



A Brief History

of the

Irish Mission

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Reformed Presbyterian Church

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by

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Introductory

It was not until about the opening of the 19th century that any organised efforts were made by the Protestant Churches in Ireland for the express purpose of bringing the Scriptures to their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. Endeavours had been made by individuals to have the Scriptures, or parts of them, printed in Irish, which was the only language the vast majority of Roman Catholics in Ireland understood at that time. One edition of the New Testament was printed in Irish by the use of a set of Irish type provided by Queen Elizabeth I "in hope", as she said, "that God in His mercy would raise up some to translate that Book into their Mother tongue". After Elizabeth's death the Jesuits seized the type, and used it at Douey in France for printing their own publications in Irish. William Bedell, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin (1627), and afterwards bishop of Kilmore, Co. Cavan, with the assistance of two Irish scholars had the Old Testament translated from Hebrew into Irish on his own initiative. When he appealed to the English authorities for financial help to publish Christian literature in Irish, with a view to the conversion of the native Irish, he was rebuffed with the reply that the Irish "were not to be converted, but to be governed". Again, in 1710, when an attempt was made to have the Bible published in Irish, the attitude of the English authorities was that "such a proposal was destructive of English interests".

Thus until the 18th century the native Irish were largely without the Word of Life, and for the greater part of that century not a single copy of the Scriptures, or any part of them, was published in Irish, though over three million of the population of Ireland could speak no other language.

In 1794 the publication of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles in Irish, with parallel columns in English, created a new interest in the native tongue, but it was not until the second decade of the nineteenth century, when various societies were formed for the dissemination of the Scriptures in Irish, that Protestants in general became interested in sharing the Gospel with their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER I

THE FORMATION OF A MISSIONARY BOARD

About the year 1830 the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland formed a Missionary Board whose special task was the care and superintendence of small isolated groups, or "Societies", of Covenanters, i.e., Reformed Presbyterians. One such Society was settled in Dublin. The Board began to supply this Society with Gospel ordinances in 1834. In 1837 a place for worship was rented, and, most of the members being from Scotland, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland helped the Board to supply them with the regular preaching of the Word. A Society of Covenanters was also formed in Drogheda in 1839, but it continued for only a few years.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church did not undertake the work of disseminating the Scriptures among Roman Catholics in Ireland until the year 1846. From this year, as "The Covenanter", June 1857, states, "various sections of the evangelical Protestant Church have prosecuted with vigour and considerable success the work of diffusing Scriptural knowledge among the Romanists of this country". The same writer goes on to refer to the Irish potato famine of 1847-48 as "the day of Ireland's distress" and says that in that day "it was the Protestants of every denomination that hastened to the relief of the perishing multitudes; and while they administered freely to mitigate and remove temporal misery, numbers accounted it a primary duty to point them to the Great Physician, and to the grand remedy provided in gratuitous salvation".

Special Committee Appointed

At this time the Reformed Presbyterian Church appointed a Special Committee to consider whether it would be possible to form a Mission to Roman Catholics. This Committee drew up "A Constitution and Regulations for the Mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Roman Catholic population in this country in whatever part of it". This document was published by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1850. It set forth the objects of the Mission as follows—to make known "the

glorious Gospel to a people sitting in the shadow of death, and to disseminate the Scriptures, and likewise to sow the seed of Divine Truth by means of Scriptural Schools on the Sabbath and on week-days". It stated also that areas in the South and West of the country were to be visited first as being "the most distressed". The workers were to be ministers, licentiates of the Church, Scripture readers and teachers; and persons who could preach and converse in the Irish language were to be appointed as soon as possible.

Appeal for Colporteurs

In the Spring of 1850 Mr. Tait, a licentiate of the Western Presbytery of the Church was sent to the West of Ireland, to discover what prospects there were for mission work in that area. Mr. Tait's report to Synod that same year was received with sober gratitude as the following statement in the minutes of Synod 1850 shows—"That this Synod have heard with deep interest the statements of Mr. Tait, the agent of the Irish Mission in Connaught, and express their gratitude that he has been sustained in his arduous labours, and prospered in imparting truth to the neglected children of Roman Catholics . . . and regard themselves, by the success that has attended his efforts to enlighten their fellow-countrymen, as called upon to prosecute the good work with redoubled diligence and activity". Mr. Tait left the fellowship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1851, but the Church held on to its "determination to prosecute the work . . . in the hope that" it "might be crowned with success". Accordingly an appeal was made for "young men of known piety and devoted spirit" to offer themselves for training with a view to this work (Minutes of Synod 1851). Synod's appeal, however, was not fruitful in results until 1855.

CHAPTER II

THE MISSION IN DUBLIN 1855-1859

Missionary Ordained

In 1855 Synod was able to report progress in its Irish Mission work; for in April of that year **Mr. Robert Allen**, a licentiate of the Church, was ordained and appointed to take up work in Dublin. Besides ministering to the Society of Covenanters there, Mr. Allen was asked to do evangelistic work among Roman Catholics. As there was no organised congregation in Dublin at that time his appointment was on a yearly basis.

In the following year, Mr. Allen, supported by Mr. Paul Kirk, a member of the Dublin Society, gave a full report of the work to the Synod, and Synod adopted unanimously the following resolution: "That Synod regard it as their special duty to sustain the Mission, and to encourage the members of the Church in Dublin in their laudable efforts to promote the cause of Christ, and resolve to continue Mr. Allen in his present sphere for another year" (Minutes of Synod 1856).

Reports to Synod

The Report of the Irish Mission in 1857 states, "that during the past year their information respecting the labours of their agent, Mr. R. Allen, in Dublin, has been of a very cheering nature, and attests much diligence and perseverance in his missionary efforts. While he has been devoting a considerable portion of his time to visiting in the streets and lanes of the city, the houses of Roman Catholics and others, as he could have access to them, to converse with them of the things pertaining to their salvation, he has been most diligent in visiting the few families connected with our Church in Dublin, and also the families of such as hear the Gospel preached by him, though not of our communion". The report also states that the members of the Church there spoke in terms of highest commendation of Mr. Allen's labours. It mentions, too, that the members felt that the want of a more comfortable and respectable place for worship militated against the success of their efforts to

increase the congregation. They also considered that “the cause would be greatly promoted by Synod sending to Mr. Allen’s aid a well-qualified Scripture reader”; and with this, it was stated, Mr. Allen entirely agreed.

The Irish Mission Report 1858 had this encouraging news to relate—“A suitable and very accommodating house of worship has been procured and neatly fitted up, at the expense of the people connected with our church in Dublin”. This meeting-house was situated in Aungier Street. Mr. Allen stated in Synod that the house was obtained at moderate expense. A **Memorial** from the members of the Church in Dublin was presented asking Synod to continue and strengthen the Mission. Synod arranged that the memorial should be presented to the Southern Presbytery and received by it, and that this Presbytery should take steps to have the Society in Dublin organised into a congregation and have an elder or elders ordained.

