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IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

VOLUME EIGHTEEN 1985/86

IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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VOLUME EIGHTEEN ... 1985-86

EDITOR: JOSHUA THOMPSON, B.A.

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EDITORIAL

The past session has been marked by increased interest and attendances at the meetings of the Society. There were four meetings instead of the usual five. The meeting in June was not held because of the difficulty in finding a topic and speaker suitable to the occasion. The same problem persists and the 1986-87 session will also have four meetings. It is hoped that it will be possible to re-instate the June meeting in the 1987-88 session.

This eighteenth volume of the Journal offers two contrasting papers on local church history. Both papers are models of their type and raise some valuable historical perspectives. The third paper deals with a topic of contemporary interest and drew the largest audience and stimulated a lively discussion. No doubt this paper will be read with interest by members and subscribers who were unable to hear it delivered by Mr. Porter. The Editor will welcome comments from readers on Mr. Porter's paper, and also suggestions for topics of contemporary interest for discussion.

It is interesting to note that the Journal is of interest to scholars working on one aspect or another of Irish history. While our primary task is to stimulate the interest of Irish Baptists in their own history, we aim to provide well-researched and documented material of use to church and other historians. We also offer assistance to researchers and others seeking information germane to Irish Baptists.

In conclusion, the Editor thanks those who helped in the production of this volume of the Journal.

IRISH BAPTISTS AND ORANGEISM

At first glance this appeared to be a very simple paper to prepare; but not so, I found it easier to handle the history of Orangeism than the history of the attitudes of Irish Baptists towards Orangeism. Consequently, I almost regretted having accepted the kind invitation to give this paper. However, having put my hand to the plough I was bound to proceed with it. It is my intention to set out the claims and principles of the Orange Institution and briefly to look into the early history of the movement, before considering the attitudes of Irish Baptists to it.

I begin, therefore, with three quotations from Orange literature:

> 'An Orangeman, who was asked how long his Order had been in existence, answered off-hand that Orangeism could be traced back to the Garden of Eden. This was a thoroughly accurate statement. He simply meant to convey that all the essentials of a perfect nature and of an exalted religion were to be found associated in the primal day of our race. Man, upright and innocent, was the companion of God, and God honoured him by constant communion and fellowship. That state of harmony and bliss was, however, rudely disturbed by the appearance of sin. Adam, in punishment for his fall, was driven from the presence of the Creator and denied any further claim to happiness. The greatest misery he could then experience was remembering what he had once been. In mercy God provided a plan for undoing the work of Satan, and His words in reference to it held out a gleam of hope; but, before their fulfilment on Calvary a long period of years had to run during which man was to be put on trial, and allowed to see what a failure he was. Probation from Adam to Moses and Law from Moses to Christ could do nothing for his salvation. He sank more and more into the mire until, when the light of the Dayspring from on High

> visited us, the whole human family wallowed in the lowest depths of degradation. The time had then come for God to act. Through the sacrifice of His Son He purged away our sins, gave us changed hearts, and placed our feet on a new and living way ... Redemptive grace and the sanctification of our whole being enabled us "to read our title clear to mansions in the sky" ... That was Protestantism and that was Orangeism. Popery, however, obscured the truth ...'[1]

This is part of a long paragraph in the Introduction to two large volumes entitled *Orangeism in Ireland and Throughout the Empire*.[2] My main reason for quoting it at length at the outset of this paper is to establish the fact that the Orange Institution or Order is primarily a religious movement brought into being for the purpose of maintaining and defending the Protestant religion as seen in the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation. Supplementing this quotation is a statement found in *The Constitution, Laws, Ordinances of the Loyal Orange Institution of Ireland*:

> 'First, the Basis of the Institution. The Institution is composed of Protestants, united and resolved to the utmost of their power to support and defend the rightful Sovereign, the Protestant Religion, the Laws of the Realm, and the Succession to the Throne in the House of Windsor, BEING PROTESTANT; and united further for the defence of their own Persons and Properties, and the maintenance of the Public Peace. It is exclusively an Association of those who are attached to the religion of the Reformation, and will not admit into its brotherhood persons whom an intolerant spirit leads to persecute, injure or upbraid any man on account of his religious opinions. They associate also in honour of King William III, Prince of Orange, whose name they bear, as supporters of his glorious memory.'[3]

Bear with me as I make one more quotation from the same publication, this time under the heading 'Qualification of Candidates'. Adherence to this qualification is essential before a person can be

admitted into membership of any Orange Lodge. It is assumed that it is always upheld.

> 'An Orangeman should have a sincere love and veneration for his Heavenly Father; an humble and steadfast faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, believing in Him as the only Mediator between God and man ... he should honour and diligently study the Holy Scriptures, and make them the rule of his faith and practice; he should love, uphold, and defend the Protestant religion, and sincerely desire and endeavour to propagate its doctrines and precepts; he should strenuously oppose the fatal errors and doctrines of the Church of Rome, and scrupulously avoid countenancing (by his presence or otherwise) any act or ceremony of Popish Worship ... he should remember to keep holy the Sabbath day, and attend the public worship of God, and diligently train up his offspring, and all under his control, in the fear of God, and in the Protestant faith;' he should never take the name of God in vain, but abstain from all cursing and profane language ... the glory of God and the welfare of man, the honour of his Sovereign, and the good of his country, should be the motives for his actions.' [4]

It is quite clear from these quotations that Orangeism came into existence as a professing Christian organization, and that its aims and objects are in keeping with what all true born again Christians in Ireland would basically have believed in the past, long before the partition of this country. The history of the arrival of William of Orange from Holland is steeped in the defence of the Protestant religion, and the defeating of those promoting the Roman Catholic religion. All this dates back to 1688 and the immediate subsequent years. In those years Protestantism and Orangeism were simply, to many in Ireland, different terms for the same principles, and they equally claimed the support of all genuine sons of the sixteenth

century Protestant Reformation. Of course, nearly a hundred years were to elapse before the Orange movement emerged.

The conditions existing in England, Scotland and Ireland, at that time, were peculiar; and there was only one personage in Europe who could satisfy the requirements of the crisis in that period of the late seventeenth century. He was William Henry, Count of Nassau, Prince of Orange, Stadtholder of Holland, and finally King of England. We are not concerned here with the details of English history around this period, so I will not develop it any further.

