THE CHURCH OF IRELAND IN BELFAST 1800-1870

by

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Degree: Master of Philosophy

University of Edinburgh

1978.

In memory of my father, REV. STEPHEN PARNELL KERR; one-time Curate of St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett and Incumbent of St. Mary's Crumlin Road, Belfast.

Preface

I should like to record my thanks to the following people for their help and encouragement: the staff of the Linenhall, Queen's and R.C.B. libraries especially Miss Geraldine Willis; the staff of the Down and Connor Diocesan Office and of the N.I.P.R.O.; The Rev. Canon Edgar Turner, Rector of St. George's Belfast, Rec. Roy Cox, former Rector of Christ Church Belfast, Rev. Dr. Alan Acheson and Miss Lydia de Burgh; Mr. and Mrs. M. Malone for organising typing and binding; my two Rectors in the last seven years - Jim Moore and Michael Roycroft; my supervisor for his patience; and finally my wife and family for putting up with me and for their very practical support.

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Degree ..... M. Phil. Date 1978

Title of Thesis ..... The Church of Ireland in Belfast, 1800-1870.

This thesis is an account of the life of the Established Church of Ireland in Belfast during the first seventy years of the 19th century. It may seem an uneven account, with more attention being paid to the final forty years of the period than to the first thirty. This inbalance is due to their being less material dealing with the early period available, perhaps because Belfast, and consequently the Church in the city, did not begin to expand until the late 1820's.

Chapter I - "Belfast 1800-1870" - describes the development of Belfast during the period, so that the Church might be seen in its political, social and economic context. It traces the city's growth from being a small town in the early 1800's to a large industrial city by 1870, indicating some of the problems attendant on such a transformation. The growth of hostility between the Catholic and Protestant communities is noted.

Chapters II, III, IV and V deal with different aspects of the Church's response to the changing situation of Belfast. In "The Church Becalmed" (II), the Church in Belfast is considered against the background of the Established Church in Ireland at the turn of the 19th century. The conclusion is offered that until the mid 1820's, the Church in Belfast very much shared the characteristics of the Established Church in the rest of the country - of calmness, staidness and slight superiority.

"The Church Concerned" (III) relates the Church's growing awareness of the growth of Belfast and her response to it in terms of Church extension. The involvement of the Church with the rising population of the city is considered in Chapter IV, while "The Church Militant" (V) examines the emergence of a narrow and aggressive evangelical

protestantism in the life of the Church.

I conclude:

(1) that the Church of Ireland in Belfast after 1830 was remarkably energetic and stridently confident in her outreach to the growing city, although not very successful.

(2) that the Church became increasingly anti-Catholic as the century progressed.

(3) that after 1850 the laity began to play an important role in the mission and organisation of the Church.

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THE CHURCH OF IRELAND IN BELFAST: 1800-1870

Introduction

"Belfast has always been reputed a Presbyterian Town."[1] So wrote George Benn in his History of Belfast. There would seem to be more than just a grain of truth in his assessment, especially at the beginning of this period. In 1800 when Belfast had a population of about 20,000, there were six Presbyterian congregations, to only one Anglican Church.[2] Further, both in the spheres of commerce and politics, the years between 1790 and 1820 saw a rapid increase in Presbyterian influence. The Protestant leadership in the 1798 rebellion in the North of Ireland was mostly Presbyterian, while of the fourteen individuals who were partners in the three private banks, eight were Presbyterians.[3] However alongside these areas of Presbyterian influence, we must set the other side of the picture. Due to the effects of the eighteenth century penal laws, most positions of influence under the crown were confined to members of the Church of Ireland, as were the magistracy, and membership of the municipal corporations.

By 1871, the close of my period, there had been a dramatic change. The total population had risen to 174,000[4] of which 56,000 were Roman Catholics, 60,000 Presbyterians, and 46,000 members of the Church of Ireland. The Church of Ireland from having just one building for worship in 1800, now had 19, while the Presbyterians had increased to 26 churches. Also by this date, Dissenter and Anglican had drawn much closer together to form a united front against the Roman Catholic presence in the city, which now represented about 31.9% of the total population of the city.[5] (In 1808 Roman Catholics had only amounted to 16% of the total, so

Protestants could afford to be more tolerant than they were later in the century!)

These years, then, were years of tremendous growth in the city of Belfast and its churches. They were years which saw a significant change in political attitudes. In the late eighteenth century Belfast was a centre of liberal thought, where the Belfast Volunteers - Protestant to a man - felt free to parade at the opening of the first post-Reformation Catholic Church[7] of St. Mary's. In contrast, by 1870, the same city had become accustomed to seasonal riots usually motivated by sectarianism.[8]

My purpose in this thesis is to trace the growth of the Church of Ireland in this period and to give some account of its make-up and its day-to-day life. The Church of Ireland's relationship with other Churches, her involvement in Education, her contact with the new working class, and the work and attitudes of some of the more important Anglicans in Belfast during these years, are some of the topics which I hope to consider.

This is an important area of study for three reasons. First, it has not so far been the object of any detailed research. There has been quite a volume of research completed on the Church of Ireland during this period, and Belfast itself has certainly not been totally ignored, but no one has documented the Church of Ireland's response to the rapid growth of Belfast as an industrial city. This will be my task. It is also important because it is from this period that we in the Church of Ireland have inherited much of our present day parochial structures in Belfast, and, perhaps more important, our assumptions about the strategy of Christian outreach and mission in an industrial situation. Finally, this period is important because it was at this time, perhaps more than any other, that the seeds of our present day sectarian conflict were sown (1969-).

Notes for Introduction

1. G. Benn, History of Belfast, Vol. 11, 1799-1810, p. 83.

2. "The population of Belfast may be estimated at 30,000, of which probably 4,000 are Catholics.... A few years ago there was hardly a Catholic in the place. How much Presbyterians outnumber the members of the Established Church appears from the circumstance of there being five meeting-houses and only one church."
J. Gamble, A View of Society and Manners in the North of Ireland in the Summer and Autumn of 1812. (London 1812) p. 64.

   There were six congregations of Presbyterians in Belfast.
J. C. Beckett (J. C. Beckett & T. W. Moody (ed.), "Ulster before 1800", Ulster since 1800; A Social Survey.) p. 22.

   We might resolve the conflicting figures of Gamble and Beckett by suggesting that two of the congregations may have met in the one meeting house.

3. Benn, op. cit., p. 83.

4. Population and denominational statistics (to nearest thousand) from D. J. Owen History of Belfast. Church building statistics from J. F. McNeice, The Church of Ireland in Belfast.

5. I. Budge & C. O'Leary, Belfast: Approach to Crisis p. 32.

6. Ibid. p. 32.

7. D. Kennedy, "The Catholic Church", Moody & Beckett op. cit., p. 175.

   From this point onwards, I will refer to Roman Catholics as 'Catholics'. I am not implying by this designation that any of the Protestant denominations are non-Catholic, i.e. that they are not part of the "One Holy Catholic Church".

8. Budge & O'Leary, op. cit., p. 89. In their table of religious riots, the authors show that from July 1813 until August 1872, there were nine years in which 'religious riots' took place, and always in the months of July or August.

CHAPTER I

Belfast: 1800-1870

(a) Situation and Appearance

By the standards of the time, Belfast in the early 19th century seemed to be a pleasant well laid out market town. One observer described Belfast as being:

> "... a large well built town. The streets are broad and straight.... Neatness and trimness, indeed, rather than magnificance, are the characteristic of all the public buildings. A large mass house, however, to the building of which, with their accustomed liberality the inhabitants largely contributed is an exception".[9]

The surrounding countryside was, by all accounts, extremely pleasant - "like one continued garden, shadowed with trees, interspersed with thickets, and neat white-washed houses."[10]

The town was wealthy, by Irish standards - it was, according to one traveller, a Mrs. Anne Plumptre, "one of the most opulent towns in Ireland".[11] It had also a reputation as a "literary place ... a sort of Metropolis of the North".[11] This "Metropolis of the North" bore little resemblance to present day Belfast. It was a town of about 20,000 people, housed in about 3,000 dwellings,[12] most of which were fairly modest in appearance, only a few being four storeys high.[12] The lowness of Belfast's skyline - the comparative lack of tall buildings and Church steeples - continued to be a distinguishing feature of the city till well into the period of Belfast's most rapid industrial growth. J. A. Pilson wrote in 1846:

> "The lowness and flatness of the site, the compactness and regularity of the street alignment, and the almost total absence of either tower, dome, or spire, render the exterior aspect of the town tame and unpromising."[13]

However, seen from the high ground above the town,

> "... it appears a vast, orderly tasteful assemblage of uniform streets, neat, large houses, pretending mansions, and bulky abodes of manufacture and traffic."[14]

There were just six main thoroughfares - High Street, The Parade, Donegall Street, North Street, Waring Street and Donegall Place, the latter being the most 'desirable quarter' of the town. The suburbs, when they grew up, were uncharacteristic of their time.

> "The suburbs inhabited by the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the easier classes, have nothing of that filth and misery which are almost an unfailing characteristic of an Irish town."[15]

However, by the 1850's things seem to have deteriorated alarmingly. The Rev. W. M. O'Hanlon, in a series of newspaper articles on the poor of Belfast (1849-54), gave some vivid descriptions of the less savoury areas of the city:

> "Barrack Lane was surely built when it was imagined the world would prove too strait for the number of its inhabitants. About five or six feet is the space here allotted for the passage of the dwellers and for the pure breath of heaven to find access to their miserable bodies. But in truth, no pure breath of heaven ever enters here; it is tainted and loaded by the most noisome reeking feculence, as it struggles to reach these loathsome hovels."[16]

(b) Population

The population of Belfast in the eighteenth century had been about 92% Protestant,[17] but by 1808 the percentage of Roman Catholics had nearly doubled - the new influx of Catholics being mostly working people.[18] This increase in the minority population, even in this early part of the century, brought with it an aggressive self awareness which was rather upsetting to the Protestant majority:

> "The lower classes of Catholics are not now characterised by servility; they seem rather to have passed into the opposite extreme, and give offence by what is called their rudeness and sulkiness."[19]

The Catholic percentage of the population continued to increase so that in 1834 out of a total population of 60,803, there were 19,712 Catholics - 32.4%; by 1861 they numbered 41,237 out of a total of 119,444 - 34.1%.[20] At the end of our period (1871) the total population had reached 174,412, and the Catholics numbered 55,575.[21] These last figures indicate a slight fall in the percentage of about 2% but despite this drop, the fact that by the 1830's about one third of Belfast's population was Catholic had profound implications for the political atmosphere of that city.

(c) Politics

(i) The United Irishmen

Prior to 1800, Belfast had been a town where liberal politics fluorished. The predominantly Presbyterian population made it a fertile ground for the seeds of revolutionary thinking. So it is not surprising to find that one of the most influential figures in the founding, in Belfast, on October 14th, 1791 of the Society of United Irishmen, was the son of a Presbyterian minister - one Samuel Neilson. The aim of the Society, of which perhaps the most famous member was Theobald Wolfe Tone, was to unite Irishmen of all persuasions against what they considered to be undue English influence in the country and ultimately to secure parliamentary reforms which would reflect these new nationalistic aspirations.

Wolfe Tone referred specifically to the liberation of Catholics from the yoke of hostile legislation in his original draft resolutions which he had sent to Belfast when the setting up of a political reform society had been first mooted.[22] This proved to be rather divisive among the predominantly Presbyterian United Irishmen of the North. At one meeting there was "a furious battle, which lasted two hours, on the Catholic question".[23] A bitter anti-Catholic, The Reverend William

Bruce, apparently declared that thirty nine out of forty Protestants were opposed to the liberation of Catholics.[24] Tone did not seem to appreciate the depth of this anti-Catholic feeling and what repercussions it might ultimately have on the struggle for a United Ireland. The buttons on the uniforms of Dublin's new corps of city Volunteers, which he helped to raise, were to be embossed with the Irish harp without the Crown above. In his diary he asked:

"Is that wise" and then wrote, "Who cares?"[25]

These are hardly the words of an astute leader who is trying to unite two factions who had traditionally opposed each other.

It is necessary to dwell on this point at some length, for it was this suspicion of Catholics among some of the Presbyterian United Irishmen which marked the beginning of the end for Protestant liberalism in Belfast - a political phenomenon which has not gone unnoticed by historians.[26] As Tone himself said, as late as 1791, the people of Belfast knew "wonderfully little" about Catholics.[27]

The Presbyterians of Belfast - they also had the support of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Down and Connor, Bishop Dickson - were motivated in their support for the United Irishmen by the political ideals of the French Revolution - liberty, equality and fraternity. They, as Dissenters, wished to be equal before the law with Anglicans; they wanted freedom to pursue their commercial interests. But when the movement for reform progressed towards open rebellion in 1798 some grew hesitant in their support, especially since the movement in the Southern part of the country had begun to take on an anti-Protestant bias. This sectarian element was mainly to be found among the Catholic peasantry in the counties adjacent to Ulster where they had formed themselves into groups of Defenders. These groups were loosely connected with the United Irishmen, but their aims would probably have been more narrowly pro-Catholic than those of Tone, Neilson and Napper Tandy. Thus, in 1795 a group of Defenders declared:

"Sweep clean the Protestants, kill the Lord Lieutenant and leave none alive."[28]

The massacre of Protestants at Vinegar Hill and the murder of more at Scullabogue by the predominantly Catholic rebel forces, during the '98 rebellion, confirmed many of the erstwhile Presbyterian United Irishmen in their worst fears. - Consequently, they reverted to their traditional antipathy towards Catholics and found an outlet for it in such clubs as the newly-formed Orange Society (1795).

A contemporary song about an incident during the rebellion reveals the sectarian feeling which was present among the forces of the United Irishmen even on the field of battle, - it is obviously written by an embittered Catholic:

"Treachery, treachery, damnable treachery!
Put the poor Catholics all in the front,
The Protestants next was the way they were fixed
And the black-mouthed Dissenters they skulked at the rump."[29]

The equivocal attitude of the Belfast Presbyterian United Irishman is captured well by an observer writing about twelve years later:

"The sober Presbyterian ..., as long as it was uniting, and writing and speaking ..., took the lead; but when the Rubicon was to be passed, when the final decision was to be taken, when the fatal sword was to be unsheathed - then his moral sense resumed its influence, then the voice of conscience was hearkened to, then his feelings and his prejudices which were slumbering only, awoke." When he " ... saw the slaughter in the South ..." he "returned his allegiance to the government."[30]

This refusal to go the whole way, obviously did not endear him to his former Catholic brothers in revolution.

"The Catholic now hates him as a renegade and has no confidence in him."[31]

Our observer concludes:

"The Protestant played only for ... the counter of speculative freedom which circumstances led him to prize more than formerly. But the Catholic played for life; ... he had set his all on the hazard of a die, and he played with a constancy, a fidelity, a devotedness, equal to the greatness of the stake."[32]

(ii) The Act of Union 1800

The defeat of the '98 Rebellion was followed two years later by a political initiative from the British Government - namely the Act of Union (1800) uniting the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland under one government.

Opinion was varied as to the desirability of the Union. The Orangemen constituted the most cohesive opposition to the Act. They adjudged that they would have less influence on politics if they were governed from London rather than Dublin. The Catholics, on the other hand, were pro-Union, for they considered that they would be more likely to obtain concessions from a united parliament, than from one dominated by the representatives of a suspicious and often bigoted Protestant minority.

Post-Union Belfast was quiet, with little political activity of note.[33] As one contemporary journalist wrote in 1801:

> "Instead of the unavoidable calamities induced by foreign war, the inexpressible evils of civil discontent, the clamour of disaffection, and even the scourge of famine, we have been graciously restored to unanimity, plenty and peace. Before us we have been set the pleasing project of national prosperity, and those dark and dismal clouds which produced in our minds a gloomy sadness, almost to despair, have vanished with unexpected celerity."[34]

Nevertheless, despite the restoration "to unanimity, plenty and peace", as the century progressed the rift between all shades of Protestant opinion and Catholicism grew wider and more bitter. In the years after the Union, Belfast tended to gravitate, commercially at least, towards Great Britain, rather than southwards towards Dublin. A traveller noted in 1834,

> "It needs but a glance at Belfast and the surrounding country to perceive that the town and its neighbouring districts have nothing in common with the rest of Ireland."[35]

Some would go so far as to say that as the industrial revolution took hold, Belfast became more like a typical English industrial city[36] than

an Irish one. This feeling of being different from the rest of Ireland and the fact that Ulster, and Belfast in particular, had much closer economic ties with Great Britain than with Ireland, had a profound influence on the political and, consequently, the religious attitudes of the people of Belfast. They realised that their future prosperity would depend on close links with Britain, and so any anti-Britain hostility which there had been among the middle class business community (mainly Presbyterian) gradually evaporated.

(iii) 'Catholic' versus 'Protestant'

Consequently, as they became increasingly pro-Union, Presbyterianism lost much of its liberal, anti-establishment flavour, and tended to ally itself with the Church of Ireland against the common 'enemy' of militant Catholic nationalism. Thus, the battle lines for periodic sectarian rioting in Belfast were drawn up. The influx of Catholics from the country, and the consequent job competition with Protestants; the revival of militant Orangeism in response to the concerted push for Catholic Emancipation; and, later in the fifties, the rather bigoted influence of some of the leaders of the evangelical revival - all these factors combined to create in Belfast during this period a highly inflammable religious and political situation.

However, it would be wrong to imply that the liberal pro-Catholic element in Presbyterianism was eclipsed overnight, and that after the Union Presbyterians, en masse, lined up alongside The Church of Ireland to oppose incipient Catholic nationalism. There was vigorous support for Catholic Emancipation in the Ulster Synod even as late as 1813. However, when the torchbearer of liberal Presbyterianism, Henry Montgomery, seceded from the Ulster Synod on doctrinal grounds,[37] the way was left open for "the great champion of orthodoxy",[38] Henry Cooke, minister of

May Street, Belfast, to promote better understanding between The Established Church and the Dissenters, thus presenting a common front against Catholicism. Henry Cooke's task was not an easy one, for even as late as 1844 he complained[39] that the bishops of the Church of Ireland were "secretly opposing" a bill declaring the validity of marriages solemnised by a Presbyterian minister. What is more, a protest, signed by three archbishops, ten bishops and nine lay Lords, against a bill for the same purpose, which was brought before the Irish Parliament prior to its dissolution, was considered by Bishop Mant - Bishop of Down and Connor (1823-1846) - to be a "truly noble production".[40] So relations between the two churches were not always cordial during the first part of the nineteenth century. However, as the privileges of the Church of Ireland began to be whittled away from the 1830's[41] to the final culmination of Disestablishment in 1869, the identity of interests between Church of Ireland and Dissenter became closer and more enduring.

So we can sum up by saying that Belfast, from being a hotbed for liberal and republican ideals in the 1790's, became, during the first half of the nineteenth century, a city where Protestant and Catholic were bitterly divided by an explosive mixture of religious and political aspirations. As the years passed, all shades of Protestant opinion generally became increasingly pro-Union, and conversely the Catholics became more aggressively nationalistic. The main factors concerned in this seeming transformation, were: the disenchantment of many Belfast republicans with the bloody realities of rebellion; the fact that after the Union, the business community in Belfast (mainly Presbyterian) realised that commercial prosperity lay in closer ties with Britain rather than the Irish hinterland; the influx of Catholic labourers into Belfast combined with the increasing momentum of O'Connell's Emancipation movement resulting in the formation of a siege mentality among the Protestants

and a revival of the fortunes of the Orange Order in the late 1820's; and finally, the Great Reform Act of 1832, giving Dissenters the vote, which removed one of the original grievances of erstwhile Belfast Presbyterian republicans and allowed them to throw their weight behind the Union. If the political life of Belfast in the first sixty years of the nineteenth century was to be summed up in one word, that word could well be 'polarisation', - a polarisation between Catholic and Protestant which became deeper and more bitter as the years passed.[42]

(d) Economic History of Belfast 1800-70

(i) Industry

The economic history of this period in Belfast could be entitled, 'From Rags to Riches', or 'From Famine to Plenty'. In 1801, Belfast was suffering the effects of famine, and consequent inflation. "The shilling loaf was now precisely the same weight as the sixpenny one had been the same day twenty years before ...."[43] The Lord Lieutenant issued a

> "Proclamation exhorting all masters of families who are not altogether in the lower ranks of life not to suffer any potatoes whatsoever to be consumed in their families in order to save all for seed."[44]

However, things seem to have changed for the better by 1843. In that year, a Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall made the following remarks on the state of Belfast:

> "It is undoubtedly the healthiest manufacturing town in the Kingdom: although densely populated, there is far less wretchedness in its lanes and alleys, and its suburbs, than elsewhere in Ireland ..... The situation of Belfast is most .. auspicious. It is a new town, and has a new look. It is an improving town, and signs of improvement, recent and progressive, are everywhere apparent. Unhappily, such remarks are applicable to very few other towns of the country ..... it is by many degrees, the most flourishing town of Ireland, and second in prosperity to few of the commercial or manufacturing towns of England."[45]

While Mr. and Mrs. Hall's view may be somewhat biassed, especially with regard to the state of the poorer quarters of the city, there is little

doubt that by this date Belfast was well on the way to becoming an important manufacturing city which had more in common with Liverpool or Glasgow than it did with Dublin or Cork. Indeed, Belfast was at this time, according to another observer, what we today would term a rather 'philistine' city in its single minded pursuit of commercial wealth, and in its comparative failure to make provision for the appreciation of the arts or sciences.[46]

In 1800, the main manufacturing industry in Belfast was the spinning and weaving of cotton. There were ten cotton mills in the city at that time, using in that year a total of 10,000 bales of imported cotton to the value of £200,000.[47]

However, it was the linen industry on which the prosperity of Belfast was built. The importance of the cotton industry lies mainly in the fact that its prior existence, and structure, prepared the way for the introduction of linen. Since cotton yarn was produced by machinery in factories, not only did it draw thousands of potential employees into the city from the country, but it also transferred the control of the industry from the hands of the cottage weavers and spinners to the new industrial bosses. Thus, the machinery was there, the people were there, and the organisation was there, and when the advantages of flax-spinning were realised (i.e. it didn't threaten England, and the existence of the expertise of the French Hugenots in and around Lisburn), the linen industry was on its way. By 1838, it had far outstripped its predecessor with fifteen flax-spinning mills to only about three or four cotton. By 1841 there were 25 steam-power mills in Belfast and vicinity. The most important was in York Street, employing about 1020 people, with an annual output worth £80,000-100,000 and a wage bill of £16,000.[48]

The trade went through a difficult period from 1809 until the early eighteen thirties, but then it started to revive until in 1846 it was

> "once more in a decidedly prosperous condition - more prosperous, perhaps, than at any previous period of its history".[49]

The value of the linen cloth manufactured in Ulster at this date was about four million pounds annually, and the number of persons employed was 17,000, with an annual wage bill of nearly one and a quarter million pounds.[50] By 1861, there were 61 flax spinning mills in Belfast using 593,000 spindles, and the number of power looms had increased to 4,900.[51] The linen industry was the most important single industry in Ulster and in Belfast during the first seventy years of the century. It provided fairly constant employment, and it attracted the peasant away from the land to Belfast and the other manufacturing centres. It, also, adversely affected the rural linen weaver, who usually carried on his trade at home, for he now had to deal with a manufacturer, who claimed much of the profit that was once his. However, the finished product was cheap, plentiful, and apparently rivalled anything that could be produced elsewhere.[52]

Among the other industries which flourished in Belfast during this period were: paper-making at Dunmurry; rope-making; glass-making; brewing and distilling; and soap and candlemaking. Ship building, for which Belfast was later to become most famous, was begun in 1791 by Messrs. William Ritchie and Brothers, and carried on most notably in the fifties by Harland and Wolf.[53]

Another indication of the importance of Belfast as an industrial centre was the growth of the port. In 1810 the total value of exports passing through the port was £2,904,590 19s., a figure which had risen by 1835 to £4,341,794 3s. 7d. By far the most important export in that year was, of course, linen in its various guises, which realised over £21/2 million.[54] The number of vessels using the port increased fourfold between 1805 and 1845, rising from 840 in 1805 to 3,655 in 1845.[55] Also, by the close of 1841 there were regular 'steamer' services to Glasgow, Dublin, Liverpool and London.

Transport on land was mostly by coach, with the first passenger coach beginning to run between Belfast and Downpatrick in 1809. Thirty years later in 1839 The Ulster Railway was opened for traffic, running from Belfast to Lisburn, and later Armagh and Portadown. Measures were also taken to connect this line with the Dublin-Drogheda one, thus, revolutionising communications between the two main cities in Ireland.

(ii) Living and Working Conditions

The living and working conditions of Belfast's new working class were not good. The linen industry depended very largely on the labour of women and children, and the wages were low - 1/6 to 4/6 per week in 1855. However, a labourer was paid 1/0 per day, while a worker at the Ropeworks might hope to earn the princely sum of 21/0 per week. Trade unions, or 'combinations' of workers getting together in order to try and better their conditions, were actively discouraged by magistrates and employers. Many of these people would have lived in hovels with as many as three families to a hovel.[56] Less than a third of the houses had piped water, and more than three thousand had no lavatories.[57] Consequently, epidemics were rife, and life was often very brief. As late as the eighteen fifties, life expectancy was nine years, due to the high infant mortality rate. When a life expectancy of 9 years in Belfast is compared to a life expectancy of seventeen years for a Manchester labourer and fifteen years for a Liverpool labourer in 1842,[58] then it would seem that conditions in Belfast were worse than average, despite the view of Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall.[59] One consequence of these miserable working and living conditions was that many people resorted to alcohol to drug their sensibilities against the grim reality of life. The Rev. W. M. O'Hanlon remarks on "the flourishing condition of 'the spirit stores'", which "you meet at every turn"[60] in certain poor quarters of the city.

The region around North Street, Peter's Hill, Millfield and Lodge Road was particularly well populated with these sources of blessed oblivion.[61] However, it was oblivion at a cost, and O'Hanlon remarks (no doubt angrily):

> "If one may judge of the profits of any trade by the number disposed to invest capital in it, surely, this trade of whiskey selling must be among the very best in this rising and opulent city."[62]

(e) Social Aid Organisations

As the century progressed there seemed to be no lack of charitable institutions founded to help and succour the poor, especially those fallen on hard times. For the sick there were hospitals: The Public Dispensary and Fever Hospital (1792), a Lying-in Hospital, and, in addition, a Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick (1826). Provision was also made for the mentally ill by the opening of the District Lunatic Asylum in 1829; and for the deaf and dumb by the opening of a school expressly for them in 1831. There was, for those who had fallen on hard times, The Poor House build by public subscription and a lottery in 1771 in North Queen Street, and later to be known as "Belfast Incorporated Charitable Society".

Further provision was made for the "able-bodied", but unemployed, poor through the efforts of an institution known as 'The House of Industry'. Apparently this was "a house, where work could be served out and taken in, for the employment of such as could not be separated from their families, and in which many could be employed under the immediate inspection of the Committee ...."[63] The Committee divided the paupers up into three categories:

> "first, those wholly incapable of work from age and chronic diseases, for whom the Poor-House was considered to be the proper asylum; secondly the sick, who are relieved at the Fever-Hospital and Dispensary; and thirdly, those who can in some degree contribute to their own support, who are the proper objects for the House of Industry".[64]

The clergy of "every religious persuasion" were invited to become honorary members of the committee, and participate in a

> "... scheme ..... which, ... if properly supported, promises to become a powerful engine to promote what is their peculiar aim - the moral improvement of the lower classes of society".[65]

Clergy were also involved in an attempt to better the lot of the working people through the work of 'The Society for the Amelioration of the Working Classes of Belfast' (1845-1860), whose object was "generally to promote their (the working classes) health and their cleanliness", and "to give them better habits and higher tastes".[66] There would seem to be more than just a hint of the 'noblesse oblige' attitude in these words of Andrew Mulholland, the then (1845) Mayor of Belfast, from his speech which called upon the Town Council to set up the society. Further evidence of paternalism is revealed, when the Mayor maintains that this sort of subject is not really the business of the town council and that he does not expect them to have to do anything about it. Rather, it is up to "the benevolent individuals of every sect and party in the town"[67] to promote the cause of this society. It seems to have been very much a matter of 'us doing good to them for their good!'

Perhaps a more acceptable attitude, at least as far as contemporary attitudes were concerned, was that shown by yet another society working for the betterment of the poor - "Belfast Working Classes Association for General Improvement". This was much more of a self help organisation. They declare in one of their magazines their reservations about the approach adopted by The Belfast Society for the Amelioration of the Working Classes. The writer says that "we are assured" that this society, "will be highly instrumental in removing many of the grievances so long associated with our social state".[68] "But", he wonders,

> "however praiseworthy such exertions on the part of disinterested and benevolent individuals may be, we must express a matured doubt that, without the co-operation and without the cordial interest and zeal of the working class <u>themselves</u>, such efforts can be permanently useful."

He then gets slightly carried away with his own rhetoric, though there

is truth in what he ways:

> "The working classes themselves must be up and stirring - they must evince a deep desire for their amelioration - must show themselves prepared to take advantage of their new position, and prove themselves worthy of the change. Then, and not till then, will the emancipation of labour be accomplished - then and not till then, will the dominion of mind be universal."[69]

All the attempts to better the lot of the poor, which I have referred to so far, were voluntary efforts. Unfortunately, until 1838, when the Irish Poor Law was passed no legal provision existed for the destitute and needy. Moreover, the 1838 bill merely extended the English Poor Law to Ireland. Thus, as in England, the whole country was to be divided up into districts, each of which had its own Poor House under the control of a board of guardians. The system was to be financed by the levying of a poor-rate.

One of the major problems, which the Belfast Board of Guardians had to deal with, was that of paupers who had been removed from Scotland or England, because according to theauthorities there, they were ineligible for relief. As the law then stood, they had no right to do this[70], but what was perhaps more disturbing, was "the wholesale and inhuman system adopted in removing paupers to this country".[71] Apparently the Glasgow authorities were the most guilty in this respect.

> "Paupers removed from Glasgow ... invariably declare that they are unfurnished with food or money, and several ... just discharged from hospital, ... arrive in too weak a state to travel."[72]

In March 1847, the Board of Guardians had to deal with an issue, which, though not of major importance from the administrative angle, is, nevertheless, interesting as regards relations between the Churches. On March 30th of that year, a letter was received from the Rev. Mr. Teape, Protestant (Church of Ireland) chaplain to the workhouse. In it he complained that:

> "... the Romish chaplain has applied personally to the master of this workhouse to visit and attend upon some of the inmates belonging to the established church of this nation".[73]

He called for new regulations to be brought which "shall prevent any such interference or tampering with the souls"[73] which were committed to his charge.

This incident is significant in that it reveals the new militancy of the Catholic Church in its willingness to embark on what could be termed "sheep-stealing", and also the tendency of the Church of Ireland to stand on its dignity as "the established church of this nation".

(f) Education

Denominational rivalry also extended into the field of education. Perhaps the most obvious instance of this was the withdrawal of the Church of Ireland from the system of National Schools in 1838 and the founding of its own Church Education Society to maintain schools of the established church. It took this course of action because it opposed the practice of allowing each church to provide its own distinctive religious instruction for its own children at times set apart for this purpose within the school. At these times the children would be separated into their denominational groups and go to be instructed by their own clergy. It was this system of withdrawal which gave rise to the complaint of the Rt. Rev. Daly, Bishop of Cashel and Waterford, that the Church of Ireland was unwilling to take part in an educational system

> "... which makes it a fundamental principle that notice is to be given to the Catholic children to go away from the word of the living God".[74]

A further case for denominational rivalry, or, to be frank, anti-Catholic bias, could be made against the Irish Society of the Church Mission to the Roman Catholics, who apparently[75] bribed the children to come into their school, doubtless to set them on the true path to salvation.

However we should not be too hard on those who were at least attempting to provide some sort of education for the poor. Up until the National System was inaugurated, educational provision was mainly in the hands of voluntary organisations and of some enlightened, energetic individuals. There was the Belfast Lancastrian School in Frederick Street (1811) run along the lines advocated by Joseph Lancaster of London, who "having invented ... a new and mechanical System of Education ...' felt 'anxious to extend its advantages to Ireland".[76] This new 'invention' in education involved pupils teaching pupils who were one step behind them. The school was run by the Belfast Sunday School Society in a comparatively enlightened fashion - corporal punishment was discouraged, as was narrow denominationalism.[77] By 1818 there were 704 pupils in the school "of whom 400 are able to read and write".[78]

Other educational establishments included: the Brown Street Sunday School and Daily School (1812) under the patronage of the Marquis of Donegal; St. Patrick's, Donegall Street (1829) - the first school in Ireland to place itself under the National Board of Education; the Church of Ireland Schools - St. Ann's, St. George's, and Christ Church Daily School, and others connected with that Church. There were also by 1846 "in Belfast and its vicinity nineteen National schools, and a great number of private seminaries".[79] Until 1878 secondary education was the sole preserve of Belfast Academy (1785) and Belfast Academical Institution (1810). Queen's College (1849) gave opportunity for higher education.

Yet, despite all this provision and despite the National System introduced in 1831, Rev. Wm. O'Hanlon could still comment thus, more than twenty years later:

> "All honour is due to those in Belfast who have sought to carry the blessings of education to the lowest poor; but who can pass through the courts and alleys of the town, without the deep conviction that very much yet remains to be done."[80]

He goes on to estimate that despite the existence of sixty-one schools,

> "... great and small, including ... all the National Schools, all those of the Established Church, all the other schools connected with places of worship, and public and private ones which stand in no such connexion, descending downwards to the smallest schools ... of the back streets and alleys ..."[81],

roughly 10,000 children between the ages of four and fifteen were unschooled and

> "exposed to all the polluting vices which they behold daily, in their homes and in the streets."[82]

The irony of the situation was that the schools were not full, the poor were not availing themselves of the existing educational facilities. So O'Hanlon recommended that what was needed was what the Church of Scotland minister Dr. Chalmers called 'moral excavations'. In other words, rather than compel the poor to use the schools by law, as was done on the continent, they should be visited, and encouraged by "moral suasion" to "place their unhappy children under instruction".[83]

Belfast 1800-1870 - Conclusion

I have tried to show in this introductory chapter, that Belfast, in this period, was a city in transition - physically, industrially, socially and politically. From being little more than a small town in 1800, she had become a thriving industrial centre by 1870, and the expansion continued well into the twentieth century and brought with it attendant social and political problems. Perhaps, the most ominous development in these years, as regards the future of the city, was the growth of sectarianism - the deterioration of relations between the Catholic and Protestant communities - the reasons for which, have been discussed elsewhere.[84] This latent hostility between the communities erupted into rioting, which was to become a periodic characteristic of Belfast life right up to the present day. Trouble often started round

July 12th - the day on which Orangemen celebrated (and still do) King William III's ('King Billy's') victory over King James at the Battle of the Boyne (1690). Thus, in 1843 (July) the following report appeared in 'The Northern Whig' newspaper. It said that on July 12th, 1843

> "... one corner of our town, including a part of Sandy Row and Barrack Street has been the theatre of much excitment and rioting, the contending parties being Catholics and Protestants of a low description, disgracing the name of both."[85]

Riots also occurred in July and September 1857, and later in 1864 and have continued periodically ever since (1880, 1884, 1886, 1907, 1920, 1966-present day). A commission set up to inquire into the cause of the 1857 disturbances not only blamed the provocative nature of the July 12th processions but, also, some ministers who insisted, against the advice of the magistrate, on holding open air services and enflaming an already explosive situation by their controversial preaching. This finding is corroborated by a later commentator:

> "After a careful analysis of conflicting evidence, I have arrived at the conclusions that many of the Protestant clergy, instead of inculcating peace and brotherly love, are more often engaged in stirring up sectarian bitterness by ill-judged attacks on their fellow-subjects. It is a tragic commentary on Christianity to see clergymen bound over to keep the peace."[86]

(A sentiment which could be equally well applied to 1978 - unfortunately!) One of the foremost exponents of this type of provocative preaching was the notorious Rev. Hugh Hanna - 'Roaring Hugh' - a Presbyterian minister, whose statue, until recently, stood at the centre of Carlisle Circus.

The distrust and suspicion by which the rioting was fuelled and on which the clerical demagogues thrived even affected the administration of law and order in Belfast. In 1864 a commission of inquiry was set up to look into the magisterial and police jurisdiction of the borough. It reported that the police force could not be expected to command the complete support of the whole community because of the large disparity between the numbers of Protestants and Catholics who were members of the

force. The figures they quote are 160 Protestants to only five Roman Catholics.[87] The fact that "Orangeism prevails to a considerable extent amongst its members"[88] certainly did not help the situation. The force was controlled by the Town Council, which, according to the report was

> "composed with ... one exception, not merely of Protestants but of Protestants who are regarded as adverse, both by the Roman Catholics, and by the 'Liberal' section of the Protestant Community"[89] -

which was a further reason for the Catholic community to withhold their support.[90]

Perhaps, it might be most fitting to conclude this section with the anguished cry of a Unitarian minister, as he gave vent to his pain and frustration at what was, then, well on the way to becoming Belfast's most lasting and deep-rooted problem:

> "Oh my country! when wilt thou learn to feel, that only shame and ruin can spring from thy intestine broils: when will thy children love as brethren, and thy fair fields cease to be reddened by fratricide blood - blood shed to slake the insane thirst of party, pride, and power, and shed often at the bidding of men who trample thy rights and glory in the dust - thy disgrace, thy bitter, taunting foes? Sir, I look on every man as an enemy to our land, be he Protestant or Romanist, who cherishes the spirit of faction, who seeks the domination of a party, or who, to further what he may even conscientiously deem a good cause, will kindle and inflame the bad passions of an ignorant and imbruted mob. Such is the wretched practice which has been pursued for centuries in this unfortunate island, and which has made Ireland a hissing and a scorn to the whole civilized world. Is this to last for ever?"[91]

The following chapters of the thesis will attempt to give an account of how the Church of Ireland in Belfast faced up to this issue and to the other problems of a growing industrial city in these first seventy years of the nineteenth century.

Notes for Chapter I

9. Gamble, op. cit., p. 64 (Gamble's comment on the willingness of the population to contribute to the construction of a "Mass-House", testifies to the liberalism of Belfast's mainly Protestant population at the turn of the century).

10. Ibid p. 61-62.

11. S. Simms, Expansion of Belfast in the 19th Century, p. 6. He cites Mrs. Plumptre's account of her travels in and around Belfast.

12. Simms, op. cit., p. 4.

13. J. A. Pilson, 'Belfast' (History of and Rise and Progress of) p. 9.

14. Pilson, op. cit., p. 9.

15. Leitch Ritchie: Ireland Picturesque and Romantic (quoted by D. J. Owen op. cit., p. 248).

16. Wm. O'Hanlon 'Walks among the Poor of Belfast' (Belfast 1853).

17. Budge & O'Leary, op. cit., p. 32.

18. Gamble, op. cit., on p. 64 he states that most of the 4,000 Catholics in Belfast in 1811 were working people.
"Within a few years some four or five thousand raw, uneducated Catholic labourers from the South and West had poured into the city' and were 'rapidly increasing in proportion to the rest".
J. Barrow, A Tour around Ireland (Dublin 1835) p. 37. Quoted in Budge & O'Leary, op. cit., p. 31.

19. Gamble, op. cit.

20. Emrys Jones, A Social Geography of Belfast, p. 189.

21. Owen, op. cit., p. 312.

22. William Theobald Wolfe Tone (ed.) Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone, 2 vols. (Washington 1826). Vol. I p. 26 cited in Robert Kee: The Most Distressful Country, p. 50.

23. Tone, op. cit., p. 149, cited in Kee, op. cit., p. 52.

24. Kee, op. cit., p. 52.

25. Tone, op. cit., p. 208, cited in Kee, op. cit., p. 55.

26. cf. A. T. Q. Stewart, The Transformation of Ulster Presbyterianism (unpublished M. A. Thesis for Q.U.B. 1956).

27. Tone, op. cit., quoted by Mary McNeill in 'Mary Ann McCracken' p. 63.

28. MacNevin, Leading State Trials, p. 466, cited by Kee, op. cit., p. 70.

29. Kee, op. cit., p. 131.

30. Gamble, op. cit., p. 118.

31. Ibid., p. 118.

32. Ibid., p. 272.

33. "The political condition of the town in those years was dull. The Marquis of Donegal returned the parliamentary members for the town, generally some relation or connection of his own.... It was said also by a more direct or pungent jest, that a person calling one day at the Castle office, and asking to see the Marquis, was told that he was just then engaged, and on turning away, he was told ... it would be unnecessary as His Lordship would be down in a few minutes, being only upstairs making an M.P." Benn, op. cit., Vol. 11, p. 85.

34. Belfast Newsletter 1801. Cited by Owen, op. cit., p. 186.

35. Quoted in E. R. Green, The Lagan Valley, p. 32.

36. By the late 19th Century, Belfast 'was a typical English industrial rather than an Irish town'. Patrick Bruckland, Ulster Unionism - and the Origins of Northern Ireland, p. XXIX.

37. Montgomery and his followers were accused of being Arians by the Orthodox party led by Henry Cooke. After refusing to declare their belief in the equality of the three persons of The Holy Trinity at the meeting of Synod in Strabane (1827), they later (May 1830), withdrew from the Synod, and organised themselves as 'The Remonstrant Synod of Ulster'.

38. W.D. Killen, Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, 1875, p. 437

39. Ibid., p. 300.

40. Ibid., p. 300 note.

41. This 'whittling away' process was initiated in February 1833, when Lord Grey's ministry introduced The Church Temporalities Act, which abolished eight bishopricks and two archbishopricks (Cashel and Tuam). The revenues of the other twelve were to be reduced. The surplus money thus created was originally to be used by Parliament as it thought fit, but this clause was later withdrawn, due to intense opposition from The Church of Ireland. John Keble, and John Newman, leaders of the Oxford Movement, considered the Bill to be a body blow not just for the Church of Ireland but also for the Church of England. Keble called the Bill a "National Apostasy", while Newman described Grey as "The Blind Premier".

42. Gamble, op. cit., p. 81, indicated the way things seemed to be moving as early as 1811.

43. Benn, op. cit., p. 27.

44. Ibid.

45. Pilson, op. cit., pps. 90-91.

46. Simms, op. cit., p. 18.
According to Simms a French traveller observed: "Neither art nor science seem to be much appreciated, whilst trade and business are the animating principles that embrace everything. The streets themselves exhibit this even to the unobservant" (1843).

47. Simms, op. cit., p. 9.

48. Pilson, op. cit., pps. 62-63.

49. Ibid., p. 63.

50. Ibid.

51. Bruckland, op. cit., p. xxvi.

52. "A highly respectable authority" on the linen industry comments: "We are now certain that we can manufacture almost every description of linen, except lace and fine cambric, as cheap and as well, perhaps cheaper and better, than any other country". Pilson, op. cit., p. 65.

53. The total tonnage of ships built in Ireland was only 1.042. It only began to increase dramatically in the sixties and seventies when Harland and Wolf began their main expansion.
An important offshoot of shipbuilding was the heavy engineering industry. F. S. L. Lyons, Ireland since the Famine, p. 67.

54. Pilson, op. cit., p. 69.

55. Ibid., p. 75.

56. "We entered one wretched hovel occupied by three families.... We had not the remotest idea that such a den of darkness and squalor could be the abode of human beings...." O'Hanlon, op. cit., p. 8.

