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A table of contents for the *Irish Baptist Historical Society Journal, old series,* can be found here:

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IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

VOLUME TWENTY-ONE

1988/89

IRISH BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

VOLUME TWENTY-ONE 1988 - 89

EDITOR: JOSHUA THOMPSON, D.Phil (Oxon.)

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117 Lisburn Road,
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Telephones: Belfast (0232) 663108/9

CONTENTS

1	**Editorial**	**4**
2	**Dublin Baptists from 1650 onwards**	**5**
3	**Dublin Baptists: A Stroll Down Memory Lane**	**17**
4	**A Brief History of Rathcoole Baptist Church 1951-1987**	**22**
5	**Three Irish Pastors:**	
	Frederick William Gracey (1883-1950)	**30**
	Hugh Henry Orr (1904-1973)	**47**
	James Irvine (1914-1982)	**55**
6	**Anabaptism in England During the Reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603)**	62

EDITORIAL

This volume of the *Journal* contains two extra articles, being two papers read at a special meeting of the Society in Dublin as part of the celebration of the millenium of the city of Dublin.

The history of the Rathcoole Church, Newtownabbey, is another in the series of local church histories written by church members, in this case two founder members of this church located in one of the growth areas outside Belfast.

Important biographical material is embodied in the articles on three well-known pastors of a past generation.

Dr Maurice Dowling's informative paper on English Anabaptism in the reign of the virgin Queen carries on our policy of developing the interest of members in the wider context of church history.

Due to the increasing cost of producing the *Journal* we have been obliged in increase the membership subscription to £5.00 sterling or $8.00, which entitles to the *Journal.*

DUBLIN BAPTISTS FROM 1650 ONWARDS

For almost three and a half centuries Baptists have worshipped and witnessed in Ireland's largest city. The Dublin churches have never been numerically impressive, apart from some short periods of unusual expansion, but neither have they been without significance or courage. The distinctive theology of the Biblical Anabaptists has been tenaciously upheld in a city which contributed much to the development of Irish Baptist life. While they have been statistically outflanked by the Christian Brethren, the Medthodists and the modern 'house church' movement, nevertheless they have not experienced the kind of decline of their close historical companions, the Congregationalists and the Moravians, now reduced to a handful.

Baptists locate their ecclesial home within the sphere of Nonconformist Christianity. They have always been looked upon as Protestant Dissenters and the spirit of early English Nonconformity was transplanted into Ireland in the middle of the seventeenth century. These early Baptists took on board some of the ideas of the "shock-troops" of the Reformation, the Anabaptists but were also heavily influenced by the robust theology of the English Puritans. Early Dublin Baptist life was nurtured from several streams and may well have been an example of the kind of provisionalism described by Ronald Knox. He holds that "it is difficult to see that the Anabaptist movement had, at any time, an organization to govern it or a unifying principle to hold it together". 1

Historians may wish to argue with Knox's thesis because there is evidence that the spiritual descendants of the Anabaptists in Dublin had a unifying principle which held them together.

This is recognized by Professor Corish of Maynooth:

> "The baptists did not fit into the pattern of independency because they absolutely refused to accept that infant baptism was true baptism. For this reason their opponents frequently called them 'anabaptists'. Though they tended to reject the name as abusive, it implied a radical political and spiritual outlook that many of them did in fact accept". 2

It is important to locate the early Dublin Baptists within the lineage of nonconformity because they interacted with other dissenters, both negatively and positively and were themselves moulded by the ethos of those who found common ground under the Free Church umbrella. They were affected by what one historian has called "the three distinct stages in the growth of the nonconformist churches". These are - the stage of persecution when struggling for their existence, the period of propagation and controversy, aimed at increase and expansion and the era of settling down when many of the distinctions are filed down. 3

The emergence and development of the Dublin churches was characterised by the stages and features identified here. Their story unfolds both the strengths and weaknesses of dissent, particularly when expressed in a turbulent political climate from within a congregational mode of church polity.

DUBLIN BAPTISTS HAVE A DISTINGUISHED HERITAGE

The provenance of the first Dublin Baptists is well documented as positioned within the Cromwellian era. They were part of a small crop of churches which grew up in the garrison towns of Bandon, Carrickfergus, Clonmel, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Kinsale, Limerick, Waterford and Wexford as early as 1653. H.D. Brown's claim that "when the Cromwellians came to Dublin in 1650, they found not founded, a church of our faith and order ... their advent meant a great accession and stimulant to Baptist principles"4 popularised the view that the Commonwealth churches had antecedents in the city. Indeed the suggestion has been made that Baptists had an early presence in the Antrim area in the 1630's although firm evidence for this is somewhat scanty. 5

We are able to reconstruct a fairly reliable impression of the Baptist presence in Dublin in the seventeenth century. There were three main characteristics of the gestation period:

1. There was an inextricable involvement with the Independents. Similarity of church polity and the patronage of the Protector created the situation in which the Congregationalists and the Baptists were spiritual twins brought to birth from the same womb. While political events caused their destinies to oscillate together, they defined and defended their differences. We know that by October 1651 there were at least two gathered congregations of Independents in Dublin. One was established by Samuel Winter and worshipped in St. Nicholas's Church. The other met in Christ Church cathedral, where John Rogers was pastor. It was this group which formed the nucleus of one of Dublin's earliest churches. When Thomas Patient and Christopher Blackwood arrived in Ireland in 1650, they went to Kilkenny and Waterford, where the military governors Axtell and Lawrence became Baptists. Two Waterford members, John Vernon and William Allen came to Dublin with a letter from Patient around 1652 and in December of 1652 Patient became a regular preacher at Christ Church

Cathedral. He established a Particular Baptist Church which emerged out of Roger's Independent congregation.

2. These early Baptists attained a prestigious place in the Commonwealth regime. Because of the influence of the New Model Army the early churches were heavily influenced by Cromwellian soldiers. Obviously the pacifist stance of the continental Anabaptists had not percolated into seventeenth century Baptist thought. By 1655 twelve military governors were Baptists and it was said that in the army "the officers bowed down to the idol called baptism to obtain promotion". This state of affairs must be treated as something of an aberration. By 1657 we hear of "the humble address of divers of the baptized Christians in Dublin and elsewhere expressing loyalty to the Protector".

This unnatural rise to prominence was in some ways predictive of some who secretly desire influence and recognition but outwardly withdraw from the public process. A Baptist mayor of Galway isn't a likely development in the twentieth century!

3. The collapse of the Commonwealth greatly impeded their growth. Even before Restoration in 1660 and the beginning of the 25 year reign of Charles II Baptist influence had slipped into decline. A note in Thurloe's State papers refers to the situation in 1654 "a congregation of which Mr Patient is the pastor - from whose church those of profitable employment daily do decline" 6 Since the Baptist cause was attracting political radicals, Cromwell's younger son, Henry, was sent to Dublin and made a member of the Irish ruling council. His brief included the reducing of the power of the military which had the support of the Baptists and the restoring of the authority of civilians who were mainly opponents of the Baptist cause. This trend is succinctly observed by Corish:

> "When Henry Cromwell arrived in Ireland the baptist sectaries were in control of the administration. By 1659 he had displaced not merely these but also the independents, and had instead forged a politique alliance with the 'old Protestants', as the protestant planters who had settled in Ireland before 1641 came to be known after the restoration". 7

The withdrawal of official favour certainly reversed the fortunes of Baptists in Dublin but the "rump" of Roger's original Independent congregation survived. According to Dr Barrie White, Patient was responsible for erecting the first Baptist Meeting House in Ireland in Swift's Alley in 1653 and we are told that Christopher Blackwood still had a congregation after 1660 where William Lamb preached in 1674.8

DUBLIN BAPTISTS UNDERWENT DECLINE AND RENEWAL

With such auspicious beginnings it might seem that the future of Baptist work in the city was practically guaranteed. What evidence is available of the early period, particularly the eighteenth century suggests that the cause struggled and expanded in fits and starts. Leadership of the quality produced in the Cromwellian era was not a permanent feature of church life. Significant strides were made and some remarkable events happened at the two sites in the Meath

Liberties where Dublin Baptists worshipped, Skinner's Alley (now New Market St) and Swift's Alley off Francis Street.

It is not easy to determine whether Skinner's Alley was the original site of the meeting house, being replaced by a commodious chapel in Swift's Alley in 1737 or whether Dublin had two Baptist congregations functioning in parallel, perhaps one a General and the other a Particular church. We are sure that Baptists worshipped in both places for extensive periods until 1834 when the Swift's Alley building was sold to the Established Church as a "Free Church". It is also beyond doubt that spiritual decline afflicted both congregations and that a measure of recovery occurred.

It is not easy to identify the causes of decline but several developments contributed to it. We have seen that the Restoration and the Act of Uniformity made it difficult for Dissenters to expand their work. Some of the Commonwealth ministers conformed but others such as Samuel Mather and Daniel Williams were able to maintain congregations in Dublin. Huguenot refugees began arriving in Dublin after 1662 under an Act for the settlement of protestant strangers and an even greater influx came after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. It is significant that a large number of them conformed and were eventually absorbed into the Established Church. Baptists operated within the general milieu of disadvantage accorded to most nonconformists.

Henry Cromwell had said that he had been courted by the Anabaptists who, under Patient maintained a strict communion position. One potential church member complained that he would join the Dublin Baptists "were it not for their rigidness". Patient's espousal of the 1644 Confession of Faith and his insistence that "this ordinance of baptism is one of the essentials of a true visible church" may well have created the atmosphere in which, unintentionally, orthodoxy and doctrinal stringency became ends in themselves.

The eighteenth century was noted for doctrinal controversy and the Baptists were not averse to public debate and pamphlet warfare. Oswald Edwards, described as an Anabaptist preacher entered into a prolonged disputation with the Quakers on baptism. He published several "strokes" at the foundation of Quakerism and on 17th September 1722 entered a public debate at Skinner's Alley. This disputation arose after a discourse by Joseph Gill at the funeral of a female Quaker at their burial ground near Dolphin's Barn. The exchanges were intense from both sides. The Quaker answered Edwards by contending that "his sophisms are detected, new notions exploded and arguments for water baptism refuted". Edwards countered with "a plain demonstration that the Quakers do not baptize with the Spirit; that they are not baptized with the Spirit, neither do they know what the baptism of the Spirit is"! This immoderate language was typical of the time but still revealed a defensiveness and some lack of ecclesial charity.

If controversy dogged progress at Skinner's Alley the situation at Swift's Alley at the turn of the century left much to be desired. When the great missionary statesman Andrew Fuller visited the church in 1804 he noted that

"Discipline had long been neglected; very discordant sentiments were entertained by members of the church; and some were sadly conformed in their manners to the dissipation common among those who are wholly men of the world". 9 Apparently Fuller urged the faithful remnant in the church to secede and form a new congregation untainted by Unitarianism.

The pattern of decline and renewal continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. After Swift's Alley was abandoned in 1835 the congregation met for some time at the Apollo Saloon, 15 Grafton Street. The search for new premises brought the Committee to Harcourt Street but eventually they chose a site in Abbey Street. On July 6th 1838, Rev John Ford laid the foundation stone and the building was opened on July 14th, 1839. The Baptist Irish Society in co-operation with Dublin church members erected a new chapel at Grosvenor Road Rathmines in 1860 but it only remained open for worship for five years and was sold to the Brethren and became known as Grosvenor hall.

In 1884 Hugh D. Brown became pastor of Abbey Street Church. Three years later he personally built the large and well appointed chapel in Harcourt Street which quickly became the centre of Baptist life in Dublin. A remnant remained in Abbey Street but in 1891 they moved to Phibsboro Avenue, where they remained until 1900 when the present church was built, largely under the energetic leadership of Pastor J.D. Gilmore.

These transitions were not made without pain but there were also seasons of unusual prosperity. The providential ordering of Dublin Baptist Church life emerges in the sunlight and shadow which characterised its progress.

In 1813 the Rev John West became pastor of Swift's Alley Church. He was responsible for forming the Baptist Itinerant Society with the intention of evangelising towns and villages within a 20 mile radius of Dublin. Two young men McCarthy and Condel were set apart for the work of evangelisation and they were able to report the conversion of 70 people. Later the Baptist Irish Society was formed in 1814.

A similar commitment to congregational evangelism was a feature of Hugh D. Brown's ministry at Harcourt Street. There was exceptional growth in the latter decade of the century. L.E. Deens has documented the numerical strength of the church. There were 659 baptisms in the first thirteen years of the church's life and the membership peaked at over 400 in 1904, representing 257 families. Outstations were opened at Lusk, Dundrum, Harold's Cross and in a little chapel in Lr. Gardiner Street. The Harcourt Street Evangelisation Society employed three evangelists for a time.

Inevitably shadows fell over the witness of the Dublin Baptists and there were a number of serious disruptions to congregational life. Disagreement arose in Harcourt Street over a contract for repairs to the roof and the installation of electricity and this precipitated the resignation of the pastor in 1917. A period of unrest and retrenchment followed.

In the 1940's the Phibsboro Church underwent a traumatic period of unrest which resulted in the bulk of the congregation along with their pastor returning

to Abbey Street to form a new congregation not associated with the Baptist denomination in the premises of the original Grecian building.

This pattern of encouragement and disappointment is still a feature of twentieth century Baptist life in the city. The closure of the Dun Laoghaire Church, the difficulties experienced at Grace in more recent times and the failure of the Blanchardstown evangelistic experiment to materialise into a permanent work serve to illustrate the point and to challenge contemporary church members in their calling.

DUBLIN BAPTISTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED MUCH TO THE WIDER CHURCH

From the early days of Irish Baptist work Dublin held an honoured and important place in its development. We have noted how the vision of John West at Swift's Alley led to the formation of the Baptist Irish Society. McCarthy and Condel were ordained as itinerating evangelists and they spearheaded much evangelistic endeavour in the provinces. Isaac McCarthy was a fluent Gaelic speaker and he established several circuits in the Midlands and West. While the BIS was directed from London a Committee was also assembled in Dublin.

At the close of the nineteenth century Dublin was the natural choice when home rule was arranged for the Irish churches. The Baptist Irish Society became the Irish Baptist Home Mission on 1st July 1888 and later the Union offices were also located in Harcourt Street. Whole generations of Irish Baptists recall with affection the impact of the Irish Baptist College on the ministry of the churches. It was sited firstly in Harcourt Street and later at Tenenure Road East. For the better part of a century denominational affairs were conducted exclusively from Dublin and in this way the comparatively small group of churches in the city influenced and was influenced by the wider Irish Baptist world.

Dublin's impact on denominational life is already well chronicled elsewhere, so it is appropriate to turn our attention to the part the Dublin Baptists played in the growth of evangelical Christianity in Ireland. It may come as a surprise to some to discover that the early churches in the Liberties provided facilities for the birth of both the Methodist and Moravian societies in Ireland.

John Wesley arrived in Dublin on his first visit on 9th August 1747 and instantly began to organize the infant Methodist society which had its origins in the work of Richard Morgan, an Irish member of the Holy Club, and Thomas Williams, who was converted under the ministry of Charles Wesley in 1738.

John Cennick arrived in June 1746 and took the city by storm. The initial invitation to a reluctant Cennick who had a strong prejudice against the Irish people, came from a young Baptist, Benjamin La Trobe, who had recently completed studies in Glasgow. He began to preach in the disused Baptist chapel in Skinner's Alley with marked success. The Moravians have recorded his experiences:

"The first Sunday people were turned away in hundreds and if he could have had St. Patrick's Cathedral there would not have been room for his hungry hearers. The hall in Skinner's Alley was crowded out. The people who wanted a seat had to come three hours before the time. The windows had to be removed and people perched on the roofs of neighbouring houses and upon every windowsill and wall and Cennick himself had to climb through a window and creep on the heads of his people to the pulpit". 10

Although there was severe resistance and a claim that "two thousand stones were thrown at Cennick and la Trobe during a single service" the Skinner's Lane Society grew to 520.

In his History of Methodism in Dublin R. Lee Cole describes the conflict which arose between the Baptists, Methodists and Moravians -

"The Baptists owned a small disused chapel with a few rooms and a small burial ground in Skinner's Alley. It was for the moment occupied by John Cennick and his group of hearers. Mr Samuel Edwards, who was a trustee of the premises, told Williams and Charles Wesley that he wanted to get rid of his Moravian tenants and asked if the Methodists would give a larger rent. Charles Wesley replied that he would do so, only if the offer was made first to Mr Cennick. Cennick was highly indignant and refused to increase their rent and his Society was evicted by the trustees. For some weeks the premises were idle and at length the Methodists took a lease of Skinner's Alley ..... The Moravians, meantime got better premises in Bishop Street. But Skinner's Alley proved unsuitable to Methodist needs and Wesley sought for a better site on which to build more commodious premises". 11

What became the mother church of Irish Methodism was built in Whitefriars Street on a plot of ground purchased in 1749.

La Trobe later became a Moravian bishop and wrote the following immoderate assessment of John Wesley in 1785. "It is very doubtful whether John ever knew himself as a sinner or the Lord as his Saviour". Happily the Baptists and Methodists often enjoyed Christian fellowship as the following entries in Charles Wesley's diary testify -

Friday Sept 25th 1747 - "I passed the evening very agreeably at a Baptist's, a woman of sense and piety and a great admirer of my father's Life of Christ".

Friday October 2nd - "I passed two hours with Mr Powel and another Baptist, whom I also persuaded to give up their faith of adherence, so called, for the faith of the Gospel which works by love and is connected with peace, joy, power and the testimony of the Spirit".

Charles Wesley records how he was received in Dublin. The Lutheran minister is described as "a simple, loving man, but not quite as courageous as Martin Luther". On Sunday 20th September 1747, he walked to Oxmanton Green (now called Blackhall Place) and began preaching.

"I spoke with great freedom to the poor Papists, urging them to repentance and the love of Christ, from the authority of their own Kempis, and their own Liturgy. None lifted up his voice or hand. All listened with strange attention. Many were in tears. I advised them to go to their respective places of worship. They expressed general satisfaction, especially the Papists. This also hath God wrought".

After this peaceable reception he was attacked on the return journey:

"Returning, we were insulted by a gathering mob, when a Baptist came by, and desired us to take shelter in his house. We stayed and breakfasted; and left him quite happy in having protected us from the violence of the people". 12

The Swift's Alley building was erected in 1738 on foot of a lease dated 19th March 1735 made between Godwin Swift (a relative of Jonathan Swift) and William Flower, Abraham Wilkinson, William Coates and William Taylor. "All that parcel of ground situate on the north side of Swift's Alley, Dublin containing in breadth on the South bounding Swift's Alley aforesaid 78 feet and in breadth to the North 87 feet and in depth on the West side 60 feet and in depth on the East side 61 feet or therabouts together with the old large house then erected on part thereof commonly called the Baptists Meeting House including therein the two tenements enjoined therewith for many years then past fronting the said Alley".