Our attention must be directed to Ireland, but before doing so, it is important to mention that on 5 November 1688, whilst the English were celebrating the anniversary of their deliverance from the Gunpowder Plot eighty years earlier, William, Prince of Orange, landed at Torbay. Now back to Ireland.

In 1641 a rebellion broke out in Ireland which lasted for forty-seven years until 1688. Thousands of Protestants were killed under the forces of Tyrconnel, Lord Deputy of Ireland and commander-in-chief of the Jacobite forces. Time and its vicissitudes had not obliterated the scars which testified to the brutalities committed in the nine months from 23 October1641. In 1688 there were rumours of another impending massacre, and in that year the siege of Londonderry took place. Years of fighting had gone on between the Roman Catholics and Protestants. While the Scottish Plantation of the early seventeenth century played an important role in the preservation of

Ulster Protestantism, it was the formation of Orange Lodges throughout many parts of the Province of Ulster, and in the other three Provinces, that provided the main strength of opposition to the Roman Catholic church. These Orange Lodges consisted mainly of men from the Church of Ireland and the Presbyterian church. Not all the church leaders in these, the two main Protestant denominations, were entirely happy with either their clergy or laity joining the Orange Institution. Several hundred Methodists also joined the ranks of Orangeism in its early days. The pattern differed slightly from district to district as far as membership on a denominational basis was concerned.

It was in September 1795 that the first brotherhood of Protestants was formed to defend themselves, to support the Protestant religion, and to uphold the King and Constitution. They called themselves 'the Orange Boys'. This took place in a district called 'The Dian', a village on Lord Caledon's estate in county Tyrone. James Wilson, a prosperous farmer who founded the Orange Boys, lived near The Dian. Wilson was a Presbyterian as were the majority of members in his society in that district. However, there is evidence that groups of Protestants in other parts had also formed themselves into Orange societies about the same time. Many of these groups were first formed in licensed premises.

In his *History of Belfast*, Mr. Berwick writes, 'At the laying of the foundation stone of the White Linen Hall, in the year 1783, the

procession was conducted by the Orange Lodge so confessedly acknowledged to be the first in Europe, being composed of 150 gentlemen, among whom are the noblemen and commoners of the very first distinction. The Orange Lodge was revived in September 1780 and the most munificent acts of charity and benevolence have arisen from this never-to-be-forgotten phoenix.' [5]

It must be noted that the 'Orange Boys' existed as a separate organization alongside the Orangemen for some time, thus making it difficult to set definite dates for the first distinctive Orange Lodge as we now know the Orange Institution. In fact, in Belfast and Londonderry, Masonic Lodges bore the title 'Orange'. In most places where Protestants lived, orange lilies and sweetwilliam were grown side by side. It all symbolized pride of ancestry and religion, and a certain unity of heart and mind. From the pages of history we are informed that the first Orange Lodge actually met in Loughgall, county Armagh, in September 1795.

Orangeism spread throughout many of the counties and gathered support from Protestants in all walks of life, including the nobility, judiciary, members of parliament, church dignitaries, businessmen, farmers and the ordinary rank and file. Its standards were well maintained, but its members often failed to uphold them. Many good Christian people admired the Orange Institution and showed their sympathy for it, but would not join its ranks. In fact, some who became 'born again believers' gradually withdrew from it. The

habit of many Orangemen in frequenting public houses had a lot to do with Christians withdrawing. To this day the situation is still the same.

If I have taken too long in trying to outline the background of Orangeism it is because I felt the need to say what I have said in order to explain something about the history of Orangeism, as I am of the opinion that those listening to this paper would not be in possession of some of the details I have given.

Turning to the historical side of the attitude of Irish Baptists to Orangeism, one is faced with an almost total lack of information, especially as we have no Irish Baptist history to turn to for help. In view of this it is not possible to say how Baptists living in counties Armagh and Tyrone reacted to the existence of Orange Lodges in their districts. It is quite clear that Irish Baptists would have no sympathy with Roman Catholicism, and would have been horrified at the massacre of Protestants in 1641 and at the siege of Londonderry over forty years later. The Baptist denomination, if we may speak of such a body, was not in existence at that time. There is no evidence of how many Protestants, if indeed any, held Baptist convictions.

After the formation of Baptist churches I cannot trace any evidence to prove or disprove whether members of Irish Baptist churches joined local Orange Lodges in their districts throughout Ireland. However, we do know that there are cases of individuals, known to me as well as reported, members of Baptist churches who

were and are members of the Orange Institution. Obviously, I am referring to this present twentieth century. What happened in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries I just do not know. I will have to move into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to consider the Baptist attitude.

It is alleged that some local Baptist churches inserted in their church constitutions a paragraph prohibiting their members being members of the Orange Institution. This was done, I understand, under the phrase, 'worldly organizations'. How many Baptist churches did this I do not know. Yet the same churches, I believe, allowed their members to belong to trade unions, political parties, and even sporting clubs etc. You will now observe why I thought it important to go into the religious background of Orangeism. Inconsistency seems to have prevailed in many of our churches in the past, as indeed it still does to this day.

The fact that a number of our churches have used Orange halls for evangelistic meetings and other purposes seems to reveal some of this inconsistency. Several of our Baptist churches have members and regular adherents who belong to the Orange Institution. Added to this, we have some churches where the annual Orange service is sometimes held in their buildings. It is evident that there is no distinct pattern to be found in our Baptist Union of Churches regarding the Orange Order.

Looking into the past we cannot find when the present situation really arose. If we had access to minute books of our oldest congregations it might be possible to obtain information on the foregoing facts. Not having this source of information one is at a loss to be able to substantiate the details.

However, some research has helped in discovering what some Irish Baptists in the more recent past thought of the Orange Institution, especially when we consider the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The *Tubbermore Church Book* and the *Irish Baptist Magazine* are the main sources for most of what follows.

The Baptist church at Abbeyleix in county Offaly was formed in 1822, but it was not until 1838 that the Rev. Thomas Berry, who was the pastor at the time, made reference to Orangeism. On 2 June that year he wrote, 'Abbeyleix, though small, has one of the largest Orange lodges in this country. Among this class, humanly speaking, there is not much good to be expected. I am happy that one or two of the church have ceased meeting in their lodge.' In the *Tubbermore Church Book* there is a report about three church members who walked in Orange processions in June 1861, and another church member who, while he did not actually walk in the procession, walked alongside it (this man, incidentally, was called Porter!). All four were visited by representatives from the church and reprimanded. Many years later, on 3 November 1903, the same church had as speaker at its annual church meeting Thomas H. Sloan

Esq., M.P., a prominent Orangeman! In Belfast, a leading member of the Great Victoria Street church was Robert Graham Glendinning, who was associated with the Independent Orange Order from 1902 to 1910. After his death a commemorative bronze plaque was placed on the wall of the church building.

