

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Reconciler or Controversialist?**

Charles Wordsworth was one of the more outstanding ecclesiastical figures of the 19th Century. He came to Scotland initially to assume the Wardenship of Glenalmond College, but because of his many attributes he after a few years was elected Bishop of St. Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane. Most of his episcopate was spent engaged in re-union endeavours — to unite the Episcopal Church in Scotland with the Established Church of Scotland.

In his schemes for re-union he preached many sermons, published many of his Charges and Tracts and wrote several books including an autobiography. Wordsworth was controversial, he was the first Bishop of the Episcopal Church since 1690 to propose ideas of re-union — all against the background of a growing and strengthening Episcopal Church and an Established Church whose morale was at its lowest in the post-Disruption years.

In his writings Wordsworth displays a wealth of knowledge in Biblical Studies, Patristics and Church History, but he was somewhat insensitive to Scots tradition within and outwith the Episcopal Church. Often he was misunderstood and was the subject more of controversy than reconciliation, opening up age-old debates on the *esse* of Episcopacy in the government of the Church.

He was without doubt one of the originators of the modern ecumenical movement in Scotland and his vision of a New United Scottish Establishment may yet be fulfilled.

Charles Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrews 1853-1892;
Reconciler or Controversialist?

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“The best day’s work of Gladstone’s life”

In the history of inter-church relations in modern Scotland there can be few more important figures than Charles Wordsworth. An Englishman, he first took up residence in Scotland on 4th May 1847. He had been appointed the first Warden of Glenalmond College but his work as a schoolmaster was of less importance than the fact that in January 1853 he became Scottish Episcopal Bishopⁱ of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane. His subsequent life was largely dedicated to the Re-union of the Episcopal and Established Churches in Scotland.

Wordsworth was a forerunner of the modern oecumenical movement. He was a visionary with an impassioned dream that Episcopal government could be ingrafted onto the established Presbyterian structure of the Church of Scotland. In an age when ecclesiastical dismemberment was the order of the day he stood out as a reconciler. Yet, because of the very nature of the schemes which he was putting forward he could not but be regarded as controversial.

Many prominent men in the Church of Scotland, in the Episcopal Church, in academic circles and in society in general, applauded his efforts and listened to his pleas with great interest. But he also met with a great deal of resistance, determined and persistent though he was, for he opened up the debate on re-union at a time when there was much disharmony and even bigotry in Scottish Church life. Many saw his schemes for reconciliation as opportune, others as adding even more controversy to a country already torn by ecclesiastical strife. Perhaps his work is likely to meet with greater appreciation in our own more oecumenically-minded century.

As a Church leader he could command attention because of his intellect, wide learning, drive, enthusiasm and far-sightedness; and he was respected for his attempts to understand Scottish culture and religion and to re-unite the sadly

ⁱ elected to See of St Andrews 30 November 1852
consecrated at Aberdeen on 25 January 1853

dismembered Scottish Church. On the other hand, he was often misunderstood or disagreed with. For some, even his accent was wrong, and he was occasionally regarded as being either paternalistic or amusingly dogmatic. Many difficulties, not only with the Church of Scotland but from within the Episcopal Church itself, faced him.

Within the Church of Scotland, whose morale had suffered a severe blow in consequence of the Disruption of 1843, Wordsworth's schemes were regarded with great suspicion. Bishops were looked upon with distrust because of Episcopacy's turbulent history in post-Reformation Scotland, while some considered that they had been proved superfluous in the generations of Presbyterian establishment after 1690. Many in the Church of Scotland did not consider the Episcopal Church to be a *bona fide* Protestant Communion. Its worship was denounced as ritualistic — though it attracted many away from the Established church including some of the landed classes who had sojourned in England and become familiar with the English Church having found Episcopalian rites more satisfactory than those provided by the Kirk. Kirk leaders like Dr Robert Lee of Greyfriars, Edinburgh, in the eighteenth-forties began to experiment with changes in worship principally in order to check such losses to the Episcopal Church, and Wordsworth's appeals were seen to be another manifestation of the same threat. A typical reaction is recorded in a letter of November 1st, 1865 from John Tulloch of St Andrews to R.H. Story of Rosneath. Writing of a visit paid to him in St Andrews by Dean Stanley, Tulloch reported: "I put the case of possible union with Episcopacy on the part of the National Church of Scotland, showing that this was excluded by the High Church presumptions urged by Wordsworth. He saw the matter fully and, with great frankness, put the alternative, 'Supposing I were to become a Scotch Bishop?' Shairp seemed to see nothing but ridicule in any project of union, and thought Wordsworth great game."ⁱ

As Wordsworth set out on his task he faced a battle to win not only the minds but also the hearts of men in the Kirk. At the end of the day his plans did not come to fruition, but at least he made some deep and lasting friendships with prominent Kirkmen like Tulloch.

In a sense there were as many hurdles to clear within the Episcopal Church. Some approved of Wordsworth, considering him a man who could handle a situation well. This can be seen particularly in connection with the debate on "Passive Communion", with which he was involved soon after his arrival in

Scotland. Bishop Torry of St Andrews, for example, wrote about Wordsworth's address at Synod as follows: "I am more than simply pleased; I am delighted: and think that you have thereby done good service to the church — and particularly to the Clergy of my Diocese."ⁱ

In addition Wordsworth was regarded by J.M. Neale, Torry's biographer, as "one who held the highest station in the second ecclesiastical order."ⁱⁱ Without doubt Wordsworth's ideas on establishment and re-union with the Establishment appealed to those like Dr Rorison of Peterhead, who wished a restoration of Episcopacy to its old position of influence. But one of Wordsworth's biggest problems was his own insensitivity to the indigenous strand in Scottish Episcopacy. Typical of this was his attack on Bishop Torry's Prayer Book of 1850. Torry, as his biographer points out, "was confessedly the only surviving Bishop, with one exception, of the Epoch of persecution and might therefore be supposed to be the purest source whence the traditions of the independent Scottish Church, as perfected by Gadderer, might be derived."ⁱⁱⁱ Wordsworth, however, saw the Prayer Book as "a conspiracy of Scotsmen whose aim was to cut the very bond with the Church of England which the Scottish Bishops were with such pains endeavouring to strengthen."^{iv}

We see in this issue one of Wordsworth's great weaknesses as a man seeking to assume leadership in the Scottish Church. He dismissed the non-juring strand in Scottish Episcopalianism as "infatuation"^v and as "living in romance"^v, an element within the Episcopal Church which was a stumbling block to re-union. For many years of his Episcopate, he was involved in controversy with the Rev George H. Forbes, brother of Bishop Alexander Forbes of Brechin. George Forbes was a classic example of the non-juring tradition within the Episcopal Church and his family had given long and devoted service to the Episcopal Church. He detested Wordsworth and voted against his election as Bishop because of his pro-Anglican establishmentarianism and insensitivity to Scottish tradition.

Forbes' biographer has neatly summed up the relationship: "No greater contrast could be imagined than that which existed between the two men. Wordsworth was tall, handsome, athletic, well-dressed. Forbes was a cripple who, when in public, was to be seen hiding his deformity with a shabby shawl over his

i Neale, J.M. *Life and Times of Patrick Torry* pp254-255

ii Ibid. p260

iii Ibid. p272

iv Perry, W. *George Hay Forbes* p48

v Ibid. p86

knees, and wearing clothes that for seediness matched the shawl. The two men had few ideas in common. To Wordsworth, the Church of England as by law established was everything; to Forbes, Anglicanism was good only in so far as it was Catholic. Wordsworth thought the Book of Common Prayer was perfection; Forbes regarded the Prayer Book as disfigured with blemishes, some of them liturgical, others doctrinal, and all due more or less to the influence of continental Protestants on the English Reformation. Wordsworth possessed the training, but neither the accuracy nor the genius of the scholar, while Forbes by his own efforts had both. Wordsworth loved to see himself in print; published tracts, sermons, charges and pamphlets by the dozen, and was extremely liberal in sending them to the clergy and leading laity, and to Presbyterian ministers as well. By his unceasing efforts in the cause of union with the Established Church of Scotland, he gained in a remarkable degree, the ear of the Scottish public.”ⁱ

It is surprising that, although Wordsworth presented himself before the eyes of the Scottish public as the apostle of unity and concord, he should have had such a turbulent time within his own diocese. In many ways, he was an ecclesiastic rather than a *pastor pastorum*. His Cathedral Church at Perth was the centre of strife from 1856 — 1885, known locally as the “thirty years war”. For twelve years, Wordsworth tried to make the Cathedral his own Church, thus bringing about a fundamental divergence of opinion between himself and Provost Fortescue and Precentor Humble. Wordsworth regarded the Cathedral men as ultra-Ritualistic. In 1853, when the new Constitution for the Cathedral was drawn up, Wordsworth wrote that he would “watch over the progress of the Cathedral with the utmost care as feeling how important it was, for the success of the scheme itself, to remove every unnecessary occasion of offence, and that nothing should be seen or done there which a faithful and well-informed member of the Church would be displeased to see, or a faithful and true-hearted minister of the Church would be disinclined to do.”ⁱⁱ Unfortunately, as events show, it turned out otherwise. Wordsworth failed to exercise his episcopal authority, thus showing a weakness in the system which he hoped Presbyterians would accept as being superior. In defence of the Scottish Office in the parishes of Alyth, Muthill, Forfar, Strathtay and Blairgowrie he tried to resist the substitution of the English Office, yet with little success. At times he could fail in assertiveness. At other times, he could be over-assertive, particularly in the case of Forbes’ Eucharistic Controversy on the “Real Presence”, the first Charge

i Perry, W. **George Hay Forbes** pp86-87

ii Wordsworth, C. **Annals of My Life** p153

of which was delivered on August 5th 1857. When Bishop Trower resigned in early 1859, Wordsworth assumed the role of champion of official Anglicanism in Scotland, provoking Bishop Forbes to describe the state of affairs within the Episcopal Church to Gladstone as follows: “Bishop Wordsworth dominates over all the bishops and gets them to do whatever he wills at the moment.” And again, “I hear such accounts of Wordsworth’s bitter animosity, which has almost grown into fanaticism, of which the bent is that he has an apostolate to put me and those who think with me down.”ⁱ

The first seven years of Wordsworth’s episcopate were so stormy that (according to Canon Perry) “he contemplated retiring to England, and even entertained in 1859 the vain hope of being appointed Principal of St Andrews University. . . . The rubrics of the English Prayer Book of 1662 were to him what ‘orders’ are in the British Army. In 1859, he even adopted the ‘north end’ position when celebrating, and wrote sheets on the interpretation of the obsolete rubric that appeared to enjoin the practice. He never forgot that he had been a headmaster, and ruled his diocese by rubrics and canons much as he had governed Glenalmond by the fifty rules which he framed for the boys there. In his latter years, he lost much of the masterful and domineering temper which provoked the opposition of the able men in his diocese but, until well on in the seventies, he was always fighting.”ⁱⁱ

Perry in his book on George Forbes further implies that Wordsworth was insensitive to the physical weakness and ill-health of George Forbes and gave no encouragement to his literary work. Wordsworth chastised Forbes for his monthly magazine **Gospel Messenger** because it did not always agree with the official Diocesan policy. Wordsworth, who had received confidential information on the subject, complained that Forbes hindered his work as a priest by working as “a general publisher”.ⁱⁱⁱ Forbes’ letter of reply to the Bishop’s withdrawal of support to the **Gospel Messenger** was scathing “and incidentally exposes a great weakness in Wordsworth’s character, the habit of acting on remarks dropped by his friends”.^{iv}

Perhaps the only time that the two men ever united was in the case of Bishop Forbes’ Eucharistic Controversy, when Wordsworth solicited George Forbes’ assistance to try and stave off a heresy trial; but the friendship only lasted until the end of the controversy.

i Perry, W. **Alexander Penrose Forbes** p93

ii Perry, W. **George Hay Forbes** pp87-88

iii Ibid. p88

iv Ibid. p90

But now, let us turn back to Wordsworth's origins and his time at Glenalmond to see how this remarkable man was prepared for the task that he was to assume as the "apostle of unity and concord".

He was born at Lambeth in the year 1806 and was the second son of Christopher Wordsworth (1774—1846), Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury and William Wordsworth's brother. Charles was educated at Harrow, and in 1825 entered Christ Church, Oxford where he completed his classical studies and gained a First Class degree in 1830.

He has been described as having some claim to be the first of the really influential muscular Christians of the nineteenth century. Tuckwell's description of Charles Wordsworth in his reminiscences of Oxford portrays him as *l'uomo universale* — the whole man. "He was not only a brilliant scholar — he took a First in Greats in 1830, having won the University Latin Verse and Latin Essay prizes — but he was a member of the Oxford Cricket XI in the first cricket match between the two universities (1827) and a member of the Oxford Boat in the first inter-university Boat Race (1829)."ⁱ

From 1830 to 1833, he gathered in succession a brilliant company of private pupils, including James Hope, W.E. Gladstone, Henry E. Manning, Francis Doyle, Walter Kerr Hamilton, Lord Lincoln, Thomas Dyke-Acland, Charles Canning and Francis Popham.ⁱⁱ

Tuckwell also noted that Wordsworth "was first among the Oxford comrades of that time . . . the best scholar, cricketer, oarsman, skater, racquet-player, dancer, pugilist of his day. His proficiency in this last branch of antique athletics was attested by a fight at Harrow between himself and Trench, which sent the future Archbishop to a London dentist in order to have his teeth set to rights."ⁱⁱⁱ

The years 1833 to 1834 saw him serving as tutor to Lord Canelope, a position which allowed him to travel to many European countries like Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and France. This experience widened his knowledge, complemented his academic training and deepened his understanding of continental religion.

In 1835 he returned to England to become second master of Winchester College, where he had frequent intercourse with Keble, one of the protagonists of the Oxford Movement.

i Newsome, David *Godliness and Good Learning* p204

ii cf. *Dictionary of National Biography Charles Wordsworth*

iii Newsome, David *Godliness and Good Learning* p204

1867. Mr. R.

The Principles of 'Episcopalians' 280.1
as a Basis of Christian Union.

A SYNODAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT PERTH, SEPTEMBER 1864

BY

CHARLES WORDSWORTH, D.C.L.

BISHOP OF ST. ANDREWS.

EDINBURGH. PRINTED BY THOMAS CONSTABLE,

PRINTER TO THE QUEEN, AND TO THE UNIVERSITY

SOLD BY RIVINGTONS, LONDON;

R. GRANT & SON, EDINBURGH

1867.

Wordsworth was unusually tall and handsome, with a strong and prepossessing countenance set off by brown curly hair and brightened by a winning smile. He had taste and talent for friendship and numbered among his firmest friends Bishops W.K. Hamilton and T.L. Claughton, and Roundell Palmer, later Lord Selborne. In disposition, he was generous, particularly in his support of Glenalmond. A casual glance at any of his tracts or letters will show how meticulous, accurate and orderly he was, even in trifles and it was apparent he expected others to be so too.

His classical training, and his experience as a teacher must have made him very sharp and critical yet, at times, he seemed to be very sensitive. When he was in controversy, he pursued argument with such reference to detail as almost to be tedious. In many situations he appeared to be humourless. He was impulsive and eager yet often subject to fits of depression. His thinking was occasionally inconsistent, the emotions ruling the intellect.

Like his tracts, his sermons were extremely well prepared and contained many literary references. Dr Boyd of St Andrews wrote many years later: "He (Dr Wordsworth) said that he was nervous in preaching, though he did not look it. He appeared perfectly self-possessed. His voice was beautiful. The manner was perfect. Very simple and earnest; but extremely dignified."ⁱ

Wordsworth was not good at personal relationships, nor was he good at understanding the Scots.

Wordsworth's early dealing in Diocesan and other Ecclesiastical affairs displayed his worth to his brother clergy, except of course to those who had no time for his respectable Anglicanism. He was an ecclesiastic and knew how to manipulate. Though he was pompous, he did display honesty, and his elevation to the Episcopate allowed him greater scope to indulge in his schemes for re-union, aware of course of the advantages of his position.

Father Humphrey, SJ, in his book **Recollections of Scottish Episcopalians**, remarks that Charles Wordsworth "had been the first Warden of Glenalmond College, and by means of his own vote, which gave him a majority of votes in the electing chapter, he had made his way from Glenalmond into the Protestant Bishopric of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane."ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth at the episcopal election certainly did cast his vote in favour of himself, yet this was done so as not to disappoint those who supported his election. Of this he wrote: "Caring little for the issue on my account, I cared very much on

i St. Quintin, G. **History of Glenalmond** p28

ii Humphrey, SJ **Recollections of Scottish Episcopalians** p39

theirs, and on account of the cause which, represented by them, was also incumbent upon myself. I voted as they urged. The act being conceivably questionable, I announced that I should request the College of Bishops to cancel my vote if they disapproved it; and I wrote to the Primus accordingly.”ⁱ

The election caused no end of stir, especially with those who disapproved the appointment, and Wordsworth engaged in much correspondence about it. He wrote: “I have entered thus fully into details which many will consider nothing more than *fluctus in simpulo* (waves in a saucer) partly because the circumstances of the election were in several respects very peculiar, and created an interest extending beyond this country; partly because misrepresentations, to my disadvantage, were widely spread by influential Church Journals in England, misrepresentations which, it is to be feared, are in some quarters remembered still. Even such a candid and accurate writer as Dr Grubb has placed the circumstances as they affect myself in an improper light. He makes no mention of the first and more important of the grounds upon which the Bishops confirmed the election, and represents the election as having rested upon the other; whereas I myself had proposed to forego the latter if it should be disapproved by the Bishops, and it was the former upon which, entirely sufficient to my own conscience, I was prepared to insist.”ⁱⁱ

However, Wordsworth received letters in support of his election from the clergy of the Diocese and from a great body of influential lay members and heads of families, which was most gratifying to him. His reply to these letters on March 7th 1853 wrote of his devotion to his high calling: “It will be my constant and earnest endeavour, in dependence upon the Divine blessing, so to act; and you, on your part, will not deny me, I trust, the benefit both of your assistance and of your prayers, that I may have strength and power faithfully to fulfil the resolution I have formed.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Wordsworth was aware that many of his friends in England disliked the thought of him becoming a Scottish Bishop; they feared “it would entail banishment from England permanently.”^{iv} However, in the conviction that he was doing the right thing, he entered one of the longest episcopates ever sustained by one man within the Episcopal Church in Scotland.

His arrival in Scotland, as we have noted, was due to his appointment as Warden of Glenalmond.

i Wordsworth, C. *Annals of My Life* pp125-126

ii Ibid. pp137-138

iii Ibid. p143

iv Ibid. p125

It was on the eve of Whitsun 1846 that W.E. Gladstone travelled to Winchester to discuss with Charles Wordsworth a matter in which he had very great interest. It was a meeting that was to change dramatically the course of Wordsworth's career, for Gladstone had come to induce Wordsworth to accept the wardenship of Glenalmond College, then being built in Scotland for the Episcopal Church.

"I described myself", writes Wordsworth, "as a 'broken-down horse' and added that I had no intention of engaging again in scholastic duties. So far as my health would permit, my purpose was to devote myself for the future either to the practical duties of the ministry or to theological study. He replied that I would have ample time to recruit, as the buildings would not be ready until the next year; that I was only wanted to start the School or junior department, with the benefit of my Winchester and Harrow experience, and then I might devote myself to the theological students — the senior department — at the same time pursuing my own studies. But what weighed with me most was the intimation that the scheme had been mainly set on foot by himself and James Hope, for purposes in which I entirely sympathised; and it was the notion of being associated more or less with them — for both of whom I had retained the most sincere regard — in such an undertaking, that tended more than anything else to overcome my scruples, and to form the attraction to which I yielded, little anticipating that within a year or two I should become, through changes of position on their part, more or less alienated politically from the one, and ecclesiastically from the other."ⁱ

For W.E. Gladstone and James Hope, the building of Glenalmond was a dream coming true. In the early nineteenth century, there was a revival in the fortunes of the Episcopal Church and the foundation of Glenalmond was seen as one of the first signs of this renewed vitality and energy.

Gladstone and Hope belonged to the Tractarian Party, the members of which watched the revival of the Episcopal Church with sympathetic interest, admiring her former sufferings for a lost cause and her maintenance of principles which they also cherished. Both were ardent Scots, though their work had taken them to England.

The hope for Glenalmond was that it would provide all the benefits of an English public school education in Scotland, train young men for the priesthood of the Episcopal Church, and further the principles of the Oxford Movement in Scotland.

Wordsworth clearly hesitated about taking up the appointment as Warden for he had no desire to leave England. His first wife, Charlotte, had died a few years previously, after giving birth to their daughter, Charlotte Emeline; and his older

i Wordsworth, C. *Annals of My Early Life* pp311-312

brother, John Wordsworth, had died on 31st December 1839. These losses were followed by his father's death on 2nd February 1846, previous to which Charles had resigned his post at Winchester.

