

H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
BRITISH CHURCHES OF CHRIST

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE BACKGROUND

## THE BACKGROUND.

The first congregations of the body known as "Churches of Christ" came into existence in Great Britain and Ireland early in the nineteenth century. At the same time similar congregations were being formed in America, where they have become best known by the term "Disciples of Christ". The origins and the subsequent history of the British and American groups have a good deal in common, and yet show a considerable degree of diversity. The American "Disciples" (who have developed into the largest Christian denomination claiming American origin) have had numerous historians; this is the first attempt to write the British history. There will of necessity be references to the American movement, but only in so far as is required to shed light on the development in Britain.

The earliest congregations in Britain sprang up, without knowledge of each other, in various parts of Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales; nor did they know, for more than twenty years, of the similar churches in America. This suggests that the times must have been ripe for such a religious movement. This is borne out by a study of the religious and philosophical thought of the centuries after the Protestant Reformation; and especially of the ramifications of Presbyterianism and of the origin and development of Independency in Scotland, and of the influence thereof in other parts of the British Isles and in North America, during the eighteenth century.

On both sides of the Atlantic the pioneers were

inspired by the desire to achieve Christian re-union on the basis of a return to New Testament principles of organisation and worship. They were distressed by the increasing number of Protestant sects and by the spirit of intolerance generally shown by one sect to another. They believed that Christian re-union was possible if each sect would abandon its written creed and agree to accept as binding on all Christians only those essentials which were clearly taught or implied in the New Testament, allowing individuals liberty of opinion in non-essentials.

They were not the first to desire re-union. The Roman Catholic Church had always been willing to receive back into her fold those Protestants who would recant and conform to her authority. The Council of Trent was planned and called with a view to re-uniting all factions. Calvin, Melanchthon, Cranmer, and others of the great Reformers made earnest efforts to find a basis for Protestant union. The Hampton Court Conference was an attempt to bring together the English Episcopalians and Puritans. Authors, such as Richard Baxter and Edward Stillingfleet (afterwards Bishop of Worcester), pleaded the necessity of a united church.

Neither were the "Disciples" the first to plead for the restoration of New Testament Christianity. The Waldensians, Wyclif and Hus all took up this position. Chillingworth's famous book, "The Religion of Protestants a safe way to Salvation"(1637), argued that the Bible was the sole authority in the matter of salvation; and his

conclusion, "The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants", represented truly the claim of most of the Protestant bodies. Calvin, for instance, frequently and forcefully asserted the absolute authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice. Most of the Protestant divisions were due to conviction on the part of those seceding that they were thereby conforming more closely to the instruction of the Scriptures.

Nor was the idea of demanding only a minimum of common belief within a united church a new conception. Stillingfleet, in his "Irenicum"(1659), had stated the position thus: "For the Church to require more than Christ Himself did, or make the conditions of her communion more than our Saviour did of discipleship, is wholly unwarranted." And Rupertus Meldinius, in these terse words, had stated the principle: "In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things charity."

What were the factors, then, which caused small groups in different parts of Britain and North America to attempt to put into practice in the nineteenth century principles which had been already enunciated, though not extensively practised, several centuries earlier? And why should the nineteenth century effort have survived, whereas sporadic efforts on similar lines in various parts of Europe in the previous centuries had not survived? And why was the new movement so successful numerically in America (now having a membership of nearly two million) and so slow in growth in Britain (with a membership still under twenty thousand)?

## I. THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND.

The Church of the Middle Ages was a united church, but one without individual liberty. It was able to exhibit the values of solidarity and of the close union of church and state, but it also showed the limitations of a unity without liberty. The guiding ideas in the Protestant Reformation, as expressed by Luther, were justification by faith, freedom of conscience, and the right to read the Scriptures and to be guided by them without overhead authority.

The whole trend of modern thought has been towards the enhancement of the dignity of the individual. Philosophy from Descartes to Hume has had this for its outcome, if not for its conscious aim. The sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries developed the conception of individual rights and liberties, and gave that conception some embodiment in social structures. In the nineteenth century the religious movement we are studying seriously faced the question: "How can we be united and still be free?"

John Locke (1632-1704), towards the end of the seventeenth century, produced in rapid succession his three Letters on Toleration, two Treatises on Government, Thoughts on Education, the Reasonableness of Christianity, and the Essay on Human Understanding. In the Letters on Toleration he vindicated man's right to religious freedom

on the ground that it is absurd to force all men dogmatically to adopt one particular belief, when the foundations of our knowledge of the things which theology pretends to teach are so unsubstantial. In his Treatises on Government he similarly defended the freedom of the citizen in the state on the basis of expedience or utility, in opposition to the unreasoning faith which rests on mere blind tradition, and expresses itself in the theory of a divine right of kings. It was the writings of Locke which, a century later, were to have a great influence on the pioneers of the new movement for Christian union.

Locke's genius gave a new direction to the current of thought. His inquiry into the origin of knowledge gradually undermined the Rationalism of Descartes and Leibnitz. He found the origin of knowledge to be wholly empirical. Experience is the source of all we know; the innate and universal ideas of reason, on which more or less consciously the Rationalists had relied, have no existence. But if this is true then, sooner or later, an absolute science must follow in the steps of dogmatic religion; one is as little to be demonstrated as the other. The result is Scepticism, and Hume reached this point. Not only he, but all the French sceptics, and the whole philosophy of the "Enlightenment" in England, France and Germany, rested on Locke's limitation of human knowledge to the materials supplied by the physical sensations of the individual man. In the Enlightenment the so-called natural religion

of Deism took the place of revealed religion, which at least had something to say to the emotional nature of man. God was pushed farther and farther into the distance, as the mere starter of the universal machine, to be pushed out finally altogether.

Every century of course has its complexities, and these main streams of thought do not account for all that is significant in the eighteenth century. Not only were there rationalists such as John Toland, the deist, and Samuel Clarke and William Paley, who opposed deism; but there were also mystics of the type of William Whiston and William Law. Although the century was under the domination of empiricists like Locke and Hume, it also produced a transcendental philosophy of high order - that of Joseph Butler, in some ways superior to its continental counterpart worked out by Immanuel Kant; a century which had itself no moral vigour, but practised an easy-going complaisance, produced in Butler and Kant two of the greatest moral philosophers. It also saw the beginnings of Biblical criticism of a thorough-going historical kind, though in its deistic tendencies it held itself aloof from history. This work was done by the Roman priest Jean Astruc, the first scholar to make an analysis of the sources of the Pentateuch; by Robert Lowth, and by Johann Gottfried Herder, who began the study of Hebrew poetry.

Moreover, the age which exalted reason above either experience or dogmatic pronouncements, and in which natural theology wholly displaced revealed theology, saw the rise of the most thorough-going reduction of religion to the content of experience that has ever appeared - the Methodist Revival; and in the end of the century there appeared the resurgence of the most creed-bound system of revealed theology which has ever held sway over men's minds; especially did this manifest itself in New England amongst Reformed (Presbyterian) and Calvinistic Baptist Churches.

We have to take into account also the Romantic Revival which appeared at the close of the century. It manifested itself in one form in the work of Rousseau; he insisted on the unity of self (in opposition to the Lockian psychology, which makes man's life a mere play of ideas), and this essential and very inmost man is - not intellect, but - feeling. In France the negative side of his influence predominated, and had its issue in the Revolution. When this political experiment had proved the inefficiency and the danger of a régime of unorganised individualism the time was ripe for a modern reconstruction of both civil and religious society.

In another form the Romantic Revival appeared in the work of Goethe in Germany and in the poetry of Burns, Blake and Goldsmith as forerunners of a new style

and a new theme. They were the prophets who gave birth to Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Scott and Byron.

There was also a conservative reaction to the sceptical school in the Scottish "common sense" philosophy, founded by Thomas Reid, which was, at the end of the eighteenth century, the only current British philosophy which gave hearty support to orthodox Christian faith. The writings of Reid, Beattie and Dugald Stewart were well known and acceptable to such pioneers as Thomas and Alexander Campbell.<sup>1</sup>

## II. THE RISE OF REFORMATION MOVEMENTS.

This section will deal chiefly with Movements in Scotland in the eighteenth century, as it is to that country mainly that the "Churches of Christ" owe their origin.

1. In preparing the foregoing the following works have been consulted:-

- |            |  |            |
|------------|--|------------|
| Garrison's | "Religion follows the Frontier"          | pp. 1-48   |
| Ainslie's  | "The Message of the Disciples of Christ" | pp. 53-90  |
| Robinson's | "What Churches of Christ Stand For"      | pp. 11-15  |
| Rogers'    | "A Student's History of Philosophy"      | pp.251-439 |
| Creed and  | Boys Smith's                             |            |
|            | "Religious Thought in the 18th Century"  |            |
| Butler's   | "Analogy of Religion"                    |            |
| Paley's    | "Evidences of Christianity"              |            |
| Law's      | "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life" |            |
| Locke's    | "Letters on Toleration"                  |            |
| "          | "Treatises on Government"                |            |
| "          | "Thoughts on Education"                  |            |
| "          | "The Reasonableness of Christianity"     |            |
| "          | "Essay on Human Understanding"           |            |
| Hume's     | "Treatise of Human Nature"               |            |
| Rousseau's | "Emile"                                  |            |

After the Scottish Reformation in the sixteenth century the rival claims of Episcopal and Presbyterian politics within the Church of Scotland alternated in their fortunes until the Revolution of 1688 brought about the settlement of Presbyterianism as the form of church government. For a generation thereafter a decreasing minority of Episcopal clergy retained their parishes, vacancies being filled by men of the Presbyterian stamp.<sup>1</sup> The Episcopal Church has ever since been a Dissenting Church in Scotland.

The Union of the English and Scottish Parliaments in 1707 led to many changes. Repressed during the long period of religious and political turmoil the secular side of Scotland began to assert itself. In the Church the reaction took the shape of a movement in favour of English deism, which seemed to many of the clergy to present a more liberal resting-place for the mind than the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession of Faith.<sup>2</sup> For a time theology was left in the background, and the leading minds devoted their efforts to literature, philosophy, political economy, industry and commerce. The ecclesiastical polity of a Church party, which took for its theological fundamentals not Redemption and Regeneration but Culture and Conduct, was naturally saturated with Secularism.<sup>3</sup> This party, which rapidly attained a

1. Cunningham's "Church History of Scotland". Vol.II. pp.196-197.
2. Macpherson's "Battles for Spiritual Independence". p.135.
3. Ibid.pp.139-140.

majority amongst the Scottish clergy, became known as the Moderates. Opposed to them were the Evangelicals, who still held by the old Reforming and Covenanting ideals of the Church.

A. THE SECESSIONS. The bulk of the people still remained Evangelical in their outlook. In 1712 their right to call their own ministers was removed by the Union Parliament, which set aside the Act of Security and restored Patronage. For about twenty years Patrons and Presbyteries were careful to appoint ministers who were acceptable to the people; but in 1731 the General Assembly passed an Act declaring that where the appointment of a vacancy devolved upon a Presbytery the election should lie with "the heritors, being Protestants, and the elders". This was regarded by the Evangelicals as "a voluntary surrender by the Church of rights which she had hitherto claimed"<sup>1</sup>. Ebenezer Erskine and three other leaders of the Evangelicals denounced the Act so vehemently that they were expelled from the ministry of the Church in 1732. The following year they took the further step of constituting themselves into an Associated Presbytery, and thus was founded the Secession Church.

This revolt of conservatism gained much support from the people. The Seceders rapidly increased in number. An overture laid before the Church of Scotland General

1. Macpherson's "Battles for Spiritual Independence" p.147.

Assembly in 1765 declared that the schism in the Church was growing; that there were now in the country 120 meeting-houses, to which a hundred thousand persons (formerly belonging to the Established Church) resorted; and that dissent was taking the deepest root in the largest towns.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the century the four congregations of 1733<sup>2</sup> had increased to 200.

Theologically, the Secession, a counter-Reformation of Calvinism, vigorously reaffirmed the doctrine of Predestination as it had been interpreted by the English Antinomians. An old book, "The Marrow of Modern Divinity", which ably discussed the points at issue in the controversy, was adopted and widely circulated by the Seceders. This work, which had been written in 1646 by Edward Fisher of the University of Oxford, was resurrected by Thomas Boston and republished in 1718. In 1720 Boston published a work of his own, "The Fourfold State". The whole theology of the Seceders was cast in the mould of the Dispensations as representing the various stages of Salvation which God has vouchsafed to men. The two books were widely read by the Seceders, both clergy and laity.<sup>3</sup> As will be shown later, Alexander Campbell was familiar with them, and came under their influence.

The history of the Seceders was somewhat dimmed

1. Cunningham. Vol.II. p.370.
2. Ibid. p.414.
3. Kellems' "The Theology of Alexander Campbell". p.30.

by the "Breach" in 1749 (into Burghers and anti-Burghers) on the question of burgesses taking an oath; and the further cleavage of both parties, in 1799, (into Auld Lights and New Lights) on a dispute about making the Solemn League and Covenant a term of communion. The two groups of New Lights came together in 1820 as the United Secession Church; and the two groups of Auld Lights coalesced in 1842 as the Original Secession Church.

Thomas Campbell, one of the main pioneers of the American Disciples, was an anti-Burgher Auld Licht minister in Ulster for nearly twenty years, and a few years before his departure (in 1807) for America he had made an unsuccessful attempt to unite the Burghers and anti-Burghers. The Irish Provincial Synods were willing, but the proposal was unwelcome in Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

B. THE RELIEF CHURCH. The vexed question of Patronage led to the founding of a second Dissenting Church, the Relief Church. Thomas Gillespie, minister of Carnock Parish, near Dunfermline, was deposed from his office in 1751 for refusing to carry out the instructions of the General Assembly to assist in inducting a new minister at Inverkeithing, who had been 'presented' by the patron, but whom the congregation resented. He preached in the fields for some time, until a new building was erected for him in Dunfermline. In 1757 the people of

1. Richardson's "Memoirs of Alexander Campbell". pp.56-58.

Jedburgh, not gaining the man of their choice as the new parish minister, built a church for themselves, and their nominee, Thomas Boston (son of the author of "The Four-fold State"), settled among them. Similarly Thomas Collier became Dissenting Minister at Colinsburgh, and in 1761 the three churches formed the Presbytery of Relief.

Unlike the Church of Scotland, which had become so intolerant, and the Secession Church, which kept strictly aloof from the parent body, the members of the Relief Presbytery from the very first cherished catholic ideas of Christian communion. They "revived a truth that was ready to die, when they taught that, notwithstanding the multiplicity of sects, there was but one God and Father of all. The communion-table, said they, is spread, not for the Burgher or the Anti-Burgher, not for the Independent or the Episcopalian, not for the Churchman or the Dissenter, but simply for the Christian".<sup>1</sup>

In twelve years the Relief Presbytery of three congregations with three ministers had increased to a synod of nineteen congregations with fourteen ministers. In process of time the majority of the Seceders came to be of one mind with their Relief brethren, leading to the formation in 1847 of the United Presbyterian Church, a union between the United Secession Church and the Relief Church.

1. Cunningham. Vol.II. p.377.

C. THE GLASITES OR SANDEMANIANS. Of fundamental importance to our study is the history of the Glasites, another dissenting body, whose origin dates back to 1730, when the minister of Tealing, John Glas, was deposed from the ministry of the Church of Scotland. By 1734 congregations following his leadership were formed in Dundee, Perth and Edinburgh. They adopted the congregational form of church government, and were the first Independents in Scotland (if we exclude the short period of Cromwell's power).

The Glasites never became a popular movement. "Even in their palmyest days it is questionable if the total number of churches ever reached forty, or the aggregate membership exceeded one thousand. Yet this numerically insignificant body at one time caused no little stir in the religious world and exercised an influence out of all proportion to its size. During the greater part of the eighteenth century, and for a few decades later, the writings of Glas and his colleagues were widely read...Many who never joined the membership imbibed some of the Glasite Tenets which they introduced into their own religious groups."<sup>1</sup>

All Glas's teaching was based on the assumption "that the Scriptures of the Old Testament as Christ and His apostles received them from the Jews, and gave them

1. Dr. J.T. Hornsby. Ph.D. Thesis on John Glas.

to Christians, with the Scriptures of the New Testament, as we have them handed down to us, contain the complete revelation of the whole counsel of God, and are the perfect rule of the Christian religion; which is still to be found pure and entire in these."<sup>1</sup> While he admitted that it might sometimes be useful for a church, or many churches, to publish their faith to the world and indicate their interpretation of the Word of God in opposition to heresy and error, Glas denied to formal creeds and confessions any authoritative value.<sup>2</sup>

Glas's doctrine of the New Testament Ministry was significant. He had made a careful study of the development during the first three Christian centuries, and traced the steps whereby the simple ministry of the New Testament churches gave place to a clerical caste deriving its authority from a monarchical Episcopate.<sup>3</sup> He wished to restore within his societies the Scriptural ministry which, though unprofessional, was valid and authoritative, resting solely upon the Word of God. He made a distinction between the extraordinary officers (Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists) and the ordinary officers (Elders and Deacons, the latter including the deaconesses or ministering widows). The extraordinary officers he deemed to be a temporary ministry, the

1. Works of John Glas, V, p.1.
2. Works of John Glas, I, p.211.
3. Works of John Glas, V, pp.325-353.

ordinary officers to be a permanent ministry.<sup>1</sup>

With the Presbyterians he agreed as to the original identity of bishop and presbyter (or elder). He also insisted on a plurality of elders in each congregation. "The written tradition establishes a plurality of bishops in every church, and we may as well seek for one chief deacon as for one chief presbyter in any church there".<sup>2</sup> He disagreed with the Presbyterian distinction between a teaching elder and a ruling elder.<sup>3</sup>

Glas repudiated the idea that ordination conveys any priestly status or removes the ordinand from one class into another. He acknowledged no distinction of "clergy" and "laity", and deprecated the use of ecclesiastical titles. Elders may fulfil their duties without giving up their ordinary occupations, though if necessity obliges them to do so they have a right to sustenance from their flocks.<sup>4</sup>

"Despite their opposition to clericalism the doctrine of the Glasites respecting the pastoral office was so high that some have accused them of retaining the leaven of clerical domination under the name of Elders. They regarded the ministry not as a mere convenience, but as something essential to the order and well-being of the Church. The ministry is God's gift to His Church, invested

1. J.T. Hornsby, pp.128-129.
2. Works of John Glas, V, p.336.
3. Works of John Glas, II, p.220.
4. J.T. Hornsby, pp.132-133.

with divine authority, possessing functions which may not be assumed by any except those specially chosen and ordained to office. Without a constituted presbytery no church is complete or may observe the institutions and discipline appointed by Christ.<sup>1</sup>

The office of deacon is confined to the "ministry of tables", as distinguished from the ministry of the Word.<sup>2</sup> The special function of the deacon is to minister to the poor.

Glas's views on Baptism remained very much the same as they had been during his Presbyterian ministry. It is an institution wherein is expressed "the great Christian truth, concerning salvation by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased, and the purification of sinners by His blood". It is an institution of permanent obligation, to be administered by water not indiscriminately but to believers and their children.<sup>3</sup>

His views on the Lord's Supper however were very distinctive. Baptism is administered to individuals, but the Lord's Supper must be partaken of in a company.<sup>4</sup> Those who partake must be one body, consequently membership of the church in a particular place is necessary to communicating. He objected to indiscriminate admission to the

1. J.T. Hornsby, pp.127-128.
2. Works of John Glas, II, p.214.
3. Works of John Glas, II, p.356.
4. Works of John Glas, V, p.157.

Lord's Table. "None can be admitted to communion in the Lord's Supper, with a congregation of Christ, without the consent of that congregation, and there must be a profession of brotherly love in them that partake together in that ordinance".<sup>1</sup> "It is our duty to forbear communion with them that have no appearance of being disciples of Christ, believers in Him, and are not objects of that brotherly love required in the new commandment".<sup>2</sup>

Glas considered that the practice of the Apostolic Church in observing the ordinance at least weekly is binding on Christians. While he insisted on no precise time of the day for its celebration he favoured the evening time, for it was instituted at supper time and was given the name of Supper.<sup>3</sup>

His doctrine of the Lord's Supper emphasised the commemorative and declaratory aspects of the sacrament. While it is a real communion of the Body and Blood of Christ the sign must not be confused with that which is signified, viz., the sacrificial death of Christ. That sacrifice has been made once for all and cannot be repeated in the Sacrament which represents it and assures its benefits.<sup>4</sup>

Glas emphasised the social character of true religion. Only in a fellowship can the duties of Christian

1. Works of John Glas, I, p.188.
2. Works of John Glas, I, p.266.
3. J.T. Hornsby, pp.141-142.
4. Ibid, p.142.

discipleship be fulfilled and the Christian character be developed. The first Christians assembled regularly on the first day of the week for fellowship in prayer and praise, mutual exhortation, and the observance of the Lord's Supper. The social worship of the Glasite churches is modelled according to the directions in Acts 2, v.42, to which are added other injunctions in the Apostolic writings. Glas considered it the Christian's duty as well as privilege to attend regularly to the doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers. Exhortation is not confined to the teaching elders, for the people of God are also called to exhort one another.<sup>1</sup> By "fellowship" Glas understood the regular contribution of members to the requirements and services of the church, especially the relief of needy brethren. In the Glasite churches the "fellowship" collection is taken immediately before the Lord's Supper.<sup>2</sup>

There were certain other practices amongst the Glasites, such as the celebration of the Love Feast between the forenoon and afternoon services, the salutation of the Holy Kiss, and the custom of feet washing, which have less importance for this study, but which might help to explain why the movement never became popular. Another explanation lay in the severity of the discipline, dissenters from any finding of the church being ex-communicated, thus

1. J.T. Hornsby, p.145.

2. Ibid, p.146.

preserving complete uniformity.<sup>1</sup>

The movement has long been a spent force. Only four small congregations survive, two of them not co-operating with the other two, a dispute about the middle of last century causing a schism. The influence of Glas can be traced however in the rise of other denominations towards the end of his life-time, or during the half-century which followed. Some of these we shall now note.

D. THE SCOTCH BAPTISTS. The founders of the Scotch Baptist movement, Archibald McLean and Robert Carmichael, both had a previous, though brief, connection with the Glasites. McLean, a printer and bookseller in Glasgow, after correspondence with R. Sandeman, Glas's son-in-law, in 1761,<sup>2</sup> joined the Glasites from the Church of Scotland. Carmichael, an Anti-Burgher Secessionist minister at Coupar-Angus, became a Glasite in 1762, and in the same year was appointed one of the pastors of the Glasite church in Glasgow.<sup>3</sup> Within a year both McLean and Carmichael left the Glasites, being dissatisfied with the decision in a case of discipline. The following year Carmichael removed to Edinburgh. McLean and he corresponded on the question of baptism. By 1765 both were convinced that infant baptism had no foundation in the Word of God, and that none but visible believers had

1. Scottish Churches Handbook, 1933, p.28.

2. Sandeman's full reply first published in

"Millennial Harbinger", 1835, Vol. I, pp. 272-274.

3. History of Baptists in Scotland, p.44.

a right to be baptized. As they did not know of a single Baptist in Scotland (although, unknown to them, Sir William Sinclair, of Keiss, was in Edinburgh at the time), Carmichael went to London to be baptized, and a few weeks later he baptized McLean and a few other ex-Glasites. In 1768 McLean removed to Edinburgh, and joined Carmichael<sup>1</sup> in the co-pastorate of the first Scotch Baptist church.

Within a few years similar churches were formed in Glasgow, Dundee and Montrose. After the death of Carmichael in 1774 McLean was the recognised father of the movement, and remained in the leadership of the Edinburgh church, with co-elders, until his death in 1812. Before the close of the century causes had been founded in Dunfermline (1779), Galashiels (1782), Newburgh (1782), Perth (1784), Largo (1791), Paisley (1795), and Kirkcaldy (1798).<sup>2</sup> The movement had also spread to England, where churches had been organised at Wooler (1779), London (1792), Chester, Beverley, Hull, and Whitehaven (1795), and Liverpool (1800).

McLean, as a printer, was able to give good publicity to the views held by himself and his colleagues. Differing from the Glasite doctrine very little except on the question of Baptism, it was natural that many of the first members were drawn from the Glasite societies. The term Scotch Baptists came to be applied to all Baptists,

1. History of Baptists in Scotland. pp.45-46.  
2. Ibid. p.49.

whether in Scotland, England, or elsewhere, who held the views propounded by McLean.

In 1795 the extending movement reached North Wales. One of the most popular of Welsh preachers, J.R. Jones of Ramoth, read McLean's "Christ's Commission", and other of his works, and entered into correspondence with the author. Another great Baptist preacher, Christmas Evans, about the same time, was adopting McLeanist views. Scotch Baptist sympathies thus began to spread amongst the Particular Baptists of North Wales. In 1801, after a Conference at Ramoth, five of the churches (Ramoth, Harlech, Dolgelly, Criccieth and Glynceiriog), led by J.R. Jones, but without<sup>1</sup> Christmas Evans, seceded from the Particular Baptists. By 1836 the number had grown to twelve churches, with a total membership of 488.<sup>2</sup>

In Scotland itself the Scotch Baptist churches increased in number more rapidly after 1800. During the first twenty years of the nineteenth century there were forty new churches.<sup>3</sup> Most of them rose in the smaller towns and villages. In the absence of trained ministers they appointed to the pastoral office the more qualified men in each assembly, who were for the most part engaged in daily business. Some of the increase was due to the impetus of the Haldane movement (which we shall shortly consider), particularly after the adoption of Baptist

1. Christian Advocate, 1922, p.93 (Article by Prof. Witton Davies)
2. Millennial Harbinger, Vol.II. p.326.
3. History of Baptists in Scotland. p.52.

views by the Haldane brothers.

But the Scotch Baptists, by this time, were not a united body. The unanimity required in church decisions, a tenet inherited from the Glasites, led to dissensions within congregations and to the secession of many individuals and groups. From Glas also the leaders had inherited the high conception of the pastoral office, and no group of members was recognised as a church until it was organised under a pastor or pastors. Members meeting in the absence of an elder could not celebrate the Lord's Supper. From 1783 onwards there were two opinions on this point. In 1810 there was a split throughout the country, and there ceased to be any fellowship between the two factions. In 1834 the two small groups in Aberdeen reunited, agreeing to make the subject of dispute a matter of forbearance. A majority of the Edinburgh church agreed to recognise this union in Aberdeen, but the minority, including two elders and a deacon, withdrew and formed a new congregation. The two parties in Edinburgh then sent circulars to all the original Scotch Baptist churches asking their decision on this matter, that they might know whom to recognise as sister churches. The result was that the Glasgow and Dundee churches divided. Kirkcaldy, Anstruther, Saltcoats, Nottingham and Leeds remained in connection with the majority in Edinburgh; while Largo, Newburgh, Stirling, Galashiels, Wooler, Beverley and Haggate held

with the minority in Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> From that time the churches of the latter connection would not admit anyone from the other connection. Some of them maintained this rigid attitude for many years. It was obvious that peace-loving Christians in such circumstances would be apt to withdraw from membership, and this was an important factor in the rise of "Churches of Christ" in Britain.

E. THE OLD SCOTS INDEPENDENTS. Like the Secession and Relief Churches this denomination had its origin in Fife. The founders were James Smith of Newburn and Robert Ferrier of Largo, neighbouring ministers of the Church of Scotland, who, on adopting views very similar to those of Glas, resigned from their membership of the National Church in 1768. They organised a congregation at Balchristie, in Newburn Parish, on Independent lines, they themselves being appointed the joint pastors, and deacons being appointed for the administrative work.

About the same time a small group in Glasgow withdrew from the Church of Scotland because of interference by the magistrates and town council in the congregational choice of a minister, and built for themselves a chapel, long known as 'the Candle Kirk'. Mr Ferrier came to Glasgow to be joint pastor with the

1. Minute Book of Rose Street, Kirkcaldy, Church of Christ. (formerly Scotch Baptist).

celebrated Robert Dale, a Glasgow merchant; while a Largo weaver became colleague at Balchristie of Mr Smith. Dale was the first layman to officiate as a minister in Glasgow, and much indignation was stirred up in the city against him and the new cause. But both survived, and new societies were formed in Montrose, Marykirk, Perth, Methven, Kirkcaldy, Hamilton, Paisley, Dundee, Newburgh, Sauchieburn, Edinburgh, Galashiels, Airdrie and Earls-<sup>1</sup> ferry.

They never became a large body. There was the same divisive tendency as amongst the Glasites. Moreover two other bodies were growing up side by side with them, which drew away many of their members, namely, the Scotch Baptists and the New Independents or Haldaneites. In 1816 their sixteen churches, with five hundred members, united with the Inghamite churches in North-West England. They were non-aggressive and non-evangelical in character, and gradually dwindled. In 1858 there were only eight congregations in Scotland (Glasgow, Dundee, Arbroath,<sup>2</sup> Perth, Hamilton, Lesmahago, Paisley and New Lanark). The Glasgow congregation was still flourishing, with an attendance of 250 at their 'First Day' meetings. Now the movement has died out.

F. THE HALDANE MOVEMENT. During the last few years of the eighteenth century a great evangelistic

1. J.T. Hornsby, p.277.

2. Christian Advocate, 1858, p.199.

movement arose in Scotland. None of the existing religious bodies in Scotland at that time was remarkable for evangelical belief or zeal; while the exclusive and narrow spirit of most of them was distasteful to many individuals who longed for some better way. The moral, social and political convulsion of the French Revolution also had a great effect upon many people. Robert and James Alexander Haldane, brothers and wealthy laymen of the Church of Scotland, became dissatisfied with what seemed to them the formalism, the sterility, the institutionalism of the Established Church. They decided to give their lives to the work of evangelisation. They encouraged lay preaching and established institutes for the training of young men to preach. A formal break with the Church of Scotland was inevitable. In 1799 the Haldanes and their followers organised themselves into an Independent Church in Edinburgh, James Haldane being ordained the pastor. Within nine years eightyfive new churches were formed, and pastors settled. Robert Haldane spent £70,000 in twelve years out of his own fortune in furtherance of the cause he had adopted.

In 1808 a cleavage arose over the question of baptism. The two Haldanes were amongst those who adopted Baptist views and were immersed. The new congregations were disrupted, and two groups were formed, one of them gradually developing into the modern Congregational

Church and the other into the modern Baptist Church Union. For a time considerable impetus was given to the Scotch Baptist movement, but more and more the congregations deserted their system of mutual ministry and returned to the system of one-man pastorates.

Greville Ewing, formerly minister of Lady Glenorchy's, Edinburgh, was head of the theological institute in Glasgow. In the winter of 1808-09 Alexander Campbell studied at Glasgow University, and Ewing was his best friend. He became familiar with the Evangelical outlook, and sailed for America in 1809 with his own point of view as a Secessionist considerably changed.

The Calvinistic doctrine, which had been held by all the Independents as well as by the Presbyterians, now began to have its critics. The doctrine was gaining ground that Christ died for the sins of all men, and not for the sins of an elect number only. This resulted in the formation of the Evangelical Union, a break-away from the Secession Church. Soon afterwards a number of the ministers and churches of the Congregational Union seceded and joined this new Union.

G. EARLY SEPARATE "CHURCHES OF CHRIST". With the rise of so many 'Restoration Movements', having so much in common, yet differing so keenly from each other, and the demand for uniformity within each body resulting in great bitterness when schism took place, it would not

be unnatural if certain local groups of Christians adopted the main principles and at the same time refrained from identifying themselves with any of the rival bodies. Such separate congregations would be dependent for their continued existence on the quality of their own local leaders. Where leadership was poor longevity was improbable. A number of these separate churches which managed to survive, however, attached themselves later to the "Churches of Christ" movement, and something of their early history is known to us.

In 1807, at Auchtermuchty, Fife, a congregation was formed on the principles of Independency as advocated by the Haldanes. Two years later, in 1809, thirteen of its number were immersed one evening in a small river adjoining the town, and constituted themselves as a church of immersed believers. The brothers John and George Dron, of Presbyterian stock, were called to the pastorate. They remained independent of the Baptist organisations, and yet took a kindly interest in religious reform movements, both at home and abroad. Not till 1830 did they know of the Campbellite movement in America, and in 1834 John Dron<sup>1</sup> visited Alexander Campbell in America.

As early as 1804, in Dungannon, Ireland, a congregation of Independents adopted the Breaking of Bread on every first day of the week, and established mutual

1. Christian Advocate, 1858, pp.164-5.

teaching of the brethren. Robert Tener, who knew nothing of the existence of Baptist churches, was struck by the accounts of missionary work among the heathen. He saw that converts were always baptised after believing, and that this was in accordance with apostolic records. He knew of no one to baptise him. When one, Robert Smyth, having completed his training for the ministry, returned to Dungannon, he sat up with him whole nights studying the question. In 1810, hearing of an old man in the county of Armagh who was a Baptist, Robert Smyth went to him to be immersed, and on his return he immersed Robert Tener, Mrs Tener and William Smyth; and the four formed a church, which later increased to forty. In 1825 they came to know of Alexander Campbell, and corresponded with him, receiving several complete sets of his works. Visitors to Dungannon were influenced and carried the new doctrine to various parts of England<sup>1</sup> and Scotland.

In a private house at Cox Lane, Allington, Denbighshire, another Church of Christ originated in 1809. Previous to that year it was an organised church practising infant baptism and observing the Lord's Supper. Having no local preachers they formed themselves into a Bible-class. After six months' probation Charles Davies was immersed at the Baptist Church in Wrexham, and in 1809

1. British Harbinger, 1868, pp.335-339.

he baptised over thirty at Cox Lane. Soon afterwards John Davies, at the age of sixteen, became the first preacher; their membership spread till they broke bread in three places, remaining one church; and it was not till 1835 that they knew there were other congregations<sup>1</sup> in Britain and America with views like their own.

In the then remote peninsula of Furness there was a church at Kirkby, meeting in a chapel which was probably built in 1826, and the church must have been in existence for at least some years before that. It was not discovered by the main body of "Churches of Christ" until 1854. In a yet unpublished "History of the Churches in Furness", Principal William Robinson (himself a native of the peninsula) writes:

"This church undoubtedly owes its origin to a group of Churches of similar, though not identical, faith and order which began their troubled history in the troubled days after the Restoration of Charles II. There were at least four of these churches and three have now ceased to exist. The fourth - Tottlebank - is now in the Baptist Union. Fortunately it possesses a Minute Book going back to its foundation in 1669..... The Church Minute Book contains a full Confession of Faith, and it is interesting to note that the Church had the following marks usually associated with the Reform-

1. Bible Advocate, June 11, 1909.

ation of the Campbells -

1. It was named 'The Church of Christ'
2. Only Believers' Baptism by immersion was practised.
3. The Lord's Supper was the chief service of worship each Sunday and only baptised communicants were allowed.
4. The government was congregational and there was liberty of ministry. Elders and deacons were ordained, and one elder served as Teaching Elder and was supported by the Church."

