



## Changing Uses made of the Great Testimony in the Catholic Apostolic Church

The “heads” of Christendom had not responded to the Great Testimony the British apostles had addressed to them. The “Work of the Lord” experienced a crisis. Two heavily edited versions of the Testimony witness to the differing views of the situation that could be found among the apostles at that time. Other variants after 1860 were no longer meant to reach the “heads” but rather the members of their “flocks” who were individually called out of “Babylon”.<sup>1</sup>

### **The “Heads” of Christendom remain in Babylon and the “Work under Apostles” experiences a Crisis**

“We would have healed Babylon, but she would not be healed.” This is how Apostle Woodhouse assessed the effect of the Great Testimony in 1847, quoting words of the Prophet Isaiah (51.9), and Apostle Carlyle used similar words in a letter to King Frederick William IV. of Prussia written in the same year.<sup>2</sup> Both apostles thus echoed Edward Irving’s statement in March 1832 that he had not succeeded in his attempt to heal “Babylon”. Irving had concluded that Christians whose church fellowships insisted on remaining in a state described as “Babylon” had to separate from them, “crying to the Lord to raise them up Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, Pastors and Teachers and Elders and Deacons, and the other office-bearers in his house”. Before doing so, however, they “ought to enter into friendly converse and loving communion” in an attempt to lead their church fellowship out of Babylon, before separating “from the pastors under whom the Head of the church hath placed us”.<sup>3</sup>

Against this background one may conclude that the Testimony did not only serve as an appeal to the leaders of Christendom, but also as a justification for consistent efforts to raise up a new church if it were ignored. Seeing that the apostles had already found that their testimony to the Anglican clergy had been almost without effect on the Church of England, one might suppose that they could scarcely be surprised when the Great Testimony was no more effective. Instead, we find that the “work of the Lord”, whose steady progress had been

---

<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to thank Dr. Tim Grass of Horsham, West Sussex, for his help in checking the English version of this article for linguistic and stylistic accuracy and for supplying certain references and other information. Mathias Eberle of Berlin contributed information from archives located there.

<sup>2</sup> [Francis V. Woodhouse], *A Narrative of Events Affecting the Position and Prospects of the Whole Christian Church*, London 1847, p. 113. Anonymous letter to Frederick William IV., dated 18 February 1847. The original, written in English, is deposited in Geheimes Staatsarchiv (Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz), Berlin-Dahlem, shelfmark GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 89 Geheimes Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, Nr. 22806, “Anonymes Schreiben aus Berlin an König Friedrich Wilhelm IV. betr. Die christliche Kirche usw., 1847”. We read (sheet 5v, sheet 6): “He would have healed Babylon; but she would not be healed. (Jer. I 1.9). The time is come for complete deliverance. Therefore does he send forth the cry: “Babylon the great is fallen.” (Rev. XVIII.2).” The letter is attributed to Thomas Carlyle in a stencilled German translation by W. Walger 1930. This translation is reprinted in Reiner Friedemann Edel, *Auf dem Weg zur Vollendung der Kirche Christi, Die oekumenische Sendung der katholisch-apostolischen Gemeinden an die Gesamtkirche Jesu Christ dargestellt in Leben und Wirken des Prof. Dr. Heinrich W. J. Thiersch*, Marburg 1971, pp. 305-313.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Irving, “A Judgment – as to what Course the Ministers and the People of the Church of Scotland Should take in Consequence of the Decisions of the last General Assembly,” *Morning Watch*, vol. 5 (1832), pp. 97, 102-3.



described in the final part of the Great Testimony, entered into a crisis of considerable import between 1840 and 1847.