However, Wordsworth accepted Gladstone's offer and prepared to enter his new sphere of duties in Scotland. A short time after the interview, Gladstone wrote to him: "Rarely has it happened to me to do an act on which I could reflect with such lively and unmixed delight as my journey to Winchester on Whitsun Eve."ⁱ This statement of Gladstone's was further corroborated by Sir Archibald Edmonstone, a member of the original Council of Trinity College, Glenalmond, when he said at a public dinner given to the Scots Bishops in Edinburgh in 1853 that Mr Gladstone had said to him that "the best day's work he had ever done was when he went down to Winchester and persuaded Wordsworth to come into Scotland".ⁱⁱ

It is interesting that Wordsworth had been second choice for the job. The first choice of the Council was Rev Robert Scott, a rector of a Cornish parish and Prebendary of Exeter, but he declined the offer as he thought the job too onerous.

By October 28th 1846, Wordsworth had remarried — Katherine Barter, a daughter of an English Rector. He now prepared himself for the new task awaiting at Glenalmond. Of this he wrote: "My undertaking at Glenalmond was likely to be more successful with a wife to assist me in it than if I had remained a bachelor."ⁱⁱⁱ

Wordsworth was present at the laying of the foundation stone on September 8th 1846 on which he had written an epigram:

"In honours new, for high deserts arrayed,
Gladstone, auspicious name, this basement laid,
Glad stone, laid here by Gladstone's bounteous hand,
Still blest with honours new for ever, ever stand."^{iv}

Was the visit of Gladstone the best day's work in his life? Was Wordsworth a major success in his work in the College, which was later hailed by the Perthshire Advertiser in 1891 as being of "peculiar significance in the history of religious thought of the century, being one of the products and visible manifestations of a movement which is the outstanding feature of the century"?^v

i Wordsworth, C. *Annals of My Early Life* p313

ii Ibid. p313

iii Ibid. p315

iv Ibid. p318

v Ibid. p12

Wordsworth believed that the school could cover all aspects of education, moulding the boys into good and upright citizens of manly and Christian character. An advertisement issued in September 1846 stated that the Department for boys, of all ages from eight to eighteen, would have in all respects the character and advantages of an English Public School. It was an attempt to encourage parents of the landed or salaried classes in Scotland to send their boys to Glenalmond rather than across the Border.

It was evident that Glenalmond would tax his faith and missionary zeal. The conditions called for the patience and courage of a pioneer.

An interesting incident happened in 1847 in which Wordsworth's attitude did not reflect his oecumenical spirit. A boy had been caught smoking. Two others, whose parents lived at Perth, had been removed as a sequel to the unhappy disputes with Major Jelf Sharp of Kincarrathie. The first boy was a Presbyterian and the other two Schismatics who belonged to St John's, Perth which had removed itself from the Bishop's obedience. Wordsworth, in a letter to Dean Torry, wrote: "that, as two of these boys were the sons of Schismatics and third of a Presbyterian, the trouble had arisen where they might have expected it and nowhere else." Such an attitude towards these "strange children", as he called them, may now seem regrettable but it was characteristic of the extreme views then held in these matters.ⁱ

The dispute with Major Jelf originated over the Major's conduct at worship, at which he was late and failed to kneel. He also allowed his son to miss Evensong one Sunday without permission. Major Jelf, who had been called "an evil liver" by Wordsworth, belonged to St John's and was refused Communion by Wordsworth who regarded the action of the Perth congregation as schismatical.

The correspondence was bitter and soon reached the ears of the Press. In addition, the young Sharp was involved with a prefect named Bell and the whole incident got out of hand. Major Sharp demanded with threats that the Warden should furnish a full explanation and afford him an opportunity of clearing his son's name from a stigma publicly cast upon him before the whole school.

Wordsworth resented the interference of Major Sharp who had accused him of making the school a theatre for carrying out his extreme views and transporting to Glenalmond "one of the worst parts of Winchester, its prefects and their sticks". He had clearly not forgiven the Warden for what he called "the display of intolerance, bigotry and uncharitableness evinced in refusing him the Sacrament".ⁱⁱ

i St. Quintin, G. *History of Glenalmond* p29

ii Ibid. p32

In his eyes, Wordsworth seemed pompous, supercilious and overbearing. Worse still he was an evident Puseyite and a petty tyrant. The matter was canvassed in the Press and Major Sharp, besides taking the boy away, carried out his threats by sending a circular letter to members of Council and others connected with the College. In this, he charged the Warden with “inculcating Tractarian principles and monastic habits and with introducing a system of tyrannical discipline”.ⁱ Wordsworth made no reply and the storm blew over. Shortly after the incident, Mr Reid, the Secretary, wrote: “It is gratifying to add that, during the vacation, letters have been received from every one of the parents and guardians who have boys at the College, testifying, in the highest possible terms, their thankfulness for the benefits which their sons have already received and their entire confidence in the system, both religious and scholastic, which the Warden has established and administered thereto to their perfect satisfaction.”ⁱⁱ Wordsworth also received the support of the Council in his work as Warden.

The way in which Wordsworth handled the incident is interesting; he could have shown more tact, but that was not his nature. Dr Boyd said of him: “He had no art at all. He knew nothing but to do right: what he was perfectly sure was right. What was to come of it was the concern of the Great Disposer. You might think Bishop Wordsworth impracticable if you would: you could not but reverence him. If there was an honest man on God’s earth, there he stood.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Wordsworth had to overcome much suspicion about the College which included that it was a monastic institution and, being the first Anglican theological college in the British Isles, little better than a Romish seminary. However, by the end of his time at Glenalmond, the College had been established and was set on the road of steady growth, thanks to his effort and personal sacrifice. W. Perry wrote in his book **The Oxford Movement in Scotland** : “As a theological college, Trinity College was a failure, because it proved impossible to combine the education of boys with that of young men. But, as a public school, it became a great success, though like all public institutions, it never won the cheap success which is the worst kind of failure.”^{iv}

Unfinished buildings, pecuniary difficulties, small numbers of pupils and consequent lack of keen competition amongst the scholars and the partial success of

i St. Quintin, G. **History of Glenalmond** p32

ii Ibid. p32

iii Ibid. p33

iv Perry, W. **The Oxford Movement in Scotland** p49

the theological department contributed towards Wordsworth's resignation on June 24th 1854. Despite several letters of support, he decided to resign because of ill-health, his sick headaches in particular, and his travels as Bishop. He had impoverished himself in what he had given to the College. Several years before there had been a cooling in the relationship between Wordsworth and Gladstone, due to Gladstone's disestablishment policies, which Wordsworth openly criticised, and he thought it time he left the College. He wrote: "I felt comfort in the reflection that the dissolution of my tie with the College, to which I had become so warmly attached, should virtually be the act of others, rather than my own."ⁱ

With his Warden's responsibilities behind him Wordsworth now concentrated his activities on his office as Bishop and his dream of uniting the Episcopal Church with the Established Kirk of Scotland. Initially, after moving from place to place, he resided at Perth from 1856 — 1876, and thereafter until his death in 1892 he lived at St Andrews.

Throughout his long life there was a prolific flow from his pen in the cause of re-union, on behalf of which he never seemed to tire or exhaust his energy.

In the **Scottish Guardian**, the Newspaper of the Episcopal Church, October 1866, it was said of Charles Wordsworth in a quotation from the **North British Daily Mail** that "He is never long without making an independent appeal to the public. He tries almost every known method for gaining its ear and his end. In charges to his clergy, in correspondence with others, in sermons, essays and tracts, he is continually holding up to his adopted countrymen what he thinks the indisputable evidences for the superiority of the system he champions — presenting to them the advantages which he would like them to share — and beseeching them to be reconciled to that Church which he deems 'the pillar and ground of truth', the pattern of all that is well-ordered and seemly."ⁱⁱ

i Wordsworth, C. **Annals of My Life** p172

ii **Scottish Guardian** October 1866 p445



Bishop of St Andrews
from a photograph taken 1889

CHAPTER 2

The Church of his time

When Wordsworth arrived in Scotland he found that the Episcopal Church was undergoing an ^{a remarkable} incredible transition; it was flexing its muscles and was re-establishing itself on the Scottish scene. Bishop Torry wrote in 1842: "I am old enough to be able to look back on a period of service in the Church of not less than sixty years; and at the commencement of my ministry, I had to officiate every alternate Sunday for two years in a kitchen, because no better place was to be found. The favourable change therefore which has taken place in the external condition of the Scottish Episcopal Church is to me truly astonishing; and I cannot do less than take up the words of the Psalmist and say, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'"ⁱ

For Wordsworth there was tremendous opportunity in this revival. Now was his hour, now was the time to put forward schemes for re-union, because he was talking to Scotland from a position of strength. He wrote: "Nothing, I believe, can henceforward prevent or check the progress we are making, and shall continue to make, but we ourselves."ⁱⁱ

The eighteenth century was one of great turbulence for the Episcopal Church in Scotland. The Episcopalians who had been part of the Reformed Church of Scotland became a separate ecclesial communion in 1690 because of the Revolution Settlement which established Presbyterianism as the government of the Church in Scotland. Yet Episcopalians were disunited during the eighteenth century. Many of the clergy and people took advantage of the Act of Toleration 1712, whereby Episcopalians who were prepared to accept the parliamentary Settlement of the Succession, that is the House of Hanover, were given protection in worshipping according to the liturgy of the Church of England. Thus began the "Qualified Chapels". They were attended by English immigrants to Scotland and had to draw their clergy from England and they became known as "English Congregations"

i Neale, J.M. *Life and Times of Patrick Torry* p192

ii Wordsworth, C. "*Euodias and Syntyche*"

Public Appeals on Behalf of Christian Unity Vol.2 p587

and "Jurors". However, on the other hand, the Scottish Bishops to a man were Jacobites and "non-juring", supporting only the cause of the House of Stuart. With the failure of the Jacobite Rebellions, the consequent Penal Laws and the "break-up" of the Clan system, the Episcopal Church had by the end of the eighteenth century been reduced, as Sir Walter Scott wrote: 'to a mere shadow of a shade'.

At the end of the 17th century, when the Episcopalians began their separate existence, their worship had been barely distinguishable from that of Presbyterians except perhaps in Aberdeenshire. Yet, in the early years of the eighteenth century there was a liturgical revival, due partly to disestablishment, but mainly to Bishop Campbell of Aberdeen's consultations with the Eastern Orthodox.

The "Qualified Chapels" were, of course, using the English Book of Common Prayer, but the "non-Jurors" turned to the Communion Office contained in the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637 sometimes (but inaccurately) called 'Laud's Liturgy'. This rite was slightly altered by the Aberdeen revisions called the "wee-bookies" until the final revision in the Scottish Communion Office of 1764. During the period of development there was much controversy over the "usages": Epiclesis, mixed chalice, prayers for dead, formal prayer of oblation, use of consecrated oil in confirmation, anointing sick and immersion in baptism. It was a situation not unlike the Church of Ireland today, where "high-church" theological principles are held concurrently with the more or less universal "low-church" ritualistic practices.

In 1784 Samuel Seabury was consecrated in Aberdeen as Bishop of Connecticut, the first Bishop of America to be consecrated after the American Revolution. This action of the Scots Bishops in effect began the Anglican Communion, for one independent Province had consecrated a Bishop of another Province without the approval of the English Bishops. Seabury went back to America with a copy of the Scottish Communion Office of 1764 which became the basis of the American Liturgy.

In 1788 Charles Edward Stuart died and Bishop Skinner, who had just become Primus, called an Episcopal Synod to be held at Aberdeen. As the 1743 Canons directed, the Deans were also invited as representatives of the clergy. The Synod resolved to give evidence of their submission to George III as their sovereign by praying for him in the words of the English Prayer Book, and instructions were issued to all the clergy accordingly. Notice of this decision was sent to the Secretary of State that it might be communicated to the King, who duly acknowledged it.

Bishop Skinner then turned his attention to secure the abolition of the Penal

Laws and his efforts bore fruit with their repeal in 1792. Thus came to an end the long years of persecution. The 39 Articles of the Church of England imposed by the 1792 Act were accepted as a doctrinal standard by the Episcopal Church at the Synod of Laurencekirk in 1804. The “Qualified” and “non-Juring” congregations were united and a trend towards “anglicisation” was inaugurated. In 1828 the English Prayer Book became compulsory for Morning and Evening Prayer and, in 1840 and 1864, Scottish Episcopalian orders received full recognition in England.

By this time, the Oxford Movement, which had been shaking the Church of England to its roots, had extended northwards and mingled with the liturgical traditions of the “non-Jurors”, giving fresh impetus to the Episcopal Church. It was due to the “non-Juring” theology that the Oxford Movement sank deep roots into Scottish soil.

The Church began to expand, and new congregations and new churches appeared. Cathedrals like St. Ninian’s, Perth and St. Mary’s, Edinburgh with its three soaring spires were built to impress. Congregations were re-formed and consolidated throughout Scotland and missionary congregations planted. Impressive events like the founding of the Cathedral of the Isles at Millport on the Island of Cumbrae and Glenalmond College took place. It seemed that the devotion of most Episcopalians had won through, for their church was now re-establishing itself on the Scottish scene. However, there are many people in the Episcopal Church today who would have wished that their Victorian forbears had not been so adventurous in their building schemes. In many cases maintenance of over ambitious buildings is depleting endowments and crippling congregations financially.

The anglicising of the Scottish upper classes and the sending of their children to English public schools made Episcopacy more readily acceptable to this section of society. In fact, many belonged both to the Episcopal Church and the Establishment and exercised dual churchmanship. Wordsworth’s Appeals, because they were written from an English background and in a classical style, were more acceptable to this stratum in society.

The appeal of the Episcopal Church in Scotland in the 19th century then was to the Scottish intellectuals and to the Lairds, to whom as a church, she was “closer, socially congenial and more attractive”ⁱ, and she did not hold to stern Calvinist Creed. It is true that, after the Repeal of the Penal Laws there was a return of

faithful Episcopalians, those who had kept their loyalties secret in time of persecution. Men like Parson Duncan MacKenzie had helped keep the faith alive in Strathnairn, and others contributed to the resurgence of the Church in old-established parishes in the North East, in Appin and in Glencoe; even in far-flung Lewis a small remnant held on to the faith despite lack of pastoral care and ecclesiastical vicissitudes. Yet Episcopalianism struck few roots among working people except in Bridgeton in Glasgow with the mission of Atchison, and with Alexander Forbes's labours in the slums of Dundee.

The old-established parishes had included either clansmen or labouring elements whereas "the recently founded congregations in the New Town of Edinburgh were exclusively congregations of the wealthy."ⁱ The salaried congregations of Edinburgh's West End appeared in stark contradiction to the poorer parishioners of Old St. Paul's in Carubber's Close.

Many of the gentry were of "double allegiance", being both Presbyterian and Episcopalian, yet, as years went on, this too changed because the growing influence of the Oxford Movement through men like Forbes emphasised the difference between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism. Mrs. Oliphant commented in her book that "it was a great misfortune for the country that the Church of the Nation was not the Church of the gentry. I have no doubt it lies at the bottom of the separation in other matters."ⁱⁱ

In 1854 Wordsworth commenced the writing of his pamphlets arguing for reunion "to show that the condition of separation in which we were living was a great and fatal mistake and then to point out the only way by which the restoration of unity could be reasonably expected."ⁱⁱⁱ Some years before, in 1843, the Disruption had rent the Church of Scotland in two and brought to the surface a lot of undercurrents which had been around for centuries. The effects of the Disruption went far further than anyone could have imagined and are still with us today. With this renewed controversy, the Church of Scotland no longer spoke so fully for the nation, but was reduced to something like Sectarian status.

"By this time, the Highlands were already displaying the symptoms of a social

i Drummond and Bulloch

The Church in Victorian Scotland p60

ii Ibid. p63

iii Wordsworth, C. **Annals of My Life** p160

order in decay, but otherwise there was a continuous growth of population, a general if unequal increase in prosperity, and a sense of achievement and assurance which contained more than a bit of smugness. Georgian Scotland had still been a patriarchal society, dominated by the upper classes, the landowners and the educated, but Victorian Scotland was to be a competitive and dynamic society of rapid change, one in which an expanding commerce, industry, and technology provided for the wealth of a new middle class and the slower emergence of the skilled working class, the mechanics and artisans. The unhappy contrast between the classical terraces of the New Town of Edinburgh and the chaotic spread of grim tenements around Glasgow and Dundee tells at a glance how much had been lost but it conceals the substantial gains made by these classes for whom the New Town made no provision except, perhaps, the servants' hall in the basement.'ⁱ

It was the era of the ascendancy of capitalism but also of Evangelical Revivalism. It was the era of Sabbatarianism, Chartism and Temperance Movements. Like the Episcopal Church, the Kirk made little impact on the working urban masses of Scotland. "The social structure of the industrial areas was a pyramid and its broad base was pagan."ⁱⁱ It was the growing Roman Catholic Church in the West of Scotland which spoke if any church did to the industrial poor. The Disruption had thus restricted the growth of Evangelism by confining it within sectarian bounds and the commonalty of Scotland felt isolated from the Church and indifferent to religious controversy.

The Disruption and its attack on Establishment was an attempt to separate Church and State. Establishment of religion was a belief which was dear to Wordsworth's heart. He regarded disestablishment as an evil and the Disruption was something which he could not quite understand. He had little sympathy for the type of remark made by R.S. Chandlish on the last day of the Assembly in 1843: "It is clear to me that no faithful member of the Free protesting Church of Scotland can give any countenance to the worship of God in connection with the Establishment. They had laid the Establishment prostrate at the feet of the Civil Power, and annulled every vestige of liberty in the Church of Christ And if now we find it impossible, even occasionally, to have fellowship with them, it is not our doing, but their own wilful act."ⁱⁱⁱ

i Drummond and Bulloch

The Church in Victorian Scotland pp1-2

ii Ibid. pp40-41

iii Ibid. p15

Wordsworth as we have noted was loyal to the old concept of the “Confessional State” and Anglicanism as established by law in England, and he was fiercely anti-papist and disapproved of Gladstone’s support of a grant to Maynooth Seminary in Ireland during Peel’s government. Gladstone’s opinion on Establishment had changed and Wordsworth refused to vote for him in the Oxford election of 1847. Wordsworth wrote to Gladstone on July 26th 1847: “You see, therefore, that I am still so unreasonable as to prescribe that ‘miserable’, ‘mad’, and, ‘humanly speaking, utterly hopeless’ course which you no less peremptorily decline. Yes — if it must be so — ‘constant irritation’, ‘certain defeat’. The ruin of your policy will (it may be) be more distant; but I believe it is no less certain; and when it does come, being, as it appears to me, disgraceful and unblest, it will be irretrievable.”ⁱ

Wordsworth didn’t see that the times were changing. The Gladstone he knew at Oxford was an entirely different one from that of later years. “By the late 1850’s, Gladstone’s position could be described as a liberal Catholicism, no less worthy of that name for having its origin in the context of England and Anglicanism. He had reached it as a result of profound political and ecclesiastical readjustment accompanied by not inconsiderable emotional upheaval.”ⁱⁱ Gladstone had moved from being a Tory High Churchman to a Liberal Catholic.

Victorian Scotland also experienced the rise of secularism and utilitarianism; and in theology, biblical criticism, which had opened up new frontiers in theological thinking. It was a time of questioning religious traditions, the age of MacLeod Campbell and Irving “who had publicly deviated from the path of strict Calvinism.”ⁱⁱⁱ

It was the age of the Gothic revival, and when one worshipped God in a church of medieval architectural style it was logical to adopt much medieval practice. With the removal of the Penal Laws, Episcopalian worship was again accessible to many of the Scottish population.