The Church at Kirkby separated from the group when the latter adopted Open Communion, and remained isolated until 1854.

Other separate churches are known to have existed at Wrexham, Shrewsbury, Bristol, Grangemouth, and probably London.<sup>1</sup>

### III. RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN AMERICA.

To understand the origins of the "Disciple" Movement it is necessary to have some idea of the conditions in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century, about twenty years after the War of Independence. The thirteen colonies that had won their freedom were all situated in the east, between the Atlantic and the Al-

1. Christian Advocate, 1883, p.360.

leghanies. After the Revolution immigration greatly increased, and settlers, crossing the Alleghanies, poured into the Middle West. For example, Kentucky, which had its first settlements in 1775 and only 150 men in 1777, had a population of 30,000 in 1783; 73,000 in 1790; 220,000 in 1800; 406,000 in 1810; and 564,000 in 1820.<sup>1</sup> Western Pennsylvania, Western Virginia, Kentucky and the North West Territory constituted a genuine frontier area during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and it was in this period and in this region that the movement of the Disciples originated.<sup>2</sup>

Even before the Revolution religious tolerance had been brought about by a medley of religious faiths such as the world had never seen before. New England was still a Puritan stronghold. In all the Southern colonies the Episcopal Church was established by law, and the bulk of the settlers clung to it; but Roman Catholics formed a large part of the population of Maryland. Pennsylvania was a State of Quakers. Presbyterians and Baptists had fled from tests and persecution to colonise New Jersey. Lutherans and Moravians from Germany abounded among the settlers of Carolina and Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

After the first enthusiasm which had motivated

1. Fortune, "The Disciples in Kentucky", p.23.
2. Garrison, "Religion follows the Frontier", p.55.
3. J.R.Green, "History of the English People", pp.759-760.

many of the pioneer colonists there came a serious decline of religious interest in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This was followed by a second wave of religious enthusiasm, called the Great Awakening of 1740. Jonathan Edwards, the Calvinist and Metaphysicist, and Whitefield, Wesley's lieutenant, were the notable figures in this revival. But in the period immediately before, during and after the Revolutionary War there was a second religious decline, not unconnected with the French and English thought of that period. The demoralising and disillusioning effects of war reinforced this tendency. Ainslie describes the conditions thus:-

"The first ten years of the young American Republic were most depressing from the religious point of view.. England forbade the publication of the Bible in the colonies so long as they were dependencies of her crown, and there was a famine of the Word of God. The French soldiers, who had so bravely aided the colonies in their struggle for independence, had scattered infidel ideas broadcast over the republic. Slavery, duelling, intemperance, profanity, lewdness and every kind of immorality was looked upon with complaisance. Colleges were hotbeds of scepticism and three-fourths of their students were avowed unbelievers...Many thought that Christianity had proven to be incompetent for the world's need and was then passing away, like the religions of ancient Rome

and Athens."<sup>1</sup>

Into the new territories of the Middle West came settlers from the Eastern States and also fresh immigrants from Britain and Europe, bringing with them their varieties of religious views. The tendency of some church leaders was to be as narrow and dogmatic in the new conditions as in the more settled ones they had left. There was a strong Calvinistic strain in the doctrine of most groups, and an absence of evangelical fervour. At the close of the Eighteenth century, coinciding in time with the Haldane movement in Scotland, came "The great Revival in the West". In Kentucky it began in 1799, and spread over the State, reaching its greatest power at Cane Ridge under the preaching of Barton W. Stone, a Presbyterian minister. Many thousands were baptised each year for a few years. This revival, combined with the pioneering spirit of both preachers and members, prepared the way for the New Movement towards Christian Union.

1. The Message of the Disciples, pp.95-96.

CHAPTER TWO

BEGINNINGS OF THE NEW MOVEMENT

1. ...  
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3. ...

## BEGINNINGS OF THE NEW MOVEMENT.

### I. IN AMERICA.

The "Disciples of Christ" in America became a separate communion about the years 1830 to 1832. The movement, often called the Restoration Movement, was a confluence of six streams of Christian action, which all emerged during the years 1793 to 1813:-

1. In 1794 certain "Republican Methodists" (Wesleyans who had become independent both of the Anglican Church and the Wesleyan superintendency), headed by James O'Kelly and Rice Haggard, decided that "henceforth the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply", and that the Bible itself be taken as their only creed. Inheriting the Methodist enthusiasm for evangelism the Movement made rapid strides, many of the adherents moving westward and founding other pioneer churches.

2. In 1800 Abner Jones left the Free Will Baptists to organise an independent church at Lyndon, N.H., whose members assumed the name of Christian only, discarding all human creeds. Jones travelled throughout New England and Eastern Canada, making many converts. This body of people also contributed largely to the westward migration, especially to Ohio.

1. Dean Walker, "Adventuring for Christian Unity", p.17.

2. Ibid, p.17.

3. Ibid, p.17.

3. Among the ministers who moved west with the people was Barton Warren Stone, who was born in 1772 and ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1798. He received a call from the churches at Cane Ridge and Concord in Kentucky. In 1801 a great revival at Cane Ridge, under his leadership, swept like a forest fire through that region. A camp meeting was attended by thousands, the people coming from various parts of Kentucky, and even from Ohio.<sup>1</sup> As many as seven ministers, including Baptists and Methodists, were speaking at one time in various parts of the camp ground. A doctrine of salvation was preached which was in opposition to Calvinism.<sup>2</sup> Stone and his Presbyterian associates in this Revival were accused of departing from Calvinism, and spared themselves a heresy trial by withdrawing from the Synod and forming an independent Presbytery in 1803. This presbytery was known as the Springfield Presbytery. "But", said Stone, "we had not worn our name more than a year before we saw that it savoured of a party spirit with man-made creeds. We threw it overboard and took the name Christian - the name given to the disciples by divine appointment first at Antioch".<sup>3</sup> In 1804 the Presbytery was dissolved, the occasion being celebrated by the publication of "The last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery; and, with no desire

1. Fortune, "The Disciples in Kentucky", p.33.

2. Ibid, p.36.

3. Ainslie, "The Message of the Disciples", p.85.

to form another communion, they started a movement, as they expressed it, "to sink into union with the body of Christ at large", and took the Bible as their rule of faith and practice.

4. A fourth group originated in Indiana, at the time when the streams of westward migration were pouring into it. In 1810 John Wright organised a Free Baptist Church, but adopted no articles of faith. In 1813 an association of Free Baptist Churches was formed, which soon dropped the name Baptist, and adopted the Bible as their creed "without note or comment". The next year they dissolved the association into an Annual Meeting. In succession they united with a group of German Baptists (Tunkers), the New Lights (followers of Stone), and the Silver Creek Baptist Association (which had become permeated with the teachings of Alexander Campbell); and by 1820 these "Churches of Christ" had become a numerous  
<sup>1</sup> body.

5. Between 1800 and 1820 large numbers of people emigrated from Scotland and Ireland to America. Many were members of the various Independent religious bodies (described in Chapter One). By 1816 Scotch Baptists had founded churches in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Danbury (Conn.), Pittsburgh, and elsewhere.  
<sup>2</sup> They sought earnestly within the Bible for an exact pattern of church

1. Dean Walker, p.19.

2. Ibid, p.20.

government, but they were not zealous evangelists. Their severe Calvinism perhaps made them not over-anxious to grow rapidly; and correctness of doctrine would certainly be much more important for them than large numbers. Yet there emerged from their ranks some of the greatest leaders in the new Movement, including Walter Scott, Robert Richardson and Isaac Errett. Scott was a relative of the great Sir Walter. Born at Moffat in 1796 and educated at Edinburgh University, he emigrated to America in 1818 and became a schoolmaster at Pittsburgh.

6. The greatest of the streams, and the one bearing most on our study, was that of the Campbells, father and son, and to its origins we shall devote some space.

Thomas Campbell was born in County Down, Ireland, in 1763.<sup>1</sup> His father was a Roman Catholic in early life, but later joined the Church of Ireland. He gave all his four sons a good education. Thomas, the eldest, was drawn in his youth to the Secession Church,<sup>2</sup> and prepared for its ministry by attending Glasgow University for three years,<sup>3</sup> and, thereafter, the Divinity Hall of the Anti-Burghers at Whitburn, West Lothian, for five annual sessions of eight weeks

1. Richardson, "Memoirs of Alexander Campbell",  
Vol. I, p.21.

2. Ibid, p.22.

3. Ibid, p.25.

each.<sup>1</sup> Returning to Ireland he was engaged for a time as a probationer, and also taught school in various centres.<sup>2</sup> In 1798 he accepted a call from a church recently established at Ahorey, near Armagh,<sup>3</sup> and remained in that charge until 1807, when he emigrated to America.<sup>4</sup> While ministering at Ahorey Thomas Campbell added to his income by working a farm for a few years, and then by conducting a school in the neighbouring town of Richhill. In that town there was (and still is) a small Congregational Church, in which the Campbells frequently worshipped on Sunday evenings. There they heard such noted visiting preachers as Rowland Hill, James Haldane, Alexander Carson and John Walker (pioneer of the Plymouth Brethren).<sup>5</sup> These contacts help to explain the after career of the Campbells.

Alexander Campbell, the eldest son of Thomas, was born in County Antrim in 1788.<sup>6</sup> Soon afterwards they removed to Sheepbridge, near Newry, and after some years to Markethill, in County Armagh, where they remained till the father's call to Ahorey. After attending

1. Richardson, "Memoirs of Alexander Campbell", Vol. I, p.26.
2. Ibid, p.27.
3. Ahorey Church, now Irish Presbyterian. Present minister, Rev. Robert G. Fry. In August, 1938, by permission of the Local presbytery, a tablet, gifted by the American Disciples, in memory of Thomas Campbell, was unveiled at Ahorey. Representatives of the American Disciples and the British Churches of Christ took part with the minister in the special service.
4. Richardson, p.79.
5. Ibid, p.60.
6. Ibid, p.19.

school at Markethill, and later for a few years at Newry, Alexander studied at home under his father's supervision. Possessing a remarkable memory he began to memorise select extracts from the best English authors. He was also introduced to Locke's "Letters on Toleration" and "Essay on the Human Understanding", and, judging from his future lines of thinking, these must have made a lasting impression upon him.<sup>1</sup> Family worship was observed, morning and evening, and every member of the family was required to memorise some portion of the Bible each day.

When Alexander was sixteen or seventeen he began to take an interest in theological studies, and particularly ecclesiastical history. But it seemed unlikely that he could gain the advantage of a university education. There were now seven children in the family, and, under the dual strain of church and school, his father's health was beginning to fail. When, in 1807, he was persuaded to emigrate to America Alexander undertook to look after the school and the home in his absence; and to follow with the family if things proved favourable.<sup>2</sup> Next year they set sail on 1st October, but the ship was wrecked off the west coast of Scotland, and the family were conveyed to Glasgow, where they stayed till the following July. This enabled Alexander to attend classes at Glasgow University in Greek, Logic, and Experimental

1. Richardson, p.33.  
2. Ibid, p.79.

Philosophy, beginning also the study of Latin and French.<sup>1</sup>  
He also came into very close touch with Greville Ewing,  
pastor of the Independent Tabernacle which Robert Haldane  
had built. This intimacy "was destined to work an entire  
revolution in his views and feelings in respect to the  
existing denominations, and to disengage his sympathies  
entirely from the Seceder denomination and every other  
form of Presbyterianism".<sup>2</sup> "The knowledge which he ob-  
tained in regard to the religious reformation then pro-  
gressing in Scotland made a deep impression on his mind."<sup>3</sup>

"He found that the Haldanes did not fully approve  
the views of Glas, Sandeman, and of Walker, which were  
at that time much discussed, and with which he had himself  
become somewhat acquainted. The Haldanes regarded the  
writings of Glas and Sandeman as exhibiting, here and  
there, noble views of the freeness of the gospel and the  
simplicity of faith; but to their system as a whole, and  
especially to the intolerant spirit manifested by them  
and their followers, both the brothers were always  
strongly opposed. With regard to faith, they regarded  
Sandeman's view, that it was the mere assent of the under-  
standing to testimony, and that faith in Christ did not  
differ from faith in any other historical personage, as  
frigid and defective. They regarded it as resting,

1. Richardson, p.131.

2. Ibid, p.148.

3. Ibid, p.176.

indeed, upon the evidence furnished by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, but as embracing not only the understanding but the heart; and both of them have remarked that 'trust or confidence in Christ seemed substantially to express the meaning of the term'. This simple and comprehensive view was that which Mr Campbell, in his subsequent religious history, himself adopted, and continued to advocate during his entire life<sup>1</sup>.

Meantime difficulties had been developing for Thomas Campbell in America. He was disciplined by his Anti-Burgher Presbytery of Chartiers for admitting Presbyterians other than Seceders to Communion. He withdrew from the Presbytery, but not from the Church, and formed "The Christian Association of Washington"<sup>2</sup>. This was not a Church in any sense, but simply an association of persons from various communions "as voluntary advocates of Church reformation", and he wrote "A Declaration and Address", which was just coming through the press when Alexander arrived to join his father. They discovered

1. Richardson, p.177.

2. Dean Walker, p. 20.

that they had reached the same point in religious development.

As Disciples consider the "Declaration and Address" the Magna Charta of their movement,<sup>1</sup> some description of it here is desirable.

Dean Walker writes:-

"The 'Declaration and Address' (1809) was over a century before its time. It repays our careful study to-day. Campbell here lays down a platform for Christian union, consisting of thirteen propositions, which may be condensed into five:-

(1) The essential, intentional, and constitutional unity of the Church of Christ ... This unity is to consist of the possession by each Christian of the mind of Christ, dominated by the will of Christ, and exhibited in fellowship individually and congregationally.

(2) The supreme authority of Scripture,

1. Garrison, p.87.

especially the New Testament. If the first proposition be Catholic, this one is the ultimate and radical Protestant contention.

(3) The relative value of theology; and futility of human creeds. Theology is individually good, but its conclusions are not tests of Christian fellowship. Creeds may be valuable, but are not properly terms of communion.

(4) The essential brotherhood of all Christians. In this proposition Campbell is again Catholic - he avoids the Calvinist criterion of election, as determining who is a Christian. But he is not a Roman Catholic - neither does he assign to Baptism the 'sine qua non'. His tests are:- faith, set forth in open profession and obedience to Christ, involving church membership; and character, or the harmony of deeds with our Lord's will; the whole being

practically demonstrated in the concrete, living brotherhood of believers.

(5) If human innovations are removed, Christians will find themselves united. That is, divisions in the Church are due to peculiarities. Discard these, and universalities remain. Here, on the broad ground of the universals, both unity and freedom are found. And, to remove these innovations and to discover what are innovations, means, practically, the restoration of the Church pictured in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>"

The Declaration and Address was ignored by the Christian world, and the application, in 1810, of Thomas Campbell and his followers to be received into the Pittsburgh Synod of the Presbyterian Church having been refused, the Association (contrary to first intentions) was formed into a church in 1811. The birth of Alexander Campbell's first child led to an intensive study of the question of baptism, resulting in both Alexander and his father adopting the Baptist view, with modifications, and being immersed in 1812. Their church was received into Baptist fellowship in 1813.

The Campbells, however, were not orthodox Baptists. For example, they administered baptism upon a simple confession of faith, not requiring the narration of an 'experience'. They observed the Lord's Supper weekly,

1. Dean Walker, p.21.

not quarterly. Their rejection of creeds included the non-recognition of the Philadelphia Confession. They<sup>1</sup> minimised the distinction between clergy and laity.

The tension within the Baptist fold was much increased when Alexander Campbell, in 1816, preached his historic Sermon on the Law. In it he contrasted the Old and New Testaments, attacking the popular divisions of moral, ceremonial and judicial, and arguing that the Old Testament law was primarily designed for the Jews and that the New Testament was the book of Christ, whose authority was altogether above the authority of Moses and<sup>2</sup> whose words must be the sole rule of the Christian life. This was a practical application of the 'covenant theology' adopted by the Secessionists from Thomas Boston, but it was as heresy to most of the Baptists who heard it.

It was 1820 before the Campbells and their followers, now known as Reformers, came to have more than a local reputation. In that year Alexander was chosen as Baptist champion in a debate with a Seceder Presbyterian minister, John Walker, on infant baptism. This established his reputation in Ohio, where the debate had been held, and he received invitations from many Baptist churches to visit them. The covenant theology which he had utilised in the debate to oppose the analogy of baptism with circumcision now began to receive sympathetic study on the

1. Garrison, pp.104-105.  
2. Ainslie, p.104.

part of a number of Baptists.<sup>1</sup> In 1823 a debate in Kentucky, on the same subject, with a Presbyterian minister, W.L. Maccalla, extended his fame to the Kentucky Baptists, and also to the Christian Connection, the group led by Barton W. Stone. Many in both parties readily accepted his views.

In the same year he founded "The Christian Baptist", which he published for seven years. This paper, which was iconoclastic in its policy, had for its leading thesis "the Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things". Campbell attacked clericalism, legislative synods and associations, missionary societies, Sunday Schools, and all 'innovations'.<sup>2</sup> Walter Scott, whose acquaintance he had made in the winter of 1821-22, assisted him in this journalistic work; and many of the articles were in harmony with the points being emphasised by the Scotch Baptists on both sides of the Atlantic.

In 1827 Scott became evangelist for a Baptist Association in Ohio. He worked out a new technique, resolving to cut loose entirely from all precedent and discover from the New Testament itself the method of evangelism employed by the Apostles. He analysed the cases of conversion recorded in the Acts. He devised a synthesis of these accounts, and arranged the items in logical order. He then went on his tour of the district, preaching

1. Garrison, p.114.  
2. Dean Walker p.28.



his "five finger exercise" - faith, repentance, confession, baptism, gift of the Holy Spirit. He appealed for and expected response.<sup>1</sup> The result of his first year's work was more than 1,000 baptisms, as against 34 the previous year.<sup>2</sup> This new method of mission preaching was adopted by others, with equally striking results. Many orthodox Baptists, of course, were distressed by the new method, and a break between them and the Reformers was imminent.

In 1829 various Baptist Associations passed resolutions disowning other Associations which had sympathy with the Reformers; and in 1830 the Mahoning Baptist Association, at the instance of Scott, adopted a resolution dissolving the body as unscriptural, and meeting again as an Annual Meeting of Disciples of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

During the next few years many Baptist congregations joined the Disciples. At the same time there was a gradual coming together of the "Christians" under Barton W. Stone and the "Disciples" under Alexander Campbell. In 1832 the leaders agreed on a Union, and chosen representatives, one from each group, went together from congregation to congregation urging their people to come together. Dean Walker estimates that probably 15,000 Christian Connectionists were added to 12,000 Reformers, agreeing to call themselves indifferently Disciples or Christians.<sup>4</sup>

1. Dean Walker, pp.30-31.
2. Garrison, p.127.
3. Dean Walker, p.31.
4. Ibid, p.33.

The fervent evangelism of Stone was now merged with the clear thinking of Campbell and Scott, and from that time the Restoration Movement in America went ahead at a great pace, becoming fifth among religious bodies in the U.S.A., with over a million members, before the end of the nineteenth century.

This union in America of Stone and Campbell has to be remembered when comparing and contrasting the development in America with that in Britain. Stone's group had been open communionists; Campbell's, while in the Baptist Association, close communionists. The Christian Connection, until the fusion with the Reformers, had not insisted upon immersion as a condition of membership; and many of the congregations refused to give up their position and join with the Campbellites. To this day they are known in America as "The Christian Church", being kindred to the Congregationalists, with whom they have been merging in the last decade. Stone and those who went with him into the union with the Disciples agreed to fall in line by preaching "baptism for the remission of sins", thus ensuring a membership of immersed believers. The influence of his group can be traced in the gradual loosening of the close communion practice, until by 1862 about two-thirds of the churches of the Disciples were practising what, in the

1. Paul Douglass, "A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity" 1927-1936, pp.114-117.

opinion of the British Churches of Christ, amounted to  
<sup>1</sup>  
 open communion.

In 1830 Alexander Campbell substituted the "Millennial Harbinger" for the "Christian Baptist". The idea underlying the name of the new magazine was that by the unification of the church the Kingdom would come in its fullness. The needs of a rapidly growing Christian body are to some extent accountable for the change in editorial policy, from destructive to constructive. Campbell himself was developing with the growing community, and things which he ruthlessly condemned in the "Christian Baptist" he countenanced later on. He continued as editor of the "Millennial Harbinger" for nearly thirty years.

Campbell's personal reputation spread on both sides of the Atlantic through his debate with Robert Owen, in 1829, on the evidences for revealed religion. After he had silenced his opponent, making effective use of his knowledge of Locke, he used all the time remaining both to Owen and himself in a twelve-hours speech, dealing with the historic evidence for Christianity, the evidence from prophecy, and the genius and tendency of Christianity, ending with a critical examination of Owen's  
<sup>2</sup>  
 "social system".

Campbell figured in two other great debates.

1. "Millennial Harbinger", 1862. See also Letter by David King to A. Campbell, "British Millennial Harbinger", 1862, pp.66-68.
2. Garrison, p.143.

In 1837 he was the Protestant champion against the Roman Catholic Bishop Purcell; and in 1843, opposing the Presbyterian, N.L. Rice, he defended New Testament Christianity against Protestantism.

The only volume published by Campbell containing a fairly complete statement of the system of doctrine he believed to be contained in New Testament Christianity appeared in 1835 under the title, "The Christian System". Some of his opponents accused him of issuing a creed; and there is no doubt that his views, as expressed in this work, have, for many Disciples both in America and Britain, had all the authority of a creed. On the other hand no member of the Disciples has ever been asked to subscribe to the views expressed therein, and no church officer has ever been required even to read it. The book was Campbell's personal statement of faith. There were prominent Disciples, even in the first generation of the movement, who differed from Campbell very considerably. The only requirements for membership were belief in the one fact that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God"; and submission to the one institution (baptism). It is a proud boast of the Disciples that there has never been a heresy trial in their history. No one has ever been excommunicated for his theology. In each generation prominent Disciple scholars have re-defined the plea in terms which they considered

more befitting the conditions of their day.

## II. IN THE BRITISH ISLES.

As already noted, there were at least a few congregations in the British Isles, taking the name and position of "Churches of Christ", originating about 1809-1810. The first of these to know anything about the Campbellite Movement in America was Dungannon, Ireland. In 1825 this church entered into correspondence with Alexander Campbell. In his "Christian Baptist", January, 1830, appeared a letter from W.T., Londonderry, referring to the Dungannon Church, and stating, "Your works are read by a good many in the north of Ireland".<sup>1</sup>

The Church at Auchtermuchty, Scotland, came to know of Campbell in 1830, and greatly rejoiced in the news of the Disciples, John Dron actually paying a visit to America in 1834 to make the acquaintance of the leaders.

But it was to a Scotch Baptist leader in London that the credit is due for first making public in Great Britain the teaching of Alexander Campbell. William Jones, M.A., a bookseller, was already a man of standing amongst the Scotch Baptists when A. McLean first corresponded, in 1795, with J.R. Jones of North Wales. He was then residing in Liverpool, and is mentioned in the correspondence.<sup>2</sup> Later he moved to London, and became

1. "Christian Baptist", Vol.VII.
2. "Christian Advocate", 1881, p.433.

a pastor of the church meeting at Windmill Street. He achieved considerable fame as a historian, and in 1844, for literary merit, was made one of the beneficiaries of the Royal Bounty.<sup>1</sup> Although he was well versed in religious affairs in Britain, he was totally unaware of the Campbellite movement in America until 1833, when a young American Disciple visited the Scotch Baptist chapel in Windmill Street one Sunday, and after the service informed him of the "Reformation" or revival of religion that was taking place in his country. From the description given Jones concluded that the order of public worship corresponded very closely with that of the Scotch Baptists in Britain. In his own words, "I requested to be favoured with the names of some of the leading persons, particularly such as were elders of churches, and was not a little surprised to hear the first name mentioned was that of Alexander Campbell, the antagonist of Robert Owen, whose public disputation on the evidences of Christianity I had read at the time with peculiar interest, without having the slightest suspicion that his views of divine truth and gospel-worship were so congenial with my own. The information now given me concerning Alexander Campbell, his more abundant labours in spreading abroad a savour of the knowledge of Christ, both from the pulpit and the press, his intrepidity and zeal, the talents conferred upon him

1. "Christian Messenger", 1844, p.50.

by the exalted Head of the Church, and his powerful advocacy of the cause of primitive Christianity, all gladdened my heart, and made me ardently long to be introduced to his acquaintance before we quitted the stage of life."<sup>1</sup>

In the correspondence that ensued, an exchange of publications was arranged, and Jones duly received all the numbers of the "Christian Baptist", and the series of the "Millennial Harbinger" as far as then published. He determined to publish a new journal, in which he would introduce the writings of Campbell and other Reformers. Accordingly in 1835 "The Millennial Harbinger and Voluntary Church Advocate" made its appearance, and found a ready circulation among the Scotch Baptists throughout the country; but it gradually became evident that there were marked differences between Campbellite and Scotch Baptist teaching, particularly with regard to the work of the Holy Spirit, and Jones ceased publication after only sixteen months. In the first volume (eight monthly numbers) half of the matter consists of extracts from Campbell's writings, mainly taken from the first volume of the "Christian Baptist"(1823); and over a quarter of the remaining space is occupied by correspondence between the two editors, in which their agreements and disagreements are discussed. In the second

1. Jones's "Millennial Harbinger", Vol. I, p.17.

volume Jones draws on other sources for much of his matter, and on Campbell's publications for only one-third of the space, the "Christian Baptist" again having the preference over the younger and more constructive "Millennial Harbinger".

It is not without significance that in the second volume Jones allows himself to be drawn into a voluminous discussion with H.D. Dickie, of Edinburgh, a leader of the other Scotch Baptist group, on the vexed question of whether, in the absence of an elder, an assembly of Christians could observe the Lord's Supper.

Although Jones decided to publish no more of Campbell's writings he had already done enough to cause further disruption amongst the Scotch Baptists. For example, in Vol. II of his magazine he published a letter from North Wales, reporting twelve churches with 488 members and mentioning "that concord and brotherly love prevail among the churches in general".<sup>1</sup> Nine years later a "Churches of Christ" reporter from the same district had a different story to tell:- "Some years ago a few persons belonging to the Scotch Baptists came to the determination that the doctrine taught by them was not scriptural. The first thing which became doubtful was the work of the Holy Spirit; then creeds, or confession of faith as a bond of union, etc. When those

1. "Millennial Harbinger", p.325.

things were made known it caused some confusion among the churches. Just at that time we had heard of the Reformers in America, through the periodical edited by Jones of London, and were much supported and encouraged to persevere in a closer examination of our tenets - to take the Bible alone as our rule of faith and obedience. It is a curious fact, that the writings of the Reformers in America were wholly acceptable to all the Scotch Baptists in Wales so long as Jones of London held his communication with these American brethren, but as soon as he turned to be an enemy to this reformation in the least degree, a great part of them followed him. We soon found that a tempest was coming against us; however, the consequence was,

"In RAMOTH, ten persons were expelled, for their exertion to learn the way of God more perfectly. These formed themselves into a church, and are now double the number; their minister is Robert Rees.

"At HARLECH, six persons were expelled, for the same reason, and have now increased to fourteen; William Pugh, minister.

"CRICCIETH. - In this place it happened that the majority held the Reformers' views of divine truth; so they retained the chapel; but those (eleven) who would not abandon even a single item of their creed, for a closer adherence to the Scriptures, went away, being at

the same time unable to give any reason for their departure. One of them said that it was as impossible to believe the Gospel, without some direct influence, as to create a world!! What is this less than making God a liar? Since they left, thirteen have been added. We now number thirty-six, and enjoy much consolation in the Lord. William Jones, minister.

"Lately, eighteen persons departed from the Baptists at SLANIDLOES, and joined with us. About the same number followed their example at MACHYNLETH.

"PEUMACHUS. - The small church in this place was of one mind, and with one accord joined in with the commandment.

"I cannot give an exact account of the churches at HANFAIRTALHAIARM, TREMERCHOIN, etc., but there are about six other places where there are small churches." <sup>1</sup>

Probably the first Scotch Baptist Church to be disrupted, after Jones ceased publishing his journal was that at Nottingham. Before the end of 1836 a crisis occurred there, and a group broke away from the parent body to form a "Church of Christ". Their leader, James Wallis, soon afterwards issued the first number (March, 1837) of "The Christian Messenger and Reformer", designed to continue the work laid aside by William Jones. In a private letter to Alexander Campbell, published later in 1. "Christian Messenger", 1845, pp.98-99.

the August number of the new journal, he wrote:- "It is to you, Bro. Campbell, under the providence of a gracious God, that myself and others in this place are indebted for a more clear and correct knowledge of that all important truth, which in these days of darkness is kept much out of view, viz., that the religion of Jesus is founded altogether upon the knowledge and belief of FACTS, instead of abstract influences and mystic operations upon the mind...

"On the 25th of December, 1836, a society on the reformation principles was commenced in Nottingham, consisting of 14 persons; it has in eight weeks increased to forty members (62 by August)...Our only denomination is 'New Testament Disciples'...We meet on the first day of the week for divine worship, which consists of singing and prayer; reading the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; breaking the loaf in honour and memory of our Exalted Head; making the collection for the poor saints, and the support of the cause of Christ in the world. After teaching, exhortation, and proving to unbelievers the glorious facts of the gospel an invitation is given to all to rise and state their views of the Saviour - to obey His gospel, and submit to His government, by being immersed for the remission of their sins into Him as the only prophet, priest and king, in Zion...

"The gifts of all the brethren are employed in

edifying the body...We have established a Bible meeting on the evening of the Lord's Day, when after reading two or three chapters in the New Testament questions may be asked by any one who chooses, whether believer or unbeliever; and if any...have confessed...they are as soon as possible immersed into His name, and united to the church the next Lord's Day...

"We cannot but feel grateful to our Heavenly Father, that our Bro. Jones has been the chosen instrument in His hands of introducing your works into this country, and hope that great good will be the result.

"Can you pay us a visit? We should be happy to receive you."

James Wallis continued as Editor, not for one year only (as was his first modest intention), but for a quarter of a century, when he made over to younger hands the management of a magazine, which, under different names, has continued now for over a century to represent the views of British "Churches of Christ".

Before the end of his first year as editor there were references to other congregations that were being formed after the new order. In the September issue mention is made of a recently-formed congregation at Newmilns, and of their connection with six other churches of like faith and order.<sup>1</sup> In the October issue

1. "Christian Messenger", 1837, p.252.

issue there is this brief insertion:- "It is with pleasure we inform our brethren that a few persons have been collected together in London, who profess to have learned much from the pages of the "Messenger", and who for some time past have met for worship on the first day of the week, on New Testament principles."<sup>1</sup>

About the same time the editor published reports from several churches which had been in existence prior to 1835, when Jones made known the views of Alexander Campbell. John Davies, who at the age of sixteen, in 1809, had become the first preacher of the Church of Christ at Cox Lane, Denbighshire, sent a letter to Wallis giving the history of his community. He was to play a prominent part in the development of the now spreading cause. Later, he described how, in October, 1835, the first three numbers of Jones's "Millennial Harbinger" came into the hands of himself and his fellow-members. The realisation that they were not alone in the world, but that they had in America 150,000 brethren and sisters, caused great joy; and he hastened to write to Alexander Campbell. It was two years more before he learned through the "Christian Messenger" that there were others<sup>2</sup> of like mind in England and Scotland.

Davies was greatly surprised to learn that there

1. "Christian Messenger", 1837, p.324.
2. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1865, p.246.

was a "New Testament Church" in Wrexham, not far from his own residence at Mollington, near Chester. This church was at least seven years old, and had never been connected with the Scotch Baptists or any other Baptists. Reporting to the "Christian Messenger" their leader wrote:- "At that time we knew nothing of Alexander Campbell or his writings...Neither his writings nor those of any other uninspired man have, of themselves, made any change in our faith or practices."<sup>1</sup>

Writing in December, 1837, a representative from Shrewsbury reported as follows:- "We, the New Testament Church in Shrewsbury, are very glad to hear of your coming into the glorious liberty of Christ Jesus...We wish to inform you that, although the small society of Christians in this place are not the followers of Alexander Campbell, yet we have been much edified and comforted by his writings, as far as we have seen them. We have never had connection with Scotch, Calvinistic, Arminian, or any other Baptist, yet we have been immersed into the body of Christ; and...we continue steadfast in the apostles' doctrine, the fellowship and breaking of bread, and in prayer, praising God, on every first day of the week."<sup>2</sup>

A perusal of the "Christian Messenger" during the next few years reveals the formation of other

1. "Christian Messenger", 1837, p.357.
2. "Christian Messenger", 1838, p. 72.

"Churches of Christ", including Newark (1838); Glasgow, Dundee, Perth, Banff, Turiff, Liverpool, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Lincoln (1839); Edinburgh, Cupar, Dunfermline, Montrose, Dumfries, Chester, and Banbury (1840).

Most of these churches were formed from the Scotch Baptists, some from choice and others because of expulsion, as witness the following extract from the "Messenger", August, 1839:- "While the gathering of a few disciples together under the influence of the Ancient Order is taking place in various parts of the country, the work of excision is also progressing, and various individuals have been separated for what is called the heresies of Campbellism."

Some of the churches however were formed through other influences. The Church at Newark, for example, was recruited from the Particular Baptists.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of the Dundee church was specially noteworthy. George C. Reid, the minister of an independent evangelical church in that city, whose doctrine was Arminian and whose people might have been taken for Methodists, in 1839 changed his views on baptism, was immersed himself, and within a few months led 110 members of his congregation to take the same stand. The brothers Dron of Auchtermuchty made his acquaintance and introduced him to the Reformation Movement, which

1. "Christian Messenger", 1839, p.177.

he heartily endorsed.<sup>1</sup>

### III. THE AMERICAN AND BRITISH MOVEMENTS COMPARED AND CONTRASTED.

We have seen that in both countries the churches became a separate communion in the decade 1830-1840.

They agreed in their desire for Christian unity; in their aim to restore the New Testament Church; in their wish to be known by Bible names only, and not by sectarian titles; in their opposition to creeds; in their doctrine of conversion (faith, repentance, confession, baptism, gift of the Holy Spirit); in their observance of the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day; in their church order (recognising the permanent ministry to be Evangelists or Missionaries, Bishops or Presbyters, and Deacons).

