

Our Theological Colleges. (II) In Scotland.

FOR the earliest Baptist Churches in Scotland, of which we have any record, the question of providing trained ministers can hardly be said to have arisen. The "Scotch Dippers" were fiercely denounced by John Knox, but the first churches which have left any trace were founded by certain officers and men belonging to Cromwell's army of occupation, and these doubtless "edified themselves." The oldest of our existing churches—Keiss, in Caithness-shire—was shepherded and taught by its founder, Sir William Sinclair, who had imbibed in England the Baptist faith.

Later the so-called *Scotch* Baptist Churches not only of necessity but by reason of their distinctive principle supplied their ministry direct from their membership, by means of a "*plurality of elders*," or pastors, who, while earning their living at ordinary callings, ministered to the church according to their gifts. Thus, though in certain cases the churches granted a salary to a pastor for special service, the problem of ministerial training did not present itself. Indeed, as late as the middle of the nineteenth century a doughty protagonist of "Scotch Baptist" views—Mr. Ninian Lockhart of Kirkcaldy—wrote extensively and passionately against the unwisdom, the unspirituality, the unscripturalness of withdrawing young men from ordinary work or business and training them for the ministry as a calling by which they should earn their bread.

With the rise and spread of the Haldane movement, a new element entered into Baptist life and history in Scotland. The opposition of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland to "unauthorised preachers" drove the brothers Haldane outside that fold, and their heroic labours for the evangelisation of their native land issued in the formation in many places of Independent or Congregational Churches. Preachers being required for these and also for their extensive evangelistic enterprises, the brothers Haldane at their own expense organised seminaries for the training of men for the gospel ministry, and it is said that these schools furnished most of the 185 men sent out for work in Scotland, Ulster, and the North of England by the

Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home during the nine years ending 1806. The Glasgow School was the forerunner, if not the foundation, of the Scottish Congregational College. When the Haldanes became Baptists, they naturally enough continued this plan, and from it came the first organised effort to train in and for Scotland Baptist missionaries and pastors. In 1820 Mr. Robert Haldane arranged that classes should be held in Grantown-on-Spey, under the care of Mr. Lachlan Macintosh, and some twenty men were sent and during their training supported by him. Among these was John Leechman, M.A., who, after labouring in Serampore, held pastorates in Scotland and England, became noted for a book on logic, of which three editions were published, and received in recognition from his Alma Mater, Glasgow University, in 1859, the honorary degree of LL.D.

Meantime several churches had been formed after the ordinary *English Baptist* order, with a recognised minister (as distinguished from the *Scotch* Baptist order with its plurality of pastors drawn from the Church's own immediate membership). These churches were frankly dependent on England for a supply of leaders—so much so that in 1837 there was formed *The Baptist Academical Society for Scotland*, which, finding it “impracticable” to train students in Scotland, sent them to Baptist Colleges in England. Their experiences, however, were not encouraging, and after a year or two the Society ceased to exist. According to the preliminary circular issued by its successor, of thirty students sent to England only six returned to work in Scotland—the lure of the bigger, better Southern land having evidently been too much for the others.

In 1843 there was formed the first Baptist Union of Scotland, but it comprised only that section of the Baptist Churches in which “a free gospel” was declared with the Three Universals, as they were called in Scotland—God loves all men; Christ died for all men; the Holy Spirit strives with all men. The older and stronger Churches being Calvinistic, stood aloof. One of the leading spirits in the Union movement was the Rev. Francis Johnstone, then of Cupar and later of Edinburgh. Mr. Johnstone had himself been trained for the ministry in Bradford (now Rawdon) College, after a full course in Edinburgh High School and Edinburgh University. In 1845, though unsupported by any Committee, he determined to do what he could for ministerial training among Scottish Baptists, and at Cupar gathered several likely young men around him. On his removal to Edinburgh in 1846 he was able to form *The Baptist Theological Academy (Scotland)* with a committee to manage its affairs—the Rev. James Taylor of Glasgow being appointed chairman, and he himself tutor. The committee, in issuing an appeal on behalf of ministerial educa-

tion deeply lamented "that so many years have rolled over the Baptist body in Scotland without the institution of a Theological School, where holy and talented young men might acquire such biblical knowledge as would fit them for more extensive usefulness." They then went on to say, "We exceedingly rejoice that for some years educational committees have been at work in Edinburgh and Glasgow with a view to a better state of things amongst us. For all the good they have been the means of doing we are truly thankful. Still, we look upon the plan generally pursued hitherto of sending the young men to England as being a great deficiency. [They had already lamented that of thirty sent only six were then labouring in Scotland.] Some might plead for the advantages of such a plan. One thing, however, is evident—that the very same advantages would be gained by other bodies were they to send their students across the Border; but the very suggestion of such a scheme would by them all be justly deemed preposterous and worthy of contempt and ridicule. No reason for such a conclusion could be assigned by them which might not also be employed by the Baptists."