57. A. G. Malcolm, "The Sanitary State of Belfast with Suggestions for its Improvement" (1852). N.I.P.R.O. Problems of a Growing City: Belfast 1780-1870, p. 138.

58. 'Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Classes' (1842) p. 152 cited in E. P. Thomson The Making of the Working Class p. 365.
These figures are corroborated by a remark in A. G. Malcolm's report op. cit., p. 160. "Next to Dublin, no town in Ireland, or the sister kingdoms, of similar character or dimensions, has been so severely visited" (by fever).

59. See p. 12 above.

60. O'Hanlon, op. cit., p. 9.

61. Ibid., p. 19.

62. Ibid., p. 19.

63. Extracts from "The Rules and regulations for the House of Industry, Belfast, to be laid before a general meeting of the town for their approbation", 1810. N.I.P.R.O. op. cit., p. 55.

64. Ibid., p. 56.

65. Ibid., p. 58.

66. Ibid., p. 188.

67. Ibid., p. 188.

68. Ibid., p. 196.

69. Ibid., p. 196.

70. "... in Ireland there is no law of settlement, but destitution is to be relieved when it takes place" (from a letter written by the Board of Guardians). N.I.P.R.O. op. cit., p. 149.

71. Ibid., p. 154 (from 'Copy of depositions made by Mr. J. Holden on the removal of poor from England and Scotland).

72. Ibid., p. 154.

73. Ibid., p. 150.

74. Moody & Beckett, op. cit., p. 185.

75. "I also visited a school near the Queen's Bridge which is connected with a society known by the name of the Irish Society of the Church Mission to the Roman Catholics. There are about a hundred children in these schools, chiefly Roman Catholic children who have nearly all been taken off the streets as vagrants. Each child has given to him a piece of bread every morning and half a pint of soup in the week viz. on Mondays and Thursdays. I recommended something of this about eight months ago to our committee."
"Extracts from the Rev. A. McIntyre's Diary of Visits to the Poor of Belfast" (1853-56) N.I.P.R.O. op. cit., p. 202.

76. Ibid., p. 46.

77. Rule 19 of Rules and Regulations for the Belfast Sunday School (March 1811):
"Endeavours to be used to manage the scholars by gentleness and forbearance, avoiding all manual correction. Any scholar continuing refractory after having been treated in the above manner, is after due admonition to be expelled." Ibid., p. 49.

Rule 20:
"Not wishing to interfere with the religious opinions of any, no catechisms of faith or books of controversy are to be taught in the school."

78. Ibid., p. 51 (General Report 1817-1818).

79. Pilson, op. cit., p. 41.

80. O'Hanlon, op. cit., p. 103.

81. Ibid., p. 107.

82. Ibid., p. 109.

83. Ibid., p. 110.

84. cf. p.11 above.

85. Northern Whig, July 1843. Cited in Owen, op. cit.

86. Simms, op. cit., p. 20.

87. N.I.P.R.O., op. cit., Doc. 35, p. 214.

88. Ibid., p. 215.

89. Ibid., p. 215.

90. A situation which can also be parallelled today in 1977.

91. O'Hanlon, op. cit., p. 33.

CHAPTER II

'THE CHURCH BECALMED'

- The State of the Church of Ireland at the turn of the Century
- Church life in Belfast during the first two decades of the nineteenth century

1. The State of the Church of Ireland

In this first section, I intend to take a brief look at the character of the 'United Church of England and Ireland' - for that was its official title after the Act of Union in 1800. It is only by having some appreciation of the character and practice of the Anglican Church in Ireland in the latter part of the eighteenth century, that we will be able to set the early nineteenth century Church in its rightful context.

I have given this Chapter the title of 'The Church Becalmed' because by all accounts, The Church of Ireland was, indeed, spiritually becalmed at the close of the eighteenth century. The impression given is one of quiet reasonableness, of educated comfort, rather than of prophetic fire, or evangelistic fervour. One observer described the established clergy as

> "... a virtuous charitable and useful body of men. In many parts they are almost the only resident gentry, and diffuse by their example and that of their families a spirit of order, decorum and gentleness in their neighbourhood ...., in letting their glebes they give an example which it would be the credit of other landlords to follow."[1]

The promotion of "order", of "decorum", of "gentleness", in short, the promotion of civilising and moderating influences among the populace was seen to be the main role of the Established Church at the turn of the century. The Church was in fact an arm of government.

(a) Political Role

This political role was not necessarily imposed on the Church by the government; on the contrary, it was a role openly championed by churchmen of the late eighteenth century. In 1787, the Bishop of Cloyne, Richard Woodward, published a pamphlet on "The Present State of the Church of Ireland" in which he publicly advocated erastianism.

> "The business of this little tract", he wrote, "is to place the Church in a point of view merely political; to prove to the Gentlemen of landed property in this Kingdom that it is so essentially incorporated with the State, that the subversion of one must necessarily overthrow the other".[2]

On the subject of the duties of the clergy, he recommended that they ought not only to inculcate the principles of Christian love, but also

> "... to watch over and extend the Protestant interest, and the protection of this country from foreign enemies, to warn and guard against all insidious attempts to weaken its connexion with Great Britain."[3]

There could possibly have been some justification for this policy if the Established Church had claimed the adherence of the majority of the population. But this was not the case. The majority of the population was Catholic, a point which Woodward conveniently seems to overlook.[4] The Church of Ireland was a minority church with a majority complex.[5] There was some political and economic justification for this complex, especially up until 1829 and the Catholic Emancipation Act, but there was never any spiritual or moral justification for it. Claiming only one tenth of the population as adherents, the Established Church was indeed "one of the greatest ecclesiastical anomalies in Christendom".[6] This state of affairs did not go unnoticed by non-Anglicans in or outside Ireland. The Presbyterian historian, W. D. Killen, declared that it was only through the enactment of the Penal Laws that the Church of Ireland had become established,[7] rather than because of the support of the people. While Dr. Chalmers of Edinburgh commented that as soon as

> "she took up the carnal (i.e. accepted the support of the State) and laid down the spiritual weapon, her strength went out of her, she was struck with impotency".[8]

Dean Macartney of Melbourne put the blame for this state of affairs fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the English. England has

> "... laboured for centuries", he said, "to degrade the Church of Christ into a political tool. So far from the experiment of attempting to convert or benefit Ireland through her National Church.... Her confidence has been gained to betray, her wealth and honours used to corrupt her; she has been feasted like Isaac to be deceived."[9]

English political influence was felt most notably in the appointment of Bishops, and especially after the Act of Union in 1800. According to one present day historian, to become an Irish Bishop one had to fulfil two conditions: one had to be well born, and one had to have a political sponsor.[10] So it comes as no surprise to find that Bishop Dickson (Bishop of Down and Connor 1783-1804)[11] was educated at Eton and Oxford, was the son of a dignitary of the Irish Church, and was a companion of Charles Fox.[11] His successor, Nathaniel Alexander (1804-1823) was an even more blatant political appointment. He, apparently, had been promised promotion at the Act of Union. While he did not get Kilmore, which he had been given to understand he might be in line for, he did finally end up in Down and Connor via Clonfert and Killaloe.[12] Richard Mant, Alexander's successor in Down and Connor, was another English appointee, who gained the first rung of the Irish Episcopal ladder through the good offices of an English Earl.[13]

It was this sort of political 'jobbery' which led Killen to quote the remarks of a certain John Curran M.P. on the malaise of the Irish Church:

> "The Church of Ireland has been in the hands of strangers, advanced to the mitre, not for their virtues or their own knowledge, but quartered upon the country through their own servility or the caprice of their own benefactors."[14]

Of course, it is by no means true to imply that all these appointment s

were harmful to the Church. In his obituary in The Belfast Newsletter, Bishop Dickson of Down and Connor - in whose diocese Belfast was situated - was described as a

> "worthy prelate ... a man of elegant and refined manners, a statesman of the most independent principles".[15]

Though he was well connected both ecclesiastically and politically,[16] it seems that The Newsletter spoke the truth, for not only did he, along with one other Irish Bishop, vote against the Act of Union in 1800, he also spoke out against the coercion of the majority population.[17] He even went so far as to consider "Catholic Emancipation' a matter of right, not of favour,[18] a view which while being virtual heresy to his fellow Anglicans in Ireland,[19] brought him praise from other sources. Gentleman's Magazine, in an appreciation of the Bishop,[20] paid tribute to the unsectarian spirit which lay behind his promotion of Catholic Emancipation:

> "From that poison of social life; from that eternal curse upon Ireland religious intolerance; that fatal frenzy, which makes that miserable country be devoured like the pelican, by her own offspring, never was mortal more free than was this virtuous Prelate."

Despite the fact, then, that political considerations and connections did influence the choice of Bishops in Ireland, in the Diocese of Down and Connor, at least, the choices turned out mostly for the best. Of the four Bishops of Down and Connor 1800-1870, three of them, Dickson, Mant and Knox seemed to be conscientious Churchmen. Of the remaining one, Nathaniel Alexander - interestingly enough the most blatantly political appointee of the four - there is little evidence[21] one way or the other.[22] However, it still remains true to say that regardless of the worth of individual Bishops, the fact that political considerations might well influence their appointment and preferment, did nothing to advance the acceptability of the Anglican Church as the Established Church in Ireland.

Political influence was also felt at parish level because of the patronage system whereby the right to choose an incumbent for a parish

was often in the hands of some politically or ecclesiastically powerful figure, who may not have had any interest in the parish at all. In the early nineteenth century, one of the most influential persons in Belfast was the Marquis of Donegall, and it was he who was the patron of the parish church of St. Anne's.[23] Further, out of the thirteen Church of Ireland Churches in Belfast (in the Connor Diocese) in 1868, four had the Vicar of Belfast as their patron.[24] So, it would have been theoretically possible for appointments to these churches to have been politically influenced, if the patron of St. Anne's had been so inclined. All he need have done was exert some gentle pressure on his appointee, the Vicar of St. Anne's. We will see that there is some evidence of political influence in the making of parochial appointments in Belfast, especially in the case of St. Anne's; there is also evidence to suggest that the people of Belfast did want some measure of self-determination in choosing an incumbent for their church.[25]

Parish life was also affected by politics at the level of the parish vestry, for the parish itself was not only a religious unit, but also possessed its own civil powers.[26] The vestry had the power to levy taxes for church repairs, public works and policing. This, presumably, is why public notice was always given in the local newspaper of imminent vestry meetings, and also why the Sovereign of Belfast[26] seemed to loom so large in the affairs of the Parish Church.

The fact that the parish was an independent civil unit with its incumbent nominated by a patron, but under a Bishop appointed from London - and often an Englishman at that - meant that those on the episcopal bench failed to identify with the aspirations and fears of churchmen, both lay and clerical, at parochial level. This characteristic would seem to be especially prevalent in Belfast, probably because the Bishop did not have the same power of patronage there as he did in other parts of Ireland,[27] and so was not able to nominate 'his own men'

for the various parishes. The divergence in thinking and theology between the parish clergy and bishops is an important theme in the history of the Church of Ireland in Belfast during this period, and it is one to which I shall return.

(b) Clergy

The parish clergy were, by all accounts, a civilised and civilising group of men. According to the Presbyterian historian, Killen, it was they, rather than the Bishops, who kept the Church of Ireland going at the end of the 18th century - and for a mere pittance.[28] Richard Mant, probably because he had no anti-episcopal axe to grind, made a more modest assessment of the 18th century Irish clergy:

> "... the latter part of the eighteenth century was perhaps, on the whole a season of supineness and inaction as to religion in these kingdoms: and the Irish clergy in general may be judged to have partaken of this character ...."[29]

He even commends the Catholic clergy as setting an example worthy of emulation rather than envy:

> "If we hope to succeed in our good cause, we must come down to an emulation with them (the Catholic clergy) in exertions that are worthy only of that cause: an emulation not of envy or strife ... but an emulation in faithful earnest, and persevering discharge of such pastoral duties, as are most calculated to secure us the respect, the love, the attachment, and the confidence of our flocks."[30]

Part of the reason for the "inaction" of the clergy, may have been that they were incumbents of parishes in name only. Apparently 60% of benefices lacked glebe houses, 18% lacked churches, and 30% of incumbents were non resident.[31] So it is little wonder that Mant commends the example of the Catholic clergy,

> "who live in a constant familiar intercourse with all who are subject to their pastoral inspection".[32]

Some of the bishops also had an accommodation problem. As late as 1824, there was no episcopal residence for the Diocese of Down and Connor, and though there was no legal necessity for him to provide an

official residence, the then Bishop, Richard Mant, considered

> "that public benefit would accrue from the Diocesan having a settled and permanent official abode in his diocese"[33],

and accordingly set about finding one.

While the Irish clergy of the latter part of the 18th century may have been rather short on evangelical fervour, this is not to say that they were indifferent to the needs of their parishioners. The Rev. John Clarke, curate of St. Anne's Belfast, "a most worthy young clergyman",

> "was struck with the very scanty accommodations and provision that could be afforded by poor housekeepers in a confinement (Sic) that required some degree of comfort. He mentioned the subject to a Lady, who was ready to second his benevolent idea."[34]

The result of this collaboration was the Lying-in Hospital in Belfast, opened in 1793. As we shall see in the following pages, the clergy of St. Anne's were closely involved in the development of social amenities for the city in subsequent years.

(c) Theology

The theological stance of the clergy was anti-evangelical; "as a class they were characterised by their hatred of evangelical religion".[35] Further,

> "... there was not then a single bishop in all Ireland who supported the theology of the Reformation: all were either Pelagians or professors of some lifeless form of Arminianism".[36]

In less strident tones, we might compare the theological thinking of the Church of Ireland at this time, to that of the Scottish Church of the late eighteenth century, which aptly has been labelled "moderatism". It was characterised by its emphasis on culture and reason, as aids to living a well-ordered and civilised existence, and its lack of interest in dogma. Natural theology held sway over the theology of grace and redemption. In short, the pervading theological atmosphere in the Church of Ireland was of "The Augustan Calm of eighteenth century Anglicanism".[37]

One reason for the lack of theological bite, may have been due to the inadequate training which intending ordinands received.[38] However a deeper reason, and considering later developments in Belfast, one that might be nearer the truth, is suggested by McDowell.[39] He says that there was no motivation for the Church to grapple with theological issues, since their main stimulus, or rather what was to be their main stimulus for theological polemic in the nineteenth century - The Catholic church - was still in a rather quiescent mood in the late eighteenth century. If McDowell's suggestion is true, it would tie in with one of my over-riding themes in this thesis: that one of the chief motivations - perhaps the main one - which underlay the Church of Ireland's work in nineteenth century Belfast, was active opposition to the Catholic Church. In other words, opposition to the Catholic church provided the stimulus for much of the preaching, the educational work, and, perhaps even the church extension work of the Established Church in Belfast in the years 1823-1870.

(d) Finance

The Church's financial support came mostly from tithes, though each parish also collected the "Church cess"[40] from everyone in the parish regardless of denomination. As mentioned above, this was used for church repairs and minor public works programmes. The tithes of a parish did not all necessarily go to the incumbent. The rectorial tithes of St. Anne's Belfast were "impropriate"; they were under lay ownership and belonged to the Marquess of Donegall.[41] The vicarial tithes went to the parish.[41] In 1787 the average income of a parish clergyman was £133.16.0. - whether he worked or not![42] A Bishpp received substantially more. The Bishop of Down and Connor had an annual income of £2,300, and it was among the lower paid of the Irish bishopricks.[42] The Board of First Fruits,[43] set up in the early eighteenth century,

provided funds for building new churches and glebe-houses.[44]

The year 1800 marked a watershed in the affairs of the Church of Ireland. Not only did she become the United Church of England and Ireland and, hence, the subject of legitimate debate in the British House of Commons, she also became subject to the influence of the Evangelical Movement. The initial impetus came from England via the Methodists, but the movement soon became "naturalised" under the leadership of such men as Rev. Peter Roe, in the South, and the Rev. Thos. Tighe in Co. Down. Evangelical enthusiasm coupled with some very necessary reforms, like the act of enforcing clerical residence for eight months of the year and the revival of the office of Rural Dean, did much to revive the flagging morale of the Church.

Neither were bricks and mortar ignored. The Board of First Fruits from 1808-22 made grants totalling £149,209 towards the building of churches.[44] Another source quotes a figure of £500,000 for the purchase of glebe lands and the building of churches.[45] One result of this increased Church activity, was a proliferation of church societies,[46] many of which had a prosyletising nature that aroused a lasting hostility among the Catholic community. The Presbyterians, however, took a different view of the new life which was beginning to pulse through the veins, and cause some ripples on the calm backwaters of the Established Church. "Since the year 1800", commented Killen, "there has been a general improvement in the state of Irish Protestantism".[47] As we shall see, from our examination of church life in Belfast, Evangelicalism, in the subsequent seventy years, took a firm hold (strangle hold?) on the Established Church.

2. The Church of Ireland in Belfast 1800-1823

The Church of Ireland in Belfast, did not feel the impact of reform, or indeed of the Evangelical movement, until the third decade of the century. The simple reason for this was that, until 1816, there was only one Anglican Church in this "Presbyterian Town",[48] and for the ensuing eleven years there were only two, both under the control of the same group of people. So, if this 'group' was not sympathetic to the tenets of Evangelicalism, then the Established Church in that parish was closed to its influence. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the clergy and Church of this period should be written off as ineffective in Belfast, as will be obvious from the following pages.

(a) St. Anne's Parish Church

The Parish of Belfast, "known by the alias appellation of Shankill",[49] was served by one Anglican church for the first sixteen years of the century. It was the church of St. Anne, built in 1778 to replace the old parish church which was in danger of collapsing. "It was built on a new site by the then Marquis of Donegal - a munificent gift"[50] at the cost of £10,001.[52] It had a seating capacity of 1,000 persons,[51] "but the seats were allotted to the then residents of the town"[52] who had the right to pass them on to succeeding generations, or to sell them. Thus, no provision was made for the accommodation of the inhabitants of the rural parts of the parish or for the very poor in the town itself.[53]

The patron of St. Anne's was its builder, and his descendants - The Marquises of Donegall, whose family name was Chichester. It would seem that the Chichesters had few qualms about using the right of patronage to forward the interests of their own family, for the Rev. Arthur C. Macartney, Vicar of Belfast from 1820-43 probably had some family ties with the patron since his middle name was 'Chichester'.[54] His successor,

the Rev. Thos. Miller,

> "... a gentleman, ... with no pretensions whatever on the ground of talent, or learning or eloquence or service rendered to the church, perhaps inferior in these respects to nine-tenths of the curates in the Diocese ..." had "... a legal right to take charge of the whole population because he had happened to purchase it from a layman".[55]

So, it is evident that the patron of St. Anne's could not only be accused of nepotism in the practice of his patronage, but also, that he laid himself open to charges of simony.

Of course, this is not to imply that, because the means of appointment to the benefice of St. Anne's was rather suspect, the appointees were automatically insincere or ineffective clergy. The establishment view of Macartney's incumbency was that he was an "excellent vicar",[56] while Miller's parishioners spoke of their 'cordial esteem' and "affectionate regard"[56] for him. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the Chichesters did abuse the patronage system.

Taking into account the influence of the Chichesters over appointments to St. Anne's, the fact that the right of nomination to the only other Anglican Church in Belfast, until 1827, belonged to the Incumbent of St. Anne's,[58] the social position of the Rev. Edward May, Macartney's immediate predecessor at St. Anne's,[57] and that there was little or no seating for the poor in either of the Churches, it becomes obvious that the Anglican Church in Belfast at this time was truly the Church of the Establishment.

Services were held in St. Anne's each Sunday at 11.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m., and according to one source, they were not well attended.

> "On those weekdays when there is a service in the parish church, nineteen seats out of twenty are quite empty - in the afternoon of Sundays it is quite the same, and at the morning service on Sundays, taking the congregations of the Churches together, on an average few will venture to say that at least one third of the accommodation which they afford is not vacant space ... it is notorious ... that there is, at all times, room too much, room to spare."[59]

A glebe house "contiguous to the parish church ... built by the Marquis of Donegall"[60] was provided rent free for the incumbent, and he lived in it for six months in the year. The remainder of the year was spent in his other benefice.[60] So he had to have at least one curate,[61] to do duty while he was away, and judging from the Vestry minutes, it was not an uncommon occurrence for the curate to be in sole charge.[62]

(i) Church Life

Some impression of church life in Belfast in these years can be gleaned from a survey of the Vestry Minutes, though since these minutes usually only refer to what would not be called Annual General Meetings, the impressions given are bound to be rather sketchy. Further, all those who paid the Parish Cess or tax, were entitled to be present at Vestry Meetings.[63] Inevitably, then, the agenda reflected the business side of the church's affairs rather than the spiritual side. Meetings are taken up with reports on the collection of the Parish Cess, on the elections of those who drew up the assessments for the Cess (the "applotters"),[64] and on complaints of those who felt they had been too highly assessed. Since everyone in the town, regardless of denomination, had to pay, there was naturally much ill feeling about the Cess. In 1823 we read this minute:

> "The members refusing to pay, having gradually increased, the parochial tax consequently became very heavy on the persons who paid their quota."[65]

Consequently, it was decided to take legal action against one Mr. Robinson of Deerpark who was refusing to pay.[65] In 1808, the amount of tax collected was £93.15.3. It increased to £388.8.4. in 1815, and by 1832 had reached £796.11.9.[66] The debit column of the parish accounts shows payments to church officials, to the schoolmaster, and for repairs of church and town clock.

Numerous references to a body calling itself "The Spring Water Commissioners" underline once again that the parish was a civil, as well as an ecclesiastical unit. Lengthy reports were given to the vestry on the costing and the progress of laying new pipes in Belfast and taking up the old wooden ones.[67] The vestry was also responsible for the election of Officers of Health - presumably the modern equivalent would be sanitation officers - and the election of a "Police Committee",[68] and the care of deserted children.

The clergy were involved in various "social aid" organisations,[69] though it is often difficult to ascertain how far they were active members of these organisations, and how far their presence on the Committee was merely in an honorary capacity as clergy of the Parish and Established Church. They were civic figures, so presumably they had to be involved in many of these societies, and their involvement was not necessarily a working out of their Christian faith. The Incumbent and the curate of St. Anne's also played their part in attempts to provide education for the poor. In 1823, their names appear in the minutes of a Committee of The Belfast Sunday School Society,[70] concerned with setting up a Sunday School in the Lancasterian school house.[70]

The power to grant compensation for injury was another of the obligations laid on the Vestry. At a meeting on June 20th 1814,

> 'The Church Wardens were appointed to settle a claim of Anthony Thompson for injury done by a riotous mob, on 12th July last, in consequence of a meeting of Orangemen in North Street.'[71]

(ii) 'Mourning Incident'

There are two other incidents in the life of the parish, one referred to in the Vestry Minutes, the other not, which give an interesting insight into the power struggles - if that is not too pretentious a term - within the Church.

On August 25th 1821, Robert Grimshaw, the then churchwarden of St. Anne's,[72] was "requested by a number of responsible parishioners to put the churches of this town in mourning, in consequence of the death of her late majesty"[73] (presumably referring to Caroline, the divorced Queen of George IV). About a fortnight later, The Newsletter reported that mourning for the late Queen had been put up in St. Anne's by the churchwardens - Grimshaw and Charley. However it had been removed by the Curate, Rev. W. St. J. Smith, on the grounds that there was no "legal order" for putting it up.[74] A Vestry meeting was called by the churchwardens to discuss the curate's action. Among those present were the Sovereign of Belfast Thos. Verner,[75] and the Marquis of Donegall, so it was obviously a matter of some importance to the town. Verner, in fact accused the churchwardens "of making the churches in Belfast places to display political feelings",[76] doubtless implying that the churchwardens by their action were indicating disapproval of George IV's divorce of his Queen. This did not seem to be the feeling of the meeting for there were "crys of No, No, No;"[76] at the Sovereign's suggestion. Mr. John Barnett[77] articulated these feelings when he said: " ... His Majesty - no matter what he might think of his Queen - could not be pleased to know her memory dishonoured by his subjects". After the curate had protested against the legality of holding such a meeting at all, the Sovereign and the Marquis of Donegal along with some others left. Those remaining passed a vote of thanks to the churchwardens for their action, and agreed to replace the mourning which the curate had removed. However, despite the will of the meeting, the Vicar, who had been away when the trouble blew up, returned, and without consulting the Vestry had Mr. Smith remove the mourning once again.[77]

The significance of this incident, aside from the point the churchwardens and people of Belfast may have been wanting to make about King

George IV's divorce, lies in the divergence of opinion it reveals between the people and the "establishment". The Sovereign, the Marquis of Donegal, the vicar and the curate presented a solid front against the churchwardens and citizens of Belfast. What is more, Rev. A. Macartney showed a callous disregard for their feelings when he and Mr. Smith removed the mourning without even consulting them. This event would not be so important in itself, had it not followed on another well reported and deep disagreement between the 'establishment' and some of the people of St. Anne's.

(iii) Proposed "Independent Church"

On January 12th 1821, there appeared in The Newsletter some correspondence on the subject of erecting a new church in Belfast. One contributor, to whom I have already referred,[78] said, the reason for the building of the new church was not lack of accommodation in St. George's and St. Anne's, since there was always room to spare in either church on a Sunday. The real reason was stated by another correspondent:

> "... the advocates and patrons of theintended new church come forward on the most substantial and legitimate grounds, and fortified with a legal opinion of the first character to claim permission to erect a place on worship in which 'they can enjoy without the probability of control the rational and scriptural privilege of appointing their own minister, imposing on themselves and their successors exclusively, every expense, both present and future, without incident to the establishment.'"[79]

This was a similar issue to that which had begun to cause more general division in the Church of Scotland, and which also was to rear its head in the English branch of the United Church of England and Ireland in the Gorham case more than twenty-five years later.[80] The issue was this: whether the parishioners were entitled to have some say in the appointment of a minister incumbent to a parish, or whether it was to be left solely to the patron. Doubtless, those correspondents to The Newsletter already mentioned, and Mr. C. Wright and his supporters in St. Anne's (the party who were pressing for an 'independent' church)

would have heartily concurred with the sentiments of the Rev. Andrew Thomson, minister of St. George's West, Edinburgh on the subject of patronage in the Church of Scotland:

> "Pure Presbyterianism supposes the election of its ministers to be sanctioned by the approbation of the people and can be no way reconciled to an institution that vests the patronage of the church in the hands of a few wealthy and powerful proprietors."[81]

At the Vestry meeting called to discuss the proposal,[82] it transpired that some parishioners considered that they had been deprived of the services of a favoured curate, Mr. Brown, by the action of that powerful 'proprietor' in whom the patronage of St. Anne's was vested - The Marquis of Donegal. They were, therefore,

> "anxious, as far as possible to avoid future mortification and disappointment, ... or being subject therein to the caprice or whim of the patron of the benefice',[83]

and so they resolved to erect and endow another church in the town of Belfast.

Various speakers addressed the meeting, despite "the tumultuous interruption" caused by "hissing and applauding the speakers on both sides".[83] The Sovereign, Thomas Verner, was once again to the fore accusing Mr. Wright, the churchwarden, of carrying off a set of chandeliers. However, it was Sir S. May who put the establishment view of the issue:

> "'The true motive' of this proposal", he claimed, "was to embody a sect under theprotection of the Established Church though differing in principles and doctrines."[83]

(Apparently it had been some of the doctrines propagated by the late curate which had led to his dismissal.) While May may have been correct in arguing that this new church would differ in some principles from the Church of Ireland, namely in its 'independence' the point about doctrine must remain unanswered, as there is little recorded discussion on doctrinal matters.

A vote was taken, resulting in a majority of 138 for those who had

proposed the erection of the new church. But again, the vicar refused to bow to the democratically expressed wishes of the majority, and instead appointed a committee to scrutinize the qualifications of the voters. The issue then disappeared from the columns of The Newsletter, though ten days later a parishioner wrote to the paper, requesting,

> "... that the churchwardens may have the goodness to communicate to the inhabitants who pay parish cess, the reason why a scrutiny into the qualifications of the voters at the late vestry has not been entered on and its issue declared; - a measure agreed by the clergyman presiding ... public faith in the churchwardens demands that no unnecessary delay should occur."[84]

Public faith in the churchwardens must have been further weakened, when it was reported on August 3rd of the same year, that it was proposed to initiate legal action against Mr. Wright, the churchwarden, for removing the chandeliers from the church![85] He defended himself by claiming that the chandeliers belonged to the dismissed curate, and that he was acting on his behalf. The charge was later dropped at the instigation of the vicar, and the whole matter laid quietly to rest.

So a possible split in St. Anne's between vicar/establishment and people had once more been averted, through the shrewdness and obstinacy of Mr. Macartney. He called for a scrutiny of the votes when the voting went against him, and quietly forgot the scrutiny; then he had the charges against Wright dropped, doubtless bearing in mind the distinct possibility that the court proceedings against theformer churchwarden might well revive the issue of the new 'independent' church.

I can find noother evidence of this kind of disagreement between 'establishment' and 'people', at parochial level at least. At Diocesan level, as I have already mentioned,[86] the divergence of opinion on various issues is a recurring theme in the history of the relationship between the Bishop of Down and Connor and his diocese. Could this be because, as the years went on, the parish clergy in Belfast became more closely identified with their people, - for good or bad - while the

Bishops remained solidly at one with the Establishment? As this thesis progresses the answer to that question will become clear.

While patronage never became such a crucial issue in Belfast, as it did in England and Scotland, probably because only a minority of the new churches built in the city had the right of nomination to them vested in a patron,[88] nevertheless it was intermittently referred to in subsequent years as being at least a cause for concern and possible reform.[87]

(b) St. George's Chapel of Ease

In 1810, it is recorded in the Vestry minute book of St. Anne's "that the sum of £50 be presented for the purpose ..." of building "a Chapel of Ease in the Borough".[89] This church, which was opened in 1816 and was listed officially[90] as The Church of Upper Falls, but was "usually styled 'St. George's Church Belfast'",[90] was built at a cost of £8,820.18.5¼d. Nearly half of this sum was given as a gift: about £1,000 as a loan by the Board of First Fruits, and the remainder by private subscription.[90] The right of nomination to this 'perpetual cure'[91] was in the hands of the incumbent of Belfast. Its income came mostly from the endowment of the rectorial tithes of Naas parish in Co. Kildare, which amounted to £126.0.0. per annum and pew rents. Like St. Anne's it made little provision for the poor, the pews being "appropriated to the subscribers".

> "In St. George's it was arranged that all subscribers of £100 and upwards should have pews assigned to them, with power to sell; subscribers of £50 upwards should have pews secured to their families in perpetuity, but without right of sale; while subscribers of £25 and upwards should have pews allotted for their personal or family use."[92]

So

> "... its seating, as far as the poor were concerned, was very small; some half-a-dozen seats were set apart for them".[93]

Bishop Mant endeavoured, soon after his arrival in the Diocese, to persuade

the pew-holders of St. George's to agree to a rearrangement of seating which would have left more room for free seating, but they were adamant in their refusal to consider his proposal. Despite its defects as regards accommodation for the poor, it was, nevertheless, an architecturally pleasing church:

> "... a splendid structure, consisting of a nave and chancel, and possessing a highly enriched and magnificent portico from Bishop Hervey's home".[94]

Its incumbents between 1816 and 1836 were the Rev. William Worthington and the Rev. William Bland, a man in good standing with the establishment.[95]

So by 1823, the year of Bishop Mant's translation to the Diocese of Down and Connor, the Established Church in Belfast, or at least the parishioners of the two existing churches, were still unaware of the needs of a population which was calculated at 37,117.[96] They did not want to face up to the implications that this rising population had for their churches, one important and obvious one being that space would have to be provided for it. It was not just the poor labourer that they chose to ignore, but also "the tithe-payers of the parish - the people by whom the Minister's income is paid".[97]

We also see a Church which at this time refused not only to respond to the needs of the increasing, unattached population, but also to the aspirations of a section of its own members. We see a church where the will of the Establishment and the Clergy coincided, and always prevailed, despite the democratic wishes of the parishioners. In more senses than one "were the spiritual necessities of the place generally" little "... understood or suspected".[98] To be fair, however, we must add that the Church of Ireland in Belfast, in these years in no way shirked its civic and social responsibilities.

Notes for Chapter II

1. J. Gamble, op. cit., p. 291.

2. R. Woodward. The Present State of the Church of Ireland - containing a Description of its precarious situation; and its consequent Danger to the Public (Dublin 1787), p. 13.

3. Ibid., p. 39.

4. Woodward, op. cit., p. 39.

5. This phrase was used in the April edition (1978) of the C.M.S. Newsletter to describe the present day Anglican Church in what was formerly a colonial situation.

6. R. B. McDowell, Irish Public Opinion and Government Policy, 1801-46, p. 19. This 'anomaly' was provided with a rationale by one Sir Archibald Alison: he remarked: "the principle of the Irish Establishment was that of a 'missionary church'; that it was never based on the principle of being called for by the present wants of the population; that what it looked to was their future spiritual necessities." Cited by J. Godkin, Ireland and her Churches, p. 149.
Godkin comments: "... the principle was based on one postulate which was unfulfilled - that the people will embrace the faith intended for them". Ibid.

7. 'The Episcopalians looked with little favour on the proposal for the relaxation of the penal laws; as these laws were of their own creation and had for generations secured them a monopoly of power and privilege.' W. D. Killen, Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, p. 303.

8. James Godkin: Ireland and Her Churches, p. 500.

9. Ibid., p. 98. Godkin op. cit. p. 461.;

10. Donald Akenson. The Church of Ireland: Ecclesiastical Reform and Revolution. 1800-1885, p. 17.

11. Ulster Journal of Archaeology Vol. III, pt. 2, Jan. 1897.
For 'Diocese of Down and Connor' see Appendix E.

12. Akenson, op. cit., p. 75.

13. 'The vacant Irish Bishopric of Waterford and Lismore was offered by the Earl of Liverpool to Dr. Mant.' Memoirs of the Rt. Rev. Richard Mant M.I.R.A., The Ven. Walter-Bishop Mant, p. 112.
(In fact, Mant never got to Waterford and Lismore, he went instead to Killaloe, the Bishop of Waterford having declined to move.)

14. Killen, op. cit., p. 332.

15. Belfast Newsletter (hereafter B.N.L.) Sept. 19th 1804 (Cited in Ulster Journal of Archaeology, op. cit.)

16. Dickson's father was a dignitary in the Irish Church and he was friendly with the Marquis of Downshire. Ulster Journal of Archaeology. op. cit.

17. Chas. Fox referred to him as one who was "a decided enemy to laws" ... which tended ... 'to deter men from the open and undisguised profession of their religious opinions by reward and punishment, by political advantages or political disabilities'. Richard Mant, History of the Church of Ireland: Vol. 11: p. 760.

18. Ibid.

19. Mant comments: "I cannot but lament whatever may have been his political sentiments, that a Bishop of the Church of Ireland should have allowed himself, if correctly reported, the use of a phrase so injurious to the character of the Church, as that of 'Catholick Emancipation'." Ibid.

20. Cited in Ulster Journal of Archaeology, op. cit.

21. On his leaving the Diocese of Down and Connor in 1823, the Newsletter made only a cursory mention of his translation to Meath. B.N.L. 28/3/23.

22. His other recorded achievement was to arrange for the portico from the Bishop of Derry's palace at Downhill to be transferred to St. George's Belfast. Pilson, op. cit.

23. Report of His Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into Ecclesiastical Revenues and Patronage in Ireland. 1838. (Diocese of Connor)

24. At one time as many as eight out of the twelve benefices in Belfast had the Vicar of Belfast as their patron, though in the majority of these cases he would have been one of a number of trustees controlling the appointment of the incumbent. What was worse from Godkin's point of view was that the Vicar of Belfast purchased his benefice from the Marquis of Donegal. Godkin, op. cit., p. 463.

25. cf. p. 43 below.

26. In 1833, through the enactment of the Church Temporalities Bill, the parish ceased to be a civil unit. It was 'disestablished'. Akenson, op. cit., p. 24. For clarification of the term 'Sovereign of Belfast', see Appendix F.

27. Patronage in Belfast, unlike in England, was controlled mostly by the Bishops. However in Belfast (Diocese of Connor) the Bishop was not the patron of any of the benefices. Ibid., p. 63. cf. Commissioners Report. 1867 op. cit.

28. J. Curran, M.P.: "Our native clergy have been obliged to do the drudgery of their profession for forty, at most fifty pounds a year". Killen, op. cit., p. 332.

29. Mant's History, op. cit., p. 779.

30. Ibid., p. 738.

31. McDowell, op. cit., p. 19.

32. Mant, op. cit., p. 738.

33. Walter Mant, op. cit., p. 193.

34. B.N.L. December 23rd 1804. Cited by R. W. Strain, Belfast and its Charitable Society, p. 53.

35. Killen, op. cit., p. 303.

36. Ibid., p. 383.

37. McDowell, op. cit., p. 19.

38. Rev. Jas. Spencer: "The Divinity Lectures in the university were all but a farce, with the merit of being a solemn one". Cited by Killen, op. cit., p. 383 (note).

39. McDowell, op. cit., p. 19.

40. Vestry Minutes of St. Anne's and St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett. Pew Rents were also to become a regular source of income in Belfast.

41. Report of His Majesty's Commissioners. 1836 op. cit.

42. cf. Derry: £7,000; Lichfield; £1,000-£1,400 p.a. Akenson, op. cit., p. 32.

43. '.... the first fruits or the profits of one year of every ecclesiastical preferment was made payable to a Board, by which they were to be applied for ever towards purchasing glebes, building houses, and buying in impropriations for the clergy.' The Board of First Fruits was later to become simply a government agency for distribution of money to the church.
T. F. Olden, The Church of Ireland, p. 337.

44. Akenson, op. cit., p. 88.

45. Killen, op. cit., p. 407.

46. The Hibernian Bible Soc., Voluntary Sunday School Soc., Religious Tract and Book Soc., Soc. for Discountenancing Vice and Promoting Christian Knowledge.

47. Killen, op. cit., p. 389.

48. Geo. Benn, op. cit., p. 383.

49. Report on Patronage and Revenue, op. cit. (1836)

50. Drew "The Church in Belfast" (Ulster Times 1838.

51. Report on Patronage and Revenue, op. cit.

52. Drew, op. cit.

53. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 231.

54. St. Anne's Vestry Minutes 1824.

55. Godkin, op. cit., p. 362. (Biassed?) Presbyterian view.

56. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette (hereafter I.E.G.) 15/10/1860 and W. Mant, op. cit., p. 232.

57. A "Sir S. May" appears in an account of a Vestry Meeting in 1821. cf. B.N.L. 19/1/21. To this day there is a 'May' Street in Belfast.

58. Report of Revenue and Patronage op. cit.

59. B.N.L. 12/1/21. A letter from a reader on the subject of a proposed new church for Belfast.

60. Report of Revenue and Patronage, op. cit., 1836.

61. cf. above p.35 of thesis. There is a reference to a curate as early as 1793.

62. St. Anne's Minutes, op. cit., the signature of thechairman at many of the Vestry Meetings over the years was that of the Curate. cf. also the Minutes for 1818: the Curate was in sole charge during the 'mourning incident' p. thesis.

63. Notice of impending Vestry Meetings was always placed on the doors of the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian 'meeting house' as well as being published in the B.N.L.

64. St. Anne's and St. Patrick's Minutes, op. cit.

65. Ibid., 1823.

66. Ibid., Cess Tax returns for the years 1808, 1815, 1832.

67. Ibid., 1832.

68. Ibid., 1824.

69. Belfast Charitable Soc. The Belfast Mechanics Institute, of which the Curate, Rev. T. D. Hincks was a director.

70. N.I.P.R.C.O. op. cit., p. 52.

71. St. Anne's Minutes, op. cit., 1814.

72. Robt. Grimshaw was also a director of the 'Belfast Mechanics Institute', founded to establish and support Lectures on such scientific subjects as are practically useful to the working classes of the community. N.I.P.R.C.O. op. cit., p. 81.

73. St. Anne's Minutes, op. cit., 1821.

74. B.N.L. 7/9/1821.

75. cf. above, p 33.

76. B.N.L. 11/9/1821. Gives a full report of the meeting.

77. Barnett was also a director of Belfast Mechanics Institute. N.I.P.R.C.O. op. cit.

78. cf. p.39. above.

79. B.N.L. 12/1/1821.

80. Owen Chadwick. The Victorian Church pt. 1, p. 253.

81. A quotation taken from the author's essay on "Scottish Evangelicals" (probable source: J. W. Craven. "Andrew Thomson" - unpublished Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis).

82. Report in B.N.L. 19/1/1821 was 'from memory'.

83. B.N.L. op. cit.

84. Ibid., 30/1/1821.

85. Ibid., 3/8/1821.

86. cf. above p. 33 .

87. I.E.G. 22/9/1869. Rev. T. Roe mentions the subject in a letter to the editor. cf. also p. 167 of thesis.

88. Report of Revenue and Patronage, 1868, op. cit.

89. St. Anne's Minutes, op. cit. 23/4/1810.

90. Report of Revenue and Patronage, 1836, op. cit.

91. cf. Appendix A.

92. MacNeice, op. cit., p. 9.

93. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 231, quoting from Drew op. cit., p. 5.

94. Pilson, op. cit.

95. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 350. Bland is described as "a gentleman ... who ... had considerable influence among his brethren".

96. Ibid., p. 230, quoting from T. Drew's letter 'The Church in Belfast'.

97. Drew, op. cit., p. 5.

98. Mant, op. cit., p. 232.

Fig. I

Map of Belfast 1822

A. The Diocese of Down

B. The Diocese of Connor.

1. St. Anne's Parish Church

2. St. George's Chapel of Ease.

See rear pocket

Fig. II

Key to Map 2 - Belfast 1870

1. St. Anne's
2. St. George's
3. St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett
4. Christ Church, Durham Street
5. St. Mary Magdalene, Donegall Pass
6. Holy Trinity, Trinity Street
7. St. Paul's York Road
8. St. Mark's Ballysillan
9. St. John's Upper Falls
10. St. Luke's Lower Falls
11. St. Mary's Crumlin Road
12. St. Stephen's Millfield
13. The Mariner's Church Corporation Street
14. St. Andrew's Hope Street
15. St. Matthew's Shankill Road.

A Down Diocese

B Connor Diocese.

See rear pocket

CHAPTER III

'The Church Concerned'

- The Church's concern for the increasing population of Belfast.
- Church thinking on 'the poor', and on the concepts of wealth and poverty.
- The working-out of the Church's concern in Church Extension.

In the eleven years between 1823 and 1834, Belfast's population virtually doubled from 32,720 to 60,763,[1] with the Church of Ireland claiming at least 16,300 of this total.[2] This increase was due to the numbers of people pouring in from the rural areas of Ulster, to provide manpower for the mushrooming industrial life of the city.[3] They were mostly people who had no experience of city life, who had been uprooted from the farms, homesteads and townlands which their families had worked and lived on for generations. Many of the Anglicans among them came from the large estates, where their denominational allegiance would usually have been that of their landlord, and where the implementation of that allegiance (i.e. regular churchgoing), would have been considered as part of their duty to their employer - a social characteristic that was carried over into the smaller manufacturing towns.[4] The severing of both the horizontal and vertical social ties of rural life, and the terrible living and working conditions which many of them had to endure,[5] must have made their former religious beliefs and practices now seem grossly irrelevant, and their close social ties seem a romantic dream. David Sheppard describes the experience of moving from the social milieu of the country to that of the city as "urban shock", and gives a graphic picture of the religious and social effects of urbanisation on the

immigrants into the English industrial cities:

> "The shock of being suddenly projected from the slow moving life of the country to the big city was by far the biggest factor in breaking the links between working men and the churches. It often broke men's links with the extended family and with every experience of the past which had connected good feelings with creation. This is not to romance about rural life. It was rural poverty which drove men to the cities, and still is. But it was infinitely harder to feel the beneficence of a Creator God if you were trapped in the world of exhausting, dangerous and erratic labour, shortage of money and ill health, than in the slow but sure seasonal changes and events of the country."[6]

Another writer, later to become a Liberal cabinet minister, described this process of urbanisation as "a race passing in bulk through the greatest change in the life of humanity".[7]

The late eighteen twenties and thirties saw the beginning and hastening of this change in Belfast. The links between working men and the churches were fast being broken, and, with only two churches, (St. George's and St. Anne's), in 1831 to cater for the needs of over sixteen thousand people, future prospects for re-establishing those links did not look at all bright.