Both groups had scholarly origins. Glas, Sandeman, McLean and others had greatly influenced the beginnings in both countries; the Campbells and Walter Scott were educated men of great intellectual power; William Jones and James Wallis were men of culture and mental vigour.

By 1840 several differences were already noticeable:-

(1) The American Disciples numbered at least forty thousand;<sup>2</sup> the British Reformers only a few hundred.

1. "Christian Messenger", 1840, pp.240-244.

2. Garrison, p.200.

(2) As many as sixteen periodicals were being published amongst the Disciples; <sup>1</sup> Wallis's "Christian Messenger" was the one paper in Britain.

(3) Many American preachers were devoting their full time to the work of the ministry; G.C. Reid was the only one in Britain.

(4) Bacon College had been opened in Kentucky, in 1836, and Campbell himself founded Bethany College, Virginia, in 1840; the British Reformers inherited the Scotch Baptist distrust of theological colleges.

(5) Most of the Disciples had been recruited in the New States (Middle West) and had freedom and enterprise in their outlook; the British Churches of Christ had emerged mainly from the Scotch Baptists, and were more restricted and conservative than their American Brethren.

(6) The Americans were pragmatists, even in their religion; the British were logically-minded, and loyalty to principle or what they believed to be principle was much more important than increase of numbers.

(7) There was a strong evangelistic strain in the Americans; the British Churches of Christ, though rejecting the Calvinistic theory of conversion, retained very largely the non-evangelical outlook of the Scotch Baptists.

1. Garrison, pp.148-149.

## I. COGNATE TENDENCIES

As we have already noted, the "Christian Worker", edited by James Wallis, was a chief instrument in propagating the doctrines of the new information movement, and as congregations were organized the workers not only became subscribers to the magazine, but also began to send letters of commendation.

With the assistance of J. G. Cook of Durham the churches gained their first travelling evangelist. He was a man of great intellectual vigor and of deep and warm sympathies, and had already proved himself an eloquent preacher. From July, 1890, he was absent from his home for ten months.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ORGANISATION AND THEOLOGICAL FORMATION

Five months, visiting Liverpool, Glasgow, Dundee, Carlisle, Chester, Exeter, Wigan, Warrington, Newark, Lincoln, Hereford, and London. He then proceeded to the North, visiting Wakefield, Hull, and other towns. He thus became acquainted with some of the young churches, and strengthened them by his powerful advocacy of the position they had adopted.

His experience convinced him that while the members of the infant congregations were well advanced in scriptural knowledge they could not expect to gain more

## I. COMING TOGETHER.

As we have already noted, the "Christian Messenger", edited by James Wallis, was a chief instrument in propagating the doctrines of the new Reformation Movement, and as congregations were established the members not only became subscribers to the magazine, but also began to send items of news for insertion.

With the accession of G.C. Reid of Dundee the churches gained their first travelling evangelist. He was a man of great intellectual vigour and of deep and warm sympathies, and had already proved himself an eloquent preacher. From July, 1840, he was absent from his home for ten months visiting Cupar, Auchtermuchty, Alloa, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dumfries, and Carlisle; and after a few weeks he went on a second tour, lasting five months, visiting Dunfermline, Glasgow, Dumfries, Carlisle, Chester, Wrexham, Wigan, Nottingham, Newark, Lincoln, Horncastle, and London. He then proceeded to the North, visiting Fraserburgh, Banff, and other towns. He thus became acquainted with most of the young churches, and strengthened them by his powerful advocacy of the position they had adopted.

His experience convinced him that while the members of the infant congregations were well advanced in scriptural knowledge they could not expect to make rapid

progress without preachers, and that proper provision for such preachers could not be made without some co-operative plan. He also maintained that as soon as possible the congregations should "select and ordain an eldership to rule, teach, and administer to the necessities of the poor and afflicted amongst God's dear children"<sup>1</sup>.

As a result of his pleading, and after consulting the congregations, the first Co-operative Meeting of British "Churches of Christ" was held at Edinburgh, in the South Bridge Hall, on the 18th and 19th of August, 1842, "when nearly forty messengers from various congregations assembled, to carry into effect the objects proposed in the "Christian Messenger", for the more complete diffusion of the gospel, and the consolidation of the congregations throughout the country".<sup>2</sup>

Statistics were obtained from 19 centres in England with 530 members, from 21 in Scotland with 608 members, and from 3 in Wales with 95 members; a total membership of 1,233 in 43 centres. It was known that there were other eight churches in England, and there were believed to be about 200 more members in Wales. Nottingham had the largest membership (202) and the next in order were Edinburgh (94), Cupar (91), and Dundee (70).<sup>3</sup>

1. "Christian Messenger", 1841, pp. 361-362.
2. "Christian Messenger", 1842, p. 247.
3. Ibid, p. 282.

"Many interesting remarks were made on the question of co-operation - whether the churches of Jesus Christ ought to unite their means and efforts for the maintenance of evangelists to proclaim the gospel to the world."<sup>1</sup> Finally it was unanimously resolved "That a committee of three brethren be appointed to receive the contributions and to see that the wants of the evangelists, with their families, are duly supplied, so long as they have the means of doing so." Jonathan Hine, James Wallis and John Frost (all of Nottingham) were appointed.

With their views of congregational independency, not all the churches were convinced of the wisdom of a co-operative meeting, and very inadequate was their response to the appeal for funds to maintain a number of evangelists. We have to remember also the Calvinistic views and non-evangelistic attitude of the Scotch Baptist Churches in which most of those pioneer members had been trained. Moreover there was the fear that the employing of evangelists would lead to the employment of resident ministers. A glimpse of the difficulties in the development of a co-operative spirit is found in this paragraph, written by the Editor:- "A more frequent interchange of brethren from different churches, and a more united co-operation of all the saints, regardless of our little selves, of human opinions and dogmas,

1. "Christian Messenger", 1842, p.283.

would have a great effect in promoting union among the disciples, as well as the more general spread of the gospel throughout the land. Some brethren cannot visit where the church does not use teetotal wine at the table of the Lord; others contend for the use of unleavened bread; others would not give a shilling for the support of the evangelists, even should the withholding of it prove the cause of thousands sinking into eternal perdition, lest, as they say, an hireling priesthood should be raised up amongst us." <sup>1</sup>

Success continued to follow the efforts of Evangelist G.C. Reid himself. His services were in such demand that he could not stay long in any one place. The following report from his pen, after a short mission in Glasgow, is illuminating:- "With much satisfaction I state that two most pleasing results have been obtained during this visit: first, the little congregation now assumes an appearance of unity, love and consolidation in its several parts, which it has never heretofore presented. Second, she has just about doubled the number of her members, who, renouncing the sects, have concluded to build on the only true foundation, the prophets and apostles. I may also here mention my conviction, that were the means continued for six months or more, there is nothing to prevent the erection of a large congregation of disciples to the Lord

1. "Christian Messenger", May, 1843.

in Glasgow. Sorry I am indeed that circumstances compel me to retire from this interesting field of labour; when numbers, whom we have been able but partially to awake, in all probability will just fall asleep again, when the sound of the Spirit is hushed.<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1843 William Thomson, of Edinburgh, became the second evangelist in the field. While still a Scotch Baptist he had spent two years in London and Leeds, and happened to be a member in London when the young American, Wyeth, paid his historic visit and introduced the works of A. Campbell to William Jones. Returning to Edinburgh Thomson played a leading part in the formation of a "Church of Christ".<sup>2</sup> As an evangelist, in one period of three months, he paid visits to Bathgate, Airdrie, Kilmarnock, Newmilns, Glasgow, Saltcoats, Sanquhar, Lanark, and Galashiels. In a letter to James Wallis he wrote:- "A feeling seems to be gaining ground among the brethren that the arrangements regarding the labours of the Evangelists are somewhere defective. The visiting of so many places, and doing comparatively no

1. "Christian Messenger", 1843, p.64.
2. Thomson, in a series of articles in 1874 in the "Christian Advocate", entitled "Incidents connected with the early Dawning in Great Britain of the Current Reformation", mentions that there were at least seven Baptist parties in Edinburgh at that time, including the two Scotch Baptist groups. The arrival of Wallis's "Christian Messenger", followed by Campbell's "Christian Baptist" had a great effect upon him and others; and ultimately they were compelled to leave the fold of the Scotch Baptists.

good at any, seems to be felt as a great evil; and I must say that I myself participate in the same sentiment."<sup>1</sup>

In March, 1844, George Greenwell, of Bedlington, after a few months ministering with the Edinburgh church, became the third evangelist co-operating with the General Committee. J. Frost, secretary of the committee, reported:- "We have now three evangelists; but this number is by no means adequate to the wide field of labour that is before us."<sup>2</sup>

A year later, however, there was only one evangelist. William Thomson had retired from the work, and G.C. Reid had sailed for America after a complete physical breakdown. (He died of consumption early in 1847). In a letter to James Wallis, dated June 27, 1845, he wrote:- "I can now say without fear of being accused of selfishness, as I shall never more be able to do the work of an evangelist, that we never can expect to see this Reformation prosper until the churches heartily unite in sending forth efficient labourers into the field." His disappointment at the slow progress of the cause he had espoused is earlier shown in "An Address to the disciples".<sup>3</sup> He had expected that "a proposal so simple, safe, noble, and God-like" would have been hailed with ecstatic delight by "all the sincere and intelligent of Christian professors".

1. "Christian Messenger", 1843, p.384.
2. Ibid, 1844, p.205.
3. Ibid, 1844, pp.7-10.

Again he stressed the need for the appointment of local elders and deacons, and for the sending forth of evangelists. His diagnosis of the causes of inattention to these matters is interesting:- (1) Their strong criticism of "the various systems of priestly domination" had driven many of the converts "from one fatal extreme to another equally fatal - from slavery to anarchy". (2) "The prevailing political sentiments, especially among the working classes, of equal rights, universal suffrage, vote by ballot, etc., have been imported into many, if not all the congregations". (3) "A spirit of vain desire on the part of some to obtrude themselves into offices for which they are utterly unqualified". (4) "Misapplied and perverted Scripture has by such parties been continually paraded and urged to confirm their unruly and licentious position".

Before the end of 1845 the Committee appointed at the meeting in Edinburgh in 1842 closed its arrangements, George Greenwell accepting an engagement to work in Nottingham and vicinity under a local committee. It was the general opinion that the evangelistic scheme had failed through being too wide; inadequate contributions were partly due to the infrequency of the visits of the evangelists; and district co-operation, which was first tried in Fife, and later extended to other districts, seemed to have better

results.<sup>1</sup> During the three years of the national experiment the total contributions received by the Committee amounted to £403, the leading churches contributing being Nottingham (£111) and Chester (£40).

Relations with the American Churches of Christ had continued to be fraternal. Wallis published in his "Christian Messenger" frequent articles from Campbell, Scott, and other prominent American leaders; and in the "News" columns he gave excerpts from American journals. Frequent invitations had been sent to Alexander Campbell to visit his native Britain, and when it was known there was a possibility of his coming a fund was rapidly raised to meet the expenses. There were many in Britain who thought it not merely desirable but almost essential to import American evangelists if success in Britain were to be attained.

Meantime the more conservative element in Britain were being disturbed by some of the developments in America. Bethany College was considered by Campbell a necessity, if he were to secure an educated ministry for his rapidly extending churches; but it was considered an unhappy innovation by many British brethren. Further misgiving was aroused when the published debate of Campbell with N.L. Rice (1843) was examined, and it was discovered that, according to his own expressions in the debate,

1. "Christian Messenger & Family Magazine", 1845, pp.143-146.

Campbell "had viewed with great satisfaction the fact that some Presbyterians, on their own responsibility, and that too without being the subjects of Christ's one baptism, had sat down at the Lord's Table with the disciples of Jesus"<sup>1</sup>. Further light on Campbell's position was copied into the May number of the "Christian Messenger" (1845),<sup>2</sup> from Campbell's own "Millennial Harbinger" for March, 1845, under the heading, "A.C.'s Change of Views". It included extracts from his celebrated "Letter to the Widow of Lunanburgh", of which the following is one paragraph:-

"Should I find a Pedobaptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually minded, and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most. Did I act otherwise I should be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians. Still, I shall be asked, how do I know that any one loves my Master but by his obedience to His commandments? I answer, In no other way. But mark, I do not substitute obedience to one commandment for universal, or even general obedience; and should I see a sectarian Baptist, or a Pedobaptist, more spiritually minded, more generally

1. "Christian Messenger", 1846, p.86.
2. Ibid, 1845, pp.39-41.

conformed to the requisitions of the Messiah, than one who precisely acquiesces with me in the theory or practice of immersion as I teach, doubtless, the former, rather than the latter, would have my cordial approbation and love as a Christian. So I judge, and so I feel".

Explaining the practice of the American Disciples Campbell continued:- "If I was asked the question in the year of Christ, 1845, 'Do any of your churches admit unbaptized persons to communion?', I would still answer, 'Not one, as far as known to me'... Professors of unblemished reputation, of Pedobaptist churches, are sometimes informed at our large meetings, that we do not suppose all unimmersed persons to be absolute aliens from the family of God, nor are they absolutely excluded from any participation with us in prayer or in the Lord's Supper; on the contrary, if any of them take upon himself the responsibility, being satisfied in himself of his own baptism, to participate with us at a table which is not ours, but the Lord's, we have no power to forbid him, and would not withhold from him the symbolic loaf and cup. But to make it a practice to receive such persons as members of our churches into regular communion, is a practice unknown to me in any one church in the Reformation ... I am still pleased, indeed, to see Pedobaptists of good Christian character occasionally take

upon themselves the responsibility to break the loaf with us in commendation of their love to their Saviour and us, because such persons, on a more intimate acquaintance, generally become disciples of Christ, or withdraw from such intimacy".

The "neither invite nor debar" position thus defined has been characteristic of most of the American Disciples throughout their history, but no impression was made by its statement on the "close communion" practice of the British churches. Still, only a few months after its publication, an appeal appeared in the "Christian Messenger" (Nov. 1845) for funds towards the expenses of a visit from Campbell, and within a few weeks twenty-seven congregations sent one hundred and seventy pounds, plus further promises.

In 1847 the great American leader, accompanied by James Henshall, spent a few months in this country. Large halls were engaged, and good audiences were secured; but so many places were included in the itinerary that the stay in any one place was necessarily short, and no large numerical gains were recorded. But the movement was given its first great publicity in Britain. In Scotland this was increased by a determined attack on the personal character of Campbell by the secretary of the Edinburgh Anti-Slavery Society, who placarded him in every town he visited in Scotland as a friend

and supporter of the slave owners in America, and who (by further charges which later he also failed to substantiate) succeeded in having Campbell put in Glasgow Prison, when the latter refused to give security that he would not leave the country pending a trial for libel. A higher court declared this imprisonment illegal, and Campbell was released after a week. He concluded his itinerary by visiting his native Ireland and then presiding at Chester over a "Co-operation Meeting" attended by representatives from twenty-six of the churches (13 English, 5 Welsh, 7 Scottish, 1 Irish).<sup>1</sup>

Campbell's opinion on the state of the cause in Britain can be partly inferred from the nature of his chairman's remarks. He stressed the need for effectually proclaiming the gospel. "It can be done efficiently only by selecting qualified persons, entirely devoted to the work. None can excel in two businesses. Christ's work also is all-important, and ought not to be attended to as a merely secondary consideration ... We must then have a valiant, a faithful, an educated corps. I mean not a collegiate, but an ecclesiastical education. Let them be men mighty in the Scriptures - men who can use the sword of the Spirit well. Qualified men. Men of piety ..."

Over £350 had been raised to meet the expenses

1. "Christian Messenger", 1847, pp.494-500.

of the two American visitors, double what was required, and £100 of the balance was voted by the Meeting to Bethany College, of which Campbell was President; and the remaining £80 was voted as the nucleus of a revived General Evangelistic Fund. Campbell was requested "to select from the American churches a brother who, in his judgment, is the most suitable to labour among the congregations in England". Fourteen of the churches promised a total of £180 to the fund for 1848.

This assembly was only the second of the kind (five years after the first), but it was decided to meet again in the following year at Glasgow, and there has been an Annual Meeting ever since.

In spite of all the weaknesses, the churches had increased from fifty in 1842 to eighty in 1847, and the membership from 1,300 to 2,300. One reason for this may be found in this tribute by W.K. Pendleton (son-in-law of A. Campbell, who visited Britain in 1846 for a few weeks and reported his impressions to the American "Millennial Harbinger", of which he was joint editor):- "One of the very best features in the state of the controversy in Great Britain is the prayerful and anxious zeal for the cause, felt and cherished, not only by the principal men, but by the great mass of the churches. Every man and woman, if not a public, is at least a warm and zealous private preacher of

reformation. Nor does their conduct, as is too often the case, neutralise their doctrine. By a good example they show forth the beauty of holiness, and in their good works and piety, as well as by their exhortations, lead others to glorify God<sup>1</sup>".

In the same report Pendleton has an interesting criticism of the practice amongst some of the British congregations (inherited from the Glasites) of making their order of worship follow the order in Acts 2, v.42. He writes:- "When we are told, 'They (the disciples) continued steadfast in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers', it will not do to conclude that these various duties and privileges must always be attended to in the order in which they happen to be mentioned by the historian, - that in coming together in a congregational capacity, we must first attend to instruction in the 'Apostles' doctrine', then contribute to the 'fellowship', next celebrate the Lord's death, and finally conclude with 'prayer'. It is plain that it was no intention of the historian to do anything more than state the points of general and important bearing in the practice of the primitive Christians, without the least reference to the order of time or sequence in which they were attended to by them; and that he did not mean, in so doing, to

1. "Christian Messenger", 1847, pp.46-47.

give us any formal ritual of service, either as followed by them or as proper to be urged upon their successors in time to come. Not only is this evident, but also that he did not mean to be understood as even naming all the things which were of uniform practice in their congregational assemblies; for there is no specific mention of singing, or exhortation, or reproof, nor indeed of edification and social worship of any kind". Pendleton also criticised the custom of not naming particular persons to lead in the 'prayers'.

James Wallis, in an editorial comment on the above, remains firm on both points. He writes:- "The voluntary prayers of the brethren, we suppose, is that to which he objects, and which he thinks is open to abuse. So it is, in some circumstances. After seven years' practice, we approve of both, and have long adopted the plan of giving an opportunity for the exercise of the voluntary and solicited prayers of the brethren. The Apostles' doctrine, - the fellowship, - the breaking of bread, - and the prayers of the brethren - was the order of the first churches, Acts 2, v.42. This may become a ritual - a mere ceremony - like any other order. But not, however, if the brethren are spiritually minded and lively in the faith. Being of divine appointment it is not so likely to dwindle into mere formality as

that order which is merely of human arrangement".<sup>1</sup>

This difference in viewpoint between the British and American brethren is explained by the system of "mutual ministry" practised by the Glasites and Scotch Baptists and adopted by the British Churches of Christ; and on the other hand by the fact that the pioneers of the American movement were mostly clergymen in other churches before their adoption of Reformation views.

Their difference in emphasis on the question of close communion has much the same explanation. The British churches were adhering to the viewpoint of the Glasites and the Scotch Baptists, and, incidentally, of almost every Christian denomination in Britain at that time; whereas the American Disciples owed their origin to an urge for Christian union, an urge which had manifested itself in a desire to invite all Christians to the one Table, even before they had developed their special Disciple theology.

The evolution in Alexander Campbell's views may partly be explained by his gradual Americanisation. His earlier writings were much more in harmony with the views of the British churches than his later ones, and the American churches developed much more on the lines of his later writings. Both groups of churches believed in the motto:- "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where

1. "Christian Messenger", 1847, p.48.

they are silent, we are silent". In practice this meant that the British churches were reluctant to introduce anything not mentioned in the Scriptures; whereas the American application gradually developed into:- "Where the Scriptures speak, we are silent; where they are silent, we speak".

## II. THEOLOGICAL FORMULATION.

As we have already noted, the beginnings of the British movement were scholarly; intellectual values were stressed in the writings of McLean, Jones, and Wallis. A survey of the contributions to Wallis's "Christian Messenger" by other writers shows that there were numerous Bible students and thinkers amongst the pioneer members. Only deep conviction brought them into the new Movement, for nothing was to be gained in the way of worldly advantage from their new association. Their independence of character meant too that they would not blindly follow any leader, but had to be convinced by rational evidence before adopting further changes. As the churches and membership increased the editor threw his columns open for the discussion of many questions. It was not essential, of course, that there should be uniformity of belief or practice in all details; but gradually there came into existence a general agreement about many items of faith and order, and an understanding not to expect agreement on certain other questions.

Of great influence too in guiding the thought of the young brotherhood were the works of Alexander Campbell, and particularly his compact volume, "The Christian System". Practically every problem that could arise amongst the churches had been discussed by him within its pages, and his views were well studied.

As the Annual General Meetings became established, bringing leaders together from all parts of the country, the exchange of views face to face did much to clarify the issues, besides creating a friendly intimacy and family spirit which still remain characteristic of the community.

The dominant idea of the British Reformers was a restoration of New Testament Christianity. This implied an abandonment of creeds and confessions, so tenaciously held by most Protestant sects at that time; and also the recognition of the Bible as a historical book. Campbell had taught them, "On opening any book in the sacred Scriptures, consider first the historical circumstances of the book. These are the order, the title, the author, the date, the place, and the occasion of it".<sup>1</sup> Though commonplace to the Bible student of our day, this instruction of Campbell was new doctrine to most Christians of his day, and was misunderstood by many of his opponents. Following his lead, the Reformers recognised three dis-

1. Campbell's "The Christian System"(English Edition),p.18.

pensations - the Patriarchal, the Jewish and the Christian; and the New Testament they regarded in particular as the guide book for the Christian. This did not mean that they ceased to have respect for the Old Testament. They considered a knowledge of it essential for the proper understanding of the New Testament. But they maintained that Christians were not bound by the Law of Moses; the ten commandments, as such, were not the Christian moral code; they claimed that Christ had fulfilled the Law, and superseded it with a freedom from the Law. To the charge that this gave license for immoral conduct they replied that the Christian moral law was far superior to the other, for it was a law of union with Christ, in which a man becomes dead to sin. From the beginning of the movement the Churches of Christ have insisted upon a high moral standard for all their members, and those who had moral lapses had to undergo the discipline<sup>1</sup> of the church.

The Reformers made a distinction between the seventh-day Sabbath of the Jews and the first-day (Lord's Day) of the Christians, and did not consider themselves bound by the Sabbatarian customs of many of their contemporaries. At the same time they recognised the sacredness of the Lord's Day, and the obligation of Christians to meet on that day to remember their Lord.

1. See Appendix, "Minutes of the Church of Christ at Kirkcaldy".

The differentiation between the former dispensations and the Christian one had been used by Campbell in his debates with Walker and MacCalla to support his argument that the analogy between baptism and circumcision was a mistake. Churches of Christ have continued to oppose infant baptism, and have been strengthened in their opposition by the clear line they have drawn between the Old and New Testaments or Covenants.

The claim has been made that the greatest contribution Churches of Christ made to religious thought was in their doctrine of conversion. In this connection Principal Robinson writes:- "In their doctrine of conversion - bound up as it is with the doctrine of baptism - we have that which divides them from all other organised Christian bodies; on the one hand from Catholics and on the other from Protestants... To this doctrine Churches of Christ have clung tenaciously from the beginning of the Movement. However much they may have differed on minor points, they have been united here. Although, like Baptists, they practise immersion and reject infant Baptism, their doctrine of Baptism, and their teaching about its connection with conversion and regeneration, separate them from all other immersionists. Indeed it is much more like the doctrine of Baptism which has been accepted in the Catholic Church from the earliest ages; for if members of

Churches of Christ accept anything they certainly accept the affirmation of the Nicene Creed, 'We believe in one Baptism for the remission of sins'. And, as the Anglican catechism professes, they firmly believe that faith and repentance are necessary pre-requisites to Baptism; but, unlike all the Catholic Churches - Anglican, Roman, and Eastern - they do not allow that faith and repentance can be exercised by proxy. They therefore reject Infant Baptism; first because historically it had no part in the original Christian System, and secondly because it violates that principle of Christ's religion which demands personal choice on the part of all His followers".<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the ordinance or sacrament of the Lord's Supper Churches of Christ continued what they had learned from the Glasites and Scotch Baptists, emphasising the Lord's Supper as the central act of worship every Lord's Day. In this service the Church, as a royal priesthood, offers worship to God through the great High Priest her Lord.<sup>2</sup> Concerning the Supper<sup>3</sup> Campbell stated these seven propositions:-

(1) There is a house on earth, called the house of God.

(2) In the house of God there is always the table of the Lord.

- Robinson,  
 1. "What Churches of Christ Stand For", pp.57-58.  
 2. Ibid, p.87.  
 3. Campbell, "The Christian System", pp. 317-328.

- (3) On the Lord's table there is of necessity but one loaf.
- (4) All Christians are members of the house or family of God, are called and constituted a holy and royal priesthood, and may, therefore, bless God for the Lord's table, its loaf, and cup - approach it without fear, and partake of it with joy as often as they please, in remembrance of the death of their Lord and Saviour.
- (5) The one loaf must be broken before the saints feed upon it, which has obtained for this institution the name of 'breaking the loaf'.
- (6) The breaking of the loaf and the drinking of the cup are commemorative of the Lord's death.
- (7) The breaking of the one loaf, and the joint participation of the cup of the Lord, in commemoration of the Lord's death, usually called 'the Lord's Supper', is an instituted part of the worship and edification of all Christian congregations in all their stated meetings.

The Glasite and Scotch Baptist views on Church Order were accepted in the main. One exception was with regard to evangelists. Whereas Glas held that Evangelists (along with Apostles and Prophets) were extraordinary officers and therefore only temporary ministers of

the Church, Campbell included Evangelists along with Bishops and Deacons as ordinary officers, and therefore belonging to the permanent ministry of the Church. He contended that there must be officers while there are offices or services to be performed.<sup>1</sup> Bishops and deacons are required for the care of the local congregations; evangelists or missionaries for the planting of new churches. It took some time for this argument of Campbell to be generally adopted by the pioneer churches of the British movement, and this partly explains their lukewarmness to the co-operative plans for evangelisation.

Like the Glasites, Churches of Christ were opposed to 'professionalism' in the ministry. The method by which a man earns his living should not be the factor to determine whether he belongs to the 'ministry' or the 'laity'. The Reformers were not opposed to the principle of paying an officer, where deemed necessary, for his services to the church; but they believed in having a plurality of ministers in one church, of equal status and ordained in the same way, and performing the same functions, whether or not they were earning their living by secular employment. Moreover, as most of their congregations were small, it was inevitable that the majority of their officers should be performing their

1. Campbell, "The Christian System", p.85.

duties gratuitously.

They stressed the value of "mutual ministry", that is, "the right of all who are duly qualified and gifted, to read, pray, and preach in the worship of the church, even though they are not called and ordained to the sacred offices of Presbyter or Deacon".<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless they had the same 'high' doctrine of the pastoral office as the Glasites. They too believed that the ministry is God's gift to His Church, invested with divine authority, possessing functions which may not be assumed by any except those specially chosen and ordained to office.<sup>2</sup>

"While, then, the Christian system allows every man 'as he has received a gift to minister as a good steward of the manifold grace of God', it makes provision for choosing and setting apart qualified persons for all its peculiar services, necessary to its own edification and comfort, as well as to its usefulness in the world."<sup>3</sup>

The congregations were to choose their own pastors, but they were to be submissive to them once they were chosen and ordained. As Campbell said, "Whatever rights, duties, or privileges are conferred on particular persons cannot of right belong to those

1. Robinson, "What Churches of Christ Stand For" p.80.
2. See Section on Glasites, Chapter One.
3. Campbell, "The Christian System", p.89.

who have transferred them, any more than a person can both give and keep the same thing."<sup>1</sup>

One 'high' view of the Glasites was not accepted by the young Churches of Christ, namely, that the Lord's Supper could only be observed under the presidency of an elder. Congregations without elders were regarded as churches, but churches which were not yet set in order. In small congregations it was sometimes impossible to find men with the scriptural qualifications for the eldership. Frequently, in such cases, the most suitable men available were chosen (but not ordained), and given the title, Presidents. They were generally appointed for a limited period of office the hope being that thereafter it might be possible to have elders. Sometimes only one elder or president was appointed, presumably because he was deemed the only person suitable. In the report of the Annual General Meeting at Glasgow, in 1848,<sup>2</sup> eighty-seven churches appeared on the list. Of these ten had one elder or pastor, six had two elders, and one had three; twenty-two churches reported having one president, ten had two presidents, and seven had more than two. The remaining thirty-one churches seemingly had no appointed elders or presidents.

1. Campbell, "The Christian System", p.88.
2. "British Millennial Harbinger", successor to "Christian Messenger", 1848, pp.528-529.

## THE MIDDLE PERIOD

The years following the visit of Alexander Campbell to Great Britain and Ireland might have been expected to be years of progress, but, in quite an unexpected way, they became a period of confusion and disunion. Campbell was unsuccessful in his efforts to find a suitable evangelist or evangelists to lead the work of the British churches, but during these years across the Atlantic Dr. John Thomas, a Disciple (or ex-Disciple) who had been a frequent contributor to the weekly periodicals of Jones and Wallis. He had been a Scotch Baptist in England before emigrating to America, to Indiana, where he was a Disciple. He developed certain views which were unpopular among the Disciples, but he was not allowed to hold these views nor to attempt to "convert" others. Gradually, however, he began to republish these views, claiming that their former rejection was invalid for lack of sufficient previous knowledge. This eventually led to some estrangement between him and many of the Disciples' leaders.

## CHAPTER FOUR

In 1848 he arrived in Britain, and sought fellowship with the "Churches of Christ" in London and Scotland. When they came to know from American sources of his attitude to the main body of Disciples they refused to have fellowship with him, and on his speaking at the  
1. "British Millennial Messenger", 1850, p. 475.

## I. A PERIOD OF CONTENTION

The years following the visit of Alexander Campbell to Great Britain and Ireland might have been expected to be years of progress, but, in quite an unexpected way, they became a period of confusion and disruption. Campbell was unsuccessful in his efforts to find a suitable evangelist or evangelists to send to the help of the British churches, but instead there came across the Atlantic Dr. John Thomas, a Disciple (or ex-Disciple) who had been a frequent contributor to the monthly periodicals of Jones and Wallis. He had been a Scotch Baptist in England before emigrating, as a young man, to America, where he joined the Disciples. He developed certain views which were unpopular amongst the Disciples, but in accordance with their practice he was allowed to hold them without any attempt at "heresy hunting". Gradually, however, he began to rebaptize those who adopted his special views, claiming that their former baptism was invalid for lack of sufficient previous knowledge. This naturally led to some estrangement between him and many of the Disciples' leaders.

In 1848 he arrived in Britain, and sought fellowship with the "Churches of Christ" in London and Nottingham. When they came to know from American sources of his attitude to the main body of Disciples they refused to have fellowship with him, and, on his appearing at the

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1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1850, p.476.

General Annual Meeting at Glasgow in September of that year as a "deputy" from the church at Lincoln, his presence was challenged.<sup>1</sup> A special committee which was appointed to deal with the difficulty decided, by a majority, that the church at Lincoln had acted imprudently in deputing Dr. Thomas.

Many of the churches, however, were willing to give him a hearing, and during the next two years he was very busily engaged in his special propaganda. In a farewell letter to "The Gospel Banner",<sup>2</sup> dated 26th September, 1850, he reported:- "I have travelled through this island thrice; addressed the people 250 times, averaging an hour and a half each time; talked with them at Soirees and in private about the Kingdom, etc.; written an octavo volume on the Kingdom, of upwards of 400 pages; published hundreds, yes, thousands of ephemeral articles for gratuitous circulation; written a multitude of letters; and last, though not least, have published a pamphlet of forty pages octavo, entitled, 'The Wisdom of the Clergy proved to be Folly'... I have sent copies of this pamphlet to the principal bishops, including the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Mr. Gorham, certain lords and members of the committee of Privy Council, and to all the daily and weekly

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1848, Report of General Annual Meeting, pp.528-531.
2. A rival journal to the B.M.H., published for four years, 1848-1851. Independent of Dr. Thomas, but which gave him considerable publicity.

London Journals, and principal religious magazines".

Dr. Thomas became the founder of the Christadelphians (sometimes called Thomasites). He denied the existence of a personal devil, and the immortality of the soul, believing in 'Conditional Immortality' to be bestowed upon the faithful of all ages when Christ returns. He insisted on the plenary inspiration of the Bible, the real death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, His resurrection and ascension; and looked for His return to the earth to reign on the throne of David over the converted and restored twelve tribes of Israel and all nations. He believed that death is a state of entire unconsciousness, terminated by a corporeal resurrection for those who have become related to Christ through faith and obedience, or are responsible for His rejection. Those accepted after the judgment reign for ever with Christ over the nations, those rejected die the second death.<sup>1</sup>

The presentation of his views amongst the British Churches of Christ did not win for Dr. Thomas many of the leading personalities; but a spirit of contention was stirred up, and "considerable havoc among the churches resulted, especially in Scotland".<sup>2</sup> Seven churches in Scotland went out of existence

1. Chambers's Encyclopaedia.

2. Jubilee Conference, 1892, Conference Paper, "Fifty Years' Work".

(including all in Ayrshire), and others were numerically weakened (including Edinburgh, Glasgow and Cupar). In certain districts of England there were similar results. After a few years however the situation cleared, and progress in numbers recommenced.

In the 1892 Conference Paper reviewing "Fifty Years' Work", and referring to this period, David King wrote:- (Dr. Thomas's campaign) "was more than sufficient to account for the non-increase of this period. But good was done - the Fort was held, the false doctrine was unmasked, and, by 1856 or soon after, Thomasism, under its various names, had become, as it remains, but of small power against us. But the conflict was severe; it was thrown upon us when we were left without an evangelist and had to be met solely by brethren engaged in the ordinary business of life".

## II. EVANGELISATION

In the same Conference Paper we are told that "applications were repeatedly made to America for preachers, but in vain, and the churches here almost unanimously decided in favour of local and district work". David King himself was given the position of an evangelist in the London church, and, from 1848 onwards, he gave up Saturday and Monday in each week from

business "to the ministry of the Word in and out of the Church"<sup>1</sup>. In like manner William MacDougall laboured in Newcastle-on-Tyne. Both of these men were to play outstanding parts in later years. In 1852 Francis Hill of Sunderland began to evangelise in connection with the churches at Chester, Wrexham, etc. While engaged at Shrewsbury, in 1854, he made the acquaintance of a young Baptist minister, Joseph Bryant Rotherham, whose change of views on the design of baptism led him to resign his pastorate at Wem in Shropshire, join the Disciples, and soon afterwards take up service as one of their evangelists.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Rotherham was already a competent scholar, and was later to earn a considerable reputation as the translator of "The Emphasised Bible".

