

The Late Midland College.

(3) Principals and Tutors.

THOMAS CARLYLE reminded us that "the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the Great Men who have worked here." The history of theological colleges is traceable largely through the biographies of the men who founded and fashioned them. It is not possible here to pourtray at length the character and gifts of those who took a leading part in the work of the Midland College, and therefore a few notes must suffice.

REV. DAN TAYLOR (1797-1813) was the originator in 1770 of "The New Connexion of General Baptists," which was at first called "The Assembly of Free Grace Baptists." It affirmed its Evangelical position against the doctrinal tendencies of the Old Connexion. In his time Mr. Taylor was miner, schoolmaster, quarryman, architect, shopkeeper, farmer, preacher, poet, controversialist, and editor. Whilst he was minister at Birchcliffe he read in the classics and in theology with the clergyman and with his neighbour, Rev. John Fawcett, D.D., of Hebden Bridge, author of "Blest be the tie that binds." With all his versatility, "his learning was not eminent," but "it was far from being contemptible." Though "nearly sixty years of age when he began his new duties," he exhibited spirit and energy in fulfilling them. "He consulted other tutors as to methods," and "read largely . . . His best students admired him as a pattern, revered him as a father, and gratefully acknowledged the many benefits he had conferred upon them." His cheerfulness never failed, despite heavy trials, and his ministry to the churches throughout the country was truly apostolic. He was present at two hundred Conferences, wrote forty books, and preached 20,000 sermons, and such work did not cease during the period of his tutorship. And, best of all, his character won such renown as to justify the title of "Saint Dan," by which Dr. Clifford has described him. Occasionally may be seen the portrait-group of contemporary Baptist Ministers in which his sturdy figure appears.

REV. JOSEPH JARROM (1813-1837). Thus far, the management of the Academy had been in the hands of Governors, representing the subscribers, but upon the retirement

of Mr. Taylor they handed over the responsibility to the General Baptist Association, and it became the one Baptist College for which a denomination was entirely responsible. For nearly eighty years that relationship was maintained, and then the General Baptist Association ceased to exist as a denomination.

It has been shown that a strong desire was expressed in favour of Mr. Taylor's removal, with the Academy, to some centre in the Midland Counties. He could not see his way to such a change, but when he relinquished office, steps were immediately taken to bring it about. The Rev. Joseph Jarrom of Wisbech was selected for the position of Tutor, and so the College (was transplanted to the little town (not really central) in which he fulfilled his pastorate. He had been one of Dan Taylor's students, and was worthy of the honoured name that he bore. Amongst the men who passed under his tuition were Joseph Goadby of Loughborough, Silas Stenson (uncle of Dr. Clifford), Dr. Richard Ingham (Baptist apologist), and three missionaries in Orissa, whose fame was in all the churches, viz: Isaac Stubbins, John Buckley, D.D., and Henry Wilkinson. Mr. Jarrom died on 5th September, 1842, in his sixty-eighth year.

REV. THOMAS STEVENSON (1825-1841). Mention has been made already of the "Education Society," formed in 1825, and amalgamated with the General Baptist Academy in 1838. For the whole of that time it was under the care of Mr. Stevenson, minister of Baxter Gate Church, Loughborough, and he was Tutor of the United College until 1841, when he resigned. Descended from farmers, he began to preach at Friar Lane, Leicester, in 1806, and subsequently became pastor of Archdeacon Lane Church in that town. He came under the influence of Robert Hall, and preached for him at Harvey Lane. He was able to commit to memory and recite passages from the great pulpit orator's sermons. In 1811 he removed to the pastorate at Loughborough, and for fifteen years ran a boarding-school in that town. That, no doubt, was good preparation for the theological tutorship and it is recorded by his successor, Rev. Joseph Wallis, that he "excelled in the tact with which he brought out the faculties of his students, and stimulated them to self-improvement. It must be owned that he raised the tone and taste of the young men under his care to a degree which far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of his friends."

REV. JOHN STEVENSON, M.A. (1841 and 1842). When Mr. Thomas Stevenson was appointed Tutor by the Education Society, his son John became his second student, and afterward proceeded to Glasgow University where he graduated M.A. For a time he assisted his father in the tutorship and

he was chosen to succeed him. But, as already shown, compliance with his stipulation that the Academy should be removed to London proved to be unsatisfactory. Within a year Mr. Stevenson's health failed, and the ten students in 1842, when he was minister at Borough Road Church, who had been under his training speedily found themselves back in Leicestershire. Mr. John Stevenson was a man of fine character, of an affectionate disposition, of a beautiful spirit, of rare classical attainment. But he was highly-strung, and although a powerful preacher he had to relinquish pastorates because "the sword wore out the scabbard." He died on 7th November, 1878.