It is reported very clearly that the Lisnagleer church in 1883 commenced special meetings on 12 July with the purpose in mind of keeping their young people away from the Orange processions held traditionally on that date. It is also common knowledge that the Carndaisy church organized special conferences on 12 July with the same purpose in mind. One can reasonably assume that many other Baptist churches would be in total agreement with this attitude towards Orangeism. There is no record or evidence that I can find of an Irish Baptist minister being a member of the Orange Order. Incidentally, Brethren assemblies were all totally opposed to any of their members being in the Orange Order.

Irish Baptists, however, did take a strong stand against Roman Catholicism and against Gladstone's Home Rule Bill for Ireland, and in this respect they were more like the other Protestant denominations, excepting the Brethren movement which was apolitical. Baptists were very conscious of their need for civil and religious liberty. John Douglas of Waterford, and editor of the *Irish Baptist Magazine* at the time, wrote in February 1890:

> 'The subjugation of the Irish churches to the See of Rome in the 12th. century led to the extinction of Baptist teaching; but 500 years later, in the early days of the Commonwealth, our principles were again introduced by British Baptists who had obtained appointments in connectionwith Cromwell's Irish administration. Amongst these were many men of the highest rank, including General Fleetwood, the Lord Deputy of the country, and not less than a dozen governors of the principal towns. By the efforts of these Baptist settlers, churches were formed in all leading centres of population, some of them were endowed, and all their pastors appear to have received annual grants from the Treasury ... At the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 the State aid was not only withdrawn but a rigorous persecution of Nonconformists was instituted. Many Baptists were thrown into prison, many more made their escape to New England, and those who remained had to encounter trials of no ordinary kind. The accession of William III brought them a measure of relief, but they were still compelled to suffer much hardship at the hands of the prelates of the Established Church. Notwithstanding these difficulties, many of our Cromwellian churches survived till the beginning of the present century, maintaining firmly their testimony to primitive Christian truth.' [6]

Let us note another quotation:

> 'In 1893 the Baptist churches gave their opinion about "Home Rule" and on behalf of the (Lisnagleer) church Pastor Pearce wrote: It is the perfectly unanimous opinion of the members of the Baptist church and congregation at Lisnagleer, Co. Tyrone, that the Government of Ireland Bill of Mr. Gladstone, if passed and carried out, would be productive of discord, ruinous to commerce, a source of bitter strife and bloodshed, and a curse to our country, subjecting Protestants everywhere to insult, and, wherever possible, to intolerance and boycotting.' [7]

The two foregoing quotations, first of all, show that Irish Baptists were very much concerned with the political issues at stake in their time, and that they realised the need to be alert to those issues and not to ignore them. Yet at the same time it would appear that there was no sympathy with the Orange Institution which held similar political views. Surely, there must have been other reasons why

Baptist congregations disciplined their members for being interested in Orangeism. Was it a case of the clergy of the major denominations not wanting Baptists in the Orange Order or *vice versa*? Without some historical statements we cannot be sure of what these reasons really were.

Perhaps our contemporary situation is based upon the past. Who knows? Today we still have members of our Irish Baptist churches who are members of the Orange Institution, and we still have some churches that forbid their members to be in the Order. I recall a certain incident where a Baptist pastor had a church member ex-communicated for being an active member of a local Orange Lodge; yet at the same time he himself preached at an Orange service in a Christian Workers' Union hall at which I conducted the service. I was at that time a member of the Orange Order. I had a good friend who was a County Grand Lodge officer, and at the same time secretary for many years of the Tobermore church. I refer to the late William McKee. He saw no inconsistency in being both a Baptist and an Orangeman.

For many years at the Baptist Union Assembly when it was customary to send greetings to the Sovereign, the late Major F.R.A. Hynds, a member of the Mountpottinger church, Belfast and a prominent member of the County Grand Lodge of Belfast, would either propose or second the appropriate resolution. During the time of the Northern Ireland parliament under the premiership of the late

Lord Brookeborough, a well-known Baptist, Major Ivan Neill (now Sir Ivan Neill), was a cabinet minister. He was a leading Orangeman in the Ballynafeigh district of Belfast.

It must, of course, be emphasised that the opposition in our churches to Baptists being Orangemen was and still is very strong. The question is - Why? Several answers have been given to this question. Let me, in closing, mention a few.

1. Unnecessary involvement with the unregenerate.
2. The social activities of many Orange Lodges being most unsuitable for Christians.
3. The party political attachments to much of the work of the Orange Order.
4. The alleged claim that the Order is a secret society requiring its members to swear unchristian oaths.
5. Being a member of the Order makes it almost impossible to do real evangelistic work among Roman Catholics both north and south of the border.
6. That the historic past no longer prevails, therefore there is less reason to have the Orange Order.

No doubt other reasons could be given. The whole question of Orangeism and Irish Baptists seems to me to be a matter for personal conscience and Christian liberty rather than something upon which our churches should pontificate. Therefore, I leave the matter there, and at the same time confess that I have not been able to present a more fully qualified paper. I have not been the expert in this whole matter as I deem was anticipated.

Notes:

1. *Orangeism in Ireland and Throughout the Empire*, (London, 1939), 2 vols. by 'A Member of the Order', p.21.
2. *ibid.* This work was published by authority of the Grand Lodge of Ireland under the guidance of a Publication Committee.
3. *The Constitution, Laws, Ordinances of the Loyal Orange Institution of Ireland*, published by the Grand Lodge of Ireland, p.1.
4. *ibid.*, p.2.
5. Cited in *Orangeism in Ireland*, p.267.
6. *Irish Baptist Magazine*, February 1890, pp.
7. J.R.Grant, 'History of Lisnagleer Baptist Church' in *IBHS Journal*, vol.4 (1971-72), p.12.

Norman Porter

Newry Baptist Church

According to the original minute book Newry Baptist Church was established on Saturday, the 14th December, 1889. The meeting place was the drawing room of a Mr. Orr of Sugar Island, a short street with a bridge at each end, one over the Clanrye River and the other over the Newry Canal, and the first worship service was held there the following day.