The most noticeable mark of this crisis was the loss of the apostles' unity. The apostles had already stated that they were still waiting to be sent out. There were prophecies made by Taplin, the "pillar of prophets", which saw the apostle ministry typologically represented in the new-born child in the manger as "Emmanuel" ("God with us"). According to these prophecies the apostle ministry should remain in hiding until it came of age.<sup>4</sup> Thus the time for sending out the apostles could be expected 21 years after their separation, i.e. 1856.<sup>5</sup> It seems, however, that against a background of an urgent expectation of Christ's imminent second coming many Catholic Apostolics had hoped for quicker results. On their journeys the apostles were to collect knowledge about existing denominations, but they were also expected to present the Testimony to the addressees nominated by prophecy – and they had not even been able to complete that task.<sup>6</sup>

Towards the end of 1839 the "Council of Zion" apparently sought to exercise an increased influence on the course of events, possibly expecting to put an end to the lack of progress. Under Cardale's leadership, the apostles insisted that they and not the church council had been entrusted with the leadership of the church. They dissolved the Council of Zion and

---

<sup>4</sup> Edward Trimen, "The Rise and Progress of the Work of the Lord," no place, 1904 (typescript Catholic Apostolic publication), pp. 64-66, records Taplin's prophecies before, during and after the separation of the apostles. These make it clear that a time of childlike weakness was expected to precede the time when the apostles would be sent out. We give the following extracts:

p. 64: "Jesus! Thou hast thy Twelve. Wast thou laid in a manger? would they not receive Thee in the inn? ... Oh! ye Pastors, unto you is committed the spiritual babe – Jesus in His Body." – "Know ye the mystery of it – In weakness as a babe. But thou Bethlehem-Ephrata, from thee shall go forth the Ruler, He Whose goings forth were from everlasting." – p. 65 (during the laying on of hands by the Angels): "Ah! it is a separating from the mother, yet of the mother separated, yet of the mother. Oh! ye cannot ascend to the throne, ye have to flee to the wilderness." – Cardale elaborated on this (p. 65): "Ah! ye Angels, hear ye His word. Lay ye it up and be ye obedient. It is a feeble infant – but the strength of Jesus is there. Nourish ye it up in prayer and in faith. Nourish ye the babe. But His work is to give His Elders of the Universal Church. Ah! in weakness hath He given, and His whole Church in them are they seen in weakness. Oh! but it is His Elders who have charge over all the churches, it is His right hand which holdeth the stars." On the same occasion, p. 66: "Now, understand, ye Angels, ye have separated the Lord's Apostles. Cry ye that the power may be in them. Cry that the blessing may flow through them." – "Oh! ye Angels, yet it is a child, ye are weak, ye are very small, the burdens of many generations have rendered you scant and small. Oh! but unto you is given the child of hope, ah! now separated, caught up into heaven. Seek ye for the glory from thence. And ye Elders of the Universal Church, remember ye are a babe and seek ye still to be nourished by the milk from the breasts, the seven breasts of your mother, that ye may grow up and be for a defence unto her, in the day of her necessities. Ye have not yet grown up. Oh! the Lord watcheth over you, and He giveth you to the care of His Church, which Church He yet giveth to your care. Grow ye up together – bring ye up the churches with you into the stature of the Lord."

In his obituary for Taplin, delivered in Basle on 5 June 1862 (recorded in the lithographed German "Record" of 25 June 1862, Apostle Woodhouse highlighted some aspects of those prophecies. Please refer to the German version of this article for a reprint.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the prophecies uttered on 17 July 1853 and reprinted in the article "[Precursors of the 'Great Testimony'](#)" (published in August as first part of this series), p. 4, note 14. They explain that "the three times seven [years] have not been completed" after which God will begin his pleading with the apostatized "mother" [church].

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the summary of events in Timothy G. Grass, "The Church's Ruin and Restoration: The Development of Ecclesiology in the Plymouth Brethren and the Catholic Apostolic Church, c. 1825 – c. 1866", Ph.D. thesis, King's College, London 1997, pp. 57-59.



ceased to co-operate with critics among their co-workers. Apostle MacKenzie doubted if the apostles, before being sent out, had a right to such far-reaching measures, and after some hesitation he ceased to take part in the deliberations of his fellow apostles. Apostle Dalton, too, soon stopped taking part.<sup>7</sup> Henceforth the apostles saw themselves as unable to act as a college in twelve-fold unity.<sup>8</sup>

### **Apostle Drummond seeks for alternatives to the activity of apostles**

In 1843<sup>9</sup> Apostle Henry Drummond published a series of "Tracts for the last Times". Tracts were short essays on religious subjects that were distributed at cheap prices. As part of this series there were eight tracts bearing the title "The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church".<sup>10</sup> In these, the Great Testimony was reprinted with various changes. Drummond wanted to address readers from within the Church of England who envisaged their church as