The Church of Scotland’s liturgical practices had changed little since the days of the Covenanters and the English Puritan influence, whereas the Episcopal Church had discarded this “bald” tradition with the influence of the non-Jurors

i Wordsworth, C. *Annals of My Life* p40

ii Butler, P. *Gladstone: Church, State and Tractarianism* p234

iii Drummond and Bulloch

The Church in Victorian Scotland p276

and the Anglo-Catholic revival. The Kirk became slowly more aware of its deficiencies in its standards of worship which stood in stark comparison to the more elaborate offices of the Episcopal Church. "There had been a time when the objectivity and intellectualism of the Westminster Confession accurately represented the public mind, but since the growth of the Evangelical party began late in the eighteenth century, there had been a spontaneous increase in the emotional element of Scottish devotion, a subjectivism, and an awareness of the personal and inward consequences of belief."ⁱ

R.H. Story wrote in his book, **Life and Remains of Robert Lee**: "The fault that I have to bring against our Scottish service 'says a complainant not very long ago' is that it is too bare and lifeless, too purely intellectual in its nature and aspect. Look at any country congregation and deny this if you can. The congregation assembles, coming into church with hardly any show of reverence for the sacred place, sitting down without any sign of prayer or blessing asked. The minister enters the too often ugly and ungainly pulpit or preaching box as one might call it. A few verses of a psalm are sung, the singing led by some discordant or bull-throated precentor. A long, often doctrinal and historical, undevotional prayer is uttered by the minister, the people standing listlessly the while, most of them staring at the minister or at their neighbours. Then as he nears the end of his supplication (in the course of which a number of women have generally sat down), there is a universal rustle and before he is fairly done with the "Amen", in which the people never join, they are in their seats. A chapter is read, more psalm singing, then probably an exposition; then again 'praise and prayer' as it is called; and a longish sermon, then more singing; a concluding prayer, which is regarded as merely a matter of course, and to which the inattention of the now wearied congregation is more obvious than ever; and a benediction, during which the men get their hats ready, and the women gather up their bibles, and draw their shawls and cloaks into the most 'becoming drape', and as soon as the last word is uttered, they are all charging out of the kirk as if for their dear lives."ⁱⁱ

An outstanding innovator of new forms of worship in the Church of Scotland was Robert Lee of the Kirk of the Greyfriars, Edinburgh, who, against much opposition, improved the standards of worship in his church. In 1845 Greyfriars had been gutted by fire and it was an ideal opportunity to innovate. Lee advocated

i Drummond and Bulloch

The Church in Victorian Scotland p184

ii Story, R.H. **Life and Remains of Robert Lee** Vol.1, p329

better music, regular and consecutive reading of the Bible, common prayers in orderly sequence, kneeling, audible responses, and reverent reception of the Benediction. The absence of these he held was driving the educated into Episcopalian churches. Lee was convinced that the National Church no longer satisfied “the religious tastes and other demands of the population” and was “gradually losing the character of a ‘National Church’.”ⁱ

Lee wrote of the worship of the time: “The prayers of one minister differ from those of another in every respect in which such exercises can be conceived to differ. In one case they are dry, didactic discourses, discussing points of theology, sadly wanting in solemnity, pathos, simplicity and beauty and expressed in commonplace and often vulgar and inaccurate language — bad sermons, addressed to God, for the instruction and reproof of the people, who are put, and cannot but feel that they are put in the position, not of worshippers but of hearers.”ⁱⁱ

As Scotsmen looked towards the Church of England and her standards of worship, the Episcopal Church in Scotland could only look more enticing. Lee noted that a few of the young clergy in the Establishment were “suspected of Episcopal sympathies” and “are much censured by some of the clergy because they offer prayers made up of scraps from the liturgy of the Church of England as if they were ambitious to exhibit the Kirk as some poor Lazarus, subsisting on crumbs that fall from the table of a rich neighbour.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Lee was not as sympathetic to the Episcopal Church as he was to the Church of England. The Doctrine of the Episcopal Church and her spirit were offensive to Lee. He saw the Episcopal Church as a hindrance to the progress of reform within the Church of Scotland, every new Episcopal chapel was a stumbling-block, which drew away members from the Established Kirk. He wrote: “Of late, a great number of persons have forsaken the Church of Scotland and Presbytery to join the Scotch Episcopal Church. This deserves serious consideration; the more so as, besides the present loss, it may indicate a tendency which if left unchecked, shall work the most disastrous consequences to the Church of Scotland.”^{iv}

Worship is always a good vehicle for conversion, yet it is curious that Wordsworth did not take advantage of the appeal of Episcopalian worship when writing his pleas for Christian Unity and it is a tremendous weakness in his argument.

i Lee, R. **The Reform of the Church of Scotland** p36

ii Ibid. p13

iii Ibid. pp13-14

iv Ibid. p47

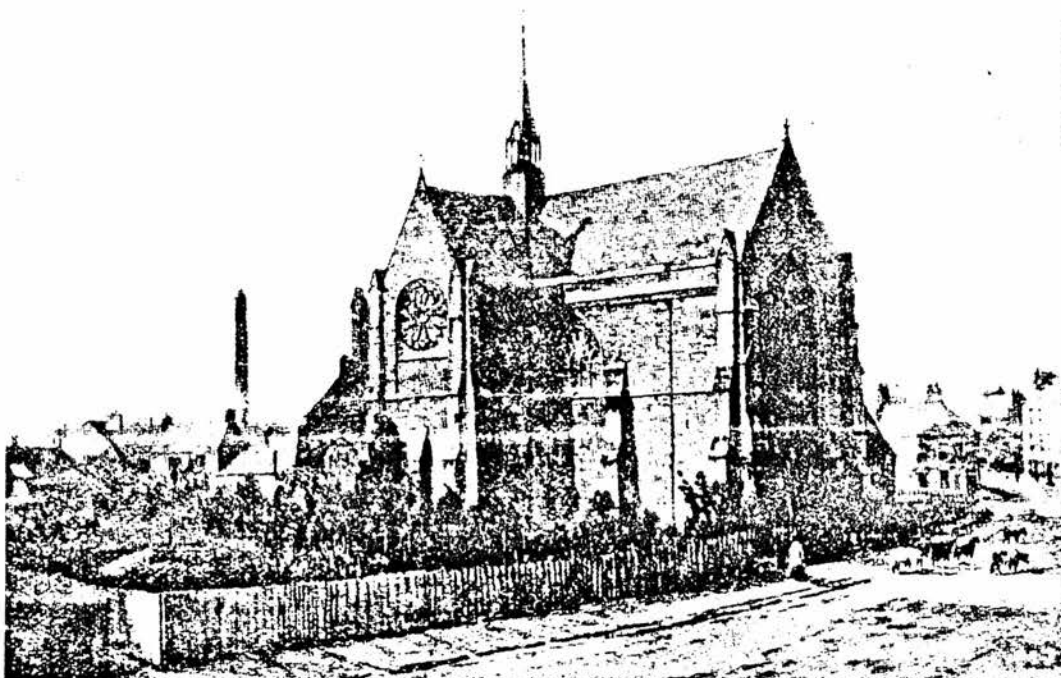
He mentions worship only briefly in his tracts, yet Wordsworth was aware of the appeal of Anglican liturgy to Scotsmen. He wrote: "I believe, moreover, that the secret or avowed use of the Church of England Prayer Book, not only among Episcopalians, but in Presbyterian families, and especially by the ministers of Scotland, has done much, under God's blessing, to preserve this country sounder in the faith than has unhappily been the case with other countries which, since the Reformation, have acquiesced in Presbyterianism — with Switzerland, with Holland, and, speaking generally, with Germany; for it is an historical fact, abundantly confirmed by the experience of the last three centuries, both on the Continent of Europe and in America, that where there has been an abandonment of the Catholic framework of church government, there has followed also an abandonment of the orthodox faith."ⁱ

Wordsworth believed that there was no point in reforming worship without reform in ministry. Reform in the Church of Scotland which Lee advocated had to remedy the "self-devised and extemporaneous Ministry" before there was remedy to the "self-devised and extemporaneous worship."ⁱⁱ

The way forward was to look at the nature of the Church in Scripture and in tradition; in which, he argued, would be found the principles basic to the re-unification of Christ's Church.

i Wordsworth, C. "*Principles of Episcopalians*" pp70-71

ii Wordsworth, C. "*Ministry of the Church Historically Considered*"
Public Appeals on Behalf of Christian Unity p515



THE CATHEDRAL FROM THE SOUTH-EAST—1850 TO 1890.

CHAPTER 3

What kind of Church?

Ecclesiology

(“How can the man that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen love God whom he hath not seen?”

1 John iv 20)

Structure of the Church in History

Essential to Charles Wordsworth’s schemes for re-union were his two basic principles of Catholic Religion.

- (i) The unity of Christians, or the “Divine Law of Universal Obligation”ⁱ based on John xvii.
- (ii) The tradition of the three-fold ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon, as contained in the Scriptures and the tradition of the Early Church.

Wordsworth regarded the disunity of the Church as sinful; it was ‘Ecclesiastical Pandemonium’. Unity can be attained by following the express command of Scripture and in practising the traditional three-fold order in ministry.

(i) The Unity of Christians, or the Divine Law of Universal Obligation

(a) *Example of the Scriptures*

Wordsworth writes: “Let me begin then by observing that the question of the law of Christian Unity, if it be not in itself the first and greatest of all questions that relate to man, is immediately connected with that which is undoubtedly the first and greatest — I mean the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the consequent Redemption of our fallen race. The Scheme of Redemption was so contrived that, by means of the two-fold nature of the Redeemer, it involved a double species of atonement, or to

i Wordsworth’s own phrase

pronounce the word according to its etymology, at-one-ment. “To this end,” says St. Chrysostom, “even God became man and undertook all those great transactions, that He might set us at one, that is, at one with God, and at one with each other.”ⁱ

Wordsworth regarded it as sinful to acquiesce in schism or to place others in a position that they became schismatical. He regarded it as essential, like St. Paul in Eph.i 9/10: “to gather in one all things in Christ”. In John xvii, in Jesus’s High Priestly Prayer, we read: “that they all may be one;” and in John x 11/16: that Jesus would lay down his life for this end that there might “be one fold and one shepherd”. These passages emphasised to Wordsworth that it was Christian duty to avoid division and maintain unity in matters of religion; that Jesus reformed the Jewish Church from within and this was the way that every Christian should operate. His thoughts were corroborated in the words of Dr. Henry Newman: “In these words (John xvii) a visible unity, a unity such as the world could recognise whatever depths it has besides, is made the token or the condition, as we view it, of that glory in which the Church was to be clad.”ⁱⁱ

St. Paul too exhorted his converts, says Wordsworth “to study earnestly to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. The Church Catholic could embrace “factions” within it without shattering the unity of the Church: a position somewhat reminiscent of the Medieval Roman Catholic Church. “The remedy of such ‘factions’ is always at hand and each man can apply it in his own case; whereas a formal separation, while it is sure to give rise to an equal or greater amount of unchristian exasperation, is too apt to propagate itself, without any prospect of amendment, from generation to generation.”ⁱⁱⁱ

However, not everyone would accept the position that Wordsworth was arguing for, that corporate unity implied institutional unity. Ian Henderson, in his book **Power Without Glory** reflects on John xvii in the following: “Jesus Christ is the revelation of the love of God. Christians are therefore clearly enjoined to seek oneness in so far as it is an

i Wordsworth, C. “*Unity a Divine Law of Universal Obligation*”
Public Appeals, Vol.1, p116

ii Ibid. p123

iii Ibid. pp121-122

expression of love.”ⁱ Henderson argued that it was obvious that there had to be denominationalism because the Church or the people in it were not sinless: “Putting all Christians within the one denomination will not cure the sin of lovelessness for the obvious reason that the worst examples of lovelessness do not occur between but within denominations.”ⁱⁱ

However, Wordsworth argued that the Scriptures are quite clear in their command and are apparent as to their meaning. “The obligation of the law of Unity can only mean what every unprejudiced person, who takes the texts produced from the New Testament in their plain and natural sense, must suppose it to mean.”ⁱⁱⁱ Wordsworth was forgetting that not everyone takes the same understanding from the Scriptures. Yet he attacks those who used certain passages to justify separation. For example, Isaiah lii 11 “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; get ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord,” or St Paul in II Cor.vi 15-17, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.” He regards passages such as these as referring to intercourse of believers with heathen idolators and not applicable to breach of communion with fellow Christians. Wordsworth believed that no separation was ordained by God Himself.

He believed that with the Apostles and in the Book of Revelation there was unity of ministry in Christ: “When we examine the inspired record which describes the condition of the Seven Churches of the Apocalypse, we see nothing to refute but much to confirm the same argument. Corruptions of faith and practice, more or less grievous, are charged against each and all of these Churches; but in no one instance does the prescribed remedy consist in the good members coming out from among the evil, but in general self-amendment and in the wholesome exercise of legitimate discipline.”^{iv} For Wordsworth, the Church was the Body of Christ and to make division was a sin, which was offensive and unjustifiable in the sight of God.

i Henderson, I. **Power Without Glory**, p26

ii Ibid. p27

iii Wordsworth, C. “*Unity a Divine Law of Universal Obligation*”
Public Appeals, Vol.1, p125

iv Ibid. p135

(b) *Tradition of the Fathers*

Continuing the argument, Wordsworth believed that the Fathers were always quick to warn their hearers against the breach of unity, such was the mystical character of Christian Unity. "To make division in that Body is to do we know not what. But if we look to the history and experiences of the elder Church; if we will accept the teaching and example of Christ Himself; if we will consent to be guided by the Spiritual lessons set forth in the lives and writings of the Apostles; or if we will deign to receive instruction from the Fathers and Martyrs of the primitive Church; if we will listen to all or any of these, then — however we may have inclined to look upon separation heretofore — and I speak more especially of separation among Christians who live together in the same place, and are natives of the same land — we shall now, I trust, be persuaded that nothing can be more offensive or more unjustifiable in the sight of God and whether there be any plea whatever that can suffice to justify it, this, if we are not yet prepared to deny, we shall at least, I imagine, be inclined to doubt."ⁱ

Wordsworth finds in Augustine *Epist. ad Vincent*, Vol.2 p360 and in *Contr. Epist. Parmen ii*, CII, Vol.IX, p103, two quotations which sum up his argument. (a) "*Fieri non potest ut aliqui habeant causam justam qua communionem suam separent a communione orbis terrarum, eamque appellent Ecclesiam Christi.*"ⁱⁱ (b) "*Haec de Scripturis Sanctis documenta proferimus, ut appareat facile non esse quidquam gravius sacrilegio schismatis, quia praecedendae unitatis nulla est justa necessitas.*"ⁱⁱⁱ

And in Irenaeus, Wordsworth finds the additional quotation "the evils of schism are so great that no reformation to be effected by those who

i Wordsworth, C. "*Unity a Divine Law of Universal Obligation*"
Public Appeals Vol.1, p140

ii "It is not possible that any persons can have a just cause for separating their communion from the communion of universal Christendom and calling it a Church of Christ."

iii "We produce these proofs from Holy Scripture in order that it may easily appear that there is nothing more grievous than the Sacrilege of Schism, because for a breach of Unity there is no just necessity."

separate can be an equivalent for it.”ⁱ (*Irenaeus IV CXXXiii*, 7)

(c) *Church since the Reformation*

As it was in the Church of the Fathers, so it should be in the Church contemporary. There is no reason, believed Wordsworth, why this cannot be the case. He believed in Universal Catholicism which could allow different national churches to exist side by side. “I cannot think”, he wrote, “that either the vicious conduct of individual ministers, or the general corruption of the ecclesiastical body; either the abuses of patronage (which in Scotland has now ceased to exist) or the tyrannical aggressions of the civil power, can justify Christians in separating from each other; on the contrary, I am convinced that their duty is to combine only the more closely when they are subject to such evils in order that they may be able to contend against them with greater effect.”ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth believed that, in cases of ecclesiastical dispute, the ideal should be *patience under protest*. It could easily be said that he was moving into dangerous ground. How could he justify the action of the Reformers, who could not be described as examples of *patience under protest*? His reply was that the Medieval Church had been usurped by the powers of the Church of Rome and that Reformation was not separation. In 1534 the State of England repudiated the authority of the Papacy in England. The National Church of England accepted this position and now had the capacity to remove the corruptions of Popery and reform the Church. The Reformers desired “to reject only what was corrupt, to retain all that was sound and to recover all that had been improperly neglected or fallen into disuse.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The same did not happen in Scotland, Wordsworth claimed, because the highest authorities in Church and State were opposed to Reform. This led to an unreformed Hierarchy being supplanted by a mixed system of government in which neither Episcopalians nor Presbyterians can recognise legitimate ancestry. Reformation was effected in both countries in different ways. In Scotland Episcopacy had been rejected and “through this means the Catholic character of the Church had been compromised and the Catholic succession lost.”^{iv}

i cf, see “*Unity a Divine Law*” etc. p141

ii Wordsworth, C. “*Unity a Divine Law of Universal Obligation*”
Public Appeals, Vol.1, p142

iii Ibid. p147

iv Ibid. p148

(ii) **The Law of Unity in the Three-Fold Ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon**
 Essential to Wordsworth's plea for unity was the recognition of one of the essential factors of Catholicism, the three-fold ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon; and it is to his treatment of this that we now turn our attention.

“If the duty of Unity among Christians be such as, from a full and impartial examination of the Word of God, we have seen it is; if it be so essential and so universally binding that, from the evidence of that Word, we were led to doubt whether the violation of it is capable of being justified under circumstances or upon any plea; if this be so, then it is only reasonable to suppose that God would indicate some definite Scheme and System of Church polity, in and by which it should be preserved . . . If there be nothing more painful or offensive to our Saviour Christ than a schism in His Mystical Body, then I repeat, we are bound, in reason and in justice to God Himself, to expect that he would point out some plain and definite method by which the commission of a sin so grievous might certainly be avoided, and the performance of a duty so indispensable might effectually be served.”ⁱ

Part of his thesis was that God has left to us to ascertain which books should be in the Canon of Scripture, which day was to be the Lord's Day and what was to be the Ecclesiastical polity which Christ designed to be the chief means of visible unity in the Christian religion. He would ascertain that “we would find this policy based upon the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments; and the presumption which their evidence affords becomes demonstration — the probability which we derive from that evidence becomes certainty — when we interpret it, as we ought, by the practice and the testimony of Christians from the beginning to the present day.”ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth believed that, as the three-fold ministry was essential to unity in the Christian Church, it was just as essential in Ancient Israel, he believed that the three-fold ministry could be discerned in the Law of Moses and that the Jews religiously maintained such a ministry in their

i Wordsworth, C. *“Provision for the Observance of Law of Unity”*
 Public Appeals, Vol.1, p168

ii Ibid. p169

High Priest, Priests, and Levites.ⁱ He wrote: “It is then, I repeat, an undoubted fact that a three-fold ministry was instituted by express authority from God Himself in the law, and so affords an example which it is reasonable to expect would be followed under the Gospel; for we must bear in mind that the Church under the law and the Church under the Gospel are not two distinct and discordant Churches but rather two distinct stages and conditions of one and the same Church.”ⁱⁱ Wordsworth argued that there was a legitimate parallel between the three orders of the Jewish and the Christian hierarchy.

In Jerome’s 146th Epistle, Wordsworth finds a quotation to qualify his argument — “That we may know that the ordinances of the Apostles were drawn from the Old Testament, that which Aaron and his sons, and the Levites were in the Temple, the same let the Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons claim to be in the Church.”ⁱⁱⁱ And again in his book against Jovinian — “Both in the Old and New Testament, the High Priests are one order and the Levites another.”^{iv} Although for Wordsworth, the Jewish priesthood was partial and occasional, and restricted to a single tribe, family and nation for a certain time, Christian ministry is not so restricted because it is catholic or universal, both in time and place. Yet it would be doubtful if his argument of the existence of a three-fold ministry in the Old Testament would be in agreement with modern scholarship.

When Wordsworth turns his attention to the New Testament, he first of all considers the ministry of Jesus and remarks: “But still it is a fact — a fact, we must admit, of some significance — that the preaching which took place under the personal guide of our Lord upon earth was carried on by a system not of parity but of imparity, and that of three orders; the seventy Disciples being inferior in office, and gifted with less ample powers, than the twelve Apostles and both being subject to their Divine Master.”^v In addition, when Christ was about to ascend into heaven,

i cf “*Response of Episcopalians to Moderator’s Appeal*”

Public Appeals, Vol.II, p408

ii Ibid. p409

iii Ibid. p410

iv Ibid. p4

v Ibid. p412

He elevated the Twelve Apostles into His own place as the future overseers and governors of His Church.ⁱ

(a) *The Apostolic Period A.D. 33-45*

Wordsworth believed that Episcopacy had been present at Jerusalem from the earliest period of the Apostolic Church. However, he did realise that “in so many of St. Paul’s Epistles we find reference to extraordinary gifts, and still more frequent allusions to false teachers, but little or no proof of an ordinary settled ministry.”ⁱⁱ St. Paul, he says, had many difficulties especially with Corinth, a Church which many advocates of Presbyterianism refer to as the place where their system was extant during apostolic times (cf St. Clement’s 1st Epistle to Corinth). However, Bishops were placed in all the chief cities of the then known world by the Apostles to show what kind of polity was desired.

