfast,

1978), pp. 7, 17. The first members included a compositor, an art metal worker and a builder.
60. IBM, 1893, p. 200.
61. ibid., 1882, obituary dated 3 May.
62. Most of this information is from one of two sources:- L.E. Deens, Man of Stature (Belfast, 1968) and L. Harris, ' The beginnings of the work at Phibsborough IBHS Jour., ix, 4.
63. D.P. Kingdon, 'Charles Hardcastle of Waterford', IBHS Jour., ii, 5.
64. IBM, 1892, p. 201; Waterford Church Book, p. 54.
65. Athlone Marriage Register in Baptist Union Office.
66. IBM, 1885, p. 95.
67. Slater's Directory, 1881.
68. Robert Dunlop, Plantation of Renown (1970).
69. Trust Deeds in Baptist Union Office.
70. IBM, 1882, p. 44.
71. ibid., 1886, p. 186.
72. Lisnagleer Account Book.
73. J.R. Grant, 'The History of Lisnagleer Baptist Church', IBHS Jour., iv, 12.
74. IBM, 1894, p. 141.
75. ibid. 1896, p.209.
76. Trevor Lyttle, 'The Weatherup family and the Carrickfergus Baptist Church'. IBHS Jour., xi, 3.
77. IBM, 1886, p. 31; W.T. Pike (ed.), Contemporary Biographies (Brighton, 1909), p. 464.
78. R.A. Heak, 'Notes from the history of the Tandragee church', IBHS Jour., i, 45.
79. IBM, 1882, p. 31; Henderson's Directory, 1881.
80. G.R. Bennett, 'Alexander McCay', IBHS Jour., v, 23.
81. IBM, 1883, p. 16.
82. W.T. Pike, op. cit., p. 606.
83. Belfast Newsletter, obituary, 12 Aug. 1893.
84. Henderson's Directory, 1894.
85. W.T. Pike, op. cit., p. 381.

A MEDLEY OF MEMORIES

This paper was first read to the Society on 4 December 1969 and repeated at the annual meeting on 17 May 1983. The text where appropriate, has been updated by way of footnotes. Ed.

When it was first suggested that I should give this talk I hesitated about agreeing, and ever since I started to prepare for this evening I have been regretting that I did accept. The more diligently I scraped my memory the clearer it became that I had very little of historical importance or value to contribute to the records of the Historical Society. For this reason I have decided to change the title of my talk from the one originally fixed - 'Sixty Years Among Irish Baptists' - to the more general one above. This will give me more elbow room, and I hope nobody will feel cheated if what I have to say turns out to have less of purely Baptist interest than the original title led them to expect.

Now it seemed to me that a chronological framework would be the most natural one into which to arrange my reminiscences, such as they are, and that being so I had better begin at the very beginning.

My first contact with Irish Baptists was when I was not more than eight or nine years old. At that time my mother and I were living with her parents in Athlone. The family was a Church of Ireland one, but every Sunday evening when the service in our own church ended we made our way to an 'after church' meeting in the little Baptist chapel. The pastor then was J.W.D. Freeman. He was still a bachelor, and still a very young man, and he was frequently in our home until he found a wife in the neighbouring town of Ballinasloe. To this day I am indebted to Mr. Freeman for two good turns he did me. It was he who gave me my first banana, as a reward for some trivial success in connection with one of his children's services. And it was he who awakened me, with some unnecessary vigour as I still think, to the fact that there was no hope of my ever achieving fame as a vocalist. He did that one evening when he forcibly ejected me from the children's choir which he was endeavouring to train despite my enthusiastic and vigorous rendering of the piece we were practising.

When I was eleven years of age our family moved to Dublin, and it was there that I was converted, at the age of 15, in the Boy's Department of the Y.M.C.A. at a mission conducted by Frederick P. Wood who, with his brothers, later founded the Young Life Campaign. At that time he was known as Fritz Wood, the Boy Preacher. It was only when the First World War broke out that the implications of the name 'Fritz' were felt to be embarrassing, and the change was made to Frederick.

At the time of my conversion we were still C. of I., but my new evangelical experience made me dissatisfied with the ministry we were sitting under, and I began to attend the Phibsboro Baptist chapel where John Dinnen Gilmore was the pastor. He later became the whole time secretary to the Union and the Home Mission. His wife was a very gracious lady, a granddaughter of the famous Dr. Alex Carson of Tobermore. One of their sons, now dead, served for a time as doctor with the BMS in Congo,(1.) and their other son is still living, and is in membership in the Grosvenor Road church, Dublin.

Before long I applied for baptism and became a member of Phibsboro. This was somewhere around 1905 when the Welsh Revival, which began in 1904 under the leadership of Evan Roberts, was influencing the religious life of many

communities outside of Wales. Perhaps it was because Dublin is so very easy of access from Holyhead we frequently had converts of the Revival in our services. They were very ready to come over and give their testimonies and conduct meetings on the lines of the informal gatherings characteristic of the Revival. For a time there was great excitement and much emotion but it gradually subsided, and, looking back, I can't honestly say that the membership of the church was appreciably increased by it all.

When I was about 18 years of age Pastor Gilmore broached the idea of full time service. At the time I was a Civil Servant on the staff of the Local Government Board, but I found it possible so to arrange my hours in the office that I was able to attend the lectures in the College. Ambrose U.G. Bury was the Principal then. He was a Trinity graduate who had, I believe, studied for a time at Yale University in the States, and also worked in association with D.L. Moody in Northfield before returning to his native land. During his principalship he studied for the Bar, and after he was called to the Bar he emigrated to Canada where he became a member of one of the State Legislatures and ultimately a judge. When he left Dublin James Willoughby, M.A., who had been a tutor under him, became principal. He had not the brilliance nor the general culture of his predecessor, but he was a solid, conscientious teacher who did good work for the College until he resigned to join the ranks of the Strict Baptists in England because he thought the Irish Baptists not strict enough in their beliefs and practices. He was a very scrupulous man, particularly in the matter of Sunday observance. Many stories used to be told to show how rigid and unyielding his principles were in this connection but I suspect that the best of them were apocryphal, cleverly thought up to poke fun at his foibles. The Matron of the College prior to and during his Principalship was a Mrs. Kinch of whose history and background I know nothing. She was however of kindred spirit in every way to Mr. Willoughby, and we students lived in hopeful expectation of a romance developing. However it never materialized.

During my student years the Annual Assembly met twice in Harcourt Street church, Dublin. The visiting speaker on one of these occasions was John Thomas of Myrtle Street, Liverpool, an amazingly eloquent, diminutive preacher. He was worthy of the tribute once paid to Joe Devlin the famous Nationalist M.P. for West Belfast prior to the First World War - he was indeed 'a pocket Demosthenes'. The other visitor was D.J. Hiley of the famous Broadmead Chapel in Bristol. He was a very different type from John Thomas both in his appearance and in his type of oratory. He was a preacher of the Boanerges school, and I remember two of his sermons to this day, but my most vivid recollection of him is of seeing him astride the tame elephant in the Dublin Zoo at the Garden Party which was given by Hugh D. Brown, puffing clouds of smoke from his briar pipe - a sight which I am afraid greatly shocked and distressed some of the Northern delegates.

Towards the end of 1912 I received a call to the pastorate of the Waterford church. Mr. Brown encouraged me to accept this, so I started there on the first Sunday of January in 1913. Mr. Gilmore accompanied me to Waterford and preached me in on the Sunday. On the Monday we both went to Clonmel where a monthly meeting was still being held in a very dilapidated Baptist Chapel despite the fact that there were no longer any Baptists in the town. Mr. Gilmore felt that ecclesiastical protocol demanded that we pay a courtesy call on the local Presbyterian minister, so we visited his manse prior to our meeting. When we were shown into his study Mr. Gilmore introduced himself as the secretary to the Baptist Union of Ireland, and me as the new pastor in Waterford, only to be met with the stern, uncompromising assertion that the Baptists had no right to be in Clonmel at all! They had no members there. They were intruders. That of course was long before the ecumenical movement had made its appearance but it does illustrate the spirit that prevailed in some places between the different denominations.(2.)

I was in Waterford from 1913 to 1919. It is indicative of the changes

wrought by half a century that the Baptist church there was then selfsupporting with a membership of about 25, and an average attendance of about 30. Benjamin Bennett, one of the members and a fairly wealthy businessman, had recently died and had bequeathed some house property to the church from which, I believe, it is still drawing rents. The church secretary, when I went, was A.B. Hamilton, but a couple of years later he was transferred by his business firm to their Limerick branch. He and his brother Peter, who was a member of the Limerick church, were two characters of the denomination in those days. They were both exceedingly shrewd and capable businessmen, very critical and outspoken about the way the Dublin office handled denominational affairs, and many an Assembly discussion was enlivened when one or the other took the floor. I remember 'A.B.' with particular affection and gratitude. More than once he ticked me off when in my inexperience I did something which I ought not to have done, but right up to the time of his death years later he was a firm and unfailing friend.

In those days there was a fairly strong Protestant population in Waterford and the Evangelicals in all denominations were friendly and active, but since then there have been big changes. Two, if not three, C. of I. churches have been closed and the parishes amalgamated. The Presbyterian and Methodist churches have been much reduced in strength, and our own little fellowship is, of course, only hanging on by its teeth.(3.) It looks as if nothing short of a miracle, a genuine Heaven-born revival, can get the stagnant waters in the Protestant churches in Waterford moving again, and it is the conviction that such a miracle is not beyond the power of God that makes some of us reluctant to surrender our outpost in that city.

It was during my time in Waterford that the 1916 Rising occurred. It broke out in Dublin on the Easter Monday, and, as it happened, I travelled to Dublin that morning en route to a convention for the Deepening of Spiritual Life which was to be held in Greystones. When we got out of the train in Kingsbridge the news met us that the city was in turmoil. I managed to make my way to a friend's house just outside the city boundary on the north side of the city, and there I had to stay for ten days, unable to let anyone know where or how I was, because of course no postal or telephone services were operating. I tried a couple of times to get across the city to continue my journey to Greystones but found it was too dangerous. Streets were being raked by rifle fire. I saw one man killed on the footpath opposite to where I was sheltering at the time, right on the spot which I had vacated only a moment or two earlier. The house in which I was staying was close to the Glasnevin cemetery and several times I saw funerals making their way there, the corpse laid in some primitive coffin (one was an orange box) because the undertakers' establishments were closed. A field adjoining the cemetery was used to bury the victims of the shooting. One big trench was dug, and I saw literally scores of bodies, still in the clothes in which they had died, brought up in a Corporation cleansing van and dumped one on top of the other in the common grave. It was a gruesome sight.

