

NOTES

¹ *Grace Magazine*. Obtainable: The Manse, Bradfield St. George, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

² *We Believe: Strict Baptist Affirmation of Faith 1966*. Obtainable: 61 Breakspears Road, London, S.E.4.

³ *F.E.B.E. Broadsheet*. Obtainable: The Manse, Cransford, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

J. E. SUMMERS.

HISTORICAL REGISTERS OF SCOTTISH BAPTISTS

IN CONNECTION with the centenary of the Baptist Union of Scotland (1969), a questionnaire was sent out to every Baptist Church in Scotland. This requested details of extant Minute Books, the exact dates of each book, and where they were kept, also anything of historical interest to the Church. It is three years since these questionnaires were sent out. The results and the discoveries that have been revealed have been most interesting. These have now been collated into five registers or files. No. 1 file deals with Church Minute Books and things of historical interest in the keeping of the Church House; No. 2, things of historical interest in the churches arranged according to Associations; Nos. 3, 4 and 5, Register of Title Deeds in safe keeping with the Law Agent of the Baptist Union of Scotland.¹

All of the one hundred and fifty-nine churches in the Baptist Union of Scotland have now returned the questionnaires. Part of the success of this venture was due to the wise decision of the committee concerned² to approach one person in each Association, to distribute and collect the questionnaires, and then to send them to the person collating³ the details into the registers.

This article is largely concerned with the things of historical interest. Keiss Baptist Church, Caithness, is the earliest known Baptist Church in Scotland. It was founded in 1750 by Sir William Sinclair of Dunbeath House, Caithness. It is said to have first met in the Castle of Keiss. It was disappointing to discover that no minute books of this church are extant prior to 1951. In the *History of Baptists in Scotland*⁴ one of the contributors was Mr. Percival Waugh, the then Secretary of the Home Mission.⁵ In his contributions Mr. Waugh gives fairly full notes. There were, however, some strange omissions from his notes. He refers to letters from Home Mission Agents concerning their arduous journeys in the Highlands⁶ but gives no indication as to where these letters are to be found. Also his references to Keiss Church are sparse. For some years those interested have won-

dered where the letters were from which he quoted. These questions were solved by the discovery of two parcels in the strong room of Baptist Church House, Glasgow, marked "Mr. Percival Waugh's Papers." The existence of these papers was known, but no one had examined their contents in detail.⁷

Amongst the contents of the first parcel are letters that help to answer the queries. Some are from the Rev. William Tulloch of Blair Athol, an early agent of the Home Mission, describing his journeys in the Highlands, together with other letters by other agents of the Society. One letter of particular interest regarding Keiss Church is from Mr. Waugh to the Rev. D. Beaton of Wick, the author of *The Ecclesiastical History of Caithness*.⁸ This was written in June 1909, the year of the publication of the *History*. It contains the story of Keiss as we know it. Mr. Beaton, in a footnote, acknowledges his indebtedness to Mr. Waugh for the details of Keiss Church.⁹ With the help of the present Convenor of the Home Mission Committee of the Baptist Union of Scotland¹⁰ it has now been possible to trace the sources of Mr. Waugh's references. These have been typed out in full and inserted in the appropriate Register. We now feel we are on much surer historical ground with regard to Keiss Church.

Much remains to be done on the earlier history of the Baptist movement in Scotland, especially concerning the relationship between Sir William Sinclair and the Rev. Archibald McLean¹¹ whom Sir William contacted during his later residence in Edinburgh. One letter in the parcel is signed by Rev. Archibald McLean, minister of the First Baptist Church Edinburgh. Future research into the history both of Scotch Baptist Churches and English Baptist Churches in Scotland will benefit from the material in these parcels. We are greatly indebted to the late Mr. Waugh for material he had preserved. It would have been easier to follow up his work if we had known the plan on which he arranged his material!

From this material it appears that there were two previous attempts at Union amongst Baptists in Scotland. The first in 1827,¹² the second in 1843.¹³ We also have further proof of the steps which led to the Union of 1869, whose centenary was celebrated in 1969. The enquiry of 1965¹⁴ had also a forerunner in 1843.¹⁵

Amongst pamphlets in the parcels are the following:—*A Baptismal Catechism*¹⁶ by the Rev. Jonathan Watson; *Christian Communion and Secular Communion*¹⁷ by J. Watson; *A Historical Sketch of the Baptist Body all the way down from Apostolic Ages*¹⁸ by William Fraser of Toronto; *The earliest Scottish sermon on Foreign Missions, 27th December 1797* by the Rev. Archibald McLean of the First Baptist Church, Edinburgh.

The second parcel consists largely of correspondence of the Rev. Archibald Smith of Clyde Street, Edinburgh, the church which ultimately became Dublin Street Church, Edinburgh. This parcel contains

letters written between J. A. Haldane (the founder of the Home Missionary Society) and Mr. Smith, on the difference between them on the question of discipline, Mr. Haldane taking a line less harsh than Mr. Smith. Other correspondence is between Mr. H. D. Dickie of Niddrey Street Church, Edinburgh, and Mr. D. McLaren of Glasgow, father of the Rev. Alexander McLaren of Manchester, on the doctrine of Election and the training for the ministry.¹⁹

Two early Baptist hymnbooks have come to light amongst things of historical interest held in private hands, Sir William Sinclair's Hymn Book of 1750²⁰, and Peter Grant's Gaelic Hymn Book of 1809²¹. According to those familiar with the Gaelic language a few of these hymns are good Gaelic poetry, but the majority do not reach the highest standard. Nevertheless the scriptural truths enshrined in the hymns appeal to the heart of Gaelic people, and were in common use a generation ago, sung feelingly by those who loved Christ and loved the Gaelic language.