Wordsworth argued that James, Our Lord’s brother, was the first Bishop of Jerusalem, ¹⁰⁹ this was certified by the Scriptures and the writings of the Early Fathers. In the Scriptures, passages such as the following speak for themselves: I Thess. ii 14, I Cor. xv 7, Acts xii 17, Gal. i 19, ii 9, Acts xxi 18, Acts xv, Gal. ii 12, Gal. ii 9, James v 14. “I conclude, therefore,” he says “that the Apostles, as they had all concurred in establishing the three-fold ministry at Jerusalem, so when the time came for them to go forth and preach the gospel to the Gentiles, they would each carry with them the same system as his model and thus all the Churches would eventually be built up — as we know they were — upon one and the same plan.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In addition to New Testament evidence, Wordsworth cites quotations from nine writers in the early Church: Papias, Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Cyril, Epiphanius, Jerome, Augustine and Chrysostom.^{iv} To these he finds other suitable quotations in the **Apostolic Constitutions Lib. VIII CXXXV Patr. Ap. Vol.1, p42** and the 32nd

i cf St. John xx 21

ii Wordsworth, C. “*Response of Episcopalians to Moderator’s Appeal*”
Public Appeals, Vol.II, p415

iii Ibid. p419

iv cf Wordsworth, C.

“*Provision for the Observance of the Law of Unity*”
Public Appeals, see text or footnotes, pp176-183

Canon of Council of Constantinople AD 692. **Bev. Pand. Canon Vol.I p192**

Wordsworth's erudition in Patristics is displayed in this wealth of quotations. He writes: "Here then are twenty-seven passages, derived from eleven, or, including the author of "Synopsis S. Scripture", twelve different sources, every one of which (if I may say so without pedantry), I have myself drawn direct from the originals; for I should have been ashamed to challenge enquiry upon a subject like this with authorities taken at second-hand; — here, I repeat, are twenty-seven different passages derived from twelve different sources which distinctly state that James was Bishop of Jerusalem, and so confirm in the clearest and fullest manner the indirect testimony which we had before gathered from no less than seven passages of the New Testament to the same effect."ⁱ

(b) *Second Apostolic Period A.D. 45-68*

Wordsworth was aware that the records, the Scriptures about ecclesiastical polity were meagre and imperfect in outline, and so encourages us to be guided by the testimony and practice of our fathers in the faith, although always aware of the demands of the Scripture. For the Bishop, Episcopacy "commenced at Alexandria in the year 63, and at Antioch and at Rome probably at earlier dates; that is, we find in this primitive time Episcopacy established not only at Jerusalem but in the three chief cities of Europe, Asia and Africa — the great divisions of the world as then known. No Presbyterian of competent learning will ever venture, I believe, to deny or to grapple with this conclusive fact, which rests upon a foundation no less sure than that of the succession of Archons at Athens and of Consuls or Emperors at Rome."ⁱⁱ

In the Acts of the Apostles, Wordsworth found "no notice of Deacons in any church, nor of a settled Bishop properly so called; for St. Paul himself, we know, during all this time, was holding still in his own hands the "daily care of all the churches" which he had founded (II Cor. XI 28)."ⁱⁱⁱ

i Wordsworth, C. "*Provision for the Observance of the Law of Unity*"
Public Appeals, Vol.I, p184

ii Wordsworth, C.
"*Response of Episcopalians to Moderator's Appeal*"
Public Appeals, Vol.II, pp421-422

iii Ibid. pp424-425

When Wordsworth looks at the Church in the time of St. Paul, he finds in St. Paul's first nine epistles no mention of either Bishop or Presbyter but only the name *Diaconus* and *Diaconia* and this applied generally to anyone who ministered in the service of God, including the Apostle himself.^{i,ii}

The Apostles are distinctly mentioned however "as holding the first rank of the ministry in two of those epistles, I Cor. xii 28 and Eph. iv"; while, in another place of the latter epistle, writes Wordsworth, the church is said to be "built upon" them, and the Prophets, as "the foundation, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone and in a third passage (iii 5) 'the mystery of Christ' is said to be 'now revealed unto the Holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit.'" ⁱⁱⁱ

Wordsworth from the above quotation would understand that there were three orders of ministry here: Apostles, Prophets and Teachers. In St. Paul's last few epistles, the case appears to be different. In Philippians for the first time the names Bishop and Deacon appear, although in these texts the terms appear to be interchangeable. But, in the letter of Paul to Titus and Timothy, Wordsworth notes a definite development in the structure of ministry. He writes "besides the all-important and conclusive fact that these letters are addressed to individuals who are charged to act episcopally towards persons of two other ranks in the ministry — we see at least one example of the clerical nomenclature assuming the form into which it eventually settled down. I allude to I Tim. iii 13. It is plain that in that place 'the office of a Deacon' describes a lower order in the ministry because it is spoken of as a stepping-stone to a higher. And yet the use of the name was not even yet tied down to this application exclusively as is evident from II Timothy iv 5, where Timothy himself is exhorted to 'make full proof of his ministry' (*Diaconia*)."^{iv}

i Wordsworth, C.

"*Response of Episcopalians to Moderator's Appeal*"

Public Appeals Vol. II, p424

ii See 1 Thess. iii 2; 1 Cor. iii 5; II Cor. iv 1, vi 3,4; Rom. xi 13, xii 7; Eph. iii 7, iv 12; Col. i 7, iv 7,17

iii Wordsworth, C.

"*Response of Episcopalians to Moderator's Appeal*"

Public Appeals Vol. II, p425

iv Ibid. p428

From I Tim.i 3, Wordsworth ascertained that Timothy exercised the function of a Bishop as that office is now understood, having under him Presbyters and Deacons. To the evidence of Holy Scripture, he adds the testimony of the “ancient authors”, as he showed in the case of St. James at Jerusalem. “I could produce” he writes, “to you if necessary passages of Eusebius, of Jerome, of Epiphanius, of Chryostom, of Hilary the Deacon, of Theodoret and others (making up altogether no less than twenty distinct authorities) all bearing testimony to the fact that Timothy was ordained Bishop of Ephesus by St. Paul.”ⁱ All this evidence Wordsworth argues shows that Presbyterianism was not extant as an ecclesiastical polity at Ephesus.

(c) *Third Apostolic Period A.D. 68-100*

Wordsworth’s thesis on ecclesiastical polity in Apostolic times comes to a conclusion in St. John at Ephesus. There was now a distinct principle in Church government, and that principle was the principle of uniformity “as exhibited in the three-fold ministry of Bishops, Priests and Deacons”.ⁱⁱ This uniformity was based not on a collective body but on an individual, and upon the individual the responsibility of Church government is laid. Wordsworth argued that the inspired and uninspired authorities in the Early Church were in harmony and were convincing.

From the lifetime of St. Peter and St. Paul, Wordsworth put forward further evidence that there had been succession of Bishops in Jerusalem, Ephesus, Antioch, Rome and Alexandria. All “were Bishops in the same sense, the same spiritual authority, the same episcopal powers, however greatly they may have differed from time to time in mere outward circumstances, in the security of their persons, in the extent of their jurisdiction, in the countenance or opposition of the civil magistrate.”^{iii,iv}

i Wordsworth, C.

“*Provision for the Observance of the Law of Unity*”

Public Appeals, Vol.I, p191

ii Wordsworth, C.

“*Response of Episcopalians to Moderator’s Appeal*”

Public Appeals, Vol.II, p428

iii Wordsworth, C.

“*Provision for the Observance of the Law of Unity*”

Public Appeals, Vol.I, p197

iv Note also footnotes

“*Provision for the Observance of the Law of Unity*”, pp193ff

Wordsworth regarded it as of paramount importance to trace the appointment of Bishops up to the Apostolic Age and to Christ. This was the crux of his argument, that the Church which was for him "the pillar and ground of truth" was the Church which represented the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith.

However, modern scholarship would challenge his thesis on the development of ecclesiastical polity in the first century. Canon B.H. Streeter in his book **The Primitive Church** wrote: "For four hundred years theologians of rival churches have armed themselves to battle on the question of the Primitive Church. However great their reverence for scientific truth and historic fact, they have at least hoped that the result of their investigations would be to vindicate Apostolic authority for the type of Church Order to which they were themselves attached. The Episcopalian has sought to find episcopacy, the Presbyterian presbyterianism, and the Independent a system of independency, to be the form of Church government in New Testament times. But while each party to the dispute has been able to make out a case for his own view, he has never succeeded in demolishing the case of his opponent. The explanation of the deadlock, I have come to believe, is quite simple. It is the uncriticised assumption, made by all parties to the controversy, that in the first century there existed a single type of Church Order.

Approach the evidence without making that assumption and two conclusions come into sight:

- (1) In the New Testament itself, there can be traced an evolution in Church Order, comparable to the development in theological reflection detected by the scholarship of the last century.
- (2) The most natural interpretation of the other evidence is that, at the end of the first century A.D., there existed, in different provinces of the Roman Empire, different systems of Church government.

Among these, the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Independent can each discover the prototype of the system to which he himself adheres."ⁱ

(d) Church of the Reformation Era

In putting forward his schemes for re-union Wordsworth, in his defence of the three-fold ministry, finds further evidence in the tradition of the world-wide Church in the writings of Reformation and post-Reformation divines.

i Streeter, B.H., **The Primitive Church**, ppviii-ix

Wordsworth believed that God had plainly stated what the system of Church Government was to be. He disliked the term *Jus Divinum*. "I have never, I believe, used the term 'divine right', I certainly have said, again and again, that I can see nothing but the hand of God in the early and exclusive universality of the threefold ministry, coupled with the Scriptural precept for univesal unity."ⁱ In quotations from universal tradition, he finds much material to qualify his position. The Church of England at the Reformation wrote in the Preface to her Ordinal that "It is evident unto all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and Ancient Authors that from the Apostles' time, there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church — Bishops, Priests and Deacons."ⁱⁱ In Hooker's **Ecclesiastical Polity**, Wordsworth discovers three important quotations on the same theme.

(a) "It clearly appeareth out of Scripture that Churches Apostolic did know but three degrees in the power of Ecclesiastical Order; at the first, Apostles, Presbyters and Deacons — afterwards, instead of Apostles, Bishops." (Book V CLXXVIII 9)^{iii,vi}

(b) "I may securely conclude that there are at this day in the Church of England no other than the same degrees of Ecclesiastical Order — viz., Bishops, Priests and Deacons — which had their beginning from Christ and His blessed Apostles themselves." (Ibid. CXII)^{iv,vi}

(c) "Let us not fear to be herein bold and peremptory, that, if anything in the Church's government surely the first institution of Bishops was from Heaven, was even of God. The Holy Ghost was the Author of it." (Ibid. Book VII CV 3)^{v,vi}

In the Church of Rome, the unreformed Catholic Church in the West, he finds the decrees of the Council of Trent affirming that "if any one

i Wordsworth, C.

"*Plea for Justice to Presbyterian Students of Theology*", p32

ii Wordsworth, C. "*Provision for Observance of the Law of Unity*"
Public Appeals, Vol.I, p156

iii Ibid. p156

iv Ibid. p156

v Ibid. p156

vi See also "*Plea for Justice to Presbyterian Students of Theology*", pp10-11

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shall say there is not in the Catholic Church a Hierarchy, instituted by Divine appointment, which consists of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, let him be anathema.” (Sep. XXIII C6)ⁱ Likewise, in the Churches of Russia and of the East “with their seventy-six millions of Christians (all of whom, be it remembered, are as much opposed to Popery as Western Protestants are) runs thus — The necessary degrees of orders in the Church are three — viz. those of Bishops, Priests and Deacons.”ⁱⁱ (**Larger Catechism of the Russian Church** p96)

“Nor is this all,” writes Wordsworth, “the testimonies of the Leaders of the Reformation on the Continent are to the same effect, although the necessities, real or supposed, of their most difficult and trying position, eventually obliged them and their followers to abandon the truth in their own practice.”ⁱⁱⁱ

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By a decree of the Diet of Spire^{delete}, the Elector of Saxony had given orders to Luther and the Wittenburg Divines, to consult and draw up an ultimatum respecting Ecclesiastical polity and Reformation. Luther and Melancthon were signatories to the document which was presented to the Elector of Wittenburg on 14th January 1545, which reads, “we are as little disposed as any men to dissolve or weaken the Constitution and Government of the Church; and it is our anxious wish that the Bishops and their Colleagues in that government would truly discharge the duties of their calling, in which case we offer them our obedience ... In short there is no other way to a holy concord than this, that the Bishops should embrace the true doctrine of the Gospel, and the right use of the Sacraments and that we should obey them as the governors of the Church; to which we pledge ourselves.” (Seckendorff’s “**Historia**” Vol.II, p531)^{iv} In a further testimony of Luther contained in his Commentary on the Prophet Hosea, he wrote that the authority of

i Wordsworth, C.

“*Provision for the Observance of the Law of Unity*”

Public Appeals, Vol.I, p157

ii Wordsworth, C.

“*Plea for Justice to Presbyterian Students of Theology*”, pp32-33

iii Wordsworth, C. “*Provision for the Observance of the Law of Unity*”

Public Appeals, Vol.I, p157

iv Ibid. p158

Bishops was seen to be “thoroughly fortified by the Word of God.”ⁱ(Luth. Op. Vol.VIII p591)

In Calvin’s treatise *De necessitate Reformandae Ecclesiae* 1545, Wordsworth discovers a still stronger testimony than Luther. “If they (the Papists) would show us a Hierarchy in which the pre-eminence of Bishops should be placed upon such a footing that they would not refuse to be subject unto Christ, and to depend upon Him as their only Head” — in allusion to the assumed universal Headship of the Bishop of Rome — “and in which they would so cultivate a mutual Brotherhood as to acknowledge no other bond of union than the Truth of God, then indeed, if there be any who would not reverence such a Hierarchy and pay it the most entire obedience, they would deserve, I confess, every possible anathema.” (Calv. Op. Vol.VIII p60)ⁱⁱ

(e) *The Church of His Time*

As well as providing his readers with a wealth of quotation from the writers of the past, Wordsworth wherever he can or wherever it seems fitting draws on the statements of his contemporaries, particularly those with whom he hopes he has some kind of rapport. Obviously, favourable comments on the subject of Episcopacy from prominent Presbyterian gentlemen in Scotland would be of much encouragement to him. For example, Principal C. Campbell of Aberdeen, in his work *The Ruling Eldership* wrote “surely the visible Church is not always to remain in its present divided condition . . . The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States” — (Wordsworth interpolates — ‘a church be it remembered which is an offshoot of our own and in every essential respect, identical with it’) — “by its admirable constitution combines the advantages of Presbytery and Episcopacy.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Another example is contained in a quotation of Principal Tulloch of St. Andrews in *The Contemporary Review*, January 1872, “there are few wise Presbyterians who do not see weaknesses in their own system from the disuse of Episcopacy.”^{iv} Lord Kinloch, a Judge of the Court of

i Wordsworth, C. “*Provision for the Observance of the Law of Unity*”
Public Appeals, Vol.I, p158

ii Ibid. p159

iii Ibid. p160

iv Ibid. p160

Session had, in comparing the Episcopal Church and the Church of Scotland, said, “Why should there not be a combination of the benefits of either system?” And again “why should a union of the systems in the best characteristics of each remain an historic dream of the very chief of our Reformers?” (Sunday Evening Studies, p305)ⁱ

Wordsworth should I think be commended for his hopefulness that these quotations, if not unanimously held, could be said to be representative of the Presbyterian Establishment. Even more hopeful was an interesting paragraph written by Wordsworth on two prominent personalities within the Free Church. He writes: “the philanthropic Dr. Guthrie, bore public witness (which it was in vain attempted to gainsay) that his illustrious father-in-law, Dr. Chalmers, did not disapprove of a Prelatical Ministry, but rather the contrary; and Dr. Hanna himself, on the only occasion I had the pleasure of meeting him, speaking with reference to a Charge of mine upon Unity, then recently delivered, which had excited much public interest, said to me frankly: ‘For my part, I have no objection to a Liturgy, and I have no objection to Episcopacy.’ ”ⁱⁱ

Statements like these gladdened Wordsworth’s heart, yet he had to convince the majority within the Church of Scotland that they should give ear to his pleas. Wordsworth did not deny that Presbyterian ministry could be efficacious and that such a ministry raises as many “good Christian” souls as any other Church. Yet Wordsworth would maintain that God had ordained certain arrangements for His Church. These arrangements are in the form of the Catholic three-fold ministry and, if this is universally accepted in the Church, then it will lead to greater preservation and enjoyment of peace and order among Christians.

(iii) Proposed New Church to Come

What was the great new Church to be? What was to be its system of polity? We have seen that Wordsworth found the normative pattern in the early church and tradition — the unity of the Church was guaranteed by the three-fold order of ministry. In the light of this understanding, Wordsworth in his thesis for re-union attempted to assimilate Episcopacy with the tradition of polity that had evolved in

i Wordsworth, C. “*Provision for the Observance of the Law of Unity*”
Public Appeals, Vol.I, p160

ii Ibid. pp160-161

Scotland. He anticipated the ingrafting of episcopacy into the Presbyterian system of Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and General Assembly.ⁱ "I have said," wrote Wordsworth, "that Prelacy is no antagonism to the full development of the Synodal system as it has grown up under Presbyterianism. When the time shall arrive for such a reconciliation as that I have advocated, there will be nothing to prevent the continuance of that system.

- (1) Kirk Sessions will remain, as corresponding to our Vestries.
- (2) Presbyteries will remain, as corresponding to Rural Deaneries, not yet revived among ourselves, from the scantiness of our numbers, but revived in England.
- (3) Synods will remain, as corresponding to our Diocesan Synods.
- (4) Above all, the General Assembly will remain, only with Bishops constituting an Upper Chamber and having the control of judicial process.

There is nothing in such a system to stand in the way of intercommunion with the Church of England, with the Irish Church, with the American Church, and with the Anglican Churches throughout the world."ⁱⁱ The Presbyterians, believed Wordsworth, suffered from a loss of the full constitution of Apostolic Ministry and want of due security for liturgical worship. There was also the disuse of the Scriptural ordinance of Confirmation and a neglect of commemoration of the principal events of the life of Christ.

He was aware of the benefits of the Presbyterian system as well. He approved of the respect for the laity, which was in accordance with the teaching of the great divines. He approved of the practice and authority of ecclesiastical Assemblies and the just relations the Church of Scotland had with the civil power. All these were practices which he wished the Church of England would emulate.

It is interesting that, at the same time as Wordsworth's pamphlet on the "*Ministry of the Church Historically Considered*", Dr. Rorison, Episcopal incumbent at Peterhead, was involved in correspondence with Dr. Lee of Greyfriars. Lee had a proposed scheme for reconciliation of the Churches and it was similar to

i cf Foster, Walter Roland

Bishop and Presbytery Church of Scotland, 1661-1688

ii Wordsworth, C. "*Ministry of the Church Historically Considered*"
Public Appeals, Vol.II, p466

that which Rorison had sent to him (Autumn 1864).ⁱ

Rorison's scheme was subdivided under three heads: (1) Polity; (2) Worship; (3) Standards. In addition to Wordsworth's proposals, there were to be 33 Synods (13 ante-Reformation Dioceses plus twenty others). This Synod would be a Superior Synod, presided over by a Moderator elected by itself, subject to confirmation by Supreme Synod (General Assembly). Such Moderator to be duly consecrated a Bishop. The Supreme Synod would retain title of "General Assembly" and would consist (a) of the thirty-three bishops; (b) of six members, three lay and three clerical, from each diocese or intermediate Synod and representatives of the Universities, forming a second chamber. Such chambers to deliberate together, but, on the demand of either, to vote apart with mutual right of veto. The Moderator to be elected annually from the first chamber of the whole Assembly. The lay and clerical members of the second chamber to be exactly equal in number."ⁱⁱ The scheme also contained interesting proposals for worship sensitive of course to the varying traditions within the United Church.

Robert Lee was not against Episcopacy as a matter of expediency but as a Divine Order and would, as Dr. Story notes, regard Scottish Episcopacy as based upon "impracticable dogmatism"ⁱⁱⁱ which the Church of Scotland could not accept. As I have mentioned elsewhere, Lee was dedicated to the Reform of the worship of the Church of Scotland. Wordsworth believed that there was no reason in reforming worship if it did not coincide with Reform of Ministry. To have better worship of God in liturgy and in order requires the channels of an ordered ministry which, for Wordsworth, was three-fold. "It would seem that some remedy must be applied to the self-devised and extemporaneous Ministry, no less than to the self-devised and extemporaneous worship, which, irregularly indeed, but not incongruously, the said Ministry has been led to offer."^{iv}

As I wrote earlier, central to Wordsworth's theme was Establishment, which was essential to the development, growth and soundness of religion. His attempts at re-unification of the Established and Episcopal Church and the pleas for re-union of the Church of Scotland with the Church of England would help the Church in its missionary work overseas, especially in British Colonies. Diversity of

i Story, R.H. *Life and Remains of Dr. Lee*, p127

ii Ibid. p129

iii Ibid. p134

iv Wordsworth, C. "*Ministry of a Church Historically Considered*"
Public Appeals, Vol.II, p515

ministry was a hindrance to the conversion of the heathen. A rapprochement between the two established churches of Scotland and England was essential. In a State ruled by one monarch and governed by one parliament, he considered it logical for a united establishment in religion, and this is at the centre of the message of pamphlets like "*Euodias and Syntyche*" and "*A United Church for a United Kingdom*". Wordsworth desired to see a New National Establishment within Scotland and in Britain. To preach the Gospel of Love and Unity abroad in a spirit of jealousy and division was thwarting the mission of the Church. All round the world, he saw examples of frustration in mission due to division in the Church. From East to West, in America, Canada, Australasia and Africa, Wordsworth quotes examples of the evil of Disunion in his Appendix to the pamphlet "*Plea for Uniformity in Ministry of Church*" pp370-378.