It was also during my time in Waterford that the First World War was fought, 1914-1918. My closest friend joined up and was killed when in France with the R.F.C. My own convictions were definitely those of the Christian Pacifists but as the war dragged on I became more and more uncomfortable in my mind. I felt that although I could not conscientiously fight I must find some way of sharing the hardships and risks of those fighting, so I offered for a time of service with the YMCA in France. I went out in August 1918 and spent four months there, part of it at the base and part at an advanced dressing post close to the Front helping to tend the wounded as they were brought in. When I was three months out the armistice was signed. I need hardly say that I am not claiming any credit for that! It was a case of 'post hoc' not 'propter hoc'.

In 1919 I got a call to the Bloomfield church, Belfast, but I was there for only twelve months as the Home Mission felt it could not continue the grant which had enabled the church to call me. In 1920 I moved across the city to the

Cliftonpark Avenue church and I was there until I went to Harcourt Street church in Dublin in 1925. My years in Cliftonpark were very happy years. William George Frizelle and James Guthrie were two of the leading office-bearers, both men of strong convictions and forceful personality but always considerate, encouraging and helpful where I was concerned. Some of those years in the early 'Twenties were very troubled years in Belfast. The disturbances then were more widespread than the recent ones, and coldblooded murders were common occurrences on both sides. When the troubles subsided a wave of religious revival hit the city. Evangelists such as W.P. Nicholson, Peter Connolly and others drew bumper congregations, and many of our own pastors experienced quite remarkable blessing. Pastor Ruddock was one of these. He was in the East End church at the time and many professed conversion in the crowded services there.

W.P. Nicholson's ministry around that period was wonderfully blessed. Under it great numbers were convicted of sin, and the restitution made by penitents for the thefts which they had committed prior to their conversion reached such proportions that even those who were critical and unsympathetic towards the movement could not but be impressed. My own vivid recollection of 'W.P.' - apart from the occasion when I had the opportunity of preaching to him in Harcourt Street church one Sunday when he was in Dublin on holiday - is of one meeting in St. Enoch's church. Somehow or another it happened that I was alone with him in the vestry just before we went on to the platform. 'We'll have a wee word of prayer', he said, and dropped on his knees. The prayer was brief and pointed, and then, on his feet again, he stepped over to the mantlepiece, broke two eggs into a tumbler and swallowed them down! 'There's nothing like it', he said, when I voiced my wonder at his feat, 'there's nothing like it for lubricating the throat.'

At that time there was in Belfast a body known as 'The Belfast Baptist Council'. I for one regret that it was allowed to die. Membership was open to all office-bearers in the city churches. It met once a month with an average attendance, if I remember aright, of about 20. I acted as secretary to it for some years. We organized a certain number of activities in common, and were instrumental in instigating and assisting some extension work in the city. From time to time we arranged conferences to which we brought outstanding evangelical preachers from across the water - W.M. Robertson at that time in Toxteth Tabernacle, Liverpool, was one who came fairly often and Dr. James Mountain was another. At the monthly meetings the discussion of whatever business was on the agenda was always followed by an address from a local pastor or office-bearer on some matter of denominational interest. I cannot but think that if this could be revived it would be of benefit to our churches and would help to develop that spirit of denominational unity and loyalty which unfortunately is at rather a low ebb amongst us.

It was during these years too that concern about the Modernism in the BMS reached its height and hastened the formation of our own IBFM about which there had already been some discussion. Mr. Thompson covered all this ground very thoroughly in the paper he read at our last meeting(4.), and there is no need for me to say anything further about it.

In 1925 I received a call to the Harcourt Street church in Dublin. Since Hugh D. Brown's death in 1918 things there had been very unsettled. Prior to his death there had been division and discord amongst the members and this continued after he was gone. Pastor Metrustry who had been his colleague for a couple of years did not continue long on his own. He accepted a call to Rothesay and took his departure. After a brief interregnum the church called a young man from Scotland, a man who had served as a chaplain for some of the war years.(5.) He only remained twelve months because he found the theological climate amongst Irish Baptists uncongenial. When he left, an Australian minister who was at the time in a church in England was called, but his three years' stay was a time of storm and stress.(6.) He was a compelling preacher but an excessively selfwilled and militant man, with, as was later discovered, a

reputation for splitting churches. During the difficult years of his pastorate the political troubles in southern Ireland also reached their peak. Republican guerrillas frequently shot soldiers and policemen in the streets of Dublin. One prayer meeting night a military patrol was ambushed outside the church. The soldiers opened fire on their attackers, and some of the bullets smashed through the windows of the hall where the meeting was in progress, fortunately above the heads of those assembled. These immediately prostrated themselves on the floor, and from the account given to me afterward I gathered that the praying that night was marked by unusual intensity and fervency.

As a result of this combination of internal and external difficulties the membership of the church was much reduced, and the outlook was anything but rosy. I was much exercised about the call and ultimately wrote declining it, but the officebearers refused to accept my decision and asked me to reconsider it. I distinctly remember that one day, in my perplexity and uncertainty, I resorted to a practice which I had often warned others against. I closed my Bible and then allowed it to fall open putting my finger at random on the page to see if perchance I would get the guidance I sought. You can imagine how I felt when I started to read. The verse on which I stumbled was Jeremiah 42.15:

> 'Now therefore hear the word of the Lord ye remnant of Judah. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel. 'If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt and go to sojourn there then it shall come to pass that the sword which ye feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine whereof ye were afraid shall follow close after you there into Egypt, and there ye shall die.' '

That nearly put me off, but in my heart of hearts I had no faith in that method of seeking guidance and ultimately I offered to go to Dublin for twelve months if the church would be satisfied with that, leaving the final decision to be taken in the light of our experience during the year. At the end of nine months the church unanimously asked me to continue and I felt free to accept. As most of you know I was there for 38.5 years in all before I finally left.

Now my survey of those almost forty years must necessarily be very sketchy. There are many things I recall with pleasure which I think you might be interested in but which I cannot enter on for lack of time. I can only single out a few of the highlights of those happy years.

It was during this time that I paid my one and only visit to America. In 1928 the Baptist World Alliance met in Toronto. Herby Hunter was a student in the College at the time and he stirred up the officebearers to make it possible for me to go by paying my expenses. This they did and I and my wife had a most interesting six weeks, first in Canada and then in the eastern United States. We travelled in a boat specially chartered by the Baptist Union along with about 400 other fellow-Baptists, amongst whom were, Mr. A.B. Hamilton and his sister, and Mr. and Mrs. Hosford who happened to be home from the Argentine on furlough just then. On the boat we hobnobbed with many Baptist notabilities such as M.E. Aubrey, the secretary to the Baptist Union, Dr. T.R. Glover suspect in many quarters because of his theological liberalism, Dr. Charles Brown the famous pastor of Ferme Park church, Dr. S.W. Hughes who succeeded John Clifford at Westbourne Park, and an old friend, a fellow Irishman, W.Y. Fullerton, then Home Secretary to the BMS. In Toronto we had the excitement of Dr. T.T. Shields' attacks on the BWA and many of its leaders. One much publicised address which he gave was on 'Four Rotten Apples'. I cannot remember who the four ministers were whom he stigmatized but he did not hesitate to name them.

When I went back to Dublin in 1925 the headquarters of the Baptist Union of Ireland were still located at 45 Harcourt Street. I marvel at the way the work of the Union has grown since then. At that time the office was housed in one room in the College, the staff consisted of Pastor Gilmore (the Secretary) who spent several weeks every year in Great Britain, visiting churches there in the interests of the Home Mission, and his assistant, Miss Kathleen Macdougald, who certainly was not overworked.

Probably the biggest event of my pastorate was the transfer of the congregation from Harcourt Street in the city to Grosvenor Road in the suburb of Rathgar. This took place in 1942. The story of how it came to be effected is an interesting one, and remains in my memory as an outstanding example of Divine guidance. It must have been about three years previously that Cecil Macdougald, the then secretary of the church said to me one day, 'Louis, what would you think of our transferring from Harcourt Street to Grosvenor Hall?' (Perhaps I should mention in passing, for the benefit of those who may not know it, that this hall was really a very fine church building, occupying a good site in a residential suburb, and was originally a Baptist church. It had been erected about eighty years previously by English Baptists in the hope that a Baptist witness might be established there. The effort failed and the building was sold, passing into the possession of the Plymouth Brethren, but their numbers had been steadily going down for some time when Cecil spoke to me). I was astonished to hear the suggestion coming from him and told him so. I admitted that I had often myself wished that the church was there rather than where it was, now very much a downtown church, but I said, 'I never imagined that you would contemplate leaving Harcourt Street since you and your family have been associated with it since it was built'. 'Oh', he said 'times have changed and we must be realists. I see that it would be for the good of the work to make the change. I'll go down straight away and speak to some of the Brethren there and put the propositon to them.' I immediately said, 'No, Cecil, please don't do that if God wants us in Grosvenor He will open the door, and I would feel much happier if we did not try to push it open.' Rather reluctantly he agreed to hold his hand, and it was roughly three years later that a man called me on the telephone, a man who was neither a Baptist nor a Plymouth Brother, and said, 'Mr. Deens would you be interested to know that the Brethren are giving up in Grosvenor Road and the building is coming on the market?' I thanked him for the information and confessed that I was very much interested. I went straight away to Cecil and told him that we had got the green light, and he could now go to the Brethren and find out what the position really was. I need not go into all the details, but he discovered that the Jews had already put in a bid for the building. The Brethren much preferred to sell to another evangelical body, and when we agreed to pay £200 more than the £6000 offered by the Jews the deal was closed. The most striking feature of the transaction came later on however. Our members were unanimously in favour of the change except for one man, one of our oldest members. He opposed it strongly and asked for a copy of the Trust Deed that he might study it and see if there was any way legally he could stop it. This compelled us to examine the Trust Deed very closely ourselves. We discovered that it included a paragraph in which authority was given to the members to dispose of the Harcourt Street premises at anytime, on the condition that the proceeds were used to provide another building for Baptist worship within the boundary of the city of Dublin. Now the really impressive point here is that when Cecil Macdougald first spoke to me Grosvenor Hall was outside the city boundary, and our elderly dissentient could have successfully contested the move in the courts; but in the interval the city boundary had been extended, the hall was now within the prescribed limits and we were free to act. Looking back years afterwards we were all agreed that the move was a wise one, and that in making it we were following God's guidance.