REV. JOSEPH WALLIS (1843-1857) was educated at Glasgow University and was called from the pastorate of Commercial Road Church, E. (now Seven Kings, Ilford) to the tutorship of the Academy at Leicester. He died on 27th April, 1857, at the age of sixty. The students went that morning to take leave of him, and he asked the senior to pray, adding—"I have prayed for you all hundreds of times." Probably the most memorable fact in his career was the entrance of Dr. John Clifford to the institution in 1855. "Whilst subsequent tutors left their impress upon him, the Doctor confesses that Mr. Wallis's influence was the most marked. He was a very lovable man, and his faults were chiefly those of a generous nature. His interest in and watchfulness over his students was almost paternal. His stores of common-sense served him well." Other students of this period who conspicuously made full proof of their ministry were: William Bailey and William Miller (Orissa), Thomas Barrass, Dawson Burns, J. Jackson Goadby, Thomas Goadby, John Orissa Goadby, and Thomas Bailey (Orissa).

REV. WILLIAM UNDERWOOD, D.D. (1857-1873) who was one of Mr. Stevenson's students at Loughborough, became one of Dr. Clifford's predecessors in Paddington from 1841, and removed to the Sacheverel Street (now Osmaston Road) Church, Derby, in 1849, was, eight years later, chosen by the G.B. Association to be Principal of the College (which was immediately removed to Sherwood Rise, Nottingham), and it was under his direction that Dr. Clifford spent his final Session at Leicester. Dr. Underwood received his degree from Hillsdale College, U.S.A. He was quiet in manner, genial and kind, and ever had the welfare of his students at heart. He was addicted to the wit and wisdom of Thomas Fuller. In manses and vestries copies may often be seen of a portrait-group of contemporary Baptist ministers with the figure of Dr. Underwood prominent among them. Amongst other literary work, he produced "a monograph" entitled, "The Life of the Rev. Dan Taylor." It appeared in con-

nection with the centenary of the New Connexion of General Baptists, and is admirable for its vividness and conciseness. Students belonging to Dr. Underwood's term of office who attained to prominence in the ministry included Charles Clark (of Broadmead, and Melbourne), James Greenwood, M.A., William Evans (of Leicester), W. E. Winks, J. P. Tetley, Charles Payne, J. H. Atkinson, W. Bishop, N. H. Shaw (of Rome), and Joseph Fletcher. Unquestionably the denomination was well served by the output of the college in these sixteen years.

REV. WILLIAM RAWSON STEVENSON, M.A. (1857-1873). When Dr. Underwood was appointed by the G.B. Association on 24 June, 1857, as Principal, it was also resolved that he should "be assisted in the business of the College by one or more Tutors." Accordingly Mr. Stevenson (not related to the Stevensons already mentioned) who had been assistant to Rev. J. G. Pike of Derby (author of *Persuasives to Early Piety*, and founder of the Orissa Mission) but became better known as minister of Broad Street (now Mansfield Road) Church, Nottingham, was chosen for the work. In 1861 the College was removed to Chilwell (about five miles from Nottingham), and there Dr. Underwood and Mr. Stevenson continued as colleagues until 1873, when both resigned. Mr. Stevenson was an accomplished scholar, an able Tutor and an eminent Christian. Dr. Clifford describes him as "a faithful, devoted and life-long friend; gifted not only or mainly in the technicalities of the teacher's profession, but most richly endowed with the sympathy that reads a student's needs, the patience that bears with his crudity and haste, his ignorance and over-confidence; and perhaps most of all remarkable for the power of leading such students, by his steady persistence and unquenchable and contagious faith in each man, to better work, clear vision, real humility and greater success."

REV. THOMAS GOADBY, B.A. (1873-1889). As soon as the retirement of Dr. Underwood was announced, there was a unanimous desire in the Association that Rev. John Clifford should accept the post, and at the Burnley meeting in 1873, he was urged to do so. But the claims of his work in London, and especially the responsibility connected with the building of Westbourne Park Church, compelled him to decline. Attention at once turned to Mr. Goadby, the minister of Osmaston Road Church, Derby, and he was cordially elected to the Principalship. He had studied under Mr. Wallis at Leicester, and (with a Dr. Williams Scholarship) had graduated at Glasgow University. The present writer was baptized by Mr. Goadby at Derby, and was one of his students at Chilwell. He feels the necessity of restraint in

expressing appreciation of his pastor and principal, but elsewhere he has placed it on record that Mr. Goadby "was perfectly free from the trammels of professionalism, and exhibited the kindly interest of true friendship. To get an hour by the fire with him was a great privilege. He was intensely human, as became more and more apparent in his later years. His utter unselfishness begat in him an unspeakable scorn for a mercenary or mean spirit in others." Dr. Clifford described him as "a cultured preacher, brilliant in expression, solid in thought, earnest and often vehement in utterance and lofty in aim." Rev. C. W. Vick said: "Few men that I have met have had a wider knowledge of English literature, or a more accurate and cultured taste," whilst the late Rev. W. T. Rosevear who was his neighbour at Coventry, bore this testimony: "He was a man of gentle manners and playful humour, a delightful companion. There was a fine naturalness interwoven with the texture of his spiritual character. He was deeply religious and yet entirely free from the conventionalisms of religion. . . He was high-spirited and high-minded, but humble, sympathetic, brotherly."