The Report for this year (1858) also disclosed that in order to obtain more satisfactory information regarding missionary prospects in Dublin, **Mr. McTighe**, who had already been working in and around Cong. Co. Mayo, should spend a month in Dublin and report. Mr. McTighe spent the month of June 1858 in Dublin, and reported that, though he found Roman Catholics in the city difficult to approach, he believed that through the children access to the parents might be obtained. Synod advised that steps should be taken to have a Scripture reader appointed in Dublin as soon as possible.

Because of the scarcity of probationers in the Church Mr. Allen was given preaching appointments occasionally during the Synodical year 1858-59 in accordance with a suggestion of the Synod; but his main work was in Dublin where he “prosecuted his duties with his wonted assiduity”.

Congregation established

The Southern Presbytery carried out the wishes of the members of the Society in Dublin and the injunction of Synod by **organising the Society into a congregation**. The Rev. S. Simms (Loughbrickland) assisted the Rev. R. Allen in this; and elders were also ordained. On the second Sabbath of June 1859 the newly organised congregation met around the Lord’s Table to remember the Lord’s self-sacrificing death. There were fifteen communicants.

The Report to Synod 1859 states—"A congregation having been organised in Dublin . . . we submit, therefore, to Synod that the present may be a proper time to consider the altered condition of our affairs there, as presenting now the aspect of a congregation and Irish Mission Station, our missionary labouring in both departments". At this Synod meeting Mr. Allen intimated that he would tender his resignation from missionary work to the Commission of Synod at its next meeting in October. He did so, and the Commission accepted it; the members of the Commission at the same time testified to the fidelity and laborious diligence which Mr. Allen had manifested during all the period of his connection with the Mission.

Mr. Allen continued to take preaching appointments throughout the Church until 21st November 1867, when he was installed as minister of Newtownards Reformed Presbyterian congregation.

CHAPTER III

THE MISSION IN CO. MAYO 1856-1869

Appointment of Scripture Reader

In 1856 the Secretary of the Missionary Board, the Rev. W. Russell, minister of Ballyclare congregation, spent some months in Connaught and preached as he was given opportunity. During his visit Mr. Russell met a catechist who had been superintending the Irish Schools for a time. This man, **Mr. Patrick McTighe**, had been brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, but in his youth a Scripture reader had directed his attention to the Scriptures. He was converted, and became an eager student of the Word of God. He was a man of wide experience in Christian work when Mr. Russell met him; besides he was an Irish speaker and knew the Irish language thoroughly. Mr. Russell at once recognised that this was the man for whom the Church had been asking God; so he engaged him as a Scripture reader, and set him to work in the district in and around Cong, Co. Mayo, in the Spring of 1856.

Mr. Russell's action in appointing Mr. McTighe was reported to Synod that year, and had Synod's approval. It was agreed that Mr. McTighe should be engaged for the ensuing year, and that Mr. Russell should visit Co. Mayo in August, and inspect Mr. McTighe's work. It was also agreed that special consideration should be given to the possibility of establishing Industrial Schools in connection with the mission in Co. Mayo.

The Secretary's visits to Co. Mayo

The Secretary carried out Synod's instruction by visiting Co. Mayo in the Summer of 1856; and in a letter to the Editor of "The Covenanter" which appears in the February issue (1857) of that magazine, he stated that Mr. McTighe "Keeps a diary, and furnishes a very full and accurately-made-out report of his labours weekly . . . giving the name and residence of every family visited, the Scriptures read, or other religious exercises performed in his house, together with an outline of some of the more interesting conversations". This letter also states that Mr. McTighe made about thirty visits each week; practically all of these

were to Roman Catholic homes, and in about two thirds of these he was permitted to read the Scriptures, while in the remainder he had opportunities to state the Truth of the Gospel.

Mr. Russell visited Mr. McTighe again in the Spring of 1857. A very interesting Prayer Meeting was held at this time in the house of a respectable land agent and farmer from Scotland who took a deep interest in the mission. Four families were represented at this meeting, the heads of three of these families engaged in conducting devotional exercises. Before separating, they resolved that the meetings should be continued weekly.

The greater part of the parish in which Mr. McTighe worked was in the hands of Protestant landlords. One very respectable family connection owned the greatest part, and took a deep interest in the spread of evangelical religion. One of these proprietors was a subscriber to the mission, and his agent, who resided on the property, subscribed five pounds, and engaged to raise an additional five pounds per annum in aid of the mission. Another person who had procured accommodation for ministers and others to use as preaching stations, promised accommodation at his own house as a central station. He also assured the Secretary that whoever would be sent with the message of salvation would have a cordial welcome from all the natives of "the land of the Covenant" resident in Connaught, and in reach of the preaching station.

Synod's recommendation

Synod having heard the Report recommended to the Commission "to take measures . . . for sending the preaching of the Word by Ministers of this Church to Connaught, and for employing Colporteurs, and at least one additional Scripture reader in one or both of the stations of the mission" (Minutes of Synod 1857).

By appointment of Synod the Rev. J. A. Chancellor, Minister of Bready and Mulvin congregations, visited the two Irish Mission stations in August 1857. On his arrival in Co. Mayo he was cordially received, and preached at Castletown House on Sabbath, and at Mr. McTighe's house on the evening of a weekday. On the following Sabbath he preached in the Courthouse at Ballinrobe, and on the next

Sabbath morning in the Presbyterian Meeting-house at Holymount, and in the evening again at Ballinrobe. During his visit Mr. Chancellor had many opportunities of joining with Mr. McTighe in colportage work, and of seeing his aptitude for it. He also discovered the soundness of his theological views and his devotedness to the work.

Some of the members of the Church apparently had doubts about the propriety of employing as a Scripture reader one who was not formally a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. So in the Report to Synod 1858 Mr. McTighe's sentiments in relation to the Reformed Presbyterian Church were given in his own words as follows—"I always consider that a Christian should be free to judge for himself, to choose conscientiously, and join the church which he believes to be founded on the model of primitive Christianity, untrammelled and uncontrolled by heathen semi-papish rules or ungodly magistrates, or acts of Parliament. Such a body I believe the Reformed Church to be, . . . such a church I have had in view for years, but had not the happiness to meet it, till Providence brought me to a real Scriptural church".

In 1858 two Scottish gentlemen (father and son, the latter a member of Parliament) who had purchased an estate about thirty miles distant from Cong, having heard about the mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in this area, made the generous offer that, provided the Reformed Presbyterian Church would send a Scripture reader, licentiate, or minister to labour on their estate and in the adjoining district, and provided that the person sent would meet with their approval, they would furnish half of his support the first year, and if satisfied with his first year's labours, they would contribute his entire salary in future.