Throughout my years in Dublin I was associated with the work of the College. I could tell many stories of our experiences in connection with it; stories of the Principal, stories of the students and stories of the various matrons. I knew Principal Spurgeon from the day when as a youth he arrived to begin his studies in Trinity College. I vividly remember the morning in the College when Ambrose Bury brought him into the classroom and introduced him to the students. From that time on he and I were intimate friends. We did not always agree on matters of church practice or denominational politics and occasionally relations for a time could be rather strained but any temporary

rift was speedily healed. He was a man of outstanding gifts, with an equipment of scholarship which impressed all who came in contact with him. It was unfortunate that for various reasons he failed to win the full confidence of our denomination as a whole. He was criticized and distrusted by many Irish Baptists and although the criticisms were often unfair and due to misunderstanding, I am afraid it must be acknowledged that he partly brought them upon himself by his dogged refusal very often to see the other man's point of view or make any concession to his prejudices. The successive generations of students were an unfailing source of interest to us, and, it must be confessed, often of worry. Today these students are scattered far and wide; a few are still with us in Ireland but the majority are serving elsewhere - some in England and Scotland, many others in Canada, the United States, Australia, one at least in Africa. The relations between church and College were intimate and happy, sometimes a little too much so, as for instance when it happened more than once a student returned to Dublin after graduation to claim a keen worker from the choir or Sunday School or C.E. Society as his wife. Our succession of matrons were an interesting collection. Some ex-students could tell amusing stories about Miss Murray whom they drove nearly distracted by their practical jokes when she was looking after them in the original building in Harcourt Street. And what a building that was! Four storeys high, with attics above, the most primitive kitchen arrangements, ancient furniture in classroom, lounge and bedrooms. College life really was spartan in those days compared with conditions today in Sandown Road. When Miss Murray retired one of the Grosvenor members, who had recently been left a widow with a very young son, was appointed. I'm afraid she encountered rough seas from time to time. I have a particularly vivid recollection of one of the ladies who offered her services when Mrs. Gill ultimately retired. She was asked by the House Committee to attend for an interview. She had excellent qualifications so far as domestic science but she was fairly young and attractive. When she left the room and we were discussing her suitability for the post some committee men thought that her personality might have a distracting effect on the more impressionable and susceptible students. For my part I had been particularly struck by the fact that she did not seem to have remained long in any of her previous jobs, and when I was asked for my opinion I gave it unhesitatingly but unfortunately expressed it rather ambiguously. 'I wouldn't vote for her', I said, 'I noticed that her stays are too short'. Excusably, perhaps, my colleagues on the committee put the wrong construction on my perfectly innocent remark, and it took me quite a long time to live it down.

Some who are here to-day will be familiar with all the details of the transfer of the College to Belfast. Those who were concerned in the negotiations for the sale of the Dublin building were convinced they had very definite answers to prayer. Indeed, in the whole matter of the College, the smoothness with which the transfer was ultimately effected, and the developments and improvements which have followed on the change are convincing evidence that here again we have been Divinely guided and helped.

In closing, many other memories crowd in upon me which I fear must go unmentioned. Last year (1968) I wrote a couple of brief articles for The Irish Baptist, one on some outstanding personalities of byegone days, and one on some of the outstanding Assemblies and controversies which have marked the passage of years. To me some of my most interesting memories are of distinguished preachers whom I have been privileged to hear or to meet. I recall serving in Gospel missions conducted by evangelists such as Dr. Harry Guinness, Dr. R.A. Torrey, John McNeill and Lionel Fletcher. I particularly remember outstanding sermons and addresses which I had the privilege of listening to from Archibald Brown, Dr. Clifford and Charles Brown amongst British Baptists, from A.C. Dixon and R.S. McArthur amongst American Baptists, from John Kelman, James Black and George Morrison amongst Prebyterians, and from J.H. Jowett who was a Congregationalist. I can remember, too, attending a service in the City Temple

in London when the controversy about the New Theology was at its height, at which R.J. Campbell, whose book started the furore, was the preacher. He was a very striking personality in the pulpit despite his quiet and restrained delivery. I could give you the texts and outlines of some of these sermons after all those years, but such reminiscences as those would only interest those who do a bit of preaching themselves.

I propose to close with a few general reflections which come to my mind as I relive the past and compare the conditions of to-day with those of yesterday. As look back I see many reasons for rejoicing. I mention four. First, the passage of the years has seen a big increase in our numerical strength. When I entered the pastorate in 1913 we had 43 churches in the Union, with a membership of 2876. In 1969, when I first gave this talk, the statistics presented at the Assembly showed that the 43 churches had become 78 with a membership of 6922. In 1983 there were 7949 members in 91 churches. Second, the passage of the years has also brought a wonderful improvement in our finances. In the early years of my ministry, and right through the time when Mr. Gilmore, followed by Mr. Fraser, were secretaries to the Union, very many of our churches survived only because of substantial grants from Home Mission funds, and these grants were possible only because the secretaries spent many weeks each year doing deputation work and soliciting subscriptions in England and Wales. In 1913 the total income of the Home Mission from donations and subscriptions was £2086, and of that sum little more than half was raised in Ireland. Last year (1968) the income of the Mission from donations and subscriptions was £8226, of which our Irish churches contributed £7668, and England, Scotland and Wales between them less than £100. When we add to these figures the £11000 raised for the Foreign Mission, £3000 raised for the Orphan Society, £2000 contributed by the churches to the College, I think it is evident that our people to-day are far more ready to shoulder their financial responsibilities than their predecessors were. The figures for 1982 are even more convincing: Baptist Missions, which is the name now given to the united work of the Home and Foreign Missions, received in donations and subscriptions from the churches £95950, gifts from England, Scotland and Wales totalling £277. The Orphan Society received almost £17000 from the churches, the College £19500, figures which speak for themselves. Third, another advance in which we can rejoice is the successful reconstitution of the College. I have already touched on this. After its rather chequered and hand-to-mouth existence in Dublin it is a special joy to me to see it much more firmly established in the confidence of our churches, with a teaching staff and a curriculum of which we can be legitimately proud. Fifth, one other feature of our work from which we can draw encouragement is the development of our Missions, both Home and Foreign. Definite advances have been made in our evangelistic work in Ireland since the end of World War Two, and although we are still facing problems in our overseas work, we can look back on forty years of faithful service in Peru on which the blessing of God has unmistakably rested, and I believe we can look forward to advance there also.

But now, having said all that, I feel I must go on to say that these well-grounded reasons for rejoicing do not provide any justification for self-complacency or self satisfaction. Side by side with them I can see certain causes for concern, and I am going to stick my neck out by calling attention to three of these.

First, I am concerned about what I regard as the imbalance in our preaching and teaching. We are apt to major on evangelism, and admittedly we are strong there, but I fear we are not equally strong in leading our converts and our church members onward in their Christian experience. I would like to see more emphasis on, and evidence of, the spirit of reverence and worship in our churches, more understanding of and concern for true holiness as God's purpose in our salvation, more interest and participation in social service as one element of Christian duty.

Second, I am concerned too about the young people in our churches. We have

lost many of these and we are in danger of losing more. I am afraid that very often in our Sunday schools and church services the ministry is not on the wavelength that the young people can pick up, and personally I cannot but deplore the attitude which persists in some of our churches towards the provision of social amenities to interest and help to hold them. I never could see that it is contrary to the letter or the spirit of the New Testament to provide such amenities, and I believe that when they are properly organized and supervised such amenities are of real value as evangelistic agencies.

Third, one other concern I have is regarding the attitude of many of our churches to the pastorate. I confess I am keenly disappointed that after forty years of agitation to secure a worthwhile ministerial recognition scheme we are now back to square one. The failure, the refusal, of the churches to see the need for such a scheme is in keeping with the course followed by many of them when a church is vacant. They seem to be qutie content to go on for months without making any serious attempt to find a pastor. They are satisfied to sit week after week under the ministry of local preachers, sometimes from their own ranks, sometimes from other Baptist churches, and not infrequently from Brethren assemblies. Now it should be obvious that no matter how good these men may be - and many of them are undoubtedly excellent preachers - yet such ministry must inevitably lack continuity and balance. Believers simply cannot be properly instructed in the contents of the Bible or be built up in their faith by a series of unrelated sermons bearing no relationship to each other. I greatly fear that unless our churches acquire a new understanding and appreciation of the place of the pastorate in a Christian congregation we shall never, as a denomination, exercise the influence we should be exercising in the religious life of our land.

L.E. Deens.

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Notes:

1. Dr. Haldane Carson Gilmore was the elder son of John Dinnen Gilmore. He served with the BMS in San Salvador as relief doctor in place of Dr. Mercier Gamble.
2. In 1831 when the Presbyterians were trying to raise a congregation in Clonmel they were granted the use of the Baptist Chapel for their services which were held there for five years. BIS Annual Report 1837, p. 24.
3. The Waterford church in 1983 had 19 members.
4. Joshua Thompson, 'The Origin of the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission', IBHS Journal Volume Two (1969/70), pp. 17-35.
5. Rev. J.C. Rendall, M.A.
6. Rev. J. Pearson Harrison.