In 1835 the Chapel and the ground on which it was built was leased to a number of clergy and others who established it as a Proprietory Chapel or Trustee Church, and after three thousand pounds was spent on it, it became a Chapel-of-Ease to St Catherine's parish. It is interesting to note that one of the clergy was silenced by Archbishop Whateley in 1841. He was a controversial evangelical and was sometimes known as "Trashem Gregg". A century earlier the celebrated hymn writer Augustus Toplady worshipped at Swift's Alley when a student at TCD.

DUBLIN BAPTISTS ENJOYED ADEQUATE BUILDINGS AND COLOURFUL LEADERS

We have every reason to believe that the Skinner's Alley property was not impressive. The site was leased to Robert Mason (Gentleman) on 2nd July 1695. A book of maps dated 1808-1850 shows the "site of the Anabaptist Meeting House" and a later map of 1858 shows "Meeting House Court" and "Graveyard". It is difficult to establish the date of the first building on this site.

The Swift's Alley building is described in "The Ecclesiastical Gazette" in 1882 -

> "We found the church a plain square building ... there was no name over it or any sign to mark it as a place of worship.. we found the inside of the church to be a square edifice, with a high gallery running round the three sides, the fourth side having the reading desk, pulpit and Communion Table all together, as unlike any of our modern churches as it could possibly be. We were not surprised when we were told that it had been a Baptist Chapel. Inquiring about the congregation we were told that about fifty assembled every Sunday, that most were advanced in years and most came from a distance". 13

The other Baptist property in Dublin is still visible, with the exception of Harcourt Street. Abbey Street is distinctly Grecian in style with an impressive gallery and solid appearance. Phibsboro has considerable architectural merit and carries marks of architectural sophistication typical of late Victorian nonconformity. Grosvenor Road is a typical Gothic suburban structure, with an expansive interior, plainly furnished.

Harcourt Street was an impressive building and was elegantly furnished to suit the tastes of the wealthy benefactor, Hugh D. Brown's mother. There was accommodation for 500 people in the main sanctuary with a front and rear

lecture room, vestries for pastor and elders, a ladies' common room and a caretaker's apartment. It is not surprising to find that the windows were of Cathedral plate and that "the chapel is cushioned throughout in crimson velvet pile and all the fittings are of superior description".

The Grace property in Pearse Street conforms to the rectangular meeting house style of nonconformity. While not built as a Baptist place of worship if falls within the tradition of solid plain chapels built by early Dissenters and in harmony with both Skinner's Alley and Swift's Alley. Compared with the rather unattractive buildings erected by Irish Baptists in the early part of this century the Dublin churches reflect the mild aesthetic tastes which city worshippers in the Southern capital display. Simplicity and beauty are the harmonizing features with a strong emphasis on the functional needs as well as the modest liturgical requirements.

LESSONS FROM DUBLIN'S BAPTISTS OF THE PAST

1. They survived successive crises and faced many problems.

The early years threw up the opprobrium experienced by all dissenters, and Baptists had to learn to live in a city dominated by the ethos of the Anglican Establishment mind and the Roman Catholic dogmatic intransigence.

Emigration and political change brought strains over the years. No less than 45 young men from Harcourt street joined the Forces in the First World War and the church's organist was killed in service. A Dublin Baptist minister had the rare distinction of being expelled from a city centre meeting opposed to Home Rule! I shall employ his own flair for diplomacy and not reveal his identity!

There were setbacks within congregational life. At Skinner's Alley there was a rundown atmosphere, certainly in the condition of the property when Cennick and the Wesleys arrived.

We have fairly full accounts of stresses in the Swift's Alley congregation. A leading officer in the church who was also the Registrar of the Education Fund was involved in serious fraud. A church minute records that he had "sold the bond, valued at 150, applying the money to his own use, the papers were in the hands of Mr Costello, solicitor and the trustees had given up all hope of recovering the bond". The painful episode was concluded with his expulsion from the church with strong condemnation but also prayerful concern for his restoration.

> "William Challoner having been proved to the sorrow of the church - guilty of fraud and other crimes during several years in which he has been connected with this Society and made loud professions of attachment to the cause of God was now by the unanimous and unhesitating determination of the members -in the exercise of Christian discipline - as a deceiver cut off from our communion.
>
> The Pastor urged on the church the duty of Prayer on behalf of the unhappy man - that God would give to him repentance to salvation" (Minute of October 5th 1835).

There were also tensions between pastors and their people. The Rev John Sprigg wrote a letter to the church, resigning from the pastorate complaining about what was "unlovely and inconsistent in the people" going on to remark that "only one member has felt sufficient interest to call upon me and converse on the matter". Little wonder that a visiting preacher had to be brought in for the next Sunday the minister was "too much agitated to engage in his ministerial duties on that day". The Rev John Crop traced his difficulties to two causes "the undesirable situation of the meeting house and the lukewarmness of the people".

Communion controversies arose. In 1828, the Rev John West, retired minister was asked to administer the Lord's Supper, because the incoming pastor, Rev Mr Evans "not having been ordained it was not thought proper for him to administer it". In 1835 an unbaptized person was proposed for admission to the Lord's Table but "was refused because some members of the church declared their firm adherence to the principle of strict communion". When the congregation worshipped for a short time in Grafton Street there was a move towards weekly communion which was seen as a measure which would "increase the spirituality of the church and induce devout men to unite themselves with us who conscientiously object to joining a people who do not oftener commemorate the love of Christ". Although there was a 17 to 13 vote in favour they decided not to implement the change because it was "undesirable in the present state of affairs to have anything like a division, it was resolved that the question should stand over for further discussion sine die". 14

The issue of communion wine was raised in Abbey Street in 1871 when Rev W.D. Evans was pastor. There were several meetings to discuss the wine used at the sacrament and whether it was considered advisable "to change the unfermented wine used at present and replace it with the wine used formerly". The matter was not resolved to everyone's satisfaction and some members resigned.

On Jan 11th 1835 the church at Swift's Alley heard that "Susan Thornton had formed an unscriptural connexion by marriage to a Papist" but although the matter was left until the next regular meeting of the church it doesn't appear in any later minutes. Such issues are not unfamiliar to some contemporary Irish churches.

2.They displayed versatility and variety in their work.

It was not an act of chance that the two earliest churches arose in the Liberties. Although the arrival of the Huguenots brought many artisans and entrepreneurs to the Francis Street area the Swift's Alley Church was set in a socially needy neighbourhood.

Perusal of the Register Book of the Education and Other Funds of the Church is revealing and challenging. The first entry is for the year 1748, when 29: 8: 7 was collected for the poor of Swift's Alley. An analysis of the accounts until 1804 reveals a strong social awareness by way of direct gifts .... "for the poor boy in Mr White's hands 2: 9"; "two poor women's rent"; "coal for poor". There

was provision made through property in Francis Street, Patrick Street, Limerick Alley and Dolphin's Barn. An entry for May 25th 1767 reads: "Lent the Trustees for the poor of the congregation to pay Richard Bourcheir in part of the purchase of houses in Francis Street and Patrick Street £30". 15

The Education Fund provided grants for boarding, travel and books for ministerial students and others. There is a fascinating entry for 1749 which reads "Paid James La Trobe by order of the Trustees being an award by Referees for Educating his son Ben for Ch. ministry". Rent of meeting house, pastor's salary and other expenditure is recorded including 1:2:9: to "Millar for raising the psalm". 16

Dublin Baptist life eventually became much more middle class and attracted several people of academic distinction even before Hugh D. Brown's pastorate.

When the Harcourt Street Church was built by H.D. Brown's mother in 1887 at a cost of 6,000, the Dublin Baptist community entered a totally new era. Not since the days of the Cromwellian regime were they as strongly identified with prestige albeit in a new form. Brown was a member of an old Episcopalian family, a law graduate of Trinity College and a member of the famous Grafton Street family of Brown, Thomas. During part of his ministry he had a suite in the Shelbourne Hotel and undoubtedly his preaching attracted many of the thinking evangelicals of the South side, although it must never be forgotten that this same Hugh D. Brown was a champion of evangelism to all sections of society and opened a chapel in Gardiner Street.

There is an interesting example of a move to a more open form of church life here at Grosvenor Road in 1863. The pastor, Rev John O'Dell wrote to his people "Though specially connected with the Baptist Denomination, the basis of church fellowship was laid in all the breadth of Christian charity, so that everyone who loves the Lord Jesus, and rests on his atonement for salvation, and walks as He commands, might be eligible for membership and be welcomed to the "communion of saints". 17 This wording reflects both the 'open membership' stance of many English Baptists and also the outlook of many present day Irish Baptists in the matter of open communion.

In the area of leadership there was also great variety - most of the men were straighforward working pastors but in a sentence we can summarise some of the better known names - Oswalk Edwards the stirring controversalist; John West the visionary evangelist and strategist; Hugh D. Brown who bore "the martial ring of the true crusader"; Louis Edward Deens the quiet consolidator and discreet labourer; Ambrose U.G. Bury, the meticulous theologian and careful preacher; Thomas Harold Spurgeon the man of granite who wept like a child; Dermot McDonald, the theologian of international renown who preaches with profound simplicity.

Dublin Baptists through three and a half centuries accomplished much and often stumbled and failed. They essentially remained a downtown entity with only occasional evangelistic excursions into the countryside. Their main focus was within mainstream Protestant community. But there is enough concrete

evidence in their development to prove that they were not totally lacking in social concern and holistic Christianity. Above all there is clear evidence of the overarching providence of God. Illustrated vividly in the seeming failure of Grosvenor, which only lasted five years as a Baptist Church, and yet who can deny that God had this building ready for occupation at His moment. The closure of Dun Laoghaire seems to point in the other direction. In spite of the failures of the past, because of the faithfulness of the those who have finished their course, and in the vast opportunities of the present, the best is yet to be.

Robert Dunlop

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3 Quoted by Charles Breed in Lectures in Christian Doctrine, (Strict and Particular Ministers Fellowship, 1968), p 74.
4 L.E. Deens, "The Story of the Harcourt Street Baptist Church, Dublin" in IBHS Journal vol. 14 (1981/82), pp 23-34.
5 R.L. Hutchinson, "Some References to Baptists In J.S. Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland" in IBHS Journal vol. 14 (1981/82), p 18.
6 Thurloe's State Papers ed T. Birch, (London 1742), vol II, p 213.
7 Patrick Corish, art cit p 355.
8 B.R. White "Thomas Patient in England and Ireland" in IBHS Journal vol 2 (1969-70), pp 36-48.
9 See D.P. Kingdon, Baptist Evangelism in 19th Century Ireland, (Belfast 1969), p 9.
10 See article on John Cennick in History of Gracehill, p 5.
11 R. Lee Cole, A History of Methodism in Dublin, pp 21-22.
12 The Journal of Charles Wesley. (Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, Missouri), pp 460-2.
13 Trust Deed of Swift's Alley property in Library of Representative Church Body, Dublin.
14 See Church Book, minute of 5 April 1835 in Grosvenor Road Church archives, Dublin.
15 See Register of Education and other Concerns of Swift's Alley Church from 1748 in Grosvenor Church archives.
16 Ibid. sundry entries.
17 Letter from John O'Dell, pastor of Baptist Church, Rathmines, Dublin, dated 19 September 1863.

Thanks:

The writer expresses sincere thanks to Rev H.L. Harris for considerable help in the preparation of this paper. Mr Harris, minister of the Congregational Church at Kilmainham, Dublin, has done detailed research into the origins of Dublin Baptists. He has raised an important historical question as to the relationship between Skinner's Alley and Swift's churches. Undoubtedly his discoveries, particularly quotations from Saunders News Letter will throw light on the discussion.

DUBLIN BAPTISTS

A STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE

My task this evening is to take a little stroll down memory lane and recall some of the Dublin Baptists I knew when I was a Dublin Baptist myself. I have very little documentary evidence for this, so most of it is really folk-history.

The head of our family when I was born was my grandfather, J.L.Ryder. He was a native of Co. Longford and was sent up to Dublin by his widowed mother as a very young lad with a new suit of clothes and a shilling in his pocket to seek his fortune - he eventually founded the family business. Unfortunately my memories of him are few and childish as I was a very small child when he died. How and when he became a Baptist we don't know, however he was the church secretary in Harcourt Street for some years until his death and it was he who wrote the letter of invitation to the pastorate to L.E.Deens, the only pastor I had until I married.

It was a great privilege to have grown up under the ministry of such a man, although I must confess that, as a child in Harcourt Street, I often counted the different-coloured small squares in the windows during the sermon! Mr. Deens' gifts as a preacher and teacher are well-known in the denomination and don't need me to elaborate on them. He baptised me in Harcourt Street as a girl of 14 and married Bill and me in Grosvenor. I remember him wearing the top hat and tails to church on Sundays. He and Mrs Deens took a keen interest in the young people and often joined us for our hikes on St. Patrick's Day and Easter Monday. In later years when we played hockey on Saturday afternoons in Dundrum, they came along fairly regularly on their bicycles - he never drove a car - and Mr. Deens played with us as a back. Mrs Deens just cheered!

T.H.Spurgeon came over to Ireland as a student and became a Dublin Baptist, joining the church in Harcourt Street and becoming Principal of the Irish Baptist College and also an elder in the church. His gifts as a teacher and preacher are also well-known. On a personal level he helped and encouraged me when I was a student at Trinity College by coaching me in Latin and lending me books relevant to my studies. He wrote to me several times to congratulate me on passing examinations and, in one of these letters, he included a Latin

quotation and said "Roughly translated this means 'When our Phyllis passes everything in the garden is lovely'"!! I really appreciated that.

Another Dublin Baptist of Harcourt Street days was Derry McDonald, later to become Dr. H.D.McDonald, Vice-Principal of the London Bible College, now retired. When he was a student in the Irish Baptist College, he and Miss Anne Ball, who eventually became his wife, started an Intermediate Christian Endeavour Society in the church. They encouraged us young Christians to participate publicly in the meetings and I have never forgotten the title of the first paper they asked me to write, when about 13 years of age: "Brasso - for Cleaning and Shining". We were all very sorry when they left us and went across the water to serve the Lord in a church at Stockton-on-Tees.

Des Jackson and his sister Norrie succeeded them as our C.E. leaders. Des subsequently studied in the College and went to a pastorate in Pollard's Hill, London where he served for about 20 years until his untimely death. Des was the only person I've ever known who trusted the Lord in a picture- house - the Stella on the Rathmines Road. The Lord uses many different circumstances to bring people to himself.

Miss Nellie Cooper was a very faithful Sunday School teacher for many years, both in Harcourt Street and in Grosvenor. With spectacles and her hair drawn severely back into a bun, she could look intimidating at times, but she was very good to her girls and we had a lot of fun with her. Not only did she teach us the Word of God and Spurgeon's Catechism on Sundays, but she invited us to her home once a month on a Saturday. During the afternoon we wound bandages to be sent to a B.M.S. Hospital in Belgian Congo where there was a "Harcourt" bed. Her sister, Miss Olive, made the tea and afterwards we played games - charades being a great favourite as they allowed us to dress up.

As a child in Harcourt Street, it always seemed to me that there were a great many office-bearers at the door as we went in to church after morning Sunday School, among them being Mr Charlie Warner and the Macdougald brothers, Cecil and Robert, who at one time served together as church secretary and treasurer respectively until Robert died unexpectedly. Cecil then became treasurer and my Dad became secretary, an office which he held for 25 years until a short time before his death. Their sister, Miss Kathleen Macdougald, worked for the Baptist Union when they had an office in the Irish Baptist College premises in 45 Harcourt Street.

Mention must also be made of Mr George Young who served so faithfully in Dublin city as a colporteur with the Irish Baptist Home Mission for many years and Mr J.A.Sharpe, who was mainly associated with the Phibsborough church. On many occasions Mr Sharpe acted as a supervisor at Irish Baptist Sunday School Union examinations in Harcourt Street and did his best to put us at our ease as we tackled the exam papers.

His son-in-law, George Edge, enjoyed music and singing and became choir leader in Grosvenor. I remember him getting a quartette together - Marcie Croly (now Mrs Chalmers) sang soprano, I was alto, Bill (now my husband) sang tenor and George sang bass. On a number of occasions George and his wife, Margaret,

took us to the church in Athlone and other places to sing for the Lord. George was often referred to as a descendant of Jehu, who drove furiously, and it was quite an experience to travel half-way across Ireland and back in his car! In later years George became Sunday School Superintendent, church secretary and an elder. He also served as President of the Baptist Union of Ireland for the year 1958/59.

My uncle, Sam Gill, was another deacon and choir member for many years. He was very proud of the fact that as a boy he had been a chorister in the Chapel Royal attached to Dublin Castle. He grew up to have a fine bass voice. It was he and George Edge who set off to Waterford Protestant Hall one wintry evening in a borrowed van to transport the pipe organ to Grosvenor. It had already been dismantled and when they got all the pieces packed into the van they were given a cup of tea before setting off. When they came out again they discovered they had a flat tyre - and the spare wheel was under the floor boards of the van! They finally arrived at Grosvenor about 3.00 a.m. where a number of officebearers had been anxiously waiting for hours to help them unload.

This reminds me of another uncle, Victor Ryder, who served so faithfully as organist for many years, both in Harcourt Street and at Grosvenor. He encouraged me in my music and often told me that he was like Elijah and I Elisha and that one day his mantle as organist would fall on me. However the Lord had other plans as I left Dublin and his mantle fell on Derrick Edge. Uncle Victor was also a faithful Sunday School teacher and deacon for many years.

Sterry Blackwell was not a native of Dublin but moved there from Cork due to his work in the Cunard White Star Shipping Co. when Dudley and I were very small children. Mum and Dad befriended them and as he and his wife were both only children they adopted us as their niece and nephew, becoming Uncle Sterry and Auntie Gertie to us. They spent Christmas at our home for many years until eventually they adopted Jane as their daughter. Uncle Sterry was very interested in children's work and taught in the Sunday School and he and Auntie Gertie together ran a Tuesday evening children's meeting both in Harcourt Street and later in Grosvenor for many years. Uncle Sterry was a lay preacher and very actively involved in Christian work in and around the city. He served the church as a deacon and as treasurer for a number of years. He also served the Brannockstown church as lay pastor for a time.

I have left the Dublin Baptist I knew best to the last and make no apology for taking more time over his story as I think it is interesting and worth telling. I refer to my father, F.J.Ryder, known as Francie to his family and friends and as Frank to his sporting colleagues, for he was an athlete in his young days. His first race was the half-mile in the Boys' Brigade sports when he was 12 years old - and he came in last! His family laughed him to scorn and it was a great joke among them that, after the race had been won, the groundsman went home for tea and returned just in time to see Francie finishing. My Dad was nothing if not determined and he decided that one day he would show them - and he did. Perhaps I may quote a few sentences from a newspaper article about him in a series entitled "Irish Sports Giants", dated 11th November, 1950:

"Frank J. Ryder was one of the best middle and long-distance runners Ireland has ever produced. He dominated Irish athletics in many events during his eleven years of supremacy, from 1908 to 1919. He was champion at nearly all distances from the half-mile to 10 miles and was equally proficient over track, road or cross-country though most of his outstanding achievements were on the track. He also took part in cycling races and was a decidedly useful performer. On one occasion he won a 50-mile road race and within a week carried off a 4-mile running event.....A life-long teetotaller and non-smoker, Frank ran and won all his races smiling - a happy athletic giant if ever there was one".