<sup>7</sup> For details we refer to Harold Bernard Copinger, "Annals of the Lord's Work", pp. 75-6.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the Archives of the Duke of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick, Northumberland, Drummond Papers C/11, Cardale's letters to Drummond: C/11/1, London 29 Oct. 1846, p. 1: "I deplore the existence of circumstances which deprive individual Apostles & the Church of a 12fold Apostleship." C/11/7, Bath 17 Feb. 1847, p. 2: "Is it not the case that I have ever sought, but have been defeated in my endeavours, to uphold the 12fold unity of the apostles?" In his dispute with Drummond on liturgical questions, *ibid.*, p. 3: "The general Body having declared its inability at the present time to consider the subject I decline submitting the matters to the consideration or judgment of a part of that Body consisting of one or more." C/11/15, p. 2, Bedford House Tav[istock] Sqare, 5 April 1847: "The tenor of this and of several of your letters precludes me from doing more than giving my direct denial of the charges & declaring my readiness to meet you on them whenever the Apostles reassemble." Finally Cardale writes (C/11/25, p. 2, Tavistock Square 27 Feb. 1851): "I do not consider myself responsible for the possible consequences of our reassembling at this juncture. If good is produced the two brethren taking on themselves the responsibility of causing us to be convoked will deserve our gratitude. And my part is simply to pray God to avert all possible evils, which I will not anticipate." Regarding the result of this council of apostles in which Carlyle aimed at removing MacKenzie from his position as one of the twelve apostles and recognizing someone else in his place in order to restore the twelvefold unity, cf. a statement published on this website by the Work Group "History of the NAC" on 30 March 2005, ["Ergänzende Erläuterungen zu dem Artikel 'Vor 150 Jahren starb Apostel Carlyle'"](#) von Apostel Walter Drave (veröffentlicht in der Zeitschrift 'Unsere Familie' 02/05, S. 34-35) und Stellungnahme zu Ausführungen auf der Website 'Glaubenskultur'".

Microfilms of the "Drummond Papers" are deposited in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Photographic Order Number WM 4192. The report by Jean Agnew und Richard Palmer, "Report on the papers of Henry Drummond of Albury (1786 – 1860) and Members of his Family 1670 – 1885, the property of His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, KG", Historical Manuscripts Commission, London 1977 (reference HMC/78) lists the correspondents in detail. (Photocopies of the report can be obtained from the National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU, UK.)

<sup>9</sup> The tracts appeared anonymously and without date. The series is dated 1844 in Harold B. Copinger, "A Bibliography by H. B. Copinger (Begun Easter 1908)" [typewritten manuscript], p. 21. In the *Catalogue of Books, Pamphlets, and Writings by certain of those in the Fellowship of the Apostles since their Restoration in 1835. With an appendix of the Publications contra "Irvingism" in the library of Clement Boase*. Edinburgh: privately printed, 1885, British Library (Boase Collection) 764.e.30. (1.), the series is dated 1843, however, there is a handwritten alteration to 1844. (A further copy of the Catalogue is shelfmarked 4999.bbb.21.) We prefer to date the series in 1843, seeing that a leather-bound collection of the complete series of tracts in the library of the NAC North Germany in Hamburg bears the handwritten date 1843 entered by its first owner. So far, we have not found any internal evidence that enables us to date the tracts. Copinger and Boase agree in attributing the series to Apostle Drummond.

<sup>10</sup> A [synopsis comparing Drummond's text and that of the Great Testimony](#) is published on this website together with this article.



part of a larger “Catholic”, but not “Roman Catholic” church that was led by bishops. In advertising the tracts he referred to a series of tracts in which such views had been propagated.<sup>11</sup>

In the first tracts of the series Drummond added introductions to each part, altered the style and alluded to contemporary politics. In return he left out some passages of the original including a passage in paragraph 4 in which the apostles appealed to their divine mission.