In 1855 there was a change of policy. A Lancashire committee had raised a large sum of money with a view to planting a church in Manchester, and had arranged to put four evangelists in that field. The General Annual Meeting approved of the effort, and the committee already operating was constituted a General Evangelist Committee. The first chairman, Gilbert Y. Tickle of Liverpool, presided over its deliberations for thirty-three years.<sup>3</sup> Two of the four evangelists (Hill and Sinclair) were soon withdrawn from the Man-

1. "Memoir of David King", p.8.
2. Rotherham's "Reminiscences", pp.22-30.
3. "Christian Advocate", 1888, p.227.

chester effort; but Rotherham remained for many months and King for nearly two years, till the young church was considered strong enough to manage without evangelistic help. King then reported as follows:-<sup>1</sup>

"Having been in Manchester for nearly two years, and having to do with every member of the church, having watched over the church from the first day of its existence, and knowing more of its members than any other person does or can, knowing what it might do, what it cannot do, what there is a danger of its doing - what are its resources, what are its wants - you will not be surprised when I say that leaving Manchester was to me a deeply painful step... This is not to be taken, however, as a complaint, for while sympathy said stay, judgment said go... It was expedient for them as well as for the cause generally that I should leave, at least for a time. Your readers will be glad to know that I left upwards of 50 members living in peace and love".

In 1858 King and Rotherham again joined forces in an attempt to set up a church in Birmingham. This was even more successful, and, for the remainder of his life (36 years) David King made Birmingham his headquarters. The 11 members reported in 1858 increased to 326 in 1860. This was largely due to the winning of a

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1857, p.205.

whole Baptist congregation, but there were also over 100 baptisms in the second year. Later, the new congregation withdrew, but within ten years the numbers had risen again to 381 members. During that decade the evangelist visited other towns for special efforts, notably Leicester and Wolverhampton.<sup>1</sup> When the General Evangelist Committee desired him to go in 1869 to Liverpool for a year he preferred to remain in Birmingham and resigned his connection with the Committee. He continued his supervision of the Birmingham work under the Birmingham District Association, then formed, until 1882, when he resigned, partly to be released for other work and partly so as to encourage complete organisation. There were then three churches in the city, with 500 members.<sup>2</sup> By that time Leicester had two churches and 300 members; and Manchester four churches and 230 members.<sup>3</sup>

J. B. Rotherham, in between his co-operative efforts with David King in Manchester and Birmingham, laboured as an evangelist chiefly in Wales, with Newtown as his home. In most of his journeys he was accompanied by Edward Evans, who would address the audience in Welsh, Rotherham following with a discourse in English.<sup>4</sup> In 1859 a newly-formed Scottish Evangelist Committee invited Rotherham north, and he remained

1. "Memoir of David King", p.12.
2. Ibid, p.13.
3. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1882, p.217.
4. Rotherham's "Reminiscences", p.34.

in their service until 1868, when he accepted a secular post with a London publishing firm.

In 1855, the year when the Manchester effort was begun and the General Evangelist Committee was constituted, a fresh appeal was made to America for evangelistic help,<sup>1</sup> and in the following year there was further correspondence, it being suggested that, if necessary, David King would cross the Atlantic to raise the funds;<sup>2</sup> but nothing tangible accrued. It became more evident that the British churches would have to depend on their home talent.

Scotland, after the Glasgow Annual Meeting in 1848, had not sent representatives to the Annual Meetings, and did not share in the formation of the General Evangelist Committee.

The Fife and District Churches had been organised for group evangelisation from 1846, with occasional breaks; but seldom had they an evangelist working for them full time. They put forward at the Glasgow (1848) Meeting a resolution, unanimously adopted, recommending the formation of Districts for the purpose

1. "Millennial Harbinger", 1856, p.194.
2. Ibid, p.552.

of co-operation in evangelistic enterprises. At their instigation a first Scottish Conference was held in Cupar in 1857.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hughes Milner of Edinburgh was a new star on the horizon, considered to be the strongest force since G. C. Reid, and his influence on the thought of the Scottish churches began to be felt.

His father, Dr. Milner, a dispensing physician in Leith, died in 1835, leaving a widow with eleven children. Thomas, the seventh, was then ten years old. His mother opened a general drapery shop and achieved success. Thomas, who was gentle and obliging and remarkably clever as a boy, joined the business and in his early manhood became its manager. Converted at the age of 17 and immersed in the Bristo Place Baptist Church he joined the "Evangelical Union" or "Morrisonians" (who were organised just at that time). Two years later he joined a new Baptist congregation under a Mr. Johnson, who had left his Baptist charge in Cupar because of his convictions on close communion. For ten years Thomas was a very active member of the Baptists. He was given considerable scope within the denomination as a public speaker, and, for a short time, he edited a Baptist monthly, "The Evangelist". Before he was 20 he had written and published "The Gospel Guide", intended to lead the anxious inquirer into the peace of the gospel.<sup>2</sup>

1. "Christian Advocate", 1857, pp.37-40.

2. Memoir of T.H. Milner, "British Harbinger", 1866, p.274.

In 1854, having acquired views against the "one man system" and the recognition of unconverted men as worshippers, he separated from the Baptists, and, with eleven others, met for worship in his mother's parlour; but the number soon increased, and in 1855 they began to meet in Nicolson Street Hall, Edinburgh. There the number of members was greatly multiplied, and in 1861 the congregation moved into new premises in Roxburgh Place, able to seat 700; where, shortly afterwards, they were joined by the older Church of Christ congregation which had been meeting in South Bridge Hall since 1840.<sup>1</sup> The latter had had a somewhat chequered career, dissension having arisen in 1849, half of the 80 members leaving to worship separately. A reunion took place in 1852, but Thomasism reduced their numbers again, till in 1859 there were only 49. The amalgamation in 1861 gave a church of several hundred members, with T.H. Milner<sup>2</sup> the leader.

In 1855 he published his principal work, "The Messiah's Ministry", an exhaustive treatise on New Testament worship and service. It fully sets forth the various points on which he differed from the popular order of things.

Retiring from business at the age of 33 he devoted all his energies, without remuneration, to the

1. "Christian Advocate", 1874, p.3.

2. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1861, p.257.

cause he had adopted. In 1857 he founded a penny magazine, named "The Christian Advocate", and a children's magazine, named "The Sunbeam". He continued to publish these monthlies till the end of 1865, a few months before his death at the early age of 40.

Much of his time he spent in visiting the Scottish Churches of Christ, uniting and consolidating them in a manner not previously experienced. He was instrumental in organising an Annual Scottish Conference, of which he himself was the secretary. After his lamented and unexpected death the Committee paid him this tribute:- "It was chiefly through Bro. Milner that our existing organisation for evangelistic purposes was commenced, and he was the active agent in stirring up our churches to a sense of their duty in reference to the preaching of the gospel. The Executive Committee generally approved of all his suggestions, and left the carrying of them into effect to his willing hands"<sup>1</sup>.

He paid occasional visits to England also, especially at the times of Annual Conferences; and, with his wife, he paid a visit in 1862 to Australia, where he greatly stimulated the young churches which had been formed there.<sup>2</sup>

Under the newly-formed Scottish Committee there laboured, in addition to J. B. Rotherham, a

1. "British Harbinger", 1866, p.285.

2. Various reports in "Christian Advocate", 1863.

second evangelist, Charles Abercrombie, who was formerly a schoolmaster and a Baptist. After a visit to America he accepted an appointment as teacher at Drumclair in the parish of Slamannan, Stirlingshire. He soon began to preach in the open air to the miners, and a remarkable awakening took place, over 80 persons being baptized in 1859.<sup>1</sup> In 1860 a second church was founded at Bo'ness, where his brother-in-law, John Nimmo, coal-master became the leader. Soon afterwards Abercrombie yielded to urgent appeals to give himself wholly to the work of an evangelist. Largely through his efforts small churches were founded in Bathgate, Crofthead, Whitburn, and Hamilton.<sup>2</sup>

Frequently Abercrombie and Rotherham worked together in evangelistic campaigns, and both became well known amongst the Scottish churches. An important recruit was gained in the person of Alexander Brown, a young man at Crofthead, who, in 1863, was associated with them in the work, and at the same time was guided in his studies. This plan was later developed, several young men being attached as student preachers to the evangelists, and at the time of his death T. H. Milner had inaugurated an Education Fund for the training of such men.<sup>3</sup>

1. Various reports in "Christian Advocate", 1859, p.219.
2. Ibid, 1861, 1862, 1863.
3. Ibid, 1863, p.203; also "British Harbinger", 1866, p.288.

The meteoric rise of Milner to the leadership of the Scottish Churches, while a tribute to his spiritual and mental powers, was also indicative of a weakness in those churches. Being creedless they were exposed to the danger of being influenced by the unorthodox views of those won to their membership. Milner had strong views regarding the responsibility of every church member, and asserted that no church ought to elect elders or deacons, every senior member being 'ipso facto' an elder. This doctrine, which David King called the "Plymouthian Leaven",<sup>1</sup> never became the general view of the churches, but it increased the indifference of a considerable number as to forms of ministry in the Church.<sup>2</sup> There is evidence that Milner's views were modified by contact with the Churches of Christ, both in the matter of local church government and in respect of co-operation between the churches.<sup>3</sup> His premature death was a great blow, and diverted to Birmingham certain activities which had centred around him in Edinburgh.

George Greenwell, one of the first evangelists, had been out of touch with the churches for some years, but returned in 1860 and served with some of the churches in Liverpool for a short time, before joining

1. See "Memoirs of David King", p.239.
2. See James Anderson's "Outlines of My Life", p.184.
3. Cf. "Christian Advocate", 1858, pp.234-235, with his later work as Secretary of Scottish Evangelist Committee; also "Christian Advocate", 1857, pp.216-218, with "Christian Advocate", 1860, p.236.

the staff of the General Evangelist Committee in 1861. A letter in his own handwriting,<sup>1</sup> dated 24th October, 1862, mentions that there was difficulty that year in the Committee being able to support fully their staff of three evangelists (King, Evans and himself), partly because of the Lancashire distress arising out of the American Civil War. By the following year, however, there were two more evangelists at work, namely, Henry S. Earl and Henry Exley, and the Committee were able to say:- "We cannot say now that our greatest need is qualified preachers".

Earl was an Englishman who had been resident in the United States for some time and had graduated M.A. in Bethany College. He had with him letters of commendation from Alexander Campbell and other leaders, and laboured very successfully in many places before sailing to Australia in 1864, where he was to do a very notable work.

Although there were so few evangelists available, during the decade 1855-1865 the number of churches co-operating increased from 70 to 100, and the membership from 2,000 to 4,000, an evidence that there were many earnest and capable workers in addition to the evangelists. Another side to the picture, however, is

1. Lent, with a number of others, for the purpose of this study, by Mr. Herbert A. Evans, Leamington Spa.

revealed in the fact that only ten of the thirty new churches founded in that decade are still in existence. Some of the missing twenty are accounted for by the emigration of their leaders, others by amalgamation with other congregations, but the majority by the lack of a continued virile leadership.

In the period 1865-67 there died a number of the pioneers who had guided the movement from its infancy. John Davies of Mollington passed away in 1865. In 1866 Alexander Campbell died in America; and in the following year James Wallis passed to his rest.

David King, in a tribute at the time of Wallis's death, said:- "In our recently removed brother we have had not a merely devoted Christian, but one who, in the providence of God, has been enabled, directly or indirectly, to promote a return to the faith, order, and discipline of the Church of Christ to a larger extent than any other, living or dead, whose name has been enrolled with those in this country who during the last twenty-five years have pleaded a return in all things to the good laws and right statutes of the Apostolic Church".<sup>1</sup>

In the same sermon he gave an outline of Wallis's career. Born at Kettering in 1793 and serving his apprenticeship as a tailor, he joined the

1. "British Harbinger", 1867, p.221.

Baptist Church in 1812. Two years later, to avoid military service, he removed to Leicester, and in 1816 to Nottingham. He remained with the Baptists until 1834, when he joined the Scotch Baptists, thereby becoming a reader of William Jones's "Harbinger" and through its pages learning of Alexander Campbell and the American Disciples. He was a man of 43 when he left the Scotch Baptists and assumed the editorship of "The Christian Messenger and Reformer" in the beginning of 1837. Amidst his cares as a business man he managed to continue as Editor of the monthly magazine under its various titles until the end of 1861, when declining strength led him to transfer the "British Millennial Harbinger" to David King, who thereafter acted as Editor till his death in 1894.

Wallis also edited the first Hymn Book of the young churches, publishing in 1841 "A Selection of Psalms and Hymns for the use of the Disciples of Jesus Christ". Referring to this book the Editors of the Christian Hymnary, 1938, write:- "It is interesting to note certain things about the excellent Preface which James Wallis wrote to his book; for in it he sets forth some matters which belong to the characteristic genius of the witness of Churches of Christ. He begins by saying:- 'In preparing the following selection of Psalms and Hymns, we

1. Quoted in full in "The Christian Messenger", 1841, pp. 316-317.

have aimed at correctness of sentiment, rather than beauty of poetry; believing that our ascriptions of praise are much more acceptable to our heavenly Father, when founded on what He has done, is doing, and has promised to do, rather than by singing what is only the offspring of poetical imagination'. Whilst, in its own quaint way, this is a little hard on 'poetical imagination', it does declare two things quite definitely. First it makes clear the fact that the chief consideration in the selection of hymns is correctness of doctrine. They must first of all be Christian in sentiment. Secondly, it sets forth quite clearly that Christian Doctrine consists of facts - the things which have been done by God, are being done by Him, and which He has promised to do. What we are concerned with is the Holy Action of God in creation and redemption. This is an emphasis and a simplification which was made by John Glas in the 18th century and later by all our fathers in the Faith; and now in these latter days it has come to be the burden of most theologians in every Church. Further, there is in this sentence from Wallis's Preface (and it is illustrated in his collection of Psalms and Hymns and again emphasised later in the Preface) a definite recognition of the eschatological nature of the Christian Faith and of the Christian interpretation of history. The things which have been

done - the definitive facts of the Christian Faith - are related to, and one with, the things which are being done, and the things which are yet to be done. Here again is an anticipation in recognition of a truth which is now everywhere accepted by wise Christian scholars.

"A further sentence in Wallis's Preface is worthy of quotation because it emphasises another fundamental characteristic of the witness of Churches of Christ. 'We have endeavoured also to avoid including hymns, the chief subject of which is expressive of ourselves, or addressed to any of the Christian virtues; feeling confident there is not anything that can be said about our frail selves, in the least worthy to be mentioned, in praise to Him Who has called all flesh as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass'. Here we have a clear expression of the fact that the subject and the object of Church praise is not ourselves, but God. Praise is to be objective and not subjective. This was, of course, the characteristic of Primitive Christian worship".

Extended editions of Wallis's hymnbook were issued in 1848, 1853, and 1865. David King succeeded him in this work also, publishing "Psalms, Hymns, and Scripture Chants for Christians" in 1868; and "A Collection of Hymns for Churches of Christ" in 1888.

### III. SOME PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

It will be recalled that the divisions amongst the Scotch Baptists were partly responsible for the formation of the first Churches of Christ. The desire for Christian union had a strong appeal for peace-loving Scotch Baptists who were distressed by the internal strife so long in their midst. The Churches of Christ considered complete independence of each congregation would help to achieve the true unity. Many of the first congregations distrusted the holding of General Conferences, partly because they feared such Conferences might develop into a Central Body which would control the churches. Dissension within a congregation became only too common, and frequently both parties appealed to sister churches for approval. It was not always easy to decide which party to recognise. Sometimes an offer was made to arbitrate, and sometimes there was a refusal to recognise either party till a reconciliation was reached.

As a result of their experiences the Fife District of Churches, at a meeting held on 24th March, 1847, (just prior to Campbell's visit from America), made the following suggestions:-<sup>1</sup>

1. "Christian Messenger", 1847, pp.236-237.

1. The acts of one congregation, in all ordinary cases, particularly with respect to the receiving or putting away of members, should be held in respect by every other congregation, in confidence that they have done right, without making it their business to inquire into this or that, presuming that those on the spot must have a more perfect knowledge of all cases and events occurring in their own locality.

2. No one who may have been separated from one congregation, and still standing in that separated position, ought to be received by any other congregation without making reparation to, and obtaining the acquittal of the congregation that put him away.

3. In like manner, no one who may have voluntarily separated himself, implying disrespect and want of confidence, ought to be received by any other congregation, without the concurrence asked and obtained of the dishonoured congregation.

4. In all removals, casual or permanent, of members of congregations from one place to another, letters of introduction from the place left to the place visited should be obtained and presented.

5. If disagreement arise in any congregation it is lawful and right for other congregations to endeavour by counsel and advice to bring about unity and peace, not by virtue of any authority that one congregation has over

another, but in virtue of the relation in which all stand to each, as being of the "one body of Christ" and members one of another.

6. A report of non-success by those who have been chosen to inquire into the merits of such a case should, in the event of failure, be immediately made out and circulated for the guidance of others. The congregations in general ought to receive and act upon such report as being the most trustworthy evidence that can be secured; and unitedly avoid having any fellowship with the party guilty of schism, till such time as they see their error and humble themselves, to make confession and return to the bosom of the congregation.

These suggestions were considered during the following months, not too favourably, by most of the churches; and James Henshall, in a letter dated 21st August, refers to a discussion of the matter at Edinburgh, when Alexander Campbell gave his views on the subject of union and co-operation. In the letter he writes:-<sup>1</sup> "There is no such thing in the New Testament as the discipline of churches by churches; but each church is under discipline to itself, and accountable to no tribunal on earth; but only to its Head in heaven ... There is no synodical jurisdiction among the churches of the saints... The seven churches in Asia Minor were

1. "Christian Messenger", 1847, pp.428-430.

addressed each by the Head, and warned of the departures from the truth they were guilty of. No council was called of churches to reprimand them and bring them back to their original state".

In 1861 "The Nature and Limits of the Co-operation" were defined by the Annual Conference, and included these statements:-<sup>1</sup>

"That this Co-operation has for its object evangelisation only, and disclaims all power to settle matters of discipline or differences between brethren or churches; that if in any instance it should see fit to refuse to insert in, or to remove from, the List any church, or company of persons claiming to be a church, it shall do so only in reference to this Co-operation, leaving each and every church to judge for itself, and to recognise any fellowship, as it may understand the law of the Lord to require.

"That in the event of division unhappily taking place in any church having part in this Co-operation, and the General Meeting consenting to examine the case, and declining further co-operation with one or both parties until the breach is healed, and as all Conferences or Synods claiming power to control individual churches are unscriptural and evil, the decision of this Co-operation, in such case, shall only relate to its

associated action, and leave each church to determine for itself in all matters of fellowship and co-operation with the party withdrawn from".

That is still the position.

The practical problem of church organisation was another that received much study within the pages of "The Christian Messenger" and within individual churches. The variety in expression and in methods of ordination is very interesting.

The Church at Nottingham, founded in 1836 with 14 members, had increased to over 200 when, on 28th October, 1841, "seven persons were ordained to eldership",<sup>1</sup> three being appointed bishops and the other four deacons. Similarly, in the much smaller congregation at Newmilns, Ayrshire, on 22nd March, 1842, G.C. Reid, evangelist, ordained three elders (two bishops and one deacon).<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of the same year Kilmarnock, with 64 members, reported that four elders were ordained (two bishops and two deacons).<sup>3</sup>

In June, 1843, John Laurie of Newmilns, in an article maintained that only evangelists should appoint elders.<sup>4</sup>

The Church at Grangemouth, in June, 1844, reported, "We have no pastors yet". R. Laird was acting

1. "Christian Messenger", V., pp.318-320.
2. Ibid, VI., pp.109-110.
3. Ibid, VI., pp.357-361.
4. Ibid, VII., pp.123-126.

as president.<sup>1</sup>

In November, 1845, the Church at Nottingham (see above) now had two pastors, four deacons, and two evangelists.<sup>2</sup>

In 1846 James Wallis argued for one church in a city.<sup>3</sup>

In 1851 there was a lengthened discussion on the question of a supported ministry, evoked by an article the previous year from the pen of Alexander Campbell. The Editor sided with Campbell.<sup>4</sup>

In 1853 there was some discussion on the Liberty of Mutual Teaching in the Church. The Editor's comments are worth quoting:- "Liberty of speech, apart from education and discipline, will more frequently be employed for evil than for good... Let every one be swift to hear, slow to speak, and not easily provoked to wrath... A new convert was not to be appointed a teacher... When Paul said to the church at Corinth, 'You may all speak one by one, that all may be edified', we conclude that he referred to the acknowledged teachers in the church, and not to every member of the body. And each individual ought to ponder seriously his own capacities for edifying the body, and how often he can prepare for the exercise. Christian learning and

1. "Christian Messenger", VIII., p.313.

2. Ibid, 1845, pp.334-335.

3. Ibid, 1846, pp.348-350.

4. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1850, p.534; 1851, p.86.

experience are essential to profitable teaching..."<sup>1</sup>

In the same year a correspondent suggested that a group of neighbouring churches should combine for church government. "The principle of government for a church is under bishops and deacons. What hinders the same principle of government to be applied to a number of churches? In Fife and neighbourhood some efforts at organisation have been attempted; with most happy results as regards the proclamation of the gospel. Simply extend the principle to government as well as to evangelisation".<sup>2</sup>

In 1858 the Church at Wigan reported in some detail its method of selecting officers. A study was first made of the qualifications required, "according to the testimony of the Apostles". Consideration was next given to the number of officers, and the conclusion reached that each church was at liberty to determine the number required. The third question was as to whether perfect unanimity was absolutely necessary in the recognition of pastors, and the answer was that, while not absolutely necessary, it was very desirable. Next was considered the question, 'Who is the proper person to nominate or suggest for the approval of the church those who were most qualified for the office? The church decided:- (a) The evangelist who had laboured

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1853, p.89.

2. Ibid, 1853, p.328.

most in forming the church; (b) failing such an evangelist, "the church appointed its oldest brother in the church to perform that duty". Fifthly, after a church service he nominated one by one John Corf, William McDougall, and Timothy Coop. The church indicated approval of the choice by every member rising, so that perfect unanimity was obtained. Lastly, the three pastors were requested to select for approval two brethren qualified for the office of deacon.<sup>1</sup>

Next year, 1859, Glasgow reported the appointment of overseers and deacons. "Almost unanimously the church came to the conclusion of inviting six of their number to take office: those brethren being thus invited by a considerable majority, and with the willing consent of the minority, after considering the matter among themselves, agreed to acquiesce in the wish thus expressed. Therefore the church met for the purpose of setting them apart, with fasting, prayer and the right hand of fellowship, on Lord's Day morning, 16th January, when about 50 were present. Bro. John Gray presided. After reading portions of Scripture and delivering a short and appropriate address, as well as engaging in prayer to Almighty God to guide, direct and bless them, the president called on two other brethren also to engage in prayer; and then, in the name of the church and in

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1858, p.50.

the most solemn manner, gave the right hand of fellowship, first to William Linn, John Brown, and John Clark, as overseers; and second to Robert Lambie, John Wood, and Thomas Millie, as deacons. The brethren and sisters present afterwards did the same, and thus ended the duties of the morning in a most agreeable manner, all seemingly gratified with the proceedings. Afterwards they retired to the hall adjoining the chapel, and partook of breakfast, enjoying themselves in Christian and social intercourse<sup>1</sup>".

In the following year the church at Birmingham, still under the care of their evangelist, David King, made an appointment of deacons. "After a careful examination of the New Testament teaching concerning deacons, a special meeting of the church was called, in order that the Disciples might look out from among themselves brethren qualified for this important ministry. Bro. King, who has till now held in charge this service, stated his conviction that the church was blessed with brethren in every way qualified for the deacon's office, but urged that the election should be considered to have taken place only in the event of the church's ability unanimously to call to the work in question. Bren. Johnstone, Lemprier, Eskin, and Tompkinson were then named, and unanimously declared fit and proper persons for the

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1859, p.154.

office. On the next Lord's Day, after a brief address, and prayer by several brethren, the elected were set over the work to which the church had called them, by the laying on of the hands of Bro. King - it being understood that thereby was imparted unto them the charge (in this particular department) which he had till then retained".<sup>1</sup>

The above examples illustrate the independence which each congregation exercised in such matters as local government and ministry. This was in accord with the liberality of thought implied in their movement for Christian re-union, with the plea, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty", but not very common in that age, still marked by much intolerance and dogmatism.

#### IV. THEOLOGICAL HARDENING AND ISOLATION

As is notable in the history of other religious movements, so in this it falls to be recorded that the opening period of liberal-mindedness was followed by another in which there gradually developed a theological hardening and a dogmatism that were not quite in the best spirit of the movement towards re-union. An inevitable result was a religious isolation, a separation from other Christian bodies, and the neglect of suitable opportunities of impressing other people favourably. At the same

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1860, p.102.

time there was value in determining some definite views on certain problems, as will be shown later in this study.

An illustration of this is to be found in the gradual development of a very critical attitude with regard to the Disciple Movement in America. At the General Annual Meeting in 1859 the following resolution was passed:-

"Reports having been circulated in this country, that some of the Churches of the Disciples in America admit unbaptized persons to the Lord's table, it is requested that enquiry be made to ascertain the truth of the matter, by the Chairman of this Meeting, to Brother Alexander Campbell, and that the reply be published in the 'British Millennial Harbinger'."

Accordingly, G.Y. Tickle wrote a letter which, together with Campbell's reply, was published the following year. Campbell wrote:-

"I can say, so far as my knowledge extends, we have no such custom. In all my travels abroad, I have not witnessed such an occurrence. That unbaptized persons may have sat down to the Lord's table amongst our brotherhood without invitation, is not wholly improbable; but I know of no church that has formally invited them to participate with it on such occasions. We do not, indeed, on any such occasions, known to me, 'invite' or 'debar',

in the usual currency of these words, anyone unbaptized to participate with us in any act of social worship. Communion, indeed, is not confined to any one ordinance:- Lord's Day, Lord's Supper, prayer, or praise. We can preach to all men, and pray for all men, whether they pray or do not with us, but we cannot praise or commune for all men in any act of social worship. Such have been my convictions time out of mind...<sup>1</sup> What Thomas S. Wallis many years later termed "this vague and unsatisfactory reply"<sup>2</sup> did not "divest the subject of a certain dubiety and misgiving", but it showed no change in Campbell's position since the publication in 1845 of his statement following the Campbell and Rice Debate;<sup>3</sup> and there was not very much said about the matter for a few years.

In 1862 David King took over the editorship of the 'British Millennial Harbinger' from James Wallis, and in an early number gave considerable space for the copy of a long letter he had sent to Alexander Campbell on the subject of "Communion with the Sects", and for extracts<sup>4</sup> from Campbell's "Harbinger" which had prompted his letter. Isaac Errett, a rising leader, for example, had written:- "We are compelled to recognise as Christians many who have been in error on baptism, but who in the spirit of obed-

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1860, p.451.
2. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1889, p.104.
3. See Chapter Three.
4. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1862, pp.59-68.

ience are Christians indeed". Richardson had stated:-  
 "The reception or non-reception of unbaptized believers to the Lord's Table is an untaught question, and it is one we cannot scripturally either discuss or decide". And Pendleton had given his view:- "To plead for union and at the same time exclude the really pious from the Communion of the body and blood of the Saviour is, in the very nature of things, to destroy the practical power of our plea". No reply on the matter from Campbell was received; but Benjamin Franklin published King's letter in his "American Christian Review", and, in a comment, assured him, "There will be found no difference between the brethren on this side and the other side of the Atlantic, on the subject in question." <sup>1</sup>

The "American Christian Review" of 7th June, 1864, contained an appeal from James Challen, an American leader. After referring to a letter from H.S. Earl (who was leaving Britain for Australia after two years' successful work), he suggested that the American Christian Missionary Society should send out two missionaries to England for a year or more, with a suitable outfit, to visit the churches there and plant new ones. "Many years ago a mission of this kind was contemplated, and expectations were raised both in this country and in England, in reference to it; but, like many other

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1862, pp:170 et seq.

projects, it fell to the ground. If a special call were made for funds, as for evangelists, it would now be responded to".<sup>1</sup> The British Annual Meeting of that year passed this resolution:- "That the thanks of this meeting be transmitted to Bro. James Challen, of Philadelphia, for his very appropriate appeal to the American Christian Missionary Society in behalf of the brethren in this country, seeing the urgent need which exists for the labours of able and faithful proclaimers of the ancient Gospel".<sup>2</sup>

The question of Evangelistic Help from America was again discussed at the Annual Meeting of 1866. "Considerable discussion arose. Two things were apparent:- (1) An earnest, loving, faithful preacher, sound in the faith, and firm in adherence to the order of the church of God, would be gladly received without regard to country or clime. (2) Any evangelist, whether American or English, who in any way advocates communion at the table of the Lord with unbaptized persons is to be considered as repudiated by the general meeting of the churches".<sup>3</sup> The following resolution was carried by a majority:-

"That we learn with deep regret that some Evangelists in America commune at the Lord's table with unbaptized persons who, without formal invitation and, as

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1864, p.291.

2. Ibid, 1864, p.318.

3. "British Harbinger", 1866, p.320.

it is alleged, on their own responsibility, partake; and we hereby decline to sanction evangelistic co-operation with any brother, whether from America or elsewhere, who knowingly communes with unbaptized persons, or who, in any way, advocates such communion".

Two years later the question again came up, and it was resolved:- "That Bren. King, Tickle, Linn and McDougall be a Committee to prepare and forward to the "American Christian Review", the "Christian Standard", and Alexander Campbell's "Millennial Harbinger", a statement in reference to certain differences between the Churches in America and Great Britain".<sup>1</sup> The resolution was not carried out, because two of the four<sup>2</sup> on the Committee were unable to engage in the work. David King, however, completed a series of letters (previously promised, and some sent before the Annual Meeting) to the "American Christian Review"; and printed them also in his own "British Harbinger" for 1868 and 1869. Those letters had<sup>3</sup> a considerable influence on the British brotherhood.

The first practical application of the 1866 resolution occurred in 1872. The General Evangelist Committee reported to the Annual Meeting:- "Having heard that there was a possibility of Bro. Exley

1. "British Harbinger", 1868, pp.318-326.
2. "Christian Advocate", 1889, p.246.
3. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1889, p.104.

(an English evangelist who had gone to America in 1865) returning for a time at least to this country, we gladly acted upon the spirit of a resolution passed by you in August, 1866, and wrote assuring our dear brother of earnest support and co-operation should he again visit our shores, and enter upon his old field of labour. On receipt of our note he immediately made preparations to come, and arrived here early in June<sup>1</sup>".

The Committee's proposal to engage him for at least one year was "not acted upon", when it was ascertained by a deputation appointed at the Annual Meeting to interrogate him that he had adopted the American practice while in America. The same Meeting refused an offer from B. Franklin and J.F. Rowe, two eloquent American preachers, to come and spend about six months amongst the British churches.

Timothy Coop of Wigan, who had been Treasurer of the Evangelist Committee since 1861, was one of those disappointed by this decision. He was keen to have evangelism stressed, and was coming to the conclusion that the time of the Annual Meeting was being "taken up principally with talk and very little real work. The business was largely that of regulating the churches and private individuals, and in trying to keep the churches free from heterodoxy; while no inconsiderable time was

1. "British Harbinger", 1872, p.312.

employed in an apparent effort to set the American churches right on the Communion question and other kindred matters".<sup>1</sup>

In 1875 the American Disciples, at their Annual Convention, inaugurated the Foreign Christian Missionary Society. H.S. Earl, who had worked with brilliant success in Australia, was planning to return to England to found a new church somewhere. The F.C.M.S. arranged to subsidise his effort. Timothy Coop visited Earl at Southampton, where he was getting audiences of 2,000, and became a convert to his methods. In 1878 he visited America, interviewed the Executive Board of the F.C.M.S. and arranged to give generous financial aid for a special campaign in England.<sup>2</sup> The arrival of more American evangelists, working on American lines, widened the breach between the British Churches of Christ and the American Disciples.

## V. FOUNDING OF COLONIAL CHURCHES

The first colonial Church of Christ was planted in New Zealand. T. Jackson left England on 4th July, 1843, and arrived in New Zealand on 2nd November, almost four months later.<sup>3</sup> He began preaching in 1844, and soon there was a very small congregation. He was joined

1. "Life of Timothy Coop", p.287.
2. Ibid, p.327.
3. "Christian Messenger", 1845, pp.92-94.

by George Taylor, who sailed from the home shores in November, 1843.<sup>1</sup> A report from J. Barton, dated 30th November, 1846, mentions that the Church, at Auckland,<sup>2</sup> was slowly increasing. A letter written in January, 1851,<sup>3</sup> gave news of a church established at Nelson.

In 1857 the Church at Cupar, Fife, which had suffered heavy losses through the activities of Dr. Thomas, received practically a deathblow by the emigration of most of the remaining membership. "There will be 22 of us connected together", wrote Andrew Bremner, "Myself and family, my brother and family, and my father-in-law and family, besides John Taylor and David Colville, making in all 25. Bro. James Butler and family sailed on Sunday last from Leith to the same port; so I think we shall have a little church in Otago".<sup>4</sup> A church was duly formed at Dunedin in September, 1858.

Scotland also had the honour of sending the first emigrants to represent the Churches of Christ in Australia. In 1847 twenty members of the Newmilns Church emigrated, thirteen of them being bound for South Australia.<sup>5</sup> A letter from Adelaide by Thomas Magarey, dated March, 1852, acknowledges with gratitude a case of books and the last year's "Harbingers" sent out by

1. "Christian Messenger", 1843, p.426.
2. Ibid, 1847, p.286.
3. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1851, p.329.
4. Ibid, 1857, p.569.
5. "Christian Messenger", 1847, p.385.