For ten years this Theological Academy did excellent work—the classes being held first at Cupar, and then, on Mr. Johnstone's removal to the capital, in Edinburgh. The course of study prescribed was fairly comprehensive and ambitious. "The regular course of study shall consist of four consecutive terms of nine months each, viz. from 15th August to 15th May, during which period the students shall be instructed by the tutor in the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, Theology, Church History, and Biblical Criticism, and shall attend classes in the University for Greek, Latin, Logic, Mathematics, Moral Philosophy, and Natural Philosophy, except in cases where all or any of these classes have been previously attended."

Notwithstanding scanty resources, the work actually done by this academy was of a notably high order, and the results achieved were most encouraging. Among the men sent forth were such fine spirits as Finlay Forbes (the father of Principal J. T. Forbes, D.D., of our present Scottish College), Dr. James Culross, who became Principal of Bristol College, and Dr. Oliver Flett of Paisley. But with Mr. Johnstone's removal to Cambridge, in 1855, this enterprise, and also the first Baptist Union itself, came to an untimely end.

The question of ministerial education, however, remained, and its pressure became such that in 1860 the *Baptist Association of Scotland* was formed for purely educational purposes, and during its nine years of existence some twenty students were brought under the able tutorship and inspiring guidance of Dr. James Paterson, the founder and minister of Hope Street Church (now Adelaide Place), Glasgow. The plan of training

followed included both a university and a theological course, its only drawback being that both ran concurrently and were compressed into the same period of time. Three of the men trained in this way under Dr. Paterson are still happily with us, and all of them so imbibed the spirit and purpose of their teacher that they have been fearless advocates and tireless helpers of the cause of adequate ministerial education for the Baptist ministry. One of them, the Rev. Alex. Wylie, M.A., has just retired from the staff of the Theological College after more than forty years of service as lecturer in Biblical and Systematic Theology, in which his great erudition and fine scholarship were amply proved. Another, the Rev. P. J. Rollo, as convener of the Board of Studies and leader of the College Devotional Classes, still carries on his inspirational task—while the Rev. Geo. Yuille, until recently the honoured secretary of the Union, has loyally supported the aim and effort for a thorough Baptist College.

In 1869 the Baptist Association gave place to the present Baptist Union of Scotland, which, as one of its purposes, took over what had been practically the sole function of the Association, namely, to make provision for the theological training of students, and Dr. Culross, then minister of Stirling, was appointed tutor. The road then seemed clear to a really satisfactory system of Baptist training for Baptist students in Scotland, and the new plan of university attendance in the winter six months, and theological instruction in the summer, promised to obviate difficulties previously encountered. Had it been possible to retain Dr. Culross for an extended period, the troubled history of succeeding years might have been spared our Union and our Churches, but his transference to an English pastorate changed the whole course of events.

At first the difficulty created seemed insuperable, but in 1871 the Rev. Hugh Anderson, of Bratton, being able, through special circumstances, to offer whole time service, the Committee gladly appointed him. His early and unexpected death just at the close of his first session with the students again threw the whole matter into the melting-pot. So difficult was the position that a motion was made in the Union Council in 1873, "that it be suggested to the Educational Committee that it is desirable in the meantime that the Committee, while taking a vigilant oversight of the students of the Union, should send them for their theological instruction to some one or other of the Theological Halls of the country." This motion, though influentially supported, was not accepted, and though its idea cropped up again and again, it was fortunately never approved. In their difficulty, the Union turned to Dr. Paterson in his retirement, and responding to the emergency, he faced the work again, conducting theological classes for the next

three summers. In 1878 Dr. Culross returned to Scotland as minister of Adelaide Place Church, Glasgow, and he was at once invited to assist again in the work of ministerial education, and that same year Dr. Paterson, now an old man, served his last session.

The story of the next dozen years is one of such embittered controversy that, even if it were desirable, it is impossible to trace it in any detail. Three policies or plans divided the brethren. I. The first proposed to have one tutor responsible for the whole course of theological teaching, and devoting all his time to the care of the students—he to be free to call to his assistance from time to time occasional lecturers on special subjects. II. The second, alleging that the denomination in Scotland had not men sufficiently qualified in theology to teach it, proposed that Baptist students should be sent to Presbyterian or other Theological Halls, already in existence, their course to be supervised by the Union Committee, or, alternately, that they should be sent to Baptist Colleges in England. III. The third plan, urging that the first placed an impossible task on one man and could not be fair to the students, and that the second was neither true as to the fact on which it founded nor wise from the point of view of the denomination, since logically followed out by the members of the Churches it would mean the end of the Churches themselves—the third plan set out the ideal of a denominational college, fully equipped and adequately endowed, and proposed to work towards that by instituting a collegiate system of theological instruction, three or four ministers competent for the task being asked while still retaining their pastoral charges to teach the subjects deemed necessary.