Most significantly, Drummond replaced the final part of the original Testimony by statements that are directly opposed to the original ones. Whereas the final part originally describes how the local churches increased and would eventually develop into a universal church under apostles, Drummond had in 1843 ceased to expect the formation of such a church before Christ’s return. According to him there was “no room for very sanguine expectation”; “the most fatal objection to the hope of the Church’s return to the ancient ways ordained of God, arises from the experience we have obtained of man in every aspect of his fallen being“. At all times “man has failed to do the thing he was set to do” (p. 226).

A letter Cardale wrote to Drummond in October 1846 tells us that Drummond had at that time accepted the lasting loss of the apostle unity.<sup>12</sup> In 1843 he argued that “the sending of Apostles” did not make sense, for it “must depend upon the existence of Churches desirous of receiving the gifts of the Holy Ghost“ (p. 222) And we read: “Europe must be converted before an Apostolic Ministry can go forth to the Church” (p. 224).

So he confined himself to suggesting “two contingencies, according to either of which, events must arrange themselves differently”: “The one is the case of a restoration of the ancient ordinances, and the consequent re-organization of, at least, a certain number of Churches

---

<sup>11</sup> On the “Tractarians“, who, from their early activities at Oxford University, also became known as “Oxford Movement“, cf. short introductions in Desmond Bowen, *The Idea of the Victorian Church. A Study of the Church of England 1833-1889*, Montreal 1968, especially chap. 2 (pp. 41-83), Llewellyn Woodward, *The Age of Reform, 1815-1870*, London <sup>2</sup>1962 (The Oxford History of England, vol. 13), pp. 512-520. Among more extensive studies we note Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship in the Church of England from the Sixteenth Century to the Late Twentieth Century*, Edinburgh 1993, Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*, Cambridge 1994, Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism*, Oxford 1983, Yngve Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival. Studies in the Oxford Movement*, London 1925, R.W. Church, *The Oxford Movement. Twelve Years, 1833-1845*, ed. Geoffrey Best, Chicago and London 1970 (Classics of British Historical Literature),. George A. Poole, *On the Present State of Parties in the Church of England: With Especial Reference to the Alleged Tendency of the Oxford School to the Doctrines and Communion of Rome*, London 1841 is a contemporary view pleading for the Anglican *via media*. A copy of it forms part of a Catholic Apostolic collection of tracts in the library of the North German NAC, Hamburg.

<sup>12</sup> Drummond Papers, C/11/1, Cardale to Drummond, London 29 Oct 1846, gives us Drummond’s view as Cardale saw it: “I cannot sympathize with your feelings nor with those of the Angels in Scotland, when expressing joy at the turn which our affairs as a Corporate Body have taken. My feelings are the opposite & are recorded in my Address to the Angels in London & Eng[land] & while far from insensible to this, that God may bring good out of evil[,] yet I deplore the existence of circumstances which deprive individual Apostles & the Church of a 12fold Apostleship – ‘God’s Ordinance for rule’ – I am also quite sensible that the Intervention of the Corporate Body with individual action has been excessive & injurious – but I dread the evil effects which may follow from the necessary isolation in which individual Apostles must now remain, & from the lack of that general direction & guidance which individual apostles ought to receive from the Corporate Body – Therefore it was that I thankfully acceded to the suggestion of our having in London & England a day of humiliation wherein we might implore the Mercy & guidance of God in our present circumstances – “



throughout Christendom in unity, before the period of the translation of the saints; the other is the case of there being no such re-organization, and only a witness for the same in word to be proclaimed.” (p. 213) His final remarks give the impression that he only expected “a testimony for monarchy, priesthood, and sacraments” (p. 226), but not the establishing of a church according to the model prescribed by God.