THE CLOGHJORDAN CORRESPONDENCE OF 1822-23

This paper offers a preliminary examination of two letters dated 4 and 25 August 1822 from the Cloghjordan church, county Tipperary, and one dated 28 November 1823 from its pastor, the Rev. Thomas Hassell, to the Brown Street church, Salisbury, Wiltshire, and its pastor, the Rev. John Saffery, now in the possession of Dr. Marjorie Reeves, and deposited recently in the Angus Library. They provide an insight into the affairs and standing of a rural Baptist church in early nineteenth century Ireland, and, incidentally, shed light on other aspects of Baptist life and activity at the time.

It would have been more satisfying if the letters from Saffery and his church had been preserved. This would have completed the record of this episode in the life of the Cloghjordan church. However, Dr. Reeves in an article on Saffery (1.) states that very few of Saffery's own letters have survived and apparently he did not keep a letter-book. Nevertheless, it is possible from the Cloghjordan correspondence to deduce the substance of Saffery's reply to the letter of 4 August 1822, but not those revealing comments and asides which often occur in letters.

Before reading and commenting on three letters, I want to fill in some of the background of the Cloghjordan church and provide some data about the correspondents in order to help in our understanding of their contents.

Cloghjordan is a village in the barony of Lower Ormonde in the North Riding of county Tipperary. It lies in the centre of a triangle formed by Nenagh, Roscrea and Borrisokane. In the early nineteenth century it was a post town 70 Irish miles distance from Dublin by the actual route of the mail coach. The Limerick Mail took thirteen hours to cover the 94 miles from Dublin to Limerick. To send a letter from Dublin to Cloghjordan cost ninepence. The townland survey of county Tipperary of 1840 (2.) shows the Baptist meeting-house located off the main street at the north end of the village.

The Cloghjordan church, formerly known as Cloghkeating, appears to have been founded in the late 1650s. The date of formation given in the Baptist Manual for 1846 (3.) is 1690, but there is no evidence for this later date outside the Manual, or indeed reason to believe that the Manual is more accurate than some of the dates of formation given in our current Baptist Union of Ireland Handbook! There is no mention of the Cloghjordan church in the details of the Particular Baptist churches which accompanied the famous letter of exhortation sent from Ireland to the London Baptists in 1653, (4.) but it does contain a clue in the reference to Clonmel, the only church then in county Tipperary apparently. The relevant passage reads:

> 'With whom are brother Charles, brother Drapes, and sometimes brother Hutchinson and Bullock to assist them, who are commonly abroad improving their guifts in severall garrisons.' (5.)

Dr. White identifies 'brother Hutchinson' as Edward Hutchinson, a signatory to the letter from Waterford to Dublin in January 1652 on the subject of open communion,(6.) and chaplain to Colonel Abbott's regiment in 1653. (7.) From the comment about Hutchinson it is evident he itinerated among the garrisons and would have had contacts with Baptist settlers who had acquired land in the vicinity of garrison towns, like Nenagh and Roscrea, in county Tipperary. Crosby, in his History of the Baptists,(8.) quoting from a manuscript in his possession which attributed the formation of the Cloghkeating church to 'one of old Oliver's officers', speculates that this was Thomas Patient,(9.) but the only basis for this assumption would be Patient's reputation and the fact that he remained in Ireland until mid-1659. Hutchinson appears to be a more likely

candidate for the honour than Patient. Evidence for this appears in the Cork Church Book (10.) where there is a long biographical note by the chronicler, Joseph Fowke (d.25 May 1780), on a notable member of the Cork church, Mrs. Ann Riggs. The third wife of Major Edward Riggs, Ann was born in Lower Ormonde about 1652 and died in Cork in 1741. Her father was Mr. Allen of Killowney. Fowke wrote,

> 'Both her parents were Baptists (and) lived in good circumstances ... 'tis probable her Parents came over during Cromwell's Protectorship, many of the Same Profession having settled about that time in the Same Country and formed a considerable Society ... The remeans of their Posterity still continue in those Parts and at present at Cloghkeating under the pastoral care of the Revd. James North ...'

This indicates that there was a flourishing church in Lower Ormonde in the 1650s. Fowke maintained (11.) that Edward Hutchinson was one of the earliest, if not the first, of its pastors and continued in that office until 'the common calamity', that is, the break-up of the Protectorate and the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, when many settlers were dispossessed of their lands and some ministers, like Patient, withdrew to England. Hutchinson was probably unwilling or unable to continue as pastor and left. His subsequent career is obscure. His daughter, Hannah, married the celebrated Thomas Delaune, moved with him to London and shared her husband's fate in Newgate Prison c.1685.(12.)

Despite the 'common calamity' with its consequences for Baptists and other dissenters, Protestant and Catholic, the church in Lower Ormonde survived. In 1725 Daniel Green was pastor with a membership in the region of sixty. Crosby, writing in 1740, credits Cloghkeating with a membership of 'between two and three hundred'.(14.) However, seventeen years later, Fowke, in the Cork Church Book, remarked 'many it must be confessed have gone off to a different Profession and are now so blended as Scarce to be distinguished.'(15.) Such defections to the Established Church, mainly through marriage, were not uncommon. Joseph Pettit, pastor of the Cork church, complained about similar losses throughout the churches in the period up to 1725. A century later, as we shall see, Thomas Hassell aired the same complaint.

The Cloghjordan church, then, with its origins in the 1650s continued with a certain vigour throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth - one of only five to do so. The other four were Waterford, Rahue (in Co. Westmeath), Cork and Swift's Alley in Dublin. By 1845, the last date for which reliable figures are available, it had declined to seventeen members. After Hassell's departure in late 1824, the church was cared for by William Thomas and Isaac McCarthy, itinerant ministers of the Baptist Irish Society. On one occasion in 1825 McCarthy saved the church from eviction for non-payment of two years' ground rent. Their efforts, however, could not prevent the dispersal of the church in the famine years and their aftermath when death and emigration reduced the Baptist interest in the midlands and west of Ireland. It became extinct in 1851 with the death of James Armitage at the advanced age of 109 years. He had joined the church in 1762 and so had been a member for eighty-nine years - possibly a record for membership of an Irish Baptist church.

Thomas Hassell was pastor of the Cloghjordan church from 1801 until 1824. He was a native of Plymouth and was a member of the Baptist church there under the ministry of the Rev. Isaiah Birt. In November 1796, Hassell, who had been recommended by Birt, went to Newcastle-on-Tyne to serve the Tuthill-stairs church. He 'became one of the most useful (ministers) the church there had ever enjoyed'. He was ordained to the ministry on 20 February 1798, the day after the new chapel at Tuthill-stairs was opened. He preached at the Northern Association meetings in 1797, 1799 and 1800. In 1798 he introduced the subject of village preaching at the Association and was subsequently made secretary of 'The Northern Evangelical Society' composed of Baptists and Independents.(16.) An example of his preaching is extant in the form of a funeral sermon. It is entitled 'The Christian Religion a Reality' and was delivered to the

congregation in Tuthill-stairs on the occasion of the death of Ann Malcolm aged 16 years. The date was 9 June 1799. The text, 'For to me to live is Christ, to die is gain ... For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better' (17.) is expounded in a clear evangelical sense. How Hassell came to Cloghjordan is not known, but it is possible that once more he was recommended by Birt. Birt had visited Ireland in 1792 for two months on the invitation of the Dublin General Evangelical Society. (18.) During that visit he preached several times to the Swift's Alley church in Dublin, and took a leading role in the ordination of Mr. Watson at Rahue. There is no indication in Birt's account of his visit that he had any contact with the Cloghjordan church, but it is easy to see how the church might approach Birt for help in their search for a suitable minister. In 1796, for example, when the Rev. Samuel Pearce, 'the saintly Pearce', visited Dublin under the same auspices, the vacant Swift's Alley church asked him 'to look out for a suitable minister for them'.(19.) The Cloghjordan church sent Pearce an invitation to visit them and preach (as did Cork and Rahue) 'which', wrote Pearce, 'if I had time I should be glad to accept'. The Irish churches apparently welcomed fellowship with visiting Baptist ministers and were not averse to seeking their advice. Birt was known to the Irish churches and he also knew Hassell personally, and it does not seem unreasonable to surmise a probable connection between these two facts resulting in Hassell's move from Newcastle-on-Tyne to Cloghjordan in 1801. As might be expected Hassell was active in the affairs of the Irish Association.(21.) He remained pastor of Cloghjordan until late 1824 when he moved to Haverfordwest. (22.) According to another source he moved to Shrewsbury 'where he closed his useful, laborious and valuable life.' (23.)

The Rev. John Saffery (1762-1825) was a native of Hythe near Southampton, and originally was a member of the Portsea church. He moved to Salisbury (Brown Street chapel) in 1790 as successor to Henry Phillips (1719-1789) who, as a matter of interest, was pastor of te Waterford church from 1757 to 1763 and of the Back-lane church, Dublin from 1763 to 1765. Saffery was an intimate friend of William Carey, Andrew Fuller and other front-rank Baptists of the period. Next to Fuller he was the most successful collector of funds for the BMS. His travels among the churches and society meant that he was well-known and, in turn, knew a wide cross-section of the Baptist constituency. Saffery had a special interest in Ireland and, in 1813 and 1814, was a prime mover in the formation of the Baptist Irish Society. He made an extensive tour of Ireland in 1813 with the Rev. George Barclay of Kilwinning in the interests of the BMS, and his subsequent report on 'The State of Religion in Ireland' advocated ways and means of assisting the Irish Baptist churches in their evangelistic efforts.(24.) Saffery was well-placed therefore to respond to the appeal from the Cloghjordan church in August 1822. Though a strong man physically Saffery's health declined after an accident in 1824 in which he was thrown violently from a gig. He died on 9 March 1825 aged 63, just fifteen month's after Hassell's letter of 1823.

The two letters of 4 and 25 August 1822 are essentially about the pastor's salary and the dilemma the Cloghjordan church faced in connection with it. In the period there were three main ways in which the stipend was raised. First, by subscription, an arrangement by which as many members as were able and willing undertook to contribute an annual or quarterly fixed sum towards the pastor's salary. This was the commonest method used in Baptist churches, and on the whole worked reasonably well. Often the stipend was insufficient for the minister with a family and many pastors acted as tutors or ran small private schools. In some cases they operated bookshops. Some ministers had the use and enjoyment of a piece of land, and used it one way or another, by cultivating or letting, to supplement their income. Second, by endowment, which usually meant that the pastor's salary derived from interest earned by monies which had been left to the church by individuals in their wills for that purpose. Some churches were well endowed and were able to offer a higher-than-average stipend.