Many in Scotland could see the advantages of a **New Establishment** and perhaps a reflection on the mood of the time within the Scottish Establishment is contained in a lecture by Dr. Cunningham on Robert Lee . . . "If the Episcopalian under guidance of Bishop Lightfoot and Mr. Hatch, were to renounce his belief in the divine right of Episcopacy, as the Presbyterian has long ago abandoned his belief in the divine right of Presbytery, it might be possible to devise a middle system . . . If men are in earnest, why might there not be even now ministerial communion and mutual eligibility between the sister Churches as there was at the time of the Reformation, the pulpits of England (if not parishes) open to the ministers of the Church of Scotland, as the pulpits of Scotland are open to the clergy of the Church of England?"

"Are the Bishops in England, or even the Bishops in Scotland, prepared for this? Alas for our poor country because of its religious divisions. What would we not do, or dare, or sacrifice for union — union with almost any Church or sect! What brain waste. What money waste. What loss of temper, of charity, of every good thing. Three men everywhere in the country doing the work of one, and not doing it so well as the one would, heathenism and vandalism rising up in the cities, and none to help! Oh the shame of it." (St. Giles Lectures. Series 3 pp408-409)ⁱ

It would be best to sum up this chapter on the nature of the Church in Wordsworth's own words which emphasise his conviction in his appeal. He writes: "We continue that appeal (true nature of Episcopacy in tradition and scripture) against the usurpations and corruptions of the Church of Rome; but we respect it

i Meredith, W.M. "*Unity of Presbyterians and Episcopalians*", p6

also with equal confidence in favour of a system such as can be proved to rest upon Scripture and upon the example of the Primitive Church. Are we unreasonable in this? Will you, the Church of Scotland, reject our position? Will you oblige us to continue in apparent separation? I address myself now more especially to those who represent the Church established in this country — will you oblige us to continue separated and excluded from the national embodiment of our common Christianity, because we cannot consent to separate ourselves from the only system which the Universal Church has recognised and which is established in the sister country; from the system which rests, as I have said and as you yourselves have seen, upon abundant Scriptural and apostolic authority and which, even though it rested upon no better sanction than the primitive decree throughout all the world, which Jerome dreamt of, ought not to be abrogated without a decree of authority to justify the change?’’ⁱ

(i) Wordsworth, C. **Outlines of Christian Ministry Delineated**, p137

CHAPTER 4

Wordsworth's Understanding of Scottish Church History

When men are involved in controversy and, in particular, ecclesiastical controversy, there is very frequently an appeal to the past to vindicate the present. No less was this the case in Wordsworth's efforts towards re-union. He approached his study of Scottish Church History with the premise that Episcopacy was the best form of Church government for Scotland, that at certain times since the Reformation Episcopacy did work and, given the appropriate conditions, could work again as the unifying authority within the Reformed Church of Scotland. There is no question that he spent many long hours in the study of Scotland's turbulent ecclesiastical past and from this he was thoroughly convinced that his own tradition was the correct one and it is interesting to see how he uses the material at his disposal in argument.

It was on February 25th 1854 that Wordsworth started his campaign for re-union. He wrote a letter to the secretaries of the Protestant Conference foregathered at St. Andrews University and appended a tract *ad ministros* to the clergy of Presbyterian persuasion within the Diocese of St. Andrew's, Dunkeld and Dunblane. Wordsworth by this time was at variance with Gladstone over the question of the relationship between Church and State and his apparent support of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. He appealed to his fellow Protestants to unite against this. In the tract he included the "*Petition and Oration of the Protestants of Scotland to the Queen Regent AD 1558*" to back up his argument. Further, he wrote: "The abandonment of fixed religious principles in the government of our country, which is now openly adopted as the only practical basis for the administration of its affairs and which, being contrary to the Word of God, cannot be otherwise than grievously offensive to His Divine Majesty, is plainly the consequence, not of this or that political party in the State, but of the separations which we have multiplied amongst ourselves; and the only remedy, therefore, is to set ourselves, as speedily as we can, to heal our divisions."ⁱ

i Wordsworth, C.

"*Letter to Presbyterian Ministers in the Diocese of St. Andrews*"

Public Appeals Vol.I, p103

So Wordsworth wrote the first of many tracts to try and heal the divisions with the Church of Scotland and to convince his readers of the value of Reformed Episcopacy. In various pamphlets, addresses and sermons he “delved” deep into the history of Scotland but he moulded the facts to suit his argument. His main interest was Church Unity and apology for Episcopacy; historically he was very subjective. His first most popular contribution was “*Euodias and Syntyche*”, a sermon of 1867 comparing the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. Previous to this in 1861 he had published “*A Discourse on the Scottish Reformation*”.

A contemporary of Wordsworth, the Rev. John Cunningham of Crieff, published his **Church History of Scotland** in 1859 which was regarded as an exemplary because impartial piece of work. Yet as one would expect, it was anti-Papist and pro-Presbyterian in bias. Cunningham wrote in his introduction to the two volumes: “In writing this History, I have endeavoured above all things to purge my heart of all leaven of polemical and party hatred and to follow faithfully both truth and clarity. I have not concealed my own sentiments for it had been either hypocrisy or cowardice to have done so; but I have endeavoured to state them without asperity; and to do justice to the motives, the opinions, and the conduct of those who differ from me. Though I cannot hope that I have arrived at perfect impartiality, I trust I have never sacrificed truth to subserve a party purpose. I have seen enough and read enough to know that worth and wisdom are not confined to any Church or any sect and that infallibility does not belong to Presbytery any more than to Popery.”ⁱ In comparing Wordsworth’s view of Scots history with that of Cunningham, it is seen that Wordsworth’s principal aim is that of unity, although not without Episcopalian bias. Wordsworth was always ready to challenge his contemporaries with his view on history and contemporary attitudes, whereas it can be seen that Cunningham avoided this, particularly in the last paragraph of his **History**: “But now we approach the region of living men, where character is sacred, and passion is strong; and therefore we reverently turn aside.”ⁱⁱ

In his “*Discourse on Scottish Church History*” published in 1881, Wordsworth attempted to answer the views of several famous historians who had some months earlier been lecturing on Scottish Church History in the St. Giles

i Cunningham, J. **Church History of Scotland** Vol.I, pVII

ii Ibid. Vol.II, p620

Lectures held alternately in Glasgow and Edinburgh. At the beginning of the first chapter of Wordsworth's book we read: "If the Reformation had done its work wisely and effectually, there would have been no need for Rebellion first and Restoration afterwards; because there could have been no provocation for men to rebel, no exile out of which the Sovereign would need to be restored. If the Restoration had done its work wisely and effectually, there would have been no occasion for the Revolution afterwards to punish its backslidings, to amend its faults and to provide against their recurrence from time to come. If the Revolution had done fully and effectually what it undertook to do viz. to secure for people the accomplishment of their wishes in matters of religion; and had provided also what certainly was not undertaken but nevertheless was fondly hoped by some, viz. — to complete spiritual independence of the civil power — the fatal movement which ended in Disruption would have been unknown."ⁱ

The above is an interesting attempt by Wordsworth to write the previous three hundred years of Scottish Ecclesiastical history in a simplistic form.

His suppositions are only speculation, the "if" of history. In the troubled times that he was referring to, men had not time to systematise their thought — they were in the heat of battle and peace was far from their lives. They were men who believed in a United Christendom, a Church Catholic, but one which consisted of diverse national churches. Men had in many ways to content themselves with the internal politics of each nation. It is not particularly helpful to say "if this had happened" or "that had happened", things would have been better.

Through his understanding of history, the Bishop hoped that he would convince his readers of the "correctness" of his appeal. The Bishop had come to Scotland with certain pre-conceived ideas. Anglicanism was the ideal Catholic Structure, it was established, it held Catholic practices, believed in a Catholic three-fold ministry. Whereas, on the other hand, the country of his adoption had an established Calvinist Kirk, to him a deviation from Catholicity. To him it was suppressed Scottish Episcopacy which contained the fullness of the faith.

Now let us turn and analyse the way in which Wordsworth treats the major events of Scottish History from the 16th century onwards; for reasons of clarity we will divide them under his theme: Reformation, Rebellion and Restoration, Revolution and Disruption.

i Wordsworth, C. "*Prefatory Remarks on the St. Giles Lectures*"
Discourse on Scottish Church History, pp33-34

(i) **The Reformation**

For Wordsworth there were two distinct groups in sixteenth century Scotland, “the men of gospel light and truth and men of darkness and error.” In the former category were men like Patrick Hamilton, Alex Alesius and George Wishart, in the latter Cardinal Beaton, Arran and the weak and dissolute King James V.

In his opinion John Knox was “the best of our Reformers”. Knox, he says, was closer to Episcopacy than Presbytery. “Isn’t Knox’s Confession of 1560 more in line with the 39 Articles than with the Westminster Confession?” “We (Episcopalians) don’t stand aloof from the Church of Knox.”ⁱ

Knox, for him, was a man of Gospel light and he was anxious to draw parallels between his own argument for unity and the example of Knox. He emphasised strongly the connection of Knox with reform in England, his stay with the English congregation at Frankfurt, his involvement with the 1552 Prayer Book, and the episcopal ordination of his two sons in England. Wordsworth believed that the strength of the Scottish Reformation lay in its love of truth, but its weakness in the disregard which it showed for that second great principle of the Christian life, the love of peace: “they have left us to reconcile the love of the Truth with the love of Peace.”ⁱⁱ

Certainly this was the tragedy of Knox’s life “that he coveted peace, but lived and died in strife: that his last years were saddened by tarnished visions and shattered hopes: that he saw with dreamy gaze a Promised Land, but found not the means to lead his people into it.”ⁱⁱⁱ

When we compare the Reformation in England and in Scotland, we find that they occurred in entirely different ways. The English Reformation came about by the will of Crown and State. The Acts of Praemunire had given greater freedom to the English Crown in matters of ecclesiastical polity. Crown, State and Church worked together in Reform. In Scotland, though the Crown had been vested with privileges such as those contained in the Indult of Innocent VIII in 1487 and Act of Scottish Parliament 1526, Crown, State and Church did not work together in Reform. The Scottish Reformation “was an eleventh hour reformation” and more democratic than the English, imposed by the will of the people rather than by

i Wordsworth, C. “*Prefatory Remarks on the St. Giles Lectures*”
Discourse on Scottish Church History, pp3-4

ii Wordsworth, C. “*Discourse on Tercentary of Scottish Reformation*”
Public Appeals, Vol.1, p248

iii McEwen, J.S. **The Faith of John Knox**, p5

the will of the Crown. The Scottish Reformation had done its work in reforming the Scottish Church and it was a Reformation inside the Church Catholic.

In his book **The Scottish Reformation Impartially Examined** published in 1860, the Tercentenary of the Reformation, Wordsworth hoped that his studies would lead to union between the established Churches of England and Scotland in the interests of "Truth and Peace" with an eye to domestic, social and national benefits, without the sacrifice of national independence. The pamphlet itself was dedicated to Ministers and Elders throughout Scotland. He invited his readers "to live the truth and the peace". "The prime evidence which the Reformers give of their devotion to the Truth was the supremacy which they ascribed at all times to the Word of God."ⁱ The Reformers in Wordsworth's eyes had a love of the truth but they could not achieve the love of peace. "The error of our Reformers, it must not be denied, was due also in part to another cause. They were misled, not only by the evil influences under which they had been born, and in the midst of which they had so long lived, but by the overweening confidence which they were disposed to place in themselves and especially in their great Leader. Eager and enthusiastic, but self-willed and undisciplined in their zeal and love for the Truth, they too much overlooked what is due to the love of Peace, which is indeed an essential portion of the Truth."ⁱⁱ

"Grant unto all Christian people that peace and unity which is agreeable to Thy will"ⁱⁱⁱ — so runs the Cranmerian Collect for Unity. It is apparent that Wordsworth equates peace with an ordered form of ecclesiastical government and that form was episcopacy. What the Bishop wanted to see was a Reformation in Scotland on Anglican lines. Yet he could not deny that the Scottish Reformation was a more peaceful one than that of England. One could argue that the great era of turbulence came with the tussle between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism in 17th century Scotland. There wasn't in the earlier years of Reformation in Scotland as great a violence as occurred with the English one. Episcopacy in England did not exactly guarantee that England was without ecclesiastical dissent and strife. Wordsworth's argument is weak in its interpretation. He regarded Knox as "the greatest of our Reformers" yet it is difficult to see how he could go along with Knox's views on establishment, particularly where women were involved

i Wordsworth, C. "*Discourse on Tercentary of Scottish Reformation*"
Public Appeals, Vol.I, p223

ii Ibid. p224

iii **Scottish Book of Common Prayer**, 1929



(cf *Monstrous Regiment of Women*), and establishment was dear to Wordsworth's heart. He desired to see a new establishment in Britain which of course was impossible at the Reformation: "What is there to forbid this union? Knox besides a self-willed and intractable disposition had his personal causes for difference with England, we have none."ⁱ He argued that it was up to us now to redress the balance.

(ii) **Rebellion and Restoration**

In the 17th Century, Episcopacy was used as a tool by Government to force its Erastian principles on the country. "*Nae bishop, nae king!*" was the belief of King James VI. Episcopacy became unfortunately associated with "the boot and the thumbscrew". In his Prefatory Remarks on the St. Giles Lectures of 1881, Wordsworth was quick to use a quotation from Dr. Story, who had delivered the 7th St. Giles Lecture. The Bishop's eagle eye always was sharp to "pick-up" statements of eminent Scottish Churchmen which would support his argument. He quotes Dr. Story who had written: "The men who sought to force Episcopacy on Covenanting Scotland by physical constraint and pressure were the worst enemies Episcopacy has ever had in Scotland. No Episcopalian need feel specially concerned to defend their memories and no fair-minded Presbyterian will hold Episcopacy responsible for their measures."ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth was battling against mythology; most Scotsmen in his day, and many still now, understand the history of 17th century Scotland in terms of Covenanters struggling against oppression and prelacy. Yet in that period politics and religion had become bound together, locked in the same struggle. The Stuart policy of forcing Episcopacy on Scotland and attempts to assimilate the two kingdoms' ecclesiastical establishments were disastrous. Scotland has always been aware of the threat of English domination. In the 17th century there was fear of being swallowed by the English establishment politically and ecclesiastically. The Court of St. James seemed so remote from Scotland. The Scots felt that they were being neglected and, to a certain extent, the Stuart kings were losing their understanding of Scottish affairs.

Wordsworth lamented the bulldozing of the Crown, perhaps because he

i Wordsworth, C. "*Discourse on Tercentary of Scottish Reformation*"
Public Appeals, Vol.I, pp254-255

ii Wordsworth, C. "*Prefatory Remarks on the St. Giles Lectures*"
Discourse on Scottish Church History, p11

was only too well aware of what could happen again, and he realised that danger only too well in his schemes for reunion. "Assimilation between Scotland and England in ecclesiastical affairs, if it is ever to come at all, must come as a perfectly natural and spontaneous effect of causes not only strictly constitutional but qualified to produce it for the good of both: that is, it must come out of pure conviction, out of riper knowledge, out of wider sympathies, not only with the sister country, but with universal Christendom; both of the past and present, and especially of the early past."ⁱ

The result of the Stuart policy was that the two kingdoms descended into Puritanical gloom with the advent of the Civil Wars. Wordsworth was anxious to show the sufferings of the period, that ecclesiastical disunity had sacrificed "Truth and Peace". This found no fuller vindication than in the testimony of Robert Baillie who wrote on January 2nd 1651 to David Dickson and William Spang: "It cannot be denied but our miseries and dangers of ruine are greater now for many ages have been; a potent, victorious enemy, master of our seas, and for some good time of the best part of our land; our standing forces against this his imminent invasion few, weak, inconsiderable; our Kirk, State, Armie, full of divisions and jealousies; the body of our people be-south Forth spoyled and near starveing; the be-north Forth extreamlie ill used by a handfull of our oune; many inclyning to treat and agree with Cromwell without care either of King or Covenant, none of our neighbours called upon by us, or willing to give us any help, though called. What the end of all shall be, the Lord knowes."ⁱⁱ

The worst outcome of the Civil War for Wordsworth was a phenomenon in "the nature of a Nemesis" as he called it, that Presbyterianism in Scotland accepted the "cast-off trappings" of English Puritanism. He couldn't understand why the Westminster Confession had become the standard of faith for the Church of Scotland considering where it was written and that one of the chief characteristics of Scotsmen is their love of independence.

An even worse outcome of these events in Wordsworth's eyes was the Restoration and he portrays a very predestinarian view of God's dealings with the two nations. It was his belief that the breaking of the Divine Command of Unity contained in St. John xvii was the cause of all the tragedies. The nation did not follow the precepts of peace and unity, thus God's wrath was released upon the land. With the Restoration, within five years "the country became engaged with France and Holland" in the war of 1665; "such was the Great Plague" "and such

i Wordsworth, C. *Discourse on Scottish Church History*, p51

ii Ibid. p55 (*Orig.* Baillie, Principal R. *Letters and Journals*, p127)

too the great Fire of London”ⁱ.

But it was not the Prince alone who caused the difficulties. The Divine Law of Unity was not exactly pursued by the Commissioners at Breda in 1650, as Wordsworth notes in the words of Alexander Jaffrey, Commissary of Aberdeen: “We did sinfully entangle both the nation and ourselves, and that poor young prince to whom we were sent, making him sign and swear a covenant which we knew that he hated in his heart. Yet, finding that upon these terms only he could be admitted to rule over us, he sinfully complied with what we most sinfully pressed upon him; where I must confess, to my apprehension, our sin was more than his.”ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth finds in a sermon of Robert South (who was later chaplain-in-ordinary to Charles II) which was preached in Westminster Abbey 1688, a primary source to support his interpretation. “When it pleased Providence to blow over the storm in the happy restoration of both (Church and Monarch) it was not long before the destroying angel stretched forth his hand over us in that woeful calamity caused by a spreading devouring sickness; that ceased not to destroy and mow down thousands before it without stay or strap till at length it gave over, as it were, out of weariness with killing.” . . . “we have seen and felt what an angry God can do.”ⁱⁱⁱ

But, to a certain extent, the Bishop was correct in his interpretation of ecclesiastical government in Restoration Scotland. Episcopacy and Presbytery, government of the church by Synods, Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions worked well in Restoration Scotland. “The re-establishment of episcopacy did not alter in any significant way the long Scottish tradition of Calvinist theology, discipline and worship. But the Bishop worked within the System as its chief minister, fulfilling the functions of a Spiritual leader and not merely those of a political agent.”^{iv} Not only did Bishop in Presbytery work but it was a time when imparity in ministry, essential to Wordsworth’s schemes for re-union, was in operation within the Reformed Church. Statements by Laurence Charteris, Minister of Dirleton, helped Wordsworth in the presentation of his argument. Charteris said: “this I may with greatest confidence affirm, that religion never flourished more in the

i Wordsworth, C. **Discourse on Scottish Church History**, p58

ii Ibid. pp60-61

iii Ibid. pp59-60 (*Orig.* South’s sermon on Isaiah V,4 **Works** Vol. 4 p91 *et seq.*)

iv Foster, Walter Roland

Bishop and Presbytery, Church of Scotland, 1661-1688, p172

world than it did when and where there was an imparity among the officers of the Church. And this I know that some famous Protestant Churches do allow Episcopacy and continue to this day under that form of Government.”ⁱ

Wordsworth saw in the Second Episcopacy something which was highly commendable, which he believed could come to pass again in the right circumstances. “The Diocesan Synods held at Dunblane during Leighton’s Episcopate (1662-72) and continued down to the Revolution by his two successors, Ramsay (1673-84) and Douglas (1684-88), afford ample proof that there is nothing in Episcopacy, when properly administered, with a due regard to the rights of the two orders of the ministry, and of the laity, to prevent the introduction and the working of the same synodical element which the champions of Presbytery have been wont to insist upon and to claim as a peculiar recommendation of their own system. We do not indeed find the presence of the laity in these Dunblane synods; and this was a defect.”ⁱⁱ

In the Episcopal Church in the earlier part of Wordsworth’s career, there was not much Lay involvement and this was true also of the Church of Scotland. Lack of Lay involvement in the 17th Century synods being regarded as a defect was a comment of hindsight rather than pure historical analysis.