These views are remarkably similar in some respects to those of a movement of “brethren” who in allusion to the name of one of their founders are often referred to as “Darbyists” or who are otherwise known as “Plymouth Brethren” because one of their early centres was in that city. This movement began at about the same time as the Catholic Apostolic Church. Darby and many of his coreligionists were, as were the founding members of the Catholic Apostolic Church, convinced that the church, which by its nature ought to exist on earth in visible holiness and unity, had been destroyed even before the activity of the primitive Christian apostleship had ceased. The reason, he thought, was a lessening of the expectation of an imminent return of Christ. But while the Catholic Apostolic apostles saw themselves as commissioned to re-establish the church with all its original ministries, Darby believed that the ruin of the church could not be healed before the return of Christ. True believers could only assemble for breaking bread with each other without an ordained minister, thus waiting for their rapture (or, as Catholic Apostolics would call it, translation) up to God.<sup>13</sup>

As Drummond did not expect a re-establishment of the church at that time, he restricted himself to an appeal to his readers to spread the gospel of Christ’s imminent return. He hoped that the future rulers in the kingdom of Christ would attain that unity and readiness for their future task that they were still lacking due to the lack of a rightly ordered church. A faithful remnant gathered from all denominations would after their translation be schooled for their future task that would begin when Christ and themselves would return to earth to establish the kingdom (pp. 215-217).

---

<sup>13</sup> This summary of Brethren teachings is based on Tim Grass, *Gathering to his Name. The Story of Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland*, Milton Keynes 2006, pp. 89-96, Grass, “The Church’s Ruin and Restoration”, chaps. 3 und 4. Apart from taking note of the differences described above, it seems worth while to refer to the following parallels between both movements: The idea that there was a Jewish Christian and a Gentile apostleship and that both failed in succession (Grass, “The Church’s Ruin and Restoration”, p. 66), the habit of calling all denominations “sects” (*ibid.*, p. 69, n. 66), a strong reliance on typology (*ibid.*, p. 67), the expectation that a special group will be raptured or translated before the Great Tribulation (*ibid.*, pp. 68, 73, cf. a review article by Timothy C.F. Stunt, “The Tribulation of Controversy: A Review Article,” *Brethren Archivists & Historians Network Review*, vol. 2, No. 2, 2003, pp. 91-98, in which Stunt gives an outline of a controversy on this subject). Both groups propagate the view that the history of salvation consists of a succession of “dispensations”. In this they both adhered to a hermeneutical approach which was common at their time, but they arrived at differing conclusions (Grass, “The Church’s Ruin and Restoration”, p. 91). So far, there is no comparative study of the eschatological concepts propagated by both groups. Such a study would have to point out parallels and differences and take into account that there were various competing eschatological concepts in publications by members of the early CAC and Brethren. For useful statements on competing eschatological views among Brethren cf. Jonathan D. Burnham, *A Story of Conflict. The Controversial Relationship between Benjamin Wills Newton and John Nelson Darby*, Milton Keynes 2004, especially chapter 5. In addition, readers are referred to Gary L. Nebeker, “The Ecstasy of Perfected Love’: The Eschatological Mysticism of J. N. Darby,” in: Crawford Gribben, Timothy C.F. Stunt, eds., *Prisoners of Hope? Aspects of Evangelical millennialism in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1880*, Milton Keynes 2004, pp. 69-94, Tim Grass, “Edward Irving: Eschatology, Ecclesiology and Spiritual Gifts”, *ibid.*, pp. 95-121.



### **Apostle Cardale's Handbook for a united Christian church under Apostles**

Apostle Cardale laboured to establish a unified ecclesiastical organization among the congregations in England, with whose care he had been entrusted. To serve this purpose, he used parts of the Great Testimony for a "Manual" in which he summed up "the special objects of faith and hope in the present times".<sup>14</sup> As he explained, he left out all passages pointing out the errors found in the various denominations (p. vi). He claimed that the churches led by apostles were truly "Catholic" while he designated all other denominations as "sects". He admonished the office bearers under his authority not to show any special sympathy to any one of the denominations but by their intercession to strengthen in all of them those things that still accorded with the unchangeable divine model (pp. vii-viii).

Apparently Cardale at that time still hoped that Christendom could be united under apostolic leadership.<sup>15</sup> "We believe that the perfecting of the Church, that the offering of the true

---

<sup>14</sup> A [synopsis comparing Cardale's text and that of the Great Testimony](#) is published on this website together with this article.

More or less simultaneously, Cardale drew up a liturgy laying down rules for divine services in England (cf. Drummond Papers C/11 *passim*) in an attempt to lay the ground for a form of worship which would eventually be accepted by all Christians who decided against Antichrist and in favour of the apostles.