There were risks attached to this arrangement, one of which will emerge in the correspondence. Third, by freewill offerings. Pew rents were not widely used by Particular Baptists in the period, although a plan of the Waterford building showing it before and after renovation suggests that certain families and individuals customarily occupied certain pews. Subscriptions and their more modern counterpart, freewill offerings, did not apparently entitle the donors to occupy a pew exclusively, but often social position and long custom did. Where freewill offerings towards the pastor's salary were the rule it was apparently the custom to pass over the proceeds without deduction to the minister.

Arrangements in the early nineteenth century in relation to the pastor's salary varied considerably and there was nothing resembling the modern practice of setting salary standards and paying annual grants from common funds to local churches in aid of the pastor's salary, although the Baptist Irish Society and the Baptist Home Missionary Society did give assistance on a very limited scale. In England the various Baptist Itinerant Societies paid the bare expenses incurred by approved ministers who evangelized villages in their area. The Irish Society did this in the cases of two successive pastors of the Waterford church - Clarke and Hardcastle. Often, in the case of pastors who died, the only provision for their widows and orphans was a public subscription in response to an appeal, or the proceeds of the sale of the funeral sermon often preached by a prominent preacher and published in pamphlet form. There are numerous examples of such sermons preached by famous ministers of the day.

The plight of Hassell revealed in the first letter was not exceptional, and gives an insight into the struggle and often the acute embarrassment, not to say suffering, which ministers endured. It is never a pleasant experience to have to write a begging letter.

Cloghjordan August 4th 1822

To our highly esteemed brother the Rev. John Saffery, and the baptized church of Christ under his care, the church of Cloghjordan sends christian salutation.

Dear and benevolent friends -

We bless the ... God that we are in the deep waters of tribulation, but tho' almost overwhelmed, we are not destroyed. We have had our ordinary trials and now we ... very extraordinary ones; yet we dare not impeach either the justice of God, or his wisdom & goodness. Oh that we may believe by and what we can see. But to come at once to the cause of our extraordinary trials permit us to add, that the salary of our dear pastor arose chiefly from the interest of £930 bequeathed to the church at different times & by different persons. The representatives held this property with little or no security, except that they were supposed solvent, from holding farms or possessing real estates; But it has pleased God to strip us of nearly the <u>entire</u> of the £930, by failures for the 2 last years; and had it not been for the kindness and liberality of a few, our brother Hassell and family would have been obliged to make their appeal to the public - He has scarcely £25 a year from the church, his goods have been seized for debt, and are even now under seizure; he has had afflictions and trials in his family, and but for confidence in God he must have left us, and our sweet little interest here, would have been entirely destroyed!

The churches in our own denomination are but few and poor, and one of the smallest of them in point of numbers has promised to assist us and thereby enable our pastor to stand his ground. We have suffered likewise from endeavouring to maintain scripture discipline among us - as some of (<u>sic</u>) withdrawn both themselves and their

subscriptions - Very few in England know the difficulty of enforcing evangelical discipline in the churches in this country.

We beg leave to add that we mean to apply to our Churches in England very generally, requesting (of) them that they will assist us in this our great extremity. Did the members with you know perfectly, what, as a church, we have endured for the last two years, their sympathy and support would not be delayed, no not for an hour.

Our brother Hassell has baptized about 100 persons here and in other parts of Ireland; but it must not be concealed that we have lost many by death and very many have emigrated to America. In ... little time things may wear a better ... tho' from what we can judge, the prospect is by no means flattering.

May the Lord incline you to assist us and that as soon as possible. We can assure you dear friends that nothing but our necessity prompts us to write the application - Our confidence in you will not be in vain. We remain your affectionate brethren - Signed at our church meeting this day

Jos Antisell Thomas Hassell Wm. Shortt Thomas Antisell
Minchin Lewis Chris Antisell

Brother Saffery may direct either to Minchin Lewis, Esq. Nenagh or to Thomas Hassell, Cloghjordan but do not add Tipperary.

But for the benevolence of the English, I think I am safe in saying that Thousands of the poor Irish would have fallen victims to starvation and disease.

The Cloghjordan church, then, did not rely exclusively on endowment interest to pay their pastor's salary. That interest, if taken as 5% (which may be considered too high for the period) on £930 would have been less than £50 a year, and probably may have been as little as £28. Either way its loss was a serious blow to Hassell's finances - at best halving his income and, at worst, reducing it by two-thirds. His position was exacerbated by the withdrawal of some members to avoid impending church discipline with the consequent loss of their subscriptions. Hassell was in debt and, not surprisingly, had domestic problems. What strikes a modern reader of this letter is the almost cold-blooded attitude it takes towards Hassell's predicament. Almost certainly it was drafted by Hassell himself for approval and signature by the leading men in the church. In all probability it was their 'kindness and liberality' which saved the reputation of the church and enabled Hassell to hang on without being forced to seek help from the general public. It is clear that after two difficult years during which the church had lost irretrievably its endowment income and some of its more affluent members the crisis-point had been reached, and the church was in danger of losing its minister. If Hassell left, the church, weakened by many deaths and much emigration, would not survive. Hence, their last-ditch appeal to Saffery and his church, and their intention to appeal generally to the English churches for help.

Of the signatories to this letter more needs to be said, after local enquiries are completed. On this occasion it is only possible to note the internal evidence in the second letter of 24 August 1822 about three of them.

It is clear that Saffery and the Salisbury curch responded quickly and (one hopes) generously with money and advice. The present minister (25.) of the Brown Street church informed me that the church minute book which covers the whole of Saffery's ministry disappeared at the beginning of this century and is now, apparently, lost and probably destroyed. How much, therefore, the Brown Street church raised for Hassell is not known at present, though a search of miscellaneous accounts and papers in the church's records might yield this

information.

Let us look now at the second letter which acknowledges the help of Saffery and his church.

Cloghjordan - August 25th 1822

The church of Christ in Cloghjordan to their benevolent and dear friends at Salisbury, send christian salutation -

Fellow Christians -

Your friendly donation came safe to hand - it was hailed with emotions of pleasure and gratitude - May the Father of Lights reward each donor with abundant and durable interest. We thank you likewise for the prompt and handsome manner in which you have conveyed to us, this token of your love - a plain proof of your love to our common Lord. We recollect with pleasure the Saturday evening that you (Mr. Saffery) came to our dear brother Minchin Lewis - Miss Lewis, the elder of his two sisters whom you (he) met there, has been dead several yrs. Miss Jane is married and settled in Cork, and the two nieces are married - one in Dublin, the other in England - We have no doubt that they will feel pleasure in your (his) kind remembrance of them - and to all the church you (he) shall be affectionately remembered - Brother Saffery may & must feel much pleasure in such a connection - 'I believe, says he, that while we are not numerous, I have one of the most affectionate and liberal people in the kingdom.' We cordially join in the same belief - and pray that a long and lasting union may be preserved between such a pastor and such a benevolent people. May the Lord increase their number - You may be ready to suspect us of selfishness in this our wish - perhaps so - for selfishness is a beguiling serpent that entwines itself about all we say or do - We cannot for a moment give up the pleasing thought, that at some future period we shall hear from you and your friends again.

We shall make no mention of Brother Saffery's name when we write to other churches, but it is a pity that we are enjoined, by him, to put the candle under a bushel & not on a candlestick that it might give light to all that are in the churches recommended to us!!! We purpose to select from the number given to us. - As to exaggerated accounts being transmitted to England of the distress of this country - there can remain no doubt of the truth that many things have been exaggerated - Man is a selfish creature, and it is highly probable that selfishness actuated some to overstep the modesty of truth - But we know of no exaggeration - and as it relates to the sufferings and distresses, now felt, by the farming gentlemen we could not exaggerate were we disposed to do so - !!! Those who have money, can buy

the best mutton at 2.1/2 pr lb.
- - beef at 3.1/2 do.
a stone of wheat of 14 lbs the stone, at 11 per stone
& even 9 do.
- - - - - - - - potatoes at 2 do.
wool 16 lb (the stone) at 14 do.
Barley and oats low in proportion

Now as the rents, tythes and taxes have not been lowered in proportion to the low prices of provisions, it will at once be seen that the agriculturist must unavoidably suffer. One of our dear friends who laid out more than £1200 in improving a farm a few years since told me (our pastor) this day that he must give it up - Nor can we see where it will stop, or when things will be better -

As to the moral state of the country, we see as much pride now in

poverty, and as much neglect of God, as when outward propriety abounded - Thousands of Protestants have emigrated to America - Methodists and Baptists have directed their course to Canada - Nevertheless God has not left himself, in Cloghjordan, without witnesses - I have (Our pastor has) lately preached in the Court House of Birr - and last Lord's-day our brother Antisell (one of our deacons) informed me (him) that my (his) last sermon produced a great spirit of enquiry - Deo volente I am (he is) to preach there on Tuesday evening -

If you (dear friends) or others have been misled by any statements whatever, to believe that popery is on the decline; or that our interest is much on the increase, the delusion is awful indeed; let the accounts come from whom they may - !!!

If the voice of truth could be believed the present plan, and the present operators are incompetent. We admit that some of them are zealous and enterprizing but if the foundation be defective, will the building succeed - What if a number of pious and learned young men were sent to the cities and larger towns in Ireland with a im..... prospect of only £50 or 60 a year, and let them work their way in humble dependence on God - The refuse of our denomination will not do for Ireland -

'Verbum satis sapiente'

O Lord make us all wise to promote thy glory - We have made these remarks in love - and we know that every person acquainted with Ireland must aquiesce in the truth - But people must take time & observe well to know this country - popery wears a majestic head & front - We remain your ever dear & grateful brethren, and very humble servants for Christ -

Thomas Hassell
Chris Antisell
Minchin Lewis

The morning has been very wet - We remembered our dear friends in Salisbury in public prayer - We will act upon your advice as to the little remaining property.