In 1928 the Rev. Arthur Piggott, a collector of ancient books as well as a Baptist minister in Dundee, gifted to the Baptist Union of Scotland his collection of Bibles.²² The Rev. C. E. Shipley in an article in the *Scottish Baptist Magazine* of that year²³ describes some of these: The Great Bible of 1549; the New Testament of Tyndale—Jugge's Revision (this is a very imperfect copy, sadly mutilated); the Breeches Bible 1592; Mrs. Elizabeth Sale's Bible. (Mrs. Sale was the first to open the Indian Zenanas to lady missionaries, and was co-founder of the Baptist Zenana Mission.)

Amongst letters in the keeping of the Baptist Church House, Glasgow, are a number of framed letters gifted by the Rev. John Horn of Ayr Baptist Church. One of these, in the handwriting of William Carey,²⁴ bears the date 22 August, but not the year.

Things of historical interest in individual churches have also been collated. The Selkirk Baptist Church possesses, in typescript, twelve "Letters of Miss Joseph." These give details of life in India in the 1890's. Two of these are of special interest; one reveals the difficulty of professing Christ in India at that time; the other describes a visit of Miss Angus of London to India. Further enquiry has elicited from B.M.S. headquarters that these are probably letters from Miss Joseph (scattered through various periodicals of the Society). She was one of the early Zenana Missionaries in India. Who gathered them together, or why they are in Selkirk Church, no one knows.

Interest created by the questionnaire had one pleasing result. A minister,²⁵ during a weekend at Lerwick Church, Shetland, read one of the rare copies of a book on Sinclair Thomson, the Shetland apostle. He urged the Lerwick friends to make sure that a copy came into the hands of the Union. He also wrote to the Secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland and to the compiler of the Registers. The result of consultations, by letter, is that the Lerwick Church, as its contribution

to the Centenary, has itself published a very fine new edition of the book.²⁰

The whole project of the "Registers of Church Minute Books and things of Historical Interest" arose out of a suggestion made by the then Principal of the Baptist Theological College of Scotland, Dr. A. B. Miller. They will find a place in the Records Room of the new Baptist Church House, Aytoun Road, Glasgow.

The author of this article owes much to the kindness of the Rev. Andrew D. MacRae, M.A., B.D., the Secretary-Superintendent of the Baptist Union of Scotland, for encouragement and help; to Miss E. Bernard and the staff of Baptist Church House, Aytoun Road, for much help willingly given.

NOTES

¹ I. L. S. Balfour, M.A., LL.B., Messrs. Balfour and Manson, Frederick Street, Edinburgh.

² Baptist Union of Scotland Centenary Committee, Publicity sub-committee.

³ Rev. Fergus G. Little, M.A., Biggar, Lanarkshire.

⁴ *History of Baptists in Scotland* second edition. Editor the Rev. George Yuille, Baptist Union Publication Committee 1927.

⁵ The Baptist Home Missionary Society for Scotland, especially in the Highlands and Islands.

⁶ *History of Baptists in Scotland* pages 72 and 74.

⁷ The Rev. Derek B. Murray, M.A., B.D., Kirkcaldy, is now examining these parcels.

⁸ *Ecclesiastical History of Caithness and Annals of Caithness Parishes* Rev. D. Beaton, Wick (Available Scottish Central Library, Edinburgh.)

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 226 Note.

¹⁰ Rev. Edward Campbell, Bellshill, Lanarkshire.

¹¹ Co-Pastor First Baptist Church-Magdalone Chapel, Cowgate, Edinburgh.

¹² Minutes of Meeting for Purpose of founding a Union of Baptist Churches in Scotland, 13 June, 1827. (First parcel P. Waugh's Papers, Baptist Church House, 14 Aytoun Road, Glasgow, S.1.) Register No. 1, p. 10.

¹³ Minutes, Baptist Union Assembly, Cupar, 1843. (Percival Waugh's Papers, Parcel No. 1, Baptist Church House.)

¹⁴ Baptist Union of Scotland *Office-Bearers Enquiry into the State of the Union of Scotland*, 1965.

¹⁵ *Inquiry* 1843. (Six copies in Percival Waugh's Papers, Parcel No. 1.)

¹⁶ Percival Waugh's Papers (Parcel No. 1).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Parcel No. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Parcel No. 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Parcel No. 2.

²⁰ *A Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs* Edited by Francis Johnstone, Edinburgh, 1847. Reprint 1870.

²¹ *Gaelic Hymns* Peter Grant. MacLaren and Sons, Glasgow. Edited by Hugh MacDougall, 21st edition, 1926.

²² Collection of Bibles now housed in The Baptist Theological College Library, 31 Oakfield Avenue, Glasgow.

²³ *Scottish Baptist Magazine*, May 1928. Article by Rev. C. E. Shipley, Bristo Place Church, Edinburgh.

²⁴ Dated 22 August but no year specified.

²⁵ Rev. Thomas Stirling, Elgin.

²⁶ *Sinclair Thomson the Shetland Apostle* Rev. J. A. Smith, D.D. Reprinted by Lerwick Baptist Church, *The Shetland Times Ltd.* 1969.

FERGUS G. LITTLE.