It was thought, at the time, that this was the first Baptist witness in Newry but since then evidence of an earlier church has been discovered.

According to the Annual Report of the Baptist Irish Society for the year ending 31 March 1818 a Baptist Church was formed in Newry on the 22nd. February of that year with 10 members including 4 who were baptized that day. The pastor was the Rev. Charles T. Keen, a Baptist Irish Society itinerant minister. A Sunday School of 56 children had been started. On 4th May 1818 another 3 were baptized and by then the Sunday School had grown to 220. Keen had been sent to Newry in 1817 in response to a request from Dr. George Millar, a Baptist living there. On the 21st. November 1818 a letter, signed by Millar and an Andrew Brodie, was sent to the Baptist Irish Society thanking them for extending Keen's allocation to Newry for another year. Newry, at that time, had a population of about 14,000. In April

it was reported that one person had been received into membership, and another was to be received. Keen had good relations with the ministers of the town. On occasions he had preached at Armagh.

In the autumn of 1819 Dr. Millar wrote, 'We have a very promising school at Ballynafern about 10 miles from Newry, where there is a small Baptist church, established for several years and which Mr. Keen visits occasionally; several of the Sunday School scholars there have become members of the church.'

Keen left Newry after nearly two years, and went to the Cork church to assist the pastor, the Rev. Walter Richards. The Newry church seems to have survived until 1822 and then disappeared.

Charles Thomas Keen (1791-1870) was born in London on 5th. October 1791. He was converted when he was about 18 or 19 years of age. He joined the Edmund Street church in 1812 and entered Stepney College in 1814 to train for the ministry. His course was shortened when he joined the staff of the Baptist Irish Society as an itinerant minister. He was ordained at Maze Pond church, London, on Tuesday, 14th October, 1817 for service in Newry. While in Cork he married an Episcopalian lady who had been converted through Dr. Quarry, rector of St. Mary's Shandon, Cork. Mrs. Keen was baptized in 1822. They had 8 children, one of whom died in infancy, and another, Charles Thomas Junior, entered the Baptist ministry and served, among other places, in Cork (1854), Londonderry (1862) and Ballymena (1863). Mrs. Keen was an interesting, well-educated woman. A

Calvinist, she studied prophecy and held millenarian views, including the return of the Jews to their own land, and the personal reign of Christ on the earth. She died on the 17th September, 1853 and was buried in the graveyard of the Aylsham (Sudbury) Baptist church. Keen held pastorates at Newry, Waltham, Pershore, Exeter, Worstead and Aylsham.

Why this early Baptist church at Newry should cease to be, when it seemed to be thriving and so soon after its formation cannot be determined and so, for the present at least, must remain something of a mystery.

The church formed in 1889 with a similar number of members was destined for longer life though its early years were not without disturbing problems. When it was formed it was evidently intended that its meeting place should be somewhere in Newry for that is the name given to it on the flyleaf of the minute book. The room in Sugar Island where the first service was held continued to be used as a meeting place for some months. Hugh D. Brown and the members of Harcourt Street church, Dublin, showed an interest in the newly-formed church and a gift of £8 from them towards the furnishing of the meeting room is gratefully recorded in the minutes of a church meeting held on the 12th March 1890. A report in the *Irish Baptist Magazine* of the following April expresses the hope 'that the way will soon be clear for the erection of a suitable chapel'. This hope was not to be realised for a minute of 18th November 1890 reveals that the church had been

meeting in the Lecture Hall of the YMCA in Hill Street from the 1st of October. The charge for the use of this accommodation was one shilling per meeting and another shilling for heat and light. How long the church continued to meet there is not clear. It could only have been a matter of months as the April 1891 issue of the *Irish Baptist Magazine* reveals that the church was now meeting in Maytown, about four miles from Newry on the Mountnorris Road. This, from the start, was only meant to be a temporary arrangement for, not being able to obtain a suitable building site in Newry, the church had decided to erect a portable wooden structure at Fivemilehill. This was made in sections at the home of a member who lived at Jerrettspass and then transported to the chosen site. There the opening services were held on the 15th November 1891 at 11.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. So, after almost two years, the church had a modest meeting house of its own where it was to meet for the next seventy-nine years during which time it was known as Fivemilehill Baptist church.

On 20th December 1891, a Mr. Robert G. McClelland was received into membership. He was later to become the church secretary and treasurer and serve the church as such for many years. At this time, however, he built a baptistery and completed work on the flooring and ceiling of the new building. He was then asked to extend the building by ten feet to provide a vestry, and when this was done to put up stabling for four horses.

At various times since the building has been renovated. The outside shell has been renewed and the windows and inside panelling replaced. About 1960 the old entrance hall which was very small was taken down and a larger one put up. Although the church does not now use the building a weekly meeting and a children's work is carried on by an interdenominational group known as the Fivemilehill Fellowship.

In 1970 the name of the church was changed to its original one of Newry Baptist Church. At the annual business meeting of the church held on the 30th December 1969 it was suggested that the time might be ripe for a move back to Newry. There had been a considerable drift of country people to the towns and it was thought that the witness of the church might be more effective if a meeting place could be found within the town boundary. Subsequently the church unanimously agreed to this suggestion and two members were appointed to enquire about properties which might be suitable and available. Within a fortnight one had been discovered. It was a large Victorian dwelling house, an end one in a terrace of four, situated in Downshire Road, and quite close to the town centre. It had once served as a Presbyterian manse. It had a fair-sized garden at the side and rear and beyond this stables with a loft. These were in a very dilapidated state and have since been demolished.

When it was learned that this property was for sale a church meeting was hurriedly called and although £56 was the sum total of

the church's funds the decision to buy at the asking price of £5,000 was taken. With a membership of only 20 this might have been considered a big undertaking, but such was the members' enthusiasm that the total sum was raised through gifts and interest-free loans within a few months.



Sometime previous to this the church had begun to feel, in a new way, its responsibility to support financially the work of the Union in its various departments, which is one reason there was so little in hand when the property desired came on the market. In church meetings, at the time, it was emphasised that it would be wrong to shelve this responsibility, even for a period, just because the cost of the newly purchased building had to be met. The result was that

instead of a reduction in the support for Union departments there was an increase of 7%.

To make a sizeable meeting room the wall between the drawing and dining rooms was removed, making it possible to seat comfortably almost a hundred people. Other accommodation included a large kitchen on the ground floor and on the first floor five rooms of varying size. A cellar underneath had a number of apartments. At present plans are afoot, which, if implemented, will make the building suitable for residential conferences and similar functions.