Yet 17th Century Scotland was also the era of men like John Forbes of Corse (one of the Aberdeen Doctors) and Robert Leighton of Dunblane, men who did stand out for their eirenic disposition. Naturally, Wordsworth pursuing the argument of “Truth and Peace” held them in high regard. They were men of the Episcopal party who stood for Catholic Unity.

John Forbes was “concerned above all to look beyond the immediate controversies of the Church of Scotland to the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of which it must be part. It is because of its sectarian implications that he is so opposed to the National Covenant, and the attempt to force Presbyterianism on an unwilling England by the Solemn League and Covenant fills him with horror. His eirenic temperament; his wide perspective; his anxiety to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential in matters of faith and church government are elements which have too seldom been present in Scottish ecclesiastical controversy. Scotland’s church would have gained much if this great theologian had been more

i Wordsworth, C. *A Discourse on Scottish Church History*, p68

ii Ibid. pp62-63

influential in the course of its thinking, its worship and its witness.’ⁱ

Cunningham in his **History of the Church of Scotland** wrote that Leighton “had fixed his thoughts so intently on the essential doctrines of Christianity that he had come to regard all forms of Church government as indifferent. He had no sympathy either with the bishop pleading for the Divine right of Episcopacy, or the presbyter maintaining the Divine right of Presbyterianism.”ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth in his discourse on **Scottish Church History** made much of the eirenic temperament of these two men, Forbes and Leighton, whom he held up to be champions of “Truth and Peace”. Though they were of Episcopalian persuasion neither could be held up to be champions of Episcopacy at least in the style as understood by Wordsworth. He maintained that they were attempting to rectify the strange position in which the Church of Scotland found herself. The heat and excitement of the first collision with enemies of Reformation had passed away and the upholders of the corrupt medieval system had been utterly overthrown. For the Bishop “it was only natural that men of thoughtful and well-instructed minds should begin to feel uneasy at the strange position which the Scottish Reformers had taken up — a position in which they stood, broken loose as it were from all the traditions of fifteen centuries, and if they were to be content to swim with the tide, without any guidance of certainty to direct their cause.”ⁱⁱⁱ Unfortunately, Leighton and Forbes made little impact on the direction the Scottish Church was taking.

Wordsworth would have assented to the motto of the Aberdeen Doctors: “In things essential unity, in things unessential liberty, in all things charity.” However, there is no question of doubt that he saw in the next epoch — the Revolution — the shattering of the essential unity of the Church.

(iii) The Revolution

The Revolution of 1690 saw the rejection of episcopal government and the re-establishment of Presbyterian polity within the Church of Scotland. The rejection of Episcopacy was disapproved of by Wordsworth, because it was effected in an

i Sefton, H. “*Scotland's Greatest Theologian*”

Aberdeen University Review (1974), p352

ii Cunningham, J. **Church History of Scotland**, Vol.II, p187

iii Wordsworth, C. **Discourse on Scottish Church History**, p46

Erastian way, by the authority of the State. “It is one of the ugliest features of the epoch and worst signs of the generally low standard of the national religion, that it was obviously thought unsafe to trust the settlement of Church affairs to Churchmen.”ⁱ This is a curious statement considering Wordsworth’s attitude previously — he seemed to have no objection to the State re-establishing Episcopacy at the Reformation.

He was certainly correct in his critique of the Revolution. It is interesting to note King William’s remarks on the draft Church Act of 1690: “whereas it is said that their Majesties do ratify the Presbyterian Church government to be the only government of Christ’s Church in the Kingdom, his Majesty desires it may be expressed thus — to be the government of the Church in this Kingdom established by law.”ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth was very bitter about William of Orange and Carstares and the decision they came to. “To say the least — considering who the two men were — who William was and who Carstares was — as supreme judges of catholic and everlasting truth, this would seem to be a hard sentence to pronounce upon any country.”ⁱⁱⁱ His opinion of the two is very sour when he comments that “We (Episcopalians) have been trampled on now nearly for 200 years and, if certain individuals can have their way, however we may ‘bleat and whimper’, we shall be trampled on still. No Episcopalian till the end of time need dream of touching tithes or tithes, however they may be still called ‘Episcopal’. No Episcopalian need think himself admissible to a theological professorship, even though founded by his own forefathers; or that he can be permitted to exercise any political influence upon religious matters except for the benefit of the Presbyterian Establishment. And all this — because it has so seemed good not so much to the people of Scotland as to King William and William Carstares.”^{iv}

Wordsworth was on dangerous ground here because he made the terrible mistake in parts of arguing from emotion. He was arguing also on conjecture that

i Wordsworth, C. **Discourse on Scottish Church History**, p46

ii Dunlop, I.

William Carstares and the Kirk by Law Established, p71

iii Wordsworth, C. “*Prefatory Remarks on the St. Giles Lectures*”
Discourse on Scottish Church History, p21

iv Wordsworth, C. “*Prefatory Remarks on the St. Giles Lectures*”
Discourse on Scottish Church History, p22

although William had Presbyterian predilections “they were not of such kind as to lead him to lay stress upon them in comparison with his political interests.”ⁱ Wordsworth’s argument is very weak; on the one hand he disapproves of Erastianism as shown in 1690, yet on the other hand he would have wanted William to have favoured the Episcopal cause. Surely Presbyterianism and William’s political will were inextricably bound by events?

Most Episcopalians, I am sure, would admire the courage of the post-Revolution Episcopate for their loyalty to the cause which had bound them by oath. The Episcopal Church was entering a period of long and protracted persecution; the hard-core which survived to the rescinding of the Penal Laws in 1794 kept alive the faith, an essential factor towards the enthusiasm and impetus in the following century, the century of Wordsworth.

Bishop Wordsworth dismissed the non-Jurors as Romantics. The Bishops “had motives derived from a sentiment of a narrow nationality, because of the Stuarts who had befriended Episcopacy in the past, and from the suspicion that they alone could be depended on to befriend it in time to come; motives derived from a feeling of jealousy towards England, which had taken its own course without consultation with the Scottish Parliament; motives in short allied more or less to the short-sighted policy which, on this side of the Tweed, so long and obstinately opposed the union of the two countries which has proved so beneficial to them both, but especially to the more northern country.”ⁱⁱ

It is perhaps true to say that the Bishops were acting in a romantic way, but Wordsworth should not have overlooked the fact that the Church of his birth, the Church of England, did not recognise Episcopalian Orders until his century. The Scots Bishops may have been insular but there was insularity on both sides of the Tweed. In a statement like the above, we can begin to appreciate his lack of understanding of the ethos of Scottish Episcopacy.

Wordsworth is arguing from hindsight here; of course, union had been of benefit to both countries, but Scotsmen at that time would not have seen it in such light. Monarchy was remote from Scotland and Jacobitism was very much “in the air”. Others, like Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, could see the future of Scotland in a different light — a Scotland built on Republican lines. Wordsworth was correct to say that the Treaty of Union 1707 had been beneficial but he should not have

i Wordsworth, C. *Discourse on Scottish Church History*, p70

ii *Ibid.* p71

forgotten that the same Treaty ratified the “rights and privileges” of the Church of Scotland by Law Established.

He believed that the Act of 1690 had done nothing but perpetuate disunity between the two churches of the two countries. This was a position that he lamented. “In the two countries united into one kingdom within the same island and presenting so many motives to mutual attachment, so many calls and occasions for the closest and most constant intercourse — religion alone occupies a position which, as regards the mass of their respective inhabitants, keeps them at a distance and alien from each other. Religion which ought to be, and is, in its true nature, the strictest and most effectual of all bonds of union, serves to disunite them.”ⁱ

This of course was the key question concerning his scheme for re-union, a **United Church for a United Kingdom**. On whose lines would it be organised? What form of ecclesiastical government would it adopt? The next great epoch in Scottish Church history was the Disruption: Wordsworth regarded the Disruption as the obvious culmination of events because the Church of Scotland had deviated from the Catholic norm.

(iv) **The Disruption**

It would have been impossible for anyone, let alone Wordsworth, to have been unaware of great disunity within the Presbyterian body in Scotland in Victorian times. The Disruption of 1843 had shaken the nation to the core. All the controversies of the eighteenth century, the Patronage Act of 1712 and the secessions from establishment all came to “a head” in 1843. Perhaps it could be summed up in a quotation from Principal Tulloch when he said “it puzzles the wise men of this world to understand how the Separated Presbyterian bodies, while they differ so little, should disagree so much.”ⁱⁱ

For Wordsworth, the Revolution Settlement had not done its work. It had not given the people religious freedom, it had not given the Church spiritual freedom. What he overlooked was that the Church of Scotland has been allowed freedom which the Church of England has never had. The Church of England is burdened by the incursions of Parliament.

The “Nemesis” according to the Bishop was again at work in the Disruption. If the Episcopal Church became a martyr by mistake for the Stuarts, “was no

i Wordsworth, C. “*Euodias and Syntyche*”, p31

ii Wordsworth, C. “*Prefatory Remarks on the St. Giles Lectures*”
Discourse on Scottish Church History, p29

similar mistake committed by our brethren of the Free Church in the Disruption of 1843?" "As in the former instance, no one hesitates to describe the act as one of a noble and magnanimous character. And here — whatever there may have been in the former case — there is less room for the suggestion of inferior motives. The question for which there is room is whether the act was or was not a mistaken one; in other words, whether the guidance of the Word of God, fully and faithfully ascertained, would not have disallowed the action rather than approved it; whether, if the like occasion were to occur again, the same action would and ought to be repeated."ⁱ

Wordsworth would have had the dissenters remain within the Body of the Church of Scotland; he would have wanted the "Disrupters" to have borne their grievance without violation of Christ's plain commands to unity. "I would not have asked them — when in their conscience they considered that wrong had been inflicted by the civil power — to forbear to call that wrong persecution and to take all proper pains to fasten the charge of persecution on the conscience of the nation."ⁱⁱ

In addition, Wordsworth would assert that God's strength would be sufficient for the Dissenters in all time of tribulation and that, in time, God would vindicate his righteousness. One wonders if the Bishop is clear about "visible" and "invisible" unity? I wonder if it is worthwhile for arguing to remain part of a "body" for the sake of unity when existentially the unity no longer exists. One wonders if Wordsworth falls short of his desire when he says "suffer all for the sake of visible unity", for God will eventually vindicate. God does not always appear to vindicate the "righteous". In a sense, the Bishop is dealing with the problem in a secondary way and not from primary investigation. It is a question of the "attitude of heart" as much as structure.

He would understand that the cause of Schism goes deeper than the facts and is due to the breaking of the Divine command to unity. "It is not a historical fact that, whenever a Church or nation has broken off and separated itself by an organic change from the visible communion of the body of Christ, then a similar separation and disruption within itself has been permitted to take place?"ⁱⁱⁱ

If the Bishop is arguing against the position of the Free Church on the

i Wordsworth, C. *Discourse on Scottish Church History*, pp76-77

ii Ibid. pp77-78

iii Ibid. p78

necessity of unity, then he stands on “shifting sands”. If he is to accuse the Presbyterians of schism, then surely the same applied to the Church of his birth, the Church of England. The action of Henry VIII was as much a Schism from Rome as that of the Scottish Reformers. Wordsworth would assert that God’s word allowed it in 1528, should not the same be claimed of 1843? What of the schism caused by Charles Wesley and the subsequent rise of Methodism in England? In his view, schism has occurred most markedly in countries like Scotland, Switzerland, Holland and Germany, where there was a deviation from “Catholic-norm” at the Reformation. Unity in his eyes is contained in Reformed Catholicism and this is where the Presbyterian Church in the ages of Reformed history in Scotland has gone wrong.

“It would seem then, as I have said, to be in accordance with a divine law — and who can question the righteousness of the judgement? — that a body which has broken itself off from the unity of the Church, by a substantial deviation of whatever kind from Catholic rule, should, in God’s own time, be rent and divided as we see the Presbyterian body is at the present day.”ⁱ For Wordsworth there has been a deviation from Catholic principles and the Catholic ministry in the Scottish Church, hence a deviation from Catholic Unity.

In Wordsworth’s understanding of Scottish Church History, what comes out clear is his preconceived ideas about Scotland and Presbyterianism; on top of this he foists his preconceived ideas about unity and catholicity. As we have seen, he holds to the assumption that Anglicanism is the best example of Reformed Catholicism, and that an essential part of this was Establishment. In 1864, the Church of Ireland was disestablished by Act of Parliament and he feared that the next great epoch of the Church would be known as the **Disestablishment** Epoch. Establishment went hand in hand with his belief in unity and it was on the subject of disestablishment that his friendship with W. E. Gladstone was wrecked.

One could question if the views which Wordsworth held so dear could actually be borne out by the facts of history. There was an incredible romance in his soul which is displayed most eloquently in his own words in a passage on the theme of disestablishment. “If a council could be held of the departed spirits . . . a council of those whose memory we all agree to cherish with veneration — from Patrick Forbes and Robert Leighton to Thomas Chalmers and Norman MacLeod — they would have little difficulty in framing such a reconciliation of our existing

i Wordsworth, C. *Discourse on Scottish Church History*, p78

differences as should embrace the true disciples and descendants of them all, little difficulty in showing us how we might be able under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to attain to that greater harmony and co-operation which we must all desire and which would remove all fear of disestablishment; still less can we doubt that they would earnestly exhort us so to do.’ⁱ Wordsworth remained a child of the English establishment with all the advantages and weaknesses of that position.

i Wordsworth, C. *Discourse on Scottish Church History*, p85

CHAPTER 5

Wordsworth and his Critics

«Χαλεπά Τά Καλά»

“All Great and Noble Things are Difficult”ⁱ — Wordsworth

In the *Scottish Guardian* of April 24th 1874 there was printed a letter from Wordsworth to Dean Torry announcing his intention to resign his Bishopric at Whitsuntide, on which the *Guardian* commented: “So far as we can learn from his letter to Dean Torry, the causes operating on the Bishop’s mind are two only: disappointment at the result of his efforts to bring about sounder relations between the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and anxiety arising from the miserable contentions to which the Perth Cathedral has given rise.”ⁱⁱ John Wordsworth says in his biography that the Bishop changed his mind due to the “many urgent solicitations praying him to reconsider his intention” and also to the fact that he “could not with equanimity think of being succeeded by one who might take a party line in opposition to his own.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Wordsworth’s schemes for re-union contained in his synodical addresses, sermons, letters to newspapers, journals, pamphlets and books were certainly controversial. His delivery and style emphasised the convictions which he held and found expression in a demand for action. There were many in Scotland who applauded his pleas for re-union, who looked forward to the day when a United Church would be established on Scottish soil. But there were others who found his words unpalatable and saw in his arguments the widening of the gulf between “Dives” and “Lazarus”.

Within the Episcopal Church there were many who disliked not only Wordsworth himself but also his schemes for re-union as well. There were many

i *Scottish Guardian*, Sept. 2nd 1887, p419

ii *Ibid.* April 24th 1874, p227

iii Wordsworth, J. *Episcopate of Charles Wordsworth*, p204

who would have been content to have seen him resign in 1874 and would have echoed the words of Drummond and Bulloch that “Wordsworth outstayed his welcome”.ⁱ Within the Episcopal Church Wordsworth had little support from the Catholic party but had success with the Protestant wing.

The Forbes family in particular personified the Catholic party and were extremely critical of Wordsworth’s schemes. They were of the “non-juring” tradition and would have little truck with Established Presbyterianism. In addition they regarded Wordsworth’s schemes as lacking in integrity. Doctrinally and liturgically the Episcopal Church had moved a long way since the Revolution Settlement of 1690. The Catholic party were critical of Wordsworth’s ideas because they challenged the doctrine of Episcopal Authority and implied acceptance of Presbyterian ordination. There was also the question of eucharistic doctrine as the Episcopal Church was moving towards acceptance of the doctrine of the “Real Presence” of Christ in the Eucharist. The Catholic wing were opposed to Wordsworth and others who believed that union with the Church of Scotland was possible on the basis of moderate Episcopacy and “who were eager to silence awkward questions that might endanger this great possibility. Others with lower ideals were willing to set doctrinal standards aside in order to win adherents. Charity covered a multitude of sins; so they could console themselves, if their conscience troubled them about the Athanasian Creed, Confirmation, Baptismal Regeneration, prayers for the departed, Eucharistic doctrine and the like.”ⁱⁱ

George Forbes was typical of a school of thought in the Episcopal Church who regarded the re-union schemes as a “sell-out”; they were a betrayal of what the Episcopal Church stood for. They were “nothing less than a darkening of the light of truth and a severing of the nerve of sincerity.” “It seemed to him an outrage on decency to encourage a Presbyterian to ‘join the Episcopal Church’ as the phrase went, on false pretences. He determined that the conspiracy of silence should be broken. This was the original object of the **Panoply** (his own theological periodical): to maintain Church principles in their entirety, and to state the case for them against Geneva and Rome alike.”ⁱⁱⁱ

It is interesting that George’s illustrious brother, Bishop Alexander Forbes of Brechin, had at one point entertained the idea of a possible rapprochement with

i Drummond and Bulloch **Church in Victorian Scotland**, p212

ii Perry, W. **George Hay Forbes**, p106

iii Ibid. p106

Rome — a pursuit which would have been abhorrent to George as much as to Bishop Wordsworth. Bishop Forbes believed that “the Thirty-nine Articles and decrees of the Council of Trent had more in common than the average Roman Catholic or Anglican imagined. The English liturgy, reasonably interpreted, was as Catholic a mode of celebrating the Holy Eucharist as the Roman Mass, while the latter, apart from late rubrics and popular devotions, was as free from the doctrine of transubstantiation as the former. At the Reformation, the Church of England swung too far to the left on non-essentials, as the Roman Church had gone too far to the right.”ⁱ

In an Epistle dedicated to Dr. Pusey, Forbes wrote as a preface to his work **Explanation of the Thirty-Nine Articles**: “In all that I have written, I have had in view the future re-union of the Church. Recognising the providential position of the Anglican Church, as stretching forth one hand to the Protestant bodies, and the other to the Latin and Greek Churches, I have tried to do justice to that position, by acknowledging on the one hand the great necessity for a reform in morals and discipline at the time of the separation, and on the other by minimising the points of dissidence between ourselves and these venerable institutions. It is no longer a question of opinions on either side. The basis of re-union must be on that which is ruled as *de fide*, and of this nothing is to be assumed as such, but the contrary of what is published under anathema. This reduces the difficulty and leaves a wide margin for negotiation and explanation. May God in His good time incline men’s hearts to this, and let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad, for that the wall of partition is broken down.”ⁱⁱ

Towards a scheme for re-union Forbes solicited the assistance of Gladstone, who was extremely sympathetic. However, the promulgation of Papal Infallibility ended any hopes of reconciliation. There would have been little constructive dialogue between Forbes and Wordsworth on the subject of re-union with Rome. Wordsworth in all his writings did his utmost to refute the usurped claims of Rome, which he argued had done so much to reduce Episcopacy to a state of Presbytery, and which had removed all vestige of authority from the Episcopal Office. He disapproved of all the defections to Rome which were manifold at the time. Marion Lochhead wrote of him and other bishops of his class: “These Victorian Bishops are

i Perry, W. **Alexander Penrose Forbes**, p126

ii Ibid. pp131-132

formidable. There was too a constant fear of Rome, because of the surge of conversions or submissions and especially after the restoration of the Roman Hierarchy. There were two forms of Roman fever, a feverish hostility and an excess of admiration. The latter afflicted the cathedral clergy, the Bishop suffered intermittently from the former; and both suffered from bad temper.”ⁱ

At this time, as we have seen, there were others in the Episcopal Church interested in re-union with the Church of Scotland and in the main belonging to the Protestant wing of the Church. Dr. Rorison of Peterhead, in particular, had written an enthusiastic and hopeful letter to Dr. Lee in 1864: “it will strike you with pleasant surprise to be told that so far from being isolated, I am satisfied that I have been the spokesman of a great majority in our Church. Nineteen-twentieths of the laity wish re-union; the southern clergy generally; perhaps half the northern clergy, and (I think) five or six of the bishops. The ultra party are noisy, but not now in the ascendant. Of course I would never pen a line or stir a step in the matter if I did not believe re-union practicable without the slightest disrespect to clergy of the Established Church. Their full recognition as ordained Presbyters is a *sine qua non*. On the other hand, the restoration of a chief Pastorate seems to me not only consistent with Presbytery, but dictated by fidelity to the best and wisest precedents of the Scottish Reformation.”ⁱⁱ Sentiments like these must have gladdened Wordsworth’s heart. However, it is difficult to believe that they were representative of opinion within the Episcopal Church.