James Wallis.<sup>1</sup> In 1854 a report was received of brethren in Sydney, and several letters were published from Melbourne, including an account from the pen of Robert Service (formerly prominent member in Ayrshire and Glasgow) describing the first meeting in Melbourne.<sup>2</sup> The visit of T.H. Milner in 1862 was a great stimulus to the seven churches which he addressed, 400 persons attending the farewell meeting, held prior to his sailing for home.<sup>3</sup> In the same year Matthew Wood Green left Manchester for New Zealand,<sup>4</sup> where he proved an excellent preacher before transferring to New South Wales to do a notable work as evangelist. H.S. Earl arrived in Australia in 1864, and had immediately a remarkable success as a preacher, adding about 130 members in Melbourne in the first four months.<sup>5</sup> His success caused more American evangelists to be wanted.

## VI. EARLY TRAINING WORK

One of the first things attempted by the General Evangelist Committee, after launching the Manchester campaign in 1855, was to secure a number of promising men to add to their staff of workers. In accordance with the first resolution passed at the 1856 Annual Meeting,<sup>6</sup> James

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1852, p.568.
2. Ibid, 1854, pp.380, 528.
3. "Christian Advocate", 1863, pp.59, 109.
4. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1862, p.219.
5. Ibid, 1864, p.429.
6. Ibid, 1856, p.453.

Wallis (on behalf of the Committee) sent out a circular letter to all the churches "for the purpose of ascertaining whether there is any brother residing in your locality, who, having indicated his aptitude and desire to discharge the duties of an evangelist, might be placed with a recognised evangelist, so as to acquire the needful experience and confidence for independent action in proclaiming the Gospel". This circular recognised the necessity of some form of training. Unfortunately, there seems to have been no response in any way of a volunteer.

In 1863 T.H. Milner inaugurated an Education Fund, with a view to training young men for service in the churches. "The establishment of an educational seminary we do not deem advisable in present circumstances. The end can be reached more cheaply and readily otherwise. There is no lack of good and cheap education in the land; north, south, east and west. All that is needed is, that young brethren, to whom more or less of such schooling would be an advantage in the way of fitting them for congregational and public effort, be supplied therewith ... In some cases the brethren receiving the education would require to have all the cost supplied; while in others they would contribute a portion themselves. With some, only a partial cessation from business would be requisite; with others, none at

all. At first... he would not be expected to do more than make himself useful under the guidance of the elders of the local Church. His public appearances would be step by step, and his progress and usefulness would be limited only by what he has zeal and faith to accomplish. Many a brother might never go wholly into the evangelistic service, who, nevertheless, by some such timely help, would all his life be a more efficient preacher and teacher than he possibly could be without. Others, however, thus encouraged by those who are their guides, finding the way gradually and surely open to the engagement of all their time in Gospel labour, would come at length to be acknowledged by the churches as evangelists, according as their labours evinced their title to this confidence. We know no other way in which churches seeking to abide by New Testament usages can retain their liberty of ministry, and increase its efficiency in this one of its most important functions".<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1866 Milner reported to David King's journal, "I have given up the 'Christian Advocate'. Scottish news should be sent to the 'British Harbinger'. Scottish churches are supporting six evangelists at present. Two or three of these are on our experimental conjoint Educational and Evangelistic Scheme".<sup>2</sup>

In the previous year David King had opened a

1. "Christian Advocate", 1863, pp.203-204.
2. "British Harbinger", 1866, p.145.

Training Fund with similar ideas to those of Milner, and on the death of the latter the Scottish Conference (1866) agreed to merge their fund into that commenced<sup>1</sup> by King. In the month of October that year it was announced that John Strang, who had been one of those studying under Milner's scheme, had become the first student of David King at Birmingham. He remained a whole year, and was then engaged as an evangelist to labour amongst the Birmingham and District churches,<sup>2</sup> continuing his studies meanwhile under his tutor. D. Scott, an Irishman, and J. Adam, from Dundee, were other students prior to the first Englishman, T. K. Thompson of Leicester, who entered training in 1871.<sup>3</sup> He studied for two years before entering the evangelistic field. Men of less promise stayed a few months only and then returned to their homes, to render improved service to their local churches; men of greater promise, after a longer training, were recommended. Amongst those who became evangelists, in addition to all the foregoing, were Joseph Barnett and Lancelot Oliver. The last-named was afterwards to succeed his tutor both as editor and as trainer of evangelists. In a contribution to the "Memoir of David King" he wrote:- "The help given (to his students) was princip-

1. "British Harbinger", 1866, p.288.

2. Ibid, 1868, p.36.

3. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1871, p.287.

ally a thorough drilling in the inductive method of studying Bible topics. There was plenty of hard work in getting together all portions of Scripture on a given theme, such as 'The Spirit of God', and drawing from these their teaching on the parts of the theme these passages suggested. When the theme had been well considered in this way, then one was permitted to read such books, or portions of books, bearing on the topic, as Bro. King thought would be helpful. I daresay the results arrived at might, in some measure, be due to the teacher's known views; but he took the utmost care to avoid that, watching the correctness of the method principally. I remember when the first difference arose, he said to the effect:- 'When we differ like this, as soon as you think we have discussed the matter sufficiently, say so, and we will leave it at once; you must not accept anything merely in deference to me'.<sup>1</sup>"

David King had undertaken this training work on his own responsibility, at a time when neither the Annual Meeting nor his local church would assume it. But after a few years the Annual Meeting appointed a Special Committee "to prepare a plan for the training of preaching brethren". Their report was considered and accepted at the 1876 Annual Meeting. Amongst other things it recommended:- "That a committee be formed to

1. "Memoir of David King", p.17.

raise funds, determine the fitness of applicants, and locate them in such places, and with such evangelists or elderships, as shall be deemed equal to the requirement. The committee should be chosen by the General Annual Meeting, and not be composed chiefly of the members of any committee appointed for other work"<sup>1</sup>. Brethren King, Tickle, Marsden, Black, Brown, Johnston, and Crook were appointed the Committee.<sup>2</sup>

It will be evident that David King, as a leading evangelist, editor of the leading journal, and theological tutor of a new generation of evangelists, had become the most influential person amongst the British Churches of Christ. He had also distinguished himself in debate as a champion of Christianity, gaining a high reputation "far beyond his own chosen religious connection"<sup>3</sup>. His debate with G.J. Holyoake, Secularist leader and editor of the "Reasoner", took place in London during three nights in September, 1850. In 1867 he met in debate, at Newcastle, Mr. Charles Watts, Sub-Editor of the "National Reformer". His most famous debate was that with Bradlaugh, held in Bury on six successive nights in 1870. It was deemed "the severest handling that modern English secularism has had"<sup>4</sup>.

1. "Christian Advocate", 1876, p.322.
2. Ibid, 1876, p.323.
3. "Memoir of David King", p.24.
4. Ibid, p.28.

In another appreciation in "Old Paths" (another of his publications) Lancelot Oliver wrote:- "By nature and personal endeavour he was fitted to command a great influence. A strong full voice, commanding aspect, a powerful mind, and a great control of all his powers, gave him immense influence on the platform; and in his use of the pen, a terse but varied style was accompanied by complete mastery of the argument and much skill in showing the weakness and, if need were, the ridiculousness of an opponent's position ... Some judged him over-<sup>1</sup>critical and sometimes unnecessarily severe".

CHAPTER FIVE

THE REMAINING PERIOD (UNCLASSIFIED)

1. "Memoir of David King", p.19.

1. THE MIDDLE PERIOD (CONCLUDED)

The Middle Period was held from 1872 to 1894. David King is favored of a work under the control of the Annual Meeting, was not really begun until 1874, when a new committee (William King, Chairman; Dr. Robinson, Treasurer; John Fisher, Secretary; and William ... Secretary; all of whom were ... Robinson, Treasurer; Alexander Brown, as tutor. He had been an evangelist for twenty years, having had his first training under J.A. Witherspoon of his own in Scotland.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MIDDLE PERIOD (CONCLUDED)

During this period ... the work at Birmingham, ... his training ... several ... also gave ... training of William Duffin, a young Scottish evangelist, and William Carson of Glasgow, moving on to Newcastle, he formed four classes (58 students); and occupied ... courses for 27 students in other parts of the country. William Carson also remained under his personal care.

Isaac Oliver, who had been a student of David King, and had received some help from Alexander Brown

1. Annual Meeting Report, 1894, pp. 14-17.

## I. TRAINING WORK UNDER ALEXANDER BROWN

The Training work, laid down in the 70s by David King in favour of a work under the control of the Annual Meeting, was not really resumed until 1884, when a new committee (William Linn, Chairman; Wm. McLintock, Treasurer; John Nimmo; Thomas Jenkins; and William Crockatt, Secretary; all of Glasgow, except John Nimmo, coalmaster, of Edinburgh) appointed a fellow Scotsman, Alexander Brown, as tutor. He had been an evangelist for twenty years, having had his first training under J.B. Rotherham at his home in Crofthead.

Whereas David King had conducted all his training work at Birmingham, Alexander Brown undertook to operate his training scheme wherever he happened to be located as an evangelist. Commencing at Glasgow he conducted several oral classes each week, including one at Edinburgh; and also gave individual attention to the training of William Duffin, a young Scottish evangelist, and William Marsden of Wigan. Moving on to Newcastle, he formed four classes (55 students); and conducted correspondence courses for 27 students in other parts of the country. William Marsden also remained under his personal care.

Lancelot Oliver, who had been a student of David King, and had received some help from Alexander Brown

was appointed to do similar work (oral classes) in the Furness District. He also had a few corresponding students. He was not able to continue after the first year.

In the second year Brown worked the first part of the time in Scotland, conducting five classes; and the second part in Lancashire, conducting twelve classes weekly, with 134 students. During the year he had 35 corresponding students;<sup>1</sup> but decided he had not the strength to continue with the correspondence in addition to all the other activities. In fact he had a breakdown in health, but later, with the co-operation of Lancelot Oliver again, he undertook all the branches of training. A.W. Bushnell of Hastings and R.K. Francis of London were the next special students, and the latter afterwards completed fifty years as an evangelist with the British churches. In 1889 the students in training included R.P. Anderson, a future missionary to Norway, and R. Halliday, a future missionary to Burmah. Another stalwart of the future was studying in 1890, in the person of Joseph Smith of Newcastle. He was later to succeed as tutor at Overdale College Albert Brown of Nottingham, who was a student of 1891. Unfortunately the health of Alexander Brown broke down again, and he died on 13th September, 1893, at the age of 52.<sup>2</sup>

1. Annual Meeting Report, 1885, pp.17-18.
2. "Bible Advocate", 1893, p.393.

Alexander Brown, although an evangelist for thirty years, was pre-eminent as a teacher. "His deep-toned manly voice gave power to his public speaking, but it was in class work that its effectiveness was most conspicuous. There was a kind of music almost in his reading of the Greek Testament, and in a Bible class the natural unrestrained fulness of his tones made his remarks impress themselves pleasantly on the memory".<sup>1</sup> An example of his expository power is retained for us in his volume, "Conversion to God".

## II. EVANGELISATION

We have noted in last chapter that the membership of the churches increased in the decade 1855-65 from 2,000 to 4,000. In the following decade the increase was only 1,000; by 1885 the number had risen to over 7,500, and by 1895 to over 10,500. If we calculate the percentage increase in each decade we get:- to 1865, 100%; to 1875, 25%; to 1885, 50%; and to 1895, 40%. Although the numbers remained small, they showed a steady increase. With the increasing membership there was an increasing number of evangelists, some of whom had been trained under David King or Alexander Brown.

In 1865 Henry Exley of Wakefield, after two

1. "Bible Advocate", 1893, p.394.

years of much appreciated service, was on the eve of departing for America when he reported:- "In every place I have visited good and increasing audiences have been uniform; and it has seemed and has been felt, both by myself and the brethren, a cruel thing just when the promise of most good was seen, that it was no longer in my power to stay - other churches, with needs equally great, calling me away. I am deeply convinced that the present system of what I may call broken-up labour is not the need of the churches, but a very much longer period - say, of twelve months at least"<sup>1</sup>.

William Thomson, one of the pioneer evangelists, spent a few months among the churches that year on holiday from the United States. The church at Maryport, in reporting a visit he had paid, said:- "Had a preacher followed Bro. Thomson in this town, many would have been added to the church"<sup>2</sup>.

The Scottish Committee, in their annual report that year, said:- "The want of preachers has, as hitherto, prevented the work from being prosecuted in many centres in which, to all appearances, the labours of an evangelist are essential to the increase of the church in the locality"<sup>3</sup>.

Amongst the 100 churches that year the evangelists

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1865, p.254.
2. Ibid, 1865, p.255.
3. Ibid, 1865, p.289.

serving were:- C. Abercrombie, Alexander Brown, David King and H. Exley, twelve months each; W. Thomson, ten months; E. Evans, six months; T.H. Parris, Rae and Roth-erham, four months each; and W. Hindle, one month.

The Scottish Conference decided that year to cancel the rule which restricted the salary of their evangelists to £90 per annum.<sup>1</sup>

In 1867 the Scottish Committee, on the subject of itineration, expressed themselves thus:- "Can Evangelists who are moved from place to place do permanent good? They may arouse and awaken the slumbering soul, but when awakened is he not often left without more knowledge by the Evangelist leaving the locality; where-  
as, were the Evangelist left amongst the brethren to take the oversight and build up the churches, we are confident that the Truth would make more way in the world".<sup>2</sup> But there was no increase of evangelists, and so there was no change of system.

In 1870 they reiterated their opinion, with more particular application. "It has long been the opinion of your Committee that each church should be a centre of evangelistic labour, and ought to exert a lively influence on the surrounding district by keeping up a regular supply of preaching brethren able to make

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1865, p.289.  
2. "British Harbinger", 1867, p.314.

the name of the Lord known. This can only be done by the several elders and office-bearers going more heartily into the work than they have hitherto done, and with this view employing a suitable evangelist to look after visitation, prayer meetings, and other matters connected with the organisation, which they cannot possibly overtake. Were this suggestion carried out we would have Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Banff, and possibly other towns as centres of evangelisation, and thus relieve the Committee from much unnecessary labour".<sup>1</sup>

Edinburgh, with a roll of 130, had sustained an evangelist that year, W. Hurte, and retained him for four years.

Charles Abercrombie, who had gone back to America in 1868 and returned in 1873, threw out a challenge, desiring "that some brother would put him in possession of the evidence on which the brethren rest their authority for what they are accustomed to call 'mutual ministry'".<sup>2</sup> An interesting, but somewhat vague, discussion in the correspondence columns followed; with a final word from the Editor, "The many communications we have on the subject, all in the same tone, warrant us in saying that the brotherhood in Great Britain are sound on the question of Mutual Teaching".<sup>3</sup>

1. "British Harbinger", 1870, p.285.
2. "Christian Advocate", 1873, p.356.
3. Ibid, 1874, p.120.

In the records of 1874 we note that several churches or districts had adopted the suggestion to engage their own evangelist. Glasgow had John Strang, first student of David King, for three years before he sailed in 1874 to help the churches in Australia.<sup>1</sup> London had laid first claim to the services of Bartley Ellis since 1870, releasing him for some months each year to serve elsewhere. S.H. Coles, returned from Australia, was secured by the church at Southport. Birmingham had David King. Other evangelists of that time were Abercrombie, Adam, Brown, Evans, Greenwell, Hindle, Hurte, Murray, McDougall, D. Scott and Thompson; making 15 evangelists in all working with about 4,400 members and 109 churches. In the next year the numbers increased by 600 members and 16 churches.

In the following year James Anderson is noted as being engaged by seven churches co-operating in the Slamannan District, a mining area between Glasgow and Edinburgh, and the scene of C. Abercrombie's early successes.<sup>2</sup> Joseph Pittman, formerly of the London City Mission, was also added to the General Staff.

That year's Conference decided on an interesting experiment, to foster "District Co-operation". The country was divided into Divisions, and the Evangelists

1. "Christian Advocate", 1874, p.189.
2. Ibid, 1875, p.141.

1  
allocated as follows:-

Newcastle	- Scott
Chelsea & Leicester	- Ellis & Thompson
Southern Division	- Adam
Furness & N.E.	- Hindle (6 months each)
Wigan & Scotland	- Ellis (2 months each)
Furness & Lancashire	- McDougall
Manchester	- Brown
Yorkshire	- Pittman
As Committee may direct	- Greenwell

The Scottish Committee had in addition the services of the veterans Abercrombie and Evans, and a new evangelist, James Grinstead. This scheme, it was hoped, would mean, as well as better evangelistic results, more home life for the evangelists.

Around this time a notable work was being done by two of the senior evangelists - Edward Evans in Northumberland, and William McDougall in Furness.

In 1871, within a few weeks, during a visit of Evans, a church was formed at Spittal of over 50 members.<sup>2</sup> Eight years later he met with outstanding success at Bedlington, about 50 additions being reported.<sup>3</sup> Next year, 1880, a church was formed at Blyth.<sup>4</sup> Between his visits to Bedlington and Blyth he visited Birkenhead, Criccieth and Portmadoc. As a Welshman able to preach in his native tongue he was specially acceptable to the churches in North Wales. In his congregation at Criccieth there would be a boy who was to become famous, David Lloyd George.

1. "Christian Advocate", 1875, pp.318-319.
2. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1871, pp.214-215.
3. "Christian Advocate", 1879, pp.421-422.
4. Ibid, 1880, p.262.

William McDougall had been resident for many years in Wigan and serving the local church as one of the three bishops appointed in 1858, before being pressed into evangelistic service once again in 1866. David King's biographer, Joseph Collin, writes of him thus:-

"Closely exegetical, his expository work was very fine; and as a setter-forth of the person and claims of Christ, his power almost reached fascination. His life and work were, partly, marred by some who, through lack of fine sense, were entirely unsuited to exert a commanding influence over his destiny. He was a pastor, and should never have been thrown over into the stress and exposure of the general evangelistic field".<sup>1</sup>

Although he had also been a member of the General Evangelist Committee for many years he was disqualified because of a new rule formed in 1868 forbidding evangelists being on the Committee.<sup>2</sup> This rule was doubtless made to allow the Committee members freedom to discuss intimate questions concerning the evangelists, such as salary, suitability, etc., but it deprived the Committee of the very persons who were giving their lives to the work and who should be best fitted to formulate an effective policy.

As an evangelist McDougall had several times a

1. "Memoir of David King", p.55.
2. "British Harbinger", 1868, pp.318-326.

breakdown in health, but in spite of his weakness he had the joy of leadership in a wonderful development in Furness. The isolated church at Kirkby (referred to in the first chapter) was discovered by Francis Hill in 1854, and added to the list of co-operating Churches of Christ the following year. During the next twenty years Kirkby was visited by Church of Christ evangelists, such as Greenwell, Brown, Hindle, Abercrombie and D. Scott.<sup>1</sup>

"In 1874 began a new era with the advent of William McDougall, who found an open door. The membership in 1874 was 38; in 1875 it was 88 - more than doubled; in 1876 it rose to 101. Those were stirring times when the Chapel became too small and services were held in the open air and in farm-houses, the latter packed with people sitting on stairs...In 1876 a new Chapel was built at Wallend. The three services on the opening day averaged an attendance of 230. Mr. McDougall continued with the church until his death, and the church continued to grow until it reached a membership of 170. During this period Alexander Brown moved his training school to Kirkby, and it was here that both Albert Brown and Joseph Smith were trained, both of whom were later on the staff of Overdale College.<sup>2</sup>

In 1875 a Chapel was built at Lindal-in-Furness

1. "History of the Churches in Furness", by W. Robinson.
2. Ibid.

by a church planted two years earlier; a cause was begun in Ulverston in 1876; and a new effort was made at Ireleth by McDougall in 1878, a small church of 20 members being soon gathered.<sup>1</sup> Including an older, but small, church at Barrow there were thus five churches in Furness in 1879, with 238 members; and that year, out of fourteen evangelists serving in the country, four were working in Furness, namely, William McDougall, Joseph Barnett, Alexander Brown and Lancelot Oliver.<sup>2</sup>

In 1880 George Greenwell, the first English evangelist with the Churches, sailed for Australia, where he died six years later, at the age of 69, during his absence from home on an evangelistic campaign.<sup>3</sup> G.Y. Tickle, in an appreciation, wrote:- "Our first introduction to him was in the summer of 1844...He was then the rising man of our movement in England. G.C. Reid, up to this time, had occupied the most prominent place in our churches as a proclaimer. Although Greenwell never reached Reid's position amongst them as a preacher, his power as a writer far exceeded that of Reid, and gave great promise of a distinguished and useful career".<sup>4</sup> Alexander Campbell heard him preach, and afterwards testified:- "He is a strong argumentive speaker, and delivers himself with great clearness and power.

1. "Christian Advocate", 1879, pp.424-425.
2. Ibid, 1879, p.309, p.426.
3. Ibid, 1880, p.468.
4. Ibid, 1886, p.504.

He is well qualified to edify a Christian community"<sup>1</sup>.  
 He did not fulfil his early promise. "Shadows fell upon the early radiance, and he missed his way for a time; but was led back tenderly to his old fellowship, by the hand of David King, and continued in fellowship and somewhat fitful service until his removal to Australia, where he served to the end of life"<sup>2</sup>.

There was some attempt at the Annual Meeting of 1883 to have all the evangelists work again under the General Committee, ready to work wherever the need seemed greatest. This prompted Edward Evans to write, from his long experience, the point of view of an evangelist. "My connection with the Evangelist Committee has been to me satisfactory and agreeable. A more considerate and judicious committee I could not desire. The churches visited have afforded cordial reception... Still, all this notwithstanding, my itinerant mission being of a somewhat exceptional character, was to my sensitive mind and nervous temperament one of perpetual anxiety. The labourer in such a mission has 'no certain dwelling place'. In my own case, family and furniture have been removed long journeys to some fifteen places. These removals, attended with much expense and perplexity, did not in any place secure an unbroken work. These fifteen temporary homes had to be left year by

1. "Christian Advocate", 1886, p.488.  
 2. "Memoir of David King", pp.54-55.

year for several months (sometimes eight or ten) for service in other places..."<sup>1</sup>

In 1883 there commenced in the evangelistic field a young man, Sydney Black, who was able to work independently of committees or churches, and who gave much of his time to starting new causes. His father, Robert Black, had left his Scottish village - Twynholm in Kirkcudbrightshire - in his youth, and had succeeded in acquiring more than a competency as a draper in London, so that he was able to retire from business in 1875, at the age of 54. Brought up in the Church of Scotland, he joined the United Presbyterians at the age of 17, became a Congregationalist in Windsor and a Baptist in London, before he came to know of the Church of Christ position. He was satisfied with the latter, and was faithful to it throughout a long life.<sup>2</sup>

He married a daughter of James Wallis in 1852. Their first five children all died in childhood. Sydney was the eldest of six more, who all grew up and made their mark in life. Robert Black was the founder of a little church in Chelsea, which flourished and moved into larger premises at College Street. He had often been invited to be an elder, but only agreed when he had sufficient leisure to attend to his conception of the duties, in 1875. For thirty years thereafter he

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1883, pp.225-226.
2. "Sydney Black", by T.J. Ainsworth, pp.5-6.

was a faithful pastor, first in Chelsea and later in  
Fulham.<sup>1</sup>

When his eldest son, at the age of 22, expressed his wish to be an evangelist he gladly consented, and provided him with the means to be independent. To this advantage Sydney added unusual ability and dynamic force, so that he was very successful in his immediate object and influential in determining the policy of the churches. From 1883 to 1889 he conducted missions in many parts of the country. He devoted his first year to a mission in the little town of Leominster, and his second year to Leominster and another town in Hereford, Ross, establishing a church in each. His next effort was in the cathedral city of York, where he gathered a church of forty within a few weeks, and stayed with them for two years when they moved into their own meeting-house. He was unsuccessful in an attempt to establish a church at Scarborough, but many immersions followed his preaching with the churches at Gateshead-on-Tyne, Birmingham and Nottingham. His energy was amazing. In one week, at South Wigston near Leicester, in 1887, he delivered fifteen set discourses, besides giving shorter addresses in the villages and in a boot factory. After five years in the provinces he returned in 1888 to his native city to tackle the desperate problem of the Evangelisation of London. As was his custom he hired the best hall available, in

1. "Sydney Black", pp.15-16.

this case the Town Hall of Chelsea, and preached in it for 32 Sundays. More than one hundred were immersed, and the neighbouring churches shared in the quickening of religious life.<sup>1</sup>

Of the 151 churches listed in the Year Book of 1889 there are 97 still surviving fifty years later, roughly two-thirds of the total.

### III. RELIGIOUS JOURNALS

As the religious journals were private concerns until the end of 1889 it may be appropriate to make a survey of them here.

William Jones's "Millennial Harbinger"(1835-36) was the journal which introduced to Britain the writings of Alexander Campbell and other Disciple leaders in America. When the Editor found that Campbell went much farther than himself along certain lines of Reform he ceased publication.

His mantle was assumed by James Wallis, who began in 1837 the publication of "The Christian Messenger and Refòrmer". In 1845 he slightly changed its form, and it became "The Christian Messenger and Family Magazine". In 1848 the form and title were again changed, and "The British Millennial Harbinger" continued for the remainder of Wallis's editorship. The word

1. "Sydney Black", pp.38-47.

'millennial' was unfortunate, conveying the wrong idea that 'Campbellism' was associated with Millennarianism; whereas Campbell's idea was that the achievement of Christian Re-union would bring to pass the happy state all longed for.

During the 25 years of Wallis's editorship certain other periodicals had short careers. "In 1847, in answer to a call for a small penny monthly, the 'Bible Advocate' was issued, conjointly, by D. King and W. Godson, from a little press of their own; and it ran a course of about three years. Succeeding the earlier "B.A.", the 'Quo Warranto' was published monthly for some years; the main feature being a demand for authority for things done in the name of the Lord, that He had not ordained".<sup>1</sup>

The "Gospel Banner and Biblical Treasury" was published for four years (1848-51), during a period of some dissension, H. Hudston being the proprietor and W.J. Dawson the editor.

In 1862 David King took over from James Wallis the responsibility of the "British Millennial Harbinger", changing the name to the "British Harbinger" in 1866, and to the "Ecclesiastical Observer" in 1871, continuing under that name until 1889.

"The importance of the work done by Wallis in

1. "Memoir of David King", p.23.

laying the foundations of Church consciousness and theological outlook for Churches of Christ cannot be over-exaggerated. He was a man of deep learning and of sane piety. David King was a worthy successor, with a wider range of knowledge, especially in philosophical studies, but with the same passion for learning and scholarship in the field of theology. He was also a man of great personal gifts with the qualities of an ecclesiastical statesman. He was adamantly opposed to Millenarianism of any kind, and this may have influenced the change of title to "The Ecclesiastical Observer"; but the new title may well be taken as a symbol of the central place which the doctrine of the Church has always held in the Movement, from the days of John Glas to the present time".

In 1857 Thomas Hughes Milner founded "The Christian Advocate", which circulated chiefly in Scotland, but also in England and Wales. Milner's health breaking down, he closed the paper in 1865, intending to revisit Australia, but dying in London before embarkation.

The Scottish Annual Conference of 1872 recommended the revival of the "Advocate", and the second series (1873-77) was produced under the able editorship of John Aitken, of Edinburgh. A splendid example of his culture and catholic outlook is to be found in the Conference Paper which he read at the General Annual Meeting of 1875:-

1. "The Christian Advocate", 1937, p.153 (Article by W.Robinson).

"Our Relation to the Religious Associations around us".<sup>1</sup>

After one year's lapse, the "Christian Advocate" re-appeared in 1879, under the distinguished editorship of Gilbert Young Tickle of Liverpool, the Chairman of the General Evangelist Committee. He remained in charge until his death, a small committee of Scottish members sharing the business responsibility. When he died in 1888 he was succeeded by Lancelot Oliver.

David King, in a tribute to G.Y. Tickle, said:-  
 "The General Evangelist Committee's first Chairman presided over its deliberations for over thirty-three years, till laid aside in November last by the illness now fatally terminated. In our Annual Meetings his presence will be much missed and our consequent loss severely felt. In 1872 the duty of preparing and reading the first Annual Meeting Paper devolved upon him. He also wrote the paper for 1880 and that for 1884. In 1877 the Annual Meeting deputed him, with Messrs. Linn and D. King, to address affectionate remonstrance to the Churches in America upon the departure of many of those Churches from pure New Testament ground. He has, in various ways, well served us with his pen, as Editor; and not only in prose. He published a metrical rendering of the "Gospel According To John", giving pleasure thereby to many friends. Since then he has put most of

1. "The Christian Advocate", 1875, pp.289-310.

the Psalms into metre, and has left, complete, the "Gospel of Matthew" and the "Acts of Apostles" in metrical rhythm. His hymns, now in use, are favourites with many, and the hymn book shortly to be published will be enriched by others".<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Collin wrote of him thus:- "The superb G.Y. Tickle has often been referred to, in certain quarters, in favourable comparison to David King, especially in their respective editorial and other kindred relations. But the men's own mutual love and esteem, at their best, disarms all contrast. So different and yet so like. G.Y.T.'s presence was a peculiarly attractive one. Gentlemanly, even in the conventional sense, impulsive as a poet, tender as a woman, forgiving and ready to seek forgiveness; you loved him though his fire scathed you; you sought consolation in the passion of his love, from the judgment of his wrath; which was as unworldly as the man himself...His literary work was marked by fine taste and tone, and, on occasion, by a vigour all his own. As Editor of the "Christian Advocate" his relation to contributors was of the happiest, and was well sustained by valuable correspondence. Some of his hymns rank with the sweetest of age-lasting praise".<sup>2</sup>

1. " Ecclesiastical Observer", 1888, p.81.
2. " Memoir of David King", p.55-56.

In 1890 both the "Observer" and the "Advocate" ceased publication in favour of "The Bible Advocate", issued by "The Bible Advocate Committee". This meant that the journal was no longer a private venture.

David King was appointed Editor, continuing till his death in 1894, when Lancelot Oliver succeeded him.

A children's monthly magazine, "The Sunbeam", was begun at the same time as his "Christian Advocate", taken over by Mr and Mrs David King at the time of his death, and continued by them till 1887, when the General Sunday School Committee assumed the responsibility, with Mrs G.Y. Tickle as Editress.

#### IV. WORK AMONGST THE YOUNG

The fact of a children's magazine as early as 1857 indicates that some attention was being devoted at that time to the instruction of the young within the church.

It was in 1871, following the passing of the Elementary Education Act, that publicity began to be given to the work in Sunday Schools, and consideration of how to meet the new conditions. Joseph Adam throws some light on the position at that time. "We are in many respects behind the times in the carrying on of Sunday Schools, as a means to training the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The churches

in most of our large towns, it is true, have their schools; still, after all, there is amongst us, as a religious community, a want of sympathy for the work and united action in it... I believe that in certain Churches the want of Sunday Schools, with the attendant Bible classes, as a means of interesting the young mind far superior to the most excellent platform exhortation, is the cause why parents can see their once hopeful children either mingling among the 'sects', or in the world living a godless life. On the other hand many things can doubtless be said against them. 'They are unscriptural; the Apostle Paul never taught a Sunday School; they usurp the province of parental instruction, etc.' To this we reply, that the law for Sunday Schools is not to be found in the mere letter of the book, but, with the authority for other expediences, in the spirit or genius of our religion, which is that of love to God and man". The Editor commented as follows:- "We do not at all conclude that the little we do in Sunday School work is owing largely to indifference. Many of our churches are small and so circumstanced that Sunday School work is next to impossible. Still there is room to move on, and it is time to look out".<sup>1</sup>

In the report of the 1872 Annual Meeting, held at Leicester, the following paragraph is included:-  
 "Certain teachers in the Sunday School of the Leicester

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1871, pp.132-133.

church invited, by circular, the teachers of other schools to a conference on Sunday School matters generally; to be held at such times during the Annual Meeting as they might then be able to fix. Brethren interested in the work agreed to devote to that purpose an hour each morning, from seven to eight. Bro. T. Coop presided. Papers were read by T. Thompson, from Birmingham, by J. Adam, for James Evans, of Manchester, and by R. Mumby, of Nottingham. The first was upon "The means requisite to retain our elder scholars"; the second upon "Sunday Schools and Bands of Hope"; and the third upon "The proper Management of Sunday Schools". The papers were highly interesting. The Conference is to be resumed during the next Annual Meeting; the teachers of the Wigan School to make the requisite arrangements<sup>1</sup>".

These early morning conferences were held for four years. While the attendance the first year varied from 50 to 60, it averaged over 100 in the fourth year. It was arranged that in the following year, 1876, Tuesday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., be allotted for the consideration of Sunday School topics; and at that conference the first General Sunday School Committee was appointed, consisting of A. Brown and J. Marsden, Wigan; G.Y. Tickle, Jr., H.E. Tickle, and D.S. Collin, Liverpool; Joseph Davidson,<sup>2</sup> Birkenhead; and P. Stephen, Jr., Mollington.

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1872, p.318.
2. "Christian Advocate", 1876, p.321.

This Committee had many matters under its consideration, including uniform registration, examinations, Bands of Hope, School libraries, and preparation classes.<sup>1</sup>

It was 1887, however, before the Annual Meeting gave official recognition to Sunday School work and made its conference an integral part of the Annual Meeting. In that year too, as we have seen, they took over control of the "Sunbeam".

#### V. INCREASE OF COMMITTEES

For twenty years (1855-75) only one Committee reported to the Annual Meeting, having been appointed by it. The churches met for evangelistic purposes, and at first they had only one idea - the engagement of evangelists, and the raising of funds to pay them.

Gradually the problem of finding evangelists had forced the leaders to undertake the training of young men for the task, and that developed into the recognition of that work as a lawful part of the co-operative activities, with the appointment of a Training Committee.

Another private concern from the beginning was the management of the religious journals. To the editors, in the main, had been left the task of propaganda through literature. Not until 1885 did the Annual Meeting undertake the responsibility. That year the first

1. "Christian Advocate", 1928, p.141 (Article by F.Hepworth).

Publishing Committee was appointed, consisting of Wm. Richardson, J. Leavesley, J. North, E. Bambury, and W. Chapman (all of Leicester); with D. King, G.Y. Tickle, sen., W. Linn, W. McLintock, J. Crook, A. Brown, and Dr Robertson as consulting members. It is interesting to note the resolution defining their functions:-

1. That the existing co-operation for evangelistic purposes among the Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland be extended to the purchase and printing of books, pamphlets, periodicals, or tracts, which shall faithfully advocate the doctrine and practice enjoined upon the Church by Christ and His apostles.

2. That a committee of not less than five be appointed yearly by the Annual Meeting to carry out the above suggestion.

3. That the committee be instructed to put on sale all works issued by them, or by their authority, at the lowest price the funds at their command would warrant.

4. That this committee be requested to appeal to churches and brethren for donations, subscriptions, and bequests, to carry on this work.

5. That this committee render to the Annual Meeting a yearly report of the work done, and a balance sheet showing the amount of money received and expended.