He won more than a hundred first prizes and 73 gold medals in open competitions. He had been looking forward to running in the Olympic Games scheduled for Berlin but it was always a great disappointment to him that the First World War intervened and the games could not be held. He retired as an athlete shortly before his marriage.

It was on the starting line of a very important race in which the English and Scottish champions were competing - one which Dad was determined to win if he possibly could - that the familiar words of Mark 8.36 were brought to his mind "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul". These words challenged him greatly and brought him under conviction. He went on to win the race, but still didn't make any decision for the Lord. He always told us that he could not tell the actual date of his conversion, but that was the Scripture which eventually led to him trusting Christ as his Saviour.

The training, discipline and dedication he had acquired as a successful athlete were then channelled into his Christian service for he firmly believed in the wisdom of Ecclesiastes 9.10 "Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might". Dad was a born story-teller and loved children - and they loved him - so it was understandable that he became a Sunday School teacher in Harcourt Street and just before he married he became Sunday School Superintendent, an office he held for many years.

Dad never did anything by halves but threw himself wholeheartedly into all his undertakings and so, when the Gribbon Shield was presented to the I.B.S.S.U. to be awarded annually to the Sunday School that gained the highest marks in their examination, he was really thrilled when Harcourt Sunday School was the first to win the shield and in fact won it for the first three years in succession. It was then lost to Windsor Sunday School for a year but regained for a fourth time. After that some twenty years were to elapse before the shield returned to Dublin. The Sunday School Union Report for 1956 says "Amid a great ovation Mr Ryder (Grosvenor Road S.S., Dublin) went to the platform to receive the coveted award, the Gribbon Shield, for which every one of the 14 eligible scholars had competed".

Dad had a great sense of humour and the funny stories he told when receiving the shield at Sunday School Demonstrations in Belfast always seemed to be appreciated. He was quick in repartee and always seemed able to remember an appropriate story for every occasion.

In Harcourt Street days the choir was disbanded for a time for some reason, but when Ben Peake came as a student to the College it was revived under his leadership. Dad and Uncle Sterry made up a poem about this which Dad recited

at a Sunday School social. It was a parody on Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade". Unfortunately we have no copy of it, but a couple of verses came to mind -

"Oh Brother Ben's wild look
When poor wee Archie took
Time different from the book
In the old Hundredth".

"Stormed Des with shouts and yells,
While Cecil Mac excels
Drowning the two Blackwells -
All the church wondered".

Christian Endeavour was another of Dad's interests and, besides being an active member of the C.E. society in the church, he became involved in the Dublin & District Christian Endeavour Union and was often called upon to act as M.C. for their annual socials.

Dad served on the Committee of the Irish Baptist College for many years when it was in Dublin and was secretary of their House Committee. After I married and moved North, he and Mum came up nearly every year for the Baptist Union Assembly meetings and thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship and the opportunity to meet so many other Irish Baptists. Dad was also a gifted speaker and the church recognised his gifts and appointed him an elder, an office which he held for many years until his death. As an elder, he and his fellow-elder Mr Spurgeon worked in close fellowship with Mr Deens for whom Dad had the highest possible regard, looking upon him not only as his Pastor but as one of his closest friends. Many of his friends urged him to let his name go forward for the presidency of the Baptist Union of Ireland, but on each occasion he declined on the grounds that, as a businessman, he would not have the time to visit the churches. However he did serve as chairman of the Southern Baptist Association one year as that was a much less onerous task.

It was through Dad that, at the age of eight, I was led to personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It always gladdened his heart to see young people trusting the Lord and coming forward for baptism and church membership. He pointed out to us the importance of consistent Christian living and often reminded us that, as Christians, our walk and our talk must agree, one of his favourite quotations being "What you do speaks so loudly that I can't always hear what you say".

It was 25 years ago, 1st May, 1963, that Dad won his last race when the Lord called him home very suddenly. He had finished the course and kept the faith.

These Dublin Baptists all served the Lord faithfully in their day and generation and made worthwhile contributions to the life and witness of the church. Most of them are now at home with the Lord. We who remain should seek to follow their example in Christian life and service so that one day we too may hear the Master's "Well done!"

Phyllis Lyttle

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RATHCOOLE BAPTIST CHURCH: 1951 - 1987

EARLY DAYS

After World War II, due to the great housing shortage which was brought about by the German bombing raids on Belfast, many young people had to seek homes outside the city. About that time Ulster Garden Villages Limited built a number of housing estates beyond the Belfast city boundary and several hundred new houses were erected in the Whiteabbey area. Mr Jack Dougan, a member of Great Victoria Street Church, went to live there and his employment brought him in contact with many of the residents of these homes. Mr Dougan made careful enquiries and soon discovered about a dozen Baptists, among them Mr & Mrs William Smith of the Great Victoria Street Church and Mr & Mrs Joseph Law of the Strandtown Church.

The three men met together on a Sunday afternoon in early June 1951 and decided to invite all the Baptists, as well as other Christian friends, to a meeting in Mr & Mrs Dougan's home in Princes Crescent. Eighteen people in all attended that meeting. It was generally agreed that we should endeavour to hold a Gospel Meeting on Sunday evenings if a suitable meeting place could be found, and all present promised whole-hearted support.

This group met every Thursday evening in each other's homes for prayer and fellowship, and after two months applied for the use of Cloughfern Protestant Hall in which to hold meetings on the Lord's Day as well as Wednesday evenings. The Committee very kindly granted use of the Hall.

The young people who were interested looked upon this as an answer to prayer, and from that day felt the Lord had brought them to the Cloughfern area for a definite purpose - to witness to the truth - to witness to Jesus on the new Estate and in the surrounding district.

At a special meeting held in mid-July 1951 a unanimous decision was taken to form a Church to be known as Cloughfern Baptist Church, with two services on the Lord's Day and the Prayer Meeting on Wednesday evening. This information was relayed to the Secretary of the Baptist Union, Pastor F.H. Forbes, and we were invited to send a deputation to 3 Fitzwilliam Street to discuss the whole matter with members of the Baptist Union Council. At that meeting we were greatly encouraged by the evident interest shown by Pastor F. Forbes, W. Wilson, J. Thompson and others present. We were assured of their support and were asked to convey their good wishes to the Baptist people living in the Cloughfern area.

THE WORK COMMENCES

The first official services were held on the 5th October 1951. The meetings were conducted by Pastor J. Thompson, Assistant Secretary of the Baptist Union. The preacher was Pastor W. Wilson. Also present were Pastor F. Forbes and Messrs J. Guthrie and W.E. Davison. Attendance at the morning service was 45. There were 101 people at the evening meeting.

There were 15 foundation members:

Mr & Mrs W. Smith	Ex Gt Victoria St Church
Mr & Mrs J. Best	"
Mr J. Dougan	"
Mr & Mrs H. Cunningham	Ex Cliftonpark Church
Mr & Mrs J. McConnell	"
Mr & Mrs J. Law	Ex Strandtown Church
Mr J. Brown	Ex Grove Church
Mr W. Brown	Formerly among Brethren
Mr & Mrs W. Woods	Ex Irish Evangelical Church

The first church business meeting was held on the 15th October 1951. The business was to appoint the church officers. The result was as follows: Elders: W. Brown, J.W. Law. Deacons: J. Brown, W. Smith, J. Best, J. Dougan. James Brown was elected church secretary and William Smith, church treasurer.

The Church immediately sought fellowship with the Baptist Union of Ireland and were received to membership at the Annual Assembly in May 1952.

At the beginning the work appeared to some to be disappointing and the attendances at the meetings were low, but several members felt sure that they were in the will of the Lord. The elders continued visiting in the district, where many good contacts were made, and some of these soon began attending the meetings.

After two years the Church saw the first fruits of her labours when a number of men and women professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Later some of these were baptised and joined the Church. Our Baptismal Services in those days were held in the Monkstown and Carrickfergus Churches, kindly granted.

In 1953 a number of our members moved back to Belfast and were transferred to various Churches. Among these were an elder, Mr W. Brown, as well as Mr J. Brown, Secretary and the Treasurer, Mr W. Smith. That same year Mr E. Cassells was appointed as Elder and J. Law and J. Dougan were appointed

Secretary and Treasurer respectively. At this time Pastor Albert Clarke was given a temporary appointment for six months, when he preached on the Lord's Day and conducted a Bible Class each Monday evening. Mr Clarke also did a certain amount of visiting in the district.

The services were held in Cloughfern Protestant Hall for six years, and during that time it was in the mind of the Officers to find a building site for a permanent hall - but in spite of extensive enquiries, the search for suitable building ground proved fruitless.

THE MOVE TO RATHCOOLE

In 1956 the Church requested the Officers to consider the merits of Rathcoole. By that time this Estate had grown tremendously - to around 3,000 homes. We soon learned that the Northern Ireland Housing Trust was to erect a Hall almost on the centre of the Estate. This was to be known as Ardeen Social Centre. An approach was made to the Trust Management, and they agreed to our using the Hall each Lord's Day at a cost of 2.00 per day.

The matter was brought before the Church in August 1957 and the members were informed that if we were to move our activities to Rathcoole not only could we hold our usual Sunday Services, but for the first time we could engage in Sunday School work, and possibly children's meetings during the week. It was decided, however, that a gospel meeting be held in Rathcoole for a trial period, and that we commence a Sunday School - the whole matter to be re-considered thereafter. The Sunday School Superintendent was Mr E. Cassells, and the Secretary was Mr S. McChesney.

At the Quarterly Business Meeting held in early November the Church decided to move the entire work to Rathcoole, and the first services were held in Ardeen Hall on the first Sunday in December, 1957. The preacher was Mr Robert Lyness - Secretary of the Irish Evangelisation Society. The Church was re-named "Rathcoole Baptist Church".

The mid-week meetings were conducted by the elders and deacons (and were held from 1954 in the home of Mr & Mrs Cassells), but on the Lord's Day the pulpit was very often occupied by a Pastor from one of our Churches. We remember with gratitude the ministry of Pastors Minnis Mills, Joshua Thompson, Robert Clarke, Albert Clarke, Robert Campbell, James Smyth, W. Spence, Wm. Lyttle, Gordon McClements and R.W. Graham, to mention a few. Laymen who readily come to mind and were a great help are Stewart Neill, Robert Winter, George Lindsay, William Thompson (now Minister of Abbots Cross Congregational Church), Eric Lewis and Jack Kane (Iron Hall Assembly) and Tom Bailie.

The membership at the end of that year numbered 45. Several men had joined who were to play an important role in the future work of the Church.

While still meeting in Ardeen Hall the first Mission was held in 1958. This was especially geared to reach children and young people. The Mission lasted

two weeks. The Hall was packed each evening; many were unable to get in and stood around the open windows and doors. Children and young people came, and many brought their parents as well. The closing meeting was held in the nearby Alpha Cinema, and just over 700 people were present on the Sunday afternoon. Many were counselled, and quite a few professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Mr S. Seymour, and another friend known as Uncle Ray of Child Evangelism Fellowship, were a great help during the special effort.

In 1958 negotiations were re-opened with the Housing Trust regarding the possibility of our obtaining a suitable building site, and at the Annual Business Meeting the Secretary announced that a site had been allocated near Rural Avenue off the Doagh Road. A plan showing the proposed development was on view that evening. The ground was later purchased for 935.00. Pastor J. Thompson and Mr W.J. McCormick played an important part in this matter.

BUILDING THE CHURCH

A special meeting was held in Rantallard House, Newtownabbey, on 23rd May 1960. The Chairman was Pastor Albert Clarke. After a long discussion and a season of prayer for definite guidance, a unanimous decision was taken to proceed with the development of the site and to erect the Church Building as far as possible by voluntary labour.

Our Building Fund at the time stood at £3,000. An appeal to the Irish and English Unions Building Funds resulted in our obtaining interest-free loans of £4,000 to be repaid over ten years, but the loans were repaid before the allotted time had expired.

Earlier in the history of the Church one of our members was preaching in Portstewart Church from time to time and met an elderly lady named Mrs Annie Hanna who, on hearing about our work, informed the preacher that she had unconverted relations in the Rathcoole district and that she would like to help us in providing a meeting place where the gospel would be preached. To quote her own words she said "Put me down for £2", but some months later she sent a gift of £400 towards the Building Fund. In 1965 Mrs Hanna transferred to the Church a house she owned in Victoria Gardens, which has been occupied for many years by an ex-Missionary. (The house has just recently been sold for £16,000).

In addition to all this, permission was sought from the appropriate Committee to approach the Churches of the Denomination to seek financial help in erecting a building "worthy of the Lord" in Rathcoole. The Secretary visited about 30 Churches (on their invitation), and the appeal resulted in our receiving donations totalling around £320.

Work on the site was started on 26th May 1960 and the first bricks were laid on 10th December. There were no bricklayers in the Rathcoole Church, but Mr W. Kernaghan of the Monkstown Church introduced a number, among them Mr Sam Close, a member of Carrickfergus Methodist Church. Mr Close

supervised the brickwork from the commencement of the contract.

The work team laboured under the leadership of Mr Alfie Mairs and this young man became Clerk of Works and Works Foreman at the same time. He was an inspiration to the entire team of about 20 men from various walks of life. The "line of demarcation" was not much in evidence. "The men had a mind to work". Each did what he could and did it as unto the Lord. As well as the craftsmen - A. Mairs, J. Wallace, S. McChesney, J. Magill, S. Cunningham, E. Cassells, W. Gaskin and T. Bailie, there were also the "hewers of wood and the drawers of water", and all played their part faithfully. The ladies of the Church were responsible for providing meals for the men who worked on the contract, in their spare time, for over three years.

Every Saturday night for six years at 12 midnight, the Church Officers attended at Cloughfern Hall, and later for a further six years at Ardeen Hall, to wash or scrub floors and prepare for the meetings on the Lord's Day, and often this work lasted until 2 am on Sunday. This was necessary as the halls were used for dances and other activities on week-days. These chores ended on the first Sunday in October 1963, when the Church celebrated its 12th Anniversary by entering the new building at Mournebeg Drive. The opening ceremony was conducted by Pastor W. Wilson - Mr T. Robinson (Architect) presented the key to Mr A. Mairs who then opened the door and declared open the building for the Ministry of the Word of God and the preaching of the gospel.

At the Dedication Service Pastor L.E. Deens presided and the preacher was Pastor W. Weir. Others taking part were Pastors W. Lyttle, R. Clarke, Rev H. Magill (Abbots Cross Presbyterian Church) and Mr N. Porter. Mr J. Dougan read a Financial Statement and Mr J. Law welcomed the visitors and gave a short history of the work and the erection of the building, at a cost to the Church of 12,500, including pews, pulpit, organ, Communion Table & Chairs and all other furnishings. Over 500 friends were entertained to tea in Abbots Cross Presbyterian Church Hall - kindly granted. The Chairman at the Thanksgiving Service was Mr James Fitzsimmins, Vice-President Baptist Union and the preachers were Pastor H.H. Orr and Pastor Minnis Mills.

On the Lord's Day the preacher was Pastor L.E. Deens and Mr T. Bailie gave the "right hand of fellowship" to a number of new members, bringing the total to seventy-four. Special addresses Monday till Friday 7th - 11th October 1963, by Pastor J. Johnston on "The eternal Security of the Believer in Christ", Pastor H.H. Orr "The responsibilities of Church members", Pastor J. Ravey "The Lord's Supper", Pastor Robert Clarke "Baptist Beliefs" and Pastor G.F. Blayney "The Gospel", proved to be of great interest and were a benefit to many who attended.

Three men who were with us when the work commenced in the area in October 1951, had passed into the presence of the Lord before the building was completed. They were Pastor Albert Clarke, Mr W. Woods and Mr Tom McCurry. Following the opening of the Church Building, at a Social Gathering

a tribute of thanks was paid to our own people and members of the Monkstown Church who had worked so hard at the building over a period of three years. We were also indebted to members of other Churches and Denominations who gave valuable help. These included - Messrs T. Robinson, S. Close, W. Kernaghan, G. Campbell, E. Stewart, G. Stewart, A. McAuley, M. Dubois, R. Riley, A. Dixon, G. Bailie, T. Mairs, G. Hall, R.L. McGaw, R.J. Brownlee, F. McCune, James Logan & Sons, Ballyclare, and James McMillen & Son, Whitehouse.

In August 1964 the first Gospel Campaign was held in the new building. The evangelist was Pastor W. Mullan of Lurgan. Special prayer meetings were held, in this connection, every Lord's Day from April to August. Three thousand leaflets were distributed at the end of July and two weeks before the Mission commenced (August 24th) over three thousand homes were visited by the Church members, and the residents were invited to attend the meetings. The building was packed to capacity every evening. The power of the Holy Spirit accompanied the preaching of the Word by God's servant from the beginning of the effort and 45 people professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ during the 3 weeks Mission. Some time later Pastor Mullan returned and conducted a Baptismal Service, when 18 believers were baptised, a number of whom joined the Church.

Since those early days special meetings have been held from time to time by Mr N. Porter, Mr Ivan Thompson (one of our members) and in more recent days Mr G. Bates. These efforts all bore fruit to the glory of the Lord, as men, women and young people professed faith in Christ.

Perhaps while listening to the story of the Rathcoole Church some might think that the work ran smoothly and trouble-free year after year. This is not altogether true. From time to time problems arose and had to be faced - problems that brought sorrow to our hearts. On several occasions discipline had to be exercised. This meant grief for the officers - perhaps more so than for those being disciplined. However, some members graciously bowed to the teaching of the Word of God and were later restored to fellowship with the Church, others resigned and went elsewhere - but some we fear "went back and walked no more with Him".

OUR PASTORS

Since 1966 we have had four Pastors. The first was H.H. Orr, who came to us in October of that year, but due to ill-health Mr Orr resigned and left us at the end of September 1969. His was a short Ministry at Rathcoole, but it was a very blessed one. Many were brought to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for the first time in our history the membership rose to more than one hundred.

The second was William W. Goligher, a young man (24 years old). He came to us in June, 1973 on completion of his studies at the Irish Baptist College. Naturally he took a special interest in our young people. During his Ministry, which lasted three years, the Church Hall was completed at a cost of £40,000.

Then came J.F. Bradley in March 1978 - a faithful Pastor and a hard-working evangelist, who ministered to us for six years. Mr Bradley resigned and left us in 1984.