All these plans—save the alternative suggested in II.—had in view the great difference then existing between Scotland and England in the fact that the Scottish Universities were—as they still are—open on equal terms to all comers, so that there was no need for the denomination to provide anything in the way of general education, but only the definitely theological training. In 1880 the third plan was actually in being, with twenty-two students under the guidance of four qualified teachers—Dr. Culross, Dr. Flett, Jervis Coats, M.A., and Alex. Wylie, M.A. That year, however, at the Annual Meeting in October, plan number one was again proposed, and in 1882, by a large majority, the Council definitely adopted it and invited Dr. Culross to give himself wholly to the work. The divided vote and the urgent call of Bristol College led him to decline the invitation. From that point on the controversy grew ever hotter, threatening at times to break up the Union itself, hindering the work of the Churches in many ways, and embittering lives not a few. Ostensibly concerned with rival

plans of organisation, it was, or became, a strife as to who should teach. Charges of heresy were freely flung about, and as always proved a futile and fatal game. The wonder is that in such an atmosphere there were any students left to teach. Finally, by 1893, the Educational Fund was in such a parlous state that to the relief of all it was agreed that the work of educating students for the ministry should cease to be one of the objects of the Union, and that another independent organisation should be formed for the purpose. Thus, in 1894, was born the present Baptist Theological College of Scotland, which, taking over the students then under the care of the Union, set itself to carry through the third plan outlined above, combining a full university course for winter months, with a summer course in theology. Dr. Joseph Coats (Professor of Pathology in Glasgow University) was appointed the first President of the new college, and for five years, until his death in 1899, graciously and generously guided its affairs. Three tutors, or lecturers, were appointed—Rev. Jervis Coats, M.A., D.D. (Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis), Rev. Alex. Wylie, M.A. (Biblical and Systematic Theology), Rev. T. H. Martin, D.D. (Baptist History and Homiletics)—and together, in addition to large and busy pastorates, set themselves to lay broad and deep the foundations of the college. Theirs was a long and radiant fellowship in service, unbroken until the lamented death in 1918 of the youngest of them, Dr. Martin. The Rev. P. J. Rollo was also appointed to care for the devotional and social side of college life, and to guide the students in their course and career—a work he still carries on.

During the years of strife the protagonists on both sides constantly affirmed that Scottish Baptists were of one mind as to the absolute necessity of having a properly trained ministry. And in Scotland, with its traditional faith in, and devotion to, education, and with the shining example of the Presbyterian ministry—"the most highly educated in the world"—that should perhaps have been true without qualification and without exception. But memories of "Moderatism" in the Church of Scotland, and the fact that examples not a few still existed in Presbyterian and other Churches of culture minus evangelical experience, made many Scottish Baptists more than a little doubtful. These had a profound distrust of what they called "man-made ministers," and though they would not have put it so, they shared that feeling which Dr. Whitley in last issue described as fairly widespread in England, that somehow "education led to heterodoxy and that orthodoxy had some special affinity with ignorance." In any case, the constant controversy in the Union over educational methods and teachers increased their dislike of the whole subject, and the want of

a sufficient number of trained men left the Churches too often to find ministers as and where they could—a condition of affairs and a temper of mind by no means yet wholly overcome.

With the formation of the College there came outward peace, but the effects of the strife lingered for many years. For one thing, the College had to start without an endowment fund, and with but a very modest annual income—which meant that the allowances to students towards university fees and the honoraria to the lecturers were, to begin with, rather meagre. This was the more vexing because, in 1881, there had been submitted to the Union a scheme of ministerial education to be backed by a permanent fund of £25,000, towards which, given a certain amount of agreement as to policy, the promoters were assured of immediate contributions of at least £20,000. Unfortunately, the necessary agreement could not be attained, and the plan was not pursued. From 1894, however, steady progress was made. The Endowment Fund began to take shape and substance, until in 1913, the family of the late Mr. Thomas Coats, of Paisley, who had been one of those interested in the earlier scheme, generously gave in memory of their father over £17,000 to it, so raising it to over £22,000. This enabled the Committee the following year to invite the Rev. Jervis Coats, M.A., D.D. (Glasgow), to become Principal, devoting all his time to the College, and to add to the staff a fourth lecturer in the person of the Rev. J. T. Forbes, D.D. Dr. Coats' work proved invaluable, and in spite of the strain of the war years, the influence of the College grew until to-day it stands secure in the affection and confidence of the Churches, and with a widening basis among them of annual subscription income.