The Commission felt that Mr. McTighe was the person best qualified to take up this work, so they endeavoured to find someone to take his place. At length they secured the consent of Mr. George Lillie, a licentiate of the Church, to undertake this work for a trial period.

Mr. Lillie arrived in Cong on 8th September 1859 to find the whole district in a state of religious upheaval, because of a quarrel between a missionary of the Church of Ireland and a Roman Catholic priest. This religious animosity made the work of Mr. McTighe more difficult, and Mr. Lillie's presence with him as a Northerner was looked upon

with suspicion. Mr. Lillie saw that his presence was a source of embarrassment to Mr. McTighe, and a hindrance rather than a help to the work; he therefore resigned a few weeks later. As no one was found to take Mr. McTighe's place at Cong, the Commission could not make use of the liberal offer and field for service presented to them in that area. Mr. Lillie was ordained and installed as minister of Fairview Reformed Presbyterian congregation on 30th April 1861.

Offer to Synod

A member of Knockbracken congregation offered that should Synod send a succession of ministers of the Church to preach, each for one month, in Connaught, he would defray the expenses (Report to Synod 1859). The Report to Synod 1860 states that four ministers were appointed by their Presbyteries to go, each for one month, but, owing chiefly to unrest in the area at the time, only two of these appointments had been fulfilled, and neither of the two who went remained for a full month.

The Rev. James Smyth, minister of Drimbolg, was one of these two. He went in August 1859 before the trouble began. He first went to Dublin and visited Mr. Allen and met others at the Mission Station there. Then he travelled to Cong, and on 14th August he preached in Mr. McTighe's home to about eighteen or nineteen persons, four or five of whom were Roman Catholics. On Sabbath, 21st August, he preached in the Courthouse at Ballinrobe to about fifty persons, who seemed to hear the Word gladly. On the following Wednesday evening he preached at Castletown House. It was intended that he should preach at Headford, but this not being practicable at the time, he went to Galway and preached there. While at Cong he visited many families with Mr. McTighe.

The Rev. W. S. Ferguson, minister of Grange, was the other minister who visited Connaught that year. He arrived in Ballinrobe when the unrest was at its height. Protestant ministers, and clergymen, and many Scripture readers, required police protection when they appeared in public. Mr. Ferguson, on consulting the magistrates and chief of the police was told that a stranger could not preach without endangering the public peace and his own life. So Mr. Ferguson proceeded to Mr. McTighe's home, and in consulta-

tion with him decided that it would be better for him to go to Galway. In Galway Mr. Ferguson was directed to different persons and houses known to a lady, a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, who resided there and carried out an extensive service in personal evangelism on her own; thus he was able to minister the Word to quite a number of persons in that city.

On the invitation of the Secretary, Mr. McTighe was present at the meeting of Synod in 1861. He was asked to address the Synod and tell of his work. This he did in a clear manner. He also answered many questions regarding his opportunities for spreading the Truth among Roman Catholics, the prospects he thought the mission had; his own views of the doctrines of the Gospel, practical religion and the principles of the testimony of Christ. Synod heard him with much interest, and members expressed their confidence in his fidelity and persevering diligence. It was "agreed that two pounds out of the Irish Mission Funds be appropriated for the purchase of copies of the Scriptures and other religious books for gratuitous circulation by our esteemed agent".

During February and March 1862 the Secretary spent several weeks in Connaught, and preached on Sabbath 3rd, and again on Sabbath 10th March in the home of Mr. McTighe. He called on the local Church of Ireland rector, who said he was sorry it was not in his power to ask him to occupy his pulpit, but he had a very good school house which he would be happy to put at his disposal. Mr. Russell also ascertained that the use of the Courthouse could be counted on for a service.

In the May issue of "The Covenanter" (1862) a letter from the Secretary states—"We are now recognised as having an errand to the neighbourhood". And in the Report to Synod that year we read — "We strongly recommend frequent visits by ministers from the North, now that they can have an open door to preach the Gospel".

A strong plea for more ministerial help was made in the 1863 Report to Synod. On hearing the Report, Synod recommended the Commission "to consider the propriety of attempting to add to the instrumentality already employed, a Mission School, if possible, an additional Irish-speaking Scripture reader, and as much ministerial labour by ministers of Synod as can possibly be obtained."

In pursuance of this recommendation Professor J. Dick (Kellswater) and the Secretary were appointed a deputation to visit Connaught. These two gentlemen went to Cong on 1st March, 1864, and, in company with Mr. McTighe, they visited house after house and conversed freely with many on religious matters, and declared the Gospel freely in every house.

SCHOOL ESTABLISHED

Some months before this visit the Secretary had been in correspondence with Sir William Wylde, a gentleman who had purchased property near Cong. During this visit he informed Mr. Wylde of Synod's desire to have a **Scriptural School** established in the area. Mr. Wylde inquired particularly regarding the principles on which the Synod proposed to give education. The Secretary gave him the Synod's views on education clearly and fully, and also stated Synod's special object in desiring such a school. Sir William approved of the Synod's views and objects, and expressed his willingness to help by placing at its disposal a school already on his property.

Professor Dick and the Secretary visited the school and met the teacher, and were favourably impressed by what they saw and heard. On the Sabbath they met with three families in the school for public worship, at which the Rev. W. Russell and Professor Dick took leading parts, and three of the men present also conducted devotional exercises. The young people present were catechised and instructed. There were eighteen present altogether. Arrangements were made for the maintenance of social worship by these three families on the Sabbath days. A Sabbath School was started. The daily Scriptural School was placed under the direction of the Commission and subject to its inspection, and a monthly return was to be made by the teacher to the Secretary.

Professor Dick and the Rev. W. Russell made a proposal to the Commission, as follows—"that a grant of ten pounds per annum plus three pounds for the purchase of suitable books be made to a Scriptural School which was being conducted on the estate of Sir W. Wylde", all, of course, subject to the approval of Synod. The Synod approved and made the grant twelve pounds per annum,

and instructed the Secretary and Commission to exercise over it and the teacher a vigilant superintendence.

The teacher's reports during the Synodical Year 1864-65 show that for a time he met with some opposition which reduced the number of children attending, but gradually the number increased until in February there were twenty-nine on the roll, with average attendance of nineteen, ten of whom read the Scriptures daily in the school. As the Spring work began the number dropped to twenty-seven on the roll—four Protestants and twenty-three Roman Catholics.

The teacher had another class of fourteen whose ages ranged from thirteen to twenty-seven years. In all, twenty-two received instruction from him in reading the Scriptures.

Mr. McTighe took part in the teaching of the Scriptures in the School, as the 1866 Report to Synod shows. The School teacher took those who were beginners while Mr. McTighe took the more advanced pupils. The Synod continued to support this school until August 1868, when because of pressure on the part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the number of the pupils had greatly diminished.