The present Pastorate commenced in October 1987, when Mr T. Orr accepted our call and came to us from the Shankill Church where he had been for nine years. Under Mr Orr's ministry there are signs of a reviving among the members and adherents. The attendances at the meetings are the best since the time Pastor H.H. Orr was with us. The membership is just over 100 and often over 80 people gather at the Monday Bible Class and between 40 and 50 at the Prayer Meeting on Wednesday. Several friends have recently trusted the Saviour - quite a few have been baptised and added to the Church.

It is encouraging to know that not all who heard the Word of God preached in the Church were content to listen year after year and do nothing about it. As early as 1954 Wallace Bell left us to study at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He is still actively engaged in the service of the Lord in that country. Others followed - Kenneth McAuley, a B.T.I. student, is evangelising in the North of England. David Cassells, another B.T.I. boy, is at present minister of the Jock Troupe Memorial Church, Glasgow. John White is honorary pastor of a small Pentecostal Church in East Belfast. Valerie Howard worked with the Faith Mission for a time and later with the Qua Iboe Mission in Nigeria. Bill Cunningham is at present the pastor of Carryduff Baptist Church. Recently Philip DeCourcey completed his studies in the Irish Baptist College and has accepted a call to the Carr Church.

OFFICER-BEARERS

The present Diaconate is comprised of eight members: Messrs T. Best, F. Brooks, E. Cameron, J. Dougan, W. DeCourcey, J. Gault, A. Mairs, Uel McChesney.

A number of the brethren have served in various capacities over long periods and this has been the pattern since the Church's inception. A former elder, Mr J. Law, served for 25 years and was Church Secretary for 23 years. John Dougan was Treasurer for 18 years and the present Treasurer, Fred Brooks, has served 18 years. Uel McChesney has been Superintendent of the Sunday School for 14 years. Our organist, Miss Florence Clarke, was appointed officially 28 years ago. At the same meeting Mrs J. Dougan was appointed deputy organist. Eric Cameron has been Secretary of the Church for 11 years.

There are now only three foundation members with us: Mrs S. Woods, Mr J. Dougan, Mr J. Law. A fourth, Mrs Kathleen Law, died in April 1988. Mrs Law had a great interest in the Baptist Missions and was the Church's representative for the Orphan Society for more than 37 years.

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS ETC

The Children's Church, Creche and League of Church Loyalty on Sunday mornings are supervised by Mr G. Brown and Mrs E. Gault. There are 110 children on the Sunday School roll between the ages of 4 and 12 years. The staff numbers 14 and the Superintendent is Mr Uel McChesney. Mr McChesney also acts as Youth Leader and this organization holds its meeting at the close of the evening service on Sunday. The meeting is geared to meet the needs of the 12-14 year olds. A flourishing Children's Meeting is held each Wednesday prior to our Prayer Meeting. The Secretary is Mr D. Campbell who has a staff of five. Among the young people the Campaigner Organization plays an important role. Over 100 children attend the various "clans" on Thursday and Friday evenings. The "Chief" is Mr T. Mehaffy.

The Baptist Women's Fellowship meeting is on alternate Tuesday evenings. The Secretary is Mrs D. Stewart.

CONCLUSION

Memory can recall many blessings, joys, trials, disappointments and struggles, but crowning the past years with His goodness is our gracious adorable Lord.

As we look back on what He hath wrought, we are encouraged to step forward without fear. May our consecrated resolve be that in future we will tell more of Jesus and seek to lead them to saving faith in Him: we will read more of His word and seek to live it out: we will pray more, give more, worship more and attempt more for God and His Kingdom than ever we have done before. We can if we will - and if we really love the Lord we will.

Joseph Law

FREDERICK WILLIAM GRACEY 1883 - 1950

A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

It has been a truly wonderful experience to try to piece together the events, thoughts and aspirations of the six decades of my father's life. I am thankful to the Irish Baptist Historical Society for inviting me to write this paper - I know my father now more than ever and cannot wait to see him one day in heaven!

Our prayer is that Christ may be seen at work in and through this precious life so that all of us will exclaim "to God be the glory, great things He hath done".

THE EARLY YEARS 1883 - 1910

Frederick William Gracey was born in Belfast on November 17 1883. He was the fourth of eight children born to Robert and Elizabeth. Robert Gracey was the Drawing Master at the Belfast Royal Academy where Fred attended. Elizabeth taught music from their home - Fred being one of her pupils.

The family attended the Regent Street Baptist Church (later known as Antrim Road Baptist) and it is recorded that Robert Gracey in 1887 was the superintendent of the Sunday School which was "in a flourishing condition, and Bible Classes and cottage meetings well sustained". 1 Robert cycled to these cottage meetings where he ably taught the Word. Elizabeth visited local factories bringing the Gospel in word and song to the workers.

While still quite young, Fred came to know and love the Lord Jesus. Of his conversion he remarks, "I recall very well when the light came to me. The Word was Isaiah 53:5, 'He was wounded for (Fred's) transgressions, he was bruised for (Fred's) iniquities: the chastisement of (Fred's) peace was upon him; and with his stripes (Fred) was healed'. Life began for me then in thought and action relying upon the Lord as my Saviour". In 1893 at age 10, Fred became president

of the Christian Endeavour Group which met in his home. (Not sure whether he was self-appointed!)

In 1893 also, his revered uncle, David Gracey, principal tutor of The Pastor's College, London, went to be with the Lord. A year earlier the founder and president of that College had entered Glory. A few lines from a tribute to Mr David Gracey, by a former student, reads:

> The students of the Pastor's College were more to David Gracey than can ever be expressed. It was his life linked with his teaching that made him so great a power for good to us all. We loved him for his own sake; but we loved him also because we know how our President (C.H. Spurgeon) prized him and how proud he was of him. How loyal too was the tutor to his dear friend and President, how great his admiration of him. 2

In 1896 when Fred was 13, his father who was 45, died. From his sickbed, he said to Fred "be a fisher of men, my son". By God's grace, Fred was to heed this admonition and it was not long after he participated in open-air Gospel meetings.

From 1900-1903, he was Organizing Secretary of the Qua Iboe Mission of Nigeria - a mission he took particular interest in throughout his life.

In 1905, at 22, his mother and six siblings emigrated to the United States of America. He moved to Dublin and was a student at Trinity College and The Irish Baptist College. While in Dublin from 1905 - 1910, he attended Harcourt Street Baptist Church where he became a son-in-the-faith to Pastor Hugh D. Brown and was privileged to assist in many areas of the work. Pastor Brown, as is well known, had been a close friend of C.H. Spurgeon and also had full knowledge of the life and work of Fred's Uncle David. From 1907 - 10, he was Secretary to the Dublin Medical Mission.

Years later he was to write of his thoughts during his training years in Dublin as follows:

> I recall when preparing for the ministry of the Word, being much exercised in mind before the Lord that I might be sent not to build on another man's foundation but to the heathen where Christ had not yet been named, a sphere beyond the influence of nominal, unreal Christianity. Not alone was that not God's will for my life, however, for He sent me to Cork and even when our interests and labours for the regions beyond developed in the formation of the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission, He guided us there also in foreign missionary work to service in lands in South America where an apostate Christianity was already established.

CORK BAPTIST CHURCH 1910 - 1950

In March 1910 Pastor Hugh D. Brown of the Irish Baptist Home Mission Committee recommended for the consideration of the Cork Church, Mr Gracey "a spiritually minded, courteous gentleman, anxious to see souls saved by Jesus". It was the desire of the Committee that Mr Gracey evangelize in neighbouring towns also. The Cork Church invited him to be their pastor for one year commencing June 1, 1910. Pastor Brown had given Mr Gracey the following verse on May 25, 1910 "And the Lord looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might - have not I sent thee" (Judges 6:14). Mr Gracey accepted the call.

In November 1914, The Harcourt Street Baptist Church called Pastor Gracey to come as assistant to Pastor Brown. However Pastor Gracey did not feel this was the Lord's will for him. On November 24, 1914 the Cork Church held a special meeting when it was unanimously resolved:

> that this meeting place on record an expression of the esteem and affection in which our Pastor is held by all the members of the Church and of the ardent desire they have that he should continue among them his ministry which has been so blessed of the Lord to the upbuilding of the Church, to the increase of spirituality, prayerfulness, union and power amongst all the members, to their greater usefulness in many departments of Christian service, to the conversion of many souls and to the blessing of others outside the Church and congregation. That this meeting is of the opinion that a great door and effectual is being opened in Cork and the neighbourhood for our Pastor: that the Church members be urged to give themselves to prayer for Divine Guidance for both Pastor and Church at this time and that a copy of this resolution be sent to our Pastor.

On March 23, 1915 the Church presented to Pastor Gracey a leather-bound booklet beautifully inscribed, from the members and friends, indicating their "affection and esteem" as they "strive together for the faith of the Gospel".

And so until his death in August 1950, he remained the Pastor of the Cork Baptist Church for he believed the Lord "hath much people in this city".

THE PREACHER/TEACHER

Mr George Bird, former Secretary of the Cork YMCA said of this preacher:

> He was a man of The Book; what he discovered in that inexhaustible mine of Truth he shared with generosity. In his preaching and in his teaching he used to the full his outstanding gift of clear and cultured utterance and he was never vague or ambiguous. 3

It is quite evident from the weekly meetings held at the church, the importance placed on the spiritual growth of the members. There was the mid-week Bible study, the Women's Bible Study, the Prophetic Bible Study and the Saturday night Prayer meeting. There was also the weekly Bible study the Pastor led at the YMCA where topics were discussed such as "Christ in All the Scriptures" and "The Bible and Modern Criticism".

He loved to expound the Doctrines of Grace, the New Testament Church, the Second Advent and the Gospel. He noted "the absolute futility of giving our own message and the absolute necessity of waiting upon God for the anointing of the Spirit". How he revelled in the writings of the Puritans, and he encouraged his congregation to read such books for their own edification. The old hymns and poetry by godly saints were especially dear to him.

He accepted the historical view on prophecy. The Irish Baptist Magazine in 1941 printed his notes on the Book of Revelation. There were those opposed to his views, and he was openly called a heretic by a fellow preacher. However, he said:

> Our approach to the study of this sacred Book is with humility and faith towards God, as we seek to understand what He has given, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in this rich store-house of assurance and comfort, as well as warning and guidance concerning the present and the future.

THE EVANGELIST

As he was commissioned by the Lord of the Church to "preach the gospel to every creature", this was the thrust of his ministry. Upon coming to Cork his first task was to evangelize within the church membership. This meant some men who held offices had to step down - their lives did not exemplify a scriptural walk. This was not an easy task for a young pastor especially when men were needed in a congregation of mostly women. But to his Lord he must be true.

Outside the church, the "message" was taken to the street corners and to holiday areas. He and his helpers would use a tent (where appropriate) and a little organ - those early piano lessons from mother being put to good use. Often the tent was pulled down by angry mobs and the organ damaged by stone throwing. The Lord took care of his own and encouraged them to keep on.

It was in January 1911 that Pastor Gracey conducted his first baptismal service, one candidate being George Young. Mr Young was to prove to be of tremendous value in outreach work in the South. Pastor Gracey persuaded the Southern Baptist Association in September 1917 to appoint Mr Young as colporteur and in September 1918 the Irish Baptist Home Mission agreed to take him on their staff. Mr Young also supplied for his Pastor in the pulpit many times.

Cottage meetings were held in different parts of the city of Cork starting in 1914. Three members in particular opened up their homes. One such meeting was held in the same home for 25 years.

The mid-1920's must have been a particularly hard time for evangelism. Pastor Gracey preached a sermon posing the question "Is evangelical witness in Cork ready to die"? The question was asked because he felt "Protestant testimony was dying in Cork through decrease in protestant population; and evangelical witness was dying in Cork through Higher Criticism, so-called, denying verbal inspiration of the Scriptures". The answer came for the Pastor from Psalm 17:5, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" and for the people from Ezekiel 44:28, "... I am their inheritance ... I am their possession".

His birthday prayer on November 17, 1926 was Psalm 40:13, "Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me". He said, "We have been deploring the dearth of conversions in these days yet we are persuaded of God that His hand is not shortened that it cannot save neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear".

For a Roman Catholic to become a Christian meant severe persecution. When the priest found out, and if it was the man in the family who had been converted, he was beaten and his wife and children put into a convent. The Pastor was able with God's help to enable at least one family escape to England. It was not unusual to find under the front door of the church, notes from seeking Roman Catholics asking for prayer and guidance. In considering those dear people on March 18 1929, the Lord gave Pastor Gracey the promise found in

Deuteronomy 28:12 "The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure". In His time, the Lord has done just that for so many Roman Catholics in Cork.

The war years of 1914-18 gave much opportunity for reaching soldiers stationed in Cork and vicinity with the Gospel. Pastor Gracey was appointed Chaplain to the forces. Of untold assistance in the work during World War II was a member of the church, Andrew Kerr. Mr Kerr was chief engineer on the "M.V. Innisfallen" and he invited and brought soldiers to the church. Another faithful member, William Warner, who was associated with the Seamen's Mission, would go to meet incoming ships and take the Gospel to the sailors and likewise bring them to church.

Children were an important part of the work of evangelism. There was an afternoon Sunday School; a regular Friday night Children's meeting; a Children's Hour on the annual Thanksgiving Day Service (30 children present on one such occasion on 25 November 1943); a Christian Endeavour Group for young people and in later years the Baptist Youth Fellowship; and of course annual beach picnics for all, but geared especially for the young. Every year on a specific day, children of the Sunday School repeated to the Pastor, individually, the 52 verses of Scripture they had learned that year!!

The church was exposed to the needs of world evangelism through the regular visits of missionaries from various missions, such as the Qua Iboe Mission, British Jews Society, Unevangelized Fields Mission, Dublin Medical Mission, French Bible Mission and Culion Leper Colony, etc.

A Gospel Mission week was held every year, sometimes it would be for a 3 - week period. The Lord blessed these special efforts. Pastor J.D. Gilmore in 1913 had been the evangelist when one young lady who had heard the Good News before, now was led by the Holy Spirit to accept the Lord Jesus as her Saviour. She went on to become a Sunday School teacher and later establish a Christian home. Another young girl under similar circumstances in 1946 was brought to the Saviour and continues to rejoice in her salvation.

Pastor Gracey had planned special meetings to celebrate the church's Three-Hundredth Anniversary in the autumn of 1950 and it was to be as follows:

A Bible Conference for the deepening of Spiritual life.

A month's Gospel Mission by visiting Evangelists.

A United Missionary Conference with representative Missionaries from the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission, Qua Iboe Mission, Dublin Medical Mission, British Jews Society, French Bible Mission, Culion Leper Colony, etc.

A publication, it is hoped will be issued shortly to commemorate the church's three centuries of worship, work and witness.

This celebration did not take place due to his Home-going, but we see the Lord ever gave him the vision to evangelize and let the light of the Gospel shine brightly.

THE UNDERSHEPHERD

This undershepherd knew and loved the flock of the church. He entered into their lives and shared in their joys and sorrows. Personal letters found their way

to many a home for whatever the occasion. One letter written to an 11 year old on the occasion of her request for baptism reads:

> Your mother brought me your lovely little letter with its testimony to your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. This gives me great joy, for I know that your confession of Christ has given His joy, and has also caused joy amongst the angels in Heaven. Indeed "the Father Himself loveth you because you love" Jesus, His son.
>
> You are not too young to be baptized and to be received into church fellowship, if you are not too young to know that you are saved through faith in Him Who loved you and gave Himself for you.

Another letter written on the occasion of a young lady's wedding reads:

> The lovely learning of each others' ways and characters which only the holy intimacy of a loving marriage union can reveal, and the little adjustments to each others' points of view will come along gradually and naturally, as you continue to realise how you are sharers of each others' lives.

Young and old came to him for guidance. Bible College students would find their way to Cork to seek his advice. A preacher who now resides in Canada writes:

> I was baptized by Mr Gracey in January 1945 and joined the church. This action of mine meant I was now out of work. Soon after joining, Mr Gracey graciously offered me a temporary position as his Assistant, which I was glad to accept, preaching occasionally on Sundays as well as fulfilling other assignments. He also facilitated my entry into the Irish Baptist College in September 1945, as I may not have qualified regarding length of (Baptist) church membership.

Having suffered from polio as a child, the sorrow of his father's death as a teenager, and loneliness as a young man, what a comfort he was to those in like circumstances. In 1922 a young 16 year old girl in his congregation was very ill and not expected to live. She had great faith and believed God would heal her. Pastor Gracey held special prayer meetings on her behalf and he himself spent hours by her bedside. That young girl was healed by the Lord, and she went on to serve Him with the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission in Argentina.

The Secretary of the church, Alfred S.E. Thornton spoke of his under-shepherd like this: "Happy the flock which God blesses with such a brother".

THE BAPTIST MINISTER

In the mainly Roman Catholic city of Cork, the Baptist Minister was well known by his walk and his talk! It was amazing the respect he received from those with whom he had contact day by day - the busdrivers, the shopkeepers, the gardener, the dentist, the housekeeper, the taximen, the doctor, etc. Every opportunity was used to share his faith with these fellow-countrymen/women.

When studying late one night during the "troubles" of the 1920's, the door of his hotel room, where he lived, was flung open by two drunk Black and Tan soldiers. As they stood with their guns pointed, one soldier recongized the open Bible and said, "Oh, my Dad's a minister, he reads that too - let's leave him alone".

Most of the opposition to the Baptist cause came from the Protestant clergymen. A former member of the Cork church writes:

> I was a member of the Church of Ireland when I firstcame to Cork and I was warned that it was very dangerous to even enter the Cork Baptist church! People in Cork outside of Baptist circles secretly had tremendous respect for the man and his message because they knew in their hearts that he was preaching and living the true Gospel - I heard of many who said "Oh, I couldn't go to that church but Pastor Gracey does preach the gospel and expound the word very faithfully". I am still firmly convinced that the tremendous blessings which the church has experienced in recent years is because of the faithful witness and prayer life of the church in Pastor Gracey's day.

Pastor Gracey had sadly been aware of the Protestant churches' drift away from the authority of the Scriptures. He wrote:

> We must persevere in the teaching and fellowship of the Apostles. This through God's grace is our humble position here in Cork. We persevere in it. At all costs we are going on with it. We have no interest in any other teaching. We have no part in any other fellowship than this. We are not interested in any other teaching; it doesn't matter if it comes from the most intelligent university on earth; it matters not if it comes from traditions that date back from before Christ. At the end, we are only interested in the teaching of the apostles; we shut our ears to every other teaching. We would have missed our way surely if we had not kept this attitude. The Apostles represent the Lord, their teaching is final. Our teaching and preaching must be based upon the Scriptures. Paul says "Every Scripture (not excluding Genesis) is divinely inspired and is profitable" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Scriptures never were more precious than now to those who truly love the Lord; while christendom is tearing them to pieces and the doctrines of demons are taking their place. The Apostle Paul says "Let him that is spiritual acknowledge that the things that I write are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37).
>
> I am sometimes severely ciriticised for my attitude to various Christian union meetings and organizations. My answer is that Scripture forbids compromising with the truth, and is entirely against attempting to unite essentials which are incompatible.