The original membership of the church formed in 1889 was composed of eight men and two women and they put their names to the following statement of their beliefs and aspirations:-

> "We, the undersigned, sinners saved by the sovereign grace of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ and baptized by immersion in water according to His example and in obedience to His commission to His church, do hereby unite in church fellowship, so that as a holy brotherhood we may advocate by example and precept, the truth as it is in Jesus, proclaim the riches of his abounding grace; and by loving counsel and sympathy, help one another in the Christian and heavenward life.
>
> We seek to maintain in primitive simplicity, purity of worship and communion, regarding it as an essential feature in our Lord's teaching that the redeemed should walk in newness of life and in holy separation unto Himself.
>
> We thankfully accept 'the Holy Scriptures', 'the Sword of the Spirit', 'the Word of God' to be the rule of faith and practice, and humbly pray that through its teaching we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: be thoroughly furnished unto good works, and be

ready always to give an answer to everyone that asks us a reason for the hope that is in us with meekness and fear.

There is no name more glorious by which we can be known in the world and among our fellow believers than that of Christian but to avoid misunderstanding on all sides, we elect to be known by the name of Baptists.

We believe that order and office in the church are scriptural and essential, and that while God alone can qualify and give gifts unto men it devolves upon His people to recognise those whom He has called and chosen to fill the various positions in His church.

We hold that the recognition of the different gifts is a most important duty of the church, and that to this end the members should submit themselves one to the other in the fear of the Lord.

We desire to dwell in love with our brethren of every name and to work with them in harmony for the promotion of the glory and exaltation of their Lord and ours.

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

The first to sign this statement of belief and practice was pastor John Taylor of the Tandragee church. He had baptized four of the men in August of the previous year. They had joined the Tandragee church but were now transferring to Newry: the others, it would appear, had been baptized sometime previously. It seems clear that Pastor Taylor had much to do with the church's establishment. He was present at the inaugural meeting, and, on being asked, consented to pastor the church in its infancy, while still remaining pastor of the Tandragee church.

At that meeting a deputation from Dublin, led by a Thomas Lamb, was also present. Lamb chaired the meeting. Two months later he and his wife came to live in Newry and joined the church. He was made elder but within a year he and his wife withdrew from the fellowship for reasons given but not disclosed in the church's minutes.

This was not the only disappointment of the first few years. On the 18th November, 1890, it was reported that two of the foundation members and another, who had subsequently joined, had withdrawn chiefly on account of the name 'Baptist'.

As well as those who withdrew on their own initiative there were others with whom the church decided they could not have fellowship. 'Inconsistency of life' was a common reason given for such action, this phrase seeming to cover a multitude of sins. 'Intemperance' and 'persistent absenteeism' were others. The most unusual dismissal was that of a member who believed 'that there were three places after death' and persisted in so proclaiming.

While the infant church was feeling its way and grappling with a variety of problems the Holy Spirit, it would seem, was working in the hearts of many. It is true that not a few withdrew or were excluded from the fellowship, but amazingly the number joining far exceeded the number leaving. In the first two years of the church's life (1890-1) 43 names were added to the church roll. Remembering that Fivemilehill is five Irish miles (seven English) from Newry and that Markethill is the same distance in the opposite direction it is

interesting to note where these 43 members came from. Four were from Newry town; the other thirty-nine from places roughly within a three mile radius of Fivemilehill, but most from places in the Markethill direction. It would seem, therefore, that the move to Fivemilehill, more or less forced upon the church, was being overruled to the blessing of many.

And that blessing was to continue until the turn of the century, for in the next three years, another 50 names were added to the roll, and before the century closed another 30. In the meantime there had been losses. In 1894 a church was formed at Poyntzpass just six miles away. About a dozen members whose homes were in that area immediately had their membership transferred to the new church. Emigration to America also made inroads in the membership. The records show that at least 10 members emigrated at this time. Death and moving to other places in the country, mainly Belfast and Dublin, accounted for further losses. Although the records show that 137 members were enrolled in the first ten years, the highest number in fellowship at any one time was around 70.

On the 26th May, 1895 a young man from Bessbrook was received into membership. His name was Isaac Bell. Later he was to enter the pastorate and serve in a number of our churches, the last of which was Tandragee from which he retired in 1930. In his youth he played Rugby for Bessbrook which at that time could boast of having produced two internationals. The writer met him on a few occasions

in the late 'Thirties when he came to Bessbrook to preach and sing at the Christian Workers' Union meeting held at 8.30 on Sunday evenings. Although quite feeble he was still cheerful and could joke about his bodily weakness. One of his stories was about himself boarding a tram in Belfast. The conductor had to help him up. Panting, he thanked the conductor and remarked, 'You wouldn't think I was an old Rugby player', to which the conductor retorted, 'Precious little Rugby will do you now.' But, most of all, he loved to tell of the early days at Fivemilehill and it would be hard to forget the enthusiasm with which he recounted the blessed times of fellowship he then enjoyed. He was one of about twenty, who each Lord's Day met as a company and walked the full three miles to 'the Hill'. The morning service over they had a Bible class after which they 'took the air', weather permitting, before settling down for the evening service at 6 o'clock. The walk back home afterwards ended a day well spent.

From 1900 for the next forty years records are somewhat sparse, but it would appear there was a steady decline in the membership which on occasions was as low as 12. Since then it has fluctuated, at one time reaching 29. The present membership (1985) is 17. Two people have applied for baptism and church membership. Others have shown interest and at present hopes are high for the future of the work.

Newry has always been a predominantly Roman Catholic town and more so now than ever. With one of the highest unemployment rates

in Northern Ireland, nearly all the young people who have come under the influence of the church have had to leave for other places and most of them are now members of other Baptist churches. This trend is likely to continue, but others are coming under the influence of the church to an encouraging degree.

From its inception until the nineteen fifties the church was greatly indebted to the Irish Baptist Home Mission. Not only did the Mission offer guidance in different aspects of the work but sent a stream of men to minister to the church and evangelise in the neighbourhood as well as being responsible for the greater part of their salaries.

In the early part of the present century Poyntzpass and Fivemilehill churches shared a pastor. Later on the Tandragee pastor helped out at Fivemilehill, until in 1968 the three churches of Warrenpoint, Poyntzpass and Fivemilehill agreed jointly to call a pastor and go self-supporting. This arrangement operated until 1982, the Fivemilehill church having once more become the Newry Baptist Church in 1970.