<sup>15</sup> It hardly needs pointing out that Drummond's and Cardale's views on ecclesiology were directly opposed in 1843. The ten apostles who, after three years of inactivity, reassembled at the beginning of 1846, were aware that their publications did not give a unified view of Catholic Apostolic doctrine. The coadjutor for England (John Leslie) on 6 November 1878 communicated an important document issued in 1846 to the Angels assembled in conference. (Those conferences of all the Angels in England had taken place on a regular basis since 1850.) We give a complete transcript below (Minutes of Conference, 3rd series, pp. 96-98):

"Council Room Albury. Jan<sup>y</sup>. 27<sup>th</sup>. 1846.

That a communication be made to the Angels to the following effect.

Various publications having appeared from time to time especially during the last three years, which have the names of Apostles or other Ministers of the Universal Church attached to them as Authors or Editors of the same, or which though published anonymously are known or reputed to be written by Apostles or other Ministers of the Universal Church.

And various points of doctrine & practice having been spoken of among the Churches as being dogmatically affirmed or sanctioned by individual Apostles, upon which points, the Apostles have never come to any decision.

[p. 97] The Apostles at Albury in order to prevent or correct any misunderstanding on the part of Ministers of Churches regarding the nature & authority of such doctrinal or practical matters contained in such books, or written or oral statements, have determined to remind the Angels, & through them the Churches, that the only authoritative communications which (according to existing regulations) can be made to the Angels collectively or individually are.

1<sup>st</sup>. Those which have been delivered to the Churches by the Apostles assembled in Council, through the Pillar of that ministry.

or 2<sup>ly</sup>. Those which have been sent officially by the Apostles in Council at Albury, to the several classes of Ministers through the Four Pillars or any of them.

or 3<sup>ly</sup>. Those which have been authoritatively delivered to the Angels or other Ministers in any particular Tribe, by an Apostle, being at the time officially present in that Tribe, whether made directly, or through either of the three Ministers accompanying such Apostle making communications officially under his authority.

And with respect to this last class of matter, it is to be observed that the decision of any Apostle while in a Tribe upon matters involving any thing new in doctrine or practice, or which has not been considered & determined by the Apostles collectively, though such decision have immediate effect &



worship of God, that the accomplishing of His will and purpose in the Church, and by the Church towards all men, essentially depend, on the raising up of Apostles to minister at His altar which He rebuilds, and to guide and bless His people ...". In addition, he held that "the reviving in His Priesthood of the fourfold Ministry inherent therein" was necessary together with the ministry of intercession and with ministers bearing the title of angels heading each local church (pp. 124-5). "The ordinances which God is reviving are not for the blessing of a certain number, but for the carrying onward to perfection of His whole Church." (p. 126) Developments in the work under apostles and in the entire Christian church he held to be mutually interdependent: "We cannot be blessed without our brethren, nor they without us. While they remain impoverished, we are poor; – if we fail, or come short of God's blessing, they also share in our deficiency." (p. 126) Cardale waits for a day when God's power becomes manifest. He takes into account that he and his brethren may fail and predicts that then God might make use of another people (p. 128).

Cardale divided his Manual into 20 chapters. In copious notes he explained parts of the original text and added further doctrine. Thus he defined (in note E added to paragraph 37) the laying on of hands by apostles for the sealing of believers in a similar way to that in which the Church of England explained its rite of confirmation by bishops. In baptism as in sealing, Cardale explained, the Holy Spirit is "communicated". Baptism is for regeneration and turns man into a child of God. In sealing (which is rather abruptly called "confirmation") the baptized are led into full manhood in Christ, equipped with gifts of the Spirit and enabled to take their place as living members of the body of Christ (pp. 34-5).

### **Later editions of the Great Testimony aimed at testifying to fellow Christians**

After these early adaptations of the Testimony the document seems to have lost importance within the Catholic Apostolic Church for some time. Apostle Woodhouse played down its importance in 1847 writing: "The Testimony is a witness to the state of things that existed ten years since in Christendom, so far as God gave His servants discernment thereof." And further: "But the Testimony then is not the Testimony now."<sup>16</sup> In 1855 the apostles issued guidelines for shorter testimonies addressed to the ministers and clergy of the various spheres of their labour. These were to take account of later developments.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1860s there are various indications that the Great Testimony was studied with renewed interest in Britain, France and Germany.