During the years 1867 and 1868, Mr. McTighe laboured with his usual zeal and devotion, despite the fact that the Finian movement had stirred up the wicked passions and religious rancour of the masses. Through his labours for a period of thirteen years as he stated in one of his journals, he had free access to many who heard the Word of Life gladly and not a few came into possession of the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Mr. McTighe's death on 4th February, 1869 was a major blow to the mission work of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Connaught. A **Mr. Stewart** was appointed to work in that area in September 1869, but he remained only about six weeks.

CHAPTER IV

RETRENCHMENT 1870—1893

In 1870 Synod decided that Dublin rather than Cong should be the centre of its missionary work in Ireland; but the Report of the Irish Mission for the year ending 30th June 1871 begins as follows—"The working of the Irish Mission has not yet been resumed". One of the reasons for this delay was that the Church wanted a Northerner appointed, but no Northerner had applied.

A statement in the Irish Mission Report presented in 1873 sums up the state of things relating to the Mission during the period 1872—1879. This statement says—"the work of Irish Mission has been in abeyance . . . as it was considered inexpedient to enter on that work till a minister should be settled in Dublin, who, in addition to his pastoral labours in the congregation, would do some mission work, and also superintend and direct the labours of a mission agent". The Southern Presbytery of the Church continued to provide the small and dwindling congregation in Dublin with Gospel ordinances, but no definite mission work was undertaken. The members of the congregation were anxious that this work should be done, but they held that it could only be carried out by a missionary who was permanently placed in Dublin. (Report 1876).

The Report for 1879 states that "since the last Synod" the congregation in Dublin "had preaching on only eight Sabbaths", and also that "the Church has not funds to warrant further endeavours in that direction at present". This Report also contains the following sad statement—"We think the time is come when we must refrain from further endeavours to maintain our distinctive denominational standing in Dublin".

The Rev. W. Russell resigned from the Secretaryship and handed in the credit balance (£27-19-1) to the Treasurer. This balance was transferred to the Synod's Congregational Aid Scheme (Minute 28. Minutes of Synod 1880).

Throughout the next thirteen years the Reformed Presbyterian Church had no Irish Mission work in the South and West of Ireland.

CHAPTER V

RENEWAL

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE

At the meeting of Synod 1893 a **memorial** from the Session and Congregation of Stranorlar in regard to the establishment of an Irish Mission was received by the Synod and a **Committee was appointed** "to devise means by which our Church may make an honest endeavour to bring a pure Gospel to some of our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen, and to consider the claims of an Irish Mission". (Minutes 74-76). **The Rev. R. A. McFarlane**, minister of Bready congregation, was appointed the Convener of this Committee.

In its Report to Synod 1894 this Committee stated that it had asked "the Mission Board of the General Assembly whether our Synod might support Mr. Simpson, a colporteur who is labouring in the West of Ireland, we to be allowed a veto on any objectionable literature and modes of working. This proposal was accepted, and, subject to the approval of Synod, Mr. Simpson may now be regarded as our Agent in Irish Mission work". It was also disclosed that an appeal to the Church for funds had met with a sympathetic response. Synod was asked to approve of the Committee's action, and commend the claims of the Mission to the prayerful sympathy of the Church. The Synod adopted the Report. Mr. William Simpson being present, briefly addressed the Synod. **The Committee on Irish Evangelization was appointed** with the Rev. A. C. Gregg, minister of Ballylaggan congregation, as Convener.

At a meeting of Committee held on 9th July 1894, Mr. **Joseph Martin**, a member of Dublin Road congregation, Belfast, applied to be engaged as colporteur, and at a meeting held on 13th August his offer was accepted, and his salary fixed at sixty pounds a year. As the Committee's funds were not sufficient to support two colporteurs, the convener wrote to the General Assembly's Mission Board asking to be relieved of the obligation to support Mr. Simpson. This was granted.

NEWRY

Mr. Martin, on the advice of the Committee, attended the Rev. Dr. Magee's class in Dublin for three months training, and received a very satisfactory certificate from Dr. Magee. He was appointed to work in Newry and district under the superintendence of the Rev. A. S. Lyons. Mr. Lyons, in his report to the Committee 1896, commended Mr. Martin as having "a very high degree of prudence, wisdom, and tact", and in the Committee's Report to Synod that year it is stated that Mr. Martin, during the year, had sold 64 Bibles, 143 New Testaments, 50 Scripture Portions, 1265 Scripture Texts and 57 Catechisms. His report for the month of February showed that he had visited one hundred and eleven Roman Catholic families.

The Rev. A. C. Gregg accepted a call to Loanhead congregation, near Edinburgh on 19th January 1897, and the Rev. S. G. Kennedy, Minister of Grosvenor Road congregation, Belfast, was appointed to act as Convener until the meeting of Synod, when he was officially appointed Convener. At this meeting of Synod, it was moved by Mr. J. B. O'Neill and seconded by the Rev. S. G. Kennedy and passed, "That the Committee on Irish Evangelisation be directed to look out for a suitable person to recommend as an additional Colporteur for work in Ireland, and report to next meeting of Synod". (Minute 62).

At a meeting of the Committee, held on 8th March 1898, two applications for the position of Colporteur, one from Mr. Thomas F. Adams, a member of Newry congregation, and the other from Mr. Andrew Thompson, a member of Kellswater congregation, were presented. The Committee agreed, "That we recommend both candidates to Synod, with a view to having one, or, if possible, both, appointed to the office of Colporteur." However, before the meeting of Synod, owing to the death of both of his parents, Mr. Thompson withdrew his application.

Mr. Adams was accepted by Synod as a candidate for the office of Colporteur after a Committee of Synod had briefly examined him on the doctrines of Grace. He was required to take a course of training under Professor J. Dick, and also to attend the Preparatory Class conducted by the Rev. T. Lyle in Dublin, during the ensuing Autumn months. His salary was fixed in the meantime at sixty pounds per annum.

DUBLIN

At a Committee meeting held on 14th November it was agreed to recommend Synod to make a grant of five pounds to Mr. Lyle for his services. The Committee also recommended that **Mr. Adams should be located in Dublin** as an area which offered more favourable opportunities for work among Roman Catholics than any other. The Synod, after various proposals had been made, left the decision regarding Mr. Adams' sphere of labour with the Committee, stipulating that he should be placed under the supervision of one of the Sessions of the Church (Min. 20. Minutes of Synod 1899). The Committee met and reported later to the same meeting of Synod, that, "after very careful inquiry and consideration" they "were unanimously of opinion that in the meantime, **Mr. Adams should be located in Dublin**, and placed under the superintendence of the minister and session of the College Street South (now Grosvenor Road) congregation". The Committee gave five reasons for making this recommendation. "(1) There was no other field available. (2) The purpose of the Mission was to carry the Gospel to the distinctly Roman Catholic districts of our country. (3) Mr. Lyle had testified that there was abundant opportunity for colportage work in Dublin. (4) The people were more accessible, and the work more easily carried on in a large city than in a country district. (5) There was a number of Covenanters in Dublin, a prayer meeting could be held on the Sabbath, which might form the nucleus of a new congregation." The recommendation was approved by Synod (Min. 32, 1899).