Pastor John Taylor, true to his word given at the establishment of the church, pastored it for three years. During this time Alexander Jardine was sent by the Home Mission to conduct evangelistic services in the area. Many of these were under canvas and through the preaching of Mr. Jardine there were numerous conversions. Many were baptized and became members. When Mr. Taylor resigned from the pastorate in 1892 Mr. Jardine was appointed pastor of the two churches of Fivemilehill and Poyntzpass. He continued to evangelise

the neighbourhood for eight years. Many of those who were converted at this time were still alive when the Reverend W.P. Nicholson came to Bessbrook for one of his campaigns. In one of the meetings he called for testimonies asking Christians to stand up and merely say when and where they had been converted, and so many gave Fivemilehill as their spiritual birthplace that he interrupted the flow of testimonies to ask, 'Where on earth is this place Fivemilehill where everybody seems to have been converted?'

The first decade of the present century saw five pastors come and go. The first of these was James Spottiswoode. He had spent three years at the Baptist College in Dublin (1896-1899). He was appointed pastor of Poyntzpass and Fivemilehill in 1900, but left at the end of 1901 for Waterford where he served until 1905 when he emigrated to New Zealand. The second was H. Watson who also left after a short time. He was followed by W.J. Thompson who began with a mission in which there was much blessing. During the four years of his stay eight baptisms took place. While at Fivemilehill he married Mary Cloughley of Gilford in the Mountpottinger Church, the marriage service being conducted by Alexander Jardine. For a short time J.H. McKnight pastored the church and he was followed by R.J. Murphy. Murphy was sent as an evangelist by the Home Mission but after a time the churches called him to be their pastor and he accepted. In doing so the churches and he had unwittingly violated a Home Mission rule, so they were informed that Mr. Murphy, for the next twelve

months, was to be evangelist in charge and that no recognition service was to be held. Murphy remained in charge till late 1911 when he resigned owing to the unsanitary condition of his house which he said was affecting his health. The Home Mission had no other opening and informed Mr. Murphy to this effect. He, however, received and accepted 'a hearty call' to Tandragee, where he began his ministry on the 1st January, 1912. When he died in the early 'Thirties Pastor David Burrows conducted the funeral service and said, 'About the year 1909 our brother, who was then the Congregational minister at Donoughmore, was led to see the truth of believer's baptism and about the same time as the late Pastor Hodgett he was baptized in the Baptist church at Dungannon. Shortly after this he was called to the pastorate of Poyntzpass and Fivemilehill Baptist churches. In 1911 he was called to the sister church at Tandragee. I had the privilege of being called to succeed him at Poyntzpass and Fivemilehill in 1912 and so for a short time we were neighbours. I think it was in the eventful year of 1914 that Mr. Murphy left us for the United States.

When Mr. Burrows came to Fivemilehill and Poyntzpass it was as a supply, but having acted in this capacity for nine months the two churches sought permission of the Home Mission to call him as pastor. This was granted on condition that the two churches would raise the sum of £50 to which the Mission would add £25 and that Mr. Burrows would sit the Baptist Union ministerial recognition examination. These

conditions were agreed to and Pastor Burrows served the two churches to the beginning of 1916 when he went to Ballymena.

With the departure of Pastor Burrows there followed a period when the church would have seemed to have no pastoral oversight. This was a matter of grave concern to the Home Mission, to former and neighbouring pastors, who did what they could to help. Fortunately this period was of short duration. Between 1916 and 1940 Pastors D. Miskimmin, G.H. Weir, S. Jardine, A.E. McDowell and A. Clarke all accepted a measure of responsibility for the work at Fivemilehill while pastoring other churches. The writer was baptized by Pastor Clarke when he joined the church in 1940. In 1945 he was persuaded, also by Pastor Clarke, to become the church's secretary and treasurer, positions which he still holds but must soon relinquish. It has been his real pleasure to co-operate with Pastors R. Campbell, T.P. O'Connor, A.G. Hanna, S.J. McManus and now D. McMillan.

Special mention must be made of the ministry of S.J. McManus. He joined the Home Mission staff as an evangelist in 1951 and served in that capacity for seventeen years, during which he held missions in every county in Ulster and occasionally in the Republic. Many were converted under his ministry which was exercised in areas where there was no Baptist witness, as well as in co-operation with existing Baptist churches. He pastored the three churches of Warrenpoint, Poyntzpass and Fivemilehill (later Newry) for fourteen years. Indefatigable, methodical and painstaking he endeared himself to all

three congregations who worked harmoniously under his leadership for all that time, the longest pastorate which any of the three churches had ever enjoyed. His visitation in the homes of the people, members and others alike, was deeply appreciated, and it was here, on occasions, that he experienced his greatest joy, that of sometimes being able to point people to Christ.

The church at Newry now has its own pastor, David J. McMillan, who began his ministry on 1st. August, 1983, coming direct from the Irish Baptist College after having completed a three year course. With only one church, and that a small one, to pastor, the main emphasis has been on outreach in which most of the members have been involved. Many profitable contacts have been made. Some have found Christ and others have been challenged by the preaching and teaching to which they have listened.

In spite of the unhappy name which Newry seems to have wherever one goes the writer is convinced that here there are many seeking souls, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, but mainly the latter. Having lived in the Newry-Bessbrook district for over fifty years he can truthfully say that he has never known a time as this when people, especially young people are so open to the gospel. Shakespeare said, 'There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune'. In the context of the gospel in Newry this is such a tide. May it not be missed by Newry Baptist Church.

J.Wray

Dunseverick Baptist Church

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: This paper has been prepared for a meeting of the Irish Baptist Historical Society, March 1986. For background information a booklet entitled *Dunseverick Baptist Tabernacle 1935-1985* may be consulted. The contents of this paper are the responsibility of the author.

I. The Church - Its Environment

> 'We are constantly being submerged in quite contradictory philosophical doctrines, political propaganda and social and artistic ideas. Time was when each man lived shut up in his own little garden. Now the world is swept by one tidal wave after another.' Paul Tournier

We are certainly aware of groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth and their attempts to focus attention on the environment. Their definition of environment is of the earth and its domain. However in the context of the church and particularly Dunseverick Baptist Church we can think of the environment as the circumstances surrounding this particular entity.