---

validity, is always reported to the Apostles in Council at Albury both for their information, and in order that it may be submitted to their consideration & approval.

[p. 98] The Apostles desire further to inform the Angels, & through them the Churches, that all such publications which have the name of an Apostle or other Minister of the Church Universal attached or are reputed to be the work of an Apostle or Minister of the Church Universal, & all such reputed non-official written or oral statements on matters of doctrine or practice rest on the sole responsibility of the individuals with whom they originate, & have been put forth without the consent of the Apostles or any number of Apostles acting for the time as & for the Apostles. And that some of such publications & reputed non-official communications contain statements on points of doctrine & practice which are strongly objected to by many of the Apostles, & they take this occasion to inform the Angels, & the Churches through them that nothing contained in any such publications or reputed non-official statements on matters of doctrine or practice is to be considered as more than a private opinion of the person putting forward the same."

<sup>16</sup> [Francis Valentine Woodhouse], *A Narrative of Events affecting the Position and Prospects of the whole Christian Church*, London 1847, pp. 114, 115. (Cf. pp 112, 113 of the extended and partly altered second edition, London 1885.)

<sup>17</sup> These guidelines have come down to us together with the "Minutes of Conferences" for 1855. We reserve a treatment of the guidelines and the shorter testimonies based on them to a later article.



On the British Isles in 1861 the testimony to the Anglican clergy was for a short time used for evangelistic efforts,<sup>18</sup> but in the same year the Great Testimony received renewed attention.<sup>19</sup> In the years that followed, the work of the evangelists was intensified. In an address William Rennie Caird gave in the Glasgow City Hall on 8 January 1867, he expressly referred to the Great Testimony. First, Caird quoted some paragraphs that described the beginnings of the church in Scotland, informed the listeners that it had been printed and distributed in various languages and pointed out that he was holding a copy of that document in his hand. He then summed up its contents and quoted copiously from it. He explained that the Testimony had first been distributed thirty years before and that it had not always met with the desired success, but events had developed since then as predicted by the apostles. At the close of the address he appealed to his listeners to make use of the opportunity offered to escape the coming judgements and become part of the church of the firstfruits.<sup>20</sup>

In 1888 the Great Testimony was reprinted in England and, together with a covering letter signed by the Angels of the Seven Churches, presented to the bishops of the Anglican community from all parts of the world, who had assembled in London for the Lambeth Conference.<sup>21</sup>

In 1860 there appeared a “summary” of the Testimony in French.<sup>22</sup> Short paragraphs arranged under various headlines make it easy to grasp the main teachings. Some statements of the original are extended to make them more intelligible. Thus, to illustrate the failure of the church, we find (on pp. 40-1) the statement that Lucifer had already fallen in heaven, Adam in paradise, the people of Israel at Mount Sinai and the church in the apostolic age. As a consequence of the last of these, the measure of grace transmitted through the church had diminished, its doctrine had been subverted, and disobedience and schism had followed – Christianity was in ruins. Against this background the final chapter is devoted to the re-establishment of the church under apostles.

The very early French translation of the complete Testimony could not well be used without revisions. Printed corrections were pasted into the early copies and handwritten additions

---

<sup>18</sup> Harold Bernard Copinger, “Annals of the Lord’s Work”, p. 112, dated 4 March 1861: “A leaflet printed (4pp. 8vo.) and distributed preparatory to reading the Testimony in public, which seems to have been begun in May in the Churches by evangelists. (This was the one presented to the Bishops & clergy in 1836)” The leaflet mentioned here is in the British Library, shelfmark 4136.f.14 (a volume of testimonies). The leaflet appeared anonymously from Strangeways & Walden. In Copinger, “A Bibliography”, p. 56, it is attributed to William Henry Place (1800-1866), the “Pillar of Evangelists”.