In this chapter and the next I hope to look at how the Church tried to cope with this influx of alienated people into Belfast; first, in this chapter, in the context of Church extension and its presuppositions, and then in the following chapter in the parochial and Diocesan context. My concentration in this chapter on the role of the Church Accommodation Society may seem rather lop-sided, when the number of churches that it actually caused to be built in Belfast is taken into account and compared with the much greater number built by the Church Extension and Endowment Society nearly twenty years later. My reason for paying the former society more attention, is that the events leading up to its formation, and its dissolution give significant insights into the thinking of churchmen at the time, not only about church extension, but also about the place of the poor in society, and the role of the church. However the initial impetus towards church extension in Belfast came from neither

of these societies, but from Bishop Richard Mant, and it is to a consideration of his efforts that we now turn.

(1) Bishop Richard Mant and Church Extension

Opinions vary about Bishop Mant, from accusations of bigotry,[8] to his being one of the most zealous Englishmen that ever held an Irish bishoprick.[9] The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette gave a more considered view, when reviewing his biography by the Ven. Walter Mant (1857):[10]

> "In the long bead-roll of our Irish prelates who have been signalled by a cultivated taste, literary ability, painstaking diligence, or a faithful discharge of the episcopal office, the impartial verdict of posterity will give an honourable place to Bishop Mant."

But the reviewer goes on to make an important and revealing qualification of the fulsome praise he has just offered the Bishop. He tells us that Bishop Mant once wrote of himself:

> "'Wherever I am known, I apprehend by high churchmanship must be tolerably well known also': and so it was that his religious views found little sympathy with the great majority of the Irish clergy."[10]

This is an important comment not only because it indicates the divergence in thinking between clergy and the episcopal bench,[11] but also, and more importantly as far as this chapter is concerned, because it hints as to where Mant considered the emphasis should be placed in the church's struggle to win the new urban industrial classes. He was first and foremost a "churchman" with a very definite view as to how things should and should not be done. The main thrust of the charges he delivered during his time as Bishop, was not, so much concerned with the missionary outreach of the Church, as might be expected at a time when she was faced with an ever increasing and indifferent population, but rather with what happened inside the church building,[12] and inside the clerical study. The titles of the charges tell their own story:

"Ministerial character and occupations" (1824); "Clergyman's Obligations" (1825); "The Church the Guide of her Ministers" (1836); "The Laws of the Church the Churchman's Guard against Romanism and Puritanism" (1842).[13] In none of his writing can I find any sign of the pastoral concern for the poor and the unevangelised that characterises the writings of so many of his clergy and of his successor.[14] One gains the impression from his preaching, his charges, and from the way in which he conducted his duties in his diocese, that he was a man whose overriding interest was to preserve the doctrinal integrity of the Anglican Church in Ireland. His interest in the individuals who might be won for that church, and in the environment in which they had to live and work, seems to have been minimal. His biographer, in commenting on the Bishop's performance in the House of Lords reinforces this impression of a man who was completely wrapped up in a narrowly understood churchmanship.

> "He was not in the habit of taking any active part in the ordinary political questions of the day, nor did he ever speak in the House. On subjects affecting religion, as he felt strongly, he gave his vote when required consistently with the principles he professed as a loyal subject and a churchman; and he afterwards expressed his satisfaction, that he had had the opportunity of giving his vote against the aggressive claims of the Romanists for admission to the Legislature, which he always considered subversive of the Protestant constitution of the empire, and dangerous to the Established Church."[15]

The Catholics in the opinion of Mant, were not the only danger to the Established Church. Those other 'deviants' from the 'via media' of Anglicanism, the Presbyterians, were also to be kept at arm's length. Shortly after his translation he had occasion to reprove one of his own clergy for his tendency "to compromose" his "pwn principles to conciliate the Dissenters".[16] The Bishop recounts the incident which led up to the reproof in a letter dated December 26th 1823:

> "Yesterday I preached at a church _____, my practice being constantly to preach at some of the churches in my diocese. After I had read the Nicene Creed, what must the clergyman do but give notice of a charity sermon to be preached next Sunday at the Presbyterian meeting-house; and, in order to give his congregation the power of attending, add, that 'there would be no sermon at the church'. This was done in the perfect simplicity of his heart; and I suppose he thought my conduct as strange as I thought his, when I told him after the service, that I could not acquiesce in his congregation being deprived of their proper pastoral instruction, for the opportunity of going to a meeting house."[17]

What made matters worse was that

> "Dr. B., the minister of this meeting house, is notorious for his deviation from what used to be the doctrines of the Presbyterians, being familiarly known as the leader of the sect called the 'New Light', distinguished for their approximation, more or less, to the Socinian heresy, in the denial of the divinity of our Saviour, the Atonement, etc."[17]

Here, then, was a man, who was conscientiously doing his duty for the Irish branch of the United Church of England and Ireland. A friend of the Bishop's summed him up well on learning of his appointment to his first[18] Irish Bishoprick: "I think he would never have gone to Ireland, had bhe not been impelled, in the first instance, by a sense of duty".[19] But again it is to be emphasised that he saw his duty in terms of the church as an institution, and of guiding and directing the clergy, rather than in terms of the people who might be touched by the ministrations of the church. Within these terms of reference he performed his duties as Bishop unstintingly, giving himself over to ensuring that public worship was correctly performed, that his clergy were of blameless moral character, and that they accepted the authority of their 'Ordinary'. While this emphasis on order and authority, and his churchmanship[20] may have made Mant seem rather remote to his clergy, it was certainly not his wish that he should appear so. One of his first actions as Bishop was to invite

> "his clergy at all times to resort to him on all occasions when they might require to confer with him, and particularly fixed on one day in each week, on which he would remain at home specially to receive them".[21]

On being appointed to the Diocese of Down and Connor, the Bishop wrote to a friend that he was, "far from expecting a state of things at all comparable to any part that I have seen of England",[22] though he added that it might be an improvement on his previous station in Ireland, which had not exactly been in an area of undisturbed tranquillity.[23] Thus he did not set his hopes too high. But he was to be pleasantly surprised, for about a month later he wrote: ...

> "You ... cannot fully enter into the satisfaction and delight with which we have paid our first visit to the country where is to be our future residence.. ..... The country between this (Lisburn) and Belfast is in many parts very pleasing ...."

while Belfast itself was

> "... a very handsome town - equal to most English towns".[24]

The only reference to the progress of the industrial revolution, and its side-effects was a favourable one:

> "... they (the counties of Down and Antrim) are in fact, the centre of the linen manufacture, which appears to be the great source of industry and comparative wealth, and, not being carried on in large assemblages of persons, is said to be not attended with the same evils which mar the manufacturing districts in England".[22]

He was probably referring here to the fact already mentioned[25] that much of the spinning and weaving of cotton was at one time done in the cottages in and around Belfast, a characteristic which was soon to change with the growth of thelinen industry. Despite his unexpected admiration for his new home, his frequent, and lengthy visits to England[26] - some of them were on parliamentary duty it is true - nevertheless indicate a certain detachment as regards his diocesan commitments.

This air of detachment carries over into the church Extension sphere of his responsibilities. To Mant, as to most of his brothers on the English bench, Church Extension meant one thing - building churches.[27] They, and he assumed

> "that millions of people were absent from worship simply because churches had become inaccessible to them, and that they would be willing to become worshippers as soon as the facilities for doing so were brought within their reach."[28]

It did not occur to him, or to most of his episcopal contemporaries that

> "what was really needed was not more buildings but a reformed and reinvigorated parochial ministry relevant to the needs of the new age".[29]

Thomas Arnold's suggestion that "the first room, or the first court-yard that could be found" should be licensed, rather than wait "for money enough to build an expensive church"[30] would have fallen on as deaf episcopal ears in the Diocese of Down and Connor, as it did in Sheffield, though developments along these lines did begin to take place later in the period.

The manner in which Mant's biographer treats his church extension work only serves to heighten the reader'sfeeling that this was an area to which the Bishop gave little deep consideration. Much of the book is given over to a fairly uncritical survey of the Bishop's books, sermons and charges. The only passage which goes into any detail about the needs of the church in the largest city in the Diocese, is one quoted from a letter to a local newspaper by one of the period's most energetic incumbents, Thomas Drew.[31] So it must be assumed by his silence on the matter church extension was for him solely a practical problem, and not on a par intellectually with, for instance, "preparing and putting through the press a Translation of the Psalms into verse, from the original Hebrew".[32]

(a) St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett

But to give Mant his due, he in no way shirked the "practical problem" of church extension. In the second year of his episcopate he obtained grants for six new churches from the Board of First Fruits, one of which was to be built in the Belfast suburb of Ballymacarrett in the Diocese of Down. It was not part of Shankill (Belfast) parish, but was in the parish of Knockbreda, "at a distance from the church of the parish", and "was occupied chiefly by poor artisans, whose religious

interests had formerly been much overlooked". The Church was built at a cost of £1,500 and eventually[34] had accommodation for 560; further, there is some evidence to suggest that at least some of the "artisans" and "mechanics" for whom the church was built, did attend. In an article in the December issue of the Christian Examiner (1827) the author describes a visit to a church in Belfast which can be taken[35] to be St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett. He writes: "The church was very full, and many of the poorer classes in decent attire were present".[36] This apparently compared favourably with the Presbyterian church which only had a congregation of 150 - all "of higher class".[36] Is it unfair to wonder just how poor the "poorer classes" really were, if they were clothed "in decent attire"? Be that as it may, the fact that there were no pew rents in St. Patrick's[37] does lend some corroboration to the account in the Christian Examiner.

(b) Christ Church

The year 1829 marked the beginning of the second phase of Bishop Mant's church extension plans. At the spring and autumn meetings of the Board of First Fruits he obtained grants towards the rebuilding of two churches, and the construction of four new ones. The most important of these new churches was the one that was to be built in Belfast. We are assured by the Bishop's biographer that the grant in which he took the most lively interest, was a grant for "the building of a third church in the populous and increasing town of Belfast".[38] He was "ably seconded" in his efforts to increase church accommodation in the parish of Shankill, by "the excellent vicar" Arthur Macartney, and Thomas Hincks the curate, though the populace at large were not quite so forthcoming, many of them doubting if there was any real need for a new church.[39]

The Bishop described the need in a memorandum (1830): "The memorial of the Bishop of Down and Connor sheweth,

> 'That the population of the Parish of Belfast amounts to 50,000 of whom one quarter are supposed to be members of the Established Church.'

He went on to describe the church accommodation already available in St. Anne's and St. George's, most of which was "appropriated to particular persons or families", and so not "freely accessible to the community. ... Thus the great body of the population is precluded from joining the established church". So he proposed that "a new church or chapel of ease" should be built. It was "to contain 1500 persons, two thirds of the building being left in free sittings accessible to all persons".[40] Thus it was hoped to meet the needs of "the humbler classes, who were numerous in the district".[41] The incumbent was to be paid from the income which would accrue from "selling or letting" the remaining third of the pews, in addition to the "utterly inadequate" proceeds of the benefice.[40] This memorandum is a good illustration of Mant's purely practical approach to extending the ministrations of the church to the poor. To him it was a matter of financial backing plus bricks and mortar, and the poor would come pouring in.

Christ Church was to be built in the suburbs "at the rear of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution", on the corner of Durham Street and Towns-End Street where a site had been provided by the Marquis of Donegal. The word "suburbs" did not possess the same respectable connotations then as it does now. Walter Mant describes the site as "one of the most refuse (sic) spots in Belfast, but which, experience has shown, was the very spot for the church most usefully to be placed".[42] Dawson, later to be a curate of Christ Church, says that "the area was notorious for drunkenness", and quotes the evidence of an "officer of police" to show the magnitude of the change for the better that was effected by the siting of the new church at this particular spot:

> "... for a long time before the erection of the church he (officer of police) never could pass a Saturday night in his own house, or enjoy a peaceful Sabbath as he was required at such times to be constantly on duty quelling the riots which habitually disgraced the district ... he soon perceived the happy influence exerted by the means of grace."[40]

This "happy influence" was certainly not to be a permanent state of affairs, as we shall see in the penultimate chapter - "The Church Militant".

It could be argued that indirectly, the most significant contribution that Bishop Mant made to the movement for church extension in Belfast, was not his church building, but his agreement to the appointment of Thomas Drew to the Perpetual Curacy of Christ Church "on the nomination of the Vicar of Belfast".[43] Drew, a man of "volcanic energy" with "remarkable" powers of organisation, was just the sort of cleric needed for Christ Church with its "dense and increasing population of Protestants",[44] but the appointment was nevertheless a surprising one considering the difference in churchmanship between the two men. The Bishop's high churchmanship was well known,[44] as was Drew's evangelicalism,[45] and the fact that Mant would agree to such a man shows that he put the good of the church before ecclesiastical politics. The appointment also signified official episcopal approval in the Diocese for the Evangelical movement, which was quite a step forward, as Evangelicals had been receiving rather short shrift in Connor over the preceding two decades.[46] Drew's important role in the church extension movement will be examined in the next section of this chapter. Sufficient here to note one opinion of the crucial part he played in the movement:

> "If we see in Ulster, under conditions very similar to those which exist in England, that the population has not burst the bonds and become utterly infidel or heathen, there is no one to whom the honour of retaining the people in the church is more justly due than"[47] ...

Thomas Drew. Whether he actually retained as many people as is implied by the writer is open to question, but there is no doubting that he was

the prime mover in church extension over the next ten years.

With the appointment of Drew to Christ Church, Mant now had less to do with the building of new churches in Belfast. Though he was still necessarily involved as Bishop, it was the energetic minister of Christ Church who now took the initiative. In assessing this first phase of church extension what we might call "The Mant Phase" - we must be wary of the wisdom that comes from hindsight. By the standards of his day he conscientiously performed his duties to the unchurched - obtaining money to build churches for them. It is true to say that as far as the Bishop was concerned, the insights of such a man as Thomas Arnold were ignored, but then they were also ignored by his contemporaries in England, at least until the eighteen fifties.[48] Richard Solloway's criticism of the English bishops of the pre-1850 era - that they concentrated on providing "Physical" rather than "spiritual" space for the poor - may well be true for Mant as well. But then it would also be a valid criticism of many present day bishops.

Mant's primary interest was in church doctrine and liturgy, and he did try to impress on his clergy the important place that these subjects should hold in their personal and professional lives.[49] He must, therefore, be given credit for not allowing these interests to override his more practical responsibility to the every increasing poor population of Belfast, and if he was indifferent to their physical needs, then it simply confirms that he was a man - or Bishop - of his time. His willingness to ignore party-labels left the way clear for the appointment of a man who had a deep and practical concern for the poor and unchurched in the broadest sense, and even if that had been all Mant had done to extend 'The Kingdom' in Belfast, he would still be worthy of honourable mention. It is only to be regretted that this ability to rise above party divisions deserted him ten years later.

(2) Thomas Drew and Church Extension in Belfast (1833-43)

(a) Drew and his 'Theology of Poverty'

Thomas Drew was not an Ulsterman by birth. He was born in Limerick at the turn of the century. Twenty-seven years later he was ordained for the curacy of Broughshane, a village near Ballymena in County Antrim, where he is supposed to have increased the numbers on the Sunday School roll from 300 to 1200. He combined his evangelicalism with a staunch political conservatism, and his alliance with that great Presbyterian evangelical minister of the day, Henry Cooke, ensured that in the election following the 1832 reform bill, "Ulster was .. entirely won to conservatism",[50] though it must be added that it is doubtful whether his involvement in politics would have been smiled on by his Bishop. His membership of the Orange Order was - and is in the context of contemporary Ulster politics - a natural concomitant of his conservatism and perhaps even of his evangelicalism. However he was the "best specimen of an Orangeman - free from the hatred and bitterness which disfigure too many of the rank and file",[51] - an assessment that surely would have been questioned by The Commission of Enquiry into the riots in Belfast 1857-58. Nevertheless the fact that Bishop Knox, a liberal in politics, should promote Drew to the Precentorship of Down, in recognition of his "zeal and labours in Belfast" and his "devotedness and attachment to our church"[52] indicates that, while his evangelical zeal may at times have carried him beyond the bounds of propriety and Christian love as regards Catholics, he was officially considered to have played a prominent role in the advancement of the Church of Ireland among the poor of industrial Belfast.

There is little doubt about his practical concern for the poor and their environment,[53] but the theological and sociological basis of that concern implied that for the poor there was no way out of their misery. On the contrary they were to accept their God-ordained place in society

and even be thankful for its advantages. Of course it was not exceptional for a cleric of the pre-1850 period to come to such a conclusion. He was merely accepting contemporary church thinking on the matter - what we might call the 'official theology of poverty'.

Drew's 'theology of poverty' is clearly stated in a sermon published in The Irish Pulpit (1839) with the title: 'The Rich and the Poor'. His text was not surprising:

> "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up." (I Sam. ll, 7)[54]

He interpreted the text as meaning that God had ordained that some are created rich and others poor, and there was little that anyone could do about it.

> "The politician may seek to ameliorate the condition of the poor, but poverty will be the condition of some portion or other of mortality while sin is the companion of man."[55]

This was a commonly held view at the time. In Edinburgh Andrew Thomson propounded similar ideas from his pulpit:

> "There are differences of human condition; and if among these it has fallen to your lot to be elevated above others, that gives you certain advantages which are denied to them, and certain claims which they are not entitled to prefer."[56]

But even if it was the happy (?) lot of some to be "elevated above others" it certainly did not mean that rich and poor went their separate preordained ways, and lived out their separate lives. For

> "Mankind are encircled by bonds which unite them powerfully; the chain of gold may go forth from the rich, manacling the poor, as auxiliary to his comforts; but equally from the poor do the fetters of iron grapple the rich man and yoke him to the poor.... All are taught their dependence."[57]

Drew's words are nearly an exact echo of George Pelham's - Bishop of Bristol - twenty years earlier:

> "The happy people of this Kingdom enjoy the best security: ... where the elevated situations, which wealth or power give, must be supported by the industry and labour of the indigent: and where they, on the other hand, receive protection and comfort from those whose situation they do materially uphold."[58]

It is interesting to note that this maxim or principle of the interde-

pendence of rich and poor for the prosperity of the former and the support of the latter, formed the basis of a layman's argument as he attempted to convince his fellow industrialists of their obligation to provide financial assistance for church extension in Belfast. Sir Robert Bateson argued:

> "It was only by the efforts of their poorer brethren that Belfast merchants had been able to make such large fortunes; when the poor now needed their assistance had they not the right to call upon the wealthy merchants of the town to give them that assistance ...? It was their duty to study how to promote the temporal and eternal interests of the poorer classes of the empire; for the wealthy could never be independent of them: (my underlining) they depended on them for that very wealth which they enjoyed."[59]

Drew considered that poverty was a blessing to the poor man, for the only temptations that might assail him were of the kind that would "drive him to God"; his constant need could create an attitude of dependence on God.

> "He that must go daily to the fountain, cannot forget that such a fountain exists:[60] ... and he whose wants send him hourly to the Giver of living waters, is less likely to forget his benefactor."[60]

On the other hand the type of temptation which came to the rich man often lead him "farther and farther from God".[61]

True happiness for the poor man was a direct consequence of him accepting his "true position". Further, it was a "true philosophy worthy of being purchased at any price"[62] which would correct the commonly held view that his "condition were altogether disreputable" and that "he were hardly dealt with".

Drew was certain that the solution to poverty did not lie in education, for "resources of a merely intellectual kind fall short of the mark."[63] Not only did they fall short of the mark, they had subversive tendencies! "Literary societies", he said "have been instituted: these may have made men more skilful operatives, but they have made many dissatisfied with their

proper station in life, querulous of imaginary wants, and insubordinate to their employers".[63] However Drew is not here condemning education as such, for, as we shall see, he was a pioneer of the Church Education Society. Rather, he is voicing his suspicions of what might today be called Adult Education - the sort of education which was probably provided by the "Belfast Working Classes Association for General Improvement",[64] which in his eyes, "gives men ready facilities for conspiring against their own interests here, and of neglecting their happiness hereafter".[65] Similar doubts as to the "eternal" worth of societies "which made many dissatisfied with their proper station in life" were voiced by Church of England clergy when they preached to the Chartists who had paraded to the parish churches of the industrial cities during their "Sacred Month"[66] in August 1839. One preacher in Sheffield preaching on the text "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change" (Prov. 24) advised the men against "the wickedness ... they were pursuing,"[67] ... and "exhorted to a serious and diligent pursuit of those better things which the Gospel of Christ held out to them".[68]

"Those better things" offered by the Gospel, are, according to the Perpetual Curate of Christ Church: in this life "endurance", "for endurance worketh good", and anticipation of "the grave and the resurrection as heralds of termination to suffering and of admission into the joy of the Lord".[69] Holding such a view as this, small wonder that he asks: "Take this (Gospel) away, and what is life? What solace, what remedy, what hope, what philosophy, can render it endurable under privation and sorrow?"[70] Thus the poor man is encouraged to look for "solace", not in the emulation of the rich, not "in meddling with them who are given to change", but in the life hereafter where his suffering would cease, and he would be admitted "into the joy of his Lord".

Though, as has already been said, there is no doubt about the concern which he had for, and the energy which he devoted to, the problems of the poor, during his ministry in Christ Church, his 'theology of poverty' ruled out any thought of permanent change in the social or economic status of the poor. Drew held these views in common not only with other churchmen, but also, significantly enough, with millowners and industrialists, for it is on the principle already enunciated, that true happiness for the poor man is only to be found in heaven, that Dr. Andrew Ure based his book Philosophy of Manufactures (1835). He maintained that in order to transform self-willed workmen into "various mechanical and intellectual organs, acting in uninterrupted concert for the production of a common object",[71] they had to be imbued with a strong sense of discipline. Since immediate temporal gain was not a real option for encouraging such a strict discipline, as it would reduce the profit margin, workers had to be encouraged to think in terms of more long term benefits. So factory/mill owners were recommended to inculcate "the first and great lesson ... that man must expect his chief happiness, not in the present, but in a future state".[72] Theology and economics came together, and the result of that unholy alliance, as far as the poor man was concerned, can be summed up in one word - the wordthat Drew used i n his sermon - "endure". Endure poverty, bad housing, sweated labour, a high mortality rate, "For endurance worketh good": accept your situation in this life, no matter how bad it is, and you will have 'pie in the sky when you die'.

(b) Drew and Church Extension - Letter to 'Belfast Chronicle' 8/9/38

Though Drew's 'theology of poverty' did not allow for much material improvement in the lot of the poor, this in no way dampened his enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel among them. I n fact, it could well be argued that the exact opposite was the case. For surely it was this very belief, that the Gospel was, for the poor, the only ray of light at

the end of the long dark tunnel of earthly drudgery, that lent such urgency to his ministry in Christ Church, and his work in the field of church extension.

His urgency in the latter area was expressed in a letter which appeared in the Belfast Chronicle on September 8th 1838. In it he wrote that: "the subject of this publication" (the state of the Established Church in Belfast) is "of deep and paramount importance, to all who claim a name for benevolence, and to all who take an interest in immortal souls; but it is of unspeakable importance to members of the Established Church."[73] He traced the industrial growth of Belfast, and the consequent increase in population, which he estimated at the date of writing to be 60,763, of which 16,338[74] were members, or potential members of the Established Church. Actually his population estimate was rather a conservative one, as the 1841 census report gives the population as 75,308,[75] so his estimate of members of the Established Church may also be rather low. He calculated that the three churches already in existence in Belfast only provided "in round numbers" accommodation for 4,000 worshippers.

> "Here then is a melancholy fact. More than 15,000 souls yet to be provided with shelter. It is futile to call this exaggeration"

he claims angrily -

> "it is absurd to say that, if other churches were built, similar to Christ Church with greater proportions of the sittings free, that the poor would not willingly flock to them".[74]

(words underlined are printed in italics in the letter, which implies either that people doubted the wisdom of free seating, or were sceptical of the desire of the poor to attend a church if it were built[76] - or both!). Drew assured his readers that no one "understands better than I, the feelings of a poor man" who is able to attend a church and receive "ministerial oversight". He then enquired of the hopefully "benevolent"

members of the Established Church, "if they have ever experienced the slight of being refused admittance into a seat in a place of worship - or worse, far worse, and more galling - were they ever turned out of a pew into which they had strayed?"[77] The consequence of not providing a "welcome into our churches on Sundays", or "pastoral care" for "the hundreds of the poor" was that "they usually lie in bed during the greater part" of the Lord's Day, ... "while it is to be feared, many congregate at the ale-house and whiskey-shop, and waste the day in low debauchery".[77] He even lapsed into verse in order to depict just what the indifference of a Christian society had done to the poor man's religious sensibilities:

> "Long years the poor man lay despised, unknown,
> With stern indifference familiar grown;
> His little light and love grown cold and dim,
> And Sunday shined no sabbath day for him:
> Idly he sought the hearth, the field, or quaff'd
> With base compeers, th'intoxicating draught."[78]

Concern was also voiced for "poor diseased souls in the rural parts of this parish", who were unable to have a minister call. From personal experience, Drew knew "three days to pass away, under the urgency of town duties, ere a minister could go out to visit them".[79] Even in his own parish there is a district in which "the sick are neglected, and the poor unvisited" and though the church may be full on Sunday, "what of the thousands that come not forth?"

Drew argued that in respect of churches, Belfast compared unfavourably with both Limerick, Cork and some "towns in England" all of which have more churches for a smaller Episcopal population. He admitted that some provision had been made in the form of "houses of prayer",[80] which, as little "chapels of ease" might have afforded an opportunity of "bringing the Gospel before the poor man in time of health" but they would not have been of much use to him when he was confined at home because of sickness. So what was needed as well as a building programme, were extra ministers to make contact with the people.

He took the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to task for withholding a grant of £950 made "upwards of six or seven years ago", towards the building of a chapel in connection with "a Magdalene Asylum"[81] until they were certain that a clergyman could be adequately maintained. He accused them of standing "upon legal crotchets", of debating about "paper niceties", especially in view of the fact that the church had been promised a small endowment, and that at least two thirds of the seating would bring in income from pew rents. Like true church bureaucrats they "want assurance doubly assured".

To sum up, the battle for church extension had, according to Drew, to be fought on two fronts: the first and most important - that of the lack of clerical manpower (in 1848 there were "but four in all, working ministers of our body"[82]) and secondly that of church building. Progress could be made on both these fronts if a Church Extension Society was formed, which would campaign for the erection of new churches, and men to staff them. The letter is concluded with two appeals: one, to his readers to grant of their "abundance" to the erection of additional churches for the poor of Belfast; and the other to God, that the preordained social system might work as it was ordained by Him towork: "that the cry of the poor may come into his sanctuary, and that the rich may melt as one man into a holy union of love, and energy, wisdom and devotedness".[83]

This letter is evidence of achanging attitude within the Established Church towards the poor and church extension in Belfast. In Thomas Drew, we have the first recorded instance[84] of a cleric who actually seems to have made contact with the poor on a person to person basis. Whereas, before, the poor were looked on rather impersonally as pew fodder, here was a man who was prepared to go out and meet them, even if it was only to ask them what they did on Sunday.[77] Heseems to have had some idea of how the poor had to live, and to have been aware of the terrible image such customs as ownership of pews gave to the church in the eyes of the

poor.[77] He also broke new ground when he declared: "it is not merely church accommodation (italics) that the poor require .."[79] but as well as this, "the sympathy and counsel of a pastor". New churches were important but good pastors to staff them were equally important. Finally we note the adoption of what we might call the "voluntary" principle for the financing of new church building. Bishop Mant had been very much of the view that it was the responsibility of the legislature to provide the wherewithal for church extension.[85] Drew's letter marked a new departure in this respect, in that he made a general appeal to the "ready generosity" of churchmen - churchmen who, he claimed were only too willing to contribute.[86] Time was too precious to be wasted waiting on such government agencies as the Board of First Fruits to cross their 'ts' and dot their 'is'. With a Church Extension Society

> "these things would not be let drop; what is available would be secured - new ground broken up - public sympathy excited, and public confidence confirmed - yes, all would unite".[86]

This appeal to churchmen has a further significance, for this was the first time that a general appeal had been made directly to the laity of the church - admittedly a small and select section of them - to play their part in furthering the mission of the Established church in Belfast. This desire for lay involvement was, interestingly enough considering contemporary thinking on the subject, to be stressed with increasing frequency over the next thirty years.

It would be wrong to give the impression that Thomas Drew's letter to the Belfast Chronicle was the only instance of articulated concern about church extension in the Diocese during the years 1833-38. The letter was, rather, the culmination of a series of initiatives made mostly by the clergy with the approval of the bishop; but which obviously fell short of meeting the requirements of Drew's "perishing souls".

(c) Church Home Mission

As early as 1828, the Christian Examiner and Church of Ireland Magazine noted with "sincere pleasure" the founding of the "Church Home Mission". The aim of the Mission was "to exert "themselves" at the present moment in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to all within the country who are ignorant and out of the way";[87] with special reference to the "Roman Catholic population". They intended to achieve this aim "by availing themselves of the occasional labours of employed and beneficed persons", and of clergy who would be prepared to devote all their time, to preaching not only "in such pulpits of the Establishment as may be opened to them" but "to address their Roman Catholic brethren in such other places as it shall be found possible to collect them in".[87] It was this last clause that caused problems, for after a time representatives were being sent to dioceses and parishes without the prior permission of either the incumbent of the parish, or the Bishop of the Diocese. This caused alarm among some of the Bishops, notably Bishop Elrington of Ferns and Leighlin, and the Bishop of Down and Connor, who addressed a charge to his clergy on the subject entitled, "Episcopal Jurisdiction asserted, as the Law of the Church, and the Rule of the Clergy's Ministrations" (1834). In it he claimed that "the order of the Church was broken, and her discipline abrogated by the "unlawful ministrations" of these trespassing clergy, and further "that prayer, the great business of religious worship was discountenanced; and that the formularies of public worship were mutilated or abandoned".[88] Permission, if it had ever been granted, was thereby withdrawn from any members of the Mission operating in his diocese.

(d) Clergy Aid Society

Although the Home Mission was from now on banned there still remained several clergy in Down and Connor who approved of its proceedings, and an

even greater number who agreed with the main assumption on which its formation rested - that something over and above normal church activities was needed if church extension was to be really effective. In 1836, some of these clergy, one of whom was Drew,[89] petitioned the Bishop that some sort of extra effort, say in the form of a Diocesan Mission, should be organised. At first, "the whole proposal appeared to the Bishop an uncalled-for and unauthorized interference with his jurisdiction"[90] but he later withdrew from this authoritarian position due in the main to some politicking by Drew, and after an assessment of the needs of the Diocese had been made, the "Down and Connor Clergy-Aid Society"[91] was set up, with the Bishop as President. Its objects were: to provide additional clergyman in areas where they were needed, but under the control of the incumbents in whose parishes they worked; and as a "temporary expedient" to organise "occasional visits of clergymen to such districts ... as seemed most to require them", but again only with the express permission of parochial minister.

As well as the Bishop being President, the committee included Drew, as Secretary (he resigned a year later in 1838 due to pressure of work), Messrs. MacIlwaine, Oulton, Courtney and the Archdeacon of Down, Walter Mant.[91] The activities of the Society in Belfast, according to its First Annual Report, met with no small measure of success. Nine preaching "stations" were set up in Belfast, and of these,

> "Whiterock, Springfield, Ardoyne and Lepper's Mill stations are in a very cheering state; the only thing complained of by our correspondents is want of room: the first three stations being in private houses are crowded to suffocation.... The station of Upper Falls is doing very well. The average attendance is stated to be about 100."[91]

This account of the work of the Clergy-Aid Society was given only six years after Thomas Arnold's letter to the Editor of the Sheffield Courant was published.[30] In the letter, as has already been noted,[92] Arnold suggested that rather than wait for money to finance churches,

rooms and courtyards should be licensed for worship, when parish churches were too small or too remote for the inhabitants of the parish. It would seem then, that some of the clergy in the Diocese, if not its Bishop,[93] realised that there was more to church extension than simply building churches, and that what was important was contacting the people where they were, rather than where they ought to be (i.e. in a large impersonal parish church). In adopting this policy of licensing private houses for worship, the Down and Connor Clergy-Aid Society may well have been the first church society to follow Arnold's advice, albeit unknowingly. They also anticipated some of Horace Mann's proposals[94] by nearly sixteen years, and predated Scotland's first 'ragged' church by ten.[95]

A final point that should be noted about the Clergy Aid Society is its similarity, in principle, to the "Church Home Mission". They both set out to provide the same sort of service to the "unchurched"; they both hoped to implement this proposal by the use of additional clergy to those already in the area; and they both were

> "prepared to address their .. brethren (Roman Catholic, in the case of the Home Mission) in such other places as it shall be found possible to collect them in".

The only real, and admittedly important difference, was that the Clergy Aid Society insisted on the "concurrence" of the local clergy before they would send anyone in. What it seems to amount to is this: the Clergy Aid Society was simply the Church Home Mission Society by another name, with one important difference - it was now, with the Bishop as President, under episcopal authority, and so had to act in accordance within the rules of diocesan etiquette. Thus the 'Home Mission' sympathisers[96] had got what they wanted, and what was even better, they had got it with the approval of the Bishop.

It was just a few days before the annual meeting of the Down and Connor Clergy Aid Society (11/9/1838), the report of which has been

referred to above, that Drew's letter was published in the Belfast Chronicle. Indeed, taking into account that the Clergy Aid Society had become so successful in 'bringing the Church to the people' that its various premises were proving too small, and that Drew was its secretary, it would seem reasonable to assume that it was the experience gained from working with the Society which led him to write the letter.

The letter was published in pamphlet form, and received a wide distribution, and was doubtless instrumental in convincing influential members of the public of the need for more clergy and the erection of additional churches for the poor of Belfast. Drew's guiding hand can also be seen in a resolution of the Clergy Aid Society drawn up at the annual meeting just mentioned. It had become evident that "the very machinery" of the Society, "was insufficient for want of fit places to worship". In other words, the new, growing congregations which had been "revealed" by the pioneer work of the Clergy Aid Society in private homes and school houses, now demanded permanent church accommodation. The forming of a Society specifically for church building purposes was then suggested and it was agreed that:

> "... an effort should be made for this purpose, by consulting the most influential and wealthy members of the Church, both laymen and clergy, in the diocese, in order to ascertain what prospect there might be of supplying by private benevolence those wants in regard to places of worship, which there was no hope of supplying from any public funds."[97]

A petition to this effect was drawn up, signed by all those who were in favour, and presented to the Bishop, requesting that he convene a meeting of the diocese to "take this matter into practical consideration".

(3) The Church Accommodation Society - Its formation, its work and its dissolution (Church Extension 1838-43).

(a) The Formation of the Church Accommodation Society (1838)

The petition and the request to convene a meeting to discuss the subject of the petition was acted on by Bishop Mant without delay. A meeting was called for Wednesday, December 19th 1838, and a committee was formed to make the necessary arrangements. The Bishop and his committee soon realised that no public room in Belfast would be large enought to accommodate all who intended to be present, and so it was agreed that Christ Church, "the largest church in Belfast" should be the venue. On the day of the meeting the church was packed,[98] not only by the "nobility, clergy, and gentry" but also by a "large body of mechanics" the former occupying the galleries, the latter the "body of the Church".

The meeting was first addressed by the Lord Bishop. In his speech, having thanked the audience for their presence, he drew attention to "thefairer prospects, which, notwithstanding the privations of the parochial clergy, appear to be breaking on the Church".[99] In this regard he alluded to the "recent institution of a 'Diocesan Education Society'",[100] the "silent and unostentatious" work of the "Clergy-Aid Society", and the newly formed "Additional Curates' Fund Society".[101] Reference was also made to the paucity of government funds for church building, a state of affairs which had come about after the Board of First Fruits had been annulled, and superseded by the Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners. In the course of the first nine years of his episcopate, before the annullment of the former Board, eleven new churches had been built, and seven renovated. In the intervening years, despite two petitions to parliament, the Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners had "produced little advantage" building only one new church, with the help of private contributions, and

renovating one other, though he hurriedly added that this was in no way a "censure" of the Commissioners, for they suffered from having inadequate means to discharge their "very heavy duty". If new churches were still to be built, the Bishop concluded that the only means of funding them was by our own "exertions", and so he commended the proposed society to the meeting as having "the most powerful and imperative claims" on its support.

The varied reasons that other speakers gave for supporting the formation of a church accommodation society, give some interesting insights into contemporary theological and sociological attitudes. Sir Robert Bateson[102] M.P. spoke of the duty that the rich had towards the poor. The poor by their efforts had created the wealth of the rich, and so the "wealthy merchants of the town" were now morally obliged to come to the assistance of the poor in their time of spiritual need. Thus, as has already been noted, Bateson adapted Drew's "theology of poverty" to the particular situation.[102]

A cleric, Rev. H. Smyth of Carnmoney appealed to the self-interest of the rich:

> "... let not the Lord be tempted on account of our unfaithfulness - on account of our selfish indifference to those who are perishing around us for lack of knowledge; let Him not be tempted to give wings to the abundance with which he has blessed us, that it may fly away from us."[103]

These words of course bear with them the implication that God rewards faithfulness with material prosperity, a principle that John Wesley[104] also recognised, but nevertheless deplored because of the way in which it undermined what he called "the spirit" of religion. Smyth also observed that "there were members of our several churches .. who readily and liberally responded to the calls made upon them for evangelizing the Heathen;"[105] but were not so keen when presented with the heathen at their own front door; "... it might be", he shrewdly contends,

> "that missionary exertion, as exercised amid the darkness of Heathenism and in a foreign clime, was ennobled and rendered more interesting than the near and rugged outline of every-day pastoral duty, when performed among nominal Christians, at our own doors."[105]

"Moral degradation" and "social corruption" were the main concerns of Emmerson Tennent M.P. He obviously was of the opinion that religion was first and foremost a civilising influence on society. The twin evils just mentioned, he argued, "cannot fail to extend ... throughout the entire body politic in a state of society where such spiritual destitution obtained",[106] as in Belfast. Both he, and fellow M.P. G. Dunbar, had never realized "the lamentable want of church accommodation that existed in Belfast", until they had been put in the picture by Drew. Tennent estimated that in Belfast alone twenty additional churches were needed, "and as many zealous and faithful ministers"; so that city would present the proposed society with an "ample field for their munificence and their exertions". He concluded his speech by moving the following resolution which was seconded by the Hon. and Rev. H. Ward:

> "That with the view, under the Divine Blessing, of supplying this unhappy deficiency of Church Accommodation, a Society be formed, to be called the 'Down and Connor Church Accommodation Society'."[107]

The resolution was unanimously agreed to. G. Dunbar proposed the adoption of "the Rules and Regulations of the Society"[108] whose object was to provide additional churches or enlarge already existing ones, and to raise funds for this work by donation.

The quality of the men who were to staff these additional churches was another issue that came up for discussion. According to Drew, a lot of anxiety existed in certain quarters "on the subject of those who were to be ministers". The root of the trouble was the abuse of the patronage system. In certain instances "family aggrandizement" was being made "to predominate at the expense of the glory of God" and he further assured his listeners "that to the appointment of unworthy and unfit ministers may be traced the origin of thedisaffection, disloyalty, and infidelity of the land".[109] So he condemned nepotism and favouritism, and called for

ministers "who will care for souls and love the poor and feed the lambs and do the work of the ministry to the glory of God".[109] Compared with the other speakers, Drew once again revealed his personal knowledge and experience of the situation on the ground. He gave the statistics "a human face". He illustrated the religious alienation[110] which affected many of the poor after they had made the move from country to city, with an account of an individual who called at this house and said:

> "I have walked up and down before your door this half hour afraid to knock at it, I was afraid to speak to you; we hear your church clergy are so high; but I heard tell that you are a poor man's minister, and I called to ask you to see my wife, and my brother's wife also - they are dying on the hills near the town; yet I pay tithe and church cess etc."[111]

The incumbent of Christ Church made one other extremely significant observation. He said that the movement for procuring church accommodation was not a one-sided affair - the church authorities considering that the poor and unchurched ought to have churches to attend. He argued that the increase in work-load in his own parish since the time of its formation was due not only to the increase of factories and people in the area, but also to the fact that the people, observing the work that was going on in and around Christ Church, were beginning to see "the value of religion".

> "... before this, the life of the heathen and the death of a dog was the history of the lives and deaths of many - they did not seek the minister, and though the minister might have been ever so active, he must not expect unless he has church room, that he can excite a deep feeling on behalf of religion; but by degrees the feeling arose, it was deemed necessary to have the visits of the minister in health, but especially in time of sorrow, sickness and death."[112]

Thus the rising religious expectations of the poor necessitated urgent action, for "never was there a time when so much was expected of us" (the clergy).

A note of political protest was also evident in the speeches of some of the clergy. Archdeacon Mant, who seemed to have done much good work

behind the scenes for the cause of church extension,[113] made s trong protest against Lord John Russell's initially successful attempt[114] to revive the notorious "appropriation clause" by which revenue from the Irish Church could be diverted to secular purposes. The Archdeacon called it a "monstrous injustice" and related to his audience how "he determined to show that in this diocese, at least, there would be no surplus left after supplying the wants of the people within the church's pale".[115] Accordingly he drew up a petition indicating the great needs of the church in the diocese, and it was presented - "hopelessly".

The Rev. Mr. McIlwaine employed more emotive rhetoric to endorse the Archdeacon's point;

> "Storms involving the very existence of the church were raging around their heads; they were threatened with spoliation - demolition - destruction - annhilation."[116]

Though MacIlwaine's comments on this topic bear some affinity with those of the Tractarians,[117] it would seem to be merely coincidental, for he claimed that not only was the church being attacked from without by the government, but that "there were enemies in the very camp - enemies in headquarters - even in the University of Oxford".

The meeting ended with the singing of the 100th Psalm, and the pronouncement of the benediction by the Bishop. Subscriptions received at the meeting itself amounted to £4,500, Bishop Mant having made a personal donation of £100. Six months later that sum had risen to £13,540.[118]

Before reviewing the work of the Down and Connor Church Accommodation Society, it might be helpful to summarise briefly the characteristics of the movement for church extension as revealed by the events leading up to the formation of the Society.