6. That this committee be entirely under the

control of the Annual Meeting, and occupy the same relation to it as the Evangelist Committee.<sup>1</sup>

With the recognition of the General Sunday School Committee in 1887 there were thus four Committees. The question of a Foreign Missions Committee was pending, and the fight for a Social Questions Committee a little further off.

## VI. GROWTH OF COLONIAL CHURCHES

In the previous chapter we noted the founding of Colonial Churches in New Zealand and Australia, the visit of T.H. Milner to Australia and the arrival of H.S. Earl in Australia to do evangelistic work. Regarding the latter, "His able and eloquent preaching attracted crowded audiences, and 196 were baptized in six months. In 1865 he visited Adelaide, and took the city by storm, the largest halls obtainable being crowded. Similar success attended his work in Dunedin in 1867".<sup>2</sup> More American and British evangelists were secured, and the work made more rapid progress than in Britain.

The Victoria Census in 1872 showed that in ten years the Church of Christ had increased from 441 to 3,537, an increase of over 700%, the highest percentage amongst the religious bodies in the state.<sup>3</sup> In 1885

1. "Christian Advocate", 1885, Annual Meeting Number, pp.21-22.
2. "That they all may be one", pp.16-17.
3. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1872, p.275.

A.B. Maston compiled their first Year Book. By that time there were 25 churches and 1,238 members in New Zealand, and 105 churches and 6,052 members in Australia.<sup>1</sup> The total of 130 churches and 7,290 members was remarkably like the British figures of the same time - 129 churches and 7,327 members.

Matthew Wood Green from Manchester went out in 1862 to New Zealand,<sup>2</sup> and did a notable work there for some years. Later he went to New South Wales, and was prominent both in that state and later in Victoria. John Strang and George Greenwell were also appreciated preachers from Britain; but perhaps their best recruit from these shores was Joseph Pittman, who arrived with his large family in 1888.<sup>3</sup> Not only was he spared to a ripe old age to work himself, but all his sons became preachers as well. One served as a foreign missionary, and another joined the faculty of their Training College.

## VII. MISSIONARY WORK

In 1851 James Wallis printed a letter from Dr Barclay, an American Disciple Missionary at Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> Quite a number of the British churches began to contribute financially, and many reports appeared from his pen in the subsequent years. After about ten years he

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1885, p.95.
2. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1862, p.219.
3. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1888, p.27.
4. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1851, p.428.

returned to his homeland.

In 1867 David King opened a fund to support J.O. Beardale in Jamaica. But there was no properly organised missionary society till the Women's Christian Missionary Society (W.C.M.S.) and the Foreign Christian Missionary Society (F.C.M.S.) were formed in America in 1874. Curiously enough the latter Society chose England as one of the first fields to evangelise, and this was resented by the British Churches of Christ for several reasons. For one thing, the Society did not have the support of the American churches in general, but only of a small number of individuals at first, who became members by paying a fixed sum of money. The preachers who came had the "neither invite nor debar" position on the communion question, and this was distasteful to the bulk of the British churches. Instead of breaking up new ground most of the "Missionaries" commenced a rival cause beside an existing Church of Christ. This happened in Southport, Chester and Liverpool within the first few years. The Missionaries were "one man ministers", and adopted the title "Reverend" and other clerical ways. The Lord's Supper was not the central act of worship, but an addendum at the end of the service. Pew rents and open collections were other expedients that aroused criticism.

H.S. Earl commenced a mission in Southampton

(where there was no Church of Christ) in 1875, receiving a subsidy of 1,000 dollars per annum, which was afterwards increased to 1,500 dollars.<sup>1</sup> Hiring a large hall he soon gathered a congregation of several hundred members, but the work was hampered after some years by an unfortunate quarrel, a rival congregation being set up under the leadership of a former assistant of Earl. The cause survived that ordeal, and there is a large, flourishing congregation in Southampton still, although it is now completely separated from all other congregations.

M.D. Todd began the second mission at Chester in 1878 with an allowance from the F.C.M.S. of 1,800 dollars per annum, of which one-third was provided by Timothy Coop, a successful business man of Wigan, who had been treasurer of the British General Evangelist committee for many years before transferring his allegiance and his increasing wealth to the American method of evangelisation.<sup>2</sup> By 1883 Todd's successor at Chester claimed to have a membership roll of 300.

Later in the same year as Todd came to Chester, 1878, W.T. Moore arrived at Southport, where Coop resided, and soon there were two churches in the town, the old British congregation and the new one led by Moore and Coop.<sup>3</sup> The pastor's salary was 3,000 dollars, Coop

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1883, pp.306-7.

2. Ibid, 1878, p. 82.

3. Ibid, 1878, p.331.

paying a third.<sup>1</sup> There was not the rapid increase in the new Southport effort that there had been in the other two places; and Moore transferred his activities to London in 1881, where he became the editor of a new weekly journal, "The Christian Commonwealth",<sup>2</sup> and the pastor, in succession to Henry Varley, of the West London Tabernacle.<sup>3</sup>

Some other able men came across the Atlantic, including J.H. Garrison, who had been for some years the editor of "The Christian Evangelist". In London there were six congregations in the "Christian Association" (the name chosen for the new group) by the year 1888,<sup>4</sup> and there were also the churches at Southampton, Chester, Southport, Liverpool and Birkenhead.

David King kept a watchful eye upon all their movements and published reports, and for some years published an occasional "Extra" of his "Ecclesiastical Observer", the pages of which he utilised for strong criticism of the new efforts. In the first year's "Extra", 1879, he pointed out three innovations in the Southampton Mission, all of which he considered to be wrong:- the use of instrumental music in the worship; open collections; and a choir not confined to the membership.<sup>5</sup> Commenting

1. "Life of Timothy Coop", p.327.
2. Ibid, p.406.
3. Ibid, p.418.
4. Ibid, p.418.
5. "Ecclesiastical Observer Extra", 1879, p.23.

on the Chester Mission, which claimed to have 96 members after one year, he remarked, "We dare not do evil that good may come".<sup>1</sup>

Instead of co-operating in teaching what their fathers would have considered the essentials, the two groups became strongly critical of each other. The very presence of the Americans was a reflection on the methods of the British churches; and their work was sorely hampered by the opposition, and sometimes exposures, of the British brotherhood. The new preachers defended their attitude on the communion question, and claimed that they stood where Alexander Campbell stood at the time of his cordial reception in Britain. Curiously enough, for he was not often wrong in points of fact, David King denied that they in Britain knew those views of Campbell prior to 1859.<sup>2</sup>

When President Garfield died in 1881 the British "Churches of Christ" claimed church relationship with him. They regarded the F.C.M.S. as not fully representative of the Disciples; but Garfield was one of those who had influenced Coop in his change of views,<sup>3</sup> and in the liberal attitude he had adopted.

The F.C.M.S. also contributed, on less generous terms than to their preachers in England, towards the

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer Extra", 1879, p.27.
2. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1880, p.86.
3. "Life of Timothy Coop", p.397.

upkeep of a mission in Paris, conducted by Jules Delaunay<sup>1</sup> and his wife. Gradually they withdrew their support, and the British Churches of Christ helped the mission<sup>2</sup> and took quite an interest in it for a number of years.

From 1875 support was also given, especially by the Scottish churches, to a small group of churches in Norway having similar views. R.P. Anderson, a young man from Ayrshire, was one of A. Brown's students in 1889, "increasing his Biblical knowledge, and desiring to go to Norway"<sup>3</sup>. That year the Scottish Conference "agreed, on the motion of Bro. Crockatt, seconded by Bro. Wm. McLintock, to engage the services of Bro. R.P. Anderson, with the ultimate object of sending him to Norway to engage in evangelistic work there - the field<sup>4</sup> being considered from reports a very promising one".

Three years later, after considerable discussion at the Scottish Conference, it was unanimously agreed to send him, and he left soon after with his wife and family.<sup>5</sup> During the years of waiting he had mastered the Norwegian language, and was able straightaway to get into intimate touch with the people he was to help. Unfortunately he was disappointed in a number of the leaders. "My conversations with N. have not

1. "Life of Timothy Coop", pp.395-396.

2. "Ecclesiastical Observer Extra", 1879, p.6.

3. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1889, p.52.

4. "Christian Advocate", 1889, p.302.

5. "Bible Advocate", 1892, p.259.

tended to strengthen my faith or confidence in him as a trustworthy man ... I don't know of any suitable man I can recommend for the work. J. is too 'easy' and loose for the position, in my opinion ..."<sup>1</sup> The difficulties continued, and ultimately Mr Anderson withdrew from Norway, and the Scottish Conference ceased to send financial help.

Before this withdrawal, however, the British Churches of Christ had committed themselves to a much bigger undertaking overseas. In 1886 John Crook, secretary of the General Evangelist Committee, contributed a series of four articles to the "Christian Advocate"<sup>2</sup> on the subject of Foreign Missions. This provoked some discussion at the next Annual Conference, resulting in this resolution:- "That, having respect to the greatness of home demands on our resources and the smallness of the agencies at our disposal, we cannot at present recommend any definite action with regard to foreign mission enterprises; at the same time we thank the writer of the articles in the "C.A." for his careful and wise letters on the subject of foreign missions, and will keep this important matter in view, with the hope of entering upon that work at some future time when our resources are enlarged."<sup>3</sup>

In the Conference Paper the following year

1. Private letter from R.P.A. to Wm. Crockatt, dated 12/10/92.
2. "Christian Advocate", 1886, pp.116, 163, 255, 297.
3. 1886 A.M. Resolution No.18.

Bartley Ellis contended that "Christianity in its aggressive character" involves a duty to the "Regions Beyond".<sup>1</sup> The matter continued to receive attention, and the 1890 Conference appointed John Crook to prepare the Conference Paper for the next year on the subject "Foreign Missions and our Relation thereto". According to custom the Wednesday afternoon was reserved for the reading of the paper and the subsequent discussion. The 1891 paper made history. "At 2 p.m. the chapel over-filled with eager friends... The paper was received with frequent expressions of approval... It was followed by considerable discussion". There were only two who spoke against the suggestion to undertake such work, namely, George Collin and David King. Those who spoke in favour included Evangelists, James Anderson, Bartley Ellis and James Grinstead; G.Y. Tickle and H.E. Tickle, sons of the late G.Y. Tickle, Sen.; Arthur and Milner Black, sons of R. Black and brothers of Sydney; J.A. Dawson and Halstaff Coles. The practical results were that a Committee was appointed to collect necessary information, with a view to undertaking the new work, and to report to the next Annual Meeting; this committee was composed of the G.E.C., together with D. King, R. Black, A. Brown, W. Chapman, James Nimmo, and H.E. Tickle; this committee was also asked to consider the invitation of the associated Churches of Christ in

Victoria, Australia, to co-operate with them in Foreign  
<sup>1</sup>  
 Missionary work.

Next year's Conference was interesting for several reasons. It was the Jubilee Conference, and was held in Edinburgh, the same city as had invited the first Conference in 1842. Neither of the two survivors of those attending the first was able to attend the Jubilee. Advanced age forbade Peter Stephen, the 1842 secretary, making the journey from Mollington, Chester; P.C. Gray, an Edinburgh pioneer, sent his greetings from Detroit, U.S.A.

The Special Committee brought in its report on Foreign Missions, and a decision was taken to go forward with the work overseas. A Committee for "Foreign Mission Work" was appointed, composed of James Marsden, R. Black, G. Collin, J. Crook, W. Richardson, W. Chapman, G.Y. Tickle, A. Ferguson, L. Leavesley, T. Jenkins, L. Oliver,  
<sup>2</sup>  
 James Nimmo, David King and W. McLintock.

Burma was selected as the first mission field, and John Crook had the honour and responsibility of accompanying the three selected missionaries (Robert Halliday, Alfred E. Hudson and William Forrester) to Burma,  
<sup>3</sup>  
 to help them choose a suitable locality. They arrived in Burma on 6th December, and finally selected Ye, in the province of Tennaserim, as their centre; with a view

1. "Bible Advocate", 1891, pp.233-247.
2. Ibid, 1892, pp.308-9.
3. Ibid, 1893, pp.312-3.

to making their special work amongst the Talaing race.

### VIII. EARLY LIBERAL MOVEMENT

The changes in organisation and extension of activities described in this chapter have suggested that new forces were at work within the brotherhood. A group of younger men, most of whom had been born inside the movement, had become impatient at the slowness of the growth and at the rigidity of their elders in the faith. We have seen how Sydney Black, free from the dictation of any Committee, had engaged in an aggressive and very successful evangelism. The Annual Conference of 1890 was held at Leominster, a small town where he had planted a church. The Meeting was specially noteworthy for the decision to make a "Forward Move" in evangelism. The General Committee had presented a financial statement showing an income of £858 that year. A resolution, moved by Halstaff Coles and seconded by Sydney Black, was carried, urging the churches to increase the income of the General Evangelist Committee during the next twelve months to £5,000, "in order to the formation of a substantial fund for increased development of evangelistic work"; and slips were handed round which, when returned<sup>1</sup> an hour or so later, contained promises of over £800.

The younger men responsible for this new spirit

1. "Bible Advocate", 1890, p.236.

of aggression also commenced a monthly journal, "The Young Christian", edited by H. Coles and published at Leeds by John Crockatt. Its intellectual outlook was liberal, and its attitude to modern scholarship was sympathetic. Sydney Black, who had just spent a year in study at Oxford, proceeded in February, 1891, on a world tour; and, while in Australia had an opportunity of showing that a liberal outlook in some matters did not necessarily involve a change in the fundamental doctrines of the churches. J.J. Haley, an American evangelist, first in Australia and then (1891) in Birkenhead; England, had sent a report to the American "Christian Evangelist", copied by the Australian "Christian Pioneer", reporting on this "Forward Movement", and saying:-"I am glad to notice that some of the younger and more active brethren have grown weary of the policy of criticism and stagnation, and propose to throw themselves, in the spirit of New Testament evangelism, into a 'Forward Movement', with progress as the watchword. A paper has been started to advocate the movement... If these intelligent young men who are leading the new departure succeed in teaching the 'old brethren' that mutual edification, close communion, close contribution, anti-organ, anti-pastor, and anti-do-nothing, do not constitute the creed of the Christian religion nor any part of it, but that absolute submission

to Christ does ... they will have accomplished a great work, and have done their brethren the highest possible service". Sydney Black, being in Melbourne, was able to send an immediate reply to the "Pioneer", strongly resenting Haley's letter. Discussing its contents he said:- "What does 'absolute submission to the Christ' involve? It certainly involves the maintaining and honouring of the faith, order, polity, and institutions of the church ... Hence it involves mutual edification by all qualified and able brethren for the upbuilding of His body. It involves the confining of the Lord's table to those alone whose sins are scripturally remitted. It involves the restriction of the Christian fellowship to those only who are Christians. It includes the exclusion not only of organs, but of everything else tending to disturb the sublime symmetry of Divine worship according to the apostolic institution. As to the 'anti-pastor' question, I here and now re-announce my fixed intention to toil on and pray on, if perchance I may, in some small measure, help to strip our splendid movement of the very last rag of priestcraft and popery".<sup>1</sup>

The chief contributors to this early liberal movement were, in addition to Coles and Black, T.J. Ainsworth, J. Crockatt, R.P. Anderson and Joseph Smith. The

1. "Bible Advocate", 1892, pp.266-7.

"Young Christian" ceased publication after a few years,  
and the movement was nipped in the bud, yet never died out.

THE DENOMINATIONAL ISOLATION TO 1910.

In 1894 the Annual Meeting was reorganized and  
appointing five standing committees: The General Man-  
gling Committee (C.M.C.), the Training Committee, the  
Sunday School Committee, the Publishing Committee and  
the Magazine Committee.

With the passage in 1894 of measures which  
eventually, a financial system was set up (C.M.C.) was  
added to the list.

In 1895 the functions of the Budget Commit-  
tee was reorganized by the Conference (C.M.C.) that all  
Chairmen of Standing Committees reported to the General  
Annual Meeting in 1895.

CHAPTER SIX

The function of the Conference was to be the  
body of all the churches in the denomination.

DENOMINATIONAL ISOLATION

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denomination, was to be the body of all the churches  
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## I. FURTHER ORGANISATIONS TO 1910. +

In 1891 the Annual Meeting was recognising and appointing five Standing Committees:- The General Evangelist Committee (G.E.C.); the Training Committee; the Sunday School Committee; the Publishing Committee; and the Magazine Committee.

With the decision in 1892 to commence work overseas, a Foreign Missions Committee (F.M.C.) was added to the list.

In 1895 the importance of the younger Committees was recognised by the Resolution (39):- That all Chairmen of Standing Committees appointed by the General Annual Meeting be members of the Reference Committee. The function of that Committee was to consider any matters of difficulty that might be referred to it by the Conference, and hitherto this work had been delegated to the General Evangelist Committee. The new resolution admitted representatives of the other Committees to this work. All members of the G.E.C. were still to be members of the Reference Committee as well.

In 1905 the Magazine Committee, at its own request, was dismissed, and its work taken over by the Publishing Committee. In operation since 1889, its work in managing the magazine had been under the control

+ Most of the facts mentioned in this Chapter have been obtained from the Church Year Books.

of the Annual Meeting. Under the new arrangement all power was taken from the Annual Meeting, except that of electing the members of the Publishing Committee. The Editor thus became free from dictation by the Annual Meeting.

Correspondence with Isolated Members, a most valuable work, had been undertaken in 1885 by Mrs Robert Black of London, and continued by her until old age compelled her to withdraw in 1902. The Conference appointed Mrs Oliver and Miss Ainsworth to succeed her. After four years these Birmingham ladies retired, and Mrs T.E. Bambury and Miss A. Leavesley, of Leicester, took on the task.

The General Evangelist Committee underwent an interesting modification in 1900. Resolution 21 of that year decreed:- "That to constitute the G.E.C., the General Annual Meeting shall appoint five brethren, and the Divisions shall be invited to appoint one representative each from their number to serve on the G.E.C." This was the culmination of an experiment that had been tried since 1890, whereby each Division in the country was asked to appoint a Corresponding Member to report to the G.E.C. on the work and needs of the Division. In 1939 the number to be appointed by the General Conference was increased from five to six; but the number of divisional representatives still far exceeded the number directly

appointed.

In 1903 a Book-room was opened in Birmingham, primarily to serve as headquarters of the Publishing Committee. It is the distributing centre for all the literature of the Movement.

Annually since 1880 a Sisters' Conference and a Temperance Conference were held during the Annual Meeting week, but these were still regarded as outside the scope of the official activities. In 1903, however, a sister, Miss L.K. Dawson, was elected a member of the Sunday School Committee, and Miss Bertha Marsden joined her three years later. Moreover, in 1910, at the request of the Foreign Missions Committee, it was resolved (No.2):- "That the number of members of the Foreign Missions Committee be increased from seven to nine, in order that sisters may be added to the Committee." Mrs C.W. Batten and Miss Alice Crook were the ladies chosen.

## II. HOME EVANGELISATION

The Leominster resolution, 1890, to attempt a Forward Movement and to aim at raising £5,000 led to considerable activity in the next few years. A well-organised campaign to visit the churches and induce the members to give systematically was carried out with much thoroughness. The Chairman and Treasurer of the Committee (James Marsden and George Collin) did their own share of

the deputation work, and amongst those who gave vigorous help were Sydney Black, H. Coles, John Crockatt, G.Y. Tickle, H.E. Tickle, D.S. Collin, J. Leavesley, W. Chapman, T.J. Ainsworth, R. Black and A. Ferguson. The sum raised before the next Annual Meeting was £2,895, which was a great improvement on anything previously experienced, and allowed of a Forward programme.

The Committee aimed at opening new churches or converting small struggling causes into flourishing ones. A year later, 1892, a church founded in 1890 at Burslem, and helped continuously by Bartley Ellis, reported a membership of 143; in Bristol James Grinstead and Robert Crawford, working since September, 1890, now rejoiced in a membership of 98; at Hawick, Scotland, a new effort was commenced by Evangelists Mortimer and Jackson in January, 1891, and had now a membership of 31; the small cause at Belfast had been helped since March, 1891, by the Scottish Evangelists, James Anderson and John Straiton, and had increased their membership to 81; and a small church, founded at Dalton by Alex. Brown, had received Evangelists, Jackson and Albert Brown, the membership having already grown from 10 to 20. New efforts had also been commenced at Perth and Lowestoft, under the Evangelists, J. McCartney and G.E. Buckeridge respectively. Four other Evangelists - Johnson, Oliver, Adam, and Webley - were utilised in

1. See "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1890, pp. 303-5 & 325-6.

visiting weak churches throughout the country.<sup>1</sup>

The churches did not maintain their contributions up to the standard of 1890-1; but in the three following years they raised £1,573, £1,517, and £1,804. Thereafter the amounts became smaller, partly, perhaps, because some of the new work did not show much result, and partly because the enthusiasm was not maintained. The Committee gradually changed its policy back to the Divisional idea, each Division engaging its own evangelist or evangelists, and the General Evangelist Committee maintaining only a small staff.

In his work at Bristol James Grinstead won over to the position of Churches of Christ a Baptist minister, named William Webley, a Welshman. Being able to speak Welsh he was a very useful acquisition for the Welsh-speaking churches in North Wales. But he was to find a still more profitable field in South Wales, where he was instrumental (by 1910) in establishing a Division (8 churches with 515 members) where there had been one tiny isolated congregation of about 20 members. These new churches gave exercise to three men who developed into Evangelists - David Morgan and the brothers, John and Urbane Nicholls.

Sydney Black, after a tour of the Churches of Christ in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States,

1. See Year Book, 1892.

which occupied nearly two years, returned home with over £1,000 which he had raised for a social work which he contemplated in London. Acquiring premises in Fulham at a cost of £2,250,<sup>1</sup> his father giving him £1,000 towards the balance he required, he had the premises altered so that they supplied an Assembly Hall, accommodating 500 people; Class Rooms; Club Rooms and a Coffee Bar; with a basement utilised as a School Room and a Soup Kitchen. "Twynholm Hall" (named after his father's home village) soon became well-known in Fulham, and gradually it became the home of the largest congregation in the British Churches of Christ (600 members). Adjacent to the main building was a house set aside as an Orphanage, and Churches and Sunday Schools throughout the country contributed to its maintenance.

Unfortunately the strain of the work proved too great even for the once iron constitution of Sydney Black. His health broke down in 1902, and he died the following year. Chairman of the Annual Meeting in 1897, his last appearance at such a gathering was in 1902 at Edinburgh. The discourse he delivered at one of the evening sessions was to be the last many of his brethren would hear. Describing this address, H.E. Tickle, a competent judge, wrote:- "If ever a human instrument forgot self, it was surely Sydney Black during those few pregnant minutes.

1. "Life of Sydney Black", p.91.

With the tongue as of one inspired, he poured out his soul in a tribute of praise and adoration to the Saviour Whom he loved so well, and served so faithfully. Poetry, prayer and prose mingled in grandest harmony to make a peroration the like of which is only listened to once in a lifetime".

The church statistics show that in 1890 there were 146 churches on the list; in 1900 the number had increased to 173; and the 200 mark was reached in 1911. The membership correspondingly moved forward from 8,985 in 1890, to 11,789 in 1900, and to 14,725 in 1911. Amongst the evangelists who worked within this period, in addition to those already mentioned, were Charles Bailey, Ernest Bell, William Chapman, Enos Coleman, T.R. Coleman, Fred Cowin, W. Crosthwaite, A.J. Elwes, T.E. Entwistle, W.F. Greenslade, H. Grinstead, L. Grinstead, C.W. Harris, W. Herring, A.L. Laird (a former Presbyterian minister), Wm. Robertson, E.G. Rockcliffe, A. Russell, J. Wardrop, and Edward Wood.

### III. GROWTH OF FOREIGN MISSION WORK.

In December, 1892, Robert Halliday, Alfred E. Hudson and William Forrester arrived in Burma with John Crook, the secretary of the Home Committee, and chose Ye as their mission centre. Forrester soon found that a

1. "Life of Sydney Black", pp.133-134.

measure of deafness was a great handicap in learning the language, and he accompanied the secretary home.

The wives and families of the other two joined them at the end of 1893, but misfortune soon befell them. Mrs Halliday died six months after arrival, and her husband brought home his two children in the spring of 1895. He was compelled to stay at home indefinitely. One year later the Hudsons also had to come home for health reasons, leaving the mission field without a missionary. In September of that year, however, Halliday was able to return, accompanied by the second Mrs Halliday (a daughter of James Anderson, the evangelist).

For four years they were working without white help, and then came a period of extra activity. Hudson returned alone as their first reinforcement. A year later John Wood arrived, having trained at his own expense with a view to developing an industrial side of the mission. The Hallidays were free then to enjoy a short furlough, arriving home on 31st March, 1902, and returning in the autumn. With them were three young missionaries, Percy Clark, George Munro, and John Wood's bride, Agnes Campbell. Clark had trained under Lancelot Oliver at Birmingham for a year, then had practical instruction in carpentry and ironwork, before proceeding to Livingstone College, London, for a year's medical training. Munro was a Scottish graduate teacher, going out to develop the educational side

of the mission.

At the end of 1902 there were thus five men on the staff at Ye, but Hudson soon afterwards crossed the frontier into Siam to make contact with the Mons, who were the same people as the Talaings and spoke the same language. After a few months he was joined by Percy Clark, and Siam was established as a second mission field.

The industrial department of the Burma Mission proving unsuccessful, John Wood resigned and left in October, 1904. Munro managed the educational work very successfully until 1907, when he resigned, and, after a visit home, joined the Burma Education Service of the Government, becoming an Inspector of Schools. Mr and Mrs Halliday were thus left once again as the only white missionaries.

In Siam Hudson and Clark lived together in a small bamboo hut, and explored the country as far south as the sea and eastward to Bangkok; but Hudson's health broke down, and he arrived home in January, 1906. This term of five years was his last in the East. He died in Canada after many years residence there.

He left Siam just before Mary Denley arrived to become the wife of Percy Clark. Amidst many changes in the personnel of the staff in Siam, they have been spared to continue the work, with their headquarters at P'rapatom, now better known as Nakon Pathom, a small

town on the railway 35 miles west of Bangkok.

When the Hallidays came home on furlough in 1909, there was no missionary to relieve them, but the work had so developed that they were able to leave the church of 66 members in the care of the pastor Ko Win. On their return, accompanied by their eldest daughter, Esther, they stayed just a few weeks before going to Siam to allow the Clarks their first furlough. They reached the conclusion that there were better prospects among the Mons in Siam than among the Talaings in Burma, and consented to remain in Siam, taking over their own language group and leaving the Clarks to specialise on the Siamese and Chinese. Shortly afterwards Ko Win most unexpectedly died, and in the destitute condition of the small Christian community at Ye, it was agreed to transfer the Burma Mission to the American Baptist Missionary Society who were the nearest neighbours.

The Foreign Missions Committee, using part of a legacy of over £1,100, decided to send out help to the few small churches in South Africa. R.K. Francis was the first sent, and he was away for a year. Spending the first half of the year with the church in Cape Town, he visited the scattered inland churches in the second half. Fred Cowin, a young preacher, was sent next, his stay also lasting about a year; and, lastly, Bartley Ellis, the veteran evangelist and prince of preachers,

was sent to give further encouragement.

From the church at Buluwayo and that at Cape Town certain members made their way, in 1908, to Nyasaland, and reported there was an Open Door amongst the natives there. The prospects were reported in the Homeland by Tom Anderson from Buluwayo, and the Annual Meeting of 1909 authorised the Foreign Missions Committee to take charge of the work. G.H. Hollis of Cape Town was the first missionary, followed by Mary Bannister in 1912, and by Henry and Mrs Philpott in 1913.

The Conference of 1909 also authorised the taking over of a mission recently opened at Daltonganj, India, by an ex-Methodist Indian pastor, Paul Singh. G.P. Pittman and his wife offered to pay their own passages from Australia to participate in the effort, and arrived before the end of 1909. The Committee in that year were thus committed to work in four fields - Burma, Siam, Central Africa and India; but Burma soon afterwards was transferred. The remaining three fields are still being worked.

Before concluding this section some mention should be made of the principal home officials. From the inception of the work until 1906, James Marsden was Chairman of the Foreign Missions Committee, as well as Chairman of the Home Missions Committee. A son-in-law of Timothy Coop, and a director of Messrs Timothy Coop and Co., he was energetic and successful in business

during most of this time. His contributions to the two Committees during the ten years 1894-1904 amounted to £4,800, and he had given munificently to the Home Committee previously. It was largely his generosity that made the foreign work possible.

John Crook, the secretary of the Foreign Missions Committee from the beginning until 1903, and also the secretary of the General Evangelist Committee for over twenty years until 1900, played a heroic part in the expansion of the Churches' activities. He was one of the band of men who earned their living in secular pursuits, and devoted most of their leisure to church work. He was a very methodical man, always jotting down notes from his reading, and writing very well-informed articles to the enrichment of the religious journals. He was the compiler of the first Year Book, in 1886. On his retirement from active service, the Annual Meeting honoured him by making him an Honorary Member of the F.M.C.<sup>1</sup> He died in August, 1904.

In 1904 George Collin, the first Honorary Treasurer, made over that post to his cousin, H.E. Tickle. He too had held the treasurership of both the G.E.C. and the F.M.C. From that time onwards no man has been Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer of both Committees at one time.

Robert Crook, son of John, shared the secretarial

1. Year Book, 1903, p.112.

work of the Committee for two years with William Crockatt of Glasgow. Thereafter the latter took over the whole task. He was head of a consulting engineer's business; elder of Great Wellington Church, Glasgow; and Chairman of the Scottish Divisional Committee; yet made time to do an ever increasing work as Foreign Missions Secretary with the greatest efficiency. The Treasurer, H.E. Tickle, and the new Chairman, David Drummond, were also resident in Glasgow; so that for many years Glasgow was the headquarters of the F.M. enterprise.

#### IV. EDITORIAL AND TRAINING WORK.

The death of David King in June, 1894, marked, as it were, the end of an era. Joining the Church of Christ in London in 1842, at the age of 23, he was a recognised evangelist by the year 1848, and chosen to be Secretary of the General Meeting in 1852. From 1855 to 1869 he was on the staff of the General Evangelist Committee, when the Birmingham District Association was formed to continue his services in Birmingham. In 1882 he resigned his position as evangelist, in the hope that his withdrawal might hasten the complete organisation of the churches he had supervised.<sup>1</sup>

His editorial work, as we have already noted,

1. "Memoir of David King", pp.7-13.

began on a large scale when he took over from James Wallis in 1862 the "British Millennial Harbinger"; and he continued this work throughout the remainder of his life, fully 32 years. He was also the first in this country to undertake the work of training prospective evangelists, doing this on his own responsibility until the General Meeting took it over.

The qualifications for eldership was a subject upon which the leaders of the churches were not wholly agreed. George Greenwell wrote the Conference Paper for 1879 on "The Eldership", and G.Y. Tickle the one for 1880 on "The Qualifications and Work of Pastors, etc." Greenwell took a pessimistic view of the system as it had operated. "Many of the pastors", he wrote, "are well qualified to bring living water and nourish with life divine, if they had fair play; but, under the grinding pressure of business claims, day and night, up to the very close of the week, what can be reasonably expected? The consequences are, in some cases, death-like stagnation, and in others absolute ruin. Many drift away in instinctive search after better pasture, and many die in our own field purely for want of nourishment".

David King differed from him most decidedly. His comments were:- "Decisive failure!" We claim decisive success! And we are willing to submit the claim to

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1879, pp.223-8.

stringent tests. We insist that our members, generally, know more of the Bible than those of churches anywhere, which possess the hired pastor... We would be very sorry to say a word implying satisfaction with our modes of applying this liberty as if there were no need of improvement. But with all our faults (not its faults) we love it still, for manifest good results, which will bear the strongest tests that can be applied... The hired pastor has been a failure all along the line...<sup>1</sup>

While thus contending for a mutual ministry King held very particular views on the qualifications for eldership. Whereas Reid, the first evangelist, had urged all the young churches to choose elders immediately, King had been in Birmingham over twenty years and the first church formed was still without an eldership. And he refused to accept nomination himself for such a position because he had no children. G.Y. Tickle seems to have had him in mind when he wrote these words in the 1880 paper:- "In the early history of our movement most of our small congregations sprang into existence through the earnest labours of one or two brethren in each, who, though estimable as Christians, were in many instances but little qualified to rule. In the rebound from the defective leadership thereby introduced we are in some danger of running to another extreme, and of creating,

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1879, p.259.

by undue delay and want of organisation, the impression that the Eldership on Scripture grounds is incapable of realisation. Such an impression at the time that we are affirming and endeavouring, in our own practice, to prove that the Christian System is simple and easy of application above all others, must be regarded as at least unfortunate; and if, on a more thorough investigation of the subject, we find that we have been laying an undue stress on some minor point to which we have attached a fictitious importance, and have been excluding men from office with all the more solid qualifications, simply because they do not fulfil our mistaken ideal as to that one point, it will be our duty to relax our overwrought grasp, and to lay hold with a more discerning hand on those veritable things which go to make a thoroughly efficient pastorate...<sup>1</sup>

George Collin, in his Presidential Address at the General Meeting a few weeks after King's death, paid a warm tribute to the departed leader. Comparing him with other stalwarts - James Wallis, G.Y. Tickle and Alexander Brown, he said:- "There was left to us David King, like Saul among the prophets - head and shoulders above the rest ... Our departed brother had faults ... but even his 'failings leaned to virtue's side' ... We shall miss his help very much. We will never again

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1880, p.221.

listen to his powerful advocacy of our plea, nor hang with breathless attention on his judicial deliverances in our debates, nor watch with thrilling interest how he could disentangle the labyrinths of confusion into which we sometimes got, and present before us the clear outlines of the subjects under discussion...<sup>1</sup>"

Lancelot Oliver, one of his own students, succeeded him as editor of the "Bible Advocate". He had already had editorial experience, having followed G.Y. Tickle as editor of the "Christian Advocate". Lancelot Oliver also became the successor of Alexander Brown as theological tutor, and thus he combined two of the most important offices open to church leaders. Until 1918, when his health broke down, he carried on his dual task, and also the numerous other duties which were thrust upon him from time to time by a brotherhood which highly esteemed his intellectual and spiritual gifts. At the time of his death in 1920, H.E. Tickle wrote:- "The void left by the death of the redoubtable warrior (David King) was a big one, and could not be filled by anyone. But that the choice of his successor was the best that was possible can hardly be a matter of question. That the Elisha upon whose shoulders the mantle of the Elijah fell was a man of different fibre and temperament might be true of this succession as of the older one, but God

1. Year Book, 1894, pp.8-10.

never makes two men out of the same mould".<sup>1</sup> H.J. Johnson, elder of the Moseley Road Church, Birmingham, and secretary of the Training Committee, wrote at the same time:- "I have seen him in every mood ... I never knew a man who approximated more nearly to the Christ character and life. His was a giant intellect; his heart was as tender as a woman's - an unusual combination ... His extremely delicate, sensitive, retiring nature sometimes held him back ... He was a many-sided man. He could read both Old and New Testament in their originals. He read German with ease; and as for his mother tongue he was a master of it ... But it is as a helper of young men that his memory will last the longest".<sup>2</sup>

Amongst the forty men who passed through his hands in the period 1899-1916 were the following who became evangelists:- Percy Clark and H. Philpott (foreign missionaries); Fred Cowin, E. Rockliff, R. Beale, and H. McKerlie (who later crossed the Atlantic); E. Wood, T.E. Entwistle, W. Mander, E. Bell, W.J. Clague, W. Robertson, E. Coleman, N. Barr, S. Sharp, W. Lister, W. Wilson, J. Hoggan, G.J. Hammond, and W. Smith.