Mr. Adams began work in Dublin in June 1899, and continued to labour there until July 1929. These thirty years witnessed great upheavals in Ireland. There was continued political unrest in the land. There was terrible poverty, especially felt in the cities, where many of the poor were living at, and even below, starvation level. In 1916 open rebellion against British rule broke out, and the unrest continued until 1921 when guerilla warfare held sway all over the country and forced the British to grant Ireland her own governments and parliaments. The Irish Free State, and Northern Ireland came into being as separate political entities. Those who know Irish history do not require to be told that this political unrest and

upheaval was religiously motivated. To be the purveyor of what was dubbed Protestant literature at a time and in a community that was seething with religious animosity required courage, tact and devotion of a high order. Mr. Adams proved himself to be a man of this calibre.

In the first year of his work in Dublin, Mr. Adams had God's seal on his ministry in the conversion of several young people. Two of these young people had to endure hardship, their own families disowning them. Mr. Adams received them into his own home, and as they had not enough money to live on, he helped them out of his own scanty allowance. Mr. Adams felt that, like His Master, he was called to preach the Gospel to the poor. "The streets and lanes in which I visit", he wrote, "are the lowest and poorest in the city. With the exception of one or two days in each month, when I go to Lucan or Rathgar, I spend my time in the city The poorest people in the city are the most needy in every sense, and amongst them I feel disposed to spend most of my time".

Besides colportage work, Mr. Adams conducted a Bible Class every Sabbath morning, and on Sabbath afternoons he visited the North Dublin Union, where he went from room to room reading the Scriptures to about three hundred persons. Every Monday evening he conducted a prayer meeting, and every Wednesday evening he went to a "Night Refuge", where he had the opportunity of reading the Word to between two and three hundred homeless persons, most of whom were Roman Catholics.

NEWRY AND DUBLIN

As an indication of the work done by the two colporteurs the Report of the Committee in 1900 states that "they visited 7,067 homes, 4,240 of which were Roman Catholic".

In the Report in 1901 the Committee gave the figures for the year as, families visited 6,753 and 3,777 of these were Roman Catholic families; 621 religious conversations with Roman Catholics; and sales included 81 Bibles, 156 New Testaments, and 143 portions of Scripture.

Mr. Martin's work consisted chiefly in colportage, and he reported that the two great encouragements in his work were, "a greater readiness on the part of Roman Catholics for the Scriptures, and a more open door for conversation."

Yet Mr. Martin found opposition to his work, strong and persistent, in some instances. In his "notes" which appeared in "The Covenanter" December 1902, he stated, "I called at a house that I have been going to fairly regularly for about seven years, and yet I have never got over the door step. Not once even in all that time have I been spoken to civilly." Then he proceeds—"It would be quite easy for me to get chased with a kettle of boiling water, and so start the whole neighbourhood talking. I simply came away, called at another house which is friendly, then to another (all of them Roman Catholics), where I sold a gospel by John and a Shorter Catechism. In two other Roman Catholics' houses in this same district I had splendid talks."

After almost ten years of mission work, Mr. Martin resigned on 15th March, 1904. In September of that year Mr. David McCullough was appointed colporteur on the condition that he would become a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Mr. McCullough agreed to this condition, and after a course of instruction under the Rev. T. Lyle in Dublin, he commenced colportage work in the Newry district.

The Report of the Committee in 1905 states that Mr. McCullough had met with much encouragement, and felt greatly cheered with the assurance that his labour had been blessed to the salvation of several of those whom he had been able to reach with the message of the Gospel. Two instances are given. One was that of a young Roman Catholic woman who was very seriously ill, and who, Mr. McCullough believed, was led to accept Christ as her Saviour. The other was that of a Roman Catholic man who was near the end of his life, and whom Mr. McCullough visited several times and pointed him to Jesus Christ. This man died without calling for a priest, and his wife told Mr. McCullough that his last words were—"I am satisfied with Christ".

The 1905 Report of the Committee also shows that in Dublin, 15 to 20 attended the Sabbath morning Bible Class, and 20 to 50 persons were present at the Monday night Prayer Meeting. These meetings, which were held for some years in Mr. Adams' own house, were, from 1st January 1904, held in a mission room which was capable of accommodating sixty persons. The rent for this room was one pound six shillings per month. During the Synodical

year ending June 1905 two social evenings were held, one given by the friends and members of College Street South (Grosvenor Road) congregation, and the other by the members of Newry congregation. About seventy persons were entertained to tea on each occasion. The Committee recommended the Synod to take steps to have public worship conducted on the Sabbath in Dublin at least once a month. Though Mr. Adams had a band of willing helpers who rendered him considerable assistance, the task of bringing the Gospel Message to those who attended the various meetings rested principally with him. Occasionally ministers of the Church attended the Monday Prayer Meeting and gave a message. This meeting was a source of blessing to many. The Rev. A. S. Lyons was present at a social meeting, and at the Prayer Meeting which followed it. Later he wrote to the Convener stating that "fifty-five persons were present, about one-fourth being Roman Catholics Mr. Adams has, by his energy, tact and devotion, a firm hold on those who attend the Mission, and enjoys also the confidence of the Covenanters in the city." ("The Covenanter" April 1907).

On 8th December 1907, after a lapse of almost thirty years, **the Lord's Supper was observed by the Covenanters in Dublin.** The Rev. A. S. Lyons conducted the various services, and fifteen communicants were present. Subsequently the Communion was held, generally once a year, with an average attendance of about thirteen, until 1920.

During the Synodical year 1906-7 almost three thousand copies of an Appeal setting out the nature and claims of the Irish Mission, and soliciting increased support, were circulated among the congregations of the Church. Presbyteries also, in accordance with instructions received from Synod, endeavoured to stimulate interest in the work of the Mission.

The Report of the Committee to Synod 1907 states that **"Mr. David McCullough, the agent in Newry district, has tendered his resignation. This has been accepted and the Committee wish directions from Synod regarding the appointment of a man to succeed him"**. Synod instructed the Committee to find a successor to Mr. McCullough, and also to fix his field of labour.

On 24th September, 1907 **Mr. James Stewart, a member**

of Drimbolg congregation was appointed to the work, and, after a period of study under Professor J. Dick, and two months of colportage in association with Mr. Adams in Dublin, he assumed the duties of a colporteur in Newry and district, and continued to work in this area until February 1926.

Like his predecessors Mr. Stewart had ample scope for his work. To enable him to carry out this work more easily and expeditiously some of the members of Riverside (Newry) congregation, together with some Presbyterian friends, presented Mr. Stewart with a bicycle, on 20th September, 1909. The bicycle was brought to Mr. Stewart's home by Mr. (later the Rev.) R. N. Lyons. At the same time, and from the same source, Mr. Stewart also received about three thousand tracts and booklets for distribution.