One of the family's get-away-places was Sherkin Island. This Baptist minister was often seen walking the island with the Roman Catholic priest, a Mr Lamb, the subject of conversation always being the one and only Gospel. When Mr Lamb learned of the passing of his friend, he held a Mass for the repose of his soul. All the island attended. It was not a service Pastor Gracey would have desired to have taken place, but surely it was an indication of the esteem Mr Lamb held for this man of God.

A Baptist through and through, believing the Baptist position was patterned as near as possible to Scripture, he did have fellowship, however, with ministers of other denominations who were the Lord's disciples and believed the Bible to be the inspired Word of God.

THE PRAYER WARRIOR

This prayer warrior learned that "the way to know God is to wait upon God. The great things of a deeper life with the Lord can be only found in prayer. The hard and difficult things are only solved by prayer".

The letters T and P (tested and proved) are inscribed in his Bible beside Psalm 55:16-17, "As for me I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me.

Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud and he shall hear my voice". No step in his life was taken without falling on his knees in prayer. In fact, one of his daughters remembers forever stepping over his legs as he so often was found kneeling!

And so he instructed his co-warriors to be a praying people. There was the weekly Prayer Meeting and all members were encouraged to try to attend. A week of prayer for the needs of the church members was part of the programme of the church. At the end of one such week in October 1943, he commented "splendid spirit, and worthy conclusion of heartening season of prayer this week".

The Annual Thanksgiving Day was always a special uplift and blessing. Prayer commenced at eight o'clock in the morning with several sessions during the day. The climax would be in the evening, when after a social time together, the messages from near and far were shared. Pastor Gracey would then give the closing address.

A Missionary Week of Prayer was held every year too. Missions of the world would be presented and current news from the various fields made known - after which specific prayer could be made.

There were days set aside for prayer for the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission. Once again up-to-date news was brought before the people and the burdens were uplifted.

THE FRIEND

One of Pastor Gracey's best loved hymns was "What a friend we have in Jesus". He could sing it heartily because he knew of what he sang. He endeavoured, therefore, to be himself a friend to the members of the church.

During the period of the civil war in the 1920's, there were many anxious moments, and his Bible is well marked with verses received from the membership to encourage him. Their response to his friendship was evident in numerous ways, not the least the letters of love and support he received when on extended periods away from Cork.

Church socials and picnics were important in that they were a way of getting to know people. How Pastor Gracey happily participated in the games - not always being too practical wearing "whites" on the beach. When he was married and had his own home, the door was ever open to visitors. Every Sunday evening after church, the home would be abuzz with friends.

Thoughout his 40 years in the church, he had many members and office bearers whom he considered his close friends. It would not be wise to name anyone lest someone is left out. Notes from memorial services he conducted for several of these dear saints show great love and thankfulness to God for their help as co-labourers in the Gospel. As was said of Pastor Gracey, "thy love to me was wonderful", so he could say of his friends' love to him.

IRISH BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSION HONORARY SECRETARY 1923-1948

The Baptist Union of Ireland presented to Mr Gracey in 1948 upon his retirement as Honorary Secretary an inscription, a portion of which reads:

> Mr Gracey has acted as Honorary Secretary to the Mission ever since it was founded in 1923. Its formation was largely due to his missionary enthusiasm, and its consolidation and extension since then must be attributed in great measure to his expert guidance. His special knowledge of the field combined with his careful and painstaking attention to the heavy work of correspondence and administration, and his evangelistic vision and spiritual approach to every problem have been of simply inestimable value to the Mission.

Excerpts from a sermon delivered in Great Victoria Street Baptist Church, Belfast on September 30 1945 will show his missionary passion for the lost in South America.

> When I was a boy attending the Belfast Royal Academy, there was one country in the world which stood out from others on the map as different to me. Somehow its very name seemed more striking than others - PERU. And the thought entered my mind how I would like to see that country.
>
> I had a cousin in London, older than I, the son of my uncle who was Principal of Spurgeon's College, and this boy received the gift of a book from the great preacher - C.H. Spurgeon and the book was called "The Gold of the Incas" - the wonder story of Peru. My cousin gave me that book afterwards and I have it still in my possession with his name and C.H. Spurgeon's signature all in his own handwriting.
>
> Some years later when I was a student in the Irish Baptist College, my mother and sisters and brother were going to the United States and I went to Liverpool to see them off. On the same liner, Dr. Harry Guinness, the great missionary leader and evangelist and his daughter Geraldine, were travelling and I was introduced to them by friends of theirs and mine. I discovered to my great interest that they were on their way via the U.S.A. to Peru with the purpose of seeking opening for the Gospel. That was in 1905. As a result of that visit, Miss Guinness wrote her famous book Peru - Its Land and Its People which came as a thrilling story and challenge to missionary hearts at that time. This was the occasion of the foundation of the Evangelical Union of South America.
>
> Then twenty-three years ago when our Baptist Union decided that the time had come for Irish Baptists to have their own missionary society, the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission was formed. As we waited on the Lord for His guidance to the mission fields in the country in which He would have us labour, we were unexpectedly guided to Peru, and thus began a very real and definite link with that land, as our own Irish missionaries went out there to take the pure gold of the Gospel to a people who had lost their country's gold.

Mr Gracey visited the United States and Canada on deputation work for the Mission in 1925, 1927 and 1935. Many contacts were made and the financial burden was lifted to some degree.

The Baptist Union in 1926 suggested he resign the Cork church to be their deputation secretary in the U.S.A., but the Lord did not point Mr Gracey in that direction. With the church's consent, he gave as much time as possible to the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission.

At a meeting of the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission on October 10, 1928 Mr Gracey proposed the formation of the Women's Auxiliary of the Mission. This was accepted. The necessary and helpful work of the Women's Auxiliary has been documented by the Irish Baptist Historical Society in a previous

publication. In the lighter vein, a quote from that article mentions how Pastor Shields and Mr Gracey were the only two men present at the first Annual Meeting of the W.A. in 1930 and "apparently they were so intimidated by the number of ladies present that they asked to borrow the overalls of the helpers in the kitchen so that they could go in disguise!" 3

Mr Gracey visited South America during 1937-38. The following is part II of the sermon he preached on September 30, 1945 at Great Victoria Street Baptist Church:

> Now just 8 years ago when I was about to go to the U.S.A. to see my mother and family, a good friend of the IBFM asked me if I would not like to visit our mission stations in South America while in North America, and of course I had to admit nothing would please me more. This friend immediately offered to provide the means, so that the whole journey to South America was made without costing the IBFM one penny. And so a life-long dream was realized and I found myself actually in Peru. To increase the wonder of this fulfilled dream, I arrived in Peru from the sky, coming by aeroplane, and my first view of that country was the top of the Great Andes Mountains and then the historic old capital city of Peru - Lima. Later I was to fly to Argentina.
>
> Above all the thrills of that visit was the attraction to me of those Indians. You would never forget the impressions they made upon you. They are like slaves running away from something they fear, always in a hurry, a downtrodden race, with a crushed look, pathetically and pitiably an object of sympathy. The story of the conquest of Peru by Pizarro, the Spanish R.C. envoy, is one of the blackest and most infamous chapters in the ill-fated history of the Roman Church for which in these days of ours that system of religion is being brought under the judgment of God. How these Spanish servants of the Papacy, with the sword in one hand and the crucifix in another, waged cruel war against a harmless and worthier people than they and even though these Incas were pagan sun worshippers, they would never have descended to the depths of the iniquity and barbarous tyranny of their conquerors.
>
> And just here is where a dream is being realised in bringing light to them that sit in the darkness of earth, the bringing of life to a fast dying race, the replacing with the treasure of the Gospel of God's Grace the looted wealth of the incredible treasure of the Incas. To have seen the remnants of this race, to have looked into the saddened countenances of their descendants amongst whom now our IBFM are labouring to give them hope and life and joy through the Gospel, has been one of the greatest experiences of my life.
>
> "Then with a rush the intolerable craving, Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call, Oh to save these, to perish in their saving, Die for their lives, be offered for them all".

As Honorary Secretary, Mr Gracey enjoyed the personal contact with the missionaries on the field. He realized it was vital to be made constantly aware of their struggles, needs and blessings. Whenever possible, he was there to see them off to the field or welcome them home on furlough.

DEPUTATION TRIP TO THE U.S.A. NOVEMBER 1948 - 1950

From a human point of view, this deputation trip was undoubtedly the most physically and emotionally draining that Mr Gracey ever encountered. Yet spiritually he experienced a sweeter than ever fellowship with the Lord Jesus. In contemplating this trip, he had naturally sought the Lord's guidance and part of his prayer to his Master on July 23, 1948 reads:

Before the Lord, facing the critical challenge of world evangelism in view of the world situation, in the light of the imminence of the Lord's Return and our considering the possibility in His most blessed will of

1. leaving Cork for one year or more
2. visiting USA for a year or perhaps two with the object of doing deputation work for the IBFM.

In August 1948 he received a promise from the Lord from Isaiah 45:2-3:

I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

By November 1948, Mr Gracey and his family were residing in New Jersey at the home of his brother, Robert. Mr Gracey travelled extensively within the States making known the Mission. There was increasing discouragement as he found it almost impossible to turn the eyes of affluent American Christians away from their materialism to the needs of their neighbours way down south.

As he thought of the life of the Apostle Paul, he wrote these words:

When things have not turned out as expected, when plans are frustrated, storms gather, or the frail craft on which our lives depend is shipwrecked, what then is the position of the man of God?

The closing chapter of the Apostle's life is the answer. It points to the inner sufficiency of the Christian experience. Paul is not cast down in the hour of need. It is not simply that God cares for him, but that God is in personal, spiritual fellowship with him. This is the secret of Paul's confident calmness and ever cheerful-ness in those dark and different days. Indeed, the spirit displayed in the troubles that have befallen him is a greater witness to the truth and power of the Gospel than many of the triumphs he saw on the mission field.

Numerous verses are marked and dated in his Bible for 1949 - 50 (93 in total) as he used Scripture to cry out to the Lord to obtain strength:

30.4.49 "... neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon the Lord" (II Chronicles 20:12).
3.10.49 "Rest in the Lord, and wait ... fret not" (Psalm 37:7,8). 24.1.50 "Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly" (Psalm 108:12,13).
31.3.50 "For with God nothing shall be impossible"Luke 1:37).

His heart was heavily burdened for the outreach of the Mission and he felt he was accomplishing so little. Along with this burden, he was constantly under the attack of Satan who caused some family members to adamantly oppose his efforts on behalf of the Mission. (Long after his death, some of these loved ones came to realize the error of their ways and with great sorrow have sought forgiveness).

Mr Gracey physically worked himself to the limit. In God's Providence, when he was in South America in 1937-38, he received a bite from an insect which resulted in Chagas' Disease. This disease damages the heart muscle. As well, in 1944 he had suffered his first heart attack. These facts together with the strain of travel and extreme heat and humidity of the summer months in the States, now took their toll on his strength.

His prayer on November 16, 1949 was as follows:

After many days and nights of soul anguish, prayers and heart searchings, in renewed confidence and boldness before the Father, I come now very humbly and submissively in the Lord's holy and merciful presence, to set out my further confession of faith in Him concerning our cause and circumstances today:

1 The cause which has brought us here to U.S.A., is to our minds more essential than ever before we left Ireland; (a) the 25% deduction is more than ever necessary on the Field; (b) the material equipment, such as a jeep, one or more cars, a launch, the requirements for Medical Clinic, are pressingly urgent needs; (c) the devaluation of the pound has increased by nearly 50% the cost of the drafts we are at present permitted to send to Peru and Argentina; (d) the reaction of the devaluation is felt by our missionaries in increased costs of living on the Field.

2 Our circumstances are bewilderingly, perplexingly embarrassing: (a) only about $1000.00 has been subscribed to date; (b) our expenses total about $5000.00 which we owe at present; (c) every effort to get openings for our propaganda fails. Not one solitary leader of the Baptist groups extends a helping hand. Every door of approach to possible wealthy stewards of God's money is up to now closed to us; (d) prayer, fully believing and confident in the faithfulness of God to His promises, has not brought the required response; (e) I have not one cent to spend, giving my last to the Sunday collections. Air mail letters to Ireland are awaiting postage; (f) the strain on us physically is telling on all of us. My pulse is only around 40 - too low to be safe; (g) another day's mail has come and no help from the Lord.

The immediate circumstances are as dark as they could be and we are tried to the utmost, and don't know where to turn or what to do, "but God"; "let us now fall into the hands of the Lord"; "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him"; "yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation". So helpless, but not hopeless; penniless, but not Christless; dejected but not forsaken, we wait for the Lord.

The family were not exposed entirely to his anxiety of soul. It was to the Lord he brought his deepest burdens, and because he did this, he was able to radiate a joyful, peaceful spirit and his presence was a delight.

The Lord wondrously gave him faith to believe all would be well. Once again, verses marked are:

28.2.50 "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (I Thessalonians 5:24).1.3.50 "... how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him" (Matthew 7:11).

Government regulations concerning visitors from Ireland to the U.S.A. limited the amount of money one could bring into the States annually. However, Mr Gracey was able to pay all outstanding debts before leaving the States without any cost to the Mission. Also the Lord did move the hearts of the people not only to give financially to the Mission, but to pray for the labourers on the Field who were faithfully sowing the Seed awaiting the Lord's harvest.

BAPTIST UNION OF IRELAND

Pastor Gracey was honoured by being called to the Presidential Chair in 1922/23 and again in 1947/48. In a memorial to him, Pastor F.H. Forbes, the secretary of the Baptist Union wrote:

During his last Presidential year it was my privilege to enjoy close fellowship with him not only at Headquarters but also in visiting the churches. It was most impressive to see the hearty welcome extended by pastors, church members, and friends in sympathy with the work of the denomination which was so dear to his heart and which he served so long

and with unvarying loyalty. I could see that these contacts gave him an insight into prevailing conditions in the churches of which he had not before been aware. This led to deep concern for the future of the work. Often we spent periods of intercession together seeking for guidance as to the next step and for grace and inspiration that helpful advice might be given as representatives from churches would seek interviews regarding problems which had arisen. I have no hesitation in saying that prayer was answered beyond our expectation. Still there was his deep longing for revival in all our churches, for the rapid advance of the spread of the Truth and for a fuller and more joyous experience of the presence of the indwelling Christ in the lives of the children of God. No bit of service for the Master was ever looked upon as trivial but rather as a further opportunity for the fulfilling of the great purpose which he believed God had revealed to him. 4

At the Annual Assembly of the Irish Baptist Union in 1934, Pastor Gracey suggested that the next annual meeting be in Cork. It was held in the Methodist Central Hall in Cork City in 1935. This is most interesting for back in the 1750's John Wesley had come to Cork, and was very welcomed by the Baptists. For several months he used the Baptist pulpit from which to minister, and then took half the Baptist congregation away making it the nucleus of the Methodist Church in Cork! 5

COMRADESHIP WITH OTHER FAITHFUL SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS

A) OVERSEAS

In an era when travel was still limited to a certain degree, Pastor Gracey was privileged to visit extensively in the British Isles, America and Canada. He cherished the moments spent with those of like precious faith and prayed that "the drawing together of the nations may be realized in worldwide spiritual revival". He had the humble joy of speaking in some of the great churches in these countries. Those with whom we know he had fellowship were: Dr G. Campbell Morgan and Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones of Westminster Chapel, London, England; Rev E. Guedj of the French Bible Mission, Colombes, France; Dr T.T. Shields of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada (Dr Shields was able to visit Cork on one occasion); Dr W. Houghton of Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., (this Institution having bestowed upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity - a title, however, which he never used); Dr J.M. Stowell Sr and Rev D.C. Graham of New Jersey, U.S.A.

In 1984 the Gracey family had a "surprise" letter from Rev D.C. Graham who was then the Senior Minister of McIlwain Memorial Presbyterian Church, Pensacola, Florida and Dean of Pensacola Theological Seminary. He writes the following memories of Mr Gracey:

I became acquainted with Rev Frederick Gracey when he visited America in 1948-49. His sister, Mrs Albert Storr was a member of the church where I was Student Pastor. It is significant to remark that this church had started with 11 people, including my wife and myself, as part of the break from the large Presbyterian denomination. We met that year in a very humble hall. Brother Gracey graciously came into our midst when not itinerating in ministry, and preached notably for us.

There might have been little reason I should gain the friendship of such an older and experienced pastor except that he was supremely a man of Christian grace. I could mention that we shared common faith in the high doctrines of sovereign grace. We were both Spurgeonic quite unashamedly. He was the soul of Christian love. The fact that I was presbyterian did not shadow that relationship. He should not be forgotten for he is one of those occasional gifts God grants to His church to light the way in a sin-darkened world. This trumpet gave "no uncertain sound". I say with heartfelt thanks, "Praise God for Frederick Gracey".

B) AT HOME

Fellowship with other soldiers of the Cross was to Pastor Gracey of priceless value. In a city where Protestant churches were departing from the Word, he looked forward with anticipation to visiting colleagues, missionaries, etc., with whom he could chat about the King's business. Some of those whom he loved were: Pastors L.E. Deens, J. Ravey, H. Spurgeon, F.H. Forbes, J. Johnston, S. Carser, J.D. Gilmore and G.H. Weir. No name is omitted intentionally. He himself would probably add many more!

FAMILY MEMORIES 1938-1950

MARRIAGE

On August 8, 1938 Pastor Gracey underlined II Samuel 17:18 "... his will I be and with him will I abide", and made the note "verse on calendar today in study, last day of Patricia's being here before our marriage".

On August 10, 1938, Pastor Gracey was united in marriage to Patricia Grace Forsyth, third youngest daughter of 9 girls born to Edward and Agnes Forsyth of the Cork Church. Patricia, affectionately know as Tish, had been Pastor Gracey's secretary for 10 years. In fact, Pastor Gracey had known her since she was an infant as he had been part of the Forsyth family for years. He just waited for his bride-to-be to grow up!

CHILDREN

Their firstborn, named after his father, died at birth. Mrs Gracey was heard to say to the doctor: "The Lord gave and the Lord took away". This event brought great sadness, but as time has gone by, Mrs Gracey has realized God's wisdom and can say "Blessed be the name of the Lord". Their secondborn, Patricia Elizabeth Grace, was the cause of much rejoicing. Her father marked II Samuel 7:18-29 with the notation "claimed through the gift of faith on birth of daughter Grace", verses which request God's blessing on the family now and yet to come. Grace today covets those verses for her own children. In another couple of years Grace was presented with a sister, Jane Ruth, whom she learnt to pinch quite quickly. However, a blessed sister/friend relationship is enjoyed now.