Once the funds from the Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners began to dry up, the impetus behind church extension came increasingly from

the clergy and laity, rather than the Bishop. The first steps in the setting up of both the Clergy Aid Society, and the Church Accommodation Society,[119] were taken by parochial clergy who petitioned the Bishop on both occasions, presumably when they felt they had enough support. The irritation of the Bishop at the initial approach made to him about the Clergy Aid Society[120] may well have indicated a certain pique at being told what to do by his clergy, a novel turn of events both for him, and most of his brother bishops in the United Church of England and Ireland. This is not to say that he was not committed to the church extension movement, merely that he was an authoritarian bishop who found it difficult to deal with the evangelistic fervour of his clergy. The close involvement of his brother the Archdeacon of Down (Robert Mant) doubtless ensured that the Bishop was kept up to date on the day-to-day affairs of the Church Accommodation Society.

The appeal to the generosity of the laity, along with the determination to be independent of government aid are perhaps signs of the willingness of the Church to stand on her own feet; of an incipient maturity which was to blossom in the post-disestablishment era.

There was definitely an increased and informed concern for the poor. Drew was known as a "poorman's minister" - though admittedly there was no independent corroboration of this title! But again the concern tended only to be about their lack of church facilities, which if they were provided, would encourage them to be content with their lot in life. Improvement of that lot was not an issue, though to be fair to Drew he did initiate schemes in his parish (as we shall see in the next chapter) which seemed to belie his stance on the need for a poor man to accept his poverty.

Perhaps the most unfortunate feature of the movement for church extension, was the anti-Tractarian emphasis introduced by Rev. Wm.

MacIlwaine, for it was this which caused a split in the movement, contributing eventually to its dissolution.

Finally, some advice appeared in the correspondence column of the Ulster Times which the members of the Church Accommodation Society would have done well to note. It appeared in a letter from "a Protestant Layman" writing to promote "The Assistant Curates" Fund Society (presumably not realising that the Additional Curates Fund was already in existence), and he made the important point that whatever plan of church extension was adopted, "let it be the work of ALL classes of the community, and not confined to the wealthy only". He went on to say that he believed that the reason why many of "our places of charity - especially those whose object is of a spiritual nature - often fail," is "simply because the sympathies and co-operation of the poorer classes are not enlisted in the good cause".[121] Unfortunately for the church it was advice which was not taken, and a possible chance of bringing the poor in "on the ground floor" of church extension was lost.

(b) The Work of the Church Accommodation Society in Belfast

On account of the arrangements made for the payment of donations, the Society was from the outset only to have a limited duration. The "Final Report" stated:

> "The plan of the Down and Connor Church Accommodation Society having provided that the donations of its members might be paid in one sum, or in four yearly instalments, the period of four years became thereby almost certainly fixed as the limit of the Society's duration."[122]

Those who contributed £300 or more were made Patrons of the Society, and they included the Marquises of Hertford, Downshire and Donegal, Sir Robert Bateson and John McNeile. Subscribers of £100 or more, automatically became Vice-Patrons, numbering about forty in all, including such names as Rev. Robert W. Bland, The Viscount of Dungannon, James Goddard and William Wilson.[123] Goddard was elected treasurer, and the Messrs.

Thomas Walker (Curate of St. Anne's) and John S. Maunsell (later to be Chaplain of The Magdelen Asylum), honorary secretaries, The Messrs. William MacIlwaine, C. S. Courtney and Thomas Drew, among others served on the Committee. Charles Lanyon was appointed Honorary Architect. The total amount of cash raised by the Society came to £15,844, though about one third of this, £5,525, was contributed for special purposes, so the committee had only about £10,300 to spend without strings attached.[124] However the author(s) of the 1843 report maintained that the real value of the contributions made to the Society was more like £32,000 if the value of the ground given for the sites of sixteen churches, the amount spent by individuals on ornaments and fittings, and the "sums appropriated for endowments in the cases of seven of the churches"[124] were taken into account. But even this sum compares unfavourably with the £200,000 reported by Bateson to have been raised by Thomas Chalmers,[125] and the £125,000 subscribed to Blomfield's fund by 1839,[126] though it is difficult to make an accurate comparison due to the disparity in population of the three cities, and also in support for the respective established churches.[127]

Bearing in mind the emphasis that was given to Belfast and its lack of church accommodation at the "Great Meeting for Church Extension" in Christ Church, it seems strange that of the twenty grants made from the society's funds, only four went to church extension work in Belfast. These consisted of £1,000 to the Magdalene Asylum Chapel, £180 to St. Matthew's Chapel, £300 to St. Anne's Chapel of Ease, and £830 to Holy Trinity.[128] What it amounted to was that the society only managed to provide about 2,500 additional sittings in Belfast,[129] against the 15,000 souls that Drew mentioned "as needing shelter". Further, three of these grants were made to churches or buildings already in existence. The grant to the Magdelene Chapel was made to complete it and fit it up for divine service; St. Matthew's Chapel had originally been one of Drew's

schoolhouses, and the Society's £180 was used to convert it; and the St. Anne's Chapel of Ease was a former Methodist "Preaching house". So only one new church appeared in Belfast as a direct consequence of the efforts of the Church Accommodation Society, and of the £3,494 2s. 4d. needed to build Holy Trinity Church,[130] the Society gave less than one third, the remainder coming from William Wilson and his sister Sarah Wilson. The reader of the 1843 Report of the Society is left wondering what happened to the people who could no longer be fitted in to the private houses and school houses being serviced by the Clergy Aid Society.[131] Why were their needs not met? There is no mention of the Society financing work in either the Whiterock, Springfield, Ardoyne or Upper Falls areas, though the St. Matthew's Chapel may have been intended to cater for the Lepper's Mill "station".

Two factors emerge from a study of the report, which may throw some light on the Society's failure to do more for the poor in Belfast. Firstly most of the grants were made to situations where money was already available or had been raised. Thus £600 was contributed by the "inhabitants of the Parish of Hillsborough and the neighbourhood" to the building of St. John's Kilwarlin, to which the Society added £234. 10s. Muckamore Grange Endowed Chapel was built with the help of £415 from the members of the Thomson family of Muckamore Abbey, a sum of £1,250 having been made already available by the head of the same family, John Thomson, for an endowment of the Chapel. In this case the grant made was eventually £536. 5s. Even in the case of Belfast, the Society never financed a church without help. Holy Trinity, as was mentioned, was mostly financed by the Wilson family; the building of the Magdalene Asylum Chapel and St. Matthew's had been mainly due to the singlehanded efforts of Thomas Drew, and only needed the Society to pay the outstanding balance; while in the case of St. Anne's chapel of Ease, a grant of £300 was made

"towards purchasing the tenant-right of a building, formerly a Methodist Preaching-House, in Academy Street, Belfast".[132] Presumably if the grant was made "towards" the purchasing, somebody else put up the remainder.

So it would seem that the policy of the Church Accommodation Society was only to make grants where there was money already available. Obviously then, in a poor area, where there would be no possibility of a 'matching' sum of money being raised or being donated, the chances of receiving aid from the Society would be rather slim.

It is also noticeable that of the twenty one grants made, at least sixteen[133] were made to parishes which had some connection with either a patron, vice-patron, or member of the committee of the Society. The four churches erected or completed in Belfast all had such connections. St. Matthew's and the Asylum Chapel were under Drew, the St. Anne's Chapel of Ease had connections with the parish church, the Vicar of which was a trustee, while the Wilsons of Holy Trinity were vice patrons, having contributed £100 at least. So again it would seem as if a parish or area did not have a representative on the committee, or did not possess a sizeable contributor among its inhabitants, then the chances of aid were not good.

These two factors then may provide some clue, as to why the Church Accommodation Society did not do more for the poor of Belfast, who had been the major justification for its inauguration in the first place.

(c) The Dissolution of the Down and Connor Church Accommodation Society (1843)

On January 19th 1843, the Church Accommodation Society held its final meeting, and wound up its affairs, seemingly according to plan.[134] However there are indications that there was much more behind the cessation, than merely the conclusion of its four yearly instalment plan for members.

That all was not quite as it should be, is fairly obvious from the comment made by Abraham Dawson on the dissolution of the Society:

> "Many regretted the dissolution of this Society ..., but the harmony and confidence exhibited at the 1838 meeting (inaugural) no longer existed. Romanising influence had sadly increased to the perversion from the truth of many among both clergy and laity."[135]

He goes on to say that this Romanising influence often manifested itself "in the architecture and ornament of churches", and that societies were formed "to promote the knowledge of these medieval devices". According to some sources,[136] it was due to the formation of one such Society - the Down, Connor and Dromore Church Architecture Society - that the Church Accommodation Society did not continue its work.

The Down Connor and Dromore Church Architecture Society was formed in October 1842 "at a meeting of clergymen and gentlemen of the diocese, desirous to encourage the study of ecclesiastical architecture".[137] However not only did they study church buildings, " - the reliques of architectural antiquity" still existing in the diocese - they also sought to promote and encourage "whatever tends to add dignity and majesty to the houses of God in our land", provided it be free from all superstitious admixture".[138] In other words they wished to encourage church building, which in their opinion would be more conducive to worship. The formation of the Society was in no way meant to be a slight on the work of the Church Accommodation Society, whom the Bishop praised in his inaugural address for "their careful endeavour under the gratuitous assistance of an ingenious and able architect[139] to give their churches in all respects, a proper church character".[139] The Bishop, a few months previously, had become a patron of a Society with "similar objects" in England - the "Cambridge Camden Society", and so presumably advised that the Down Connor and Dromore Church Architecture Society should become affiliated to the former, which, in due course, it did. It should be stated at the outset that the Camden Society was not Tractarian. Neale, the son of an evangelical clergyman, and one of the founders, was primarily interested

in the way that church architecture could be used to lead men to worship. He even "criticised the tract-writers as 'unworthy' in blinding themselves to the principle of aesthetics".[140]

Mant's biographer claims that normally such a society would not have raised a stir in the diocese, but, he says

> "those were days of unnatural excitement; and the Church Architecture Society was judged, and condemned by some persons, not for what it had done, but for what its accusers imagined it intended to do; and for the supposed evil doings .... of the Cambridge Camden Society".[141]

One of the foremost critics of the Society was the incumbent of St. George's, William MacIlwaine, who, it is recalled pinned his anti-Tractarian colours to the mast at the meeting called to organise the Church Accommodation Society in 1838.[142] In a series of letters published in the Belfast Commercial Chronicle, MacIlwaine (under the pseudonym "Clericus Connorensis") sought to expose the true nature, as he thought, of the Church Architecture Society, and to prove its connection with the Church Accommodation Society. He criticised it on various counts; for its secrecy, claiming that its inaugural meeting was held in a private manner, and without any public notice;[143] for the fact that there were already enough diocesan agencies to cope with church building, and therefore this new one was "needless if not worse"; and for its failure to realise that reform of the church was not so much a matter of "painting and decorating the material structure", or of "stained glass windows and carved oak ceilings", as of having a "Gospel ministry within its walls. "A church without such a living Gospel", he claimed, was "just a carcase - a dead, though it be a fair body - without a living soul".[144] However his overriding reason for criticism was the Church Architecture Society's affiliation with the Camden Society, with all he considered that entailed. "... Ecclesiology[145] in Ulster", he wrote, "is, and was designed to be, but a kindred movement with the same work which has been going on in Oxford and Cambridge".[146] The "work" which he referred to was "Puseyism"

or Tractarianism, and in an early letter he attempted to prove the connection between "the rise and progress of Puseyism and the new-fangled rage for Church Architecture". The basis of his proof was a tract issued by the Camden Society in which "the communion table" was referred to as "the altar", a term which had been "designedly expunged from the Book of Common Prayer" because of its sacrificial implications.

It would be wrong to give the impression that criticism of the Camden Society's literature was peculiar to MacIlwaine or indeed to the Established Church in Ireland. No less a person than Blomfield, Bishop of London, resigned from the Cambridge Camden Society because he disapproved of its literature.[147] So while the Church Architecture movement would not have considered itself "tractarian", there was nevertheless some grounds for suspicion on this count, especially among those who were at the opposite end of the theological spectrum.

MacIlwaine, for example, inferred that the Down Connor and Dromore Church Architecture Society as an offshoot of the Cambridge Camden Society, was instrumental in the introduction of Tractarianism into Ulster:

> "The young and sleeky cub, although its claws may be but incipient and its fangs far from formidable, may become a full-grown monster; and the Protestants of Belfast and Ulster have no fancy for fondling such a pet as the Society alluded to, when they see it drawing its milk, and receiving and returning the caresses of the parent lioness, whose sojourn is Cambridge, and den on the banks of the Isis."[148]

MacIlwaine concluded this particular letter (XII) by voicing the fear that "Ecclesiology" had done much harm to "that originally noble institution, the Church Accommodation Society", and he laid the blame on those people who had "undertaken to intermix its proceedings with those of other institutions, on which lies the taint of Puseyism". He was doubtless referring to the fact that there was an overlap in membership of the Church Architecture and Church Accommodation Societies.

The Bishop was of course a member of both, as were the treasurer of the latter, James Goddard, one of the hon, secretaries, Rev. John Maunsell, the hon. architect, Chas. Lanyon and The Archdeacon of Down. He also accused the Ecclesiologists of adjourning committee meetings of the Accommodation Society, to make way for the business of the Architecture Society.

Archdeacon Mant attempted to repudiate some of these allegations in a pamphlet in which he referred to them as "slanderous insinuations" and "absurd and mischievous opposition" to the church Architecture Society. His assessment of MacIlwaine's accusations was probably close to the truth, for the incumbent of St. George's produced very little hard evidence to prove that the Church Architecture Society was tractarian,[149] though the overlap in membership of the two societies inevitably meant that it would be very difficult to prove that the "Ecclesiologists" had no influence on the policy of the Accommodation Society. Thus MacIlwaine claimed that the Ecclesiologist members of the Church Accommodation Society, with their admitted link with the Cambridge Camden Society, were "importing" Puseyism into "Protestant Ulster" and in so doing had shaken "public confidence" in the former society and its hoped for revival after its initial four year period. The Church Accommodation Society "was no more - its death knell had been rung by the Ecclesiologists".[150]

Dawson[151] confirmed the crisis of confidence in the Church Accommodation Society. According to his account of the affair in 'The Annals of Christ Church', a deputation which included Drew, MacIlwaine, J. McNeill, the Marquis of Downshire and Robert Bland urged the committee of the Church Accommodation Society not to cease operations completely, but to delay for a month to give people time to come together again:

> "... inasmuch as, at this time, no hope of present unanimity is apparent - ... and increasing disunity is likely to be the consequence of the continued existence of the Church Architecture

> Society: we representing ... a large and influential proportion of the members of the Established Church in this Diocese, ... entreat .. that the Church Accommodation Society be suspended until we can hope for its revival with better prospects of usefulness."[151]

A memorial of January 30th 1843 on the supposed pernicious influence of the Church Architecture Society was also drawn up by some influential laymen of the diocese, recommending that that society should be dissolved, since "it was paralysing the operations of our other diocesan institutions".[151] Naturally they singled out the Church Accommodation Society for special mention:

> "... we have reason to believe the apprehension arising from the introduction of such innovations amongst us, through this institution (Ch. Arch. Soc.), has already operated most unfavourably in impairing the effects and impeding the further progress of that valuable society - The Church Accommodation Society."[152]

So they called on the Bishop to withdraw his "countenance" from the offending society, and apparently their demand was endorsed by one thousand three hundred and eighteen signatories.[151]

Unfortunately Bishop Mant, in his reply to the Memorial, succumbed to one of his fits of episcopal pique, and based the defence of his actions on an aggressive assertion of episcopal authority. Though he strongly emphasized his impeccable anti-tractarian credentials,[153] and admitted that the Cambridge Camden Society, might have been guilty of some indiscretions, he declared that it was impossible to withdraw his "countenance" from the Church Architectural Society. If he had confined himself to answering the points made by the memorialists, it is possible that he might have created for himself some room for manoevre. Unhappily he made an unwise, though deserved, attack on MacIlwaine, whom he accused of ecclesiastical insubordination:[154]

> "For many weeks", he wrote, "that Society (Church Architectural Society) has been the object of false and slanderous accusations, of insults and revilings from certain assailants, especially from one, who, masking himself under a general designation, which he has disgraced by his unclerical and unchristian conduct, under its protection, has scrupled not to vilify and denounce the Society in the face of the public."[155]

He claimed that the Church Architectural Society had now become a side issue. The main issue was now one of ecclesiastical discipline:

> "It is a question whether a Bishop, in the discharge of his office, is to have the liberty of following his own conscientious judgement, or to be placed under the dictation and the ban of any of his clergy who may take it upon himself to say - 'This shall be or shall not be done'; or, we will raise the Laity against the Bishop."[155]

While it may well have been warranted, this attack was tactically unwise, for it brought the Bishop down to MacIlwaine's level, and it allowed MacIlwaine to pose as the innocent martyr. In another letter to the Commercial Chronicle he declared that he was prepared to "await the decision of another" higher tribunal as to the validity of the Bishop's charges against him, and that he was willing "to abide the sentence" which his conduct might "meet in this matter at" God's "own righteous hands". Meanwhile he pledged himself to continue to conscientiously oppose

> "... every effort, however innocently or undesignedly made, for introducing amongst my brethren of the Protestant Established Church, any institution which even remotely savours of those false doctrines and teachers, whose evil ways are now so manifest elsewhere. If to do this", he continued, "in the estimation of any, be to forfeit my title to a minister of the Gospel, or a believer in its Divine Author, I am most willing to bear even this reproach, for His name's sake."[156]

So, in the eyes of the public, Mant was seen to be the aggressor. This unseemly wrangling between a bishop and one of his clergy was harmful enough, but probably even worse was His Grace's reaction to the thirteen hundred signatures on the Memorial. He insinuated that many of the signatories did not really know what they were signing, that they had been "canvassed and solicited" as if the exercise had been a political campaign, and worst of all: that they were:

> "... persons disqualified by their age, and habits, and station in life, and defective knowledge - rather, I may say, by utter ignorance - of the points in question, for forming a proper judgement concerning them."[157]

There may well have been some truth in what the Bishop said, but it would probably have been better in the long run for the future of Church Extension in Belfast, if he had kept his doubts to himself. For in a comment on the Bishop's reply the memorialists claimed that when their deputation called on him to deliver their memorial, he read to them his "ready-written answer"; which, therefore must have been prepared previous to his Lordship's being in possession, either of knowledge concerning the signatories to the Memorial, or the names of the individuals by whom it was presented.[158] They implied therefore, that he was prejudging the issue, and that any information he might have received prior to the arrival of the deputation was inaccurate. From what source the Bishop received "the leak", one can only surmise, but his biographer, the Archdeacon of Down may have had something to do with it, for the only comment, aside from an account of the Bishop's reaction, that he makes on the memorial, is to question the competence of its signatories "to form a proper judgement of thepoints in question". It would be natural to assume that as Archdeacon he would attempt to keep the Bishop informed as to the tactics of the 'opposition', and be prepared[159] for their next move.

These events did not help relations between the Bishop and many of his clergy and lay people. His request to the memorialists that they should acquaint themselves, "by the testimony of" their "own senses", with the proceedings of the Church Architectural Society; that they should "look with charity and brotherly love" upon their brethren, who are associated with their Bishop; and that they should put their confidence in him who for twenty years had watched over their spiritual welfare, fell on unsympathetic ears. As to the cause of the rift, there were many contributory factors. Obviously MacIlwaine's provocative writing had much to do with it; the Bishop's sensitiveness about his authority certainly did not do anything to ease the situation; but

perhaps the key to understanding the situation can be found in some of Mant's own words from his reply to the memorialists:

> "As to the Cambridge Camden Society, there is a sensitiveness in your minds in which I confess my backwardness to participate";[160]

Mant, because he was English, simply could not appreciate the fears of the memorialists. They may have been irrational fears based merely on suspicion, but they were, nonetheless real for all that. Through no fault of his own he simply could not enter into their apprehension about anything which had the remotest echo of 'Rome' about it.

The most important consequence of these events however, was not the rift between Bishop and people, as death would soon bring an end to his episcopate. It was, rather the cessation of the church extension movement for the next nineteen years. According to Dawson there was absolutely no possibility of the continuance of the Church Accommodation Society:

> "It was not to be expected that the great body of clergy would give their counsel, or the laity contribute of their means, to the furtherance of a work which might, and they, not without grounds, dreaded would be perverted to the introduction of Romish error into their pure and scriptural church."[161]

Despite the fact that the Bishop later severed his connection with the Camden Society, and that the Church Architectural Society also dropped its "slight connection" with it, the "concessions came too late and too ungraciously" to make any "reparation for the injury".[161]

Thus the second stage of church extension in Belfast, came to an ignominious conclusion. As far as the city was concerned, results in terms of church accommodation were minimal, with only 2,500 additional sittings provided, as against over 15,000 required. It would not be unfair to conclude, therefore, that the Church Accommodation Society at least partially failed the Established Church members of Belfast; and so its winding-up in 1843 may not have been an unmitigated disaster in terms of church accommodation.

Several interesting and important trends in the life of the church become increasingly evident in the events leading up to the dissolution of the Church Accommodation Society. The growth of anti-Catholic feeling, and the suspicion of anything that even hinted of things Catholic was very obvious in the controversy, especially in the writing of William MacIlwaine, and it was a characteristic which had such important implications for the life of the church that it will be returned to in a later chapter. The part played by the laity also cannot be allowed to pass without comment. They played some part in setting up the Accommodation Society, and a decisive one in preventing its revival. Lay aspirations could no longer be ridden over roughshod, as they had been in the eighteen twenties.[162] The divergence in opinion between Bishop and diocese (clergy and laity)[162] also cannot be ignored, especially with regard to anti-Catholic sentiments. Mant was anti-Catholic in doctrine, but many of his people and clergy were politically, historically and emotionally anti-Catholic. That was the difference between Bishop and people in Belfast, and, paradoxically the link between clergy and laity, a link which was strong enough to override social and economic considerations which in other situations would have divided them.

(4) <u>The Belfast Church Extension and Endowment Society - 1862</u>

In their final report, the Church Accommodation Society expressed the wish, that their "good and pious work" would not cease,

> "but that a new society, with the same objects, under the same episcopal presidency, and with the same noble and respectable patronage, though under a different modification perhaps of laws and management", would "arise, phoenix-like from the dissolution of their own."[163]

Their wish was not fulfilled for nineteen years, for it was not until 1862, that another church extension society was formed, though church building was not neglected in the intervening years. In those years

five new churches were built in Belfast - St. John's, Malone (1842), St. Paul's (1850-51), St. John's, Lagan Bank (1853), St. Mark's, Ballysillan (1856), and St. John's, Upper Falls (1861).[164]

In toto, these five new churches provided nearly 1,700 new sittings for Established Church members in and around Belfast. Most of the churches were funded by private subscription, the sites having been provided free. St. John's Malone was the exception. A grant of £900 had been made by the Board of First Fruits "several years" prior to its consecration in 1842, for building a Church in Malone, "a country district of the parish of Belfast", but "technical difficulties" - perhaps similar to those fulminated over by Drew[165] in connection with the Magdalen Chapel - delayed its construction. St. John's Upper Falls, was the only case in which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners provided money.[166] The incumbent, Joseph Rawlins, who "was most energetic in his exertions to procure funds for the erection of a church", raised a substantial sum by means of what might have been the first church 'bazaar' ever held in Belfast. Thus Rawlins introduced the idea of organising a fund raising effort for church extension, rather than simply asking people for money.

Again, there is some doubt, as to whether all these churches were sited wisely as regards the new population concentrations in the city. St. Mark's Ballysillan, and St. John's Upper Falls were built when school-rooms or barns became too small to hold the existing congregations, so they could be justified from the point of view of population. St. Paul's was originally a Chapel of Ease to St. Anne's - "The congregation of St. Paul's was that of St. Anne's Chapel of Ease, Academy Street",[167] which presumably must have been closed in the meantime - though it was situated not far from one of the largest linen mills in Belfast,[168] so it was, or would be in the midst of a large catchment area. St. John's Malone, and St. John's Laganbank are more problematical. The former church was built for the 'bosses' rather than the new industrial working classes,

though that is not to imply that the area's need was any the less. On its consecration the Irish Ecclesiastical Journal commented (June 1842):

> "The church will be of the greatest advantage to a considerable district of the large parish of Belfast, at a distance from the parish church and other churches in the town; as well as to the inhabitants of the two other adjoining parishes."[169]

However a later writer made it clear just who would be served by this church:

> "It is a parish church of a very prosperous neighbourhood, but owing to the church accommodation not being very favourable ... St. John's can scarcely be said to represent Malone Parish .. As the site is a very picturesque one, near to Belfast, and the neighbourhood of Malone rising in importance, a new and more suitable church would be very desirable."[170]

St. John's Laganbank, "picturesquely situated on the Lagan bank south of Queen's Bridge, at the extremity of May Street "was apparently built for an expected population which never materialised. Of it MacNeice wrote in 1931:

> "There was, I believe, some reason in 1853 for building the pretty little church on the edge of the Lagan. A population on the town side of the church was, it seems, expected. The expectation was never realised, and never can be. Great towering stores now overshadow the church, and the Lagan is in front. No one to-day would in his wildest dreams propose to place a church where St. John's stands."[171]

However, while the church itself may have been in a position which was to render it redundant, this did not prevent the first incumbent, Chas. Seaver, from taking his ministrations to where the population was - notably in Cromac Street where in 1870, a "Free Church" was built for the poor - gaining for himself the accolade of "clergyman of one of the most populaous districts in Belfast".[172]

The 1861 census revealed Belfast to have a population of about 120,602, with the Established Church claiming 24.6% of that number - 30,080,[173] and yet even with the church building of the previous two decades, there was still only accommodation for around 7,500 people - less than a quarter of the potential total.

> "The want of Church accommodation was so keenly felt that a number of earnest members of our Church met together on 26th November, in the Messrs. Ewart's office, Donegall Place, and founded 'The Belfast Church Extension and Endowment Society'.[174]

As the title of the society indicated, not only was there a need for more new churches, but there was also a serious lack of endowments. Total endowments for the Belfast churches amounted to only £600

> "from which it would appear that while Belfast contained one twentieth of the Church of Ireland population, the amount of endowment of all its churches formed only one thousandth of the Church's income".[175]

So a society for church building and endowment was formally constituted with the Lord Primate as patron, and the Bishop as president. However, in comparison with its predecessor, the Church Accommodation Society, this one was initiated and organised by lay-men. Sir William Johnson accepted the office of treasurer, and the secretaries were Sir William Ewart Jun. and Robert Cassidy.[175] They worked in close co-operation with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Ireland, who were to receive a considerable access of income on the death of primate Beresford, which it was believed would be made available for church extension and endowment.[175] Belfast's need was immediately laid before them, and a proposal that they should build five[176] churches, provided that the Church Extension and Endowment Society would provide sites and an endowment for each church of at least £7,500, was adopted. The patronage of the new churches was to be vested in local boards of Trustees and sittings were to be free.

The foundation stone of the first of these five churches, St. Mary's, was laid on October 27th 1865, on a "commanding position on the Crumlin Road". Until this time there had been no church between Trinity Church and St. Mark's Ballysillan, and it was obvious that some provision for worship should be made in a rapidly growing area. The Bishop, Dr. Knox, met this need by creating a new parochial district partly out of St. Matthew's parish, and partly out of Trinity. St. Mary's was consecrated

in 1868. The second of the five to be consecrated was St. Stephen's - the first completely free church in the diocese - in October 1869. It was sited, at the instigation of the Society, in Millfield in an attempt to meet the needs of the poor in that area, who, before the building of the church had been worshipping in Brown Street School. So St. Stephen's was another case of a church which was fulfilling a real and existing need. The Mariner's Church in Corporation Street was also built for an already existent congregation, one that was in fact formed as far back as 1855. As the name implies, the incumbent of this charge, also had, as part of his duties "the seeking out of the mariners who frequent our shores", a duty which was apparently performed most diligently by the first incumbent, G. A. Patton.[177] Perhaps in the Mariner's Church we have the beginnings of what were to be later termed 'specialist ministries'. Certainly, in this case, we do have a broadening of the Church's concern to include people other than those who simply inhabit a designated area of town or country otherwise known as a parish.

The remaining two of the five churches originally decided on were St. Andrew's and St. James's, the former consecrated in 1870, and the latter in 1871. St. Andrew's parish was formed out of districts taken from the parishes of St. Mary Magdalene and Christ Church, and so would probably have served some of the poorer areas, while St. James's was sited on the Antrim Road, one of the increasingly 'select' parts of the city.

Two other churches, over and above these five, were also built and endowed by the Church Extension Society. Both were situated on what were, or would become, centres of a "large industrial population". The first of these, Willowfield, was consecrated in 1872, the congregation raising £425 towards the building of the church, and £500 for the Glebe House.[178] The other, St. Matthew's, consecrated also in 1872, replaced Drew's converted school house, and was situated on the 'country end' of

the Shankill Road, where the Bishop had created another new parochial district.

In only about ten years then, the Church Extension and Endowment Society had built seven churches, and provided accommodation for about 5,000 additional worshippers, at a cost of some £35,573 of which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners contributed £23,194, the trustees of the Marshall Beresford Fund, £2,500, the balance of £9,879 being raised by the Society and its supporters. £13,400 was also raised by the Society for purposes of Endowment.[175] Taking into account two churches - St. Luke's, Lower Falls, and St. Thomas's, Lisburn Road, - built and funded independently of the Church Extension and Endowment Society, by 1872 there was in Belfast accommodation for around 14,400 worshippers, and other churches were already in the process of being built. However, this has to be measured against an Anglican population in the city which in 1871 had risen to 46,423,[173] although in percentage terms at least the situation had improved since 1838, when Thomas Drew had claimed that about 25% of the members of the Established Church could be seated.[179] The figures had now increased to around 33%.

Of the three 'phases' of church extension in the Church of Ireland in Belfast 1800-1870, - Mant's, the Church Accommodation Society's and the Belfast Church Extension and Endowment Society's - the final phase was obviously the most successful as far as the city itself was concerned. During the last phase seven new churches were built, as aginst two by Mant, and one completely new one by the Church Accommodation Society. This success may have been partly due to the help that the Church Extension and Endowment Society received from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and also perhaps to the fact that it was a lay-inspired movement. These laymen obviously worked in close cooperation with Bishop Knox, and together they made sure that the churches were, by and large, sited where they were most needed, and not, as in the case of the Church Accommodation

Society, where certain 'moneyed interests' wanted them. Again, circumstances in the sixties may have been more favourable for lay-episcopal cooperation, than they had been in the forties, at the beginning of the Tractarian scare. Certainly, as we shall see in the following chapter, Bishop Knox worked hard to gain the confidence and support of his clergy. Perhaps his efforts in this area created the right atmosphere in the Diocese for the smooth running of the Church Extension and Endowment Society.

While the church building efforts of that Society "which had its beginnings in a merchant's office" are to be commended, it is wise to temper them by referring once again to Bishop Tait's warning:

> "It is wrong," he said, "to mistake the erection of churches for the spread of the Gospel throughout the land .... It will be necessary to place in the churches faithful ministers of God's word .... and we must be careful to use every means to bring in the poor .."[48]

In the next chapter, we will consider the faithfulness and dedication of the ministers of God's word, their Bishops, and the methods they employed in their work.

(5) Belfast Cathedral

Before leaving the subject of Church Extension, it should be recorded that there was at least one cleric in Belfast who regarded the "multiplication of churches in a town, each with their own minister as an evil". Charles Reichel, Professor of Latin at Queen's University voiced this opinion at a Diocesan Conference of laity and clergy in 1862, called together to discuss various topics of interest to the Church, one of which was "The Cathedral of the Nineteenth Century". It was Reichel's paper on this subject which contained his repudiation of the traditional notions of Church Extension, arguing that not only did the multiplication of churches in a town, each with their own minister, lead those ministers to feel isolated and unsupported, but it also encouraged their parishioners

to expect them to be capable of doing and being much more than any one man could ever be or do. On the other hand, he maintained if one large Cathedral were built in a city like Belfast supported by a team of clergy, then they would benefit from mutual cooperation; because of the size of the Cathedral, more people could enjoy the higher quality of cathedral worship; and the labours of one preacher would reach an audience of thousands rather than hundreds. So a Cathedral in a city, rather than "a multiplication of petty churches" would lead to a more efficient church as a whole, and presumably at less cost.

Other speakers stressed that a city of Belfast's size and Church of Ireland population ought to have a Cathedral, but despite the conference's enthusiasm and Bishop Knox's personal backing for the project, it was another thirty years before building actually started.

Notes for Chapter III

1. MacNeice, op. cit., p. 131.

2. Drew claimed that this figure of 16,300 was inaccurate because "members of the Established Church were returned as Roman Catholics" in the 1834 census. Not only that, but the figure was also low, because he and his "friends" found it impossible "to trace out every instance in a town where poor Episcopalians are pouring in incessantly from every parish of the surrounding countries". Drew, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

3. cf. p. 13 above.

4. "... because relations between its employers and employees could be more personal than in a manufacturing town, it was more likely in a great town that the workers could be persuaded to embrace the religion of their masters." K. S. Inglis: Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England. 1963. (quoting Rev. Thomas Chalmers of Glasgow) cf. Thomas Drew on 'religious alienation' of the poor in the city p. 80 above.

5. cf. pp. 15 above.

6. David Sheppard Built as a City (1974) p. 102.

7. Ibid., C. F. G. Masterman, later to become a Liberal Cabinet minister.

8. Killen, op. cit., p. 474.

9. Godkin. Ireland Her Churches, p. 461.

10. I.E.G., May 1857.

11. cf. p. 33 above.

12. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 182.

13. Ibid.

14. Thomas Drew, Thomas Roe Incumbent of Ballymacarrett and Charles Seaver of St. John's Laganbank are notable in this respect. Bishop Knox's Charges - e.g. 1858 - seem more concerned with people than the niceties of liturgical practice.

15. W. Mant. op. cit., p. 198.

16. Ibid., p. 181.

17. Ibid., p. 182.

18. He was first appointed to the See of Waterford, but since the Bishop of that diocese later refused to move to Killaloe, Mant was offered it instead. He of course accepted.

19. W. Mant. op. cit., p. 113.

20. cf. p. 55 above.

21. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 181.

22. Ibid., p. 157.

23. Ibid., p. 150.

24. Ibid., p. 159.

25. cf. p. 13 above.

26. During his episcopate in Down & Connor, he made at least six visits to England, the majority of which were for months rather than weeks.

27. "Church building rapidly became the principle panacea of Church leaders, especially the bishops in the 1820's ..."
Richard Solloway, Prelates and People, p. 294.

28. K. S. Inglis, op. cit., p. 18.

29. R. Solloway, op. cit., p. 294.

30. E. R. Wickham, Church and People in an Industrial City, p. 87.

31. W. Mant, op. cit., pp. 230-231.

32. Ibid., p. 183.

33. Ibid., p. 216.

34. The church was "enlarged to double its original size" in 1860.
Handbook of the United Diocese of Down, Connor & Dromore
L. M. Ewart, (1886) p. 37.

35. From the description of services in St. Anne's and St. George's on p. 38 above, it would seem that they were not "very full" on a Sunday. Further it is doubtful if "many of the poorer classes" would have been present in either of these two churches. Therefore he must have been referring to the only other church in or near the city - Ballymacarrett.

36. Christian Examiner Vol. V, No. XXX Dec. 1827.

37. Irish Ecclesiastical Revenue and Patronage. Report 1867.

38. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 231.

39. Ibid., p. 232.

40. Rev. A. Dawson. The Annals of Christ Church Belfast, from its Foundation in 1831.

41. MacNeice, op. cit., p. 11.

42. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 232.

43. MacNeice, op. cit., p. 12.

44. cf. p. 55 above.

45. Drew is described as a "conspicuous light" in the Evangelical school. J. Wills and Freeman Wills, The Irish Nation, Vol. IV, p. 536.

46. Comment by Dr. Alan Acheson in a letter to the author. (His Ph.D. thesis on the Evangelicals in the Church of Ireland is listed in the Bibliography)

47. Wills & Wills, op. cit., p. 538.

48. E. R. Wickham notes that Bishop Tait was the first Bishop to realise that building churches was not enough. "It is wrong", he said, "to mistake the erection of churches for the spread of the Gospel throughout the land ..." Wickham, op. cit., p. 112.

49. I will deal with this aspect of Mant's episcopate in the following chapter - 'The Church Involved'.

50. Wills & Wills, op. cit., p. 538.

51. Wills & Wills, op. cit., p. 537.

52. I.E.G. 15/12/1860.

53. Drew gives ample evidence of his concern and knowledge of the poor and their conditions.

54. Drew, op. cit. (third series) Sermon XII The Irish Pulpit p. 251.

55. Ibid., p. 253.

56. Rev. Andrew Thomson: Sermons on Infidelity (1839).

57. Irish Pulpit p. 252.

58. R. Solloway, op. cit., p. 84.

59. An account of the "Great Meeting of the Diocese of Down & Connor for Church Extention" Ulster Times 19/12/1838 pp. 9-10.

60. Irish Pulpit p. 267.

61. Ibid., p. 268. cf. Solloway's comment: 'They (clergy) knew the poor were actually relatively happier than the rich, and got - he then quotes Bishop Sumner - "more actual enjoyment from the satisfaction of (their) ... hunger by the most frugal fare, with an appetite sharpened by air and labour, than those whose table is regularly spread with sumptuous variety".
Solloway, op. cit., p. 112.

62. Irish Pulpit p. 259.

63. Ibid., p. 260.

64. cf. above p. 17 .

65. Irish Pulpit p. 261.

66. Wickham, op. cit., p. 99.

67. Ibid., p. 100.

68. Ibid., quoted from Sheffield Mercury, August 24 1839.

69. Irish Pulpit p. 269.

70. Ibid., pp. 268-269.

71. E. P. Thomson, op. cit., p. 395.

72. Ibid., p. 398.

73. Drew, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

74. Ibid., p. 8.

75. MacNeice, op. cit., p. 131. cf. also note '2' p. 103 above.

76. Those who doubted the wisdom of 'mindless' church building were anticipating Bishop Tait's comment; cf. note 27.

77. One person absented themselves from the church for eighteen years! because of such an experience! Drew, op. cit., p. 9.

78. Ibid., p. 9. cf. Appendix B for complete version.

79. Ibid., p. 10.

80. There were three 'houses of prayer' 'The Wicliffe' House of Prayer .. built adjoining the Shankill graveyard; the 'Huss House of Prayer' to be built at Bowes Hill; and the 'Luther House of Prayer' at the foot of the Whiterock. Ibid., pp. 11 and 12.

81. It was due to the initiative and the enthusiasm of Drew that the Magdalene Asylum and Chapel were completed. When donations failed to raise enough money to begin to build on the site .. "almost all, save Mr. Drew himself, became disheartened and lost faith in the ultimate success of the venture." p. 30. It was also probably as the result of the influence of Mr. Drew that the Society (Church Accommodation) .... made its first grant by allocating the sum of £1,000 for the completion of the Magdalene Asylum Chapel. W. S. Leathem. A History of the Church of Ireland in St. Mary Magdelene Parish Belfast, p. 28.

82. This total of four would exclude theincumbent of Ballymacarrett it being in a different 'parish'.

83. Drew op. cit., p. 15.

84. Drew does imply that other ministers are at least aware of "the wretched neglect of the poor". Ibid., p. 11.

85. 'He suggested to each of the clergy in whose parishes such a want (for churches or chapels) existed, "to unite his congregation with him in a petition to each House of Parliament"'. W. Mant. op. cit., p. 349.

86. "... churchmen", he claimed, "often tell me they are not called upon for Church purposes". Drew, op. cit., p. 13.

87. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 306.

88. Richard Mant. Episcopal Jurisdiction Asserted

A Charge delivered at the ordinary visitation at Lisburn. August 13th 1834. Dublin 1834 p. 36.

89. Though he agreed with the principles behind the Home Mission, Drew considered "that the clergy were wrong both before God and man, in setting forward any missionary work without seeking the countenance of the Bishops of the Church:" W. Mant. op. cit., p. 363.

90. Ibid., p. 350.

91. Account of the proceedings of the Down and Connor Clergy-Aid Society. September 11th 1838. Belfast p. 13.
For a full statement of the purpose of the Society see Appendix C.

92. cf. p. 59 above.

93. Ibid.

94. Wickham, op. cit., p. 112.

95. The first 'ragged' kirk in Scotland was that set up by James R. Wilson at the Albion Street Mission in Aberdeen (1846).
A. Allan MacLaren, Religion and Social Class p. 193.

96. cf. p. 74 above.

97. W. Mant. op. cit., p. 360.

98. Dawson in the Annals of Christ Church estimated the crowd at 1500; W. Mant, op. cit., at 1700.

99. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 3.

100. cf. Ch. V.

101. The Additional Curates' Fund Society was set up in 1839 by the Bishops and Archbishops in response to a memorial signed "by upwards of three hundred Clergymen" who were of the opinion that "the exercise" of their own "individual ministrations" in their parishes, could not meet the "whole exigencies of our Church and of our country". Accordingly Bishop Mant drew up a plan which would enable "the prelates to provide resident curates where they may be wanted, thus producing a fresh accession of ministerial strength". The plan was accepted by his brother bishops, and "The Additional Curates' Society" for Ireland was formed. W. Mant op. cit., pp. 364-369.

102. cf. p. 66 above.

103. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 13.

104. " ... religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world... How then is it possible that Methodism, that is, a religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately

increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away." Thomson, op. cit., p. 391 (quoting John Wesley).

105. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 12.

106. Ibid., p. 23.

107. Ibid., p. 27.

108. See Appendix D for Rules and Regulations of the Society.

109. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 31.

110. cf. p. 53 above. David Sheppard's 'Urban Shock'.

111. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 31.

112. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 32.

113. It was Archdeacon Mant along with his opposite number in Connor who brought the Bishop and clergy together to form the Clergy-Aid Society in 1837. W. Mant. op. cit., p. 356.

114. J. C. Beckett. The Making of Modern Ireland. p. 318.

115. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 15.

116. Ibid., p. 38.

117. Of the government's attempts to introduce Irish Church reform, John Newman commented: "Well done! my blind premier, confiscate and rob till, like Samson, you pull down the political structure on your own head:" while Keble called the government "the ruffian band come to reform, where ne'er they came to pray". Chadwick, op. cit., pp. 56 and 57.

118. W. Mant., op. cit., p. 385.

119. From this point, I will refer to the 'Down and Connor Church Accommodation Society' simply as 'The Church Accommodation Society' for convenience.

120. cf. p. 74 above.

121. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 45 (the letter was printed in the same pamphlet as the account of 'the Great Meeting').

122. The Last Report of the Down and Connor Church Accommodation Society 1843, p. 5.

123. Ibid., p. 1.

124. Ibid., p. 11.

125. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 8.

126. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 337.

127. Robert Bateson expected support from the Presbyterians as well. 'Great Meeting ...' op. cit., p. 8.

128. For details of churches built with aid from the Church Accommodation Society, see Appendix V.

129. This figure does not include St. John's Whitehouse also built with help from the Society, but outside Belfast.

130. Last Report ... op. cit., p. 33.

131. cf. p. 74 above.

132. Last Report ... op. cit., pp. 22, 20, 26, 25 respectively for details mentioned in this paragraph.

133. The total would be seventeen if the fact that Bishop Mant had his 'Palace' in Holywood parish were taken into account. However, it is hoped that as Bishop he would have remained unbiassed as regards the siteing of the new churches.

134. cf. p.83. above.

135. Dawson, op. cit.

136. Ibid., Also "Ecclesiologism Exposed":- the letters of Rev. Wm. MacIlwaine as published in Belfast Commercial Chronicle.

137. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 420.

138. Ibid., p. 421.

139. The "able architect" was Chas. Lanyon who was also a member of The Church Architectural Society.

140. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 213.

141. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 422.

142. cf. p.8& above.

143. MacIlwaine, op. cit., p. 20.

144. Ibid., p. 21.

145. 'Ecclesiology' was used by MacIlwaine in a perjorative sense to mean involvement in the Church Architecture Society. He sometimes referred to members of that Society as 'Ecclesiologists'.

146. MacIlwaine, op. cit., p. 23.

147. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 213.

148. Ibid., p. 38. (Letter XII)

149. MacIlwaine complained that a certain stained-glass window in Kilwarlin Church Hillsborough, which was a 'Church Accommodation Society'-aided church, 'was very well in by-gone days of Romish and earlier superstition' but not today when people could find the truth for themselves in the Bible. MacIlwaine, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

150. Ibid., p. 48 (Letter XVI).

151. Dawson, op. cit.

152. MacIlwaine, op. cit., p. 60.

153. "Against the Romish corruptions, I have again and again raised my voice ... Against the modified form of Popery (Tractarianism) to which you advert, I also have not been wanting in bearing my testimony ..... in a Charge which I addressed to my clergy in the; last summer I enlarged upon that sentiment, and ... impressed upon them cautions .... - not, out of a fond respect for the bygone usages of antiquity, to infringe the duty which we owe to our National Church in a faithful observance of her ordinances, and of her ordinances only;" MacIlwaine, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

154. Bishop Mant seemed to see a Bishop's relation to his clergy in military terms. At one point in his reply to the memorialists he stated that "the most respected military officer" whose name (Col. Ward) stood at the head of the list could not "but be alive to the fatal consequences of the superior being thus made subject to the arrogant dictation of the inferior." MacIlwaine, op. cit. p. 65.

155. Ibid.

156. Ibid., p. 57.

157. Ibid., p. 61.

158. Ibid., p. 67.

159. The Archdeacon stated that the Bishop prepared his reply "at two hours notice". Perhaps if it had been less hastily composed, it would not have been so provocative to the memorialists. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 423.

160. MacIlwaine, op. cit., p. 63.

161. Dawson, op. cit.

162. cf. p. 45 and p. 33 above.

163. Final Report of the Church Accommodation Society, op. cit., p. 11.

164. L. M. Ewart, Handbook of the limited Diocese of Down, Connor and Dromore (1886), pp. 72-77 and 101.

165. cf. p. 71 above.

166. I cannot find any information as to whether the commissioners did or did not give aid towards the building of St. Mark's Ballysillan.

167. MacNeice, op. cit., p. 18.

168. cf. p.13. above.

169. Irish Ecclesiastical Journal June 1842. No. 24.

170. L. Ewart, op. cit., p. 101.

171. MacNeice, op. cit., p. 20.

172. I.E.G. 22/4/1869.

173. MacNeice, op. cit., p. 131.

174. L. Ewart, op. cit., p. 34.

175. Final Report of the Belfast Church Extension and Endowment Society. Compiled by Sir Wm. Ewart, 1925.

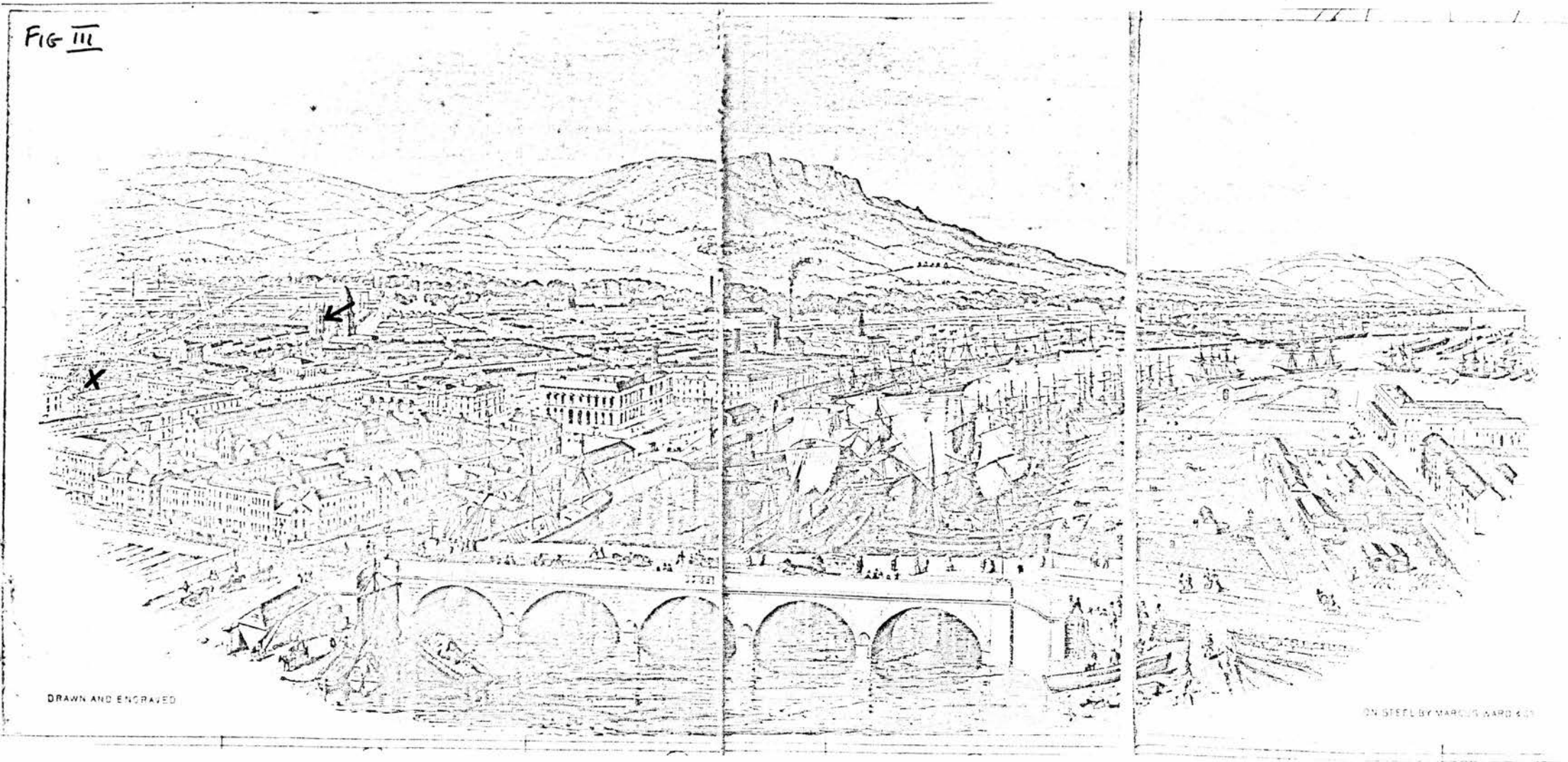
176. L. M. Ewart, op. cit. pp. 77-78 and 79.

177. I.E.G. November 1857 - Report of a presentation to Patton.

178. L. Ewart, op. cit., p. 57.

179. Drew. 'The Church in Belfast' op. cit., p. 8.

FIG III



DRAWN AND ENGRAVED

ON STEEL BY MARCUS WARD & CO

Fig. III

A View of Belfast from the River Lagan in 1864

- St. Anne's Parish Church is marked thus: ↙
- St. George's Church is marked thus: X

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH INVOLVED

- the daily round of parochial life
- attempts to attract the poor to church
- the Bishop's involvement with the Diocese.

In the last chapter, "The Church Concerned" we examined the Church's declarations of concern for the increasing population of Belfast, and how effectively that concern was implemented in terms of "church extension". In this chapter, "The Church Involved", I want to look at that Church's involvement with people, as seen in 'the daily round' of parochial life, the attempts to 'bring in' the poor, and also the Bishop's relationship with his clergy and Diocese. To put the purpose of this chapter in general terms; it is now our task to consider what went on inside the new churches provided by the church extension movement, and how the clergy who staffed them occupied their time.

(1) The Role of the Clergy

It was only natural that each minister, and each bishop should have his own ideas about how the clergy should spend their time. Each placed the emphasis on a different aspect of the clergyman's calling. Thomas Drew stressed the identification of the pastor with his 'flock':

> "Blessed be God that many are those amongst us whom the Lord accounts faithful. We know how great is the influence of such a pastor, and how generously it is acknowledged when he walks among his charge, not as an unapproachable mystic, but as one of like infirmities with his flock."[1]

He warned against what he probably considered to be a Tractarian interpretation of the role of the clergy:

> "... against elevating unduly the pastor's office; mistaking the true nature of the Church; unscripturally exalting outward forms, and overlooking the paramount importance of a vital faith in Him who is alone 'the way, the truth, and the life'."[2]

Drew saw the "pastor", as will be obvious later in the chapter, very much as "the friend of the oppressed", and there was no limit to the ways in which he could minister to his people. In addition to the more traditional roles of pastor and teacher, the minister could and should be concerned with: "... the admission of children to schools, the little loan to the needy, clothing for the naked .. and intercession with the rigid creditor ..... In short ... it is the delightful privilege .... of the faithful minister of Christ .."to preach the Gospel to the poor," and to go "about doing good"."[1] Though the 'social gospel' was obviously important to the incumbent of Christ Church, he certainly did not see the job of the clergy solely in those terms. It was of the utmost importance, that they should make known mens' "... need of a Saviour ... of the value of their souls, of the joys of heaven and woes of hell", - and especially to their personal friends!

A slightly younger contemporary of Drew's, - the perpetual curate of Holy Trinity, Theophilus Campbell - in a sermon preached at an ordination service in Holy Trinity,[3] dealt only with the teaching and preaching aspects of ministry. The only true motive for entering the ministry of the church was he said, ".... a desire to preach and to teach Jesus Christ". He described the minister as a "spiritual builder", building by "teaching"; not teaching truth as an "...abstraction, an opinion, a sentiment, a dogma ...," or any "... ism, ever devised by the ingenuity of man ...", but as "a person ... Jesus, Christ, God manifest in the flesh". While this view of the Ministry may seem a somewhat narrower one than that of Drew, - at least as far as the social implications of the Gospel are concerned - there is, nevertheless,

a hint of theological 'broadness' about it which was often missing in the more vitriolic utterances of Drew. For instance, Campbell, reminded the ordinands that they were not to set themselves up as "spiritual pulse-takers":

> "Are we constituted judges, infallible judges, of the spiritual condition of our people? Are we competent to decide as to the genuine or counterfeit Christianity of men? .... We have not such power; we cannot read the heart: ..." The office of a minister "... is to teach the Word of God, so as to instruct the mind and inform the understanding; but the heart, to affect it appertains not to us; God the Holy Gost alone can accomplish this."[4]

The Bishops also had different opinions as to the role of the clergy, though they were agreed on the crucial importance of parochial visiting. Bishop Mant wrote that he was unaware of any other area of ministry!!"... from which a clergyman is likely to derive a more abundant harvest of spiritual good amongst his people ... than by .. continuing to keep up a personal and domestick intercourse with them".[5] If the clergy failed to show a genuine interest in their parishioners, then he maintained that they would get the impression that the clergy were only performing their liturgical duties because they had to, and not because of their desire to make known God's love for them.

Mant's successor, Bishop Robert Knox,[6] felt that "... there was 'no means so well calculated to increase the attendance of the poor, especially on the public ministrations of the church as house to house visitation'."[7] However, Knox realised that in the larger city parishes such a visitation by the clergy on their own was well nigh impossible, so he recommended the appointment of "district visitors" under the "exclusive superintendence of the parochial clergy". In his encouragement of lay involvement[8] in the mission of the church, and in his desire that the poor should be sought out by whatever means - within broad limits - that the clergy thought appropriate,[9] Knox diverged sharply from the policy of his predecessor.

Mant's "dictum" from St. Ignatius, that "without the bishop nothing should be done in the church",[10] applied to the role of the clergy as much as it did to any other area of church life. So the minister of the Established Church in Belfast during Mant's episcopate was first and foremost a man under authority. His 1822 Charge to the clergy of Killaloe, just a year before he was translated to Down and Connor, reminded them of their obligation of "conformity to the laws, that is, to the rubrics and canons, and obedience to the governors of the Church", and this Charge he later "caused to be transmitted" to the clergy of Down and Connor. "Conformity to the laws", and obedience to the governors of the church was, according to 'Horae Liturgicae' (1845), "a security against error", or in the words of the title of his 1842 Charge "... the Churchman's Guard against Romanism and Puritanism".

For Mant then, an extremely important part of the clergy's role was keeping the church pure and free from error. They were to influence people not so much by 'extra mural' activities such as the Cottage Lectures recommended by his successor, or worship in "unlicensed homes", but by their exemplary character.

Unfortunately, however, the characteristics which were to be emulated by the conscientious cleric were rather negative and colourless. In addition to the mandatory daily Bible Study and prayers - with the family if possible - the minister was to avoid "unbecoming levity either of sentiment or expression", was to be discouraged from reading "merely secular or profane studies" and was to be "careful to live a life as abstracted from the affairs of the world as his necessity will permit him".[10] "In certain cases", he might be permitted to hold the office of magistrate, but on no account was he to have any truck with the race-course, the sporting field or the club room, as these amusements were

"incompatible with the grave and spiritual character becoming a minister of the Gospel".

Admirable though many of Bishop Mant's recommended qualities may have been, his "grave and spiritual" cleric seems infinitely less attractive than Drew's "pastor" who was the "friend of the oppressed" and "one of like infirmities with his flock". There was a warmth and a humanity about Drew's and Knox's conception of the role of the clergy, which was absent from Mant's Charge on 'Ministerial character and occupations'. Though, it should be added that once Drew's "pastor" mounted the pulpit, that same warmth could be transformed into a white-hot passion sometimes, unfortunately, against the "Romanist Sect".

(2) Church Life

(a) Worship

No matter how they spent their time during the week, and no matter what was their conception of the "Ministry", all the clergy were regularly involved in the conduct of public worship. "Divine service" was usually "celebrated twice on Sundays",[11] and during the week as well in St. Anne's and Christ Church. The sacrament of Holy Communion was usually administered monthly, and in Christ Church, on the Saturday evening prior to the monthly celebration of Holy Communion, a Sacremental Prayer Meeting was organised so that intending communicants might prepare themselves for the reception of this sacrament.[12]

It is difficult to get an accurate picture of parochial worship in Belfast during this period, since descriptions of actual services are rare. One worshipper's impressions of a service in a Belfast Church[13] were, however, recorded in The Christian Examiner in 1827:

> "... Concerning what I heard there, there is only time for me to say that there was no awkward and unseemly contrast of an evangelical liturgy, and an unevangelical sermon - that the minister who delivered God's message to sinners, was

> serious and impressive. The church was very full, and many of the poorer classes in decent attire were present."[14]

The observation that there was no "unseemly contrast" between the liturgy and the sermon, - both presumably being "evangelical" probably implied that this was not the usual state of affairs in the Established Church. This would tend to corroborate Killen's assessment of the theological stance of the clergy of that Church.[15]

Sources other than actual descriptions of services are not so difficult to come by. Bishop Mant in his 1842 "Charges" and in "Horae Liturgicae" - "Liturgical Discrepancy, its extent, evils and remedy" (1845) provides quite a fruitful source of information about the conduct of public worship.[16] However this source is still limited in its usefulness, as far as Belfast is concerned, for two reasons. First, he only refers to what was actually going on in the churches in the context of Liturgical malpractice, or "discrepancy", to use his own term, and then recommends what should be done if the rubrics were obeyed. He gives us no complete picture of the normal, liturgically correct service, if it existed. Second, Mant never makes specific reference to a particular church, he merely makes a general survey of the "liturgical discrepancies" in the Diocese. These may, or may not have been true of the churches in Belfast. However, we can ascertain from these writings the sort of liturgical practice that Mant would have liked to have been normative for the Established Church in Belfast during the eighteen thirties and early forties.

In attempting to impose "Liturgical Harmony" Bishop Mant's purpose was to secure the Church against error, whether "popish or puritanical," so the "seventy-two discrepancies" in liturgical practice which he lists as being in evidence in the Diocese at that time (1845) can be described as either "popish" or "puritanical" discrepancies. Judging from the

errors list, the Established Church in the Diocese of Down and Connor tended more towards "puritanical" than "popish" error in the performance of her liturgy. One of the chief puritanical errors was the practice of "extemporaneous prayer", a custom which must have been quite widespread and deep-rooted among the clergy, judging from the amount of time that the Bishop gave to condemning it.[17] Among twelve reasons for forbidding such a practice were that "it would have been to endanger the purity of God's worship", that "it would have been to prescribe for the Church an inappropriate and unbecoming style of sentiment and language"; and that:

> "On the whole it would have been to compromise the character which distinguished the national Church; and to assimilate her in no slight degree to other religious communities, which had set up a different ecclesiastical discipline and different modes of worship."[18]

Thus, if clergy were restricted to the prayers in the Book of Common Prayer, it would prevent "God's worship by His Church" from being exposed to "... the erroneous opinions, the enthusiastical flights and extravagances, the conceits and indiscretions, not to say the indecencies sometimes and profaneness, of ill-regulated individuals".[19] Even "special commemoration" of those sick people for whom prayer had been asked was banned.

Another custom which received the Bishop's censure was that of infrequent communion. He recommended that this sacrament be celebrated at least six or eight times a year, though a monthly celebration was preferable. Judging from this recommendation, it would seem that in many churches Holy Communion was only administered maybe once or twice a year, after the custom of the Presbyterians, though in Belfast, as we have seen already, a monthly celebration was more common.[20]

The sacrament of Holy Baptism also received the Bishop's attention.

Private Baptism (a Presbyterian Custom?) was discouraged, as was baptising at the Communion Table, "out of a moveable common household basin", or "a glass tumbler". It was also laid down that sponsors should be baptised communicant members of the Established Church.

The prevailing atmosphere of "puritanism" may also have contributed to the unpopularity of the Daily Service in the Established Church, which in 1842, "... with some few exceptions, ... where it still preserves a precarious and hardly sensible existence (St. Anne's and Christ Church?), is scarce recognised amongst us".[21] So Mant encouraged the revival of the Daily Service, and the observation of the Saints' days, reminding the clergy that the congregation could be supplied by his family.

"Popish" errors in the Diocese seemed to centre around the service of Holy Communion. Some of the clergy mixed water with the wine before consecration; some knelt too often, and had to be instructed to kneel only three times - at the General Confession, at the Prayer of Humble Access, and at their own reception of the elements. There also seemed to be a custom in some churches of the clergy changing dress before the sermon:

> "Previously to the Sermon in some congregations the minister withdraws from the Church to the vestry room and continues there during the collection and the singing. When, having changed his surplice for a black gown he returns to the congregation and ascends the pulpit."[22]

Whether this error was committed in deference to "popishness" or "puritanism" is not clear, but no matter what the reason behind it, Mant considered it improper and forbade it along with "the kiss of peace", the ringing of bells, and the reserving, carrying about, and lifting up of the bread and the wine. Other presumably "popish errors" that the Bishop had discovered in his visitation of the Diocese, were the "intoning of the exhortation" and the singing of the creeds, which practices were also outlawed.

Perhaps a more important weakness in the conduct of public worship, than the "popish" and "puritanical" errors mentioned above, was the failure of some of the clergy to read the service with any sense of meaning or enthusiasm. "Divine service," said one observer,[23] "was conducted in a slovenly manner". "Everything was cold, formal and lifeless." It was not a Bishop, but an incumbent in Belfast, who attempted to point out the crucial significance that the proper and enthusiastic conduct of public worship bore, in relation to communicating with the man in the pew. Thomas Roe wrote:

> "The great point above all is that we should believe firmly and feel deeply all that we say to our people, accompanying with fervent prayer the words spoken that they may reach the hearts and consciences of all that hear them. This will effectively banish all signs of affectation and art, and leave the impression that we are sincere and in earnest, actively devoted to the Holy work."[24]

The clergy were not the only ones who in certain instances were failing to come up to standard in the conduct of public worship; some congregations were apparently at fault also. Bishop Mant devoted a complete sermon[25] to the duties of the congregation in public worship, and commenting on the rubrics calling for congregational participation he wrote: "... it is notorious that in many congregations they are partially observed, in others they are altogether slighted". He blamed this habit of congregational non-participation on the "Romish Church", who had allowed the custom of the people joining in the conduct of public worship to fall into disuse. He commended the custom to the congregation adding that it would serve to "fix and quicken their attention" in church, and that it would provide "mutual encouragement for minister and people".

In some places congregations were still in the habit of remaining silent,[26] leaving the clerk to say the responses on their behalf. Even as late as 1868, Thomas Roe had reason to write to the 'Irish

Ecclesiastical Gazette', encouraging people to take their part in the responses, "... rather than have the absurd duet between Parson and the Clerk, which was so general in former days".

(i) Music

Congregations were much less reserved when it came to singing in Church, especially the singing of hymns. At first[27] Bishop Mant disapproved of this hymn singing, seeing hymns as "deviations from the uniformity of our public worship", since they were not sanctioned "by any competent authority". Part of the problem was that there was no authorised hymnbook: hence, just as in England,[28] (so in the Diocese of Down and Connor), 'chaos' reigned in the area of church hymnody. Thus, in his 1842 Charge the Bishop condemned "strange versions of the psalms and hymns of private composition", declaring that they were objectionable "as violations of ecclesiastical discipline, and at variance with the Church's principles and provisions for public worship". However, by 1842 he permitted those hymns which were "appended as a supplement to the New Version of Psalms"in the reign of Queen Anne.

Nevertheless, there was still confusion in the Diocese over what could and could not be sung in church, and this state of affairs continued, until in 1862 each Church in Belfast had its own hymnbook.[29] Consequently, at a Diocesan Conference[29] called to discuss, among other topics, the "Public Worship of the Church" it was suggested by Rev. William MacIlwaine that a diocesan hymnbook should be produced. This proposal received the encouragement of Bishop Knox who, because church tradition and the need to conform to the letter of the rubrics did not weigh so heavily on him as it had done on his predecessor, agreed that "... a Hymn-book issued on the authority, or with the approval of a bishop, might be used in his own Diocese, but it would have no binding authority

for the whole Church". Accordingly, it was proposed that a committee should be set up to prepare a collection of hymns, "to be submitted to their next annual Conference, as a hymnal for the United Diocese". The committee included the Messrs. William MacIlwaine, Theophilus Campbell, Drew and the Archdeacon of Down. It is surprising to note that although Drew was nominated to this committee, and although he was a noted Evangelical, concerned about making the church relevant to the poor, he had some reservations about hymn singing. During the discussion on worship he complained of the "modern innovation" of starting the service "with a long hymn". He continued:

> "The service of the Church was beautifully fitted for being carried on, (Sic) as the sinner ought to approach God by making confession, then the absolution, prayer, and then praise; but all this was reversed by beginning with praise."[30]

Similarly, the practice of singing a closing hymn distressed him. He was of the opinion that the people ought to be dismissed "with the impression made by the sermon still fixed in their memory". These reservations about hymn singing may have been the reason why an organ was not installed in Christ Church until December 1858 - just two months before Drew left the parish.[31]

The psalms were said in the form of responses where they were not able to be chanted by the congregation, and the metrical version by Tate and Brady was in general use, though it came under heavy criticism at the 1862 conference.[32] According to Thomas Roe, members of the Established Church in Belfast were well used to chanting; in fact, they took great pleasure in it. However, "high class church music" was a different matter:

> "As to intoning anthems and high class church music, however I believe that the introduction of them into ordinary parish churches would be a grievous mistake. The great majority of the congregations attending those churches have certainly not been trained to appreciate this high class style of music... They are for the most part people of simple tastes. Give them the well read prayer, the loud fervent response, the well known and popular psalm and hymn tune - they are edified and delighted."[33]

(ii) Preaching

Sermons were nothing if not long. Drew of Christ Church favoured the shorter (!) sermon, maybe averaging about 5,000 words,[34] which, at a rough calculation would last from 40to 50 minutes, while the incumbent of Trinity Church usually went on for about an hour with an average of around 7,000 words. Bishop Mant had been known to preach for one and a half hours,[35] so Chadwick's observation about sermons in the Church of England at this time - that they "were more frequent but shorter" - would certainly not seem to apply to the preaching of the clergy of the Established Church in Belfast.

It is difficult to assess the quality of the preaching. Many of the sermons that were printed still read well, though one wonders about the many thousands of unprinted ones! Some, however, read more like learned discourses,[36] and surely would only have been meaningful to the most erudite of congregations. From the eighteen thirties onwards, preaching tended to be evangelical in its theological tone, the clergy usually taking the advice of Theophilus Campbell to ordinands: "and with all your preaching, never omit the precious blood which cleanseth from all sin". The sermons usually had a strong biblical base and contained a liberal dose of quotations from the Bible, though Bishop Mant made copious references to the Book of Common Prayer, the Articles, the Canons, and the Early Fathers. In making such references, he was following his own dictum that "the Bible was not intended to be used to the exclusion of ministerial instruction". In other words, he believed that Bible and Prayer Book should be inseparable in the teaching ministry of the Church.

Judging merely from the sermons that are still available, the clergy of Belfast, with the possible exception of Drew, did not usually preach on topical themes. Drew did, however, attempt at times to relate the

Faith to contemporary issues. Thus, as we have seen above, he preached on the division between rich and poor, and later on 'State Education'; he even referred to the outbreak of the Crimean War in his sermon on the occasion of the twenty-first anniversary of Christ Church.

If the admonitions against it are anything to go by, extemporary preaching was very common in the diocese as a whole, if not in Belfast. In his book "The Clergyman's Obligations Considered" (1830), Bishop Mant utterly condemned "extemporaneous preaching" as not being "congenial to the staid character of the Anglican Church", and as being "more suitable to the extravagant propensities of the conventicle". Thomas Roe was of the opinion that "the written sermon" was the "best mode" of preaching, with the proviso that it was "carefully composed and effectively delivered". If these qualities were missing, the sermon would have all the drawbacks of the "extemporaneous sermon" with none of its "great and admitted advantages". It was only the "younger members of the ministry" that Bishop Knox was worried about when it came to "extemporaneous preaching". He thought that they might use it simply to save time and work. He also had some doubts about open-air preaching, and it was little wonder that he did, for many held that this activity was one of the main causes of the riots in Belfast (1857-58).[37] The Bishop upheld the right to practise outdoor preaching, and recognised its value, though:

> "I would guard myself against being considered an advocate for its indiscriminate practice either in times of political agitation or in localities where it is calculated to excite an outbreak."[38]

The value of outdoor preaching in the Bishop's eyes was that it was a means of "... gathering together, from the highways and by-ways, those who, though living in a Christian country, have never yet heard so much as the sound of the Gospel". It was, in fact, a means of evangelising the 'unchurched'. There is little doubt such methods were

needed, for it would have taken more than merely casual interest to persuade a person to sit through not only a long sermon, but a service which always included, in the morning, Matins, the Litany, and the Communion Service, even when the Sacrament was not being administered.[39] Rev. Charles Seaver, perhaps without realising it, pinpointed one of the major problems raised by public worship of this nature in a growing industrial city like Belfast. "Their services", he believed, "required an educated audience .... and it would be very desirable if the ministers of their Church explained the meaning of the portions of the service to their people".[40] With the majority of their potential members from the new working class unversed in and unused to - especially in the 'second generation' working class - "the staid character of the Anglican Church", to use Mant's description, the Established Church in Belfast was certainly faced with an up-hill task in evangelism.

(iii) Attendance at Public Worship

The question of how many people did attend these long and "staid" services is also difficult to answer, as records are few. As I have noted above,[41] in 1821 a correspondent to the Belfast Newsletter claimed that the afternoon service at St. Anne's was appallingly badly attended, with "nineteen seats out of twenty" being "quite empty". As for the Sunday morning service, taking St. Anne's and St. George's together, he stated that "... on an average few will venture to say at least one third of the accommodation which they afford is not vacant space .... it is notorious ... that there is, at all times ... room to spare". In rough figures this would work out at about 70 people attending the afternoon service at St. Anne's, which had a capacity of about 1,000 persons, and about 1,550 people in St. Anne's and St. George's combined, on a Sunday morning. Thus, around 16% of Established Church members in Belfast attended church on a Sunday.[42]

About thirty years later (in 1850), across the River Lagan, St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett (a church with a capacity of 560), rarely had more than 200 in the pews on a Sunday morning,[43] and sometimes had as few as 90, the smallest number present being 69. In 1858, the curate of Christ Church, and the compiler of the 'Annals of Christ Church' carried out a census of Christ Church's 'district', visiting all members of the Established Church. According to his findings,[44] out of 7,109 people, 3,929 attended church, though he did not specify whether attendance meant once or twice a year, or regularly. Obviously, all 3,929 could not have attended on the same Sunday, as Christ Church could not have accommodated them - though some of them may have attended the Houses of Prayer. However, even if this figure is halved, it still compares very favourably with the 'new' churches in London at the same time.[45]

There are more specific figures for attendance at Holy Communion in the 'Annals of Christ Church', though only for the year 1838, when the average attendance of communicants was 180, a figure which increased to 400 at festivals.[46] Again this compares very favourably with the attendance at Ballymacarrett, where in 1835 there was only an average of 82, a somewhat artificial figure since it includes the dramatically larger numbers present at festivals. A normal attendance at Holy Communion would have been nearer 50 people, and this figure had fallen to 41 in 1845 for some unknown reason.

With so few reliable statistics available it is impossible to build up any real pattern of church attendance. All that might be concluded from these figures is that the strong 'social' emphasis in the ministry of the Christ Church clergy may well have encouraged a higher than average attendance at public worship.

It is even more difficult to find out what sort of people made up these church congregations. As we have seen[47] the congregations of

St. Anne's and St. George's were made up mostly of those who could afford to pay for a pew. Christ Church was reported to have 1,000 sittings for the free use of the poor,[48] though whether the poor used them is altogether another question. Some idea of the social status of those people who either went, or at least were in touch with Christ Church, may be given by the fact that out of the 7,109 people visited in 1852, by the Christ Church clergy 5,055 of them claimed to be able to read. This would seem to indicate that around 70% of the potential worshippers at Christ Church were not of the lowest strata of Society.[49]

However, it may have been clothes rather than reading ability which were the determining factor as to whether a person went to church or not. The Christian Examiner correspondent who visited Ballymacarrett noted that the poor who were present at the service were "in decent attire".[50] Thomas Roe, in a letter about revision of the Rubrics complained that those who had drawn up the "third rubric" - that baptism had to be administered after the third collect - were in effect excluding the poor from the baptism of their own children. The reason he gave is germane to the question of how far clothes, or lack of them, influenced church attendance:

> "There is no doubt that if the poor were obliged to bring them (babies) forward after the second lesson and to expose themselves to the gaze of a well-dressed congregation in their miserable garments, children would either remain unbaptized altogether or they would have been placed in the hands of the minister of some more pliant denomination."[51]

The implication behind both of these statements is that those who could not afford suitable clothing did not feel able to attend the larger churches at least. They may have felt more welcome, and less conspicuous in the 'Houses of Prayer'.

"A coldness and indifference to the advancement of their interests", was a further reason put forward by Roe, for the "humbler brethren's"

failure to support the Established Church:

> "No one seemed to care for them: they were left too much to themselves unaided and unbefriended. The hearty warmth of a genial brotherhood they saw existing in other religious communities, but found entirely absent in their own. All this has been aggravated by the fact that the members of our Church consist of the various ranks in society from the Queen to the humblest individual in the land. Between these various grades, conventional distinctions and barriers exist that cannot be broken down. I have heard it often said, 'See how cold these Church people are to one another - how very stand off. They do not associate together like the members of other religious bodies.' This, for the reason already given, cannot possibly be helped."[52]

He was also of the opinion that neither the Presbyterians nor the Catholics suffered from this particular drawback, since they were more homogeneous groups, the "Protestant dissenters" belonging for the most part to the middle classes, and the Catholics to the "lower strata of society".

It may well have been this acceptance of the necessity of the distinction between the higher and lower orders of society, on the part of the church, referred to in the last sentence of the quotation, which created the largest obstacle to the poor being closely involved in the church. They could have gone to church in rags, if it had not been for the attitude of their supposed 'betters', an attitude unwittingly epitomised by the advice that Thomas Roe tendered to the better classes in an effort to encourage the "humbler brethren":

> "I do not, therefore, press upon our people that general social intercourse, which can only be expected amongst those who belong to the same rank in society. I venture to recommend however, what I think will do just as well, namely, the cordial smile in greeting, the kind inquiry, the lively interest in the advancement of those who require their protection and fostering care. The humblest member, indeed should be diligently sought out, recognized and encouraged."[52]

We can conclude then, that it is unlikely that the working classes attended the parish churches in great numbers, even where the seating was free, because, as I have mentioned, of an environment which was hostile to religious feelings when compared to the rural situation from which many of them had come; and perhaps even more significantly,

because of the attitude towards them of those who were already in the churches. Horace Mann wrote in 1851, when setting out the case against pew rents: "Working men ... cannot enter our religious structures without having pressed upon their notice some memento of inferiority";[53] and the paternalism advocated by Roe, was not going to alleviate these "mementos of inferiority".

(b) 'Christian Nurture'

(i) Parochial

The weekly Sunday services were, during this period, being increasingly complemented by other activities designed to consolidate parishioners in the faith, and to involve those who would normally not come to Sunday worship. To these activities I have given the title - for want of a better one - 'Christian Nurture'. Those which were organised as part of the normal parochial routine will be dealt with as being in the 'parochial' category, while those organised outside the parish, on a Diocesan level, or for the special purpose of 'urban outreach' will be included under the 'extra-parochial' category, though some will fit neatly into neither. Much of the information about 'Christian Nurture' at parish level is taken from The Annals of Christ Church, though this does not necessarily imply that the other churches in Belfast were not organising similar activities, simply that they have not been recorded.

Sunday Schools

The Belfast Sunday School Society was founded[54] in 1802 through the generosity of some concerned citizens of Belfast. In 1811, the Society's school, which by then was also operating during the week, came under the management of a committee of twenty, "one half of which is to be teachers, the other half to be chosen by the teachers from among the subscribers to the institution".[54] While the enterprise had not been

initiated by the Established Church, at least one of the Vicars of St. Anne's was involved in its day-to-day running.[55]

At this stage in its development, the Sunday School was very different from its present-day counterpart. Its purpose was not merely religious instruction, but the "affording of education to those in the situation of servants and apprentices who are employed during the rest of the week and to those whose parents cannot afford to pay for their education".[54] Thus the Belfast Sunday School demanded a four hour day from its students, rather than the paltry forty-five minutes which seems to be the custom to-day. A further difference between the Belfast and the present-day Sunday School was that the former was interdenominational in ethos, its regulations forbidding the use of "catechisms of faith or books of controversy",[56] while allowing free circulation of the Bible.

By the third decade of the century, there is evidence to show that specifically church-connected schools had been set up though it is not clear if they were also 'Sunday' schools. In 1836 St. Anne's were paying a Diocesan school master £136. Os. Od. per annum,[57] while there was a school being run at St. George's by 1846.[57] However it is the[58] Annals of Christ Church, which provide us with the most detailed picture of the church-connected Sunday school.

The Christ Church Sunday Schools were opened only 3 months after the consecration of the church in November 1833 and by 1843 there was not only a Sunday School for children at 9.30 a.m. each Sunday, but also one for Adult Males at 4.30 p.m. and for Adult Females at 5.00 p.m. Sunday Schools were not held at only one location, but wherever there was a need, and the teachers moved round accordingly. According to the returns of 1838, there were 1,000 children on the Sunday School rolls, with an average attendance of 400 children, taught by 60 teachers. The Superintendents, if not the teachers, would seem to have been middle class,

rather than working class, one being a Collector of Excise, and another the son of a Wesleyan minister. Each Easter Monday "an annual feast" and "excursion into the country" were organised for the children of the Sunday Schools - doubtless, the forerunner of the Sunday School excursion, though within a more overtly religious framework. Before they set out to walk to their destination in the country, a hymn was sung and a prayer said, and the day culminated with a service in the Church at 7.00 p.m. which was attended by "crowds of children". The excursion provided a marked contrast to the usual daily round for many of the children:

> "The free bounding air of the hills as it breathed upon these children of the loom and factory, was welcomed with delight; and many a one exclaimed 'Ah how beautiful it must be here'."[58]

By the 1860's, with the spread of day-schools, the nature of Sunday Schools was beginning to change. The need for the Sunday School to provide a secular education[59] was being questioned, and the issue of denominational teaching was coming to the fore.[59] It was argued that:

> "Our Sunday Schools should stand out in bold and holy relief and be a living protest against the prevailing follies and vices of every day life!"

They should be made

> "... places of quiet and sacred retirement ...", different from "our colleges and schools" which "... are all now absorbed in the competition struggle for place, power and gain."[60]

However, there was some question as to what form the denominational teaching of the Established Church should take in her Sunday Schools. The Catechism was criticised as being "not simple enough", "too brief and restricted and too systematic", and further:

> "It is quite above the comprehension of the majority and with great difficulty can be intelligently received by the more advanced of our Sunday School Scholars."[61]

In Trinity parish the Incumbent, Theophilus Campbell, had found the Catechism wanting as regards the teaching of Church principles. He maintained that it was to be taught only to those who intended to be

confirmed. Church principles i.e. "Church Government", "Episcopacy", could and should be taught from the Bible, and that way could give no offence to any dissenters who might have been in the class. He had found this to be a most satisfactory method of instructing his young people, and as a result "they knew how to defend their Church against the attacks of others".[62]

The supporters of the Catechism were not at all worried about giving offence to any dissenters who might be attending their Sunday Schools. (In fact, nearly half the members of some of the Sunday Schools in the Diocese were dissenters.) It was their opinion that there was no difference between Bible and Catechism, and if some children objected to what they were being taught, then let them go elsewhere. There was "... no more effectual way of doing injury to the Church than to show a fear of teaching its Catechism and its principles".[63] Thus, the Sunday Schools of the 1860's had moved a long way from the principle of enunciated in 1811 that "no catechism of faith or books of controversy" were to be taught in Sunday School, for fear of interfering with the religious beliefs of any of the pupils.

According to an English observer of the Belfast Sunday School scene, children there remained longer in Sunday School than did their English counterparts.[64] However, if the less than 50% average attendance at Christ Church[65] reflected a general trend of Sunday School attendance in Belfast, then the Sunday School system might not have been as influential as that observer, and the participants in the 1862 Diocesan Conference would have liked to think. This suspicion is given added weight by W. M. O'Hanlon, a Unitarian Minister, who not only doubted the effectiveness of the teaching in the Sunday Schools,[66] but calculated in 1853 that about 43%[67] of the children "of the working and lower poor" never came near Sunday School, whether of the Established Church or any other.

While it was true that many of the children of Belfast never attended a Sunday School, it would be wrong to dismiss them as failing in what they set out to do. They may have failed to convert the working classes en masse to full Christian faith and practice, but, as in England, they were places where the children of the poor received "such moral and religious instruction as many of them ever got", and as such constituted "... a major working-class institution in the 19th century and the source of an indefinable, no doubt slight, but pervasive influence upon the people at large".[68]

Confirmation

Confirmation, the conferring of full membership of the Church, would presumably have been the natural culmination of Sunday School instruction, though it is impossible to say at what age young people were confirmed. It is probable that there were, in Christ Church at least, special classes[69] to prepare confirmation candidates, in which, to judge from the discussion at the 1862 Conference, great emphasis was placed on the inculcation of the distinctive characteristics of the Established Church in addition to Biblical teaching and the Catechism. Beginning in 1835 with 124 candidates for confirmation, the numbers in Christ Church rose to a peak of about 270 per year between 1845 and 1847. However, they slumped dramatically in the fifties to a mere 15 in 1857.[70] It is interesting to note that of the 857 candidates presented between 1845 and 1847, 501 were orphans, 71 of whom had lost both parents, figures which immediately raise the questions, as to why the percentage of orphans should be so high. The possibility of special 'incentives' cannot be ruled out. Financial help may have been available to widowed parents provided their children were regular attenders at Church and Sunday School.[71] Judging from Dawson's census,[70] confirmation did not necessarily imply a strong, life-long commitment to the Church, for he

records that out of 2,503 confirmed parishioners in 1858, only 857 of them attended "the Lord's Supper". In some churches the "1859 Revival" seemed to temporarily halt this falling away of the confirmed. In Trinity Church 161 were confirmed in that year, "almost all of whom have come to the Lord's table".[72]

Christian instruction did not cease with confirmation. Bible classes were organised during the week, and in Christ Church Thomas Drew inaugurated a series of weekly lectures in 1834. Christian education, then, especially of the young, was given a high priority in the Church of Ireland in 19th century Belfast, and though it had its limitations, its influence could not have been insignificant.

Prayer

The prayer meeting, as distinct from the Bible Class, also became part of parish life in Belfast in the 1830's. There were Sacramental Prayer Meetings on a Saturday evening to give people an opportunity to prepare themselves for attendance at Holy Communion the following day.[70] They were also organised for more specific purposes. On leaving Christ Church Sunday School in 1840, the Sunday School superintendent had a prayer meeting organised on his behalf, while in September 1857, there was a large attendance at a prayer meeting on behalf of those who were in peril on account of the Indian Mutiny.

All the Protestant churches reverently observed the National Days of Prayer called by Royal Proclamation. Dawson noted that a "Day of Humiliation" was observed in the Belfast Churches on August 26th 1854:

> "... in order to obtain pardon from our sins, and in the most devout and solemn manner send up our prayers and supplications to the Divine majesty imploring His blessing and Assistance on our arms (war against Russia having commenced) for restoration of peace."[70]

Just as in England,[73] the day was widely observed:

> "More than a Sabbath Stillness prevailed in the town ... not a single case of drunkeness was reported."[70]

The only 'violators' of the day were the mill-owners and the railway companies who kept their employees at work. However, the Roman Catholic Church could also be classed in this category, since they did not organise any special services as happened in the other churches, even though the Catholics "seemed to want them".

The Ministry of the Laity - Parochial Associations

We have noted the increasing influence of the Laity in church affairs in Belfast, especially in relation to the Church Extension Movement, and their influence in this area was undoubtedly crucial.[74] However, whether the lay people should actually be involved at parish level in the ministry of the Church, and the nature of that involvement if admitted, were questions on which there was quite a divergence of opinion.

Some believed that the main contribution of the laity to the bringing in of the Kingdom was to be seen merely in financial terms. The Incumbent of Trinity Church, Theophilus Campbell, would have liked more lay participation in parish life, but because of the fact that in his opinion "the Laity of this town of Belfast were so engrossed in business that they had not the time" to give to such involvement, he recommended that they "put their hands in their pockets and provide more clergy for the Church people of Belfast".[75]

A prominent lay man, Dr. Cassidy, while again welcoming in principle the co-operation of clergy and lay-people in the parish ministry, nevertheless, saw it in terms of ultimate financial gain. He compared the record of the Church of Ireland laity with that of other churches, and concluded that financially at least, the latter were much more committed. The comparative ineffectiveness of the Church of Ireland laity he put down to the fact that "the aristocracy" were "shamefully parsimonious as far as Church affairs were concerned" and that the Laity

had not been encouraged to think that the Church was "their business". However, if the habit of co-operation between clergy and people was encouraged, they (especially the aristocracy) "... would take more interest in the affairs of the Church, and would give more liberally towards its support and extension",[76] and also "step out and do the work which they now did not do".[76]

While, then, it was often considered that the "giving of money to religious societies" was "the sum of the Layman's duty", there was also a strong body of opinion which held that because so many people could not be reached by the clergy, the laity must be mobilised to communicate the truth of the Gospel, and to bring their influence "to bear upon those who are ignorant and careless". In the past, jealous clergy, fearing the encroachment of the laity upon their exclusive role, had unconsciously encouraged the notion that prevailed extensively among laymen, "that they have little or nothing to do" as Church Members. To counter this widely held notion, it was proposed, with the approval of Bishop Knox,[77] that the clergy of Belfast and the Diocese should consider the possibility of organising in their parishes "Parochial Associations" which, it was hoped, would tap the latent power of the lay-members of the Established Church.