P.S. Would it be possible for brother Saffery to pay a visit to Ireland - ? It would greatly delight us - and from his steady and observant mind much good might result - For our part we hope and trust that the schools are doing well - there is a great zeal on the part of the Protestants in erecting schools here and in Nenagh to prevent the children that attended with us being infected with sectarian principles - But if good be done no matter who are the agents - But this country wants some popular & pious ministers much - Who then is willing to devote himself to the service of God -

Happy would I be to receive a few (pious young men) into my house and to instruct them (as far as my slender abilities would enable) in Classical and Biblical knowledge and to send them into the towns & around us

T.H.

I have written to Isai Birt - Birmingham
Giles - Chatham - but the letter is not yet sent-

If brother Saffery can aid us hereafter beyond what the present opportunity offers - I mean by recommending our case when he visits any friends out of his own church - T.H.

An amusing feature about this letter is that it was obviously written by Hassell in the first person to Saffery and simply amended throughout to serve as a letter between the two churches. No doubt, in characteristic style, Saffery had written directly to Hassell, and a grateful Hassell had hastened to reply, only to find that his members wished to observe the decencies and send a reply from the church. By simply amending his letter Hassell still managed to convey his personal thanks!

Intimations are present in the letter of the gist of Saffery's letter conveying the gifts from the Salisbury church, including one direct quotation. The sole condition attaching to the gift was that Cloghjordan should not use his name in their appeal to other English churches. Helpfully, however, he recommended some churches that might be approached with advantage - among them Cannon Street, Birmingham, where Hassell's old friend and former pastor, Isaiah Birt, was now minister, and Chatham where William Giles was pastor. (In passing it is interesting that Giles' son John Eustace and his grandson William Leese Giles, pere et fils, were to pastor simultaneously the churches at Lower Abbey Street and Rathmines, Dublin, forty years later). Time has not permitted me to discover if and when these churches responded and how much they donated. Wisely, Saffery gave the Cloghjordan friends some advice about how to handle the little that was left of their endowment funds.

A brief word may be said about the loss of their trust fund monies. The church had entrusted their capital to several men of substance who paid the church interest at an agreed rate. Evidently no security had been taken and when these men got into financial difficulties the money belonging to the church was appropriated by their creditors. In all probability the money had been spent on improvements to their farms or estates, or in acquiring real estate, so involving the church in their personal losses. The experience was not unique to Cloghjordan. For example, in 1806 a Mr. Isaac Senior died and by his will bequeathed £200 towards the erection of a new chapel for the First Baptist church of Sheffield but 'the trustees failing after a few years, the money was lost'. (26.) This danger was not legally eliminated until the end of the century when legislation was introduced to safeguard trust monies and to oblige trustees to invest the capital in trusts in giltedged securities. Doubtless, Saffery's advice to Hassell pertained to ways and means of protecting the church's interest.

Hassell's letter is full of interest in relation to current food prices, emigration, over-optimistic reports on trends in religion in Ireland etc. His criticism of BIS policy and staff selection with his constructive suggestions deserve a detailed analysis which would lengthen this paper unduly.

The results of this appeal for financial assistance evidently eased Hassell's position for a time, which brings us to the third letter of 28 November 1823. This letter highlights a problem which seems always to have been a threat to the Irish churches.

Sraduff Novr 28th 1823

The Rev. John Saffery.

Dear Brother -

The intermarriages of our members with persons of the Established church has been very ruinous to the Baptist Interest in Ireland. A Mr. Christopher Antisel of Sraduff, who is a member of the Cloghjordan church, baptized by me, a young gentleman of excellent character, amiable disposition, and unfeigned piety, has determined to avoid this error, and, if possible, to unite himself to one of like views with his own - His father purposes to give up his Estate to him, and to retire, on the son's marrying agreeably to his mind.

The property consists of Two hundred acres of highly improved,

planted, and richly ornamented land, with an elegant House, and a great deal of fine old timber - None but a Baptist would meet with the views of the old gentleman, and the son is equally decided on this point. You may be ready to ask, Cannot such a person be found on your own side of the water? To which I would reply, that throughout our denomination, and from the present state of Ireland, you will be grieved to be told, that a suitable match, in point of fortune, would be very difficult, if not impossible to be found! It is the wish of my dear young friend that I should accompany him to England as soon after the receipt of your answer to this, as possible - at which time every information requisite will be afforded - His principle object is to marry in the Lord. Often he might have made a most eligible match, not only in a pecuniary, but in every other point of view, religion excepted, but that was paramount to every other consideration. You have a very extensive knowledge of our denomination, and know where, in all probability a suitable companion may be found - And I hope you will be ready to communicate all that information necessary on the present occasion. On the whole, I am candid to acknowledge that I am totally ignorant of any mercenary views actuating the parties on this solemn subject. Mr. Antisel Senr. is a deacon of my church.

Hoping to hear from you as soon as possible

I am, Dear Brother Saffery, your greatly obliged & very humble servt.

Thomas Hassell

The Earl of Ross will frank this

P.S. Please to direct

To Christopher Antisel, Esq.
Sraduff
Parson's Town
Ireland

I have received a pleasing letter from Dr. Ryland - wherein he professes to yield me every assistance in his power, according as I wrote to you - I may hope to see you ere long.-

This intimate letter tells us a great deal about the Antisell family and indeed Hassell himself. One of its chief interests is the serious threat which intermarriage posed to Baptists in Ireland, even into the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Independents (or Congregationalists) and other small sectarian groups (with the exception of the Quakers), who were not distinguished from the major paedobaptists, Anglicans and Presbyterians, did not long survive the stresses and strains of religious, political and social life, as dissenters, incumbent on the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the operation of the Penal Laws. The London Hibernian Society (1806) and its offshoot the Irish Evangelical Society (1814) were products of the English Independents and were not indigenous to Ireland. The Baptists, however, did survive as a distinct group right through the eighteenth century into the nineteenth chiefly because of their doctrine of believer's baptism and of the gathered church. Nevertheless, social and economic pressures and, occasionally, political aspirations on the part of some individuals did make inroads on the Baptist community. The shortage of suitable partners to marry tempted some to look outside the denomination for a spouse. As part of the technique of survival it was crucial for Baptists to marry 'in the Lord', that is to another Baptist, and there is evidence that serious attempts were made to prevent losses through intermarriage with people of 'another profession'. Hassell's letter on behalf of Christopher Antisell is a good example of the concern over the issue shared by both minister and family. Hassell's attitude was not peculiar to himself, and his letter to Saffery assumes that the latter appreciates the problem and

will co-operate.

Again, closer investigation of the contents of this letter must await another time.

In conclusion, it can be said that these three letters, each in its own way, signalled the death-throes of a declining Baptist church in rural Ireland of the early nineteenth century. Perhaps its endowments vitiated the ability of the members to shoulder the financial burden that fell upon them and contributed to its demise. Certainly, the relief given by Saffery and others was only temporary. By the end of 1823 Hassel was in touch with Dr. John Ryland about a move from Ireland. As we have seen he did remove to Haverfordwest a year later. After his departure Stephen Davis, one of the BIS itinerant ministers stationed at Clonmel, found the church in an 'undisciplined state' with no prospect of supporting a resident pastor.(27.) Famine and emigration completed the process of decay which seems to have set in during the two fateful years of financial ruin and indiscipline leading to the pathetic appeal of the letter of 4 August 1822.

J. Thompson

Notes:

1. Marjorie Reeves, Note written for the Biographical Dictionary of the Earlier Evangelical Movement.
2. Ordnance Survey of 1840, Sheet 16
3. p.37
4. See 'The Irish Correspondence of 1653' in Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660: Part 2 The West Country and Ireland, ed. B.R. White (The Baptist Historical Society, London, 1973), pp. 110-124
5. ibid. p.120 italics mine
6. ibid. p.124 n.60 See also John Rogers, Ohel and Bethshemesh, p.306
7. See St. John D. Seymour, The Puritans in Ireland 1647-1661, (London,1912), p.215
8. Thomas Crosby, The History of the English Baptists, 4 vols. (London,1740), iii, p.43
9. See B.R. White, 'Thomas Patient in England and Ireland' in IBHS Journal vol. Two 1969/70, pp.36-48
10. Records of Cork Baptist Church 1653-1875, p.5
11. ibid. p.4
12. in loc
13. Joseph Pettit to Elisha Callendar, 25 November 1725
14. Crosby, op.cit., iii, p.43
15. Cork Church Book, p.5
16. David Douglas, History of the Baptist Churches in the North of England from 1648 to 1845, (London,1846), p. 237, pp.240ff.
17. Philippians 1:21,23
18. Baptist Magazine, 1838, pp.107ff.
19. Andrew Fuller, Memoirs of the late Rev. Samuel Pearce, A.M., (Clipstone, 1800), p.159
20. Samuel Pearce to Sarah Pearce, 24 June 1796
21. See Baptist Magazine, 1813, p.308; 1814, p.350; 1815, p.526; 1816. p.396; 1817, pp.437-8
22. Irish Chronicle, January, 1825, p.33
23. Douglas, op. cit., p.244
24. Baptist Magazine, 1813, pp.432-4
25. Rev. Gywnne Edwards, M.A. for whose help I am grateful.
26. Circular letter of West Riding of Yorkshire Association for 1842, p.28

HAMILTON ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH,

BANGOR, CO. DOWN

The year was 1907. King Edward VII was on the throne of England. The Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was prime-minister of a Liberal government with a cabinet containing such notables as Grey, Lloyd George, Asquith and Churchill. Old age pensions were still unheard of. The North and South Poles had still to be discovered. Heavier-than-air flying machines were mere curiosities and the Titanic was still on the drawing-board at Harland and Wolff Limited.