HOME LIFE

Mrs Gracey speaks of her life with her husband as "heaven upon earth". Everywhere he went, in or outside the home, he left the fragrance of Christ. Those 12 brief years were indeed a foretaste of the joys awaiting them in Glory.

Pastor Gracey loved his "girlies", and playing with them was always fun and laughter. When his wife would come home from the evening Women's Bible Study the house would be ablaze with lights: the children who had earlier been put to bed, were up playing with Daddy!

GRACE'S MEMORIES

Being 9 years old when Daddy went to be with the Lord Jesus, I have many precious little memories of a beloved father. Among these there are two incidents that I would like to share with you as for me they show the very essence of the faith and love he had in and for his Saviour.

The first one took place some time in 1949 while we were in the U.S.A. It was evening, and we were all gathered around Mum and Dad's bed, kneeling in prayer. Our request: that the Lord would send the needed money so that Daddy could travel within the States. I recall kneeling there, eyes closed, Daddy in prayer, his voice intense, the words I do not remember, but I do remember thinking that I didn't dare open my eyes as I was sure there was a listening angel hovering over us. To this day I can visualize that angel there. While we were still praying, there was a knock at the door, and a lady we all knew was standing there and she said: "Fred, I have been saving this money to give to your for some time and I felt that I had to give it to your tonight". Can you imagine the impression that this had on an 8 year old? It was to me the real power of prayer, and the knowledge that God had not only heard our request but had answered it immediately. The impact of that experience lives with me to this day.

The second one took place early one morning. Jane and I were lying on either side of Daddy in bed and he said: "Do you see that calendar over there on the wall, well we will be home in Cork by the end of May, and I would like you both to be able to sing by memory the hymn 'What a Friend we have in Jesus'". He proceeded to sing and teach us those wonderful words. Looking back I realize he could not have left us with a richer legacy than the words that are penned in the first line of that hymn.

A NIECE'S MEMORIES

Within the family circle Uncle Fred was always someone special, someone looked up to, someone to be consulted about major events. He was always fantastically generous not only to the family (how else would I ever have tasted peaches!) but to everyone he came in contact with.

A NEPHEW'S MEMORIES

While playing chess, stories are told with meaning and love between moves of pawns and knights. A sense of warmth, genuine caring, genuine love for Jesus

and His kingdom is imprinted on a mid-teenager just when needed. Uncle Fred put something, through God, into me that I know has been an anchor and steadying influence to this day.

A PEEP BEHIND THE SCENES

During his second presidential year 1947-48, Pastor Gracey and his family lived in Bangor, renting W.P. Nicholson's old house. That year holds treasured memories of visiting the churches as well as being warmly accepted into Pastor George Weir's church in Bangor. Pastor Gracey and his two girls sang a trio once at Great Victoria Street Church. However, Pastor Gracey was left singing alone as one daughter was fascinated by the audience and the other was admiring her new shoes.

On returning to Cork in May 1948, Pastor Gracey waited upon the Lord regarding the financial needs of the mission and what must be done. He was convinced, as has been indicated before, that the Lord would have him go to the U.S.A again. The way was opened up and in November 1948, at the age of 65, he, his wife, children and sister-in-law, Ethel Forsyth, prepared to sail to New York. "Gracefield", the family home, was sold and the furniture put in storage. A local businessman had asked Pastor Gracey for a loan of money so he gave this man the money from the sale of "Gracefield". The money was to be returned on Pastor Gracey's arrival back from the States. Psalm 112:5 is marked and dated 5.5.48 - "A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion".

While in the States, Pastor Gracey counted it a blessing to have Miss Forsyth as his able assistant, as she travelled widely with him on behalf of the Mission. Mrs Gracey stayed with the children in New Jersey most of the time. Another blessing were the precious times the Gracey family had with Pastor Gracey's brother and family, sisters and brothers-in- law.

Upon returning to Cork in May 1950, the doctor ordered a holiday for Pastor Gracey. He and Mrs Gracey went to England for 2 weeks. While in Dublin, on the way home, the Lord called Pastor Gracey to Higher Service. He had once written, "Lord, may this be so of me" beside Job 5:26, "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season". And it was so.

Added to the great sorrow of the sudden passing of such a dear companion, Mrs Gracey found herself in a financial dilemma. She was to prove, however, as had her husband, 1 Peter 4:19, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing as unto a faithful creator". Mrs Gracey never heard from the one who had borrowed the money. As well, Pastor Gracey's solicitor failed to keep his life insurance payments up-to-date as had been arranged prior to going to the States. Therefore, the insurance had been cancelled. Now totally dependent upon God - He supplied every need. Mrs Gracey was surrounded with a loving, caring family who gave of themselves in countless ways. The Gracey family remembers

how love and sorrow met together and produced the richest blessings and memories.

THE WRITER'S CONCLUSION:

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Corinthians 2:9).

My father's loving desire was to reach the lost for Jesus. All his life he humbly obeyed Colossians 4:17:

Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.

He was not to see the rich blessings that the Cork Baptist Church and the Mission have experienced these past several years. But that is not important. What is important is that this life of unceasing prayer, this life of loving service, this life indwelt by the Holy Spirit was used for the honour and glory of Almighty God's time and way.

Lest we have failed to keep my dear father's life hidden behind the cross, may we close with a poem entitled "A Preacher's Prayer" found in the front of his Bible - a prayer he sought to live:

I do not ask that crowds should throng the temple,
That standing room be counted worth a price;
I only ask that as I voice the message,
They may see Christ.

I do not ask for pomp in Church or pageant,
Or music such as wealth alone can bring,
I only pray that as I voice the message,
He may be nigh.

I do not ask that men may sound my praises,
On flaming headlines spread my name abroad,
I only pray that as I voice the message,
Hearts may find God.

SOURCES:

1 The Irish Baptist Magazine, March 1887.
2 The Sword and Trowel, No 342, June 1893, Volume XXIX, page 317.
3 Joan Thompson, 'The Women's Auxiliary of the Irish Baptist Foreign Misison 1929-51 in the Irish Baptist Historical Society Journal, 1977-78, Volume 10.
4 The Irish Baptist Magazine, September 1950, page 13.
5 "Past and Future of Baptists in Ireland". An address by Hugh D. Brown at the Centenary Meeting of the Irish Baptist Home Mission, Dublin, May 27, 1914.

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Jane R Gracey

HUGH HENRY ORR (1904 - 1973)
A Brother Beloved

In the list of those who have contributed much to the enhancement of the spiritual life and reputation of the Baptist churches in Ireland few names will rank more highly than that of Hugh Orr. Born in 1904, the seventh and youngest son of a large family he was used to the hard work associated with farming in the early days of this century. He was the product of a mixed marriage. This is not to be understood in the usual context of the term as between Protestant and Roman Catholic. Hugh's father was Church of Ireland, his mother a Wesleyan. She never lost her love for Methodism during her long life. In the early days the family worshipped in the prettily situated Woods Parish Church not far from the South Derry village of Ballyronan and the shores of Lough Neagh. The father died when Hugh was but seven years old. By then the family had moved to a holding much nearer to the town of Magherafelt. Here Hugh's Mother's love for Methodism re-asserted itself and the family became worshippers in the little Methodist Chapel in Magherafelt. Methodism never had a strong following in South Derry. The local circuit embraced churches in Bellaghy, Castledawson, Knockloughrim, Maghera and Magherafelt, none of them very strong causes even in the best of times. No witness now remains save in Knockloughrim and Magherafelt. There are still a few families around the little village of Knockloughrim who are to be congratulated on their evangelical outreach in recent years. This has resulted in a vigorous if small witness culminating in the erection of a well-appointed new church building which should provide for the needs of the church for some time to come. Incidentally when the Methodist church in Maghera ceased to be used, the old pulpit and the pews were purchased for the Baptist cause in Portstewart and served well for many a day until in Pastor Lutton's time the present modern building was erected.

Hugh Orr's primary education - the only institutional schooling he ever had the opportunity to have - was within the walls of the Old Fair Hill National

School attached to the First Magherafelt Presbyterian congregation. Here he received not only a grounding in the three R's but what in later days was more important still, 'the Holy Scriptures' which as the apostle so well said 'are able to make you wise unto salvation'. How much the older generation owed to the influence of godly schoolmasters and lady teachers only eternity will reveal. In the smaller schools of a former day there was opportunity to influence children for good which is lacking in the modern educational set-up despite all the advantages that are supposed to accrue from our up-to-date surroundings and methods. The schools in the Magherafelt area boasted at least two devoted Christian men as principals. In the Fair Hill school Master John Stewart, an elder in First Magherafelt Presbyterian church, faithfully sowed the seed which later was to produce a rich harvest in the life of more than one of his pupils. Another such was principal in a nearby seat of learning. He was Master John McIlwrath who took young believers into his home to show them 'the way of God more perfectly'. In the early days of his pilgrimage Hugh benefited greatly from the help received from the latter. Both these men, long since in glory, are still remembered with affection and thanksgiving by older folk around the district who profited much from this caring ministry in earlier days. It was in the year 1922 that young Hugh Orr sought and found the Saviour. The days of the early 1920's were stirring ones in Ulster. The new state of Northern Ireland was ushered in with a great deal of sectarian conflict. There was confrontation on the streets and unrest generally throughout the province. Then God intervened and a striking change came over 'Protestant Ulster'. A sense of spiritual need became widespread. Men and women became aware of sin. There grew up a desire to hear the Gospel and many, very many, in the city, town and country sought and found the Lord. This work of grace was very pronounced in South Derry as well as in other places. The prayers of God's people were being answered and the seed sown by faithful servants of the Lord began to bear fruit. Hugh Orr's awareness of his need and the possibility of faith in Christ became a personal reality. The discovery that some of his friends had trusted the Lord, and their witness to him of their new found faith had the desired effect. In the company of one of them Hugh passed from death unto life as they stood at a crossroads in the nearby county of Tyrone. The young convert soon found fellowship with others in the home of godly schoolmaster John McIlwrath of whom mention has already been made. It was in that home that the future preacher was first constrained to let his voice be heard in public prayer. From then on opportunities of serving the Lord were seized with all the enthusiasm of youth. When W.P. Nicholson conducted a very fruitful mission in the First Presbyterian church in 1924 Hugh, as a personal worker, was greatly encouraged to see some he knew well led to the Lord. As was the usual practice following Nicholson's missions efforts were made to form a Christian Workers' Union. Hugh Orr played a leading part in the formation of the Magherafelt branch and became a regular preacher at its meetings and also at various other venues.

The development of Hugh's preaching ability and its acceptance and

recognition led him, while still serving his local Methodist church, to consider entering the ministry of that denomination. For some reason this did not materialize nor did an approach for training at the Moody Bible Institute. It was over a year later that plans were finalised for his entry to the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary. This road was blocked also as a visa was refused him on health grounds. His idea in applying to transatlantic situations was due to his desire to support himself during his studies and so relieve his mother of possible financial burden. This of course was only possible by going to the U.S.A.

These events, disappointing as they must have seemed at the time, were no doubt all in God's plan. They led his servant into that sphere of service which has proved such a blessing to many under the rich ministry which our brother exercised over the intervening years in our midst.

Consideration must now be given to the circumstances which led our subject into fellowship with those people called Baptists and to whose churches he gave so much, during the course of a fairly long life. In 1921 - just in time to reap the fruits of the upsurge in spiritual interests in the South Derry district - there arrived as pastor of the Tobermore church the Rev. George McKillen. He was then but 30 years of age, a keen evangelist whose warm, caring nature won the hearts of all who came into touch with him. His untimely death some 10 years later, after an illness of 4 days' duration, devastated the feelings of the whole neighbourhood. At that time Dr Carson's church was the only Baptist witness from Lisnagleer through to Coleraine. George McKillen came from Presbyterian farming stock in the townland of Tully, a few miles from Ballymena on the road to Larne. His first venture into whole time service was as a Belfast City Missioner at the Island St Hall in East Belfast. This hall is noted as the birthplace of the Qua Iboe Mission and from which went forth its founder S.A. Bill. Later we find McKillen graduating from the Baptist College, Dublin and taking up the pastorate in the Dungannon and Lisnagleer churches. He was called to the Tobermore church in 1921. George McKillen during the next 10 years evangelised the whole of the surrounding area. He left as his memorial new churches at Magherafelt and Coagh as well as re-establishing the old church at Carndaisy and a mission hall work at Upperlands. He had a remarkable gift of gathering young men around him and encouraging them in their new found faith in Christ. It is not surprising then that young Hugh Orr found in him a kindred spirit. Soon he was baptised in Tobermore and found himself a member of the young church in Magherafelt.

One of the aspects of McKillen's work in Tobermore was the formation of an evangelical association sponsored by the South Derry churches. From the basic support of one penny per week from the members of these churches a portable hall and later a tent were purchased as well as a horse-drawn caravan. The association also supported at times young men as evangelists. These evangelists included George and Alfie Olley, Sam Carser, Thos. McNabb and as to be expected, Hugh Orr.

It was in 1930 that Hugh Orr was appointed. He continued under the

auspices of the South Derry Association until after the home-call of Mr McKillen. As time went on and his preaching gifts developed many more demands were made upon him than the association could possibly cope with. Hugh launched out under his own flag and conducted many fruitful missions in a wider field. Sooner or later in Irish Baptist circles God's blessing on an itinerant evangelist leads only to one thing, a call to settled work as a pastor. Here there was no exception for Hugh Orr was called to the pastorate of the Kilrea church in 1935. He remained there for some nine and a half years and saw the membership of the church grow from 33 to 53 members. The continued growth of the church until the present time is a tribute to the constructive ministry which he exercised during the time he spent there.

His years in Kilrea could be said to be a period of thinking through and establishing life-long relationships. Two in particular are worth looking at. One was his marriage with a very fine young lady who became a real helpmeet and an ideal pastor's wife. The other had to do with his relationship with the Baptist Union of Ireland. The first matter was easily and quickly settled, the other took longer to resolve.

May Stitt, the future Mrs Orr, like her husband was from the Magherafelt area. She was from Coolshinney, the other side of the town from where Hugh was brought up. Having trained as a nurse she held a position in a Belfast hospital. Hugh, being of a retiring nature, was inclined to carry on his courtship as quietly as possible. He succeeded fairly well as walks up the tow path of the Lagan canal were hardly to be known in Bann-side Kilrea. Such goings on however, if at all serious, usually end up in the good old fashioned way. Sure enough on the 20th November of the year he settled in Kilrea he found himself, a very nervous young man, awaiting his bride at the front of Belfast's Templemore Hall. It was the well-known Pastor W.E. Tocher who tied the knot. The happy couple spent their honeymoon in London and Edinburgh and set up home near where the present Kilrea church building now stands. Many were to bless the day that Hugh brought his bride to Kilrea. Her experience as a nurse stood her in good stead and was a real asset to her witness to the Lord in the town and district. Again and again her professional help was sought and freely given. Her husband discovered that she soon was in demand also as an acceptable speaker. She was a little more outgoing than her husband but modest withal. Her ministry over the years to women folk well beyond the bounds of her own church and denomination will be long remembered. Mrs Orr survived her husband for some years. After his death she returned to live near his late brother's family. It was sad to see her mental powers decrease. The loving care she received from her sister-in-law at great personal sacrifice was an example for all to see.

Hugh Orr's relationship with the Baptist Union in the early days of his ministry recalls a bitter controversy over ministerial recognition in the 1930's. A scheme which to my mind was, and is, a very fair one was presented to the Baptist Union Assembly in Dublin in 1932. It was strongly opposed by some of

the younger men on the grounds that it contravened the right of a local church to have its pastor recognised by the Baptist Union without any further condition. The revolt was led by George Olley, pastor of the Newtownards church, formerly of the Magherafelt and Coagh churches who had, like Hugh Orr, started his preaching career with the South Derry Association. He was joined by Pastors Tom Bailie of Magherafelt, Samuel Jardine of Lurgan, William Wilson (assistant at Grove) and Sam Carser who had also served in Lurgan. Hugh Orr too was one of the number. As a result of this opposition the churches at Magherafelt, Kilrea, Newtownards and Lurgan withdrew from the Union while Coagh ceased to communicate. J.K. Paisley of Ballymena later supported the stance these men took. The division also affected attitudes to the College in Dublin. If Presbyterians had a target in J. Earnest Davey, Baptists could smell 'modernism' in their college. Heresy hunting in those days had almost become a cult. This tragic episode in Irish Baptist history has been chronicled elsewhere for the benefit of another generation.

It may be said that Hugh Orr's wisdom showed him the folly of such squabbling. Be that as it may, under the benign influence of Mr Harry Corbett senior, the rebel Kilrea pastor was persuaded to accept an invitation to become Home Mission Evangelist.

Hugh's farewell sermon was preached in Kilrea on 10th September 1944. He was straightway commissioned by the Union at a service in the Gt Victoria St church, Belfast. His first mission as Union evangelist began in Portadown on the 17th September. His engagement with the Union lasted for around two years, during which he had the joy of preaching in many centres across the land and of seeing not a few led to trust the Saviour. History repeated itself when after a very successful evangelistic campaign in East End church, Belfast, he received a call to become pastor of that church. He relinquished his post as evangelist and was duly inducted as pastor of East End church on the evening of Monday 13 may 1946. The church property had been damaged by German bombing during the war. This necessitated a good deal of expenditure on repairs which left the church in debt. This, together with the need for a manse, presented a daunting task for a church of 82 members and its pastor. They were however able to meet the challenge and at the same time see a time of spiritual advancement during Mr Orr's ministry. As at Kilrea, their pastor threw himself into the work body and soul. Although house-to-house visitation was not to his liking, for he was more at home in the pulpit, yet he set himself to call at every home in the vicinity and found it a most rewarding exercise.

In the year 1951 an opportunity arrived to make a visit to the U.S.A. Accompanied by Mrs Orr he set sail from Cork on the 'Washington' on 16 July. The American experience was thoroughly enjoyed. The meeting with some American friends and renewing acquaintance with quite a number who had emigrated from these shores proved a great thrill. Through their generosity he was able to travel right across the country. In California he met up with W.P. Nicholson. One can imagine how much these two had in common. Many a story

was told and incidents during the never-to-be-forgotten days of the campaigns of the 1920's recalled. The Orrs' set out for home 19th November and re-crossed the Atlantic on the 'Queen Elizabeth'. Back in Belfast the good work of looking after the flock of God and reaching out on evangelistic work was resumed and continued until 1956. The pastor's 10th anniversary was celebrated by the church in May of that year when he and his good wife were given a gold watch each. In a comparatively short time the happy relationship which existed between pastor and church was disturbed and finally came to an end by a call from the influential Gt Victoria St church in central Belfast.