Year after year, he went in the summer vacation to Halle and worked at German. The result was his translation of two volumes (published by T. and T. Clark), viz: *Ewald's Revelation—its Nature and Record*, 1884; and *Old Testament Theology*, 1888. Two American Universities conferred the degree of D.D. upon him, but he never used it. Amongst his students were Jos. Turner (some time pastor at Moss Side, Manchester), John Vaughan (Orissa), E. Carrington, C. W. Vick, R. M. Julian, C. F. Aked, R. L. Lacey (Orissa), F. E. Fuller, D. P. Packer, R. C. Ford, M.A., B.D., F. G. French and Gordon S. Wilkins (Orissa). It is scarcely too much to say, in view of his gifts and accomplishments, that he was the most distinguished of all the men who have been at the head of the College. He died suddenly (alone in his study), on a Saturday evening when he was about to start for a preaching engagement, and on his memorial stone in the General Cemetery, Nottingham, these mottoes are inscribed:—

"Per ardua ad astra."

"Per angusta ad augusta."

They had been given many years before to Mr. Goadby's brother, Rev. J. Jackson Goadby, by Elibu Burritt, whom he had asked "for a map of the road on which he had travelled" and more appropriate use of them could not have been made.

REV. CHARLES CLARKE, B.A. (1873-1883) was Classical and Mathematical Tutor until the College was removed back to Nottingham. He was trained at Horton (now Rawdon)

College, and remained in the pastorate of the Church at Ashby-de-la-Zouch after his acceptance of the Tutorship at Chilwell. He was a modest, lovable man with a quiet enthusiasm for his work, and when his services were no longer required because of the removal of the college to Nottingham so that the students might attend the lectures and classes at the University College, the G.B. Association expressed its deep sense of the distinguished ability, unwearied diligence and marked success with which, for ten years, Mr. Clarke had discharged the duties of the Tutorship. The kindly and genial spirit he had always shown had won "the affection of the students and the confidence and esteem of the denomination." He was a great sufferer in the years of his retirement, and he passed away in July 1905.

From 1889 to 1891 was an interregnum, during which various attempts were made to find a successor to Principal Goadby. Only three or four students were admitted, and they, together with their seniors, were placed under the tuition of a "Syndicate" consisting of two or three local ministers. After this period, it was determined that the college course should be extended from four to five years.

REV. THOMAS WITTON DAVIES, B.A., Ph.D., D.Th., D.D. (1891-1898). At this point we come to the record of ex-Principals who, happily, are still with us, and extended comment upon them and their work is neither necessary nor desirable. The record of Dr. Davies in the Ministerial List of *The Baptist Handbook* is extraordinary. He is an enthusiastic Orientalist and he is learned in Greek as in Hebrew. At Nottingham College he had to carry on the work practically single-handed. His students found him accessible and sympathetic. When they had become pastors his interest in them was undiminished. Amongst them were Dr. Newton H. Marshall, M.A., B. G. Collins, Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, M.A., T. W. Hart, M.C., and Gwilym Davies, M.A. Dr. J. T. Marshall, M.A., of Manchester College has thus written concerning Dr. Witton Davies, Scientific Scholar, versed in Syriac, Arabic and Assyrian—"Erudition sits lightly on him, his Oriental research has not interfered with his religious life or crushed the Christ-like sympathy of his youthful nature."

REV. SIDNEY WILLIAM BOWSER, B.A. (1899-1913). Upon the removal of Dr. Witton Davies to Bangor, attempts were made to find a new Principal, and meanwhile Dr. Bowser of Birkenhead was appointed Tutor. This necessarily involved his having entire oversight of the students, and, as he occupied the Principal's house for this purpose, he became known as "Resident Principal." At length it was

found impracticable to make any additional appointment, and Mr. Bowser was fully recognized as "Principal." He had the reputation of being "a fine New Testament scholar and a master of New Testament Greek." He has been described as an "omnivorous reader," and all who have known him can bear witness to his devotion to the interests of the college and the welfare of its students, among whom may be mentioned E. Elliott, W. H. Haden, M.A., C. H. Watkins, M.A., D.Th., G. H. Matthews, M.A., A. C. Underwood, M.A., B.D., J. Ivor Trippls, B.A., and Claud M. Coltman, M.A. Principal Bowser's genial courtesy is proverbial, and he is ever actuated by a high sense of duty. He was trained at Regent's Park College and graduated at London University.

REV. JOHN DOUGLAS, B.A., was for five years associated with Mr. Bowser in the tutorial work of the College from 1904 to 1909. He was the son of an Irish Baptist minister who subsequently held a pastorate at Newport, Mon. Trained at Regent's Park College, the son afterwards graduated at the Royal University of Ireland, and had charge of the Church at Waterford from 1874 to 1891. Then he was minister of Broad Street (now Mansfield Road) Church, Nottingham, for ten years. At the conclusion of his Tutorship, he became pastor of the Church at New Lenton, Nottingham, and died on 10th May 1916. He was a warm-hearted, enthusiastic Celt, and many can testify to his brotherly spirit. To the end he was a diligent student.

(To be continued.)