The main proponent of this scheme[78] based his arguments for it on his understanding of the nature of the Church:

> "Whatever blessings we receive come to us as members of this body (the church); whatever duties we have as Christians to perform, arise out of this membership, 'for every member has his vocation and ministry'. The work we have to do is not so much individual as relative, for the chief object of the institution of the Church is to build up men into one family, and therefore the work of each individual member is more or less connected with the welfare of the whole body."[79]

The ministry of the Church was, therefore, a corporate activity, with clergy and people each having their own part to play: "each

(clergy and laity) has its own appointed work to do". Arising from this basic idea of the clergy and the people together being the 'body of Christ', the Parochial Church Association was to be an organisation "... in which the clergyman, as the centre of unity in his parish, organises a band of workers, to be helpers together with him in building up the body of Christ".[80] The membership of the Association was to be confined to communicant members of the parish, and there was to be "no preferring one above another because he is rich or has a better social position".

The chief purpose of these associations in practical terms was visitation of the parish, an area of work which, in Belfast at least, had been neglected by the clergy due to their scarcity in numbers.[81] The 'Associate' was also to act as the parish contact in his street or neighbourhood,[82] and as a collector "both for parochial and other objects of general interest".

It was hoped that the work of such Associations would affect for the better the members themselves, their relationships with the clergy, and the wider community. The members of the Parochial Association would begin to feel that "they belong to one another"; they would grow closer to the clergy, and learn to "sympathize with the difficulties the minister has to encounter in his work", and they would provide a touch-stone for the incumbent as to the "state of feeling among his parishioners generally"; finally, they would become "an imperceptibly diffused, but very effective influence for good" in the community, and would "tend to make people feel that they belong to a body that has some care for them and some interest in their welfare". The problem of congregational isolation[83] might also be alleviated, if the parochial associations of neighbouring parishes were encouraged to meet from time to time for mutual consultation.

The pitfalls in forming a Parochial Association were not ignored.

Clergy were warned against allowing an Association to become a "political or religious debating club", and against allowing it to degenerate into a clique of the special friends of the clergy. The importance of good organisation was also stressed, lest the Association fall apart on the departure of the incumbent who was the originator and "animating spirit" of the scheme.

Reaction to this scheme on the part of the Belfast clergy was mostly favourable, in principle at least. William MacIlwaine, although he formed no Association in St. George's, was in favour of setting up an Association in every parish. Just how much the lay people of St. George's would have been allowed to do in such an Association is questionable, for their incumbent made it very clear that he intended to keep the Laity in their place:

> "With reference to the setting apart of Laity to certain offices, and to discharge certain duties in the Church - giving them authority to do so - he would certainly object to it. What disgrace had this not brought to other communities."[84]

MacIlwaine may have been referring to the office of lay-reader in this comment. The office was introduced in England during the sixties, but it was not easily accepted and aroused much suspicion.[85] However, even if he was referring to a particular office, his authoritarian attitude would not have lent itself to the building up of mutual confidence and trust between himself and the Laity.

Seaver, of St. John's Laganbank, had accepted the necessity of gaining the co-operation of the Laity in his own parish work, and only asked that they might co-operate "according to some fixed rule". He thought that women were especially suited for this sort of work, for ".. they found access to the house of many where a man would not be welcomed as a visitor". Thomas Drew was the only Belfast incumbent who had actual experience of an Association in his own parish, and that experience was somewhat salutary:

> "He got up an association at Christ Church, that would satisfy Mr. Kerr, and a female association that would satisfy Mr. MacIlwaine. One day a matter was proposed and the gentlemen were agreed about it, but the ladies said they would not like it at all. (Laughter) So great did this difference become that he had to dissolve both committees. They might, however, prepare a set of rules to guide these associations, and he believed they would work well."[86]

From the foregoing comments, we can gather that on the whole the clergy of Belfast were in favour of involving the Laity in the ministry of the Church, albeit on a fairly limited scale and on the assumption that such participation would be governed by rules which would apply to all parishes in the Diocese. It would probably also be fair to say that while the clergy realised the desirability of lay involvement in principle, they were somewhat wary of it in practice, fearing for their professional status. Nevertheless, it is surely remarkable that the concept of the ministry of the laity should even have been under discussion during this period, and that much of what was said, would not seem out of place in the Church of the present day, where the ministry of the Laity has become such a 'live' issue.

However, judging from the conspicuous lack of success, in the last hundred years, of the idea of a real ministry of the Laity in the parish - as distinct from concern by lay-people only in its financial affairs - it seems as if the sober realism of Theophilus Campbell was prophetic:

> "The truth was that the Laity in this town of Belfast were so engrossed in business that they had not the time to give to such associations."[75]

'Christian Nurture'

(ii) Extra-Parochial

Christian instruction was not confined to the efforts of the clergy and laity of the various parishes in Belfast. The Established Church initiated various societies for this purpose, the chief[87] of which were the "Association for Discountenancing Vice and Promoting the Knowledge

and Practice of the Christian Religion", and the "Church of Ireland Young Mens' Society'.

The Association for Discountenancing Vice and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion

This Association was founded in Dublin in 1792 by Dr. John O'Connor, a former incumbent of Ardboe, Co. Tyrone. It was founded as a propagandist organisation for the Established Church and it was hoped it would stem "the baleful torrent" of infidelity and immorality in Ireland by pouring "a stream of religious instruction into the cottages of the poor and the schools of trading, mechanical and labouring youth".[88] The founders emphasised their allegiance to mainstream Anglicanism by making very clear their distrust of any form of extremism or "enthusiasm".

The "religious instruction" which poured into "the cottages of the poor" came in the form of Bibles, Prayer Books and moral tracts. They tried to ensure that this literature was read, at least by the young, through the promotion of catechetical examinations. The association also distributed Irish translations of the New Testament, and later became involved in the area of elementary education and showed some interest in the reformation of the "criminal poor".

In 1800, the A.P.C.K. as it later came to be known, received a grant of £300 from the Government, and continued to do so annually for the next thirty years. Support was also forthcoming from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in England, grants of £1,000 and £1,250 being made in 1822 and 1836 respectively, towards the work of the Association.[89] However though there was close contact between the two bodies, and though S.P.C.K. had been active in Ireland during the 18th century, it is clear that the A.P.C.K. was founded as an independent organisation.

In 1824, when it was at the peak of its influence, a Diocesan Committee of the Association was organised in Down and Connor, it being

"the first religious society in connexion with the Church instituted in the Diocese". It was well supported both by clergy and laity, despite the fact that the National Association lost the support of the Government in 1829. This development was interpreted by many, including Bishop Mant's biographer Walter Mant, as yet another 'sop' to the Catholics, very much in line with the Government's pro-Emancipation policy. Despite this set back, the Association continued "to maintain a position" in the Diocese, with varying degrees of success and support until the 1850's.

The Church of Ireland Young Mens' Society

While the object of the A.P.C.K.,[89] was the provision of resources for Church Education in the Diocese, the C.I.Y.M.S. was more directly involved with people, mainly - as its name would suggest - young men. The reason for its inauguration in 1850 was given as "the spiritual, moral and intellectual improvement of its members", and "the diffusion of a missionary Spirit amongst them".[90] The committee, partly composed of Anglican clergy from Belfast,[91] nevertheless, suspected of organising a political society, for in their annual report it was firmly pointed out for the 'fiftieth' time that the Society "had nothing to say to politics":;

> "For the fiftieth time at least we say our motives are to exalt the moral and religious tone of the young men in our town and make them more useful to each other - to their masters - to society at large."[92]

They placed due emphasis on the influence of the Bible - 'The Charter of Britain's Liberty' - and on the observance of the Sabbath Day, arguing that if it was observed as a day of rest, it would render young men more fit in mind and body for the next week's work, and increase their "value to their masters". It is obvious from the subservient references to the industrial "masters" that the committee of the Society would brook no tinkering with the political and social status quo. Working class

aspirations were frowned upon. A speaker at the 1854 Annual Meeting complained about "dangerous literature" from which he quoted the following extracts:

> "I hold that the life and property of a working man is far more sacred than the life and property of either squire or landlord, or prince .... The working classes are the only true and proper owners of property."[93]

What was worse, many of the newspapers that contained this sort of literature were sold on a Sunday morning!

The Society may have discouraged working class political activity, but this attitude did not preclude a real sympathy for the environment in which the poor had to live. Joseph Napier M.P., in an address to the Society, compared the horrors of living in some areas of Belfast with those of the Crimean War:

> "War is bad .... and yet I am not satisfied that there may not be a more fearful sacrifice of youthful life within the circle of peace and home in the midst of material prosperity and abounding wealth. The poison of the miserable dwellings of the poor, the waste of uninstructed and overworked childhood, the coarse and cheerless toil of those who have to fight every step of the hard battle of life often with the courage of a hero and the constancy of a martyr ...."[94]

at least equalled the horrors of war. This "debasement" presented a "... battlefield for that noble fight and glorious conquest over desolation which is but the grander triumph in which death itself and hate be swallowed upin victory".

It was not surprising, considering the composition of the committee, that the Society refused to have any dealings wwith the Tractarians who:

> "having eaten the church's bread, wear her livery, pocket her wages, and yet do the work of her enemies .... The voice is indeed Jacob's voice; but the hands are the unsacrificed hands of Esau!"[95]

The morals of the young men of Belfast were the overriding preoccupation of the Society. In the Annual Report for 1856, it was recorded that the Society was looking for premises "where any young man in Belfast may turn out of harm's way". There then followed a long

catalogue of the vices of Belfast in the 1850's, including "singing saloons" which were considered even worse than public houses because of their "more pretentious aspect". The temptation for young men to "wander into the haunts of vice and villainy" had apparently been increased by "... the generous concession made lately by employers ... in the matter of the half-holiday on Saturdays". So the provision of a "refuge" from vice was more urgent than ever.

Besides the "vice" to be found in public houses and singing saloons, the Young Men of the Society were also warned against the arguments of local philosophers who were "generally setting people against the ordinances of religion". They were reminded of the need to surrender "some portion of one's intellectual freedom" if one was to be committed to the Christian Faith. Intellectual argument may have been dangerous, but, according to Drew, the point on which the Society should concentrate, was the keeping of the Sabbath. "It is at that turning point the youth must be arrested or lost."

Membership of the Society cost 2/6 per head, but despite the patronage of the Duke of Manchester, and the Presidency of the Earl of Roden, support for the C.I.Y.M.S. was not all that the committee would have desired. In the 1854 Annual Report they called for "... a greater and a more decided assistance to their efforts from the members of the Established Church in Belfast".

The Belfast Female Mission, was not, as its title might suggest, the female equivalent of the C.I.Y.M.S. It was involved in the task of Christian nurture, but not exclusively among females, nor just among Church of Ireland members. It was an interdenominational society organised by females, to "work for Christ and souls among the out-of-the way places of Belfast", and it received the active support of at least one of the incumbents of the Established Church in Belfast - Charles Seaver of St. John's Laganbank.[96]

(3) Missionary Involvement

(a) At Home

Many of the clergy in Belfast from the 1830's onwards would have been in at least partial agreement with Lord Shaftesbury's assessment of the parochial system:

> "The parochial system is no doubt, a beautiful thing in theory and is of great value in small rural districts; but in the large towns it is a mere shadow and a name."[97]

The effectiveness of the parochial system depended on the ability of the minister to know personally each one of his parishioners, which required constant visitation, and that was just not possible in the overcrowded areas of the city.[98] It was this realisation which led some of the clergy in the Diocese of Down and Connor to conclude in the early 1830's "... that there was a necessity for some exertions more than ordinary for the extension of the labours of the Church". The concept of a mission-orientated church, a church whose concern must go beyond simply asking people to attend the parish church on Sunday, was beginning to form in the consciousness of the clergy. If the people could not, or would not come to the Parish Church, then the church must go to them.

The first of the clergy in Belfast to attempt to put this idea into practice was Drew of Christ Church. In the out-lying areas of his parish, he had built what he called 'Houses of Prayer',[99] which were designed for public worship and for teaching children. They were in fact the first "dual purpose" church halls in Belfast:

> "Two portable doors placed outside the chancel-railing enclosed the centre space and along with the stationary doors at the sides of the reading desk and the pulpit, formed a complete screen across that portion of the apartment during the ordinary days of the week when it was used as a school room."[100]

A monthly service was held in the "Houses of Prayer", though there would have been a Sunday School every Sunday, and of course the Day School

throughout the week. There is also some evidence to show that Seaver, of St. John's Laganbank, conducted worship in a similar situation in Cromac Street, though it is not clear whether statutory worship took place there on a Sunday.[101]

(i) Cottage Lectures

The "Cottage Lecture" was simply a less formal extension of the "House of Prayer" idea. A room was rented in a populous area for the purpose of holding a religious service or meeting. Bishop Mant condemned the idea in his 1842 Charge, but his successor, while admitting that it might diminish attendance at the Parish Church, nevertheless, recommended the idea to this clergy:

> "... must not every Clergyman feel that there are many within the sound of the Gospel and within the reach of their Parish Churches, who never hear the one or attend the other ... and they must be sought out; perhaps in school-house or Cottage Lectures, in some localities, present the best mode of reaching them .... At these occasional services the ordinary excuse of want of proper clothes, age or infirmity, and distance from the Church, cannot be pleaded for non-attendance there. Such meetings present to the Clergyman an opportunity of using a more homely and conversational style than would be becoming in the pulpit, and which is calculated, under God's blessing to produce much benefit .... (it) opens a favourable opportunity for conveying counsel or reproof more likely to come home to their consciences, and to be personally felt by them, than if delivered in the church to a large congregation, where such admonitions are too often considered by the hearers as designed for their neighbours, and not for themselves."[102]

What took place at these Cottage Lectures varied according to the clergyman who was organising it. From Bishop Knox's remarks, it could be taken that these "lectures" were an informal service with a simple homily on some moral point. However, some of the Shankill Road people demanded a little more in the way of liturgy from their "Cottage Lectures". A poll was taken in a "mission-room" on the Shankill Road as to the form of service preferred by those who attended. The answer came back:

> "We the undersigned, are in the habit of attending the Mission-Room on Shankill road, and we beg leave to record our sentiments that we highly appreciate the Service of the Established Church as being Scriptural and simple; that we prefer it to the manner followed by Protestant Dissenters, and that we consider the Church Service is sometimes blamed rather from the manner of the Minister than from the Service Book."[103]

This statement was signed by all present with the exception of one.

Onve the River Lagan, in Ballymacarrett, the Incumbent of St. Patrick's used Cottage Lectures as "a training for the regular services of the Church", and found that they had the effect of increasing "the attendance of the people upon the public ordinances of the Church". He, therefore, maintained that they should be recognised:

> "... as a valuable, though humble auxiliary, highly calculated to lay hold of the outsiders - the practically unattached, though nominally belonging to our own and other denominations."[104]

It is clear that the "Cottage Lecture", was not only a much needed, and much used facility; but also, on the evidence of at least two of the clerics referred to above,[105] it was seen as an important stage in parish development among the poorer sections of the community. Despite the obvious drawbacks, as regards intimacy of social contact and informality of worship, necessarily incurred in transferring from a small "Cottage Lecture" to the statutory services of the Parish Church, the change seemed to present no real problem as far as the clergy were concerned. The Bishop's remark about the lectures tending to diminish congregations would, however, indicate that there were places where people did not make the transfer from "cottage" to church and where, consequently, the "Cottage Lecture" became an institution in itself.[106]

(ii) Belfast Parochial Mission

The Belfast Parochial Mission was an extension of the "Cottage Lecture" idea, except that it was organised on a city-wide basis. It was founded at a representative meeting of the Belfast clergy and laity[107] held on December 9th 1856. The Vicar of Belfast was made President,

with Charles Seaver and William Ewart (jun.) as Hon. Secretaries.[108] The idea behind the Mission was similar to that which motivated Bishop Tait to set up the London Diocesan Home Mission at around the same time. With church accommodation being so scarce in the fifties, the object of the Mission was to establish additional services for divine worship in 'destitute localities' making use of whatever accommodation happened to be available. Free schooling for the poor was also provided wherever possible. The first localities in which the Mission operated were Cromac Street, Smithfield, Union Street and Shankill Road. In all these locations Sunday Schools were opened, and three were also given day schools.[109]

One notorious development from the work of the Belfast Parochial Mission, was the practice of Open-air preaching, which seemed to the committee to be "an obvious means of reaching the masses of the people". The front of the Customs House was selected as a strategic point for this aspect of the Mission's work, but, as Dawson commented:

> "They had not long proceeded when the riots by which the town was outraged in the Summer and Autumn of 1857 broke forth and interrupted these efforts, and even from thence derived a pretext for disgraceful excesses."[108]

The authorities considered that these open air sermons might be provocative to the Catholic population of the city, and indeed, Bishop Knox may well have been of the same mind, for it was probably this series of sermons that gave rise to his pronouncement on the undesirability of open-air preaching in sensitive areas "where it is calculated to excite an outbreak".[110] Whether, indeed, these sermons provoked rioting is a question for the next chapter. I mention them here only as an illustration of the Church's missionary concern, albeit an instance where that concern went awry.

(iii) Revival (The 1859 Revival and its impact on the Established Church)

Houses of Prayer, Cottage Lectures, and the Belfast Parochial Mission were all organised attempts to reach out to the 'unchurched' of Belfast. The Revival of 1859, on the other hand, was not the result of a decision by an organising committee.

> "It originated not with the clergy, it arose among the people; they came together in prayer; they invited their minister to pray for and with them."[111]

According to Seaver,[112] the Revival "arose" first in America, and later (May 1859) spread to Belfast via the small County Antrim parish of Connor, where the people had shown an "increasing anxiety" for personal experience of such a phenomenon, since the first news of it had come from across the Atlantic.[113] In Belfast, the Revival had been no respecter of persons of denominations. "... (The) minds of all" were "aroused in such a way and to such an extent as we have never seen in our day or generation".

Opinions naturally differed as to the nature of the Revival, probably according to a person's depth of involvement with it. Seaver, a committed 'revivalist', was in no doubt that "the Agent in the work is God", and that the Revival was:

> "... an awakening of the mind of the community to a due sense of the importance of revealed truth, evidencing itself in an increased love for the means of grace, and especially of Him to whom these lead."[114]

Others saw it in less spiritual terms. One sceptic[115] described it simply as "a social phenomenon" which was only successful in gaining converts among poorly educated people who had no control over their feelings. He substantiated this claim by comparing the reactions of two Presbyterian congregations to the same revivalist preacher - Rev. W. Gibson.[116] The uneducated congregation at Berry Street demonstrated many signs of "a visible work of revival", while the more sophisticated

congregation of the Rosemary Street Church, "a few perches distant", "under the same preacher ... remained very much as it was". He considered that the difference in reaction on the part of the two congregations was inconsistent with the idea of a true revival: the reaction or lack of it, in the various churches in Belfast said more about the social make-up of those churches, than it did about the power of God to change mens' lives. He concluded:

> "It is sad enough thus to be forced to the conclusion that humanity, untrained and uneducated became the corpus vile of clerical dissectors."[117]

Most of the Established Clergy in Belfast would not have gone as far as Nelson in their criticism of the Revival, but many had reservations, mostly centring upon the outward physical manifestations of conversion. They would have agreed with Nelson's axiom that "... when the Holy Spirit saves ... there is no violence done to the body or the mind".

A balanced establishment view of the Revival was provided by the Archdeacon of Meath, Edward Stopford,[118] who, while admitting that undeniable and obvious good had resulted from the Revival, nevertheless voiced considerable disquiet about the emphasis put on inducing physical symptoms by some revivalist preachers, as an outward sign of inner conviction of sin. He named this more characteristic of the Revival the "Counterwork", and adjudged it to have more to do with the medical condition of hysteria, to be treated "by the clergy under the advice and guidance of the Christian physician", than with true Christian repentance. The "imitative" nature of hysteria lead him to believe that:

> "... if any cause of hysteria were now to arise in Belfast from any irritation ... it would at once assume the form of trouble on account of sin; (and) ... that in such a case upon recovery, no trace or consequence of godly sorrow for sin would remain."[119]

Stopford was convinced then that there was no necessary connection between true conversion and "bodily affection", and that those who had been

"struck"[120] would show no signs of true conversion once they recovered. He believed that man, and not God, was working on certain sections of the population who might be susceptible to this sort of hysteria, with the result that they were praying to be "struck", rather than for real conversion:

> "I cannot leave out of account the effect of excitment during the hours of the night. The diet of the mill girls often consists wholly of bread and tea - the worst diet for cases. At work for thirteen hours - they are then kept often till long past midnight in crowded and ill-ventilated assemblies subjected to the greatest excitment. I have heard them singing after one -o-clock in the morning. We have no right to call this the natural result of the act of God."[121]

The upshot of this sort of activity was that "... hundreds of mill girls in Belfast have prayed, and are praying to be "struck". The strange cries that issued from such girls on being "struck", reminded the Archdeacon of those he had heard in Mr. Irving's Chapel in London.[122]

The "physical manifestations" of the movement, also, aroused doubts in the mind of the Incumbent of St. George's,[123] who pleaded "for great caution" before any such movement should receive the official approval of the Church. While he gave the Revival "full credit for sincerity", he was of the opinion that in the light of Scripture and the history of the Church:

> "Revivalism ..... far from being dealt with apologetically or approvingly in connexion with pure and undefiled religion, will be consigned to the region of distrust and disapprobation."[124]

Further, such revivalism with its emphasis on "physical manifestations" was characteristic only of the Presbyterian tradition and while, regretfully, "... some few of the Clergy of the Established Church in Ulster joined the ranks of Revivalism, ... from its earliest date in the 17th century down to our own, it has never found a place in the Church of the land".[125]

Seaver, as betokened one who was heavily committed to the Revival, took a less rigid view of the "physical affects" sometimes accompanying

conversion. While he maintained that only a very small proportion of those "awakened to spiritual things" were "thus physically affected", and while he also warned against assuming any necessary connection between "bodily affection and the soul's conversion", he, nevertheless, implied that such "affects" may have been part of God's will:

> "If God then, has been pleased to use this physical prostration as a means of arousing sinners as we know he has other diseases, shall we not then thankfully receive it as thus sent and bless God if, in any way, and by any means, sinners have been aroused?"[126]

MacIlwaine and Killen may have considered Revivalism as being outside the traditions of "the Church of the land" and as exhibiting a state of things "for which canons and Rubrics made no provision", but its lack of Episcopal pedigree did nothing to inhibit its influence in certain quarters of the Church of Ireland in Belfast. Perhaps, in these quarters the enthusiasm of Revivalism warmed the "coldness of the minister and the people" causing the liturgy of the church to take on new meaning and life. This is what seemed to happen in one case quoted by Stopford from a letter he received from a cleric who was obviously involved in the Revival but in a manner not inimical to the traditions of Anglicanism. He wrote:

> "The plan of a religious service which you have suggested ... is precisely that which I adopted at a school-house in my parish, close to a great factory. The meetings have been very solemn. No 'cases' occur at them. The mill girls who attend are a very interesting class .... The Litany is I think growing upon the people, and unfolding its depth of devotion."[127]

It was this deepening of commitment to the existing services of the Established Church, rather than any wild excitment, which seemed to characterise the impact of the Revival on those parishes which were affected by it. Trinity Church,[128] whose Incumbent claimed that the "awakening" in his church had preempted by two years the general revival in the city, experienced an "increased seriousness at public worship", increased attendance at church and at the Lord's Table, and

a "true and genuine piety" amongst the young men of the congregation. There was, also, greater desire for Biblical instruction, especially among the young of the congregation. Only sixteen "stricken cases" were recorded, which was not surprising since Mr. Campbell was suspicious of "pure excitment", holding that it was not of God, but usually arose from the circumstances of the meeting.

Again, in Christ Church the "physical manifestations" were few, but "... 200 more partook the Communion on Last Christmas Day than on the previous". Events followed a similar pattern in St. John's Laganbank where the number of communicants was doubled. St. Paul's and St. Mary Magdalene's were the other "most largely visited" among the Episcopal Churches in the City.[129]

It is clear that these churches "visited" by the spirit of revival, received the enthusiastic support of their Bishop, who in a letter[130] to the author of 'The Year of Grace', Professor W. Gibson, remarked on "... the truly spiritual character of this great work, ... which in the providence of God has visited this province making many a barren spot fruitful, and many a sorrowing heart glad". Again, the evidence which he produced to back up his opinion, was to do with a deeper commitment to already existent practices in the Established Church, rather than to "things for which Canons and Rubrics made no provision". Knox recounted that the number of confirmees hadlept dramatically from an average of 250, to 750 in the preceding year, and not only that, but the quality had also improved:

> "... never since I have administered that rite of my Church, have I witnessed such solemnity of manner and deep feeling, as was exhibited by all whom I then confirmed."[130]

Knox's evidence for dramatic improvement in confirmation figures was treated with some scepticism by Isaac Nelson,[131] and with some justification; for the drop in the number of confirmees in the churches

affected by the Revival in the years following 1859 was very noticeable.[131] Nelson also took the Bishop to task for his support of a rather more unorthodox event emanating from the Revival.

Mr. Seaver of St. John's, as a result of the interest shown in the Revival, had helped to organise a weekly interdenominational prayer meeting called the "Union Prayer Meeting" in the Music Hall in Belfast. The first meeting, on June 15th, 1859, was crowded. Those present included "ministers of various denominations", the Mayor of Belfast, and William Ewart, jun. The form of the meeting in no way conformed to the liturgy of the Established Church; yet the Bishop agreed to preside at the following meeting, and from that time, the meetings continued "with unabated interest". In agreeing to preside at the meeting in the Music Hall, the Bishop incurred the displeasure of Nelson who accused him of degrading his order and of forfeiting "the respect of intelligent men". He continued, sarcastically:

> "If in future, he does not choose to lend the weight of his great intellect to the support of some Gospel truth, we recommend him to select rather the House of Lords, than the Lord's House; and to advocate Sunday Sports rather than Revival pretence."[132]

Charles Seaver, in a sermon on the subject of Revivalism, said that he would look for practical results in two areas of the convert's life - his church-going habits, and his conduct in society. Even sceptics were supposed to have admitted the changes evinced in society as a direct result of the Revival:

> "Millowners and managers, magistrates and policemen, men sceptical as to the causes, indifferent to the movement or hostile to it, have all concurred in bearing witness to the change on the face of Society: to the almost entire disappearance of certain vices, to the sobriety and honesty that characterise all classes."[133]

Even MacIlwaine of St. George's grudgingly admitted "... that effects of a moral and as some believe a spiritual and beneficial sort have resulted", whilst Stopford claimed:

> "... that instances are numerous of persons whose outward life is changed: that in some places the outward face of Society is changed (as far as we can yet see) by a visible reformation: all this is admitted without question by those who see most to blame in the conduct of the movement."[134]

However, though it may seem that the consensus of opinion was that the Revival changed Society for the better, the only hard statistics produced to back up this claim, were those relating to the number of prisoners brought to trial at the Co. Antrim Quarterly Sessions. In October 1859, the height of the Revival, the number was only half that of the previous year.[135] This is rather slim evidence on which to base any sort of case.

There is rather more evidence[136] to substantiate the claims of increased church attendance, and consequently of "... a general anxiety on religious (subjects) ... pervading on <u>all</u> ranks of Society". Numbers[136] attending certain of the Established Churches certainly did increase during this period, as did the demand for Bibles.[137] but the fact that most of the churches "visited" by the Revival and the clergy most involved in it, served working class areas,[138] lends support to Nelson's sociological observations on the phenomenon,[139] and tempers Stopford's rather extravagant assertion about the Revival's universal appeal:

> "All whom I have conversed with in Belfast - clergy, laity, persons of all classes in Society and holding all varieties of views in respect of the physical phenomena, do all agree that there is widely awakened a serious attention to religion in the minds of thousands who never thought seriously of it before: that there is an access to mens' minds on the subject of religion, a readiness and desire for instruction and for joining in the worship of God, such as was never known before ... that churches are filled as they were never filled before ...."[140]

One feature of the Revival which may have contributed to its appeal among the poorer members of society, was its emphasis on lay involvement. Seaver wrote that "the present work ... has been brought about, not by eloquence, not by learning ..., but by prayer-meetings generally conducted

by laymen of an humbler rank in Society". The attraction may have been that the Revival meetings showed that "ministerial functions" no longer had to be discharged by "a class set apart", and that the layman not only had a part to play in the ministry of the church, but was now able to play it. There was by no means unanimous support for this "revival-inspired" ministry of the laity. Even committed revivalists like Seaver and Campbell had reservations about it,[141] while MacIlwaine questioned the depth of the commitment of some of the actively involved lay people. He referred to: deluding and deluded victims of the latest Revival,

> "wh. who in 1859 were exercising the offices of preachers, teachers, and evangelists, and who have in 1860 returned to all the carelessness and godlessness of the most barren profession or even to the ranks of the scoffer and the profane."[142]

A further alleged characteristic of the Revival was its unsectarian nature, and its discouragement of "party spirit". "Ministers of all Evangelical churches forget their comparatively unimportant distinctions and meet, and pray, and act together", wrote Seaver, in an obvious reference to the Union Prayer Meetings of which he was co-organiser. The critics replied by asking - perhaps a little unfairly - how a Revival which increased adherents to the existing denominations, making them "more tenacious" of their "peculiar notions" could be said to decrease division among the churches?

> "Had revival broken down the old denominations, shattered old sectarianism, and brought its disciples out of all existing associations into a new organisation called the "Physical Conversion Church" we could, while rejecting its claims have respected its consistency."[143]

Nelson's criticism may have been needlessly sarcastic, and a little unfair, in that the Revival may well have helped to decrease hostility between the clergy of the various denominations by bringing them together for prayer and fellowship. Also the increase in converts along denominational lines need not have increased denominational rivalry. However, his criticism does hold good as regards relations with the Catholic Church.

The unity between ministers and members of the Evangelical Churches which arose from the Revival, and which was given visible form in the Union Prayer Meetings, was avowedly and openly anti-Catholic. Of this unity Mr. Seaver wrote:

> "I give it as my firm conviction that if the Evangelical Protestants of Ireland were united together in one firm band, by God's blessings Popery's advances would be checked - Popery's power could be overthrown."[144]

So it may well have been that if the Revival did discourage "party spirit", it was only achieved by replacing it with a "... spirit seven-fold more wicked, more relentless, more intolerantly hating and hateful" - an opinion shared by present day historians.[145]

As an instance of the missionary concern of the Established Church in Belfast during this period, the 1859 Revival was certainly important. Its emphasis on lay-involvement may have been the seed which germinated in the general acceptance of the principle of Parochial Associations three years later at the Diocesan Conference referred to previously.[146] Enthusiasm for church worship and attendance at it, certainly increased, though how long this increase and the Revival's beneficial effects on society were maintained, is uncertain.

Out of a sample[147] of 106 clergy asked, 51 said that even one year after their congregations had been 'visited' by the spirit of revival, there was still an increase in church attendance and at "the Lord's Table". In 71 congregations the average morning congregation of 1860 exceeded that of 1859 by 3,133, and communicants exceeded those of 1859 by 1,239. However, suspicions of the transience of the movement would not really be allayed unless the figures for five and even ten years later showed that there had been no falling away of these same congregations. Certainly Mr. MacIlwaine's comments on the shallowness[148] of the commitment of some of the active participants do rather confirm these suspicions as do the 1862 confirmation figures.[131]

An important side-effect of the Revival was its drawing together of the various Protestant denominations into a unity against "Popery", a unity which at least one Presbyterian hoped might eventually culminate in "the Union of the General Assembly and the Irish Episcopal Church".[149]

Missionary Involvement

(b) Abroad

Support for the work of the Church in other countries was certainly not as enthusiastic as that for, say, Church Extension in the Diocese. In the early forties, money collected for the support of the Missionary Societies[150] throughout the whole Diocese "did not amount to £1,300 annually".[151] When this figure is compared with the £30,000 raised for Church Extension over five years (1838-43), it gives some idea of the sort of priority Missionary Societies were given in the Diocese.

In order to raise interest in the work of the various Societies and to coordinate the collection of funds for them, Bishop Knox was instrumental in the setting up of the Diocesan Board of Missions (1852), with Archdeacon Mant and Dr. Thomas Drew as secretaries.[152] They found an "eager interest among people", but some apathy among the clergy, and by 1853 had caused the total sum collected to be raised to £1,970.[151] The Board then went into abeyance for a couple of years, and financial support for missions responded accordingly with a drop of nearly £300 in 1854.[153] Revival of the Board, with Theophilus Campbell as secretary, brought the total up again to a peak of £2,500 in 1857.[151] Of this total the parishes in Belfast (excluding Ballymacarrett) contributed £404. 10s. 2d., St. George's giving £114. 18s. 4d., Christ Church £53. 4s. 6d., and Trinity £31. 5s. 1d.[151] Again, a clearer picture of the importance of missions to the people of these parishes is provided if these figures are compared to their total incomes. In 1867,[154] the total

revenue of St. George's after deductions was £248. 7s. 1d. (and presumably would have been lower in 1857), which when compared to the £114. 18s. 4d. for missionary giving would indicate a healthy missionary concern. Not so the Parish Church of St. Anne's, which only contributed £17. 12s. 9d. and whose income in 1867 was £429. 15s. 7d.[154] Even if their annual income was considerably lower ten years before, it would hardly have decreased more than 100% in ten years, and £17 out of £200 still does not signify a great deal of zeal for the cause of Missions. However, these figures cannot be taken as indicating a general interest on the part of the majority of the parishioners, for while some of the monies for missionary objects may have been raised by collections at church services,[155] the greater part of it - in the case of St. George's perhaps most of the £114 - may have been contributed by a single individual.

By 1861 the sum collected for Missions had once again dropped to about £2,000 and this may have been the reason why "Missionary Associations" was chosen as another of the topics for discussion at the 1862 Diocesan Conference.[153] In his introductory speech, Charles Seaver concentrated not so much on how to raise more money for Missionary Societies, but on how to inculcate a missionary concern among the people - on "the best means for infusing a Missionary spirit among our people". He recommended first that the clergy themselves should give a proper place to missionary work in their daily round; that it was not to be considered as "... a work of supererogation, as many seem to regard it ... but as a duty which we are called to perform, which we dare not neglect". For only when the clergy took sufficient interest, would their people come to regard "... these Societies not as something belonging to someone else, with which they have no immediate concern, but as much a part of it as the Home Parochial System". For the purpose of creating and sustaining interest, it was suggested that Parochial Associations should

be organised with a special interest in missions, circulating missionary literature, especially among the young, and organising bands of collectors who would encourage each family to give a quarterly subscription, "let the sum be ever so trifling". Organisation, then, was the keynote of Seaver's address on Missions, and it was timely advice, for lack of organisation probably had much to do with the inconsistent pattern of giving which is obvious from the figures we have been considering in the eight years between 1853 and 1861.

Nevertheless, what is clear from these figures, is that while they may have compared unfavourably with the monies raised for Church Extension at home, they did represent, in nearly 40% of the Belfast parishes, a healthy concern for the missionary work of the Church.

(4) Social Involvement

There is little doubt that as the century reached its middle years, certain areas of Belfast were becoming "socially deprived areas". O'Hanlon's description of Barrack Lane,[156] with its "loathsome hovels" and "reeking feculence" and an M.P.'s[157] reference to "... the desolation and debasement of many who are wallowing in ignorance and animalism under the shadow of centuries of neglect ...", certainly do not suggest a city in which the poor enjoyed a decent standard of living. Some churchmen saw this state of affairs as an opportunity, as "a battlefield for that noble fight and glorious conquest over desolation", to quote once again Mr. Napier's words to the C.I.Y.M.S. Another prominent Belfast cleric - Seaver - saw the support of the poor, not as an optional extra in his ministry, but as very much part of his duty as a minister of the Established Church:

> "The minister of our Church is responsible for the people of his district - ours being a National and Established Church - as far as they will receive his ministrations, and therefore, any efforts put forward by me were justly due."[158]

But it was Thomas Drew of Christ Church, despite his ideas on poverty[159] - implying that the poor should accept their state, who was foremost of the Belfast clergy in his practical concern for the poor of the city. Most of the material in this section will, therefore, be taken from the Annals of Christ Church.

(a) Education

In the eyes of socially concerned churchmen, the most pressing need of the poor was for education. Though little was done to stop child-labour, the "waste of uninstructed and overworked childhood" was certainly not ignored by at least some of the Belfast Incumbents. However it was education with a definite scriptural bias that one of them saw as the answer:

> "When you look at homes, and the early age at which young people enter life and the character of the home education they receive, you will agree with me, that it is impossible to give too much attention to the Scriptural education of the young."[158]

"Secular education" was certainly not ignored by Mr. Seaver. Indeed, 500 children each year[158] received a "sound scriptural and secular education", although even with this noble effort, the proportion of the educated was decreasing, while the quality of education was not improving.

The principle of a 'scriptural education' was also upheld by Thomas Drew when he appealed for subscriptions towards the first school in the parish. The school was not a personal scheme of his own that he hoped to foist upon the local community. On the contrary, this school was the answer to a felt need - "the parents are generally anxious to have the benefits of a Scriptural education secured to their children". Drew's appeal did not fall on deaf ears, for the Christ Church School house was completed in November 1836, about eighteen months after the foundation was laid, and at a cost of £800.[160] It had all the modern conveniences, with a system of communication from the minister's room to each of the

school rooms, by means of "tubes and messenger boxes"! His appeal, two years later, for funds to build five more school houses did not initially meet with such a warm response,[161] but he still managed to complete them.

Financial support, or rather lack of it, continued to be a problem for Drew's educational programme. In 1842 the schools were only being maintained "with difficulty" due to the "insufficient support" of the congregation. Apparently only 19 out of a "congregation of thousands"[160] made an annual subscription towards the support of the schools. It took a special collection, and "a grant from a stranger" to keep them in operation. Even so, the schools were not totally dependent on the generosity of outsiders, for each child at the school, was asked to pay 1d. a week towards running costs.[162]

The school day ran from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., but what evidence there is, points to rather erratic attendance. In 1853 out of 1,454 on the rolls of the schools in the parish, there was an average daily attendance of only 411,[160] Perhaps this was due to both parents going out to work early in the morning and being unable to make sure the children went to school. It is interesting to note that these schools were not exclusively attended by children of the Established Church. In 1853, 'Protestant Dissenters' made up about 35% and Catholic children about 12½% of the total 163, so the Established Church by no means had an overwhelming majority. However, it may have been proselytism rather than pure altruism which was uppermost in the minds of those who were responsible for the admissions to the schools!

Provision was also made in Christ Church for education - in the broadest sense - out of school hours. A library of 2,000 volumes was formed in 1836, and membership was open to all ages, subscriptions ranging from 5s. per annum for members of the congregation, to 1d. per month for children, with Sunday School teachers on a special rate of 2/6d. per year.

A singing class was also established, which in 1837 had a membership of 220.

Neither were the more immediate needs of the poor of Christ Church forgotten. Two of the earliest projects that Drew gave his attention to, were the founding of a Clothing Society (1834) and the establishment of a Dispensary which dealt with 700-800 cases annually. Another, more novel scheme was his attempt to institute, with the help of some of the influential laymen of the city, a Public Lending Office (1837) along the lines of one that was operating in Limerick. The need for such a service was pressing, since the pawnbrokers rates were so high,[164] but a "lending office" operating at only half the pawnbrokers rates, was found to be uneconomic, and soon fell through.

(b) Alleviation of Distress

Outside the boundaries of his parish, Drew also involved himself in efforts by the City to alleviate distress among the poor and hungry. His most notable contribution was his work for the Belfast Famine Relief Fund, for which he was secretary. Counties Antrim and Down were not so seriously affected by the "awful visitation of famine and pestilence" which spread "desolation and mourning over so much of the rest of the country for five or six years (i.e. 1845-50)".[160] But as usually happens in such situations, the hungry and the destitute poured into the City from other more severely ravaged counties, and indeed, from the other side of the Irish Sea.[165] The fund amounted finally to £7,148. 1s. 9d., and out of this sum grants were made to "almost every county in Ireland". A grant of £1,000 in 1847 also enabled the Belfast soup kitchen to remain in operation.[165] The raising and then handling of such amounts of money, meant a lot of work for the secretary: so, despite "the increased claims of his own immediate charges", Drew "devoted four and sometimes seven hours daily to this work of mercy".[166]

Another extra-parochial social project to which Drew lent his support was the founding and building of the Ulster Magdalene Asylum and Episcopal Chapel. In fact, as we shall see, if it had not been for his initiative and perseverance, the whole plan "for the establishment in the town of an asylum, .. for penitent females" would probably have fallen through for lack of support. The 'Asylum and Chapel' were originally planned as a replacement for the "Penitentiary" in Donegall Street which had been obliged to close through lack of financial support,[167] It was thought that if such an institution was to be successfully revived, "it would be advisable to annex a house of worship to it", hence, the name, "Asylum and Chapel". The reason for the foundation of a chapel bringing in the needed support is unclear. Perhaps, the specific 'religious' connection gave such an institution an aura of respectability. Be that as it may, the Established Church agreed to sponsor the project, and at a public meeting on October 1st 1833, in the Exchange Rooms Belfast, a resolution was passed:

> "... that when we consider the circumstances of Belfast, which is rising in importance and increasing in population, we cannot but desire the establishment of an asylum for unfortunate females for the town of Belfast ...."[168]

A board of trustees was set up, of which the majority were to be clergymen of the Established Church, the Rev. John Kinahan and Thomas Drew being appointed treasurer and secretary respectively.

It was mainly due to the exertions of the secretary that a site was found in Donegal Pass for the erection of the proposed buildings, but despite his further efforts[169] to raise the required cost of the building, that site remained unoccupied due to lack of funds. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners refused "regretfully" to give any assistance, and

> "... there appeared so many and great difficulties in the way, that almost all, save Mr. Drew himself, became disheartened and lost faith in the ultimate success of the venture".

However the trustees reluctantly allowed the secretary, "whose energy

had accomplished so much", to begin building on his own responsibility, with the proviso that the cost should not go beyond the contributions to date.

> "(So) ... not discouraged, early one gloomy morning in the spring of 1838, Mr. Drew alone, assisted by the ordinary workmen, laid the first stone of the chapel, in hope."[170]

Drew's optimism - or faith - was put to the test, for funds ran out before the buildings could be completed. It was not until he persuaded[171] the Down and Connor Church Accommodation Society to make a grant of £1,000, nearly a year later, that the Chapel was finished. This grant also enabled the foundations of the Asylum to be laid, but due to internal wranglings,[172] it was not opened for the reception of inmates until 1849 - nearly ten years later. Initially there was accommodation for fifty inmates, who were to contribute to their own support by the carrying on of laundering "in a substantial way".