It was in July of 1907 that a group of christians with predominantly Baptist convictions began to meet regularly in the Orange Hall on Bangor's Hamilton Road. There had been summer meetings during previous years but in 1907 when the summer ended the meetings continued throughout the winter. On Wednesday 15 April, 1908 the first formal business meeting was held, under the chairmanship of Rev J.H. Boyd (secretary to the Home Mission Committee). At that meeting Bangor Baptist Church was constituted. The records indicate that the 133rd Psalm was read at this inaugural meeting and the opening hymn was "Here from the world we turn, Jesus to seek". Pastor Alex. Jardine represented the Belfast churches and a vote of thanks was passed to Mr. W.J. Shields of Belfast for the gift of a Communion Service. The first name submitted for membership was that of Mr. Alex. Sloan of Conlig, a town which had known a Baptist witness in the previous century.

On 15 May 1908 the secretary of the new church, Mr. William S. Mitchell wrote to the Baptist Union of Ireland applying for admission to the union of churches.

During 1909 the church appears to have prospered and the Orange Hall was also hired on Wednesday evenings for prayer.

* * *

On 10 January 1910 the church, through the Home Mission, invited Pastor David Henderson to conduct the services for three months with a view to being called to the Pastorate. The outcome was that on the first Sunday of September 1910 David Henderson received the right hand of fellowship to become Bangor Baptist Church's first pastor. It is said that this outstanding man of God visited every home in Bangor.

In these earlier days the auditors took a more overtly critical look at the church accounts. Not only did they comment upon the accuracy and reliability of the book-keeping but they also remarked upon how money was spent. An extract from the auditor's report for 1910 reads as follows:

> "..... the expenditure on the church and Sunday School Social was most extravagant and under no circumstances must it be the precedent for any similar entertainments in the future."

This rebuke was because tea had been served at tables at a cost of 10d (ie. approx. 4p) each. The hire of a waiter (!) and a gratuity to the cartetaker for the event in question had amounted to 3 shillings and 6 pence (17.1/2 p) and even a carpet was hired for 2 shillings and 6 pence (12.1/2 p). The total cost for the social was £2.11.4 (ie. about £2.57).

The Sunday School excursion in 1910 also came under the scrutiny of the auditors, and no wonder! It had cost £6.1.6 (ie. £6.07.1/2) which was close to

a quarter's offerings.

Pastor Henderson's ministry was blessed and by the end of 1913 when he received a call to Tobermore the membership in Bangor stood at 36. The church had developed a deep love for the pastor and a plea was issued to the Home Mission asking for intervention to keep Mr. Henderson in Bangor. A letter was even written to the Tobermore church urging them to let the Pastor remain in County Down. However Mr. Henderson was to move on and his ministry in Bangor concluded on 31 December 1913.

* * *

After a vacancy of only 10 months Pastor Campbell was called through the Home Mission and he ministered through the three early war years until the summer of 1917. The church's contribution towards the pastor's salary moved up from £40 p.a. in 1910 to £70 p.a. in 1917. The Home Mission throughout paid the balance.

It is interesting to note that although the membership in 1917 stood at 32 the average attendance at the young peoples meeting each Wednesday was 80/90. The church went into the stock market that year when the Rt. Hon. R.G. Glendinning donated 100 - 5% cumulative preference shares in the Lambeg Weaving Company. Whatever happened these shares?

* * *

On 25 November 1917 the church extended a unanimous call to Louis Deens, then in Waterford. Calls had to be unanimous in those days according to the church rules and on the first count one member abstained because he considered Mr. Deens was "far too young". Mr. Deens declined the call and early in 1918 Pastor S. Ruddock came as supply and oversight for six months. In July 1918 the church asked Mr. Ruddock to become its pastor and he accepted with Home Mission approval. One of Pastor Ruddock's first formal duties in his new post was to receive into membership on 1 September 1918 Mr. and Mrs. John Ravey. Mr. Ravey was held in such esteem that in less than one year he was elected to the eldership of the church.

Pastor Ruddock had to resign in 1919 due to the poor state of his mother's health and he preached a moving farewell sermon on 25 May that year.

In June 1919 the finances of the church were strong and the annual contribution towards the pastor's salary of £210 per annum was £150. By October 1919 the bank balance was almost £500 and it was decided to endeavour to secure building ground on Hamilton Road.

* * *

On 14 April 1920 a call was extended to Pastor David Burrows. He accepted the call and commenced his ministry on 1 October 1920. By 1921 the church's income was £250 p.a. On 13 April 1921 Professor Ivor Beaumont presented and explained to the church the plans drawn up for the proposed new building.

The opening of the new building on Hamilton Road on the first weekend in September 1922 at a cost of £3000 was a wonderful occasion. The services on Sunday 3 September and Monday 4 September 1922 were fully reported in the County Down Spectator including the full text of the Sunday morning sermon. The preacher was Rev. J. Pearson Harrison of Harcourt Street, Dublin and he took as his theme "the Church".

(i) the Church is a spiritual creation;
(ii) the Church is to be spiritually governed;
(iii) to the Church there must be spiritual admission;
(iv) in the Church there must be spiritual progress.

Many people had to be reluctantly turned away from the opening services and

representatives were present from the local Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

The rest of the "twenties" were marked by growth and blessing. By 1928 the membership had risen to 72 and there were 106 scholars in the Sunday School with 9 teachers. The income of the church was £550 per annum and the debt on the church was reduced to £450.

It is difficult to feel the spiritual pulse of the church from the records which tend to dwell upon material things. However at the quarterly meeting in October 1929 the church was concerned about the need for home meetings as a means of bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the neighbourhood. At that same meeting an application for membership was received from a young fellow called Jim Taylor. Eleven years later in 1940 J.C. Taylor became the church secretary, a post which he occupied for 20 years. He is today the senior and highly esteemed elder of the Hamilton Road church.

The records for the late "twenties" continue to reveal evidence of sustained blessing. The church was active in open-air work and missions and the regular services were well attended. The Sunday School had over 100 members and the Young Peoples and Senior Christian Endeavour Societies were strong.

The records for 1930-1935 were maintained with uncommon precision by the secretary of the time Mr. C.E. Hill. Bangor was an established preaching centre and the Hamilton Road church played its part in bringing outstanding preachers to the pulpit. These included Jack Atkinson the boy preacher, Rev. Mark C. Hayford M.A., D.D., F.R.G.S. a noted black preacher, Dr. Herbert Lockyer, Rev. Boyd Morrison, Pastor Malcolm Ferguson, Mr. Owen Brandon, Harold Carter, Dr. T.T. Shields of Toronto and Dr. Jesse Sayer.

In 1931 at the Annual General Meeting the church placed on record its indebtedness to the Home Mission and decided not to apply for a grant for the coming year but instead to become fully self-supporting.

It is interesting to note throughout the years the relatively trivial matters that occupy time at church business meetings. The level of heat in the building, the problem of draughts and the uncomfortable nature of the chairs are a few of the issues which appear regularly in the minutes. In 1936 the original gas lights in the church building were replaced with electric lights to the delight of everyone.

Pastor Burrows resigned from the pastorate in November 1937 after a ministry of 17 years in Bangor. The vacancy lasted for 18 months when a call was issued to Pastor A.J. Chandler from Staffordshire. Mr Chandler was received into fellowship on 30 July 1939 and remained for one year.

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In 1940 an invitation was extended to Pastor David Hood of Dromore to conduct the services during the month of August. The outcome was his subsequent call to the pastorate. Pastor Hood ministered in Bangor from 1 January 1941 until 1945 when he left to take up work with the Mildmay Movement. During Pastor Hood's ministry the annual meetings of the Baptist Union were held in Bangor in 1942. Hotel Pickie provided lunch for the delegates at 3 shillings (15p) each. An interesting reference in the records of 1944 is the commencement of a witness at Bangor West in a venue called Carnalea Hall which was offered by Mr. S.C. Thompson. Can anyone remember this?

During the war years the churches and other organisations were asked to leave Monday evenings free for civil defence activities. This probably accounts for the fact that Monday is a slack evening for most of our churches to this day.

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On 30 July 1945 a call was issued to Pastor George Weir and later that same year in December Mr. Weir was received as pastor of the church. Mr. Weir was a

graduate of the Irish Baptist College and after pastorates in Belfast and Portadown it was a delighted church that welcomed him and his wife to Bangor.

Mr. Weir's faithful ministry and wise counsel were instrumental in building the church in every dimension. The membership grew to over 200 and unity of purpose was forged to the glory of God. The bond of love between pastor and people was very great and it is talked about to this day. "Weir the builder" was not just active in the spiritual realm. In 1953 he was active in seeing the minor hall added to the church buildings. It is clear from the records that Pastor Weir had visions of a second Baptist church in Bangor for many years before its realisation.

In May 1961 the church received the gift of an excellent site on the Newtownards Road in Bangor. This was ideally suited to the proposed new church building and in September 1964 the Rosemary Park Baptist Church came into being with the transfer of 55 members from Hamilton Road. Pastor Weir had the joy of opening the new building which cost £14,000.

In the summer of 1965 after twenty years in Bangor Pastor and Mrs. George Weir left Bangor to take up further work at Gilnahirk in Belfast. The esteem in which this servant of God was held became very evident by the great company of people who attended his victorious funeral service in the Hamilton Road Church some years later.

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In December 1965 the church was favoured with a visit from Rev. H.M. Carson, an Ulsterman who had been long enough in England to be accorded a modicum of suspicion. Mr. Carson was a regular talking point at Hamilton Road for the next twenty months until at a special meeting on 22 February 1967 a call was extended to him to become pastor. He accepted the call and his induction took place on Tuesday 26 September 1967 before a packed church building with a closed curcuit television relaying the service to the neighbouring Millar Craig Hall. The charge to the Pastor and the church was delivered by the late Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in a stirring address.

H.M. Carson's ministry in Bangor lasted for 15 years before God called him to further work in Leicester. The depth of Mr. Carson's ministry and his strong emphasis on missionary endeavour had a profound influence on the life of the church. It was also a delight to have some involvement in his wider ministry of writing and preaching abroad.

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During Mr. Carson's period in Bangor it became evident that the town could accommodate a third Baptist Church. Several locations were considered but the remarkable acquisition of an excellent site at Ballycrochan tended to confirm that area as the most likely contender.