For a time Oliver endeavoured to carry the double burden of the "Bible Advocate" and the Correspondence Classes - no personal training being done in his first

1. "Bible Advocate", 1920, p.133.
2. Ibid, 1920, pp.135-6.

years of office. The Annual Meeting of 1896 sanctioned the appointment of John McCartney, an Ulsterman, as an assistant in the Training work. Gradually the whole of the Correspondence Class work fell into his hands, the personal training occupying the attention of his senior colleague. Hundreds of people every year studied by correspondence, and oral classes also were organised in various parts of the country under competent leaders to study the courses set.

In 1911 a book from Lancelot Oliver's pen, "New Testament Christianity", was issued by the Publishing Committee. It was the first book of its kind written in this country by a member of the Churches of Christ. He also acted as one of the editors, with James Nimmo and H.E. Tickle, of "Hymns for Churches of Christ". The "Collection of Hymns for Churches of Christ", published by David King and others in 1888, was replaced by the new compilation in 1908. As it was prepared under instruction from the Annual Conference of 1903, whereas the earlier hymnbooks of Wallis and King were issued on their own responsibility, this was really the first official hymnbook of the Churches. It served them until the end of 1938, when it was replaced by "The Christian Hymnary for use of Churches of Christ".

A man who was able to see both sides of most  
 1. See end of Section II, Chapter 4. p.113.

problems, Oliver had never attempted to dominate his brethren. His was a moderating influence in times of crisis, and, especially during the years of the Great War, this characteristic of his proved of great value.

The General Sunday School Committee, as already noted, was officially recognised in 1887 as an integral part of the Conference organisation. "The Sunbeam", founded by Milner and continued by David and Mrs King until 1887, was taken over by the G.S.S.C. that year. It was edited by the widow of G.Y. Tickle, Sen., until 1913, in a manner that was most acceptable; and by Mrs Isaac Freeman from that time onwards for twenty years.

In 1895 a Hymn Book for Sunday Schools was prepared by the Committee, and introduced into many of the Schools.

The need for a Magazine for teachers and elder scholars had long been felt, and in 1904 the first number of "Stepping Stones" appeared. For three years it was edited by Wilby Kershaw, B.A., of London, who was followed by E.G. Swann, of Birmingham. At the end of 1909 it was withdrawn in view of an improved and enlarged "Bible Advocate", which now included much of the matter that had appeared in "Stepping Stones".

To increase the efficiency of the Sunday Schools James Flisher of Manchester was appointed in 1907 as Organising Secretary, and continued this work until his

death in 1925. He visited the various districts, staying in each over a period, addressing conferences, exhorting the Churches, forming preparation classes, and organising week-night activities; thereby very much stimulating and improving the work amongst the young.

The Foreign Missions Committee commenced a Quarterly in October, 1912, John Crockatt of Leeds being the first editor. In 1914 the Publishing Committee undertook its publication and distribution, but the F.M.C. remained responsible for the conduct of the magazine.

Mention may be made here of a private enterprise by evangelist, James Grinstead, in the early nineties to assist his work in Bristol. "The Messenger" was a small monthly, with an issue of about 1,000 copies, each number containing a sermon by the editor and other interesting material. After about thirty years as an evangelist in Britain, James Grinstead in 1897 severed his connection with the General Evangelist Committee and settled in America, where he became the pastor of a church of the Disciples in Pennsylvania.

Another evangelist, James Anderson, at the request of many friends, wrote "An Outline of my Life", a book of 187 pages, which the Publishing Committee issued in 1912. An edition of 2,000 was disposed of in a few years.

It may be of interest to note that in 1914, before

the Great War began, the 200 churches with over 15,000 members and the 173 schools with nearly 19,000 scholars were able to take 4,250 copies of the weekly "Bible Advocate", 8,900 copies of the monthly "Sunbeam", and 6,000 copies of the quarterly "Open Door".

#### V. MORE LIBERAL TENDENCIES.

From what has already been written it can be seen that the outlook of the Conference leaders was gradually broadening. The duty of the Christian Church was something more than nurturing its own members and preaching evangelical sermons to the unconverted. The Church had a work to do that was many-sided.

In the 1910 Conference Paper Joseph Smith wrestled with the problem of the alienation of the masses from the Church. As foreman in an engineering firm at Newcastle he was in touch with the working classes. "The failure of the Church to throw its influence into the solution of social problems; the increase of secular literature and the access provided to evening classes and college courses making known to working men of a reflective type the Darwinian doctrine of evolution by natural selection and variation; likewise the results of the studies, by Dr Fraser and others, of comparative religion; and the changed attitude of the world of intellect and scholarship in advocating a revolutionary conception of

the origin, nature and contents of the Bible; these factors made a certain measure of elasticity of thought imperative". "The acceptance of Jesus by the soul of man", continued Smith, "must never be allowed to raise a barrier against intellectual freedom. Otherwise we return, not to the faith of the primitive, but to that of the mediaeval church. And I am afraid that in many Churches, instead of the simple creed of the New Testament with its large freedom, there exists a rigid, unwritten creed, which exercises a paralysing and petrifying influence, and tends to obscure the glorious evangel of an ever-living, ever-working, ever-saving Lord".<sup>1</sup>

This Paper aroused such interest that the subject chosen for the following year was, "A Review of the Work of the Higher Criticism and its Bearing on New Testament Christianity". The writer, Charles Greig of Manchester, in concluding his survey, said:- "It has often been a great joy to the writer that Biblical criticism, rightly understood, leaves New Testament Christianity - 'our plea' - so unimpaired. Accepting the views here put forward, the Deity of Christ and the inspiration of His Apostles stand forth confirmed in many respects, and shaken in nothing. It has ever been the aim of the churches of the Restoration to keep the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Acts and Epistles in their true relative positions. This has

1. Year Book, 1910, p.37.

been sound criticism. It has its gains to-day..."<sup>1</sup>

While this problem was thus receiving attention others of an immediately practical nature were also being discussed. The Relation of Christianity to the Social Questions of the Day, was the theme of T.J. Ainsworth's Conference Paper in 1904; and in 1909 the subject discussed was whether Instrumental Music in Public Worship was scriptural and expedient, James Marsden affirming and John McCartney denying. Most of the churches still had no instrumental music at that time; and at one stage they would have refused to co-operate with any that had; but the matter was now left for each congregation to decide for itself.

These liberal tendencies aroused a certain amount of strong opposition from a number of conservative brethren, and this found expression in a small monthly, "The Interpreter", founded and edited by Ivie Campbell of Glasgow. In America there had long been a keen dispute about the use of instrumental music and the organisation of "Societies", and those who believed in having no organs and in having all missionary enterprises conducted or financed directly by individual churches gradually separated from the main group of Disciples, and in the United States census of 1906 they were listed under the separate name of "Churches of Christ".<sup>2</sup> The editor of

1. Year Book, 1911, p.45.

2. Dean Walker's "Adventuring for Christian Unity", p.48.

the "Interpreter" had views much in common with the latter body. He was strongly opposed to the introduction of church organs, and disapproved of the Conference having so many committees to direct the work. He also insisted upon the verbal inspiration of the Bible "from cover to cover".

One scholar who had held more liberal views than the majority over a period of many years was Joseph Bryant Rotherham. In 1868 he gave up his position as a whole-time evangelist, and found employment in London, first as publisher's editor for six years, and afterwards as Press Corrector for thirty-one years. In this congenial work he found scope for the development of his own literary tastes, which culminated in his production of the "Emphasised Bible". Other works from his pen included "Studies in the Psalms", "Our Sacred Books", "Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews", "Christian Ministry", and "Let us Keep the Feast".

Rotherham was spared till 1906, when he was 82 years of age. In his "Reminiscences" - published after his death by his son - he wrote a section entitled "Revised Conclusions", which is worth quoting:-

"How far am I satisfied still to remain in a position taken up more than fifty years ago? ... From 1850 to 1854 I made three changes in my ecclesiastical position - from the Wesleyan Methodist to the Wesleyan

Association, from that to the Baptists, and from the Baptists to the Disciples; and here I appear to have remained stationary ever since - for more than half a century ... Either in 1854 my mental growth was suddenly arrested or else I have since found space for mental development. It is the simple truth to say that that was the exultant feeling with which I took up my new position in 1854; 'Now I have found room to grow!' - a most natural feeling, surely, considering that I had no human creed to sign, no promises to make save of absolute, life-long loyalty to Christ ..."

"It is inconceivable that our pioneers should have thought out all Bible questions with such thoroughness and accuracy as to come out right in everything, or even in everything of importance, leaving nothing material to be modified by those coming after them. It was, for many reasons, impossible for them to do this. They, themselves, began their reforming careers when comparatively young. Like us, they had to begin their controversial life with provisional conclusions accepted from others, some of them, though seeming to be right, yet imperfectly tested. Besides, many questions had not then been mooted which have since attracted anxious consideration. Not only so, but the discoveries, investigations, and conclusions which now range themselves under the head of 'textual criticism' had scarcely been started then;

and the Reformers of 1808 and onward accepted, and occasionally argued, from texts which are now known to be spurious. How was it possible for them to anticipate labours not at that time begun? How, then, could they think out for us problems which had not in those days been raised?"

"Probably no three men ever more profoundly moved my theological life than Walter Scott, Alexander Campbell and Robert Richardson - all of America. Some men since have furnished me with as much food for thought; but for freshness of theological outlook and strength of Biblical impulse to think for myself on all subjects, the palm must be given to the trio above named. The frankness of this admission, however, sets me free to say ... that no pioneer can excel at all points. Alexander Campbell's great merit was that he looked at the New Testament with fresh, clear eyes, and helped us to take off our theological spectacles. But I think he too readily accepted current methods of Old Testament interpretation, and signally failed to apply those principles of unstrained exposition to the prophecies which, in general, he so successfully brought to bear upon the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists".<sup>1</sup>

This intellectual liberty exercised by such scholars as Rotherham and Joseph Smith had often been denied in practice in the life of the congregation to

1. Rotherham's "Reminiscences", pp.80-82.

the men of more culture; or their attempts to influence their fellows along the lines of their own thinking had often caused such men of culture to lose patience and to desert the movement. Sons and grandsons of the early leaders were amongst the many who were lost to the movement. This was one reason why so little impression had so far been made on the religious world. The ranks of the Baptist Church, in particular, were much enriched by the recruits they gained from the Churches of Christ. With the spread of more liberal ideas a greater toleration was developing, and the churches were beginning to retain a much larger proportion of their educated young men and women.

## I. THE WAR PERIOD.

Until 1914 the British Churches of Christ were in the main a Pacifist body. The American Disciples, in the time of their Civil War, had avoided the division that befell most American denominations during that crisis by taking the position, firstly, that slavery was a social institution and that a Christian's relation to it was a matter of individual conscience; and, secondly, that bearing of arms was also a matter for each to settle for himself. A minority, including J.W. McGarvey, assumed the Pacifist position; some of them being imprisoned for issuing a Pacifist Manifesto.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

In a letter Campbell at that time David King stated the position of the British Churches.

"The only weapons which a Christian can use without offence to the Lord are those which are not carnal. They cannot see the possibility of Christian love flowing forth with the deadly strife of the battle-field. They say we can do nothing against a just government - we must give it all the moral support possible, but being followers of the Prince of Peace, we will not, because we care not, deal out death and destruction - the work of slaughter cannot be ours. If the world-power must

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In a letter to Alexander Campbell at that time David King stated the position of the British Churches. "The British brethren are united in proclaiming that the only weapons which a Christian can use without offence to the Lord are those which are not carnal. They cannot see the possibility of Christian love flowing forth with the deadly strife of the battle-field. They say we can do nothing against a just government - we must give it all the moral support possible, but being followers of the Prince of Peace, we will not, because we dare not, deal out death and destruction - the work of slaughter cannot be ours. If the world-power must

1. Dean Walker's "Adventuring for Christian Unity", pp.41-42.

do this work those who serve the world, and not the servants of the Lord Christ, must engage in it. And they would implore every one upon whom the name of the Lord has been called, as they value the favour of the Lord and eternal life, to stand with those who, in the past age and now, have proclaimed, 'We are Christians, and cannot fight'. I am confident that I express the mind of the brethren in this country".<sup>1</sup>

During the South African War the Annual Conference, at its first opportunity (August, 1900) passed the following resolution:- "As loyal subjects of the Prince of Peace, we, Delegates and Members of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, in Annual Meeting assembled in Liverpool, feel it to be our duty to record our solemn protest against the military spirit now so prevalent in British society generally, and express our deep grief and regret that this spirit so largely permeates many sections of the churches professing to be Christian, and which spirit we believe to be out of harmony with, and antagonistic to, the teachings of our Lord".<sup>2</sup>

The same Meeting appointed H.E. Tickle to prepare a Conference Paper for the next year on "What should be the attitude of the Churches of Christ toward service in the Army or Navy, compulsory or voluntary". After a len-

1. "British Millennial Harbinger", 1862, pp.27-28.

2. Year Book, 1900, p.80.

gthy and many-sided examination of the subject his conclusions were:- (1) "It seems to be to-day, as in the early days of the Church, the privilege and duty of the individual to decline all such service, whether voluntary or compulsory, even if such a course should involve penalties in person and property". (2) "The Church should not take disciplinary action against any member undertaking the profession of arms; the latter must bear the responsibility on his own shoulders"<sup>1</sup>.

In the "Bible Advocate" of 8th November, that same year, the editor wrote:- "The atmosphere of militarism, and the demand made upon him who enlists in the army, make it impossible for a Christian to be a soldier ... When a man enlists, he disowns the most precious qualities of manhood".

The 1914 Conference assembled on 4th August, and in the opening session passed this resolution:- "The Annual Conference ... thanks His Majesty's Government for their determined efforts to maintain the peace of Europe. Seeing that these efforts have, unfortunately, proved unavailing, we would now respectfully call upon the Government to maintain absolute neutrality in this deplorable war, as being in the highest **and best** interests of our national life. And that a copy of this resolution be wired to the Premier, the Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer, and the Foreign Secretary".<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of the Chancellor, David Lloyd George, a member of the Criccieth Church of Christ, in supporting the war policy finally adopted by the Government, considerably influenced many of the Nonconformist leaders and also many members of the Churches of Christ. The change that came over the latter is thus described afterwards by Walter Crosthwaite:- "The military spirit, deplored by the Annual Meeting at Liverpool, soon permeated the Churches of Christ. Leaders urged our young men to enlist and fight for King and Country, and scant sympathy was given to those who stood for the old attitude. With the coming of conscription, we saw our young men turned down by tribunals of which leaders in their own Churches were Chairmen. Brethren, some of whom were elders in the Churches, sat on magisterial benches and handed their own brethren over to their persecutors. The words of the Master had almost a complete and literal fulfilment:- 'And brother shall deliver up brother to death ... And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake'.<sup>2</sup>"

The official position became the same as that advocated by the majority of the Disciples in their Civil War; it was a matter for each individual to determine for

1. Year Book, 1914, p.164.

2. "For His Name's Sake", 1921, pp.9-10.

himself. The 1915 Conference tendered its thanks to A.J. Elwes "for his valuable work in compiling a list of brethren serving and in keeping in touch with them by correspondence"<sup>1</sup>. The 1916 Conference referred to "the many hundreds of young men, members of our Churches and families, who have gone forth at the call of duty to take their part in the defence of principles held supremely dear"; and also remembered "with deepest solicitude those who, for conscience sake, are suffering imprisonment and other disabilities"<sup>2</sup>.

"The Apostolic Messenger" - successor to "The Interpreter" - always had its columns open for the advocacy of peace, and the intensity of feeling stirred up between the supporters and the opponents of a Pacifist attitude created a breach in the unity that had been wonderfully preserved till then.

During the War Period a union was achieved between the "old" churches and the "new" ones of the Christian Association founded by the American evangelists. As far back as 1901 the Association, then comprising fifteen churches with a membership of 2,212, made an approach for co-operation.<sup>3</sup> The negotiations continued for several years, but broke down over the Association's practice of neither inviting nor debarring unimmersed visitors to the communion table.<sup>4</sup> At the 1914 Conference seven members

1. Year Book, 1915, p.188; 2. Year Book, 1916, pp.148-9.  
3. Year Book, 1902, p. 97; 4. Year Book, 1905, (see a lengthy report pp.144-166).

(J. Marsden, J.W. Black, R.W. Black, L. Oliver, W. Richardson, H.E. Tickle and S. Wolfenden) were appointed to a special commission for the purpose of attending any meetings that might be held of the World Conference on Faith and Order. They were also given power to confer with American Disciples and with the Christian Association. The outbreak of war delayed any work in connection with "Faith and Order". Towards the end of 1916 negotiations were resumed with the Christian Association, and these resulted in the fusion of the two British groups in 1917.

The agreements reached between the two bodies were first on foundation principles, thus:-

(1) "The great confession of the Christhood and Divinity of Jesus of Nazareth as the basis of man's relation to God through Him, and the foundation on which the Church is built".

(2) "The great commission of the risen Christ as the basis of man's assurance of pardon, and of his relation to the Church, built on the rock foundation".

On the Communion question there were these articles of agreement:-

(1) "That we come into Christ, and therefore into His Body, the Church, by faith in Christ, repentance from sin, and, upon confession of faith, immersion in water, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ".

(2) "That the Lord's Supper is an ordinance inside the Church, and, according to our understanding of New Testament practice, scriptural qualification to participate therein is attained by compliance with the above conditions".

To satisfy the older churches the members of the Christian Association themselves formulated the following as a statement of obvious duty:-

(3) "That it is our duty to do everything in our power, and as soon as possible, to induce any unimmersed believers who present themselves at the Lord's Table to obey Christ in believer's immersion".

(4) "That it is our duty to develop the abilities of all the members of the Church capable of taking part in the Lord's work, and to afford them suitable opportunities".<sup>1</sup>

Fifteen of the churches in the Christian Association were added to the list of churches co-operating, two deciding to remain outside the Union. The total membership of the fifteen was 1,341.<sup>2</sup>

This union was not acceptable to all the "old" churches, and protests from a number of them were considered at the next year's Conference. One church withdrew from the co-operating list; another asked for Item No.(3) of the agreement to be altered, and a number wished both

1. Year Book, 1917, pp.62-63.

2. Ibid, 1917, p.131.

(3) and (4) to be amended. The following year, 1919, two other churches withdrew. In 1921 an attempt was made to tighten the communion practice of a few of the "Association" churches, the Conference resolving "to have co-operation solely with those churches which decline to permit, knowingly, any but immersed believers to break bread with them at the Lord's table"<sup>1</sup>. This led to the withdrawal of two of the Association Churches. Dissatisfaction to some extent continued on both sides. Other congregations having adopted in some degree the "Association" point of view regarding communion practice, an amendment to the 1921 resolution was put before the 1929 Conference, but defeated. In its place an addendum to the 1921 resolution was carried, giving some latitude in the practice. Disappointment at the failure of the amendment led to the withdrawal from the Conference of the largest church co-operating, Fulham Cross, London, with a membership of 671. It joined the Baptist Union. Other churches objected to the addendum and threatened withdrawal. The problem was solved in a happy way by the 1930 Conference, which gladly accepted the suggestion that the trouble-making resolutions of 1917, 1921 and 1929 were all of the nature of a creed, and that all resolutions on the question of the Lord's Supper since 1861 should be deleted.

1. Year Book, 1921, p.171.

Of the fifteen "Association" churches which joined in 1917, eleven were still in membership in 1940. Four of the eleven have amalgamated with neighbouring congregations of the "older" brethren, leaving a net increase of seven churches. Though the increase in numbers has proved small - and has been offset by withdrawals of the dissenting congregations - the effect upon church policy has been very great.

## II. MOVING OUT INTO RELIGIOUS WORLD.

At the 1912 Conference, held in Edinburgh, a communication from the National Free Church Council was read, and a courteous reply authorised to be sent. The General Evangelistic Committee was empowered to send representatives to take part in an enquiry.

The 1914 Conference, as already noted, agreed to join in the Faith and Order Movement, and appointed a committee of seven. After the War arrangements for a Conference at Geneva were made for August, 1920; and to this representative gathering from many parts of the world three delegates were sent, namely, H.E. Tickle, J.W. Black and Wm. Robinson. The American Disciples were also represented, and in the discussions the two groups naturally had much in common. Following upon the union with the Christian Association in Britain, this contact with the Disciple leaders did much to bring

about a closer friendship and practical co-operation between the American and British Churches professing the same plea.

Another important factor was the Foreign Missionary work and its new contacts. Thirty Disciples attended the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910, and for most of them it was a surprise to find Churches of Christ in Scotland; they had only known of the Christian Association group affiliated to their own Foreign Christian Missionary Society, in England. They determined to do their best to bring the two British groups together.

The British Churches, in the training of their future missionaries, had sent Percy Clark, Henry Philpott and A.C. Watters in turn to Livingstone College, London, for a year's medical training. There they not only studied medicine, but also lived in close intimacy with the representatives of other Christian bodies also preparing for missionary service. A group of thirty students in 1913-14 represented Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Australia, South Africa and the United States; it also included missionaries on furlough from Mexico and Central Africa; and some fifteen denominations had representatives in the company. Such an intimate connection with devout men of so many varieties of outlook and training was a fitting intro-

duction for the new type of missionary co-operation demanded by the formation of the National and Provincial Missionary Councils which were set up by Dr John Mott in India, China and other mission fields after 1910. The Churches of Christ Mission in India, founded in 1909, was situated in Palamau District, Bihar and Orissa Province. In 1914 the London Missionary Society transferred their Dudhi Mission, District Mirzapur, U.P., to the Churches of Christ. G.P. Pittman and his wife, after five years in the first station moved to the new one, and their places at Daltonganj, Palamau, were taken by A.C. Watters and his wife. It was agreed to affiliate with the respective Missionary Councils; and in the subsequent history of the B. and O. Council the Palamau missionaries have played their part. In fact the present Secretary of the Council (1940), J.C. Christie, and his predecessor, R.P. Pryce, are both on the staff of the Churches of Christ Mission. Similarly in Siam Percy Clark of Nakon Pathom Churches of Christ Mission, has several times been the President of the Council.

During the War years the Foreign Missions Committee sent two of their women candidates to Kingsmead Missionary College, Selly Oak, for training. Esther Halliday and Elsie Francis thus came into the atmosphere of the Friends. Most of the later missionaries have also attended courses there.

In the mission fields the strong argument for Christian Union had greater force, and the friendliness of missionaries with each other, independent of denominational differences, did much to mould the attitude of the Church of Christ missionaries. In India they met Church of Christ missionaries from America and Australia, and this helped also in acquiring a world outlook. Their influence upon their home constituents has been of an oecumenical nature.

### III. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION.

To John McCartney, the colleague of Lancelot Oliver in the Training work, is due the credit of suggesting a training scheme more ambitious than the one then in operation. In the Presidential address of the 1912 Conference he dealt with the need for more efficient service. Amongst the things he said were these:-

"Harm has sometimes been done, I dare say, through failure to encourage brethren who needed encouraging; and possibly, too, by unduly restraining the more forward; but I am convinced that more has been done by prematurely hoisting others into conspicuous positions before they gave proof of either fitness or reliability; and also by tolerating the manifestly unfit, from fear of giving offence.

"Frequently it has happened that our churches - like those of earliest times - have had very humble begin-

nings; and the best has had to be done with such gifts as the few members possessed. All due honour to those who under such conditions have bravely done their best. But how rarely it happens that such brethren recognise later that, owing to growth and the accession of others more talented, the time has arrived when the best interests of the cause will be served by devolving the more public acts of service on those better qualified. Such a self-denying ordinance would sometimes have very beneficial effect... "I want to raise here the question, whether the time has not come when some test of fitness should be applied before a brother is put forward as a preacher, and, to an extent, therefore, a representative of the churches. Character, piety, and a desire to win souls for Christ are of course indispensable pre-requisites. But is it too much also to require such a knowledge of the elementary laws of his native language as will guard him against saying just the opposite of what he means, scattering his aspirates in all directions, mispronouncing ordinary words, and otherwise drawing attention to his own deficiencies, rather than to the message he is delivering? And (which is still more important) should not some guarantee be given of a fair acquaintance with Scripture? ...

"As to those whose lives are to be fully given to evangelisation, we need many more men of the right

stamp if our great plea is to be fairly presented to the British public within a reasonable time ... If we are to meet the need of our day young men of promise, carefully picked, should be given, at the very least, two years suitable training. Our Lord gave His Apostles about three ...

"I fervently hope that at no very distant date the Annual Meeting may see its way to appoint a special committee to consider this matter and prepare a scheme to lay before the churches".

The Conference appreciated this utterance, and showed it by choosing as the subject of the next Conference Paper:- "Suggestions as to the best means to be adopted for improving the fitness of brethren for public service in the Lord's work"; and Wm. B. Ainsworth, B.A., a Birmingham schoolmaster, was asked to prepare it. Thereafter the Training Committee was requested to give consideration to the proposals made by him.

In 1916 a Special Committee was appointed to confer with the Training Committee, and the Report of their conference was submitted to the 1917 Annual Meeting and adopted. The new proposals included an article "that students be encouraged to take not less than a three years' course of progressive study according to an approved curriculum"; and another "that the operations of

the Training Committee be carried on in a centre where there are facilities for attending University classes on special subjects".<sup>1</sup>

A Special Training Committee was appointed to raise funds, select a centre, engage a teaching staff, etc. They were able to report to the 1918 Conference that the new undertaking should be designated "Churches of Christ Training College"; that it should be located in Birmingham; and that £6,000 had already been promised towards a total of £10,000 aimed at.<sup>2</sup> By the following year they had secured a house called 'Overdale', Park Road, Moseley, Birmingham, for the first home of the College; and they had appointed William Robinson, M.A., B.Sc., to be the Principal of the College. A native of Furness District, he was a schoolmaster by profession, and noted amongst the Churches of Christ as one of their most eloquent preachers. During most of the War he had served in the army, and had attained the rank of captain. It was arranged that before the College would open, he should attend Mansfield College, Oxford, for theological study.

Overdale was formally opened in September, 1920. There were then ten students in residence, including one woman. At the opening the Staff consisted of the Prin-

1. Year Book, 1917, p.109.

2. Ibid, 1918, pp.96-97.

cipal and the veteran John McCartney. The following year Albert Brown joined, giving part time services. In September, 1923, the last-named withdrew, in order to devote full time to his editorial duties; and Joseph Smith was appointed Lecturer in Old Testament, New Testament, and Biblical Languages. At the same time John McCartney was released to give his whole time to the Correspondence work. Upon the death of Joseph Smith in 1931, an old student, James Gray, M.A., was appointed to the staff, and in the same year John McCartney was given the title of Lecturer-Emeritus.

In 1931 Overdale joined the Group of Selly Oak Colleges, removing its home to the buildings formerly occupied by Westhill and the College of the Ascension. In 1933 the Central Council of the Selly Oak Colleges appointed Principal Robinson to lecture for them on Christian Doctrine and the Philosophy of Religion. A Secretary and Librarian was then added to the Overdale staff in the person of Arthur L. Brown who was succeeded two years later by Charlotte Marshall.

In the twenty years of its existence the College has had students from all parts of Britain; and also from Australia, New Zealand, United States, Germany, China, Formosa, Czecho-slovakia and Russia. Of the thirty-four full-time evangelists working now with the British churches twenty-two have received training in Overdale; while

all six of their Central Africa missionaries and four of their India missionaries are also ex-students. Overdale has therefore attained a position in the general work of the churches which makes its spirit dominant.

It has steadily witnessed for all the fundamentals of the Churches of Christ position; but it has reached some of the conclusions in a newer way, which takes account of world scholarship. It has recognised the virtues that are in the Christian denominations, and has striven for improvement within its own churches in cases where those virtues were not prominent. For example, it has sought for new standards of worship, and has aroused an interest in the style of church buildings and in liturgical forms. Its guidance of the churches in the formation of their Replies to the Faith and Order Conferences has been invaluable.

#### IV. EXTENSION OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES.

During the War Years (1915-18) the Foreign Missions Committee could not add to their staff, but the work steadily progressed in Siam and India. The Hallidays and the Clarks shared the work in Siam. In India the two couples, Pittman and Watters, were reinforced by the transfer in 1916 of Henry and Mrs Philpott from Central Africa, where the work was suspended during the War. Missionary volunteers benefited by extended training. In the autumn

of 1919 Esther Halliday joined her parents in Siam; in the spring of 1920 Elsie Francis and Bessie Melville arrived in India, and were followed later in the year by Anne Piggot.

The new spirit of the Churches at home was shown by their contributions to the work of their F.M.C. With each year's accounts closing early in July for presentation at the August Conference, the contributions for each year, 1914-20, were:- £1,953, £2,264, £2,358, £2,348, £2,523, £3,771, and £5,040. In 1921 the figure rose to £6,211. (£6,000 became the standard figure at which thereafter the F.M.C. aimed each year).

The Home Mission work also received more generous support during and after the War, the G.E.C. receiving in the years 1914-20 these amounts:- £1,208, £1,438, £1,289, £1,518, £1,873, £2,302, and £2,966.

For the new Training College enterprise, extra to the normal amount raised under the old scheme, in the years 1918-20 the totals actually contributed were:- £852, £1,280, and £4,350.

Whereas in the year preceding the War £4,000 per annum for all the work carried on by Conference Committees was about the average, in 1920 the total was £12,000. Over and above these sums each congregation had its local obligations, and District Committees also paid for their own evangelists.

During the succeeding years the demand for trained preachers has steadily increased; twenty-three of the thirty-five whose names appeared in the 1939 Year Book were serving with one church each, only twelve being available for district work and general itineration. Most of the teaching and preaching is therefore still carried on by the local elders and other leaders. With the change of policy quite a number of the smaller and more isolated churches have died out; on the other hand the average size of the congregations left is increasing.

The General Sunday School Committee in post-war years has continued to show the enterprise noted in the pre-war period. The work as Organising Secretary, carried on by James Flisher from 1907 to 1925, was taken over by James Gray, M.A., who took a course of special studies at Westhill, Selly Oak, after completing his Overdale course. On his joining the staff of his alma mater in 1931, he was succeeded by J. Leslie Colver.

A trouble, shared by all Christian workers amongst the young, has been the rapid fall in the number of Sunday School Scholars. In 1914, 173 schools reported 18,749 scholars; in 1923 there were only 167 schools, but 19,417 scholars; after which numbers rapidly fell, until in 1939 there were only 138 schools and 10,981 scholars.

Church statistics for the same three years showed in 1914 a membership of 15,228 from 200 churches; in 1923

an increase of membership to 16,465, and a slight increase in the number of churches to 201; but in 1939 a decrease in both columns to 176 churches having 15,229 members.

As already noted a number of churches on both wings have withdrawn from the organisation of the Conference, thus accounting for a considerable part of the apparent loss. The smaller number of scholars has reduced the natural supply of new members, as shown again in the figures for the same three years:- 1914, 452 members added from the Sunday School; in 1923, 499; and in 1939, 214. Comparative figures of other Christian bodies show a steady decline of membership in these latter years. The friction created by the change of policy has been a factor that diverted some of the churches from their task of evangelisation. There is evidence that the bulk of the remaining churches are eager for advance, and are willing to try new methods, if such prove efficacious.

The mission churches in Siam have now a membership of about 500. Percy and Mrs Clark and Esther Halliday are the only Europeans on the staff. Three other couples and one single lady have spent one term each. Robert and Mrs Halliday returned in 1922 to their former field in Burma, to continue their unique work among the Talaings. Throughout his missionary career Halliday's linguistic capacity stood him in good stead. He translated the whole Bible into Talaing or Mon, and also prepared the first Mon

dictionary. At the request of the Burma Government he wrote a monograph on the Talaings, their history, customs and language, a contribution to Oriental Literature of a very high order. He was awarded the K.I.H. gold medal in the New Year Honours list of 1930, and in July, 1932, the Rangoon University conferred on him the degree of D.Litt. He died in 1933.

The membership of the mission churches in India now exceeds 500. More than half of these have accepted Christianity within the last few years, a minor mass movement having taken place. The first missionaries, G.P. and Mrs Pittman, after somewhat intermittent service, retired to Australia in 1939. The second and third couples, Watters and Philpott, returned to Britain in 1927 and 1928 respectively. One lady missionary, Mrs J.S. Brown, died in Calcutta in 1935, and her husband died while on furlough in 1936. The present missionaries are R. Penry Pryce, M.A. (of Aberystwith and Oxford) and his wife (née Elsie Francis); J.C. and Dorothy Christie; Lyle Burdett, B.A., and Mrs Burdett; and Bessie Melville.

The membership in the third mission field, Nyasaland, is about 2,650. Of these 650 are in the old mission station at Namiwawa, near Zomba; and the remainder are in the Gowa District, taken over from the Baptist Industrial Mission in 1930. Mary Bannister, the only pre-war missionary back in Nyasaland, was joined in that year by two

couples, Ernest and Mrs Gray and Wilfred and Mrs George-son. Gray had completed the theological course at Overdale. Georgeson had gained the B.Sc. degree from Liverpool University and won a scholarship for three more years at Cambridge. He renounced the prospects of a brilliant career in physics to take up this work in Africa. A third couple, J.E. Gregory, B.A., and Mrs Gregory (a certificated teacher) went out later. Mary Bannister retired in 1935.