The impression that is gained from an examination of the Social Involvement of the Established Church in Belfast during this period, is that the emphasis was very much on education - scriptural, moral and secular in that order. Schools were the only social aids that were organised on any sort of general scale for the improvement of the situation of the poor. Other more basic relief schemes for alleviating hunger or poverty, were less common; and where they did exist, as in Christ Church, they were usually stop-gap measures. There is no evidence of an organised and on-going scheme to help the poor, such as was initiated at St. John's in Glasgow by Thomas Chalmers.[173] Social involvement there was, but to a limited extent. Limited, in all probability, by the view that the most important concern as regards the Church and her duty to the poor, was to fit and prepare them for the life hereafter.[174] It followed, then, that the emphasis in the area of social involvement must be on educating the poor for that state, - hence the concentration on scriptural education - and/or redeeming them from moral waywardness - hence Drew's interest in the Magdalene Asylum. The social system, which was the

underlying cause for much of the poverty and distress, remained, for the most part,[175] unquestioned.

(5) Hindrances to Missionary and Social Involvement

Some of the clergy were of the opinion that the involvement of the church with the poor was hindered by certain practices and customs of that institution. Of these 'hindrances', I propose to look at three: pew rents, patronage, and supposedly obsolete rubrics.

(a) Pew Rents

Perhaps the most obvious obstacle to involving the poor in church life, was the existence in many churches of pew rents. In Parish Churches pew rents were illegal.[176] Pews were the property of the parish and could neither be sold nor let, theoretically being available to all the parishioners whether rich or poor. However, thefollowing directive to churchwardens makes it very clear, that in practice a distinction was made between the "higher classes" and the rest:

> "In discharging their duty, the Churchwardens are bound in their distribution to regard the accommodation of the parish at large, consulting as far as may be the convenience of all its inhabitants, seating the parishioners according to their rank and station; but in doing so not overlooking the claims of all the parishioners to be seated, if seatings can be afforded them. Accordingly the Churchwardens are bound in particular not to accommodate the higher classes beyond their real wants to the exclusion of their poorer neighbours who are equally entitled to accommodation, though not to equal accommodation as the others."[177]

The poor had a right to be seated in the parish churches, but only after the "higher classes" had been given their seats. This was presumably the state of affairs in St. Anne's where, as we have seen, "the seats were allotted to the then residents of the town".

Legally, the only Churches in which pew rents were allowed were Trustee-owned Chapels,[176] but an anomaly was being created by the fact "that districts are gradually being assigned to trustee-chapels, and

thus they are given the semblance of Parish Churches",[178] a status which looked to be permanent. Thus:

> "... the inhabitants are losing all claim to a seat in the Parish Church without acquiring a right to one in thedistrict church unless they are prepared to rent it."[176]

The usual solution to the problem of pew rents was to set aside a number of seats in a church to be free of charge, for the use of the poor, as happened in Christ Church and the Magdalene Asylum Chapel among others. But such a solution disregarded the feelings of the poor who, by the very existence of free seats alongside rented seats, could not avoid "having pressed upon their notice some memento of their inferiority".[179] What was worse in Protestant eyes, was that the Catholic church operated under no such disadvantage:

> "No wonder the Romish schism holds its ground in Ireland. The chapels are opened to the people freely; they are made to feel that they are their own - that they have a right there - that they are in no danger there of being looked down upon by those of their richer neighbours ...."[180]

Yet the pew rents seemed to be necessary to help towards the provision of a stipend for the incumbent, especially in poorer parishes where there were few endowments to make alternative provision. As Mann commented, "... The system tended to be financially necessary just where it was socially undesirable".[179] William MacIlwaine maintained that if it were not for pew rents, "the entire support of the minister" of both Christ Church and Trinity Church would disappear.[181] And it was not only these two, but the majority of the churches built in the period between 1830 and 1870 which suffered from the drawback of pew rents, as the only completely "free" church built during those years was St. Stephen's Millfield.

Besides the building of "free" churches, the other solution to the problem of pew rents was to encourage the "voluntary offertory" system which one writer[182] had shown to be, in the cases of some English

parishes, a more efficient means of raising money. He based his argument for the voluntary offertory on his contention that it was a New Testament custom and that he could not imagine "St. Paul addressing a pew-seated pew-renting congregation". This view was endorsed by the one-time curate of Christ Church, Abraham Dawson. He, also, emphasised the need for endowments, in addition to the offertory, if the church were to be finally free "of the miserable pew traffic".

(b) The Patronage System

The patronage issue had been raised in Belfast, as we have seen, over the dismissal of a well-loved curate of the Parish Church, in the early 1820's. Although, as has also been noted, in the majority of Belfast Churches the right of nomination to the Incumbency was vested in Trustees,[183] several of the Belfast clergy at various times had publicly voiced their disquiet over the system of patronage.

At the "Great Meeting" called to discuss the problems of Church Accommodation in 1838, the subject of Patronage was raised by Drew. He was not looking for an end to the system, but for a "return to right patronage" free from any hint of "family aggrandisement", "nepotism", or favouritism, which could only predominate "at the expense of the glory of God". Five years later, MacIlwaine drew attention to what he saw as the abuse of patronage by the state. Again the system itself was not questioned, merely the abuse of it:

> "What have our temporal rulers, in bygone days, done towards our Church here in Ireland? With what kind of men have they filled our Irish sees? How has the patronage, that most holy and responsible part of Episcopal jurisdiction here, been exercised? Let the fearful history of churches emptied, and hireling coffers filled - dissent and schism increased, and the Church's numbers thinned, answer this question."[184]

However, it was the Incumbent of Ballymacarrett[185] who first made it clear that the patronage system itself was a hindrance to the Church's involvement with the people. He contended that it had become "a crying

grievance with all right-minded people" and had "lead to a traffic in livings". He, therefore, recommended that:

> "... the appointment of the future ministers be placed in the hands of those who supply the necessary funds. For instance if any congregation contribute the required amount, let the patronage be vested in trustees elected by them ...."[186]

A check on the power of the congregation would be provided by giving the Bishop the right to veto their appointment, though not without the right of appeal.

Thus, the patronage issue may not have created the storms that it did in Scotland and England in the forties, but by 1870 it was obviously becoming a real bone of contention in the mind of at least one Belfast clergyman.

(c) Obsolete Rubrics

The subject of liturgical revision was widely discussed in the Established Church during the sixties. Indeed, it was mentioned at the Diocesan Conference in 1862 - its need being admitted - so that the services might be made "more truly edifying". While no general agreement was reached at the Conference on the subject of Prayer Book Revision,[187] Thomas Roe argued, a few years later in the Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette,[188] that certain of the Rubrics were detrimental to the Church's ministrations to the poor. He made specific reference to the Third Rubric which required that baptism of infants be administered after the 3rd Collect at Morning or Evening Prayer. In effect, this laid down that theoften ill clad poor had to "expose themselves to the gaze of a well-dressed congregation", to their undoubted chagrin. Rather than go through this embarrassing experience, the poor, he said, would rather let their children go unbaptized. Thus, a valuable - and perhaps only - point of contact with them was lost. He, therefore, asked that baptism should be allowed to be administered after morning or evening Prayer.

Roe was also uneasy about the "Burial Service" since its effectiveness was reduced because of the Church's legal obligation to bury all-comers regardless of belief. Hence, "... it not unfrequently happens that the service is read over those who have openly lived in gross sin" up to the time of their death, thus rendering the discipline of the Church meaningless. Therefore, permission was asked that certain passages be omitted from the service, or that appropriate alternatives be provided.

In the same letter the Incumbent of Ballymacarrett also asked that the Canon of the Church on the subject of the use of licensed and consecrated buildings be remodelled to give more positive recognition to the "Cottage Lecture System" as being one method of overcoming the traditional antipathy of theworking classes to the Established Church.

The success of the "Cottage Lecture", the failure of "free seating" as an attraction to the poor, and the attitude of the middle classes to "ill clad" fellow worshippers suggest that while church organisation did place some obstacles to the mixing of the classes in church, the main hindrance to the involvement of the poor was one of attitudes. At that stage in church development, the rich and middle classes just didnot want to mix with the poor on equal terms, and the poor felt uncomfortable in the presence of rich. As long as these attitudes were implicitly accepted by the church - which they were in the period under consideration - a homogeneous church of rich and poor was an impossibility no matter what superficial reforms were implemented.

(6) Payment of the Clergy

In at least one recorded instance, inadequate remuneration was also an obstacle to the effective operation of a Belfast Church. The Chaplain of the Magdalene Asylum Chapel, Robert Harvey, wrote in his letter of resignation on March 13th 1841:

> ".... neither my present income nor anything on which I can reasonably reckon for several years to come, if I should remain, is such as would meet any necessary expenditure, and justice to my family and to my character require that I should not any longer continue in a situation in which I should be unable to fulfil the duty of 'owing no man anything'. .... My coming has already embarrassed me considerably; .... for the future my duty is clear, to seek elsewhere a sphere of duty in which my expenses will not exceed my income."[189]

Harvey did not mention any figures in his letter of resignation, but a letter from Thomas Drew, the secretary of the trustees, to Harvey's successor, Thomas Miller, indicated that the salary was at least £50:

> "The pew rents belong to the Minister, subject to twenty guineas rent on building, but it is not likely that this would be demanded by the Trustees in the present state of the Institution. If the pew rents do not amount to £50 they make up thedifference. If they exceed £50 they are of course exonerated and you get the rents and nothing from them."[190]

One contributor to the Irish Ecclesiastical Journal[191] considered £50 - and certainly anything lower than that - to be "starvation wages". Certainly compared to the salary of the Incumbent of Christ Church - admittedly seven years later - it seems rather low. In 1848 the Trustees of Christ Church agreed to pay the Incumbent an annual salary "of not less than £200", which did not include the income which would accrue from a sum of £1,893. 10s. which had been set aside as "a perpetual endowment for the Church and the provision of the minister thereof".[192] In effect then, the salary of the Incumbent of Christ Church would usually have exceeded £200, and in 1859, with 'perks' such as the Annual Gift from the Free Sitters and pew rents it amounted to £324. 16s. 10d., though we are told that "Dr. Drew repeatedly refused to take it".[192]

From the two foregoing cases, it would appear that in Belfast, as in the rest of Ireland, salaries were erratic. They depended on the existence of a healthy return from pew rents, and while in the larger churches like St. George's, Trinity, and Christ Church, pew rents by 1868 brought in at least £200 per annum,[193] in the smaller churches the sum could be as low as £20[194] and even £12[195] and the salary of the clergy

had to be made up from other sources such as the "Curates Fund Society".

At their best, clerical incomes in Belfast compared favourably with incomes of other occupations. Christ Church did not quite pay an Irish Grammar School Headmaster's salary (£400-£500) but they did manage to compete with the Bank of Ireland who paid most of their agents between £300 and £400; or, to compare it with the legal profession, their 1859 salary was £50 lower than the starting figure for resident magistrates.[196]

Bishops of course were on a different pay scale altogether. It was reported in 1848 that the Bishoprick of Down and Connor was worth £5,000 per annum.[197]

(7) Episcopal Involvement

The contact and involvement which the Bishops of Down and Connor - and later Dromore - had with the clergy and people of the Established Church in Belfast, varied according to the character of the Bishop and the extent of the Church's work in the city. The two earlier Bishops, Dickson and Alexander seem to have had little to do with the individual clergy and people, but then up until the 1820's Belfast was not all that large, it had only two Anglican churches. Though notwithstanding the paucity of Anglicans in these years, the absence of information about the activities of Bishop Alexander, may well be a sign of his lack of involvement in any real way with the Church in Belfast.

Bishop Mant's relationship with his clergy and people was based very much on their willingness to accept his authority. He cared about, and worked for the extension of the Church's influence in Belfast, but it seemed to be the 'Church' in a very abstract sense, rather than the 'Church as people and clergy'. He made little attempt to get close to the laity or clergy, and consequently, as we have seen, was unable to appreciate their fears, whether be they real or imagined, about the connection between the Church Architecture Society and the Cambridge Camden Society.

Judging from the amount of time he gave over to writing about liturgy and the priesthood, it would seem that he was more interested in the correct practice of Anglicanism, than in the people in Belfast who were actually trying to practise it. This coldness towards thepeople and clergy, unintentional though it may have been, could have been the root cause of the mutual suspicion which culminated in the crisis over the Church Architecture Society when the Bishop accused William MacIlwaine of raising the Laity against him. Bishop Mant was involved with the Church - as an idea - but he kept himself at one remove from the people of the Church. When they threatened to get too close, he did not hesitate to remind them of the authority of his Office.[198]

Nor was Bishop Knox afraid of using his authority. He took one of his clergy[199] to court for inviting a certain cleric to preach in his church, after that cleric had been banned from the Diocese by the Bishop. But Knox also attempted to acquaint himself with the feelings, ideas and aspirations of his clergy and laity. It was for this purpose that he initiated the annual Diocesan Conferences in the early sixties.

> "By means of these Annual Conferences opportunities have been afforded of removing many prejudices and misconceptions, of considering what additional agencies are most needed for carrying on the Church's work, and for increasing the practical efficiency of those at present use."[200]

Not only would the conferences gain from the "ripe experience" of "earnest Clergymen who have patiently laboured for years in their own parishes", but also, from the "sound judgement" and "practical advice" of the "faithful laity". Topics for these conferences included "Synodal Action of the Church", "Church and State", "Movements of Religious Thought in our Church" and "State Education". Thus the Bishop encouraged contact between himself and his people, even to the extent ofinviting the Clergy and Laity attending the 1862 Conference to breakfast in the Ulster Hall on the last morning of their meeting.

Knox's efforts were not in vain. The Conferences did bring him closer to the clergy, as one of the more influential of them testified:

> ".... (B)ut I learned ... that no man is more ready to give full and perfect toleration of the opinions of others who may differ from him .... No man is farther removed from judging with any degree of severity the opinions and views of those who differ from him .... He has inaugurated these conferences .... There is not a clergyman in your Diocese, my Lord who does not bless God in his heart for bringing us together".[201]

Knox, like his predecessor disagreed with his clergy on some very important issues, as we shall see in the next chapter. But unlike Mant he was able to retain their support, because he took steps to ensure that he should not appear remote to clergy or laity.[202] He was involved with his people.

It is clear that by the 1860's, the Bishop was becoming deeply involved with his clergy and lay people in Belfast and the Diocese. However, it was doubtful whether at parish level the Church was equally involved with all sections and classes of society. Nevertheless, despite this shortcoming, the Church in Belfast created a favourable impression upon some English 'gentlemen' attending the 1862 Conference. They told the Bishop:

> ".... that they left more deeply impressed than ever with the importance of the Church in this country, and they expressed their feelings that this meeting reflected credit on the Irish branch of the Church - and that they would not be at all surprised to see meetings of the same kind established in England."[202]

Notes for Chapter IV

1. Drew, January 1842 - Sermon 11 'The Place and Use of Spiritual and of Human Influences'. 'Two Sermons preached before the University of Dublin' p. 28.

2. Ibid., p.27.

3. Theophilus Campbell, 'A Sermon preached at the Ordination held in Trinity Church Belfast'. Advent Sunday 1859.

4. Ibid., p. 7.

5. R. Mant, 'Further Particulars in the Ministerial Character and Obligations examined and Informed'. (Charge; 1825) p. 14.

6. Robert Knox, who became Bishop in April 1849 was a liberal in politics, and a conservative churchman like his predecessor. However he got on much better with the Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, so much so that in his obituary he was called the "Apostle of Tolerance". In 1886 he was made Primate. I.E.G. 27/10/1893.

7. Robert Knox, A Charge delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the United Dioceses of Down, and Connor and Dromore. July 1858 p. 21. He also referred to visitation as 'The golden clasp which binds together all our pastoral work'.

8. "Let me remind them (laity) how much depends on them and how they are called to strengthen our hands by their zealous active co-operation ....." Ibid., pp. 23-24.

9. ".... they must be sought out, perhaps by encouraging them to come to the School house or to Cottage Lectures .... where the clergyman has an opportunity of using a more homely and conversational style". Ibid., pp. 17-18.

10. R. Mant: 'Some Particulars in the Ministerial Character and Obligations examined and enforced' (Charge 1824) p. 47.

11. cf. Irish Ecclesiastical Revenue and Patronage. Third Report. 1838. op. cit. Also, Dawson, op. cit. and The Preachers' Book, St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett.

12. Dawson, Annals, op. cit.

13. cf. p.186 above.

14. Christian Examiner December 1827.

15. cf. p. 35 above.

16. In the introduction to his 1842 Charge, Mant hints at a tendency towards liturgical anarchy in the diocese: "On the one hand a disposition may be perceived, not only to slight her authority and formularies, but to compremise her apostolical character, and to merge her distinctive excellence in the gulf of Protestant latitudinarianism; a disposition, on the other hand may be

perceived to revert to the once bygone fancies of Romish superstition, and thence to bring forward obsolete notions and practices which, in common with others from the same repository of error, she has disallowed and repudiated'. 'An Extract from the Charge of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Mant. June 1842, p. 1.

17. Mant wrote a pamphlet consisting of 42 pages on the subject. R. Mant, Extemporaneous Prayer - not authorised by the Church. 1837.

18. Ibid., p. 26.

19. Ibid., p. 25.

20. In England during the forties and fifties, weekly communion became more and more common, though as late as 1864 "nearly a third of the parishes in Lincoln Diocese celebrated the sacrament four times a year or less". Chadwick. Pt. 1 op. cit. pp. 514 and 515.

21. R. Mant, 1842 Charge p. 41.

22. R. Mant, Horae Liturgicae, p. 14.

23. Godkin. Ireland, Primitive, Papal and Protestant p. 219.

24. I.E.G. 23/4/1868. Roe advocated elocution lessons which is probably why he referred to 'signs of affectation'.

25. R. Mant: 'The Office of the People in the Public Worship of the Church' Belfast 1825.

26. In England, especially in country churches, the congregations 'left the responses to the clerk and sat passive until the hymns'. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 517.

27. Quoted from the review of R. Mant's The Clergyman's Obligations considered R. Mant in Christian Examiner June 1830.

28. An "indescribable variety of hymn books" were used in England. The five central churches in Nottingham used five different books. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 518.
In 1862 the situation in Belfast was similar: "In Belfast, at present every church had it's own hymnbook, and there was no uniformity .. in this respect". from the report of a speech by Rev. W. MacIlwaine, Report of the proceedings of the Conference of the Clergy and Laity of the Utd Diocese of Down Connor and Dromore 1862, p. 21.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid. p. 9.

31. Dawson, op. cit.

32. MacIlwaine believed that the Psalms could never be translated into "good English verse". Report of Conference . . . op. cit., p. 21.

33. I.E.G. 19/8/1868.

34. These averages are of course only taken from sermons which were later printed.

35. R. Mant, A Sermon preached in St. Patrick's Dublin to the Association Incorporated for Discountenancing Vice and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion. June 17 1829.

36. T, Campbell, 'The Spirits in Prison - Who were they?' 1887.

37. cf. next chapter: 'The Church Militant'.

38. R. Knox, 'A Charge delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Utd. Dioceses of Down Connor and Dromore' July 1858, p. 20.

39. R. Mant, 1842 Charge as reported in Irish Ecclesiastical Journal July 1842, p. 436 (No. 3).

40. However the Archdeacon of Down said that an uneducated country congregation had berated him for omitting the Litany. Report of the Conference ... op. cit., p. 10.

41. cf. p.39 above.

42. Figures from Drew 'The Church in Belfast', Ulster Times (1838).

43. Preachers' Book St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett.

44. Dawson, op. cit.

45. "The new churches were often nearly empty, or at least empty by the standards of that day." Chadwick, op. cit., p. 332.

46. In 1832 the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry "lamented" that only a quarter of those who attended church in the Diocese were communicants. Dawson claimed that 857 out of 3,929 attended Holy Communion, - not quite one quarter. Ibid., p. 333.

47. cf. pp. 39 and 46 above.

48. Dawson, op. cit. (census).

49. W. M. O'Hanlon calculated that 10,000 children at least could not read in 1853. He took no account of the number of illiterate adults. Were these people attending Christ Church in any great numbers? O'Hanlon, op. cit., p. 109.

50. cf. p. 60 above.

51. I.E.G. 23/4/70.

52. Ibid., 23/4/70.

53. H. Mann, Religious Worship in England and Wales p. 94; cited by E. R. Wickham, op. cit., p. 49.

54. 'Extracts from the monthly proceedings of the Belfast Sunday School Society, 3rd October 1810-10th November 1823." N.I.P.R.O. op. cit., p. 48.

55. Arthur Macartney, Vicar of St. Anne's 1820-1843, chaired a committee meeting on March 11th 1823. Ibid., p. 52.

56. Ibid., p. 49.

57. Irish Ecclesiastical Revenue and Patronage, Report. 1836. Reference is also made to a school at St. Anne's and also one at St. George's by Pilson, op. cit.

58. Dawson, op. cit.

59. Bishop Knox said that the Paper read on the subject of Sunday Schools brought before the conference the question of whether Sunday Schools should now confine their work solely to religious instruction. Report on the Conference .... op. cit., p. 85.

60. Ibid., p. 81.

61. Ibid., p. 83.

62. Ibid., p. 86.

63. This was the view of a layman - Richard Davison. Ibid., p. 91.

64. The opinion of Mr. Norton of the Church of England Sunday School Institute. Ibid., p. 91.

65. There were 1,000 on the roll books, but an average attendance of 400. Dawson, op. cit.

66. "... my experience of Sabbath schools compels me to say, that ... themost faithful instructors can do very little in the inculcation of those higher and holier principles which constitute the true glory and real business of such institutions." O'Hanlon, op. cit. p. 108.

67. He calculates that 10,000 out of a total of 23,000 children are not touched by the influence of Sunday School. Ibid., p. 107.

68. Wickham, op. cit., p. 155.

69. "Catechising Classes" referred to as beginning in 1834 were presumably confirmation classes. Dawson, op. cit.

70. Ibid.

71. 'The Protestant Orphan Society' founded in 1866, and still in operation at the present day operates on this principle. The fact that the first Hon. Sec. of the Society was Rev. R. Hennay, Drew's successor at Christ Church lends some weight to the supposition that such a system may have operated in Christ Church, prior to the founding of the Society. 111th Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Society 1977-78'

72. W. G. Gibson; 'The Year of Grace' (1860) p. 408.

73. ".. Churches and chapels were fuller on such a day than any other," despite the doubts of "philosophical men" about the belief that "providence would specially intervene as a result of prayer". Chadwick, op. cit., p. 490.

74. cf. pp. 95 and 100 above.

75. Campbell stated that to date the giving of the Laity had been 'miserable'. Report on the Conference .... op. cit., p. 68.

76. Ibid.

77. Presumably the Bishop approved in principle of Parochial Associations, if he allowed them to be discussed at the Diocesan Conference.

78. Rev. J. A. Kerr, A.B., Curate of Dromore. Ibid., p. 57.

79. Ibid., p. 56.

80. Ibid., p. 60.

81. A comment by Theophilus Campbell. Ibid., p. 68.

82. '... his word of freindly advice to a careless neighbour is taken in good part; his invitation to attend at some sermon or lecture; his mentioning even that such a meeting took place, and what was said and done there ....; all trifling matters in themselves produce a wonderful influence and tend to make people feel that they belong to a body that has some care for them and some interest in their welfare.' Ibid., p. 64.

83. 'We are not united for any practical purpose, ...'
'As a Church, we are National and Diocesan, but yet each parish is as separate and as far removed from all the rest as if we were purely congregational.' Ibid., p. 64.

84. Ibid., p. 69.

85. Chadwick, op. cit., Pt. II, p. 163.

86. Report on the Conference .... op. cit., p. 70.

87. Pilson lists the following Societies as being connected with the Established Church in Belfast:
Assoc. for Discountenancing Vice .....
Branch of Church Missionary Soc.
" " Soc. for Promoting Christianity among the Jews
" " Dublin Orphan Soc.
" " Ladies Hibernian School Soc.
" " Church Education Soc. (viz. next chapter)
Down and Connor Clergy Aid & Additional Curates Fund Socs.
Colonial Missionary Soc.
Belfast Auxiliary to the Clergy Daughters' School
Clergy Sons' School
Prayer Book Homily Soc. Pilson, op. cit.

88. Dr. Thomas Lewis O'Beirne, Bishop of Ossory, A. Sermon (1798) - on the work of the A.P.C.K. Cited in Phillips, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 259.

89. W. K. Lowther Clarke, A History of the S.P.C.K., p. 220. Also "The S.P.C.K. and Ireland", The Church of Ireland Gazette 18/2/1964.

90. The Fourth Annual Report of the C.I.Y.M.S. Belfast 1854.

91. The Committee consisted of: Wm. MacIlwaine, Theophilus Campbell, E. J. Hartrick, Charles Seaver and T. F. Miller. Lay representation included J. Napier, Wm. Ewart, Charles Lanyon and Andrew Mulholland among others.

92. The Sixth Annual Report of the C.I.Y.M.S. 1856 p. 9.

93. With at least two 'industrial masters' on the committee (Ewart and Mulholland) it is little wonder that working class politics and aspirations were frowned upon. The Fourth Annual Report .... op. cit., pp. 9 and 10.

94. Sixth Annual Report .... op. cit., p. 22.

95. Ibid., p. 9.

96. I.E.G. 22/4/1869.

97. K. S. Inglis, op. cit., p 25 (quoted from O. J. Brose in 'Church and Parliament' p. 206 note.)

98. Drew, op. cit., p. 10. cf. also T. Campbell's comment on ".... The clergy did not visit because they had not a sufficiency of clergy to carry out visitation in Belfast." Report of the Conference .... op. cit., p. 68.

99. The Houses of Prayer were named after "heroes" of the Reformation: Huss, Wycliffe and Luther.

100. Dawson, op. cit.

101. There is a reference to "week evening meetings in Cromac Street being "much blessed", in a "presentation speech" to Seaver. I.E.G. 22/4/1869.

102. Knox, Charge .... 1858. op. cit., pp. 17-18.

103. I.E.G., 15/1/1861.

104. I.E.G., 23/9/1870. In a letter on the subject of the reform of the rubrics.

105. Roe, and Hudson Teape whose Cottage Lectures were the beginnings of the Parish of St. Mark's Ligoniel. I.E.G., 15/1/1861.

106. These 'Cottage Lectures' may well have been the precursors of the well-known Belfast institution of the 'wee mission hall'.

107. There were 43 laymen present, each parish in Belfast being represented. Dawson, op. cit.

108. Ibid.

109. 230 Children were enrolled in the Daily Schools and 400 in the Sunday Schools, though only 142 attended regularly in the former and 150 in the latter. Ibid.

110. cf. p. 124 above.

111. Rev. C. Seaver, Religious Revivals Two Sermons preached in St. John's Laganbank on Sunday 10th July 1859, (Belfast 1859) p. 9.

112. '... of the Episcopal ministers of the Northe of Ireland the Rev. Charles Seaver of St. John's was among the most earnest and successful in connexion with the revival movement.' Gibson, op. cit. p. 402.

113. Appendix "Origin of the Revival" Seaver, op. cit.

114. Seaver, The Ulster Revival, A Paper read before the Evangelical Alliance' September 22nd 1859. Belfast.

115. Isaac Nelson who wrote an answer to Gibson's Year of Grace entitled The Year of Delusion 1860.

116. The author of The Year of Grace.

117. Nelson op. cit., p. 38.

118. E. Stopford. The Work and Cunterwork The Religious Revival in Belfast with an explanation of the Physical Phenomena. Dublin 1859.

119. Ibid., p. 30.

120. 'Struck' was the term used to denote being physically affected by the 'conversion experience'.

121. Stopford, op. cit., p. 37.

122. Stopford also commented: "This is Irving and his prophetesses again". Ibid., p. 11.

123. MacIlwaine would have tended to support Nelson's 'Delusion' rather than Gibson's 'Grace' view of the Revival.

124. W. MacIlwaine. Ulster Revivalism 1859.

125. ".... but many suspented it, since it did not flow through the ancient channels of Episcopacy." Killen, op. cit., p. 533.

126. Seaver, Religious Revivals, op. cit., p. 8.

127. Stopford, op. cit., p. 101.

128. "Rev. Theophilus Campbell incumbent of Trinity Church in this town .. stated the most gratifying fact that the great religious awakening commenced in this town in connexion with his church more than two years ago." i.e. 1857. Seaver, Ulster Revival op. cit., p. 7.

129. Gibson lists the 'visited' Episcopal Churches. op. cit., p. 408.

130. I.E.G. July 1859.

131. Nelson sceptically commented: "Knowing as we do the manner in which children are gathered and prepared for the right of Confirmation in the Episcopal Church, a few hundreds either one way or the other would excite little surprise." Nelson, op.cit. p. 206.
The 1862 Confirmation figures were very low e.g. Trinity , 33; Christ Church, 26; St. John's, 12. Diocesan Calendar (1862) p. 75.

132. Ibid., p. 208.

133. Seaver, op. cit., p. 7.

134. Stopford, op. cit., p. 6.

135. Killen, op. cit., p. 529.

136. Communicants doubled at St. John's; congregations "overflowing" at Trinity; st Christ Church, Christmas communicants increased by 200. Gibson, op. cit., p. 408.

137. The Hibernian Bible Society issued to Ulster alone from 1st April to 1st September 20,423 copies of the Bible - double the quantity issued for the same period in 1858. Seaver, op. cit., p. 8.

138. There are no returns for the more "fashionable" churches like St. Anne's and St. George's, though the Vicar of Belfast, Rev. T. Miller did advocate that "we should continue to take a lively interest in the matter". Gibson, op. cit., p. 92.

139. cf. p.148 above.

140. Stopford, op. cit., p. 5.

141. He admits that where there had been lay involvement there had been some "mistakes and indiscretions". Campbell aired his views about lay participation at the 1862 Conference. Seaver, op. cit., p. 8.

142. MacIlwaine, op. cit., p. 11.

143. Nelson, op. cit., p. 204.

144. Seaver, Religious Revivals op. cit., p. 22.

145. "This heightening of religious fervour contributed inevitably to the intensification of sectarian rivalry .." Lyons, op. cit., p. 24.

146. cf. p.135 above.

147. I.E.G. 15/8/1860.

148. cf. p.155 above.

149. Killen, op. cit., p. 553.

150. The Missionary Societies supported were:
The Gospel Propagation Society
" Church Missionary "
" Jewish " "
Irish Society
Irish Church Missions
The latter society was for the express purpose of converting Catholics, and so was not strictly a 'foreign' mission.

151. Appendix to Knox's Charge. 1858.

152. Dawson, op. cit.

153. Report of the Conference 1862 op. cit., p. 98.

154. The income would probably have been lower in 1857. 'Irish Ecclesiastical Revenue and Patronage' Report 1867.

155. Preacher's Book, St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett.

156. cf. p. 5 above.

157. Joseph Napier, M.P. speaking to the C.I.Y.M.S. Sixth Annual Report .... op. cit., p. 22.

158. I.E.G. 2/4/1869 (Rev. Charles Seaver).

159. cf. p. 64. above.

160. Dawson, op. cit.

161. Reactions such as "Depend upon it, such a plan is too gigantic". Dawson op. cit.

162. Dawson, op. cit.

163. Out of a total of 1454 on the rolls, Catholics totalled 186, Est. Church 894 and Prot. Dissent. 374. Ibid.

164. Drew calculated that the pawnbrokers charged 7d. interest p.a. on a loan of 1/-. Ibid.

165. The Protestant Defender (Hereafter referred to as P.D.) 6/11/1849.

166. Dawson, op. cit.

167. Leathem, op. cit., p. 25.

168. "Unfortunate females" were presumably females who had fallen on hard times - perhaps prostitutes. Ibid., p. 26.

169. By his efforts £1,000 was raised in England. Leathem, op. cit. p. 28.

170. Ibid., p. 29.

171. "It was probably as the result of the influence of Mr. Drew that the Society .... made its first grant by allocating the sum of £1,000 for the completion of the Magdelene Asylum Chapel." Ibid., P. 30.

172. Mr. Monsell, the chaplain ascribed the delay to, among other things "prejudice" on the part of the Trustees. Ibid., p. 36.

173. Thomas Chalmers divided the parish into districts with a deacon in charge of a district. The poor in each district were thus sought out and taken care of.

174. The great emphasis placed on preparation for thelife hereafter, is well illustrated by the complex arrangements made to enable the victims of the 1848 Cholera outbreak to attend their respective churches. Strain, op. cit., p. 271.

175. Napier's speech to the C.I.Y.M.S. (cf. above p.) is the nearest churchmen get to questioning the system.

176. Letter from Rev. A. Dawson on the question of the legality of pew rents in parish churches. I.E.G. 23/6/1870.

177. Diocesan Calendar. Clergy List and Almanac. 1861. p. 84.

178. As happened in the cases of Christ Church and Mary Magdelene.

179. H. Mann Religious Worship in England and Wales, p. 94 quoted by K. S. Inglis. op. cit., p. 49.

180. I.E.G. June 1857. Letter on 'Pews'.

181. MacIlwaine, Ecclesiologism Exposed (Letter 111) pp. 14-15.

182. A letter from R. Kyle Knox on 'The Future Income of the Churches' I.E.G. 20/1/1870.

183. In at least one instance (Mary Magdelene) if the Trustees could not agree on a nomination, after three months theright passed to the Bishop.

184. MacIlwaine, op. cit. (Letter XVIII) p. 54.

185. St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett was in the patronage of the Vicar of Knockbreda.

186. I.E.G. A letter from Roe, I.E.G. 22/9/1869.

187. There was no legally constituted body in the Irish Church able to make such a revision.

188. I.E.G., 23/9/1870.

189. Leathem, op. cit., p. 32.

190. Ibid., p. 33.

191. Irish Ecclesiastical Journal March 1843.

192. Dawson, op. cit.

193. Irish Ecclesiastical Revenue and Patronage op. cit.

194. Lower Falls (St. Luke's).

195. St. Matthew's Shankill Road.

196. R. B. McDowell. The Church of Ireland. 1869-1969, p. 12.

197. P.D. 25/11/1848.

198. As when he questioned the ability of the signatories of the "Lay Memorial" to make decisions about such things. Also his reaction to the suggestion of the formation of a "Diocesan Home Mission" - he considered the approach an "uncalled-for and unauthorised interference with his jurisdiction. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 350.

199. Rev. T. Miller, Vicar of St. Anne's. The case ended with both having to pay their costs.

200. Preface, Report of the Conference .... 1862 op. cit.

201. Ibid., p. 101.

202. Ibid., p. 103.

CHAPTER V

'THE CHURCH MILITANT'

In the two previous chapters we have looked at the reaction of the Established Church in Belfast, both at Diocesan and Parochial level, to the problems posed by the growing industrial city of Belfast. In this chapter, entitled 'The Church Militant' I want to examine what might be called the 'public stance' of the Church on various issues such as education, Sabbath observance, and inter-church relationships. The word 'militant' is used in the title, because it conveys the idea of the Church standing up for, or out against; or, to put it another way, of the Church taking up an 'aggressive' position. The common thread or link running through the chapter is the militantly anti-Catholic attitude adopted by the Established Church in Belfast, an attitude which grew increasingly militant as the century progressed, thus supporting my thesis "that one of the chief motivations ... which underlay the Church of Ireland's work in nineteenth century Belfast, was active opposition to the Catholic Church".[1]

The Chapter is divided into two sections - 'The Defensive Church', and 'The Aggressive Church', the former denoting the Church defending its position in society, the latter, the Church asserting its position, and attacking what it considered to be the enemies of the Truth.

(1) 'THE DEFENSIVE CHURCH'

The clergy of nineteenth century Belfast, believed that they were part of a Christian society, and that their duty as Christian ministers was to protect that society from the encroachment of customs which they considered to be dangerous "and hostile to the spread of religious feeling and practice".

(a) Entertainment

Entertainment was an area of life which, in Victorian times, was notorious for the opportunities it presented to 'the Tempter', and the clergy of Belfast had as low a regard for the entertainment 'industry' as most Christians of the age. We have seen how the young men of the C.I.Y.M.S. were warned of the dangers of the taverns and the "singing saloons".[2] But there were other evils besides drink which were threatening society. An appeal to the "Protestant Press" signed by all the clergy of Belfast declared that drama was "the most dangerous portion of our literature, especially to the female sex who were involved in it, for they rarely escaped pollution of manner of life". They therefore asked the "Protestant Press" not to take any advertisements for such "public amusements" as might he harmful to the spread of the Christian faith, especially "theatrical performances". In so doing the "conductors of the press" would:

> "Secure more extensively the confidence and support of the religious public; relieve the consciences of many; and give increased energy to every effort for the prosperity of the Church."[3]

But not only did the Church and society need protection against the "pollution" of secular drama, "devotional" music was also suspect if played within the confines of a Catholic church. Bishop Mant complained in 1840,[4] of an advertisement which had appeared in the Belfast Commercial Chronicle and the Ulster Times about "A Grand Oratario and Opening of the new Organ in St. Patrick's Chapel Donegal Street". "Some remarkable pieces of music", were to be played, "selected from Masses and other religious services of the Popish Church".[5] In this advertisement the Bishop perceived:

> "... a temptation to you (Newspaper owners), in common with the public at large, to contribute your countenance and pecuniary aid to a sect of Christians, who are in doctrine Dissenters and in worship separatists from the Church of which you profess yourselves to be members."[4]

Accordingly he warned them against "a temptation into which you might otherwise be led through inadvertence".

His biographer recounts that the Bishop's reaction was very much in character, for "he had no toleration for that idle curiosity which must gratify the 'lust of the eye', or the 'itching of the ear', even at the risk of contaminating the inward sense".[6] It appeared that the Bishop's appeal did not fall on deaf ears for many Church members stayed away, "and" commented W. Mant caustically, "it was generally understood, that, as regards the attendance of Protestants, or their contributions - the real object - the Popish Oratario was a failure".

Two significant points arise out of these incidents. Besides the obvious anti-drama stance in the first, there is an attempt by Christian ministers to influence the policy of the 'Protestant Press' as regards advertising. For all the clergy in Belfast to impress upon their respective flocks: "That no countenance or recommendation, be given to such public amusements" in the "Protestant Press" surely constituted quite heavy pressure on these newspaper proprietors, for a large proportion of their readers would probably have come from the Protestant church-going population. These clergy made no apology for their interference; they assumed that the press, especially the "Protestant Press" should concur with their feelings on the matter. Such arrogant appeal would be laughed at to-day; no self-respecting clergyman would sign such a document. But then the contemporary church has lost the self confidence which so characterised the Victorian Church in the British Isles.

Also notable was the reaction of the "Protestants" to the Bishop's unashamedly anti-Catholic appeal. According to the Bishop's biographer, many Protestants stayed away in "regard for the opinion of others". It would appear that by the late eighteen thirties society in Belfast

was already split into the two religious factions, and even though a Protestant or Catholic may not have agreed with their own respective factions, that disagreement was not shown outwardly in "regard for the opinion of others" - or for fear of what one's co-religionists might think or even do. How different from the spirit of the Protestant Volunteers just over fifty years previously.[7]

(b) Sunday Observance

As in England, so in Ireland and in Belfast, evangelicals gave priority to the protection and defence of Sunday as a day of rest, despite the hardship - and temptations - such a policy, if successful might have for the poor.[8]

Besides the argument from the commandments "that the Lord has appointed unto all men, that the seventh portion of time should be consecrated to His particular service",[9] other more utilitarian reasons were given for making Sunday a day of rest, though some of them may have said more about the quality of life that the worker could expect in a nineteenth century industrial city, than about the desirability of sabbatarianism.

> "What would a young man do without Sunday?" asked a clergyman of a clerk in an emminent mercantile establishment. "Do, we could not do at all; it would be impossible to get on; we would break up at once."[10]

Not only was Sabbath observance supposed to have physical recuperative powers, it also kept the mind healthy. It allowed the worker to break out of the "dull routine" of "everyday thoughts" and to broaden his outlook "by taking in those big thoughts with which God's book is full". The claim that it was a help towards avoiding insanity,[11] may have had some truth in it, though for those who were unable to read the "big thoughts" of the Bible, and who were confined to their "loathsome hovels" insanity may have been inevitable even in a proverbial "month of Sundays"

no matter how strictly observed.

Perhaps one of the most valid arguments for a Sunday free from work was that it would enable a family which because of their work, had been separated throughout the week, to meet together on at least one day in the week. However Seaver's comment that:

> "We may safely affirm that but for the Sabbath there would be little domestic communion - no social system",[12]

is maybe more an indictment of the 'social system' which so fragmented family life, than a recommendation for a workless Sunday.

Sundays were to be free from work, but this did not mean that they were to be free for the enjoyment of worldly 'pleasures'. If the religious principle of keeping the Sabbath day "holy" were sacrificed simply to allow people a free day on which to enjoy themselves, "your master may say to you, if conscience permit you to take pleasure for your own sake; it can't refuse to allow you to work for my sake; and competition will soon reduce wages".[13] Thus enjoying oneself on Sunday might have posed a thread to one's economic wellbeing. So, as in the debate on Church Extension,[14] so in the arguments for Sabbath observance, economic self-interest was openly appealed to. The Church in nineteenth century Belfast was either brutally realistic about what motivated a man, or else downright cynical. One hopes it was the former.

(c) Education

Much of the energy and the money of the Established Church in Belfast and in the rest of the country between 1840 and 1860 was expended in the defence of its own educational system. Up until 1831, the government had given financial backing to the various church societies involved in education such as the A.P.C.K. already referred to above. However in that year this financial backing was withdrawn, since it had become unacceptable to the Catholic Church, and instead of "favouring" any one

denomination with grant-aid, the government established a state system of elementary education. They intended that these new "National Schools" should provide a secular education for all children regardless of denomination, though provision was also to be made for the children of the various denominations to receive separate religious instruction from their respective clergy.

Theoretically, then, in 1831, a non-denominational school system was set up. But in practice, a denominational school could still be part of the new system, because on the local level, the schools were usually managed by the local clergyman, Anglican, Presbyterian or Catholic and there was nothing to prevent him appointing a teacher of his own "persuasion" and having a majority of "his own" children at the school. Thus, each School, while retaining its own denominational ethos could still come in under the State System, and receive a generous government grant.

The Catholics and the Presbyterians used the new system, but the Established Church opted out, setting up her own system in 1839, under the auspices of The Church Education Society, a branch of which was organised in the Diocese of Down and Connor,[15] with Bishop Mant as president.

The basic reason for opting out was, according to the Bishop of Down and Connor, that "that system of so-called 'National Education', with a specious aspect of neutrality", was "constructed on principles of real hostility to the Established Church".[16] There were two, not unrelated areas of "hostility" implied here. The first concerned the nature of education and the part that the Bible should play in it. The second had to do with the right of the Established Church to proselytise in the schools by means of catechesical teaching, and of Bible reading, the latter, in the opinion of the Church, necessarily involving the right

of reference to the Bible throughout the school day so that Catholic children might be exposed to its influence.

On the question of the philosophy of education, most of the members of the Established Church would have agreed with Charles Seaver,[17] that an education which concerned itself exclusively with the development of either intellectual or "bodily" capacities was unsufficient. Also that the kind of schooling which, "while it exercises the body and fosters the intellect, implants and develops moral principles, can alone be called adequate",[17] He further argued that not only should moral training be given a place in the school syllabus, but that "it should greatly preponderate", for only a strongly developed moral sense would teach a man "submission and resignation under poverty and suffering", restrain the "monster" in him, and build a character fit for immortality.

The principles of this morality were derived from, and found their sanction in the Bible, and so education, if it was to be concerned with morality, must by definition also be Bible-centred - a man must be educated "religiously".