On the 20th June 1957 Hugh Orr responded to the call as follows:

> "I am deeply conscious of the high honour you have done to me, and the great confidence you have expressed in me by extending to me a call to be Pastor of your church. During the last two weeks I have given the matter my most prayerful and serious consideration, and only after a great searching of my heart have I decided that God would have me accept the call".

Shortly after this Mr Orr was duly inducted to the pastorate of this historic church and congregation. Thus began a ministry which was to last almost 10 years. His unique gifts and kindly manner soon began to have a remarkable effect upon the witness of a church which already had begun to suffer the disadvantages of being in a down-town location. The down-to- earth style and the practical appeal of the new pastor's preaching drew under his ministry young people of the student population and the nursing profession. Here, like W.P. Nicholson before him, was a man who understood the Ulster temperament and could address himself to the problems of the world in which they lived and worked. He spoke the language of the people. As was said about the greatest of all preachers, the Lord Jesus, 'the common people heard him gladly'. In all this Hugh Orr never cheapened his pulpit ministry by descending to the use of 'gimmicks' or 'pulpit prattle' to gain or hold the attention of his hearers. His breadth of experience and knowledge of the Word was all that was required. When this was taken up by the Holy Spirit it resulted in a ministry which was blessed to many.

During his time in Gt Victoria St Hugh Orr was privileged to see completed two major schemes involving a large extension of the church building itself and the erection of a new suite of halls. Seating capacity in the church increased from 400 to 700 seats. The new halls provided facilities of which any church could be proud. The arduous task of leading such an expanding work took its toll of the pastor's physical resources and in 1966 Hugh Orr went into semi-retirement. His urge to preach the word, however, was unabated and in the same year he was constrained to help the comparatively young church at Rathcoole in its pulpit ministry. This was done on the understanding that he would not be expected to undertake any regular congregational visitation. Here, too, Mr Orr's preaching was greatly appreciated and blessed.

The arrangement with Rathcoole came to an end in 1969. The withdrawal of Hugh Orr from the regular ministry called forth many expressions of regret and warm tributes to blessing received under the ministry of this lovable and

gifted servant of the Lord.

It was becoming increasingly evident that the labourer's task was over. After a fairly lengthy period of declining powers this brother beloved was called into the presence of the Lord on Saturday November 10th, 1973. No doubt 'the trumpets sounded for him on the other side' as he heard the Master's own tribute "well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord".

Much of this paper was culled from a 'This is your life' programme arranged for Pastor Orr as a tribute in 'Gt Victoria St' many years ago. I am also indebted to Mr J. Law of Rathcoole; also to Pastor Joshua Thompson for the following with which I bring this record of the life and ministry of a most remarkable minister of the word to a close. At the funeral service in the Orangefield church before a crowded congregation Mr Thompson expressed the feelings of all in the following terms:

> 'Hugh Orr', he said, 'was a plain man who wasted little time on unnecessary social or ecclesiastical conventions. That is not to say he was rude or insensitive -for he was neither - his plainness was wholesome because it derived from a marked sincerity and honesty. He was direct as a preacher. His sermons were always spiced with humour, and frequently illuminated by homely illustrations and quotations from his favourite C.H. Spurgeon. They were concise, coherent and often memorable. Some of his outlines were strikingly original. One that was typical related to Samson, the Old Testament character, it had three telling points - Long hair, No hair, Short hair. Perhaps his greatest gift as a preacher was in the field of evangelism. He served the churches of our denomination in other ways - no less important. He shared in the administration of denominational affairs as a member of the Council of the Baptist Union of Ireland for many years, and particularly on the committee of the Home Mission. He fully concurred in the need for the work of the Lord to be effectively organised, and his advice and experience were invaluable assets to those of us who bear he main burden of administration. As a pastor Hugh Orr met his people on equal terms. His simplicity of nature and his enjoyment of life made him quick to respond to the demands people made upon his time and energies. He was always welcome in their homes. In the hospital and in the social life of the church people loved him just as he loved people. His delight in little children and their ready response to him opened many homes and hearts to his message. Hugh Orr was outstanding as a friend and colleague. He could differ profoundly with others on matters of importance (and he was never one to mute his views because they happened to be different), he could and did dissent with sincerity, but his whole hearted love for his brethren remained intact'.

No more fitting tribute could have been paid before this honoured servant of God was laid to rest in Roselawn Cemetery to await the glad ressurection morn.

Robert A Boggs

JAMES IRVINE (1914 - 1982)
Evangelist and Pastor

Preachers sometimes appear to come out of a mould and take on the accents or mannerisms of their peers. In this paper we are reflecting on the life of an individualist, a character of a kind who are increasingly rare. Time will not allow me to speak adequately on the life and work of James Irvine and much more may be said than I have included here.

I had the pleasure of working with Mr Irvine during his twenty-one years as pastor of the church in Newcastle, Co Down. For seventeen of them I was church secretary. His friendly disposition made him easy to work with. He never tried to do work that was not his responsibility. During those years we never crossed swords once. Of course he liked to have his own way and wanted things done the way he thought they should be done. He often said from the pulpit, "You are free to disagree with me and to believe what you like, so long as you understand that I'm right"!

HIS EARLY LIFE

James Irvine was born in Newtownards on 27 February 1914, one of a family of three having two sisters older than himself. When World War I broke out his father joined the army only a few months after baby Jim was born. This good man, who was a fervent Christian, was taken prisoner by the Germans and spent three years in a prisoner-of-war camp. As time passed and the family grew up, each went their own way. Jim had no time for God. In his teens he became a heavy drinker and lost the respect of some members of the family circle.

In his unsaved days Jim was known among his companions as something of a boxer, who fought many a round on the streets of Newtownards. He often boasted of "fighting the champion of the Ards Peninsula to a draw". Some thought the scar on his right jaw was a boxing injury, but it was not. The scar was

the result of a swelling on his cheek, which turned out to be part of a tooth, left in the gum after a recent extraction, making its exit through his cheek. On one occasion while sowing his "wild oats" Jim was hit on the head with a pick-axe. The injury required major surgery during which the surgeon grafted some skin taken from Jim's leg on to his head. He always said that when he scratched his head it was really his leg he was scratching! In later life he seriously thought that this injury had affected his powers of concentration.

HIS CONVERSION

In those early decades of the twentieth century there were many evangelistic missions held throughout Ulster, and Newtownards was the venue of an ample share of them, a number being held in the Baptist church then housed in a portable building. People were generally less mobile with no television to distract them. In the evenings, in a small provincial town, mission meetings were somewhere to go and pass the time, and so were better attended than would be the case today. The youthful Jim was often invited to missions, but seldom went.

However, during a mission conducted in the Baptist church by a popular evangelist of the day, Tom Rea, Jim was invited by several friends, the most pressing request coming from his mother. Eventually he agreed to go if his mother would buy him a new cap! Indeed, his anxious mother would have bought him a dozen caps to persuade her wayward son to come under the sound of the gospel. So one night Jim was found in the back pew of the church with his brand new, pure white cap on the seat beside him, listening as the forthright Tom Rea preached on Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God". On his return home Mrs Irvine saw her son was in great distress and immediately went to fetch Jim's cousin, James Gunning to speak to him. That night Jim was brought to faith in Christ, and, characteristically, did not hesitate to "nail his colours to the mast" and to make open confession of his new-found faith in Christ. Warden's furniture and carpet store, his place of work, was a good mission-field for the enthusiastic convert. He also joined in open-air witness which was a good preparation and opportunity for speaking in public.

Later Jim met a young lady called Elizabeth McCullough and formed a very close friendship. Elizabeth had been converted in January 1933 and was a great encouragement to Jim. She was also a member of Newtownards Baptist Church, the place where they were eventually married on 8 July 1937. They had one son, Geddis.

Jim spent much time in the evenings after work studying his Bible. His wife recalls that this study often lasted into the early hours of the morning. He related how in those days he was deeply interested in Biblical prophecy, and thought he knew all there was to know about eschatology. He was by now busily engaged in preaching at meetings in his home town and neighbourhood. He was invited to conduct a gospel mission down the Ards Peninsula. He became known for

his strong and forceful presentation of the message he loved to proclaim. Then he was invited to be missionary at the Donegal Road hall of the Belfast City Mission, a Presbyterian agency. I think it is correct to say he is the only Baptist ever invited to a City Mission charge, although several city missionaries found their way into the Irish Baptist ministry.

THE EVANGELIST

For one who held firm Baptist convictions, the Belfast City Mission did not provide adequate fulfilment, and so Jim enquired about an appointment as an evangelist with the Irish Baptist Home Mission. Early in 1945 Pastor Frank H. Forbes (then secretary of the Baptist Union of Ireland) went to hear Jim preach and the Home Mission minute book records that Mr Forbes was "favourably impressed". At a Home Mission committee meeting on 16 March 1945 the Union President, Mr H.A. Johnston, proposed that James Irvine be given a two-year appointment commencing 1 May at a salary of 260 a year plus expenses.

This was the beginning of a busy period of service. At that time missions generally lasted four weeks and five Sundays with a rest week between, and from the date of his appointment to the following February the new evangelist held missions at Kilkeel, Carginagh, Limavady, Bloomfield and Banbridge. In the summer of 1946 he was in charge of the Home Mission's open-air campaign during June, followed by missions at Dromore, Knockconny, Lisnagleer and Fivemilehill. This was part of the Home Mission's ongoing programme of evangelism through the churches. During this time, Jim was a contemporary of John McCrea another Home Mission evangelist, who was also a former city missionary. Jim's service with the Home Mission ended in 1947. There was much fruit from these missions. The late Pastor James Shields of Kilkeel always spoke in glowing terms of the mission in Kilkeel, and of the conference at its close addressed by Jim and his fellow-townsman and friend, William Mullan. His son, Geddis, recalls the long periods of absence from home and the separation from his family that this programme of evangelism involved.

HIS FIRST PASTORATE

There followed a settled ministry for this man who went straight into full-time service for the Lord without the benefit of a college training or even a high school education, and made light of suggestions that he should attend the Baptist Missionary Training School. He was called to the Church Street East church in East Belfast where he stayed for two years - a sort of apprenticeship. In those days pastors were not as well paid as they are today. James Irvine often said his shoes needed new soles before he was able to pay for them. On occasions as he went visiting, Mrs Irvine said to him, "Jim, if you are offered your tea, take it because I have nothing for the tea". The church did buy their pastor a brand

new bicycle to enable him more easily to visit the church members. His son recalls that this was a very generous gesture for those days, and the bicycle, a top of the range model, had a 3-speed gear.

Throughout his life James Irvine was a'fundamentalist', and derived his somewhat puritanical views from the Scottish evangelist, James McKendrick, who often preached in Newtownards. He often spoke appreciatively of McKendrick's influence. In some respects this showed itself in James Irvine's dress which, in those days, was dark-coloured suits, white shirts, butterfly collars, spats and even a black Homburg hat!

HIS DROMORE DAYS

James Irvine's second pastorate was in the Dromore church. He was inducted there on 9 August 1949 at a service chaired by Pastor Robert Campbell. Pastors F.H. Forbes and T.J. McNabb preached the charges to the church and pastor. Pastor Irvine's ministry was well-received in Dromore and he shared in much-needed evangelism throughout the neighbourhood in Orange halls and mission halls. There were good results and many people were brought to faith in Christ. Mr Bobby Baxter recalls that numbers of the converts were received into the fellowship of the Baptist church. Pastor Derek Baxter remembers as a boy that at times when he was ill Pastor Irvine visited him and deliberately spent time with him. A true pastor, who got close to folk, his ready wit, in and out of the pulpit, made him a favourite with young and old.

His six happy years in Dromore remained a treasured memory. During his time there the church sent him to London to share in the Billy Graham Crusade at Harringay. The experience had a considerable influence on him, impressed as he was by the remarkable response to simple gospel preaching. The scale of the Harringay Crusade, a national effort, also impressed him. While he did not agree with everything the Billy Graham team did, he was made aware of the value of the local church having a higher profile in the community. As a result he organised a 'town rally' in which his church members walked from their own neighbourhoods with members of other churches, meeting in the Market Square for an evangelistic meeting. The main march was led by a Christian accordion band from Portadown. The event aroused great local interest.

In Dromore James Irvine created a busy work schedule for himself. As well as missions he established an evening service in the village of Waringsford. This meant that on Sundays he took a morning Bible class, the worship service, a late afternoon service in Waringsford, the evening gospel service in the church, and often an after-church service in one of the numerous mission halls in the locality.

James Irvine was approached on several occasions (once while in Dromore) to stand as a nominee for the Presidency of the Baptist Union of Ireland. He tended to give the impression of being "anti-establishment" and declined these invitations. The truth was not that he was a "rebel" but rather realised his own shortcomings with regard to administration and that he did not work well within

a formal structured organisation necessitating committee work.

His native good nature and humour made him a popular figure within the town. Nevertheless, he maintained his firm attitude to what he considered to be essential doctrinal principles. This is best illustrated by an incident, which in retrospect appears somewhat trivial, but at the time was taken seriously by many. The Sunday school superintendent had arranged, of his own volition, for a friend to come dressed as Santa Claus at the end of the Sunday school social and prizegiving and give some small presents to the boys and girls. This well-meaning gesture Jim treated as an issue of grave importance for he considered that a pagan institution such as Father Christmas should not be introduced into a Christian church.

On the other hand, he believed that the local church should have a missionary outlook. This interest probably was due to the influence of his cousin, James Gunning, who spent most of his life as a missionary in Brazil. In Dromore he developed an awareness among his congregation of the need to support overseas missionary work. As a whole, under his ministry, the Dromore church grew strong and vibrant.

A WATERSHED

His third charge was the Dungannon church, to which he was inducted on 25 March 1955. He was warmly received and served for three years, although Dungannon proved to be something of a watershed for him. It was the largest church in terms of size of congregation and building he had undertaken. Somehow he was unable to create the same ethos as he had done in his two previous charges, and as he did to a considerable degree later in Newcastle.

This was also the period when he developed a close relationship with his friend William Mullan then pastor of the Lurgan church. This bond of friendship lasted until William Mullan's regrettable and untimely death. One of the successful missions he held was in the village of Moygashel, outside Dungannon. A considerable number of new members were added to the church subsequently.

It was during his Dungannon days that he made an ingenious visual aid for use in the Bible class. This was a large frame with a mechanism to allow a screen to be moved slowly downwards to reveal the various headings, points and references he was using. He would spend all day Tuesday with poster paints making the outline for the next evening. This was a labour of love involving care and a steady hand. It was always prepared in multi-colours.

He preferred the weekly prayer meeting and Bible study to be held on separate evenings, and emphasised the value of an evening dedicated to Bible study. His rigidity in this and other matters caused problems in the church. He was a great admirer of the Scottish Covenanters and the early Protestant Reformers. Like them when he believed he was right he always adhered to the adage, "Never apologise and never explain". His unshakable, and what might be considered stubborn conviction that in certain matters he was in the right and

defending truth prevented him from offering any explanation of his conduct or from making a diplomatic approach to those who dissented from his viewpoint. In the end he resigned from the church and for a time was without pastoral charge.

HIS BEST YEARS

During his brief 'out-of-pastorate' period James Irvine held a mission at Dunseverick near Bushmills. One afternoon, towards the end of the second week, four men arrived quite unexpectedly with an invitation to join them and others in the formation of a church at Newcastle of which he would be pastor. The church had not been constituted, so it was like "putting the cart before the horse". When the mission in Dunseverick ended, Pastor Irvine travelled to Newcastle at the foot of the Mourne mountains for a series of Bible studies and took the Sunday services for a few weeks. The church was formed and he accepted the invitation to be its pastor.

Many of the early experiences in Newcastle are now happy memories. Often on a Sunday night we walked through the Donard Forest, among the trees where the darkness could almost be felt, and talked about the things of God. For us who were younger they were memorable occasions. Though never noted as a young people's speaker, and, on his own admission, with no flair for taking children's meetings, he was loved by the children who accepted him as their friend. Often on a Sunday night in our home he would take our little girls on his knee, tell them a story and make fun with them, and they loved it.

A man without polish he preached in plain language, on the basis of the old saying, "Mary Ann the maid was able to understand so the mistress had no problem". While some people did not warm to his easy manner and stilted grammar, everyone knew that he said what he believed, and believed what he said. If his vowels were broad, at least everyone understood what he said, and surely being understood is the important thing!

A fine gospel preacher himself, who spoke constantly of the cross, he advised those of us who preached occasionally, "Boys, whatever you do, get to the cross". He was a man who spent more time with the Word of God than he did with books about the Word of God. Before analysing a passage, he would read it through carefully twenty times or more to become familiar with his topic. I believe his lack of formal training made him a more willing pupil of the Holy Spirit. He always preached out of a heart-felt experience. Although his sermon outlines sometimes rhymed better than they reasoned and sometimes brought a smile to the cheek or drew the scorn of inexperienced theological students, the headings and the message were remembered. The spiritual food he served went straight into the dietary system and had no need for chewing all day!

Pastor Irvine gave the infant Newcastle church the strong leadership it needed. He was the sort of person who believed in a benevolent dictatorship rather than democratic rule. He saw the pulpit ministry as his sole responsibility,

and he left the elected office-bearers to get on with other church affairs. It is true that he had a 'maverick' streak, rather in the mould of H.H. Orr and William Mullan, but, like them, his independent spirit derived from sincerely held convictions.

Just before the new church building in Newcaslte was erected, Mr Irvine was invited by David Patterson of Bangor to accompany him, William Mullan and another friend on a visit to the Holy Land. As with the Billy Graham Crusade, this trip to Palestine made a considerable emotional and spiritual impact on him. He took many photographs and on his return worked up an illustrated lecture, which he gave extensively around Northern Ireland, using the opportunities to raise a substantial sum of money for the new church building. Among Baptists of south Down he was affectionately called the 'bishop' of Newcastle for his interest in the churches at Downpatrick, Rathfriland and Warrenpoint.

His humour was legendary. At the Pastors' Conference in Bangor years ago the guest speaker, the Rev David Pawson, was asked to speak of the subject of 'existentialism'. Pastor Irvine commented to one of the College students, "I thought this existentialism was something added to the manse". His timing was immaculate. On occasions he eulogised the economic and historic achievements of his home town, and went on to tell of the excellent Baptist preachers Newtownards had produced -"Pastor Willie Wilson comes from Newtownards and he is a good preacher. Pastor Willie Mullan comes from Newtownards, and he is a good preacher. And I come from Newtownards". He always left that last line hanging in the air with a naive expression on his face knowing full well that the inference would not be missed by his audience.