The Rev. T. B. McFarlane, minister of Riverside congregation, was appointed Convener of the Irish Evangelization Committee in 1910, Dr. S. G. Kennedy having resigned on being appointed Professor of Church History and Pastoral Theology in the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Hall.

In his report to the Committee in 1911 Mr. Stewart recorded two incidents which could be considered typical of his experiences as a colporteur. "Some time ago in calling with a family of the well-to-do class, I got a good reception. I was invited to rest myself, and the people seemed interested in the Gospels I gave them, and asked me to call again. I did so, and when the family saw me they all disappeared except the mistress of the house. She told me the books I left were still in the house, but not read, so I came away disappointed. In another case a big burly Irishman got into a rage with me, and said there should be a stop put to such work. 'Just fancy', said he, 'colporteurs going through Ireland to win Roman Catholics over to Protestantism'. His wife tried to quiet him, but to no purpose, and I came away feeling grieved. Some months after I called again. The man was in the house, and as soon as he heard my voice he invited me in and said he was glad to see me. He said he had heard I had left Newry, and was sorry when he heard it. We had a chat on spiritual matters, and parted good friends."

Mr. Adams in his report in 1912 stated, "We can point to definite blessing upon the work. I know of three young men

who were Roman Catholics and who severed their connection with the Church of Rome as the result of the teaching they received in the Reformed Presbyterian Mission. These young men joined the Presbyterian Church before we had Communion Service in Dublin. One is now in Montreal connected with the Presbyterian Church there. The other two have had to leave home also". Mr. Adams stated also in this report that "A hindrance to the work which seems to be growing is the circulation of literature by the agents of Societies called "Non-Eternity", "Christian-Science", and "Mormons"." Yet Mr. Adams was able to report that, "About 2,000 portions of the Scriptures, including about 50 New Testaments were put into the hands of Roman Catholics during the year, and no doubt a large percentage of these would be read". On this latter point Mr. Stewart in his report for this same year had this to state, "Being under the impression that there were some Covenanters who believed that the portions and tracts distributed amongst Roman Catholics were thrown aside or destroyed, I determined to find out if this was true. When I made enquiry, some of the people brought me the books so that I could see for myself, and some of those shown to me had been so well used that fresh covers had been put on them. No doubt some told me they had not read them; what they did with them I know not. But far more told me they had read them".

Mr. Stewart also pointed to definite blessing upon the work in his report in 1912. After stating that, "During the year I have met with a good deal to discourage," he went on to tell that, "on the other hand" he had met "a good deal to cheer and encourage. A short time ago I visited a Roman Catholic family, which was the first Roman Catholic family I visited after I came to Newry. The old woman of the house, who is drawing near her end, told me she was ready to go when the call would come, and that her hopes for heaven were placed on Jesus Christ and Him alone". Mr. Stewart added, "It was very refreshing to me to hear this testimony to blessing received through the Mission".

During the years of the "First World War" (1914-18) both Mr. Adams and Mr. Stewart availed themselves of many opportunities for mission work among the soldiers. There were many Y.M.C.A. huts located in and about Dublin, each capable of accommodating about 500 persons.

In his report for the year 1918-19 Mr. Adams refers to a conversation he had with six soldiers who were leaving for France the next day. Four of these soldiers were Roman Catholics, but they became so engrossed in the promises of the Word that they seemed to forget that they were Roman Catholics. Each audibly offered prayer for himself and professed to have definitely trusted Christ and Him alone for salvation. Mr. Stewart had many contacts with young soldiers, especially when they were on leave; and he kept in touch with many of them by sending Gospels to them in France through their mothers, sisters or wives. Many of these soldiers when writing home mentioned these Gospels and the help they had been to them.

"The war has put a different colouring on everything", wrote Mr. Stewart in 1915. "It seems to have smoothed down a good many rough places, and people are thinking more seriously of eternity, so that access to their homes and opportunities of speaking to them on Divine things are easier than in past years."

Those who had lost loved ones in the war were often very ready to listen to a portion of the Word of God read and explained, and many a grief-stricken heart was comforted thereby. Those war years brought much suffering to the poor, especially to those in the city. Appeals for help were made to the members of the Church, and the response to these appeals enabled Mr. Adams to help some of those known to him who were in greatest need. In the Winter of 1918-19 he assisted about forty families in various ways. Through the agency of Mr. John Willdridge, Belfast, two bales of clothes were sent to Mr. Adams who thereby was able to give some relief to more than thirty families.

In 1919 the property, part of which was rented and used as a mission hall by Mr. Adams, was sold by its owner. This meant that the meetings were for a time suspended. A new meeting place was secured however, which was much better and in a good centre—Anglesea Street.

On the retirement of Mr. James Stewart in February 1926, the Committee found a successor in the person of Mr. **Hugh William Stewart**, a member of Ballylane congregation, whose appointment took place on 25th May 1926.

After a course of study under the Rev. T. B. McFarlane, and a period of colportage work in Dublin with Mr. Adams, Mr. H. W. Stewart began work in Newry and district, and

continued to labour in this area for over thirty seven years. During this long period Mr. Stewart wore out quite a number of cars, travelling from ten to twelve thousand miles each year in the work of colportage. He found "the road rough at times" as he stated in 1932, "Yet we count it all joy in a life that calls for the best in bringing God's Word to the perishing". By using his car Mr. Stewart was enabled to extend his missionary efforts over a very wide area. His report for 1933 mentions Newtownhamilton, Keady, Darkley, Markethill, Armagh, Moy, Dungannon, Portadown, Lurgan, Lisburn, Banbridge, Castlewella, Downpatrick as places visited in pursuance of his work as a colporteur. In his report for 1935 Mr. Stewart stated that "when visiting a town, one hundred doors might be called at in a day; not all are opened, but some bid me welcome". And, as he said in his 1937 report, "we take courage from the fact that the Gospel of salvation by the Blood of the Lamb still grips the heart". Then he gave an instance of this, "In a home lately visited, a woman said she would like to have the knowledge of her sins forgiven. Having put before her some verses of Scripture, she was graciously led into the light as she beheld the Saviour in I Peter 2 : 24. Now she is, we believe, praying that others may be brought into the light".

During the "Second World War" (1939-45) Mr. Stewart, owing to petrol rationing, found accommodation on many occasions away from home so as to visit areas in which he had not previously done colportage work.