One chief difference between the Scottish Baptist College and the English ones is that it is not residential. Some, no doubt, will think this a disadvantage, but many if not most Scotsmen think it more an advantage. So far, indeed, the College has had no premises of its own, but has been dependent for class room and other accommodation, upon the generous hospitality of Adelaide Place Church, Glasgow. This, however, may be remedied before long as there is now a project on foot for a united effort by the Union and the College to secure a Scottish Baptist Church House, in order to bring all our denominational enterprises under one roof. The course of study prescribed is a strenuous one. Students of approved Christian character and likely preaching gifts, are accepted only on the express understanding that they will take the full university course for the M.A. degree, and that they will graduate. Wherever possible, men are urged and encouraged to take an honours degree, or to qualify for the B.D. degree, and several have done so. Inasmuch, however, as many of the

men seeking admission are, though otherwise satisfactory and promising, more or less backward in education, there is an arrangement by which they are accepted as probationers, and at the expense of the College put under the guidance of an expert tutor (a head schoolmaster), who prepares them for the University Preliminary Examination. Anything up to two years is allowed for this stage, and during it a bursary of £20 is allowed towards maintenance. On completing the Preliminary Examination, such men become full students, and a bursary of £30 is allowed. After the first year of the M.A. course has been taken the students enter the theological classes which, during three or four years, they attend each summer for ten weeks. The present theological curriculum is as follows: Biblical Theology and Ethics (J. T. Forbes, M.A., D.D.), New Testament Interpretation (W. Holms Coats, M.A., B.A., Oxon.), Homiletics and Baptist History and Principles (Thos. Stewart, M.A.). Provision is also made for full tuition in Elocution by competent teachers. The whole course usually takes from five to six years. That it places considerable strain on the students is true, but few years have passed without some of them taking high places in the University prize lists. The excellence and thoroughness of the training thus given is evidenced both by the places taken in our ministry on both sides of the Border by the Scottish College men, and by the constant and increasing applications for admission. To the College the average cost all told of each student fully trained is round about £500.

The experience, both of the Union and of the College, of the system outlined above is conclusive proof that in its broad lines it is essentially sound and eminently suitable. That it has reached its final form no one would for a moment affirm. From the first it has been the aim to secure such endowments and such a subscription income as will justify asking two or more men to give all their time to theological teaching. This would necessarily involve a longer course for the students, and therefore increased allowances towards their support during training. The attainment of this ideal was brought appreciably nearer by the splendid increase of the endowment fund in 1913, and from 1914 until his lamented death last year, Principal Jervis Coats, M.A., D.D., gave his whole time to the work of the College, which owes almost everything it has in permanence, purpose, and possibility to his unwearied devotion through more than forty years to the cause it represents. His principalship also proved invaluable to the Churches and to the Union. In the emergency created by his death, however, the Committee have reverted to the former plan in order to secure the services of the Rev. J. T. Forbes, M.A., D.D. (Glas.), as Principal, an arrangement cordially and generously endorsed by the

Church at Hillhead to which Dr. Forbes has ministered for the last twenty years. Under his leadership, however, it is confidently hoped that it may be possible so to extend and strengthen both the endowment fund and the annual income, that ere long the full ideal may be reached. The vacancy on the teaching staff created by Dr. Coats' death will, it is hoped, be filled ere long by the appointment of a fourth lecturer. But further progress will depend not only on college resources in teachers and money, but on the policy and position of the denomination as a whole. Presently, as in England so in Scotland, half the ministers in our churches have not been through a denominational college, too many of them not through any. How far this can be remedied will depend on several factors. The power of college men really to preach and to do that work of evangelisation by which our Churches live and which in Scotland at any rate is the chief reason for their existence, will greatly affect the future. But so, also, will the fact that many of our Churches, especially in the Highlands and Islands, are very small and can hardly hope ever to be more than mission stations and outposts. Almost half of our Churches are dependent, some heavily dependent, on central funds to secure the very modest minimum salary set out in our Sustentation Scheme. That minimum may not deter young men from offering—no student ever expects that he will be on the Sustentation Fund, or figure in the superintendent's "exchange" list! But it will deter parents and friends in many cases from giving the needed encouragement and support through years of training. Against that has to be placed the high appreciation of the ministerial office, as such, which is still shown in Scotland generally, and in most of our Churches. But the position will not be satisfactory until the whole problem of the supply and training of men for the gospel ministry becomes the concern of the Churches as a whole rather than of individuals, and they, as Churches, give heed to the Master's words, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."

THOS. STEWART.