Throughout the War years the work abroad was directed from Glasgow, where the Chairman (David Drummond), Secretary (William Crockatt) and Treasurer (H.E. Tickle) all resided. Then Norman F. Bambury of Bradford took over the Treasurership, and H.E. Tickle became Chairman. The latter's death in 1921 was keenly felt by the Churches of Christ, and also by Temperance workers, for he was Chairman of the Executive of the Scottish Permissive Bill Association. The death of William Crockatt in 1923 was another loss greatly felt. The officials since that time have been:- Chairman: John Crockatt (1921-22), Laurie Grinstead (1922-28), N.F. Bambury (1928-33), A.C. Watters (1933-38) and W.C. Crockatt (1938- ); Secretary: W.C. Crockatt (1923-29), Laurie Grinstead (1929-37) and H. Philpott (1937- ); Treasurer: N.F. Bambury (1918-37) and A.L. Macdonald (1937- ).

The Home Missions Committee has had fewer changes.

Since its inception in 1855 it has only had three Chairmen:- G.Y. Tickle, James Marsden (1888-1917) and J.W. Black. The latter was succeeded in the Treasurership by A.J. Elwes (1918-27), Walter Croome (1927-28) and W.E. Silk (1928-40). J.H. Nicholls became Secretary on the death of James Flisher (1925) and is still in office, A.C. Watters being joint Secretary since 1937.

Overdale has had three Chairmen of Governors:- R.W. Black, T.H. Fraser (1927-37) and F.W. White (1937- ).

The General Sunday School Committee has sat under the presidency of W.B. Ainsworth, B.A. (1912-17); T.H. Fraser, C.A. (1917-22) and Frank Hepworth, M.A. (1922- ).

#### V. FURTHER ORGANISATION.

The Temperance Committee, which had been already functioning for forty years, was recognised by the Conference in 1920. Since that year its members have been elected by the Conference. That year also a Temperance Organiser had been employed - R.H. Parker - and he continued in this service until 1928, being followed by Ernest Bell (1928-30). The Committee widened its scope in 1920, taking as its name 'Temperance and Social Questions Committee', and in 1938 it became the 'Social Questions Committee'.

In 1923 another Committee was added to the

organisation. As far back as 1872 the Evangelist Committee had recommended the Annual Meeting to establish a Chapel Building Fund. In December of that year a Lancashire Building Fund was inaugurated, with expectation of its ultimate extension to the country generally. Objection was made in the following years to the Annual Meeting taking over this fund without very serious consideration of the suggested clauses for a Model Trust Deed, some members contending that "it seemed somewhat *anomalous* analagous that a people who have said so much against creeds should now set themselves to make one".<sup>1</sup> The trustees withdrew their offer to hand over the Fund at that time. In 1923, when the assets had accumulated to £8,600, the offer was renewed and this time accepted. A Chapel Building Committee has been elected by the Annual Conference since that time, and the Capital Fund had increased to £12,600 by 1939. This Committee assists churches by loans on easy terms to erect or extend meeting-houses; and has given valuable assistance in recent years by advising churches on the type of building to erect. A great improvement in the design of church buildings is the result.

In 1930 the formation of a Central Council was authorised. Each of the six spending Committees was to appoint a given number of representatives to the Council

1. "Ecclesiastical Observer", 1875, p.244.

and the Conference would appoint six others. For the future any Committee having a new proposal involving large expenditure or important developments of its work would be asked to submit such proposal for the recommendation of the Central Council to the Annual Conference. The functions of this Council have been gradually increasing.

In 1926 a Union Committee was added to the list of Standing Committees. Such a Committee, elected from year to year, had been in existence since the Geneva Conference, and its importance was now increasingly recognised. This Committee not only kept in touch with the Faith and Order Movement, but also was ready to inquire into any possible chance of Christian union with kindred churches. One of its members, Principal Robinson, attended Lausanne Conference in 1927. Ten years later, at the Edinburgh Conference, the Chairman and Secretary of the Union Committee - A.C. Watters and Principal Robinson - represented the British Churches of Christ.

A Continental Committee, formerly operating, was reconstituted in 1936. Its duties are "to get in touch with religious movements on the Continent approximating to our own and to encourage them in their efforts".<sup>1</sup>

In the same year a Historical Committee, re-

1. Year Book, 1936, p.197.

placing an old one, was appointed for three years, with the following tasks:-

- (a) "To collect materials of historical value".
- (b) "To encourage historical research in local areas and the publication of articles dealing with the same".
- (c) "To pursue the task of compiling an official history of the Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland".

In 1939 the same Committee was re-appointed for a further three years. Part of its duties will be to help in the Centenary Celebrations of the first Conference, in 1942.

Also in 1936 a Commission on Ordination was appointed to consider the ordination of evangelists and also the ordination of elders and deacons. The Commission's Report, which has been prepared for presentation to the 1940 Conference, will, it is hoped, remove very largely the present discrepancies in practice amongst the congregations.

## VI. PUBLICATIONS.

On the breakdown of Lancelot Oliver's health, R.K. Francis became the editor of the "Bible Advocate", in 1918, and continued until the close of 1920. In 1921 the name was changed to "Christian Advocate", and the editorship was shared by Albert Brown and William Robinson.

1. Year Book, 1936, p.197.

Two years later Brown became sole editor, and continued until the summer of 1927, when he was succeeded by A. Campbell McCartney, the first trained journalist to occupy the position.

The Foreign Missions Quarterly, the "Open Door", was edited by John Crockatt from 1912 until his departure to visit the mission fields in 1920, when he was succeeded by Laurie Grinstead. On the return home from India, after twelve years' service, of A.C. Watters in 1927 he accepted the editorship, which he handed over to another ex-missionary, Henry Philpott, in 1934.

The Sunday School monthly, "The Sunbeam", after being edited for twenty years by Mrs Freeman, was in the equally capable hands of Mrs A.C. McCartney from 1933 for four years, the Sunday School organiser, J.L. Colver, thereafter taking charge.

A quarterly review for Preachers and Church Workers, under the editorship of Principal Robinson, was begun in 1934 under the title of "The Christian Quarterly", selling at one shilling. For lack of sufficient subscribers to make it self-supporting it was withdrawn at the end of 1939, much to the regret of its readers.

Since 1927 the Year Book has been edited by J.R. Francis.

A Hymn Book Committee, appointed in 1932, completed its task in 1938 and was dissolved at the 1939

Conference. The new hymn book was mainly the work of Dr Robinson and James Gray, and was well received by the churches. Within a few months the Publishing Committee reported having sold 13,000 hymn books and 1,800 tune books.

In addition to the above official publications the 'Conservative' section of the brotherhood has continued to produce a small monthly, under the successive titles:- "The Interpreter", "The Apostolic Messenger", "The Bible Advocate" and "The Scripture Standard".

Three of the missionaries have produced missionary books:- Dr Halliday's "The Talaings" (1917) has already been mentioned; Anne G. Piggot (a niece of Dr Halliday and granddaughter of James Anderson) wrote "Pen Pictures from India", which was published in 1928; and Mary Clark wrote "Stories from Pagoda Land", published in 1931.

The Sunday School Committee has also been responsible for publishing a few books. In 1930 a booklet from the pen of James Gray, M.A., appeared, entitled:- "The Sickness of the Sunday School and its Cure". Five years later there appeared from the same pen:- "Discipleship in the Church", a booklet designed mainly to help teachers seeking to prepare young people for church-membership. In 1940 J.L. Colver and A. Williamson produced "A Manual of New Testament Teaching on the Nature

of the Church".

William Robinson's first book, "Essays on Christian Unity", appeared in 1922. This was followed by "Religion and Life", "What Churches of Christ Stand For" and "Christianity is Pacificism". Amongst other publications were Joseph Smith's unique compilation, "Synoptic Tables"; and G.E. Barr's "Life of Edwin Henry Spring", a tribute by one preacher at Gloucester to his predecessor.

#### VII. A WORLD-WIDE MOVEMENT.

The visit to the Edinburgh (1910) Conference of thirty Disciple representatives, the Union of the Christian Association Churches with the older Churches of Christ in 1917, and the presence of both American and British leaders at Geneva (1920) were all important factors in drawing the Disciples and Churches of Christ more closely together.

The British Churches were also helped towards a wider outlook by the visits of leading preachers from overseas. Before the War W.D. Campbell of Detroit accepted an invitation for one year of Intensive Mission work. He visited the cities of Glasgow, Wigan, Leicester, Birmingham and London; which reported additions respectively of 30, 84, 80, 53 and 20.<sup>1</sup> The evangelistic message was not very different from that of the British evangelists, but the technique was different and opened British minds

1. Year Book, 1913, pp.42-47.

to the possibility of better methods.

After the War the Australian Churches began to repay the help they had received from the British Churches, some of their ablest preachers accepting temporary engagements in Britain. The first to take service was F.D. Pollard, who conducted missions and acted as Organising Secretary for the General Evangelist Committee for two years (1919-21). J.J. Franklyn (who had already had preaching experience in New Zealand, United States and Canada, as well as in his native Australia) spent eighteen months (1921-22) amongst the British churches. J. Wiltshire arrived from Australia in 1921 on a three year's engagement. H.G. Harward, New South Wales Organiser, came for one year (1927-28). Thomas Hagger, who had paid a short pre-war visit, made a return call in 1935-36. W.W. Hendry, who arrived in 1930, has remained, ministering now in his second pastorate.

E.C. Hinrichsen, of Queensland, has twice visited Britain in recent years as Intensive Missioner. During his first campaign (1935-36) he reported over 1,000 confessions. His second campaign, begun in 1939, was summarily concluded on the outbreak of war that autumn.

No American preacher has come in the last twenty years for the specific purpose of serving the British churches, unless the visit to his native country of E.G. Rockcliffe be considered an exception. During a year at

home (1923-24) he preached continuously, most of the time in Wigan and the remainder in his native Furness, over one hundred additions being recorded.

The British Churches have considerably benefited, however, from the visit of American Disciple ministers, who have come to study at Edinburgh University. Jesse Kellems (1925-26), Warren Hastings, G.E. Osborne, Harold F. Humbert, A.J. Miller and Dean E. Walker have all freely served the British churches; and, incidentally, on their return to America, most of them have had more prominent careers.

Following on the visit of Dr Kellems there came to Britain on a brief tour in 1926 one of the Secretaries of the Disciples' United Christian Missionary Society, Jesse M. Bader. He won the hearts of the churches. "In matter, manner, and (above all) spirit, Mr Bader poured out unstintingly the riches of his gathered experiences and wisdom upon the subject of Evangelism. He has given to our views a new orientation, a new breadth, and a new enthusiasm. None of the Churches he visited can be quite the same again. All who heard him will recall that he spoke with the authority of one who, having tasted the love of God, was anxious that no petty differences of opinion or outlook should prevent him from telling everyone<sup>1</sup> how wonderful a thing that love was.

1. Year Book, 1927, pp.49-50 (G.E.C. Report).

The 1926 Conference, which he visited, agreed to send a fraternal delegate to the Annual Convention of the American Disciples that autumn. J.W. Black, Chairman of the General Evangelist Committee, was the representative. The following summer a tour of Britain was arranged for S.S. Lappin, of the American "Christian Standard"; and Dr Abbott (editor of the "Christian Evangelist") and F.E. Smith came over to the Annual Conference as fraternal delegates. Every year since that time the American churches have sent to Britain a fraternal delegate or several, in every case an outstanding leader. In order of their visits - Charles S. Medbury, Walter M. White, George A. Campbell, Claude E. Hill, Graham Frank, R.H. Miller, J.M. Bader and F.B. Holloway, W.A. Shullenberger, W.F. Rothenburger, C.R. Stauffer, P.H. Welshimer, and F.H. Groom have brought inspiration and culture to the enrichment of the British conferences. On an average about every second year the British churches have sent a delegate to America; those honoured being A.J. Elwes, W. Robinson, G. Scarff, Miss M. Hepworth, W. Mander, J.W. Black, A.C. Watters, T.H. Fraser and C.K. Green. The exchange of visits has proved of considerable value to the delegates themselves, and enhanced their future usefulness to their own churches.

Arising out of these interchanges was organised a World Convention of the 'Movement', held in Washington,

U.S.A., in 1930. This was followed, five years later, by a second one, this time in England, the Simon de Montfort Hall, Leicester, being secured for the occasion. Delegates from 35 countries were invited, and several thousand people attended. This Convention gave publicity in Britain, as never before, to the existence of a religious body specially pleading and contending for Christian Re-union. The leaders of the Churches in all the countries were well represented at the gathering, meeting in many cases for the first time, and a strong feeling of world unity was aroused. A third World Convention was planned for Toronto in 1940, but has had to be postponed because of the war. One proof of the closer co-operation created is in the fact that the British and American delegates at the Edinburgh (1937) Faith and Order Conference agreed that it would be advisable in future to prepare joint replies, and that, at the first opportunity in each country, the proposal was ratified<sup>1</sup> by the Annual Gathering.

The Movement which had such humble beginnings in the early years of the nineteenth century now has churches in these forty-one countries:- Australia, Argentina, Belgian Congo, Bulgaria, Basarabia-Roumania, Canada, China, Cape Colony, Czecho-Slovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Great Britain and Ireland, Germany,

1. Year Book, 1938, p.208. Resolution 9.

Hawaiian Islands, India, Japan, Jamaica, Korea, Liberia, Latvia, Litvia, Mexico, Norway, New Hebrides, Natal, New Zealand, Nyasaland, Poland, Philippine Islands, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Roumania, Rhodesia, Russia, Siam, Tasmania, Transvaal, Tibet, United States, and Yugo-<sup>1</sup>Slavia. These churches have a membership of about one and three-quarter millions. In seeking to measure the success of the Movement one must not overlook the fact that there are numerous other Christians in many of the denominations to-day, who are also working for Christian Union. Thus has developed the organisation of the Oecumenical Conferences, going a long way towards the goal of the Churches of Christ. In our final chapter we shall study the relationship of the Churches of Christ to this Oecumenic Movement.

1. Disciples of Christ Year Book, 1936, p.595.

From the numerical standpoint the progress of the British Churches of Christ has been very disappointing. Moreover there are still many areas in Great Britain which the Movement has never reached, and in Ireland, Belfast, with two small churches, is the only place now represented. It seems reasonable to infer that the insistence upon an almost entirely "lay" ministry, while developing a very high average standard of church membership, tended to a loss of evangelistic power. The change of policy resulting from the creation of a theological college has so far made little change numerically, partly because of the opposition (generally subsiding) to the change.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE PRESENT SITUATION

#### ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO THE OECUMENICAL MOVEMENT.

The Church, after two centuries' existence, had only about 30,000 members in Great Britain and Ireland in 1818. That, as Dr. Clifford stated in a published lecture on 'English Baptists: Their Origin and Growth', "in the first quarter of the nineteenth century their foreign mission work began to exert beneficially on their home churches; whilst at the same time the need for better educated ministers was felt, and steps were taken to meet that need. These combined influences resulted in a rapid growth, though it

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may be questioned whether diminishing emphasis on distinctive principles has not also conduced to numerical increase. Be that as it may, they now claim a total membership of 418,608<sup>1</sup>".

Faithfulness to what they considered the New Testament pattern has always been reckoned by the British Churches of Christ more desirable than large numbers. They have never attempted to become a popular movement, at the expense of principle. Their emphasis on certain details has been modified in recent years by various factors. They recognise, for example, that in the expression of Christianity a certain amount of adaptation to individual and national circumstances is inevitable; it is no longer expected that American, Australian, Indian or Chinese Churches of Christ should conform in every detail to the practice of British Churches of Christ. The slogan still is:- "In essentials, unity;" but the list of essentials to-day would be shorter than the one of thirty or fifty years ago. The influence of the young mission churches overseas, and the more frequent contacts with American and Colonial churches have helped to produce this more liberal attitude.

They recognise also that some of the problems which have divided them from their own brethren in the past - such as close or open communion - would disappear

1. See J. McCartney's Presidential Address, Church of Christ Year Book, 1912, pp.14-15.

with the attainment of Christian Union of the type they all wish. There is an increasing tendency, therefore, to discuss less the varying points of view concerning the temporary problems, and to concentrate more on the main issue of achieving Christian Union.

Nothing would more please many of the Churches of Christ members than that the necessity should disappear for their continued existence as a separate body of Christians. They recognise the anomaly of pleading for Christian Union and at the same time constituting themselves an extra party. Happily, they are no longer a lone voice calling out for Christian Union; that aspect of their Plea has been accepted by the bulk of Christendom: but they believe the effort to achieve Union can be helped considerably by their special witness, and that it is still desirable therefore to continue that witness.

What is that special witness? What steps have been taken to impress it upon the religious world? How far is it being accepted? The answers to these questions somewhat overlap, but the remainder of this chapter will be occupied in an endeavour to answer them.

The Churches of Christ and Disciples have from the beginning been opposed to having Creeds. At first their point no doubt was to be allowed the liberty of forming their own conclusions directly from Scriptural

study without being hampered by the stated creeds of the theologians of the various centuries since the setting up of the first Christian Church. What was involved in this may not have been so obvious to them all, namely, that their conclusions from direct study of the Scriptures might be open to modification by their successors. With the extra light that has been thrown on the Bible in the last hundred years it was inevitable that such modifications should take place, and all the more easily because of the absence of a stated creed.

With the participation in the Faith and Order Movement the British Churches of Christ have not hesitated to state their position on each matter under study. The **Formularies** prepared for presentation to Geneva in 1920 and read at the 1918 Annual Conference by H.E. Tickle constituted the first Official Statement of the Faith and Practice of the "Churches of Christ". (The acceptance of the Chapel Building Fund in 1923, with its Trust Deed, was the second). The Answers submitted to Questionnaires sent out by the Subjects Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order (1920-25)<sup>1</sup> state just as specifically the position of Churches of Christ. Chapter IV of "Convictions" (a selection from the Replies to Lausanne, 1927),

1. Printed as Appendix A to "What Churches of Christ Stand For", pp.105-114.

consisting of one page from the American Disciples, twelve from the British Churches of Christ, with a short addendum from the Australian Churches of Christ, once more states the position on some of the themes. The British Churches, by their very fewness and compactness, had remained sufficiently uniform to be able to formulate detailed replies, even though supposedly without a creed; whereas the American Disciples, because of their large numbers, divergent views and practice of full congregational liberty, were unable to answer in detail.

The position taken by the "Churches of Christ" on the Sacraments attracted considerable attention.. In a memorandum published by the Faith and Order Continuation Committee in 1936, specially prepared for study in advance by the prospective members of the 1938 Conference, a most prominent place was given to that position, as witness these quotations:-

"Baptism. Read the very clear statement on pp. 71-74 of Convictions by the "Churches of Christ, Great Britain". Does this look like "Catholic" or "Protestant" doctrine? Can those who believe in Infant Baptism give any satisfactory answer without either subtracting from the meaning of the Sacrament or falling into magic? Do you agree that the Baptismal Controversy is as important as these people say?"

"The Lord's Supper. Read the "Churches of Christ" on this. Convictions, pp.74-75. Does this look like a "Catholic" or a "Protestant" statement?"<sup>1</sup>

In "The Ministry and Sacraments", a volume published in May, 1938, under the editorship of the Bishop of Gloucester, and containing the Report of the Theological Commission of the World Conference on Faith and Order of which he was Chairman, Professor Will of Strasbourg, in a synthetic report, thus referred to the position of the Churches of Christ in the Oecumenical Movement:-  
 "Among the bridge-Churches may be included that of the "Disciples" (Churches of Christ). This is opposed both to Catholic ecclesiasticism and to Protestant biblicism. It rejects the Apostolic Succession because the continuity of God's action and divine life in Christ can only be guaranteed by a living and personal relationship between God and His people, and not by mechanical legalist devices. The authority of the Church is more than that of a hierarchy. Only when it is conferred in Christ's Name and on a personal plane will ordination have a sacred character".<sup>2</sup>

The Commission's Report contained a Historical Survey, the concluding section of which was entitled "Modern Tendencies", and the final paragraph thereof referred thus to the Churches of Christ:-

1. Pamphlet 77, p.15.
2. "The Ministry and Sacraments", pp.499-500.

"In the middle of the eighteenth century a movement had arisen in the Church of Scotland for restoring the Lord's Supper as the central act of Christian worship. This movement found its chief fulfilment in the teaching of Alexander Campbell in America in the early days of the nineteenth century, who emphasised (1) the institutional and corporate character of Christianity, with consequent emphasis on the Church; (2) the necessity of the Sacraments as re-presenting the saving acts of God in Christ and as effecting in us His saving Grace. This teaching resulted in the formation of the Disciple Church, in which to a large extent it has lived on. To-day in America there is evident, especially in the work of the realist theologians, a movement away from subjectivity and empiricism, towards an emphasis on objectivity in the whole field of theology. And in all the American Churches this is having its influence in a revived sacramental life and a renewed emphasis on sacramental doctrine".<sup>1</sup>

Dr Robinson, Principal of Overdale Theological College, was a member of the Commission, and contributed a chapter to "The Ministry and Sacraments", giving "The View of Disciples or Churches of Christ". Written with a twentieth-century background and a wealth of scholarship it contended for the same principles as Alexander

1. "The Ministry and Sacraments", p.22.

Campbell a century earlier. He reiterated that they have always claimed to be neither Protestant nor Catholic, but have desired to be known simply as Christian. Their plea for organic unity has been central to their message throughout their history. In their evangelism, in their faith, and in their worship they have emphasised objectivity as against subjectivity. Whilst stressing the importance of the New Testament and urging a return to New Testament Christianity, the early fathers of the Disciple Movement declared that no interpretation of the Scriptures was authoritative unless supported and approved by the considered, qualified scholarship of the Church catholic. What they sought in the Scriptures was not a final and absolute interpretation, but only an authoritative one. They set the Scriptures within a living institution and so allowed for development of thought and the spirit of enquiry.

Continuing his argument Dr Robinson pointed out that, for the Disciples, Christianity was the revelation of God - to be received, assented to and trusted. Faith was the acceptance of testimony accompanied by personal surrender in trust and loyalty to the person of the Lord Jesus. Pre-baptismal faith is assured by the affirmation that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God", which is an oath of alleg-

iance to Him as Lord - something wholly personal and essentially moral.

On the subject of Infant Baptism, continued the writer, while within the praxis of the Church there will be development and change, no change or growth can be regarded as a true development which is a contradiction of the fundamental thing in the Christian revelation. What is sub-personal becomes sub-Christian. This is the ground of the Disciple witness against Infant Baptism. Disciples claim that the introduction of Infant Baptism was the fundamental error of Christendom, because it sets within the Christian system a standing contradiction of the Christian Gospel of God's personal relationship to His people; but, for the same reason, they cannot but regard the transference of Baptism from an effectual Sacrament to a mere declaratory act as an error of like magnitude, carrying with it equally undesirable results.

On the subject of the Eucharist, amongst other things Dr Robinson pointed out that Disciples have always placed great stress on the Lord's Supper as the supreme act of Christian worship. The Eucharist has been for them the great churchly service in which the Church as a royal priesthood offers worship, through her Great High Priest, Who is here set forth in His Holy Redeeming Act as sacrificium. Upon this sacrifice the Church spiritually feeds in Communion (fellowship),

which is God's giving and our receiving, something essentially personal.

In a final section on "The Ministry" it is stated that Disciples have no special witness of the same value as that on Baptism and the Eucharist. They join with Lutherans and Reformed in denying any doctrine of continuity which is either mechanical or legal. They have given a large place to "lay" ministry, and they emphasise the sacred character of the office of a minister to the extent of denying that it is conditioned by a man's professional occupation. It is Christ, through the Church, working in the personal realm, within the heavenly plane of worship, by choice and the rite of ordination, who gives to men the sacred character<sup>1</sup> (potestas) of Bishop or Deacon.

Since the Edinburgh Conference the Union Committee of the Churches of Christ has drafted further Replies, firstly for the consideration of the Disciple Commission appointed to co-operate in the production of a Joint Report. The following extract from the Draft illustrates why the term "bridge-church" may have been given by Professor Will:-

"Holy Scripture and Tradition. On the vexed question of Holy Scripture and Tradition there is a traditional attitude in Disciple scholars which may help

1. "The Ministry and the Sacraments", pp.253-268.

towards some solution. If we look at Catholicism and Protestantism in their most absolute forms we see that the real difference between them is the question as to the seat of authority. Both agree that ultimately Jesus is the source of all authority in the Church. Protestants claim that the authority of Jesus is to be found in the Scriptures (sola scriptura), though, paradoxically enough, they often emphasise to an extraordinary degree the present-day witness of the Holy Spirit, and urge the necessity of moving with the times. (Along with this emphasis on the present-day witness and activity of the Holy Spirit generally goes the ignoring of the activity in other ages of the Church, especially the Conciliar and the Mediaeval periods). On the other hand Catholics claim that the authority of Jesus is to be found in the Church, the Church being before the New Testament and itself "the pillar and ground of the truth". For them the Church as a living body functions as the organ of authority in every age. This doctrine, it would appear, should allow for development (as Newman claimed over against Protestantism), and should enable the Catholic Churches to be the most sensitive to the witness of the Holy Spirit in our day. But, paradoxically enough, Catholics have often been most insistent on appealing to what is primitive.

"It would appear that the whole trouble on the question of authority springs from setting the New Testa-

ment over against the Church or the Church over against the New Testament. This, early Disciple scholars refused to do. Although they claimed that if we wish to know what Christianity is we must go to the New Testament documents, and to these documents alone in the first place, they were well aware that the Church was before the New Testament. They knew that we do not see or hear Christ apart from the Church. But they also saw that to stress the authority of the Church and to neglect the authority of the New Testament was a movement in the direction of subjectivity and not of objectivity as might be supposed - a movement which might quite easily reduce the Church to the level of a human society and the Christian faith to the level of a theosophy wholly divorced from history. The New Testament - which was a collection of the earliest Christian literature and contained the most primitive tradition of the Church - was for them the norm by which all future developments in Christianity must be tested. As such it was the bulwark against all wilful preferences and the guarantee of objectivity and given-ness in the Christian system. It had reference to the creative period of Church history, the period which alone could have significance for what was fundamental to the peculiar genius of Christianity."

"But early Disciple scholars saw with equal clearness that to overstress the authority of the New Testame<sub>n</sub>t

against that of the Church was to make of Christianity a 'book religion' and to reduce the New Testament to the level of a 'rule book', giving rein to private interpretation of a literalistic and legalistic kind. So that, whilst stressing the importance of the New Testament and urging a return to New Testament Christianity, they rejected the doctrine of private interpretation, and declared that no interpretation of the Scriptures was authoritative unless supported and approved by the considered, qualified scholarship of the Church Catholic and witnessed to by the consensus fidelium".

In conclusion - The World Conference on Faith and Order and the Formation of a World Council of Churches have given the Churches of Christ a fresh incentive. The notice of their witness, taken by the world's leading theologians with a measure of approval, has been very encouraging. They have not merely contributed to the material for oecumenical consumption; they have been beneficiaries.

They are conscious of many weaknesses in their past. They know that it is their duty, not only to contend for some special things, but also to be forward in every good gift that the Church can possess.

They are proud of their pioneers. To be reared in an age of dogmatism and intolerance and yet to conceive of a Church re-united, in which there would be

individual liberty of opinion in all non-essentials, - this was a remarkable thing. That those pioneers should sometimes have displayed an intolerance and a harshness that were not quite consistent with their high ideals was regrettable, but not surprising in their surroundings. The new generation lives in a kindlier age; and must above all else display an eirenic and humble spirit. Building on the good foundations laid by their fathers in the faith, the present day Churches of Christ will fail if they do not continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX

It is possible to give a glimpse of some of the early Methodist churches, the original records of the Kirkcaldy Church having been preserved.

The following is the preamble:-

"We, the undersigned, viz. James Wigham, Mrs Wigham, Christiana Irvine, Thomas Swindell, Robert Taylor, George Scott, John Taylor, Christiana Wigham, Janet Taylor, of Kirkcaldy; also Robert Grayson from Perth and George Dick from Montrose, met in James Wigham's room on Sunday, 3rd April, 1742, and formed themselves into a church, and appointed James Wigham and John Taylor to act as Deacons, as also to preach over the members. It was then agreed to meet for a time in James Wigham's room every first day of the week to attend to the instructions of Wigham's house."

"The following is the order which was accepted. Forenoon, met at half-past eleven o'clock, commenced with Prayers, Psalter, Reading the Word, Attending to the Fellowship, and receiving the Lord's Supper."

A P P E N D I X

Afternoon, met at half-past two o'clock, commenced with Prayers, Psalter, Reading the Word, Attending to the Fellowship, and receiving the Lord's Supper. But in consequence of some of the members who could not get attendance in the forenoon, it was agreed to attend to the Fellowship and preaching of Word in the afternoon, which order still continues."

The next entry in the Minutes tells us that they continued to meet in James Wigham's room till the 17th of June, when, in consequence of disorder and disturbing their responsibility to provide to the world the Word of God, they met publicly in the Lecture Hall, Kirkcaldy, on Sunday, 17th June, 1742.

They sent a delegate to the Edinburgh Conference in August, when their membership was 25. There was an order expiring before the end of 1742. In March, 1743, it was decided to appoint Officers-burial by a ballot vote of the Church; the Bishop and two laymen were ordained. 25 votes were recorded. James Wigham obtained 7 votes for the office of Bishop, and John Taylor 13 votes for the office of Deacon. For a second Deacon, a further ballot had to be taken on the following Sunday, when G. Macdonald was elected.

## APPENDIX

It is possible to give a glimpse of one of the early Scottish churches, the original Minute books of the Kirkcaldy Church having been preserved.

The following is the preamble:-

"A few disciples, viz, James Wishart, Mrs Wishart, Christian Irvine, Thomas Saunders, Robert Taylor, George Grant, John Taylor, Christian Wishart, Janet Taylor, of Kirkcaldy; also Robert Christie from Cupar; and George Dron from Auchtermuchty met in James Wishart's room on Sunday, 3rd April, 1842, and formed themselves into a church, and appointed James Wishart and John Taylor to act as Deacons, as also to preside over its meetings. It was then agreed to meet for a time in James Wishart's room every first day of the week to attend to the institutions of Christ's house".

"The following is the order which was adopted. Forenoon, met at half-past-eleven o'clock, commenced with Praise, Prayer, Reading the Word, Attending to the Fellowship, and Breaking of Bread, then exhortation, Prayer and Praise. Afternoon, met at a quarter-past-two o'clock, began with Praise, Prayer, Reading the Word, Exhortation, Prayer and Praise. But in consequence of one of the sisters who could not get attended in the forenoon, it was agreed to attend to the Fellowship and Breaking of Bread in the afternoon, which order still continues".

The next entry in the Minutes tells us that they continued to meet in James Wishart's room till the 12th of June, when increasing in number and considering their responsibility to proclaim to the world the glad tidings, they met publicly in Mr Leslie's Hall, Kirkwynd, on Sunday, 19th June, 1842.

They sent a delegate to the Edinburgh Conference in August, when their membership was 23. There were 21 more baptisms before the end of 1842. In March, 1843, it was decided to appoint Office-bearers by a ballot vote of the Church. One bishop and two deacons were desired. 38 votes were recorded. James Wishart obtained 37 votes for the office of Bishop, and John Taylor 33 votes for the office of Deacon. For a second Deacon, a further ballot had to be taken on the following Sunday, when G. Barclay was elected.

A year later, on 17th March, 1844, "the Brethren were informed by the Bishop that certain complaints had been made respecting the government of the Church, arising from a deficient number of Office-bearers, and it was thought some improvement could be made by adding another Bishop and Deacon to the present number. It was thought wise, moreover, to leave this for the consideration of the Brethren until next Sunday". After a good deal of discussion on the 24th, all but three voted for this finding:—"That no improvement can scripturally be made under present circumstances, and that therefore we remain just as we are!"

By the summer of 1845, however, criticisms of the Bishop as a ruler led to his tendering his resignation. After several meetings a motion "that Bro. Wishart be requested to take the Presidency and rule as he had done before" was defeated in favour of an amendment "that one or two more be chosen to act along with him". The minority group, consisting of 25 members, withdrew from fellowship, and for some years there appears to have been a rivalry between the two parties, each seeking recognition from sister Churches.

The majority group retained the Minute book, which shows them as meeting in Links Hall on 5th October, 1845. From 1845 they were in the habit of electing Presidents and Deacons for short periods of six or twelve months, and many of the entries in the minutes deal with the business of those elections and of the difficulties sometimes arising therefrom. At the time of the Glasgow Conference in 1848 they reported five Presidents (and no Deacons).

In those early records cases of discipline were frequent, and the treatment much more severe than would be considered necessary by most of us nowadays. Before the Church was three months old, the name of Mrs Wright was removed from the roll. She had been absent for a number of weeks. "She was declared no longer a sister as she had neglected the observance of the institutions of Christ's house without a sufficient reason or repentance". Four months later another sister "was separated from the fellowship of the Brethren for associating with bad company, having been absent from her lodgings all the Links Market night, also because she did not attend the meeting of the Brethren to be reprov'd for her misconduct". On 26th February, <sup>1843</sup> a young brother "was declared unfit for the fellowship of the Brethren on account of having left his father's house without his knowledge, as also broken his agreement with his master". The following month a married couple were excluded for railing.

On the other hand it is worthy of note that marriages within the Church were duly recorded, and recognised as part of the life of the Church. The first mentioned took place on a Sunday. "This day, 3rd March, 1844, it was intimated to the Brethren that Bro. Robert Taylor and Sister Christian Irvine intended to be united together in marriage, and for this purpose had been proclaimed by the legal authorities of the parish, when no objections were offered, and further, that the ceremony was intended to be performed immediately, which was done accordingly by Bro. James Wishart".

The next entry is two months later. "At the Wednesday meeting, 15th May, 1844, the Brethren were informed of the intention of Bro. George Grant and Sis. Jean Dick to be united in marriage, and for this purpose had been regularly proclaimed by the authorities of the land, and also (if no objection were offered) that the ceremony was to take place immediately. No one objecting, it was done accordingly by Bro. James Wishart".

A third entry, after the departure to Links Hall, dated 10th May, 1846, reads:- "Sunday afternoon Bro. James Tulloch intimated that there is a purpose of marriage between Bro. James Haig and Sis. Janet Tulloch on Monday first, and he invited all the brethren to attend at his father's house instead of meeting on Wednesday evening". "Monday evening, 11th May. The brethren met, Bro. Thomas Brown presiding, who proceeded to solemnise the marriage contract; both parties expressing a desire to stand in the relation of husband and wife, they were declared married in the presence of the brethren then assembled".

1. Abbott, E. A. "The Development of the ..."  
 2. ...  
 3. ...  
 4. ...  
 5. ...  
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