In order to be a successful colporteur a man requires to be able to make opportunities for evangelism out of what might at first appear to be most unpromising situations. Once when Mr. Stewart went to a house the proprietor threw some primroses on the door-step exclaiming, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." This was, to Mr. Stewart, a new experience, but it was also an open door for testimony. (1941 report). In his 1955 report Mr. Stewart gave this incident—"While working in a housing estate a person said to me, 'you would be as well not to call in those houses, especially the first one, as the woman living there is a bitter Roman Catholic.' I proceeded to the house. A little child was playing on the green. I went over and made friends with the little one, who took my hand up to the door. I thereby gained an entrance into the

home and soon we were talking about the passion and death of our Lord. I produced a copy of John's Gospel and the woman became interested. She accepted the Scripture portion and promised to read it."

In 1928 the Committee was encouraged by Synod to endeavour to secure an additional colporteur; accordingly at a meeting of the Committee held on 16th October 1928, **Mr. Thomas J. Beck**, a member of Dromara congregation was interviewed and accepted. After a period of study under the supervision of his minister, the Rev. A. Gilmour, and two months of colportage work with Mr. Stewart in Newry and district, Mr. Beck commenced work in Dublin on 12th April 1929. Here in association with Mr. Adams for three months, Mr. Beck was initiated into the work of a city missionary.

Some time previous to this Mr. Adams had requested, for the sake of his children's education, to be transferred to the North of Ireland. So in July 1929, after thirty years of faithful service in Dublin Mr. Adams was removed to Belfast, where, even though in failing health, he continued to work until a few weeks before his death on 10th April 1931.

Mr. Beck's work followed the general pattern set by Mr. Adams, namely, the holding of meetings in the hall, the visitation in private homes, hospitals and other institutions, and colportage work. As time went on Mr. Beck added other activities. In 1934 report he stated, "Our activities are increasing. Each week we hold four meetings. On Sabbath there is the Men's Bible Class, with an average attendance of seventeen. Many of the men testify to blessing received. A public meeting is held on Monday, with an average attendance of sixty-four . . . About fifteen Roman Catholics come regularly. The Young People's Meeting is held on Tuesday and Friday, the average attendance being twenty. The children are taught the Psalms, and can sing many of them without the book." About the Young People's Meeting on Tuesday evenings Mr. Beck said in 1938 report, "On Tuesday nights the girls have a sewing class and make garments for destitute children." Miss Dorothy Turner (who later became Mrs. T. J. McKee) conducted this sewing class. It was opened with prayer and Scripture reading, and the garments made were for the children in Bethany Home (1940 report). Mr. Beck visited

Bethany Home each week, and gave a Gospel message to those in it. He also visited weekly in St. Kevin's Hospital, The Royal Hospital for Incurables, Blanchardstown Hospital, Simpson's Hospital for old men and Miss Carr's Children's Home (1965 report).

Many of those visited by Mr. Beck in hospitals, or in their own homes, looked upon him as their spiritual adviser, and not infrequently he was called upon to take the funeral services of those deceased.

An interesting feature of the mission under Mr. Beck was the work in connection with youth. This work was a great means of blessing to many boys who testified in later years to the blessings received through the meetings. The boys' camp, run for many years with between twelve and twenty boys attending, was, for quite a number of them, the time and place of their new birth.

For over fifteen years (1950-65) Mr. Beck acted as **Superintendent of the Y.M.C.A. Hostel**, Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin. Many of the young men in residence there from time to time during those years were mightily influenced for good through their association with Mr. Beck. His duties at the hostel did not in any way curtail his missionary work, but rather often opened new doors of opportunity. Through his agency, as his annual reports show, thousands of Scripture portions and Gospel tracts have been distributed to thousands of people in and around Dublin, and many have been brought out of the darkness and tyranny of sin into the light and liberty of the Gospel.

Many willing helpers have rallied round Mr. Beck through the years and have given generously of their time and means to provide gifts of food for those in greatest need. In 1937 the property in Anglesea Street being sold by the owner a new centre was found in the Brunswick Hall, Pearse Street.

At a meeting held on 29th February 1956 the Committee decided that an effort should be made to increase the missionary staff. An appeal was issued through "The Covenanter", and on the 22nd May an application from Mr. Samuel K. Cromie, a member and elder in Rathfriland congregation was considered and accepted. Mr. Cromie was asked to undertake preparatory studies. He completed a two years' course in the Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, and on 10th August 1958 at a meeting in

Grosvenor Road Reformed Presbyterian Church Hall, he was set apart to the work of colportage, and appointed to labour for a time in Dublin, in association with Mr. Beck.

Besides co-operating with Mr. Beck in the mission meetings and visiting in hospitals, Homes and other institutions and private houses, Mr. Cromie did colportage work and conducted a book-stall witness in O'Connell Street two evenings each week when weather permitted. Mr. Cromie found the book-stall a very effective means of evangelism, as it provided a ready contact with people. Seldom did an evening pass without some purchase being made; and the "free literature" section was used very much.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Cromie were deeply interested in work among children and youth, and they found many opportunities for service in the Friday evening Youth meeting, and also in Miss Carr's Children's Home and in Bethany Home.

In accordance with the Committee's wish Mr. Cromie spent several weeks in colportage work in the Counties of Mayo, Galway and Offaly, and found many open doors for the Word of Life.

Having been appointed missionary designate to a new overseas mission in Ethiopia in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Mr. Cromie resigned from the Irish Mission work at the end of 1961.

In October 1931 the Committee, acting on the authorisation of Synod (see min. 36 of minutes of Synod 1931) **appointed Mr. Thomas J. McKee**, a member of Rathfriland congregation, as colporteur, Mr. McKee received instruction from his minister, the Rev. S. Kennedy, for two months. He then spent some time with Mr. Stewart in colportage work in Newry, and in July 1932 he moved on to Dublin, where he worked for five years in conjunction with Mr. Beck.

CORK

The Report of the Committee to the Synod in 1937 states—"A new departure has been the going of Mr. McKee to labour in the South". Mr. McKee ultimately settled in a **suburb of Cork**, and found many opportunities for mission work in and around the city. In his report in 1939 he stated, "Sometimes one is discouraged, and wishes for more definite

results, yet we know of cases where blessing has been received. A young man we met lately is now deeply interested in the Scriptures. A young woman, dissatisfied with the teaching of the Church of Rome, is now reading the Word, and we trust seeking the truth as it is in Jesus. During the year we have given about five hundred gospels and two thousand tracts."

For many years Mr. McKee's work was mostly limited to those areas which he could reach by push bicycle. So in inclement weather and especially in the winter season he was confined, for the most part, to Cork city and its suburbs. This area, however, was so often visited and re-visited by the agents of all creeds that many of the people refused to see any of them. This led Mr. McKee to take measures whereby he could go farther afield in his mission work. Consequently, as his report for 1950 shows, he visited most of the towns and villages and many country districts in the west of County Cork, and also places in the Counties of Limerick, Waterford and Wexford. "This was made possible by the use of a small car", Mr. McKee explained, "in which we have travelled many thousands of miles in the Lord's work".