Within the Church of Scotland and in the Press some approved of his overtures to unity but the majority were critical of his schemes and in some quarters they were treated with the highest suspicion. Overtures on the necessity of unity in Christ were one thing, to achieve unity in Christ through the unifying force of a particular kind of ecclesiastical polity was another. Many people in the Church of Scotland would have regarded Wordsworth’s insistence on a dogma of the three-fold ministry as narrow and restrictive, and overtures on these grounds as condescending. He did not at all appreciate the fact that Presbytery had worked, and was seen to work, in Scotland as an ecclesiastical system.

Again with the Church of Scotland and as mentioned earlier in this chapter in the section on Episcopalian criticism, there was difficulty in accepting Episcopalian attitudes on worship particularly the doctrine of the Real Presence which was being hammered out by Bishop Alexander Forbes and liturgical and ritualistic practices

i Lochhead, M. *Episcopal Church in the Nineteenth Century*, p147

ii Story, R.H. *Life and Remains of Robert Lee*, Vol.II, p126

encouraged by the advance of the Oxford Movement in the Scottish Church.

John Tulloch of St. Andrews, who had great respect for Wordsworth, also saw Rorison's correspondence with Lee and wrote to him approving of conversations between the interested parties and of the projected conference which (as we have noted earlier) never took place. In one of his letters Tulloch wrote: "I have much sympathy with the faith of Bishop Wordsworth and rejoice in his earnest proclamations of a side of truth wellnigh forgotten in Scotland — the obligation of unity and the weakness of causeless schism. But he is greatly mistaken" (and here Tulloch's emphasis changes) "in supposing there is any tendency to accept his arguments about Episcopacy among any class of the clergy or members of the National Church or even among those not inclined to Episcopacy on other grounds. He would bring us back to a higher dogmatic ground on the subject of Church government and worship, be assured, which has sprung out of general instincts of culture and feelings of moderation that have no connection with any faith in the 'three orders' as a dogma. The historical traditions of Episcopacy — the decency and beauty of its worship, dissatisfaction with the existing state of worship among ourselves — all have had their influence. But the deepest influence of all has been the decay of faith in any divine form of Church government at all in the old dogmatic sense . . . Dr. Wordsworth does not seem to see this, or if he does, he thinks it only a temporary phase of opinion in which, I believe, he is perfectly mistaken; and all his useful, and in many respects admirable charges, are in consequence charges in the air."ⁱ

Tulloch had said that Scottish Episcopacy based itself "upon worn-out dogmas of divine right and special sacramental efficiency."ⁱⁱ Wordsworth, in defence, emphasised that the Episcopal Church was no different from the Church of England doctrinally — a claim which made most Presbyterians suspicious because many did not regard him as being representative of the position of the Episcopal Church. Yet Wordsworth was aware that some quarters in Scottish Episcopacy would have regarded members of the Church of Scotland as un-churched: "the narrowness and bigotry of Scottish Episcopacy, if they exist at all otherwise than as a calumny, do not lie in the Church of which we are members, but in ourselves; and it is not ourselves as individuals that our cause is 'based on'; it is not ourselves that we would seek to recommend, but our Church, and that not for our own sakes,

ⁱ Mrs. Oliphant *Life of John Tulloch*, pp213-214

ⁱⁱ Tulloch, J. *Theological Controversy or The Function of Debate in Theology*

merely or mainly, but for the sake of all.”ⁱ

Wordsworth disliked the phrase *Jus Divinum*; he preferred to say that Episcopacy and in particular the three-fold ministry were of Divine Sanction: “I have certainly said, again and again, that I can see nothing but the hand of God in the early and exclusive universality of the three-fold ministry, coupled with the scriptural precept for universal unity.”ⁱⁱ

In commenting on Tulloch’s argument that Scottish Episcopacy based itself “upon worn-out dogmas of divine right and special sacramental efficiency” Wordsworth is anxious to assert that the “three-fold ministry is the ‘most assured channel of divine grace’ ”ⁱⁱⁱ but “sacramental efficiency” is not just confined to such a ministry. He acknowledged that God’s grace worked in and through Presbyterian orders and it is interesting to note that in the final chapter of this thesis we see Wordsworth moving towards a more conciliatory position.

In his pamphlet “*A Plea for Justice to Presbyterian Students of Theology and to the Scottish Episcopal Church*”, Wordsworth records a series of letters between himself and Principal Tulloch; they are principally on the subject of Richard Hooker and Robert Leighton. Tulloch had said in his address “*On the Study of the Confession of Faith*” at the opening of the session of St. Mary’s College, St. Andrews 1865: “There can be no doubt that Leighton had no faith in Episcopacy, in the modern dogmatic sense in which, with a strange blindness to the real signs of the times, it has been once more urged upon the adoption of the Church of Scotland. Like Hooker and many other enlightened divines of the Church of England, he simply regarded it as the best ecclesiastical organisation, historically considered, and in this sense he attached himself to it and defended it.”^{iv} Wordsworth said of Tulloch’s use of these two great divines: “But when the authority not only of one of our most celebrated Scotch bishops, but of one of the greatest of the great English divines, is produced to justify a theory which I cannot but consider, and more than once have publicly undertaken to prove, radically, because scripturally, unsound, I do not feel at liberty to remain silent when it is in my power, I believe, to show that neither of these authorities, but especially the

i Wordsworth, C.

“*A Plea for Justice to Presbyterian Students of Theology*”, p31

ii Ibid. p32

iii Ibid. p33

iv Tulloch, J. *Theological Controversy or The Function of Debate in Theology*, p19

greater of the two, when thoroughly examined, will be found such as an ordinary reader of the Principal's address would be led to suppose."ⁱ

In the pamphlet there are seven letters by Wordsworth and four replies by Tulloch, all of which amounts to a very lengthy disputation. It certainly exhausted Tulloch, who eventually withdrew from correspondence on the subject. Wordsworth principally objected to the fact that Tulloch had used only these two authorities to support the view that Episcopacy or the three-fold ministry "is not binding as a Divine Ordinance".ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth provided many quotations from Hooker's works to prove that he had believed that there had always been three orders of ministry from Apostolic times in the Church, that Episcopal Government was the only polity. He had not read Leighton's *Paraenesis* but quoted Grub's *History*: "His (Leighton's) belief was that the Episcopate, as an order distinct from the Presbyterate, had continued in the Church since the days of Apostles; that the world had everywhere received the Christian religion from bishops; and that parity among clergymen had never been heard of before the middle of the preceding century, when it was set up rather by accident than design."ⁱⁱⁱ Wordsworth followed Leighton when he said "Well, then, if all of you preach to the times, you may surely allow one poor brother to preach Christ Jesus and eternity."^{iv}

Dr. Tulloch in his answer to Wordsworth's first letter attacks the theory of divine origin of Episcopacy: "But to suppose that Hooker believed in the divine origin of Episcopacy in Bishop Wordsworth's sense, as claiming any exclusive divine right, or any special sacramental efficiency, as dogmatically revealed or instituted for the government of the Church in all time — the very sense in which Rutherford and other Westminster divines regarded Presbytery — is not only consistent (in my judgement) with the fundamental principles expounded in his first book, upon which all Hooker's detailed reasoning rests, but with the special occasion which gave rise directly to his great work."^v Little constructive development came out of the debate as both men were of the same opinion at the end of the correspondence as they were at the beginning.

i *The Scotsman*, Dec. 2 1865, p7

ii Ibid.

iii Grub, G. *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, p237

iv Butler, I. *Life and Letters of Robert Leighton*, p147

v *The Scotsman*, Dec. 4 1865, p6

In his final letter Tulloch penned a rather interesting comment on Wordsworth's position and that of the Episcopal Church: "If I have misrepresented you or others in saying that Scottish Episcopacy takes more extreme ground than Hooker, I am sorry that I have done so. I should be glad indeed to think that Scottish Episcopalians, or Presbyterians either, were content to rest their ecclesiastical claims upon the principles of Hooker's great work. At the same time, I believe that I could show good cause for anything I have said both in the statements of Scottish Episcopalians and in the practical attitude of the Scottish Episcopal communion."ⁱ

Another prominent Presbyterian critic of Wordsworth's schemes was Dr R.H. Story who, like Tulloch, challenged the dogma of "three-fold" ministry. He wrote: "The tendency of Scottish Episcopacy has been in the direction of Dr. Wordsworth's impracticable dogmatism which, while professing a desire for union, has held out as the only condition of it, concessions which the Church of Scotland could not make. Much that touched national sentiment, and long-cherished prepossessions, might be surrendered for the sake of unity; but men cannot unite at the sacrifice of what they believe to be the truth, or through the acceptance of what in their argument is falsehood. If the Church of England and her representatives in Scotland cannot return to the wise and comprehensive policy of earlier times, recognising the validity of Scottish orders, and treating the question of Church government as a subject of reasonable argument, and not of inflexible dogma, then union is hopeless, and its blessings can never be realised."ⁱⁱ

Most of Bishop Wordsworth's Presbyterian critics found it impossible to accept that the three-fold order of ministry was explicit in the pages of the New Testament. In Wordsworth's pamphlet "*Prospects of Reconciliation between Presbytery and Episcopacy*" (1882) he devotes ten pages to a critique of lectures which had been delivered by Dr. Spratt on the subject of Ordination to theological students. Dr. Spratt had "cut deep" into Wordsworth's position on the essential nature of the ministry being three-fold in order and had questioned the assumption that only Bishops were successors to the Apostles in ministry. Dr. Spratt had said that: "Presbyters are the successors of the Apostles in all ordinary

i Wordsworth, C.

"*A Plea for Justice to Presbyterian Students of Theology*", p55
(Letter dated St Andrews Jan. 13 1866 — original not available but reprinted op. cit.)

ii Story, R.H. **Life and Remains of Robert Lee**, Vol. II pp134-135

functions of the ministry and this excludes the claim of Prelates to ordain as an Order above Presbyters, leaving them only the same power to ordain as that which belongs to all who are admitted to the Presbyterate.”ⁱ Dr. Sprott then developed his argument to show that there were only two orders of ministry not three, explicit in the Scriptures. Ignoring the position of the Church of England on ministry Sprott argued that “All the Reformed Churches held that there are only two orders in the ministry of Divine appointment — those of Bishop or Presbyter, and Deacon.”ⁱⁱ He believed that the first of these was instructed by Christ Himself when He commissioned the eleven Apostles, and for this reason we read of no separate instruction of this office as in the case of the Diaconate. In Acts chapter vi we read of the origins of the Diaconate and from this Sprott argued that the form of Church government was complete as to its essential features and he would question whether any single Apostle had power to set up a new Office. However, perhaps in concession to the position of Wordsworth Dr. Sprott did recognise that “There are traces of Superintendency in Scripture apart from that of the Apostles, as in the case of Timothy and Titus, and the frank acknowledgement of this should be made alike in the interests of Truth and of Christian reunion.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In contrast to Dr. Sprott another Scots divine Dr. Cunningham, who had an eye to a more popular audience than to Dr. Sprott’s theological students, had said of Wordsworth’s re-union schemes in his Lee Lecture delivered in St. Giles, Edinburgh in 1887 that: “Nine tenths of the Protestant population would be dead against it”^{iv} and in an even more general assumption he said that: “Bishop Wordsworth does not understand that Scotchmen are as devoted to their Presbytery as Englishmen are to their Episcopacy.”^v

When Wordsworth delivered his charges, he at every opportunity took issue either in support of, or in criticism of, the leading Scottish Divines of the day, not so much in order to force them out into the arena, but to try to create as much common ground as possible. And, as we have already noted, he did find much encouragement in occasional statements of men like Principal P.C. Campbell of

i Sprott, G.W. *Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland*, pp187-188

ii Ibid. p188

iii Ibid. p188

iv Cunningham, G. *Lee Lecture for 1887 Is a Union of the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches Possible? If not, is Federation?* p11

v Ibid. p11

Aberdeen, Lord Kinloch, Principal Tulloch of St. Andrews, Dr. R. Wallace of Old Greyfriars, Dr. MacGregor of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, Principal Cunningham of St. Andrewsⁱ and in the postscript of his pamphlet "*Plea for Uniformity in Ministry of the Church*" there is a catena of quotations in support of his schemes. The Press in some quarters wrote favourably on his behalf: "What shall we think of an Episcopalian Bishop paving a way for the Union of Episcopacy and Presbyterianism? . . . Let no one laugh at this as an impossibility, for causes are in operation sufficient to produce it — **Elgin Courant**."ⁱⁱ Such sentiments would have sounded pleasant to Bishop Wordsworth's ear but such a provincial production as the **Elgin Courant** could hardly be thought of as being representative of the Scottish Press. Yet it is possible that the **Courant** did not stand alone.

Not all comment in the Press, however, was favourable. Wordsworth delivered to Synod on 28th September 1864 a Charge called "*The Principles of 'Episcopalians' as a basis of Christian Union*", and the alacrity with which the Press criticised his address shows the interest in his endeavours. The Charge and the newspaper replies were printed in full in the **Scottish Guardian** in October and November 1864.

In the Free Church **Daily Review** of Monday, October 10th we read: "The Bishop rather favours the idea of union, but it is much in the fashion of the Pope, who would gladly embrace us all, Prelatists, Presbyterians, and Sectaries, if we would only come to his paternal arms, in terms of his own invitation admitting him to be altogether right, and ourselves altogether wrong. The Bishop makes no mystery of his expectations, for he says that 'the only legitimate way to effect 'intercommunion' between the Established Church and the Episcopalian is by 'restoring' to the former its original 'clerical organisation' "ⁱⁱⁱ

The article continued by alluding to the fact that this meant an unscriptural and indefensible move in Presbyterians submitting to Episcopacy: "Does the amiable Bishop fancy that such a proposal will be accepted, or even seriously thought of, by the Scottish people? We can venture to assure him that the hope of such a result is entirely delusive."^{iv} This is followed by a criticism of Wordsworth

i Preface to *Prospects of Reconciliation between Presbytery and Episcopacy*", **Public Appeals**, Vol.II, p572

ii Preface to "*Response of Episcopalians to Moderator's Appeal*", **Public Appeals**, Vol.II, p390

iii **Daily Review**, Oct. 10 1864, p6

iv *Ibid.* p6.

for depending too heavily on the tradition of the Fathers and not enough upon the Word of God, perhaps an unfair comment in the light of the vast amount of Scriptural study explicit in the address and in two previous tracts “*Unity a Divine Law of Universal Obligation*” 1856 and “*Provision for Observance of Law of Unity*” 1856. Wordsworth, in a letter of defence, notes that the **Daily Review** omitted several columns of his tract.

On the 29th September 1864 in the columns of the **Glasgow Herald** further interesting comment appeared on the subject of Wordsworth’s Charge. The **Herald**, which could be said to be the newspaper most representative of Scottish opinion, printed the following: “There is just as much evidence of Communism as of Episcopacy having existed in the Apostolic Church, but if Communism was ever practised, it soon ceased to be so; and Dr. Wordsworth we should think would not advocate its restoration.”ⁱ The **Herald** also pointed out that the Greek word ἐπίσκοπος in the Scriptures can be interpreted as Bishop or Presbyter.

Although most of the press were in agreement on the topic, the **Dundee Advertiser** of September 30th did strike a chord in favour of the Bishop when it said that he “has for this been made a butt for the envenomed shafts of bigotry; his motives have been misconstrued; his aspirations derided: and his arguments held up to ridicule in some papers by anonymous correspondents wanting alike in his learning and his kindliness of heart.”ⁱⁱ

Some years previous to Wordsworth’s aforementioned Charge, Bishop Lightfoot in a work called “*Epistle to the Philippians*” had written a “*Dissertation on the Christian Ministry*” which Presbyterians were holding up in support of their system. Wordsworth wrote a critique of Lightfoot’s work in his book **Some Remarks on Bishop Lightfoot’s Dissertation on the Christian Ministry** in which he justified his position. He was perhaps afraid of something like the “*Dissertation*” because he thought of it as a stab in the back. His worst suspicions were confirmed in a letter of the Moderator of the General Assembly on June 27th 1879 to the **Scottish Guardian**: The “Scriptures furnish no evidence of a three-fold hierarchy. We only read of two orders of ministers — Bishops or Presbyters, and Deacons; and are we wrong in saying that the present Bishop of Durham has made it plain that, during the first century, there was no such Church organisation as is now advocated?”ⁱⁱⁱ

Characteristic again of the Presbyterian position are the words of the Rev Dr

i **Glasgow Herald** Sept. 29 1864 p2

ii **Dundee Advertiser** Sept. 30 1864

iii **Scottish Guardian** June 27 1879 p316

Caird in **Good Words** for July 1863: “I do not believe that there is to be found in the Bible any prescribed and definite Church polity, any form of Church government rigidly and unalterably stereotyped for all future ages. I am persuaded that whilst the great truths on which the existence of the Church is based are immutable and everlasting, as the infinite mind from which they emanated, yet that the forms of worship, and arrangements of government and discipline, under which these truths are to be propagated and professed, have been by the great Head of the Church left indeterminate and flexible.”ⁱ

Wordsworth could not accept this view because he believed the Church had never accepted it. He was undaunted in his position, convinced that all great and noble things are difficult.

What had been true in the first half of the nineteenth century about the drift to the Episcopal Church because of the standards of worship in the Church of Scotland was not true in the second half. This is proof that the work of Robert Lee had not been in vain, for the Church of Scotland had adopted many of the practices suggested by Lee in his **Reform of the Church of Scotland**. In addition to this, we have noted that Bishop Forbes’s teaching had defined more clearly the difference between the Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church.

It is true, however, that many found Episcopacy more acceptable on the grounds of practicality. In a letter to Dr. Rorison in December 1864 Tulloch wrote: “My own conviction is that as a Church, we will draw nearer to Episcopacy unless some crisis overtakes us; but it will be entirely on practical grounds and to secure practical objects — more reality of ecclesiastical superintendence, more propriety and order in worship. The acknowledgement of Bishops as a divine power above Presbyters is, so far as I can see, a notion that has utterly died out of the Scottish mind, save in so much as sections of it here and there have been influenced by the teachings of your Church.

If the teaching of your Church and its cherished traditions permitted your abandoning the dogmatic ground and coming forth to meet us on such principles as Leighton proposed, I shall not think the idea of a re-union utterly impracticable. But you will excuse me saying that I have not seen any such tendency in your Church. The tendency, I fear, during the last twenty years, has been in the opposite direction, which I have deeply regretted.”ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth was criticised by some for believing that reform of worship in the

i **Good Words** 1863 p527

ii Mrs. Oliphant **Memoirs of Principal Tulloch**, p214

Church of Scotland meant a step in the direction of Episcopacy: “If Presbyterians should like to attend Episcopalian worship then it is because they prefer the services offered and may be ‘ambitious to go to heaven in fashionable company’ (*Glasgow Herald*, September 20th 1864). However, the *Herald* expressed willingness to listen to the argument from expediency: “We look upon forms of Church government as means to a end — the end, namely, of making the people good Christians. So soon, therefore, as Dr. Wordsworth can prove that Episcopacy is a better means to this end, so soon may he expect Presbyterians to accept it. But this is precisely what Dr. Wordsworth cannot and does not attempt to prove. As it is, there is something almost ludicrous in his attempt to induce the people of Scotland, who have had long experience both of Prelacy and Presbyterianism, to throw aside the form which they find working so well, and so completely to their satisfaction, and to adopt in its stead the ecclesiastical system of the Church of England — and this at the every moment when that system is betraying its inefficiency by the incompetency of its ‘Convocations’ and its inability to thrust out men who are teaching doctrines at variance with the Standards of the Church.”ⁱ

We have seen that it was central to Wordsworth’s argument that Episcopacy as the form of Church polity was explicit in the Scriptures as the will of God and it was this polity which facilitated the best growth in faith and in holiness. Dr. W.R. Pirie of Aberdeen in his Moderatorial Address took issue with Wordsworth on this point in 1864 with particular reference to Wordsworth’s section on “Faith and Holiness” contained in his appeal entitled “*The ‘Principles of Episcopalianism’ as a basis of Christian Union*”. “To put the means on the same footing as the end, and to assume that the Supreme Being loves not faith and holiness developed under a special organisation of Church government, appears to us, apart from any other considerations, to strike at fundamental principles on the security of which the very superstructure of Christian religion depends.”ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth’s answer to this was that we must follow the truth, and the truth can be discerned in matters of practice and in matters of belief: “We ‘must all speak the same thing’, yes, . . . we must ‘all’ in endeavour at least ‘be of one mind’. It is ‘truth’ alone, by which, if it makes us free, ‘we shall be free indeed’, as it is the truth alone which can make us one. There may be some ‘who confound their own theories with God’s truths.’ ”ⁱⁱⁱ

i *Glasgow Herald*, September 29 1864, p2

ii Dr Pirie *Moderatorial Address 1864* pp15-16

iii Wordsworth, C. *A Plea for Justice to Presbyterian Students of Theology*”, p15

Episcopacy must be able to offer more to Presbytery than Presbytery had to offer to Episcopacy: Wordsworth was convinced of this; and in a Conference of Clergy and Laity at Perth in 1868 he summarised his understanding of Faith and Worship: "We have to offer something more, and, as we believe, something better and more Scriptural in all respects; a better worship, because resting upon better authority, better security for its propriety and reverence; a better ministry, both on other accounts (such as its priority, its universality) and because more congenial to the graduated orders of society in a monarchical state; a better doctrine, because more truly evangelical in the unlimited offer of the Redemption which Christ has wrought, not for a privileged or predestined few, but for all mankind. We have to offer the holy cycle of the Christian year, varied by due commemoration of the most remarkable events in the life of Our Blessed Lord. We have to offer Episcopal Confirmation, according as the Scripture teaches and the Apostles practised it. We have to offer the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ to the sick and dying; and to mourners for the dead a ministration of interment at once most solemn, most edifying and most soothing, because not unaccompanied with the expression of Christian hope."ⁱ

i Meredith, W.M. "*Unity between Presbyterians and Episcopalians in Scotland*", pp7-8

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Manus ad clavum — oculus ad coelum
*veritas in caritate — unitas in veritate*ⁱ

Early in the morning of 5th December 1892, Bishop Charles Wordsworth passed to his rest at St. Andrews. He was buried in the grounds of the ruined medieval Cathedral, the first Prelate to be buried there since Archbishop Stewart, cousin of Mary Queen of Scots.