On the other hand he held serious and strong convictions with a faith grounded in fundamentalist views and doctrines. The depth and sincerity of that faith is best illustrated by his comments when his doctors advised him that he had advanced terminal cancer. His immediate reaction to this news was that it gave him the opportunity to practise what he had preached over the years, and this he did. His deep faith and wry humour never deserted him. For instance, just prior to Jim's death, another patient was brought into his ward. One evening as Mrs Irvine was leaving, the newcomer said, in what was intended to be a very low voice but was really a stage whisper, that if he recovered sufficiently he would like to be able to attend the Pastor's funeral. Jim overheard the remark and suggested that if the man would tell him a suitable time he would try to arrange it! He did arrange the details of his own funeral with his son, and selected the hymn 'I am Redeemed', a special favourite of the Newcastle church, making it clear that he wanted it sung, not as a funeral dirge, but in the usual joyful manner.

SOME REMINISCENCES

Some people clashed with his strong character and determined ideas, especially his insistence that church and deacons' meetings should be few, short and, if possible, without comment, and his tendency to interrupt anyone who

prayed overlong in the public prayer meetings. At the same time he had the knack of persuading people to get together and resolve their differences.

Pastor Irvine preached some sermons more than once and defended the practice, 'If sermons are not worth preaching twice they are not worth preaching once'. An American visitor to the pastors' annual conference was introduced to Mr Irvine and remarked in Principal Oakley's presence that he had not yet been to the Irish Baptist College, which prompted the jovial pastor to comment, 'The Lord had been good to you, brother'. Once asked by the deacons of another church if he would let his name go forward for a call, he answered, 'Don't send me any call. I know when I'm well off. I won't be leaving Newcastle'. An office-bearer's wife once attended a mission service instead of the ladies' meeting in the church, and was spotted by Mr Irvine who was also there. He was quick to tell her that she ought to have been at the ladies' meeting. He and Mrs Irvine visited the USA and Canada, and he returned wearing some 'flashy' clothes, proof that he had been to the New World. He thought the American habit of going out for breakfast was just the greatest thing. 'The steaks were so big', he said, 'you did not know whether to eat them or milk them'. If the Bible study numbers fell off he would announce from the pulpit that if the attendance did not improve the next Wednesday he would close the Bible study meeting.

THE LAST DAYS

After his retirement in 1980 Mr Irvine engaged in supply preaching, and had a gospel mission in the Orkney Islands, where the relaxed atmosphere suited him. He frequently preached in the Tandragee church and it was there he delivered his last sermon on 28 November 1982.

I visited him several times in hospital. We always prayed together. On one of these occasions he remarked, 'The man in that bed across the ward is a priest so I'm in good company. I also had a visit from a canon in the Church of Ireland who chatted for a short time, then tapped me on the forehead and said, "God bless Jim and make him better", and left'. During the days of his final illness he left an example for us all to emulate. He did not want visitors with long faces. He did not want to talk about himself, but the Saviour whom he loved. He embodied the sentiment of John Wesley:

> 'Let us then with joy remove to the family above On the wings of angels fly; show how true believers die'.

He fought a good fight, finished the course and kept the faith. His son Geddis said of him, 'He was a pleasure to have as a friend, and most certainly a privilege to have as a father'. His beloved wife coped with the illness and death of her husband in a Christlike way, and is a great strength and comfort to those who visit her.*

S N HAMILTON

(*Mrs Irvine died suddenly on 12 May 1988, two days after this paper was read to the Society's annual meeting. Ed)

ANABAPTISM IN ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH I (1558-1603)

THE EARLIER HISTORY: ANABAPTISM IN ENGLAND BEFORE 1558

The word 'Anabaptist' ('rebaptizer') first occurs in England in references to the radical movement on the Continent. William Barlow, in the pamphlet Lutheran Factions (1531), described the Continental Anabaptist movement as 'the third faction' of the Reformation, and Thomas More, in his Confutation of Tyndale's Answer (1533), accused William Tyndale, who had by then been working on the Continent for several years, of becoming party to 'those abominable heresies ... the Anabaptists have added'.

By the mid-1530s the English authorities were also becoming aware of the presence of Anabaptists in England. The persecution of radicals on the continent caused many of them to think of England as a safe haven. Comparatively speaking this was so; but Henry VIII, even after his break with Rome, was far from being inclined to tolerate Anabaptist (or even Lutheran, Zwinglian or Calvinist) views in his realm. In May 1535, twenty-five Dutch Anabaptists were arrested and tried at St Paul's; fourteen were burned at the stake. There were other executions of Anabaptists during Henry's reign (and indeed executions of people whose views were much less radical), but the movement by no means died out.

That Anabaptism did not die out in England is due not only to the influx of foreign radicals but also to the small number of native English (men and women) who embraced Anabaptist views. To a certain extent the ground in England was prepared by the vestiges of Lollardy which survived from the late fourteenth century. The extent to which a distinctive Lollard tradition survived into the sixteenth century is a matter of some dispute, as is the relationship between that tradition and the birth of the English Reformation. The famous dictum that 'new Anabaptist was but old Lollard writ Dutch' contains a measure of truth, but it indicates the significant influence of Continental (chiefly Dutch) radicalism rather than the strength of the Lollard tradition in and of itself.

Men who held less radical views than the Anabaptists did were liable to be condemned as heretics during Henry's reign, because Henry was opposed to any

deviation on such matters as the Eucharist. For example, Robert Barnes, always a fierce opponent of Anabaptism, perished at the stake in 1540 because of his Protestant views. During the reign of Edward VI (1547-53), England adopted a much more reformed position because the Protectors of the realm during Edward's minority, and indeed the boy-king himself, favoured Protestantism as Henry had not. Anabaptism continued to be regarded as an evil influence, but on the whole the Edwardian authorities tried to deal with the Anabaptists positively by means of argumentation, rather than by outright suppression. The measures used included the translation into English of several Swiss treatises against Anabaptism. The mild nature of the official displeasure (resulting in only a very few executions) meant that during Edward's reign English Anabaptism emerged from its hitherto rather secret existence and into the light of day. The principal, distinctive views held by Anabaptist's in England - as far as these can be ascertained - were believers' baptism, the freedom of the will, the unpardonable nature of deliberate sin after conversion, and the view that Christ did not receive his humanity from Mary's body - his flesh was the result of a special creation which occurred inside Mary's body (the 'Melchiorite' or 'Hofmanite' view, named after its classic exponent Melchoir Hofman). During Edward's reign an influential leader of English Anabaptism was Henry Hast of Kent, leader of a group which appears to have separated itself formally from the Church of England. But except for Hast's group, English Anabaptism up to and during Edward's reign appears to have been mainly non-separatist in character. From the evidence available it seems not to have become a movement of gathered churches comparable to the Swiss Brethren or the Mennonites. That it did not become separatist is possibly due to the precedent set by Lollardy, which likewise had not tried to set up a rival church structure, or to the 'spiritualistic' strain among the Anabaptists who came to England, in other words, the tendency to play down 'externals' such as church organization and membership.

The history of Anabaptism during the reign of Mary Tudor (1553-8) is of a piece with the fate suffered generally by opponents of Catholicism. It is possible that a high proportion of the Marian martyrs were of Anabaptist persuasion, especially the martyrs whom John Foxe describes as 'lay ministers', but records do not exist to enable us to examine this point more precisely.

THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

With the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 there begins a new chapter in the history of the English Reformation. The Act of Supremacy of 1559 declared the queen to be 'Supreme Govenor of the Church of England' (not, as in Henry's case, Head'), and papal authority over the English Church was once more repudiated. In the same year the Act of Uniformity outlawed the Catholic Mass and made the Book of common Prayer, first published in Edward's reign, the official form of worship. In September 1559 the well-known Protestant

churchman, Matthew Parker, who had managed to survive Mary's reign, became Archbishop of Canterbury. Since the Marian bishops refused to recognize Elizabeth's supremacy they were removed from office and their places were taken by Protestants such as John Jewel who became bishop of Salisbury. For the most part, the nation shed few tears over the passing of Mary and her Catholicism.

As the deposed Catholic churchmen discovered, Elizabeth's government was relatively lenient towards religious dissenters of one kind or another. At no time, however, did Elizabeth plan to indulge in the experiment of religious toleration - a very rare concept in the sixteenth century. The contemporary historian William Camden wrote that Elizabeth decided 'to suffer and tolerate but one and the self-same religion through the whole realm, for fear that diversity of religion should kindle seditions betwixt and among the people of England'. Roman Catholicism, Puritanism, Separatism and Anabaptism were all to feel the heavy hand of the authorities.

Shortly after his consecration as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1559 Matthew Parker informed Henry Bullinger that England was overrun with Anabaptists and other heretics. In November 1560, the new bishop of Salisbury, John Jewel, said in a letter to Peter Martyr Vermigli:

> 'We found at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth a large and inauspicious crop of Arians, Anabaptists and other pests, which I do not know how, but as mushrooms spring up in the night and in darkness, so these sprang up in that darkness and unhappy night of the Marian times'.

Also in 1560, the queen, in a reinforcement of the Act of Uniformity, decreed that all Anabaptists must conform to the established Church or else leave the country, on pain of imprisonment and confiscation of goods; she singled out 'the Anabaptists and such heretics, which had flocked to the coast towns of England from the parts beyond the seas, under the colour of shunning persecution'. Parker, Jewel and the queen herself were undoubtedly exaggerating the size of the problem. However, an ecclesiastical commission was set up to register and bring to trial all those suspected of Anabaptist doctrines. The case of Adrian van Haemstede illustrated the fact that the authorities were prepared to take action against Anabaptists and their sympathisers. Van Haemstede, a minister of London's Dutch congregation, was asked by the local Anabaptists to petition the bishop, Edmund Grindal, to allow them to meet as a separate body. He supported their case, recognizing 'Anabaptists as his brethren and as weak members of Christ' to whom eternal life was granted. For his support of the Anabaptists van Haemstede was excommunicated by bishop Grindal in 1562 and banished from England.

However, the ecclesiastical commission was on the whole slow in proceeding against Anabaptism. Anabaptists continued to make their way to England, especially after that arch-enemy of all heretics, the Duke of Alva, had seized control of the Netherlands. The English authorities became aware of the existence of increasing numbers of foreign conventicles meeting in English soil, and they were even more alarmed when they discovered that some native

English men and women were being influenced by radical views. There is, however, no evidence that native English Anabaptists formed a sizable percentage of the total number or radicals. The English who deviated from the official line on religion in Elizabeth's time were for the most part either Roman Catholics ('recusants') or else (to use more conventional labels) either Puritans or Separatists.

The most famous incident involving Anabaptism on English soil occurred in 1575. On Easter Day, 3 April 1575, a group of about twenty-five Dutch Anabaptists was discovered by a constable of the watch in a house near Aldgate in London. They had gathered in the house for worship and prayer, and one presumes that this was a regular gathering and that the constable's suspicions had been aroused by the fact of so many foreigners coming together on a Sunday. Two of the group escaped; the others were arrested and brought before the bishop of London, Edwin Sandys. Their interrogation centred on four points: 1) whether Christ had received his flesh and blood from Mary; 2) whether infants should be baptized; 3) whether a Christian might also be a 'magistrate' (a general term meaning government official or even ruler); and 4) whether a Christian should swear an oath. The Anabaptists were put on trial for heresy. Five men recanted and the other Anabaptists, men and women, were condemned as heretics. Theoretically this still meant under English law that they could be burnt, although no one had been burnt as a heretic in England since the end of Mary's reign. One of the condemned women recanted; the other women and a boy were deported to the Netherlands. This left five men still liable to be burned. One died in Newgate prison, and the authorities decided to burn only two of those remaining.

There was a considerable amount of opposition to the idea of burning heretics, because burning had become so closely associated with Papist tyranny. One of those who pleaded strongly for mercy was John Foxe, whose Acts and Monuments of these latter and perilous days touching matters of the Church (now universally known as The Book of Martyrs) first appeared in 1563. Foxe wrote to Elizabeth that, though he hated Anabaptist doctrines, he believed that those found guilty of them should be punished by imprisonment, flogging or banishment, but not by burning, which, he said, 'belongs more to the example of Rome than to the spirit of the Gospel'. However, the pleas by Foxe and others fell on deaf ears, and the queen signed the death warrants of Hendrick Terwoort and Jan Pieters (also called Jan Wagemaker). The two surviving members of the Aldgate group spent some time in prison and were eventually released. Nothing more is known about what became of them.

The Aldgate group is known to have made at least one English convert, a man known only by his initials 'S.B.', who was involved in a controversy with a Puritan, William White, when the two of them were in Newgate prison. S.B. was a carpenter and apparently proud of the fact that he 'had not been at university to study Aristotle's divinity'. In so far as it made inroads among the native English, Anabaptism would have found that its supporters came from among the

poorer artisan groups, mainly in south-east England.

Mention should also be made of a small group known as the Familists or Family of Love. This group practised a type of religion first propounded by Hendrik Niclaes (Henry Nicholas), the son of a Munster merchant. Originally a Catholic, Niclaes came to embrace and to teach views not unlike those of the Quakers (a radical religious movement which rose in the next century).

It is possible that he visited England towards the end of Edward's reign. Be that as it may, Familism acquired a significant following in England, although as Watts says, 'the extent to which the Family of Love took root in England is difficult to judge for it was never a Separatist sect but rather a spiritual movement which was prepared to conform to established churches, whether Roman or Anglican'.

ANABAPTISTS AND ENGLISH DISSENT

The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion left many people profoundly dissatisfied. Many were scandalized by the 'vestiges of popery' which they felt had been retained in the English Church. The Prayer Book which became law in 1559 prescribed ceremonies and practices which many felt to be popish and unscriptural, such as the sign of the cross at baptism, kneeling to receive communion, the use of the ring in the marriage service. Worst of all, ministers of the Church were compelled to wear 'priestly garments'. Michael Watts writes,

> 'If, to the twentieth century reader, conscientious Protestant objections to clerical vestments seem trivial, one should try to imagine the feelings of a German Jew, returning to Germany after the defeat of the Nazis only to find the police dressed in the uniforms of the S.S.'

The 'conscientious objectors', who were the originators of the Puritan movement, included a number of clergymen and also lay people of influence. They took exception not only to such matters as vestments but also to the government of the Church of England itself. Thomas Cartwright, one of the best-known Elizabethan Puritans, provoked a fierce controversy in 1570 by a series of lectures in Cambridge on the Acts of the Apostles. The implications of Cartwright's lectures were clear: episcopacy was unscriptural, the offices of bishop and archbishop should be abolished in favour of the parity of ministers, and ministers should be chosen by their congregations. Cartwright advocated a presbyterian form of church government, but what must be stressed is that he wanted a reforming of the national Church and not the separation of Puritans to form a dissenting 'presbyterian' body. As much as any episcopalian, Cartwright believed in a 'one-church state'; the national Church should embrace the whole people, and there could be no toleration of religious splinter groups.

The original Puritans, then, were those members of the established Church who wanted to complete the reformation of the Church. In addition, they wanted to see both clergy and laity better educated in the doctrines of the faith. The 1560s and 1570s saw the growing popularity of meetings known as 'prophesyings' - unofficial conferences in which the clergy of a particular area would gather for the study and exposition of Scripture. These conferences were

often open to the public; they provided what Collinson calls 'extra- mural education' for the clergy and at the same time stimulated theological awareness among the laity.

Puritan principles and practices met with sharp official reaction. The queen herself and many of the Church's bishops saw Puritanism as a highly dangerous and subversive element. The apparent impossibility of any official reform of the English Church led some men to conclude that they must repudiate the established Church altogether; they should separate themselves from the ungodly episcopal body and make a new beginning. Foremost among these Elizabethan 'Separatists' were Robert Browne (who later made a formal submission to the established Church), John Greenwood, Henry Barrow and John Penry.

The purpose of this survey of the main trends in Elizabethan Protestantism - 'establishment', Puritan and Separatist - is to make the point that English dissent developed a life of its own; its roots lay in dissatisfaction with the Elizabethan religious settlement, rather than in deliberate imitation of Continental radicalism. English Anabaptism became a matter of a few isolated and inarticulate individuals existing on the fringes of mainly foreign groups, or the few who combined adherence to the established Church with a clandestine attachment to radical religion, as the 'Familists' appear to have done. By far the most important opposition to the established Church came from the (mainly native) Puritan or Separatist traditions, and even the emergence of the English Baptist movement in the early years of James I's reign represents the taking of dissenting principles to a logical conclusion rather than the transplanting of an offshoot of Continental Anabaptism to English soil.

From the outset Puritans and Separatists found themselves labelled 'Anabaptists'. It was in a sense an obvious term of abuse, for 'Anabaptists' had long been synonymous with subversion or any deviation from the official religious line (especially since the disastrous Munster episode of 1534-5). It became used with little regard for its content or for the actual views of those who were being labelled 'Anabaptist' (in the manner of many labels, religious and secular, e.g. 'liberal', 'ecumenical', 'Barthian', 'fundamentalist', 'communist', 'fascist', which very often have connotations rather than content as far as the user is concerned). But Puritans and Separatists regarded the Anabaptists as being in error on many points, and they dissociated themselves from them in the strongest terms. Radical views on Christology (particularly the Melchiorite/Hofmannite doctrine of the 'heavenly flesh' of Christ), on baptism, on the relationship between Church and State, on the sin against the Holy Spirit, on the ministry, and on various other points were regarded with considerable hostility by many Puritans and Separatists as much as by the established Church. Furthermore, although there were obvious theological and physical links between the first English Baptists and the Dutch Anabaptists, those links were not the main force which brought the English Baptist movement into being. The English Baptist movement emerged out of a strong Separatist tradition within

which certain men came to conclusions on the subject of baptism which were similar to, but not dependent on, those of the Anabaptists.

The question of baptism had been discussed among English Separatists for some time before John Smyth, Thomas Helwys and the other members of their exiled Separatist congregation in Amsterdam came to the conclusion that infant baptism was incompatible with their understanding of the nature of the Church. Other individuals within the Separatist tradition had questioned the validity of infant baptism, but on the whole they had shirked the issue for fear of becoming identified with 'Anabaptism'. Such considerations did not deter John Smyth, and in 1609 he baptized himself, Thomas Helwys, and the other members of their Amsterdam congregation. Thus emerged the first English Baptist church, though not on English soil. Smyth, who was the driving force behind this transfiguration of a Separatist congregation into a Baptist one, was brought to his conclusions about baptism through a relentless desire to regulate his church according to the New Testament model. Certainly he was aware of the Anabaptist tradition before he had first-hand contact with the Mennonites in Holland, but the fact is that Smyth came to the same conclusions about baptism as the Anabaptists did, but without being influenced by them towards those conclusions.

CONCLUSION

Elizabethan Anabaptism never became a serious competitor as a religious movement. The persecution of Anabaptists was less severe than in many other parts of Europe, but Anabaptism could not thrive because it remained a foreign influence which failed to capture the hearts and minds of many native English, and it could not compete with the home-grown alternatives to the established Church. English men and women who became dissatisfied with the Settlement of Religion established by Elizabeth and upheld by her successors gravitated mainly towards one of the (native) Puritan or Separatist traditions, which would eventually crystallize into Presbyterian, Congregational or Baptist Churches.

Maurice Dowling

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