The church is set out in the countryside about 3 miles from Bushmills and 10 miles from Ballycastle. It does at first glance seem isolated and people who pass by occasionally make this remark. Why build a church on its own in the middle of the countryside? Initially, it was a central point for those who formed the church to come to. This is largely true today also. At the time when the first members were looking for a piece of ground this was literally the only available

site, others in the district would not sell land for the church. This explains its particular position.

Although the area is essentially rural there are small pockets of housing developments around the area with anything from 10 to 30 houses forming small hamlets. From the time of the commencement of the church these have not changed much in character, perhaps a few houses have been added to accommodate a natural increase in the population. In the main any development and hence increase in the population has occurred outside the general area. For example, there was in the 1960's and 70's quite a large expansion in the triangle area of Coleraine, Portstewart, Portrush. How do these circumstances affect the church?

The work and witness of the church is directed primarily toward a stable population. People in the district know the church; they know its members. The challenge for the church is to bring the gospel effectively to each new generation rather than as possibly happens in an urban situation with a moving population. People can become hardened to the gospel and a consistent yet fresh presentation of the message is sometimes difficult to achieve.

The major occupation of the area is undoubtedly agriculture, with related services. Certainly when the church commenced there was a large proportion of the membership drawn from this particular livelihood and background. If you look at the occupations of the male members of the church at various dates it can be observed that in the

1960's and 70's more people joined from categories other than farming. Is this important?

When a church has largely a single occupation group it makes the fellowship appear effortless since they tend to speak the same language and have similar problems outside the church. It is always difficult to understand and integrate the various demands and aspirations of those from different walks of life. Increasingly the church has had to do this, especially over the past 20 years.

This brings us to the structure of population in terms of the balance between children, teens, adults and the elderly. The district is fairly balanced in this respect. When the church commenced in 1935 there were three middle-aged couples and the remainder of the members were young people. This initial group formed the core of the church for many years. Some did move to other districts but the majority remained and in many senses they were the stabilizing influence in the church. Consequently, today there are a number of retired people who have been in the church for the 50 years of its existence. The only other anomaly in regard to age structure within the church at the moment is the existence of quite a number of young men between the ages of 20 and 30.

This then indicates the major trends in terms of population and occupation. Other aspects that can be considered under the broad heading of the church and its environment are the social, political and religious trends in the area.

In the past, and particularly when the church commenced, the area could be regarded as very traditional and strict in its religious observances and affiliations. This led to a certain stigma being attached to someone leaving a church and joining the Baptists. It is possible to say today, however, that quite a few people no longer have the strong ties with church that they once had. The Tabernacle is no longer regarded with the suspicion that it was for quite a number of years. This was particularly evident during the last mission that the church held, when people from all religious backgrounds attended. In recent years some of the ministers in the traditional protestant churches have become more evangelistic in their outlook. Certainly the evidence of changed lives and the passage of time goes a long way toward breaking down barriers. On one occasion in the early history of the church one of the church members expressed his discouragement at the smallness of the numbers and the slowness of the work, at the lack of interest and the apathy of those in the district. Pastor Johnston, listening to these comments, made the remark that a day would come when the Tabernacle would be established and respected in the district. Mr. Albert McMullan, in telling this incident today, draws great blessing frrom it.

Politically, the area is strongly unionist, and although no member of the church in the past has continued their links with the Orange Order, the church has been able to make use of halls belonging to the Order for missions and children's work, particularly in Armoy.

Socially, there is still a strong emphasis on the family, but in more recent years it is true to state that many of the vices associated with urban pop-ulations have become prevalent.

Perhaps the most obvious change has been in the economic well-being of the area, and particularly the effect of better communications. A good road system and the growing ownership of cars has extended the distance people can travel to the church. It also means that the church can draw on a wider range of speakers in time of pastoral vacancy.

This first section was designed to set out the church's distinctiveness in terms of its particular environment. To summarize, the church at Dunseverick still retains its essentially rural character. It faces the challenge of ministering to a fairly stable population. However changes in the area have been brought about by economic growth. Television and its accompanying technology mean that though fairly isolated physically it is not by-passed by the influences these bring.

II. The Church - Its Belief and Practice

> 'God is interested in men. He has implanted in their hearts an aspiration to know Him. He speaks to them, reveals Himself, loves them and wants their love ... We say all this as if it were quite simple but there are times when I think it seems quite incredible.' Paul Tournier

There is little doubt that most church members regard the Bible as their sole guide. However the existence of a church constitution is

obviously beneficial since it outlines particular doctrines that make the church distinctive. It also aids in regulating the affairs of the church. The emergence of a constitution and any amendments to it give insight to particular aspects of a church's growth and change.

The church at Dunseverick has had a constitution from its inception in 1935. The first constitution was drawn up by Pastor S. Jardine and was a set of doctrinal beliefs. In 1944 a new consitution was drawn up incorporating the set of beliefs and adding a number of points specifically related to the practical government of the church. Why was this change necessary? While the church had no direct guidelines concerning the role of a pastor and elders it was very much at the mercy of whoever happened to come to the church to teach. It took a certain amount of debate on the role of a pastor to indicate the need for a fuller constitution. Further in the early years of the church's existence it functioned very much along informal lines since numbers were small and consent was easily achieved.

The constitution has not ben amended since 1944 other than to bring the church property under the protection of the Baptist Union of Ireland (Northern) Corporation as Trustee.

Does this mean that there has never been a point in all the years of the history of the church where matters affecting the constitution have not been discussed? There are a number of instances where the belief of the church on a particular issue has been discussed and enlarged in the light of particular situations.

An example of this was in relation to baptism. Initially when the church started anyone who became a Christian generally left their own place of worship, were baptized and joined the Tabernacle. Once you had committed your life to this path you were not welcome at your old place of worship. In some instances people became Christians, attended the Tabernacle on a casual basis, but when it came to baptism drew back in their commitment. Baptism was the 'make or break' point. Gradually over the years it became possible for a number of reasons to return after baptism to a church that did not believe this doctrine. The church may also have been responsible for this situation arising because of a failure to give clearer teaching to candidates.

The church therefore arrived at the position that no one should be baptised particularly if they intended to continue to attend a church that did not believe this doctrine. There is a degree of sensitivity involved in ascertaining a person's reasons for baptism and an openness to their particular situation, but in general the doctrine has been made a little more watertight. Baptismal classes have also been introduced.