The number of tracts distributed by Mr. McKee annually over a period of ten years averaged one thousand six hundred and sixty one, and the number of Gospels over the same period averaged four hundred and sixty seven each year. When it is remembered that the Synod and Committee always encouraged the missionaries to distribute the Scriptures and Scriptural literature wisely, and that the missionaries have never considered themselves as mere purveyors of Gospel literature, but rather have endeavoured to sow the seed of the Word in hearts which they believed were prepared for it, it can be seen that the above figures represent a great amount of sincere, prayerful, persistent personal effort on the part of the colporteur.

Besides colportage Mr. McKee undertook open-air evangelism. Mrs. McKee also spoke to the children who gathered around during the open-air meetings, telling them Bible stories. She also held special Children's meetings. In the report in 1963 Mrs. McKee stated, "Our Children's and Young People's work has been wonderfully blessed. We have over twenty children on roll, including six ex-Roman

Catholic children. In the 1966 report she referred to "the Young Sowers' League" which met fortnightly with an average of twelve to fourteen at the class. She wrote, "When sending the contents of our Scripture Gift Mission Box to Mr. P. Hind, we asked him if some 'seeds' could be sent to our missionaries in Ethiopia. Miss P. Gilmore sent us an air-mail letter thanking the children."

Much effectual evangelism was also carried out by Mr. and Mrs. McKee through regular hospital visitation. For a number of years Mr. McKee made extensive use of a mini-bus, which he purchased, to bring children and others to the various meetings.

The Rev. Professor T. B. McFarlane resigned from the convenership of the Committee at the Synodical meeting in 1947, and **the Rev. S. R. Archer, Rathfriland, was appointed** to succeed him.

CORK CAMPAIGN

In 1957 a special Summer Campaign of Evangelism was organised conjointly by Mr. McKee, colporteur in Cork, and the Covenanter Young People's Union Executive. Since its inception this Campaign has been held annually for about three weeks each summer. Since 1962 **Mr. Harry Tadley**, Church Evangelist, has been working in co-operation with the Executive Committee of the Covenanter Young People's Union as organising secretary for the Campaign. An intensive programme of door-to-door colportage, and open-air meetings at sea-side resorts and in Cork city, has been carried out each year. Many contacts have been made, which, it is believed, have been blessed to those concerned, and have opened new doors of opportunity to Mr. and Mrs. McKee.

The Report of the Committee for 1962 states that efforts were made to have a new colporteur appointed, and that **Mr. Joseph Kerr**, a member of Dervock congregation, had offered himself for this office and was accepted. Mr. Kerr took a two year course of study in the Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, and was commissioned as colporteur on 11th August 1964, in Dervock Reformed Presbyterian Church. In September he commenced work in Dublin in fellowship with Mr. Beck. While in Dublin Mr. Kerr made

many interesting contacts, especially with young Roman Catholics, one of them a student for the "priesthood", who continued to carry on a friendly, but frank, exchange of views with Mr. Kerr by correspondence even from Rome.

Mr. Hugh W. Stewart requested permission to retire at the end of September 1963. The Committee with reluctance acceded to his request, and put on record its deep appreciation of his faithful and devoted services for thirty seven years.

DONEGAL

For a number of years the Committee had been desirous of placing a colporteur in either the West or North of Ireland. So, in 1965, proposals were made to Mr. Kerr regarding this, with the result that he took up work in **County Donegal**. Here he found a very wide field awaiting him, not only in door-to-door evangelism, in which he discovered that the people were generally willing to receive portions of God's Word, but also in open-air services at a sea-side resort, and in the Market Square of a local town. In this open-air work Mr. Kerr had as associates and willing helpers groups of young Christians to whose fellowship and encouragement, he said, he owed very much.

Mr. Kerr's removal to County Donegal brought him and his wife and family into close association with the Reformed Presbyterian congregation at Milford, and also into contact with the other congregations of the Western Presbytery. In his report for 1968 he said, "We are grateful for the support and fellowship of Milford congregation, as we joined with them in Sabbath services, C.Y.P.S., monthly prayer meeting, and in their homes. Taking services both in our own church and in other places, has been a further opportunity of presenting Christ."

An appeal was made by the Committee in 1963 for yet another young man, and on 6th September of that year **Mr. James Anderson**, a member of Drimbolg congregation was interviewed and accepted. After a two years course at the Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, Mr. Anderson began work with Mr. Beck in Dublin, in August 1965.

At the meeting of Synod 1966 the Rev. S. R. Archer **resigned** from the convenership, and the Rev. J. R. Wright, minister in Dromara, was appointed to this office. As Mr.

Wright was going to U.S.A. for a year, the Rev. D. J. Magee, Larne, was appointed interim convener, and Mr. H. Tadley, Londonderry, was appointed treasurer.

Mr. Anderson's time in Dublin was fruitful in blessing to himself, as he stated in his 1966 report. "I must also say how much benefit has been derived from helping Mr. Beck in his work, and through his helpful advice". It was also fruitful in blessing to others. A Jew professed conversion through his ministry. He had weekly meetings with a young Roman Catholic for Bible study and frequent talks with young "Legion of Mary" workers.

GALWAY

In his 1967 report Mr. Anderson stated—"After prayerfully considering our future sphere of service my wife and I felt led of the Lord to commence **a new work in Galway**". This news was in line with the Committee's hopes and prayers, so every encouragement was given to Mr. and Mrs. Anderson to follow the Lord's leading.

During the Synodical year 1967-68, the Committee assisted Mr. Anderson in procuring a new home in County Galway. This home, as Mr. Anderson stated, "has already been proving itself a battle-ground where Roman Catholic and Protestant alike have wrestled with the truths of God's Word." (1968 report). Again in his 1969 report he stated—"The building up of lasting friendships with people by inviting them to our home has been proving fruitful to the glory of our Lord."

Mr. Anderson has found many open doors for the Word of Life, and has sold teaching aids mainly flannelgraphs to Roman Catholic School-teachers.

MISSION BOARD CONSTITUTED

The Synod in 1969 agreed, "that the **Irish Evangelization Committee be constituted a Board** consisting of ten members of Synod and three representatives appointed by the Women's Missionary Union". (Min. 105). **The Rev. David J. Magee**, minister of Larne, was appointed secretary, and **Mr. Harry Tadley**, Londonderry, was appointed treasurer.

In conclusion it can be said of the Irish Mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, that its aim is truly evangelical. It strives to be the means under God of leading

sinners to Christ. It believes that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for Protestant and Roman Catholic alike. It believes that the Bible is the Word of God, the Truth most sure and infallible, and that it is the duty as well as the privilege of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to disseminate that Word of Truth to the utmost of her ability. In this conviction the Irish Mission is still pressing on with this work in the hope and with the prayer that the Lord will bless the Seed of the Word sown, and that it will yet bring forth a harvest to His praise and glory in our beloved land.