Mr. Derek Hutchinson was called as Associate Pastor in 1979 and he did much to spearhead the developing work in Ballycrochan. In January 1983 some 60 members transferred from Hamilton Road to constitute the new Ballycrochan Baptist Church. It was no surprise when Mr. Hutchinson was called to be their first pastor. The new church, just one year later, has doubled its membership and the new building at £140,000 is being paid for rapidly as a shared responsibility between the Ballycrochan and the Hamilton Road congregations. To date no bank overdraft facilities have been required thanks to the provision of God and the faithfulness of His people.

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History continues to be written. The membership at Hamilton Road today stands at around 150 with Sunday morning congregations aound 200-250. The

Sunday School and all the societies are well attended and the weekly prayer meeting is a major source of encouragement. Our eyes are to our God for the man of His choice to minister to His people.

We can learn much from the past but we cannot change it. Our testimony is simply this - "hitherto has the Lord helped us". With such a God as ours we can contemplate the future with confidence, even excitement as we work together to His glory and the extension of His eternal kingdom.

Hadden Wilson

UNDERSTANDING OUR ROOTS - REPORT

This was the title of an experimental evening for the members of the Historical Society. The Society encourages its members to attempt historical research and writing for themselves and to appreciate the nature and value of source material. The purpose of this exercise was to provide an opportunity for them to examine first-hand an historical document and to address questions to it in order to extract the maximum amount of information from it. It was planned also to emphasise the importance of context and connections in relation to source material.

The document selected for discussion was a printed copy of the breviates of the Irish Baptist Association meeting in Cork in May 1815.

After a preliminary talk about the provenance and authenticity of the material, the members were invited to identify and explain if they could terms and phrases in the document whose meaning was obscure or ambiguous. Such terms as 'the several churches', 'stated minister', 'respectable members' of the Association, 'society of Christians' and 'messenger' were elucidated. Next, attempts were made to identify the personalities mentioned in the breviates. Then topics and issues dealt with by the Association were considered and compared with current practice - for example, irregularities in administering the Lord's Supper, the appointment and ordination of ministers, the right of the Association to legislate for the associated churches on issues like family worship, indulgence in 'worldly pleasures', or, indeed, on any issue!

The members were impressed by the richness of the material in such a short document, and by some of the problems involved in unpacking its meaning. It was suggested that a 'teach-in' or workshops might be arranged to give members some instruction on or experience in handling historical material.

BOOK REVIEWS

B.R. White, The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century, (Baptist Historical Society, London, 1983). 155 pages £4.95

This is the first volume in a new series on the English Baptists originally planned under the editorship of the late Dr. E.A. Payne and now edited by Dr. B.R. White. Two other volumes on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Dr. Raymond Brown of Spurgeon's College and J.H.Y. Briggs of Keele University respectively are in course of preparation.

Dr. White divides his treatment into two categories and two periods, that is, the older group of General Baptists with its beginnings in the exiled congregation in Amsterdam led by John Smyth and Thomas Helwys and the younger group of Particular or Calvinistic Baptists which emerged from 'the underground congregations of London' in the 1630s, examining their separate histories first until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and then during the persecution of Dissent which followed until the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Passing note is taken of a third much smaller group, the Seventh Day Baptists, which developed during the 1650s. Narrative, analysis and comment are blended in a stimulating manner. The narrative content is not overdone, but is sufficient to sustain interest and comprehension in the reader.

Irish Baptists reading in this period for the first time will hear many bells ringing and discover how much they still have in common with the pioneers of Baptist work in Ireland. Naturally, the references to Irish Baptists are few, relating mainly to the 1653 correspondence, but the issues confronting these early Baptists wear a familiar face.

A valuable opening chapter, 'An Introduction to English Baptist History', examines Baptist definitions and assumptions in relation to their theology and ecclesiology, and reviews the work of Baptist historians from Thomas Crosby in the eighteenth century to W.T. Whitley and E.A. Payne in the twentieth.

Dr. White pays attention to the succession of Baptist confessions published in the seventeenth century, and engages in an illuminating discussion of the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644.

This book should be read by Irish Baptists if only to help them to relate sensibly to the wider Baptist community, and to grasp more clearly those distinguishing principles which make the Baptist community cohere.

This paperback is not the finest example of the printer's craft. It is reproduced from justified typewritten script, which has not escaped the odd typographical error, only one of which, however, mars the sense (p.75). Obviously, the Historical Society, faced with limited funds and sales potential, wished to place the series within the reach of all pockets, and consequently had to sacrifice the expensive luxuries of a case-bound volume. Nonetheless, the text is clear and well set out. It has already been suggested that when the series is complete it might be offered in a hard-back edition.

The Historical Society is to be congratulated on its decision to publish this new series. The two volumes in preparation will be awaited in interest.

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Baptists in the Twentieth Century, ed. K.W. Clements (Baptist Historical Society, London, 1983) 148 pages £4.95.

This volume brings together eight papers presented to the Society's summer school in July, 1982. They vary widely in their interest and style as might be expected.

Leonard Champion, not quite able to bridge the period spanned by our own Louis Deens, nevertheless offers the fruit of sixty years experience of changes in English Baptist life, acutely observed and evaluated. He queries whether

significant changes in church life, caused by pressures of the social environment, are consonant with the nature of the Gospel, for instance, changed attitudes and habits in regard to Sunday, the use of contemporary forms of music, singing and movement, the growth of bureaucracy and organization. Some may dismiss his views as anachronistic, but not his plea for 'a powerful contemporary formulation of the gospel' to give clearer theological direction in the issues.

W.S.M. West's absorbing recapitulation of the part played by Baptists in attempts by the Faith and Order Movement over fifty-five years to achieve a consensus on the doctrine and practice of baptism is informative and challenging. The debate has helped to bring the baptismal issue from the periphery to the centre of ecumenical concern. From the earlier process of 'comparison' the debate is now directed towards the goal of 'consensus' - the latest Faith and Order Paper 84 being entitled 'Towards an Ecumenical Consensus: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry'. It is clear from Dr. West's article that fifty-five years on and despite the notably eirenic spirit of many of the Baptist participants, the debate still turns on the intractable difficulty of reconciling believer's baptism and infant baptism, especially in relation to authority, to the possibility of both practices co-existing in one church, to the meaning of faith, and to the nature of the church. This complex debate has necessarily taken account also of the perplexed issues of the Lord's Supper and the ministry. It will, no doubt, continue for some time to come, for this sober assessment suggests that the possibility of convergence is still remote. Indeed, the debate on essential issues seems still to be running on parallel rather than convergent lines. The crunch question for Baptists, eirenic or otherwise, is whether their understanding of believer's baptism is amenable to any argument that allows infant baptism equal authority and validity. Is a trade-off desirable, or possible, or warranted in the pursuit of unity? Believer's baptism, from being the butt of Daniel Featley's ridicule has become the practice not alone of Baptists but of other large church groupings. One wonders, for example, why Pentecostalists have not been represented on the Standing Commission or why indeed, beyond the need to keep the size manageable, the Baptist representation has been reduced to one. In a matter of such import to the ecumenical cause, when the issue is clearcut, a case exists for equal representation of both positions.

Dr. David Bebbington in 'Baptists and Politics since 1914' shows how for most of the twentieth century British Baptists have been 'warmly attached to the system of liberal democracy'. He traces expertly the variegated pattern of Baptist involvement in politics concentrating on the English and Welsh scene with only a passing reference to Scotland and no mention of Ireland. In this sense the paper is incomplete, and perhaps leaves his conclusion open to amendment.

Roger Hayden distils the essence of John Howard Shakespeare's 'ecumenical vision' in his paper entitled 'Still at the Crossroads?' Reading this contribution brings to life the strong emotions which Shakespeare's book, 'The Churches at the Crossroads' (1918), his advocacy of a 'United Free Church of England' and his conviction that free churchmen should concede some form of episcopacy in the interests of reunion, provoked. Eddies of that torrent of controversy reached Irish Baptists and sadly deepened their suspicions about the trends among English Baptists despite the rebuttals of Shakespeare's views by prominent leaders like T.R. Glover.

In 'A Question of Freedom?' Keith Clements discusses the reaction of British Baptists to the ambivalent attitude of German Baptists towards the Third Reich. On the whole, it appears that British Baptists sympathised more with the Confessional Church's stance symbolised by Martin Niemoller's brave defiance of the Nazi regime, than with the puny group of other-worldly German Baptists who posed no threat to the state. It was not until after World War 2 that German Baptists realised that religious freedom was not the sole criterion of just

government.

Michael Walker's overview of 'Baptist Worship in the Twentieth Century' fires off some warning signals about preaching, liturgy, ministry, the charismatic movement, the Church Growth movement and fundamentalist authoritarianism. It is a stimulating examination of trends and experiments, some of which thankfully have made little impact on Irish Baptist churches, and others which sadly have made little impact.

'Baptist Architecture' by historian Clyde Binfield is a frank, dispassionate, often amusing look at Baptist buildings and builders. One shudders at the thought of a Binfield glance at some Baptist church buildings in Ireland, though Brannockstown and several of the post-war buildings would attract his interest. As for 'Baptists in Glasgow ...' by David Watts, the shortest paper in the collection, a comparative study of Belfast on these lines would be of interest.

Naturally, some of these papers reflect English Baptist preoccupations which Irish Baptists do not share, but that does not detract from their interest or value. A careful reading of this book will reward every thinking Irish Baptist.

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J.R. Grant, To Each His Task (1983), 65 pages £2.00, is the story of Ballykeel Baptist Church, Dromara, Co. Down written and published to mark the opening of the new church buildings. It is enlivened with some 38 photographs, and a cover illustration contrasting the former and new church buildings. Perhaps if ordinary typeface had been used instead of light italic the text would have been easier on the eyes. Eight of its eleven brief chapters are penpictures of pastors of the church from 1892 to the present. Its most interesting chapter, historically, is the second one on David Macrory, which includes photographs of Macrory and his wife Susan. A Presbyterian elder who embraced Baptist views towards the end of 1862 Macrory became the pioneer and first pastor of the Derryneil church with some responsibility for the Ballykeel church in its early stages. Mr. Grant has unearthed some local information about Macrory which fills out the picture of a zealous evangelist and pastor.

* * *

J. Thompson.