<sup>19</sup> Copinger, “Annals”, p. 112 entry for Sunday, 7 July 1861: “Catholic Testimony read in Islington Church and publicly proclaimed, and also on succeeding Sundays, at 7 p.m.” In the same year there appeared [Robert Norton], *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church*, London 1861, in which parts of the Great Testimony are quoted on pp. 154-156. Cf. our article [“Work in Progress: Different Prints of the Great Testimony”](#) which is published on this website together with this article.

<sup>20</sup> W. R. Caird, *An Address on the Instant Coming of the Lord, and the Preparation of the Church for His Coming. Delivered in the City Hall, Glasgow, on Tuesday, January 8, 1867*, London 1867, pp. 11–23. Caird made use of the complete edition of the Great Testimony. In fact, there was also a shortened version in English which was treated as an authorized version of the Great Testimony. Cf. our article “Work in Progress: Different Editions of the Great Testimony”.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. our article [“The ‘Great Testimony’, A crucial document of the Catholic Apostolic Church \(Part 1\)”](#), published on this website in September 2006, pp. 1-2, n. 5. [The text of the covering letter printed in 1888 is published on this website together with this article.](#)

<sup>22</sup>The [« Précis du Témoignage »](#) is published on this website together with this article.



made.<sup>23</sup> Once they had been treated like this, those copies of the Testimony could not be distributed, but they could be used for evangelistic work in the manner Caird had practiced in Glasgow. For distribution, the French Catholic Apostolics had their printed summary.

In Germany another solution was found. Quite obviously, the official translation appeared a bit dated and in parts hard to understand. In 1871 Rossteuscher published the first edition of a new translation of his own which he characterized as unofficial. In the years to come it was distributed widely and thus more or less replaced the official one.<sup>24</sup> A comparison of both translations leads us to conclude that both in places contain mistranslations and that they do not always give a fully reliable rendering of the meaning of the original.<sup>25</sup> In places Rossteuscher made use of the opportunity very subtly to change the meaning in the light of later developments.<sup>26</sup> This new translation was reprinted in 1889 and the leaders of the regional Protestant churches in North Germany were presented with it.<sup>27</sup>

The respect that members of the Catholic Apostolic Church afforded the Great Testimony by that time is mirrored by Rossteuscher, who at the publication of the new translation called it “the most important piece of ecclesiastical literature since the completion of the New Testament”.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Some more information on this edition is contained in our article “Work in Progress: Different Prints of the Great Testimony”.

<sup>24</sup> The first two editions were published as appendices to Ernst Adolf Rossteuscher, *Der Aufbau der Kirche Christi auf den ursprünglichen Grundlagen*, Basel <sup>1</sup>1871, Basel <sup>2</sup>1886. Another edition of 94 pages was published in Basle in 1889 “bei Felix Schneider (Adolf Geering)” without the translator’s name, entitled *Das Zeugnis der Apostel an die geistlichen und weltlichen Häupter der Christenheit. Aufgestellt im Jahre 1837*.

<sup>25</sup> The proof we quote cannot really be checked without a knowledge of German. So we refer the reader to the German version of this article for detailed references. We found that on the whole the older authorized version is a more accurate rendering of the English original than Rossteuscher’s translation.

<sup>26</sup> Please refer to the German version of this article for details.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Mitteilungen aus den Apostelkonzilien 1855-1900*, Rendsburg 1901, pp. 148-9: “Referring to the Testimony which was delivered through the Seven Angels in London last year, the apostle has decided as follows: ‘A. It is to be wished that following the testimony which had its beginning last year with the epistle addressed by the Seven Angels in London to the bishops of the Anglican Church, a special testimony be delivered in North Germany now.

[p. 149] B. The draft submitted by the coadjutors in charge in North Germany has been passed by the apostle, that is, an epistle corresponding to that of the Seven Angels in London, which is to be delivered to the higher heads of the Protestant church in this country together with a copy of the Catholic Testimony of 1837 and a copy of the Liturgy.”

According to Copinger, “Annals”, p. 159 the proposed delivery took place in July 1889.

<sup>28</sup> Ernst Adolf Rossteuscher, *Der Aufbau der Kirche Christi auf den ursprünglichen Grundlagen*, Basel <sup>1</sup>1871, p. 503, Basel <sup>2</sup>1886, p. 486.