It is interesting to compare the funerals of Charles Wordsworth and Alexander Penrose Forbes. At Wordsworth's funeral there was a vast gathering of mourners amongst whom were the city authorities and other public bodies, yet strangely enough the University which a few years previously had conferred a Doctorate of Divinity on the Bishop, made no official recognition of the event. In contrast, at Forbes's funeral, six thousand people passed into his house "to take a last look at the face of the most beloved Scottish Bishop at least since the Reformation."ⁱⁱ

In many ways the type of people who attended the respective funerals of these two Bishops was reflective of their work. Wordsworth in the main had moved amongst the upper echelons of Scottish society whereas Forbes, for the most part, dedicated his life in the service of those living in the urban squalor of Dundee.

Forbes without doubt was a pastor to all whereas Wordsworth's Episcopate was spent for the greater part in ecumenical efforts which were only acknowledged by certain intellectual strata within Scottish society. However, it is interesting to read some of the eulogies which were written in **The Scottish Guardian** following Wordsworth's death. In the edition of December 9th 1892 the article speaks of Wordsworth attempting to bring about "a union between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism in Scotland. Of the earnestness and ability with which he sought this end there can be no question. How far he has really influenced either side it is

i Inscription on Wordsworth's grave curbing

ii Perry, W. **Alexander Penrose Forbes**, p166

not easy to guess. Some maintain that the remarkable document recently issued by Dr. Milligan, Dr. Boyd and other leading Presbyterians, and published in *The Scotsman* on Thursday, October 20th,ⁱ is an outcome of the labours of Bishop Wordsworth in this direction. If this be the case, it is undoubtedly a tribute to his powers; but it still remains questionable whether, for the present, even this document can be said to be likely to bring about a rapprochement and many of the Bishop's sincerest admirers and friends, including the Dean of his own Diocese, Dean Rorison, have expressed their doubts as to its having been the effect of the Bishop's well-meant and prolonged endeavours."ⁱⁱ

Wordsworth himself had written to *The Scotsman* on 15th October an *Apologia pro vita sua* in which he said: "I can remember the day when my uncle, William Wordsworth, was told again and again that he was living in a fool's paradise if he expected his poetry to be read" and he quotes Hartley Coleridge:

'There dwelt beside the untrodden ways
To Rydal Mount that lead,
A bard whom there was none to praise
And very few to read.'

"These and such like sayings and prophecies, repeated more or less emphatically during forty years, I have lived to see thoroughly falsified; and I am not without hope that the day will come, in God's good time, when similar sayings respecting my own very different life and work in Scotland will be found equally untrue."ⁱⁱⁱ

Dr. Cooper of the East Parish Church, Aberdeen (who it should be noted was not a typical Presbyterian) said of Wordsworth in his address the Sunday after the funeral: "To my thinking, Bishop Wordsworth's aim was the noblest to which any Churchman in our modern Scotland could devote himself: and certainly he pursued it in no unworthy spirit — with no selfish or sectarian ends, with unfailing courtesy, with rare candour and wonderful perseverance — through good report and bad report; with unswerving singleness of heart; with hope undying, because it rested on the word of Christ and trusted in the power of the Holy Ghost. It must be confessed, indeed, that Bishop Wordsworth took some time to apprehend the situation. I do not know that, even to the last, he realised the theological strength of our position, but he clearly saw the historical conditions which, in Scotland, had

i cf *Scottish Guardian*, Oct. 28th 1892, p576

New Presbyterian Church Society

ii *Scottish Guardian*, Dec. 9th 1892, p665

iii *Scottish Guardian*, Oct. 28th 1892, p577

made a Presbyterian Establishment, we may say, inevitable. He was a typical Englishman, and he had an Englishman's difficulty in understanding us. But he laboured to learn, with the result that he was finally prepared for a union with us on terms which, if others would concede them, I do not see that we should have any right or reason to decline. His removal is a great loss to us. We cannot, it is true, complain that a life prolonged to eighty-six years has been too short but we ought to bear in mind that, for Churches no less than for individuals, there is a possibility of losing golden opportunities. Bishop Wordsworth has been called away without seeing any tangible result of his labours."ⁱ However, it should be noted that Wordsworth's successor in the See of St. Andrews, Bishop G.H. Wilkinson, also laboured in the cause of re-union, and that he continued the dialogue with prominent men in the Church of Scotland.

Charles Wordsworth could be said to be one of the founder members of the modern Ecumenical movement in Scotland. He in many ways was labouring against overwhelming odds. Most Scotsmen had a natural aversion to Episcopacy which was no less perhaps than that voiced by Dr. Story: who wrote that Episcopacy "having no longer any sympathy with and, except in few cases, any knowledge of its own historical ancestry, it is essentially an alien on Scottish soil; and in any of the great movements of thought, whether theological or political, exercises but little influence."ⁱⁱ Other commentators were more scathing. The Editor of *The Edinburgh Evening Courant*, commenting on Wordsworth's Charge to Synod on Christian Union in 1864, said that: his 'proofs' "on which he relies are little better than a tissue of illogical fallacies and traditional assumptions from beginning to end."ⁱⁱⁱ

Perhaps such an accusation of being illogical was not completely unfounded. Admirable as his schemes for the proposed new church were, there was a very basic and essential omission in logic on Wordsworth's part — this was the question of validity of Presbyterian orders. Central to Wordsworth's scheme was that, in the New Church, existing ministers of the Established Church were to be accepted as lawful ministers of the Episcopal Church but no similar irregularity was to be condoned for the future. Wordsworth believed that Episcopacy was a divine institution not a human one. How then could his view of this concession to

i *Scottish Guardian*, December 16th 1892, p682

ii Wordsworth, C. *A Discourse on Scottish Church History*, p21

iii *Scottish Guardian*, November 1864, p504

Presbyterian orders be included with his belief in the divine nature of Episcopacy? This discussion was investigated in an article entitled “*An English Estimate of the Life and Work of the late Bishop of St. Andrews*” in the **Scottish Guardian**, December 16th 1892: “Episcopacy is either of divine or of human institution, what right has a Church to waive it *pro hac vice* — to make an exception, that is, in an ordinance of God — without any authority from Him to make it? If, on the other hand, Episcopacy is of human institution, it may be suspended or abrogated when circumstances seem to demand it. It is impossible to conceive a more imperative instance of such a demand than is to be found in Scotland. The nation is Presbyterian, by history, by habit, by conviction. To the great body of the people, Episcopacy is an alien and distasteful system, and, so long as the Episcopal Church remains Episcopal, the chances of any union between it and the Established Church are infinitesimally small. On what ground, therefore, can Episcopalians pretend to force their theory of Church government upon their unwilling countrymen? Only, so far as we can see, on the ground that Episcopacy is ordained by God, and so cannot be set aside by man. Nothing short of this will justify the maintenance of an institution which offers an insurmountable barrier to the restoration of Christian union.”ⁱ

Wordsworth in his pamphlet “*The Case of Non-Episcopal Ordination Fairly Considered*” argued that there was spiritual grace in Presbyterian Orders: “We do not doubt that the Holy Ghost works the conversion of souls to God in and through your ministry. It would, in our judgement, be sinful to doubt this. Wherever there is godliness there must be grace and the author of it.”ⁱⁱ At the Diocesan Synod in 1888, he referred to the Lambeth Conference. Wordsworth hoped that he could achieve a more conciliatory attitude by the Anglican Communion towards Reunion proposals, especially by soliciting assistance from the American Episcopal Church which in 1887 had adopted four points towards re-union; these were: (a) “The Holy Scriptures as the rule and ultimate standard of faith, (b) The Apostles’ Creed as the Baptismal Symbol, and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith, (c) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself, (d) The historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and people called of God into the unity of His Church.”ⁱⁱⁱ

i **Scottish Guardian**, December 16th 1892, p687

ii Wordsworth, C. “*Case of non-Episcopal Orders Fairly Considered*”, p10

iii **Scottish Guardian**, August 31st 1888, p415

Wordsworth sat on a Committee whose remit was to prepare a statement on Unity; in addition to the above slightly altered text, there was added another resolution: "It has earnestly requested the constituted authorities of the various branches of our communion to make it known that they hold themselves in readiness to enter into brotherly conference with the representatives of other chief Christian communions in the English-speaking races, in order to consider what steps can be taken, either towards corporate re-union, or towards such relations as may prepare the way for fuller organic unity hereafter."ⁱ

Further to this, the committee recommended: "That, in the opinion of this committee, conferences such as we have recommended, are likely to be fruitful, under God's blessing, of practical result only if undertaken with willingness on behalf of the Anglican Communion, while holding firmly the three-fold order of the ministry as the normal rule of the Church to be observed in the future — to recognise in spite of what we must conceive as irregularity, the ministerial character of those ordained in non-Episcopal communions through whom, as ministers, it has pleased God visibly to work for the salvation of souls, and the advancement of His kingdom; and to provide, in such way as may be agreed upon, for the acceptance of such ministers as fellow-workers with us in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ."ⁱⁱ

This last resolution was not carried by the Conference. Wordsworth himself would like to have seen a differentiation in "non-Episcopal Communion" between those who professed to derive ministerial character from "above" and those from "below". Obviously he was more interested in the former qualification as that would have made negotiations with the Church of Scotland easier.

Wordsworth in this address to his Synod appears to have mellowed in his attitude towards Presbyterian orders from his previous stance: "I can well believe that one reason why we have no express command for Episcopal ordination, either from Christ himself or from His Apostles, is because He foresaw that occasions and periods might occur in the history of His church in which it might be desirable to suspend that law."ⁱⁱⁱ In addition to this, he cites quotations from Hooker, Andrewes, Bramhall and Cosin to show that this is quite acceptable. This certainly was not a "U-turn" in Wordsworth's policy but a "last ditch" attempt to encourage reconciliation. In his Charge to Synod in 1892, Wordsworth records that

i *Scottish Guardian*, August 31st 1888, p415

ii *Ibid.* p415

iii *Ibid.* p416

Dr. Charteris in his Moderatorial Address at the General Assembly in 1892 seems to have noticed this change in emphasis and used it to confirm the Presbyterian position: "Look at history, God's spirit was given to Gentiles and the claim for previous generations had to give way . . . Even so, God's Spirit is given to Presbyterians, and the exclusive claims of Episcopal succession must give way . . . The venerable Episcopal Bishop who has so long and with such generous purpose laboured among us to reconcile us to Episcopacy, says in one of his last publications that he now feels the force of this argument and, when he sees the work of God among his Presbyterian neighbours, can no longer press Episcopacy upon us in the same way as of old. It is well that, even thus late, Dr. Wordsworth comes to the true position."ⁱ

Later in his Charge, Wordsworth mentions the possible threat of disestablishment in Scotland, the coming of which he believed would bring a greater evil — Home Rule for Scotland and a consequent weakening of the ties with England. At the same time, Wordsworth applauded the tremendous change which he had seen in the Church of Scotland; he read into this a movement towards greater catholicity.

"What a wonderful change" he wrote, "do we see wrought for the improvement of Presbyterianism during the last twenty years — a change in which the working of God's hand may be plainly traced! For instance, we see in the writings of Dr. Milligan the treatment of theology in a Catholic spirit, as remote from the spirit of the Puritan divines of the seventeenth century as light from darkness. We see in the publications of the "Church Service Society" an honest and successful endeavour to reconstruct the worship and ritual of Presbytery upon principles similar to those which guided the Reformers of the Church of England. We see in the liturgical researches of Dr. Sprott the fruit of learned and conscientious study, which cannot fail to issue in sounder and more comprehensive views upon the same subject. How different is all this from the time, earlier in the century, when, as Dr. Robert Lee informed us, the reading of Holy Scripture had almost died out in public worship; and when, as Dr. MacGregor reminded his hearers in the last General Assembly, a Presbytery had been known to forbid the use of the Lord's Prayer as being Popish. But this is not all. God has made use of eminent Presbyterians themselves — such as the late Principal C. Campbell of Aberdeen, the late Dr. Robert Lee, the late Principal Tulloch, and four at least of living Moderators, including Dr. Charteris himself — to lead the minds of

i *Scottish Guardian*, October 7th 1892, p495

thoughtful and intelligent members of their Church to see the defects of their system and to point the way to reconstruction upon a firmer, more Scriptural, and more Catholic basis: a basis which shall meet the requirements of the present age in dealing with the problems which call for solution at home and shall at the same time remove the obstacle which our separations present to the propagation of the Gospel among the heathen.’ⁱ

It is unfortunate that Wordsworth did not expound more fully his argument on worship. Much more could have been said about the advantages of liturgical worship, daily or weekly eucharists, the liturgical year, liturgical prayer and private devotion, common prayer, eucharistic theology and its relationship to the Church, and the wealth of tradition in music within the Episcopal Church. It is true that this was wanting in the Presbyterian church of his time at least until the advent of Robert Lee, yet it is also true that these omissions still in many cases apply today and that this is something which the Episcopal Church can offer in the contemporary ecumenical debate. In many parts of Scotland within the various strands of Presbyterianism, worship for congregations is through the medium of the ‘ear’ and there is little expression in worship through the other senses. There is still an imbalance within Scottish worship towards the intellectual. This is particularly true within the Free Church where congregational participation in worship outside ‘psalm singing’ is at a minimum. Wordsworth could have argued quite strongly on behalf of the emotional and sensual concepts in worship. Most people are drawn to a particular church because of worship not by erudite arguments on ecclesiastical polity.

As well as asserting the antiquity of Episcopacy from the Scriptures, the Early Church and Reformation divines, Wordsworth could have enlarged his argument on expediency by including the practical advantages of the Episcopal office. Bishops in Scotland have almost universally been regarded as ‘faceless ecclesiastics’ or ‘tyrannical prelates’. A detailed argument on the benefits of a bishop as a *pastor pastorum* would have been helpful to many who read his pamphlets. In the eventualities of crisis, pastoral problems or even simple advice, it is very helpful for a pastor to be able to turn to a Bishop for advice. When a minister is working in an isolated, or lonely situation, it is often helpful to know that a Bishop can be a real ‘Father-in-God’ or an ‘*Anam Charaid*’ⁱⁱ in the Columban sense. There are many Presbyterian ministers who would welcome such a system.

i *Scottish Guardian*, October 7th 1892, p498

ii Gaelic — soul-friend

Although Wordsworth argued for the adoption of the three-fold ministry, the crux of this for most Scotsmen was whether Bishops could be acceptable or not. Wordsworth's appeal was too academic and above the heads of most people in the pews. His overtures were for academic circles. Ecumenism, if it is ever to grip the mind of the ordinary Christian, must come from beneath, not from above; it must 'come out' of a working together at the local level.

Although Wordsworth spent the greater part of his life in Scotland, and most of that time was spent in schemes for re-union and in study of Scottish tradition and history, he never really understood his adopted country. He had little conception of the ethos of Scottish Episcopalianism yet I will concede that this is a difficult thing to comprehend. He certainly had no sympathy with the 'non-Jurors' or those in that vein amongst his contemporaries. Nowhere does he expand the advantages of parity within the Scottish Episcopate with a Chairman Bishop who is '*Primus-inter-Pares*' amongst his colleagues. This is surprising considering that there was much discussion at that time on the question of revival of metropolitanical titles either of Glasgow or St. Andrews. It is interesting that with much discussion at present within the Episcopal Church on the subject of the two-hundredth anniversary of Bishop Seabury's Consecration at Aberdeen in 1784, there is much debate about the ethos of Scottish Episcopalianism.

It was one of Wordsworth's faults that he did not just pursue re-union in Scotland but also concurrently argued for a United Church for a United Kingdom — and to many Scotsmen this would be entirely unacceptable. It would have been regarded as "Anglican Imperialism" as Ian Henderson wrote in his book **Power Without Glory**. There are many within the Episcopal Church not only then but now who would detest the idea of "Anglican Imperialism" quite as much as a good Scots Presbyterian.

The Bishop should have argued more profoundly on the concept of Episcopacy within a national indigenous church in Scotland. Episcopacy is just as indigenous to Scotland as Presbytery. This of course is at the crux of the matter in the discussion on the ethos of Scottish Episcopalianism. The Episcopal Church in Scotland, like the Presbyterian Established Church, has its origin from within the Reformed Church of Scotland and not Anglicanism, although, since 1690, there has been a steady assimilation of Anglicanism into her structures. Scottish Episcopacy is part of universal Catholicism; in order for her to contribute to any scheme of re-union within Scotland she cannot always be 'looking over her shoulder' to the Church of England; her true ecumenical role in Scotland will be when she will be understood as being an indigenous church, yet in communion with many churches in the

world within and without Anglicanism. Perhaps then the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference of 1888 will come to effect, namely that Episcopacy and Presbytery in Scotland will unite, finding their own style of national Episcopacy, in a new United Church. Both churches have so much to offer one another, and Wordsworth was certainly not unaware of the potential. Without doubt, Wordsworth's proposals for the new Church could be of considerable value in the future.

When we look back at the Episcopate of this man, how much, we can ask, was he a Reconciler or a Controversialist? There would be no dispute I think when evaluating the work of Charles Wordsworth that he was more a controversial figure than a reconciler. He was certainly the first Bishop of the Episcopal Church since 1690 to advocate re-union and that fact alone made him a figure of controversy. In addition his controversial position was exaggerated by his appearing on the Scottish scene when the Church of Scotland was under pressure in the post-Disruption years. Wordsworth questioned, and questioned in depth, and challenged the Presbyterian Establishment on its position within Scotland. His appeals were not hastily written but were written with an incredible amount of preparation and in a style which could do no other than evoke response.

As a Reconciler, Wordsworth did much in opening the debate on re-union at a time when there was great disunity in Church life. His writings and addresses did much to clear a lot of misunderstanding and mistrust. He was always seen to be offering the hand of friendship and there can be no doubt that he was honest in his intentions. He certainly inspired many people to think about the value of Episcopacy if not the possibility of re-union. He was often seen as one who was offering something constructive — a way forward through all the ecclesiastical "skirmishing" of his day.

In the *Scottish Guardian* of July 30th 1886, there was printed a short critique of his Appeals: "During the last thirty years, there has been a great and undoubted abatement of prejudice and narrowness in Scotland; an insensible and gradual crumbling away of the once hard and insuperable partition walls; a general broadening of views; and an acknowledgement of the desirability, if not the duty, of re-union on a wider basis than Presbyterianism. No-one can doubt that Bishop Wordsworth's pen has been a powerful factor in the working of this great change."

The effect of Wordsworth's Appeals could be best summed up in the words of

the editorial in **The Scottish Guardian** of September 29th 1882, which commented on his Charge "*Prospects of Reconciliation*" given at the Diocesan Synod on September 19th 1882: "Do we mean that such Charges as that just given by the Bishop of St. Andrews are wasted efforts? By no means. The learned and conscientious advocacy of a great cause can never be urged wholly in vain. It will not produce an immediate and popular effect; but it will impress the thoughtful and studious few and may tend to form and educate, some strong mind which may, at the right juncture, be the instrument which may give a certain direction to the action of a whole nation. Scotchmen in general may scarcely care now to give much attention to Bishop Wordsworth when he, with erudition and close reasoning, advocates our cause, but for all that, he may be helping to form the John Knox of the future movement for a return of the people of Scotland to the Church of their fathers."ⁱ

Charles Wordsworth was a controversial figure to the end. But his greatest love was not controversy but reconciliation; to which he dedicated his life. But that task waits on the future for fulfilment.

i **Scottish Guardian**, September 29th 1882, p464

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