In the light of this discussion the question arises as to whether the constitution should be amended. There are two opinions on this. If you begin to amend the constitution you arrive at a situation where every 'i' is dotted and every 't' crossed, but not much would be gained since the church would soon become hedged in by various types of

constraints. Another opinion is that the constitution should be amended since a debate of this type takes the church to a position that is not immediately apparent. So far the church has not amended the constitution.

Many debates within the church fall into what could be regarded as the ethos or tradition of a church. This emerges from a number of sources - the tradition from which a church member has emerged; the traditions and experiences of a pastor; events in the life of the church.

The tradition from which a church member has emerged. Some of the church members of Dunseverick are from a Church of Ireland background and therefore still like church services to be fairly formal. It is sometimes difficult to balance all the different aspirations considering the various backgrounds - Brethren, Presbyterian etc.

The experiences a pastor has had. Pastor Byers introduced the church magazine which has become an established feature. Pastor Garrett introduced the concept of coming to or leaving the prayer meeting at any time suitable to the church member. Each pastor influences the doctrine of the church by his own particular emphasis.

Experiences the church has had. For example, at one time the church had a short term pastoral oversight that was not regarded as beneficial so that in later years this was something that was avoided.

Whether the church is concerned about its formal constitution or the informal traditions that have grown up, it often takes hard work to apply the church's doctrines in a way that has wide support. The

range of debate within any one doctrine is immense. Nevertheless, as Paul Tournier said, 'God is interested in men. He has implanted in their hearts an aspiration to know Him, He speaks to them, reveals Himself, loves them and wants their love. We say all this as if it were quite simple but there are times when I think it seems quite incredible.'

III. The Church - A Personal View

> 'We can help others by telling them of our experiences and convictions. But let us have the honesty to tell them of our failures and doubts as well.' Paul Tournier

Just as each individual has a number of strengths and weaknesses, so do churches. These change with time and what may be a weakness today may be overcome tomorrow and be turned into a strength. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this particular church on balance over a period of time?

The weaknesses:

The church does exhibit a certain tendency toward not dealing with conflict. Someone has said that 99% of the problems do not just go away. This lack of action can be traced to what could be defined as a country attitude: not wanting to be involved indisagreements; not wanting to interfere.

Continuing on this theme of a 'country' attitude gives rise to another problem - a 'leave it to the pastor philosophy'. This was not born out of any desire to see the pastor worked to the bone, but rather that

members genuinely felt that they could not perform a task. For example, for many years the church did not have elders mainly because the people approached from time to time sincerely felt their inadequacies.

A certain slowness in getting things done. On one particular issue the church had a debate that lasted five years. This is not the norm but it does illustrate a point. Sometimes it can be a virtue to move slowly, but on balance at Dunseverick we tend to believe the proverb, The more haste, the less speed.

Other aspects holding on to tradition, perhaps not always possessed with the ability to deal with the prevailing situation particularly when trends and events move quickly.

The strengths:

The church is and has been since its inception very interested in the work of Baptist Missions and other missions. This is possibly due to the fact that very early in its history two members went to South Peru with Baptist Missions. I think it is true to say that it has been a continuing interest and, without doubt, a prayerful interest.

The prayer life of a church a strength? The prayer meeting was one of the first instigated. At the beginning it was quite small, now on average 40 people attend. This is not to say that there have not been times when difficulties arose. One of the church members remembers going in to the back room to the prayer meeting only to see Pastor Byers praying aloud alone. Nevertheless, it is, as attested by

missionary friends, one of the areas of the church's strength over the years.

With the interest in prayer, has been an earnest endeavour to preach and teach the truth. A desire to see that the Word of God is not compromised.

The church has always been blessed in having people who were outstandingly faithful. In earlier years Mr. and Mrs.Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Taggart, Mrs. Sloan and the Sloan family, the McVicker and McCaughan families, the Thompson brothers and their wives, the McMullan family, the McClellands, and so it goes on. Mr. Albert Taggart involved himself enthusiastically in all of the church's affairs. In the prayer meetings he was always the first to pray, followed by Mr. Bob Thompson. Mr. John Thompson did much practical work around the church. He carved the mahogany posts that stabilize the platform. He chipped stones to make a suitable surround for the church, and so on. Mr. Hugh Sloan for many years acted as church secretary, Sunday school superintendent, magazine secretary. All made terrific contributions.

The church has never been really large; it has fluctuated between 50 and 60 members for quite a few years. This is one of its strengths.

A verse that came to my notice during the writing of the church history was Phillipians 3:12, 'Not that I have already attained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.' In the history of the church a

lot of time is taken up with pressing on, through the hard days and the easy days, through the glad days and through the sad days.

Agnes Borland

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Conlig Baptists: A Research Exercise

The annual meeting of the Society took an unusual form in 1985. The members were invited, under the guidance of the President, Dr. H.D. Gribbon, and the Hon. Secretary, to examine original source documents and artefacts relating to the Conlig Baptist Church, Co. Down, and to consider how to use such materials in writing a local church history.

Among the documents were the duplicate Marriage Register and the pulpit Bible. The chapel and manse are still extant and in use; the former chapel as a Gospel Hall belonging to the Christian (or Plymouth) Brethren and the manse alongside as a dwelling house. The communion plate, consisting of a pewter cup and plate, was also on view.

The Hon. Secretary had researched some data concerning the founding of the church with its day school, the ministers who had served at Conlig under the Baptist Irish Society, and the effects of the 1859 Ulster Revival, trade depression and emigration on this village church. Dr. Gribbon indicated what other sources might be consulted in writing up a local church history.

Review

Agnes Borland, *Dunseverick Baptist Tabernacle, 1935-1985*, (Bushmills, 1985), 56 pages. Price £1.50.

Attractively produced on semi-art paper with photographs, this is one of the welcome crop of local church histories. It draws a useful picture of one of our rural churches which has a deserved reputation for stability and missionary enthusiasm. Many summer visitors to the beautiful north Antrim coast around Bushmills will be glad to have this account of the church where they have worshipped on occasions.

Miss Borland has used her material with a certain reserve which, at times, has one trying to read between the lines. It would have been more interesting and helpful if the author had exercised her right to speak the truth in love a little more freely. In writing a local church history it is wise to avoid hagiography and to offer an analysis that may serve to point out pitfalls and mistakes to be avoided by succeeding generations.

One novel feature is the inclusion of ground plans of the church building as the structure was improved from time to time. JT.