> "Not that religion is the whole of education, or that it is to be confined to this, but that this is to be the foundation of all. The principles and motives and sanctions of God's revelation are to underlie all, and to pervade all - that Book is to be the authoritative standard of right and wrong."[18]

It was the duty of the State in its role as "sustainer and protector of the Church", to promote this principle of Bible centred education. In fact it was

> "... perfectly plain that, at no time in the Church's history, has the State or Church renounced this principle of religious education, until the insidious power of Rome, admitted into the Parliament of the realm, rose in arms against a free Bible, against the right of private judgement, and against the prerogatives and inheritance of the Established Church of this country."[19]

Contrary to the impression that some of the more extreme statements emanating from Church Education Society Supporters, might give,[20] the

National System did allow the Bible to be used. The point of contention was that it was only permitted during the period of religious instruction, when the children were divided up into their various denominations, thus removing Catholic children from its influence. Further, the custom of using "detached, selected, accommodated passages" of the Bible, rather than "the volume of the Holy Bible as a whole" in the National Schools was also seen as being in direct opposition to the Protestant principle of the "free use of the Sacred Volume".

What was really at issue here, was not the question of whether or not religious education should be permitted in the schools, but rather two different concepts of religious education. On the one hand, the Church worked on the "distinctive principle ... that instruction in the Word of God forms a necessary part of the daily exercises of all the pupils in attendance in its schools ..., while the teacher is left at perfect liberty to refer to the sacred volume at any hour of the day for illustration of his subject ...".[21] The State on the other hand considered religious education a subject that should be separated from secular education, and conducted along denominational lines for the children of those parents who wished them to have it. Thus the terms on which they would give aid to a school and which were unacceptable to the Established Church were:

> "That they would undertake to teach morality irrespective of religion. That they should make no 'reference to the Bible during the hours of secular instruction' or to 'any children whose parents or guardians objected': that they were 'permitted to give religious instruction, if so minded, before or after school hours', to those children whose parents wished them to attend for that purpose."[21]

In short, the Church considered religion, especially the Bible, to be of central importance in the education of children, whilst the State saw it as an optional extra.

There is little doubt that the National System was arranged in this way in deference to Catholic sensitiveness about "proselytism". Its

avowed aim was to avoid even "the suspicion of proselytism"[22] an aim which was endorsed by the comments of the Chief Secretary for Ireland on the Church of Ireland Kildare Place Society,[23] in a letter to the Duke of Leinster in 1832:

> "The determination to enforce in all schools the reading of the Holy Scriptures ... was, undoubtedly, taken with the purest motives; ... but it seems to have been overlooked that the principles of the Roman Catholic Church were totally at variance with this principle; ... Shortly after its institution, although the Society prospered ... this VITAL DEFECT (sic) began to be noticed; and the Roman Catholic clergy began to exert themselves against a system to which they were on principle opposed ... When this opposition arose ... it soon became manifest that this system could not become one of National Education."[24]

These sentiments were interpreted in the worst possible light by the majority of the Belfast clergy. To keep the Bible from Catholic children was not only declared to be an impediment to the clergy from keeping their ordination vow "to banish away all erroneous and strange doctrines", but also to be in opposition to the principles of an Established Church, whereby persons were "bound by the law of the State as well as of the Church, 'to teach the people committed to their charge out of the scriptures'".[21] It was this frustration of the Established Church's attempts to use the schools for purposes of proselytism which so incensed the clergy; this was why the State, far from supporting the Established religion, was accused of "binding" the clergy to "assist the oppressor";[22] this was what caused Thomas Drew to comment on the decision to set up the National System:

> "Then amidst the midnight festivity of Dublin Castle, the impulsive Viceroy drank deep of Jesuit potions."[25]

The crux of the matter then, for the Church Education Society, was that they were being prevented, by government statute from showing Catholic children the error of their ways. It would be misleading to assume that this desire to proselytise in the schools was based on hatred of the Catholic Church. Rather, it was based on a desire to do what was

thought to be in the best 'eternal interests' of individual Catholics:

> "True love for the Roman Catholic is not to lead him to believe that his errors are indifferent, or his mistakes trivial. It is to labour to convince him of God's truth ..."[26]

Free access to the Bible in the schools was an important means of implementing this "love".

This determined and "loving"(?) opposition to Catholicism continued to be the chief motivating force behind the Society's work, long after its foundation. In fact an incident at a meeting called in Belfast in 1849 for the promotion of "Scriptural Education", at which many of the Society's members played a leading part, clearly revealed that the supposed non-availability of the Bible in the National Schools - the very fault that the Church Education Society had been founded to rectify - was of secondary importance when compared to the duty of the Established Church to indoctrinate Catholic children, regardless of their parents' wishes on the matter.

During the meeting, Mr. Hanna, a teacher in the Townsend Street National School, in answer to a claim by Rev. Theo. Campbell that the Bible was excluded from the National Schools, said that the Authorised Version was read for at least one hour each day in his school, and "if one hour is conceived by the parties charged with the management of those schools as insufficient for the purpose of religious instruction, we can have two". This denial of Mr. Campbell's claim was received without reaction either way. However, when Mr. Hanna stated that "every reasonable man" must accede to the request of a Roman Catholic parent that his child should not be required to read the Scriptures, it aroused "groans and cries of 'Off, off'", and he was called upon to leave the platform.[27] Thus, it would appear that if the point at issue had only concerned the question of the Bible's place in the school, a compromise with the State could conceivably have been reached much sooner, and

consequently a lot of the Church's money saved. But because the much more emotive issue of the right of the Established Church to proselytize among Catholics was at stake, it was more difficult to effect a compromise. After all it was not just an educational question; it had become a question of survival in the minds of many churchmen. For not only did the State no longer defend the right of the Established Church to convert the majority population, it had also come to the "deliverance" of "Popery" which had been "tottering to its fall under the influence of Scriptural education" by establishing "a pro-Popish, infidel, unnational system upon the ruins of Scriptural institutions".[28]

It would be wrong to give the impression that all the Belfast clergy, without exception, were against the National System of Education. At least two, Rev. Charles Reichel of Queen's University, and Bishop Knox were very much in favour of it. Reichel was of the opinion that

> "... All that the Church can reasonably expect from the State, in the matter of education, is that the State should afford her every facility for the religious teaching of those whom the State provides with the necessary secular instruction."[29]

To put forward the argument, as Church Educationalists did, that the State should subsidise a body like the Church Education Society was, if accepted, to set a dangerous precedent, for the underlying principle of this policy was that the State should supply each denomination with the wherewithal to meet its educational requirements. If this principle was applied in Ireland,[30] then at least "three-fourths of the money would go to the direct teaching of Romish error". Therefore a National System which simply allowed the Church to get on with her job of religious education was infinitely preferable to one which subsidised Catholic education. Reichel concluded,

> "that no statesman will act more in accordance with the wishes of the Romish hierarchy than he who, ... shall grant that indulgence in the matter of education for which the majority of the clergy of the Irish Church have been for a quarter of a century petitioning."[31]

It is interesting to note that just as the pro-Church Education "lobby" gained much of their impetus from anti-Catholic feeling, So Reichel, in opposing State aided Church Education, appealed to similar feelings.

It was only about six weeks after his consecration as Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, that Knox made his views clear on the Church Education Society. On June 17th 1849, he forbade Dr. O'Sullivan and Rev. H. de L. Willis from preaching in Christ Church on behalf of the Society making it quite clear that he did not approve of "the Society advocated".[32] This act aroused considerable opposition among the clergy "at a time when the healing influence of death and an unusual interval had allayed the heats which dissensions had fostered".[32] An obvious reference to the disagreements that had marred the latter years of Bishop Mant's episcopate. A deputation was sent to Knox to inform him that his act was illegal since it interfered with the "right of the Incumbent over his own pulpit" and to threaten him with the withdrawal of the cooperation of the laity and clergy of the Diocese. Knox's only response was to say that "he foresaw all, and was prepared for all; but that he was determined to persevere".[32] Not only did he openly disapprove of the Church Education Society, but he was also unequivocal in his support for the National System. At the opening of Professor Sullivan's National School in Holywood, he informed his audience that:

> "... it is the only system suited to the want and requirements of this country ..... It is a system which is every year striking its roots deeper into the minds of the community and entwining itself around the institutions of the Country."[33]

However his open championing of the National System did not prevent him from attempting to seek a compromise solution to the impasse that existed between thesupporters of the Church Education Society and the Commissioners of National Education. In May 1862, it was reported[34] that a memorandum had been addressed to the Lord Lieutenant by the

Bishop, 87 of the clergy of the United Dioceses, and several prominent laymen:

> "Praying that the rule of the Board as regards the reading of Holy Scripture shall not be enforced to prevent the manager or teacher of any school from making such reference to the Word of God as occasion may demand during the hours of instruction, provided that under the appearance of exercising this just right, no religious teaching of a denominational character be introduced."[34]

This request was met with a blank refusal, since the Commissioners could not "see their way to any alteration in the present system".

Knox certainly did not get any thanks for attempting to effect this compromise. The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette accused him of inconsistency, for they said that at one moment he was trying to get the system modified and the next he was declaring it to be "the very thing to meet the wants of our people". Drew saw the answer of the Commissioners as making it quite clear that the Bible was to be kept out of the National Schools, and therefore that the National School System was completely unworthy of support: "for if our allegiance were given to the National Board, all piety, relief (sic) and Scriptural instruction for the children of Romanists, were extinguished for ever".[35] But despite opposition from the Church Press, and some of his most distinguished clergy, Knox's stand on education was finally vindicated, for in 1866 the Primate, five Bishops and over 700 of the clergy signed a document declaring their approval of the National Board System.

The defence of its educational system not only cost - and ultimately perhaps wasted - a lot of Church money, it also highlighted the extent to which the Church was prepared to go to gain an opportunity to convert Catholics, and the majority of the Belfast clergy supported her in this action. That Bishop Knox went against his clergy and laity on this issue to the extent of being threatened with non-cooperation once again illustrated the wide divergence in thinking between the clergy of Belfast and their Bishops. However, his obituary would have us believe that

he was able to live and deal with such disagreements much more successfully than his predecessor for it was said of Knox that though "his force was felt", ... "he was respected and looked up to and obeyed",[36] an opinion that was endorsed by one of his principal antagonists in the education debate.[37]

(d) Disestablishment

One would have thought that the defence of the Church itself against those who sought to relieve it of the rights and privileges of Establishment, would have occupied the minds and pens of many of the Belfast clergy. Yet, compared to the discussion on the education issue, there seemed to be little written about the threat of disestablishment. Perhaps this comparative silence was due to

> "... the conviction ... that England is the most just and honourable country in the world ... and even the munificent bribe of pacifying Ireland would not tempt her to inflict known and palpable wrong upon the Protestant laymen and clergy of that country."[38]

Nevertheless some voices were, from time to time raised in defence of the Established Church. The first 'scare' for the Church came in 1833 with the Irish Church Temporalities Act, and its clause suggesting that the disposal of the extra revenue saved by the implementation of the act, should be left in the hands of parliament rather than the Church. This suggestion roused aprotest from a group of laymen - mostly Dissenters - who had formed themselves into the 'Belfast Society' and interested themselves in Unionist politics. In their protest they gave an assurance that "the Protestants of this town, except a small section" were united "in support of the Church of Ireland" and while the "establishment" had their support, they wished "to see it made more efficient, and its revenues applied to its own purposes more judiciously".[39] The laymen of Belfast also made their protest heard at a Conference[40] in Dublin, when Robert Hamilton, claiming to represent the "hard fisted artisans

of Belfast" made it clear that disestablishment was not a matter of "party politics":

> "... it is the cause of the truth of God and of the house of God, and of the religion of God ... We were loyal, and we are loyal; and if need were, we would shut the gates again[41] ... we won't preserve the Church of Christ by levelling up Anti-Christ."[42]

His allusion to "levelling up Anti-Christ" presumably referred to the proposal by the government to examine the possibility of using some of the money recouped from the Established Church by disendowment, for the general "benefit of the Irish People". Once again, as in the case of the education question, it was the idea that the government might actually give sustenance to the "opposition" which so incensed members of the Established Church.

One seemingly popular voice,[43] raised in defence of the Establishment, was that of The Rev. G. A. Chadwick, senior curate of Belfast. However as often is the case with popular publications, it was not a particularly well thought-out defence. His main argument was that if Disestablishment and Disendowment became law, then instead of decreasing tension, as the government hoped, "it would increase tenfo ld the religious animosities of Ireland". Various reasons were advanced to back up this thesis. He claimed that the government would no longer have any restraining influence over the clergy, adding that "no sane man can believe that Protestant teaching will be milder or gentler in its tone", as a result. Further if the local clergy no longer had the official backing of the State, they would be completely dependent on their parish for support, and would therefore be more inclined to echo the opinions of their people. Theoretically Chadwick may have had a point, but in reality in Belfast during the later years of Establishment, the government had obviously very little influence over the "Protestant teaching" of clergy such as Drew or MacIlwaine as shall be seen in the following pages.

Chadwick made rather confusing forecasts as to the Catholic reaction to Disestablishemnt and Disendowment. At one peint in the pamphlet he wrote that Disestablishment was not really an issue with the Catholic Church, and quoted one of their Bishops[44] in support of this argument, However only a couple of pages further on, he is quoting 'Fraser's Magazine' (February 1868) as saying that "the land system and the Church Establishment are the twin roots of disaffection".[45] On the basis of this rather conflicting evidence he maintained that Disestablishment would not pacify the Catholics, but instead would encourage them to make an attack on the rights of property. Taking into account the encouragement that such an act would give to Catholic political aspirations, and the hostility it would provoke not only in the Established Church, but also among members of the Presbyterian Church and the Orange Institution, the author posed the question:

> "How can agitation cease when one party will have reached but the outskirts of its promised land, while the other will have learned by experience that without agitation it must perish?"[46]

The answer to such a question would have seemed obvious to any Protestant of the time, but if he had been interested in making a realistic assessment of the Disestablishment issue, he should also have asked himself another question: Would agitation cease if the Act was not passed?

Perhaps the most pertinent point, and theone most likely to influence the legislators was made in the last sentence ofthe pamphlet when Chadwick asked:

> "Lastly, how can the Church go through a revolution in Ireland, and its constitution in England receive no shock?"[46]

A rather different means of defence of the Established Church, and one used by quite a number of the Established clergy[47] including Rev. T. Roe[48] of Ballymacarrett, was to attempt to prove the superiority of the Church of Ireland pedigree to that of the Catholic Church. Many long and tedious articles and letters were written to show that the Established

Church was descended in direct line from St. Patrick, and that it was the Catholic Church that was the real usurper in Ireland. It was labelled a "troublesome and ambitious sect" which, deriving its existence from the Pope alone, had "the effrontery to presume heretofore to pass itself off as the old Primitive Church of Ireland".[49] In order to reveal the fraudulence of these claims, it was suggested that if the Church was to be Disestablished, then its new title should be the "Catholic Church of Ireland".[50]

The Bishop's stance on Disestablishment was once again out of step with that of the majority of his clergy. "He stood alone" in his support of Gladstone's bill, hoping that if it was accepted "a more generous scheme of Disendowment might be carried out",[51] His position may be explained partly by his aversion to the bitter anti-Catholicism which animated so much of the Disestablishment debate, and partly by his complete lack of sympathy with the local political 'hacks' who had jumped on the Disestablishment bandwagon - a lack of sympathy which persuaded him that nothing was more foolish "than a mere defiant and idle cry of 'No surrender'".[52]

(2) 'THE AGGRESSIVE CHURCH'

From the eighteen thirties onwards, the rift between Protestant and Catholic grew deeper and more bitter, culminating, during the fifties and sixties in sectarian riots. It is my aim in this section to consider the attitudes of the clergy in Belfast, and the ecclesiastical manoeuvres which helped to create the atmosphere in which such riots could break out, and be sustained.

(a) Closing the Ranks

The first quarter of the nineteenth century was mostly free from any organised Protestant aggression directed against the Catholic

community or Church. Indeed in 1825, some Protestants - probably mostly Presbyterian - petitioned Parliament to the effect that it should examine "the nature and operation of the disqualifying laws which affect our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects; to ascertain whether ... the repeal of such laws be not urgently called for by various weighty considerations ...".[53] But by the late twenties Protestant opinion had hardened against the Catholics mainly for two reasons - resurgent Catholicism and the spread of a narrow evangelicalism in the Protestant Churches.

During the early part of the century the Catholic community, released from the inhibitions of the penal laws, were beginning to assert their own separate religious and cultural identity. New schools, chapels and cathedrals were built, and the college at Maynooth was making a reputation for itself. In short Catholicism, despite the poverty of the mass of its adherents, was regaining its self confidence in Ireland.

This new aggressive face of Catholicism did nothing to better relations between the two communities in Belfast. In fact, along with the passing of the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act, it served only to cause a closing of the ranks among the two largest protestant denominations. This united opposition to the Catholic Church was provided with a rationale by the Evangelicalism which was common to many of the clergy of both the Presbyterian and Established Churches after 1830. Thus to be a Protestant in those times automatically implied an active anti-Catholic stance: "A man could not be a Protestant unless he was a proselytiser"; ..."no man was a Protestant who did not exert himself to proselytize every Roman Catholic over whom he could have any influence,".... "An ultra Protestant was the only true Protestant". So, "resurgent Catholicism collided violently with Protestantism revived by evangelicalism".[55] This religious "collision" was superimposed on an already existent deep political and social division,[56] and its reverberations have been felt ever since.

Until the early thirties, relations had not been all that cordial between Episcopalian and Dissenter. The former felt that they possessed a certain innate superiority over the other denominations,[57] while the latter certainly did not keep their anti-episcopalian sentiments under their hats![58] "There is one class of persons that invariably join the Establishment from the Dissenters", observed Dr. Cooke, "that is the people who grow rich. In Belfast they say that a man when he first comes into the town walks to what they call the 'Old light' house; if he gets a gig, they say he rides to one of the New light houses; ... when he has a carriage he is driven to Church!"[59]

However, the hatchet was officially buried in 1834 at a "Great Meeting of Protestants" in Hillsborough,[60] when the Presbyterian leader Dr. Cooke proposed "marriage" between the Established Church and his own. He refuted any suggestion of inconsistency in his support for the Church of Ireland, using, appropriately enough in the circumstances, military terms:

> "I betray not my own charge while I cheer forward another column of our noble Protestant army, who though differently officered and differently dressed, yet wield the same weapons of truty, and serve under the same banner."[61]

The "doctrinal parts of the 39 Articles" were adjudged to be in line with the Westminster Confession, compliments were paid to "the warm-hearted, pastors within the United Church of England and Ireland" and their "works of faith and labours of love", and with some other such flattering comments Cooke finally 'proposed':

> "I publish the banns of a sacred marriage of Christian forbearance where they differ, of Christian love where they agree, and of Christian cooperation in all matters where their common safety is concerned.... Then I trust our union is indissoluble and that the God who has bound us in bonds of Christian affection, and of a common faith will never allow the recollections of the past or the temptations of the present, to sever whom he has thus united."[62]

A prominent member of the Establishment, Lord Castlereagh, stressed

the absolute necessity of unity simply for the sake of survival ..."if the one be destroyed, the sister in religion cannot last long". Robert Bateson, a layman later to be involved in the Church Extension movement, complained of the insatiable political aspirations of the Catholics, who, he suggested were not only attempting to overthrow the Protestant ascendancy, but were "struggling for the establishment of a Catholic asendancy" in its place. In face of these incessant Catholic demands he called for the "Protestant" answer " in one voice of thunder - 'No Surrender'!"

So the marriage was made, and the ranks opposing the Catholics began to present a united front. However one thing was lacking, and that was an Episcopal blessing for the partnership. Not only was Bishop Mant absent from the meeting at Hillsborough, but no mention of it is made in his biography. Obviously his aversion to Catholicism was purely theological, and not emotional enough to cloud or soften his equally strongly held theological objections to protestant dissenters.

Despite this official "marriage" between the two main Protestant Churches, a leader-writer in a local newspaper, with Episcopalian connections,[63] was still of the opinion in 1848 that there was "too little clanship among Protestants", and urged them to copy the Catholics in this regard, "and give the preference in all matters of trade, and in all political and social relations, to those who agree with you in opinion, if equally deserving of it with others".[63]

(1) Orange Order

One organisation which attempted to promote this 'clanship' among Protestants was the Orange Order. The Order had originated in Co. Armagh at the end of the eighteenth century, as a loosely knit rural organisation ostensibly for theprotection of Protestant farms against the incursions of Catholic groups like the 'Defenders'. In its early years membership of the movement was almost exclusively Episcopalian;[64]

indeed one of its avowed aims was the "maintenance of the Established Church", and since, in the early years of the nineteenth century, that was not an aim calculated to attract Dissenters, they avoided the Orange Societies, and did not join in any great numbers until the 'sixties and 'seventies.[65]

With the increasing movement of the rural population of Ulster into Belfast and other industrial centres, the Orange Order became urbanised, though by this time - the 'twenties and 'thirties - it had become less of a "fighting society" and more of a "political and fraternal club" - a promoter of Protestant "clanship".

It was axiomatic of Orangeism, that it only flourished when and where there was discord between Protestant and Catholic. Thus the fortunes of the Order were directly related to the level of Catholic militancy and to consequent Protestant insecurity. The years leading up to Emancipation, and later, O'Connell's Repeal campaign were therefore periods of Orange consolidation, the movement becoming especially strong in the North. However the Under Secretary for Ireland, Thomas Drummond, seeking to win the confidence of the majority populace in the impartiality of the administration, clamped down on the activities of the Order and also dismissed magistrates with known Orange sympathies, the biassed administration of the law being one of the main Catholic grievances. In response to this government pressure, the Grand Lodge of Ireland resolved to dissolve the Institution in 1836, though some Lodges continued to meet and parade illegally.

One Orangeman who defied the ban was the incumbent of Christ Church, Chaplain to the Grand Lodge of Ireland and to the Imperial Grand Master, the Earl of Enniskillen. This act of defiance apparently cost him possible promotion to a Bishoprick.[66] Doubtless he was involved in the formation of the Grand Lodge of Ulster on February 12th 1844 "to give

mutual support and defence in these perilous times", and "in default of an effective Grand Lodge in Ireland". It is clear that Drew saw the Orange Order as the "political wing" of the Established Church. With its ritual framed from the Bible's "sublime prophecy", it was to encourage Protestants to combine "to deliver Romanists from mental perversion and spiritual slavery" and to protect them against the practices of the "Church of Rome" which "set the laws of England at nought"and would have "the crown of England subordinated to the dictation of an Italian Bishop".[67] For Drew, Orangeism provided a rallying point for those who realised that "all truckling (Sic) to Popery", in the shape of concessionary legislation, not only "imperilled the nation" but also made God angry; and this divine anger could only be appeased by the faithful testimony and union of Protestants. The Orange Order was the structure for such a "union".

But it was not until the middle of the century, that Orangeism really became a significant factor in the closing of the ranks of Protestants of all classes against the "threat" of Catholicism.[68] Just how potent and influential a force the Order had become, in Catholic eyes at least, was made very clear by one James McGouran in a letter to the Ulsterman in August 1857. He described "Orangeism" as having all the "characteristics of a secret society", though this did not deter magistrates from openly claiming membership or peers of the realm from accepting command in its ranks. He complained of its immunity from government investigation or prosecution, and ventured the suggestion that Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli would "choke" the Orangeman "without compunction if he were not the outwork of two institutions rather strong for even their hands - Landlordism and the Church Establishment".[69] He castigated the authorities for relying on "the fanaticism of a Drew or the cant of a MacIlwaine ... backed up by the bloodthirsty zeal of the scum and rabble of low Protestantism to ensure the stability of the executive".[69]

In his letter, even allowing for some anti-Protestant bias, McGouran provides us with a step by step picture of the closing of the Protestant ranks. The common creed of Orangeism brought together the Church, the legal profession and the gentry, while certain of the clergy[70] of the Established Church roused the working classes to an awareness of the dangers posed by militant Catholicism. When in the subsequent decades, encouraged by the threat of the disestablishment of their 'sister' church, Presbyterian ministers began to join the Orange Order,[71] Catholicism was faced with a united Protestant front.

(ii) Ulster Protestant Association

The Ulster Protestant Association was a less rigidly structured organisation than the Orange Institution, and had none of the ethos of a secret fraternity. However the purpose for which it was founded in the eighteen forties was very similar to that of the Orange Societies. It was formed in order "to combine still more closely the various bodies of Protestants, and to direct their energies more actively and with more certain effect to the promotion of their common interests".[72] To all intents and purposes, "promotion of common interests" in this context meant the restoration of the Protestant Ascendancy which automatically implied the repeal of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829.[73]

The Association had its power base in the Established Church, with such clergy as Drew, Campbell and MacIlwaine deeply involved, though "a considerable proportion of its members - who are of all ranks ... down to the humble handicraftsman - was composed of Presbyterians".[74] Monthly meetings usually took the form of a speaker making some kind of anti-Catholic diatribe. In April 1849 Rev. Richard Oulton gave a talk on the contrasting social condition of Ireland and England/Scotland, putting down the superior prosperity of the latter - and indeed of Ulster - to the Protestantism which was prevalent in these areas, as opposed to

the "Popery" which "pervaded" the rest of Ireland. It was clear to him that "Popery" invariably led a man to lose his self respect, "and the consequence was that degradation of character which leads to habits of carelessness and filth that would disgrace the African Hottentot or the uncivilised savage of the forest".[75] At another meeting a memorandum was sent to the Queen asking her not to "exercise her influence for the restoration of the Pope to his states". However the Association discouraged any enmity against Catholics. It was more as if they suffered from a disease, all signs and symptoms of which had to be eradicated from the country. Thus nunneries were to be closed, Catholic priests were to be denied access to gaols, and all grants were to be withdrawn from Maynooth.[76] What the Association was demanding was a reassertion of the eighteenth century concept of established religion along with its tendency to penalise those who held different religious beliefs. For members of the Association repression was the only answer to militant Catholicism; it was the only cure for their chronic insecurity. The government's continuous "tinkering" with the rights of the Established Church only served to make them all the more insecure, and consequently their protests and their anti-Catholicism became all the more strident.

Nevertheless even this intensity of anti-Catholic feeling was not enough to make some Presbyterians forget their traditional suspicions of Episcopalians. The unity between Presbyterian and Episcopalian, which was the chief aim of the Association, was threatened in 1849 by a division of opinion over educational policy. After some initial suspicion of the National Board Schools had been allayed, the Presbyterians had joined the system in 1838; the Episcopalians, as we have seen, remained outside it, having formed their own Church Education Society. So it was little wonder, considering the depth of feeling involved in the educational issue, that there should be some tension between the two churches concerning it.

This tension revealed itself in the Ulster Protestant Association when a group of the Presbyterian members began to spread the rumour that the Association was merely a front for persuading Presbyterians to fall in with Episcopalian educational policy; that it was "an insidious, proselytizing, anti-Presbyterian Association".[77] Thus according to one commentator,[77] for the sake of the National Board, not only would Protestant union suffer, but "Protestantism - Orangeism - freedom - may go to the wall".

It is clear that Protestant unity was not achieved easily. Despite Henry Cooke's hopes, the marriage between Episcopalian and Dissenter was an uneasy alliance at least until the fifties, when revivalism injected some new enthusiasm into it. A further characteristic which became apparent was that the concept of Protestant unity was an essentially negative one. It had no positive virtues to propound, no programme to put forward. It was simply a negative response, though undeniably a deeply felt one, to a new militant Catholicism recently released from legal restrictions. It was a unity well summed up by its traditional war cry "No surrender"!

(b) <u>The Propaganda War</u>

It would not be unfair to say that the Established Church from the eighteen thirties onwards was obsessed with the need to convert Catholics. The promotion of unity among Protestants, and opposition to Catholic political aspirations were laudable aims, but the Church's overriding preoccupation was to show Catholics the error of their ways, to help them realise their dangerous spiritual state, and so lead them to conversion. "True Protestantism ... consisted in an earnest endeavour to bring all over whom we can have any influence into the right way, and out of that which leads to destruction and death".[78]

To this end, a special missionary society - The Irish Church Mission -

was organised. A "Reformation Movement" in which Drew and Miller were involved,[79] was initiated to convert the West of Ireland; while each month in the Christian Examiner, the number of recantations from "Popery" in each diocese was published to encourage any flagging spirits!

The Church was at the same time responsible for a continuous barrage of anti-Catholic propaganda in the form of lectures, sermons and correspondence to the newspapers, the contents of which, are well summed up in some words from an editorial in the Christian Examiner:

> "... we feel that Popery with all its connexions and appendages is actually the chief cause of all the misfortunes of Ireland."

Though many of the Belfast clergy[80] were involved in the anti-Catholic propaganda war perhaps the most profuse and vitriolic was William MacIlwaine of St. George's. We have seen how it was his insinuations in the Commercial Chronicle[81] about supposed Tractarian/Romanist influences in the Church Accommodation Society which played a major part in its demise. It was also a "standing rule" of MacIlwaine's to "deliver a series of lectures upon the errors of the Church of Rome, on week evenings during Lent" "and it was a rule he adhered to for at least sixteen years[82] (1842-58), apparently drawing some "members of the Romish persuasion" to the Lectures.

In one of these lectures, entitled "The Great Apostasy"[83] he assured his audience that anything he might say that would be offensive to Catholics was said, not out of malice, but for the love of their souls. He was not opposed to them as people, merely to the religious system they lived under. He then went on to imply that Catholicism was to the Church what leprosy was to the human body, an approach not exactly calculated to win the sympathy of those of the "Romish persuasion" in his audience.

But it would seem that the propaganda war against Catholics was not meant to win their sympathy. Its outstanding characteristic was a

self-confident arrogant certainty in the rightness of Protestantism and the utter and complete error of Catholicism. There was never any hint that both creeds might have had something in common. In the 1857-58 series, MacIlwaine's lectures posed a series of questions such as:

> "Can the one Mediator of Scripture and the many Mediators of Popery be the same?"
>
> "Are the sacrifices of the Romish Altar, and the Sacrifice of the Cross the same?"[82]

Of course it was not his aim to promote a serious objective discussion about these questions. The idea was merely to pose them so that they could be quite emphatically answered in the negative. Catholicism was wrong, simply because it was not Protestantism.

During the year 1865, MacIlwaine had a prolonged altercation with the Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, the Most Rev. Dr. Dorrian, the record of which was later published.[84] The dispute began in a Turkish bath in Belfast, where, in the Bishop's hearing, MacIlwaine had referred to an incident which had taken place in a southern village - neither party was too sure of the exact location - when a Catholic crowd were supposed to have burned some Bibles, "while the Parish Priest sat up on a form beside his brother, who kept a tavern in the town, approving it". The correspondence which followed these allegations again exhibited the arrogance which was so characteristic of this kind of anti-Catholic polemic, though it seemed to be wasted on Bishop Dorrian. He commented in one of his letters:

> "Your letter .... exhibits the usual pharisaical arrogance to be found in men of your stamp, and that (sic) your own assurance of orthodoxy or of greatness is a proof rather of the contrary."[85]

Further, with regard to such an attitude, "he was not surprised that riots broke out in Belfast among the working classes, when those about them gave such an example".

From arguing about the particular instance of supposed Bible burning, they turned to questioning the basic doctrines of the other's faith.

To Dorrian's question about the central Protestant belief in the inspiration of Holy Scriptures and about which "version" was inspired, MacIlwaine answered that it was the original writers who were inspired by the Holy Ghost, rather than any one version, though it was the 'English versiona' which he considered to be most correct - a position which Dorrian, held to be similar to that of the 'suspect' English Bishop Dr. Colenso. The Bishop, on the other hand tended to avoid giving clear answer to MacIlwaine's inquiry about the correctness of the Catholic church's interpretation of the "Tu es Petrus" text, though he matched the latter's arrogance with a jibe about the Established Church's lack of years and tradition; "For a member of a church only three hundred years old", he commented, "to assume such airs is simple impertinence". The incumbent of St. George's had, seemingly, deeply offended him by daring to "arrogate" for his "system" the style and title of the Catholic Church, and doubtless also by his earnest prayer that the Bishop

> "... may be led to see" his "true position, and come forth from darkness into the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."[87]

But perhaps the most telling comment, not only on the Established Church in Belfast, but also on religious life in the City and even in Ireland as whole, came from Bishop Dorrian:

> "The day for religious polemics is over. We have now to argue, not in theology with Christians, but in science and other things with unbelievers."[88]

It was surely a sign of the narrowness of their theological thinking, that the clergy of the Church of Ireland in Belfast were prepared to pay so much attention to the anti-Catholic propaganda war and so little to the much more important argument "in science and other things with unbelievers". It was also a pity that Dorrian's admission that he was arguing "in theology" at least with other Christians, could not be reciprocated by the clergy of the Establishment.

Unfortunately their attitude was to remain one of emotive and

blind prejudice characterised by the words of one of the speakers at a meeting in the Victoria Hall Belfast, at which "the elite of the Protestant inhabitants of Belfast"[89] were present:

> "Popery is like the great North Bear; at a distance she is nothing to be dreaded, but once let her get you into her loving grasp, and she will squeeze you to death." (Loud cheers)[90]

Such words may seem amusing in isolation. But it was surely the cumulative effect of such words, and many others like them which helped create the atmosphere in which the sectarian riots of the 'fifties and 'sixties would flourish. If this suggestion is even partly true, and I hope to show that it is - then part of the blame for the riots must rest on the shoulders of the Episcopal clergy in Belfast who fuelled the anti-Catholic propaganda machine.

(c) Religious Riots

In 1857, serious rioting erupted in two areas of Belfast - the Protestant Sandy Row district and the Catholic Pound district. The trouble was separated from the "better parts of town" by Durham Street, on which Christ Church was situated, and it was a service at that church which the Commission of Inquiry into the cause of the riots considered to be the immediate cause of thedisturbances. It reported that Christ Church, standing as it did between the Protestant and Catholic districts, was "infelicitously situated to be selected as the place for a great and unusual celebration of the festival of July 12th".

It was not the service itself, to which the Orangemen had proceeded in great numbers (with their sashes under their hats until they got inside the church) which caused the trouble, but the sermon preached at the service by the incumbent, Drew, which the report recommended should be "carefully considered" in relation to the subsequent events on July 12th. The sermon in question was certainly not calculated to encourage good relations between the Protestant and Catholic communities. It was

rather a rallying cry for the Protestant cause. The congregation were asked to "Unite on broad and evangelical principles against the common foes", and "against the unwarrantable oppression of the Roman people by the dungeons of the Pope". The government was accused of discrimination in favour of Catholics in its appointments to government posts, and consequently, Drew preached,

> "To be a Protestant in Ireland is a positive disqualification and so dull and incompetent Romanists or Rome's sycophants receive what belongs to the true Protestant's birthright."[91]

He exhorted Orangemento hold together at least until the laws were impartially administered, "till lost ground was regained, and the Parliament is purified". He concluded by recalling the sacrifices that their Protestant ancestors had made on their behalf - a sure way of exciting the emotions of the congregation:

> "... We are enjoying the liberty they purchased and we call the land of William's victory 'Protestant Ireland' ... these men have left us a great inheritance - religious freedom and the brilliant example of their own deathless renown."[92]

It was after the Orangemen left the service that the rioting started, despite the fact that they had removed "their emblems" on leaving the church. The Christ Church "faction"[93] claimed that the trouble was sparked off by a Catholic called Loughran waving an Orange lily "in an insulting manner" as he drove past Christ Church, after which, on July 13th, the Catholics began a series of attacks on persons and property, which "not unnaturally" led to Protestant reprisals.

However the Inquiry considered the Loughran affair relatively unimportant as a cause of the riots, and though it was probably true that the violence was initiated by the Catholics, it was immaterial, because it was clear enough

> "... that two parties were there assembled, prepared for extreme action against each other; and only waiting for opportunity to bring their conflict to a bloody issue."[94]

Thus, while it considered that the pro-Protestant bias of the Police force[95] tended to aggravate rather than calm the situation, it is clear that the Commission of Inquiry was of the opinion that the major

share of blame for the rioting must be laid at the feet of some of the Belfast clergy. Drew's sermon was viewed as "an unprecedented effusion of religious intemperance, calculated to embitter one section of the preacher's countrymen against the other, and sufficient to account for at least the outbreak of these lamented occurrences".[96]

The activities of the Belfast Parochial Mission also came in for some severe censure at the Inquiry. When the Mission was formed, open-air services had been suggested as one of the most effective means of reaching the masses of the people, and accordingly plans were laid to organise such events in front of the Customs House. In the summer of 1857 the Mission planned a series of services to be held in front of the Customs House beginning on the 19th July and continuing through the summer and autumn. The subjects chosen for the preachers at the proposed services,[97] which all had fairly innocuous evangelical titles, were not the cause of the Inquiry's disquiet. It was the timing and advertising of the services to begin on the week after the July Twelfth celebrations, and the choice of the precher for that first week, which it found to be "unfortunate".

It was established that the Belfast Parochial Mission had not intended the services to coincide with the rioting in order to inflame sectarian feeling still further, as had been previously suspected. William MacIlwaine, in his evidence, stated that the decision to hold the services had been taken in June, and that the placards advertising the same, had been made up before July 12th. Unfortunately it was how the services were seen by the opposing Protestant and Catholic factions, rather than the intentions of the organisers, which was considered crucial as regards the cause of the continued rioting. The timing of the services, and the choice of MacIlwaine - "a clergyman well-known in Belfast as a controversial preacher" - seemed to be hardly accidental to certain sections of the Catholic population. They thought that the

services were meant to be a provocative extension of the July Twelfth celebrations, and reacted accordingly. The effect was

> "... to shift the scene of the rioting from its peculiar districts and to involve in riot and outrage the best parts of the town which before that time were peaceable and orderly."[98]

The open-air services continued through the summer till September, with a body of constabulary being kept in constant readiness to lessen the risk of renewed violence. Early in September, a placard announced that the preacher at the next service (Sunday 6th) was to be Dr. Drew, which immediately drew an angry reaction from certain Catholic quarters - a reaction which threatened to spill over into violence. On the day previous to Drew's appearance at the Customs' House another placard was posted calling on Catholics to make their feelings known on the subject of these open-air services.

> "Catholics of Belfast, Down and Antrim", it declared, " - We see by the public placards, that our religion is again to be assailed and our public walks to be obstructed by that low and ruffainly system of Ranterism which had been lately got up by our evangelical neighbours. It is now quite manifest to all rational minds that this outrage will be persevered in for the sole purpose of shedding Catholic blood ... We therefore call on our Catholic neighbours and brethren to come and defent their rights as loyal subjects and peaceable Christians ..."[99]

Ominously the poster concluded with the veiled threat, that though the Catholic community were never the "aggressors", nevertheless they knew "how to defend themselves when attached".

The Catholic placard was not the only protest. The Northern Whig commented with heavy sarcasm:

> "... Dr. Drew ... is not a man to back out of a sacred duty of disorder from any fear of the martyrdom which might become so renowned a saint. .... They (the police) will be there to protect Dr. Drew, while he inflames the passers-by into the bad blood which it pleases this Christian pastor, a leech-like purifier of Popery, to draw out."[100]

The Morning Post pointed out that the street preaching was not organised for the purpose of "enlightening Protestants", ... "Its real object and aim is to insult the feelings of Catholics and deride their faith", as well as to achieve political mastery over them.[101]

The Mission, at length, bowing to public pressure, and the advice of Bishop Knox, consented to suspend the services, a decision with which pro-Protestant press strenuously disagreed:

> "Is our town henceforward to be degraded by the reproach that a Protestant minister shall not dare to preach in its streets? Are our magistrates to rebuke ministers of God for obeying their divine Master's command "to go into the streets and highways to discharge the functions of their offices?" .... We denounce a reign of papal intolerant, brutal, mob-law among us and over us."[102]

It is clear then, that although the Commission of Inquiry found there to be no intended connexion between the celebration of the "Orange Festival" of July and the announcement of the open-air services, that connection was assumed by some. That assumption led in turn to the "intemperate" on both sides viewing the issue in terms of an "Orange or Catholic victory or defeat". As a result the initial rioting in the Sandy Row and Pound districts not only received a fresh impetus, but also spread to other districts, and the conflict became one about the freedom of Protestants to worship versus the right of the Catholic population to live in Belfast without fear of Protestant intimidation. As the Commission concluded:

> "... the pious and weakminded of the Protestant inhabitants of Belfast were easily persuaded that the question at issue was whether Protestant worship was to be put down by violence, while those of the Catholic inhabitants were as easily persuaded that the question was whether Belfast was henceforth to be proclaimed as a Protestant town, in which Roman Catholics could rarely find sufference ..."[103]

The Established Church did not seem to be so directly involved in the 1864 riots, though the fact that the Wesleyan minister from the Falls Road told the Commission of Inquiry[104] that his church was wrecked, while Christ Church had "not a single pane of glass broken" would suggest that the clergy and congregation of that church were not wholly unsympathetic to the rioters.

It would appear from the foregoing account, that the clergy of Belfast, whether they intended it or not, bore a great responsibility

for causing the riots of 1857. Further, it was not just a matter of Drew's July Twelfth sermon in Christ Church, and of the open-air services organised by the Belfast Parochial Mission. Sectarian unrest was surely the inevitable result of the propaganda war that had constantly been waged against Catholicism over the past twenty years, ranging from the cold doctrinal anti-Catholicism of Bishop Mant to the "ranterism" of a Drew or a MacIlwaine. Again it was a pity that these Churchmen could not have seen things in the same perspective as the Northern Whig:

> "We are grown too big for the fanaticism of little places, and too commercial and too cultivated for the fun that less advanced and more theological districts find in fighting amongst each other..."[105]

But to have asked them to think in these terms may welll have been to remove what they considered to be the most important reasons for the existence of the Established Church - the eradication of Catholicism. It remains only to pay tribute to Bishop Knox who was not afraid to stand out against the religious intolerance of his clergy.

Notes for Chapter V

1. cf. p. 36 above.

2. cf. p. 143. above.

3. Dawson, op. cit.

4. Christian Examiner 1/4/1840.

5. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 394.

6. Ibid., p. 396.

7. cf. p. 1 introduction.

8. Chadwick comments that successful sabbatarianism meant hardship, especially for the poor; since no "bus-drivers nor pilots of pleasure steamers nor park keepers normmusicians or stokers" were allowed to work on Sunday, there was nothing else for the poor of the London slums to do but drink gin. Hence the temptations caused by a strictly kept sabbath were very real. Chadwick Pt. I op. cit., p. 455.

9. C. Seaver: 'The Christian Sabbath' - it's divine institution and universal and permanent oblication. 1855, p. 5.

10. Ibid., p. 17.

11. Ibid., p. 19.

12. Ibid., p. 20.

13. Ibid., p. 30.

14. cf. p. 78 above.

15. The committee included Messrs. Courtney, Drew, Walker, McCartney and MacIlwaine. The branch in Down and Connor was organised before the national one came into being.

16. W. Mant. op, cit., p. 343 (quoted from 1836 Charge).

17. "The Case of the Church Education Society" by Rev. Charles Seaver, N.I.P.R.O., op. cit., p. 208.

18. Ibid., p. 209.

19. Drew. 'State Education considered' (1862) p. 23.

20. 'The duty of ministers is now called more earnestly than ever into action for not only does the State refuse to supply religious instruction but, most fearful to announce, the State absolutely prohibits all religious instruction of any kind whatsoever in the National Schools of Ireland.' Ibid., p. 13.

21. N.I.P.R.O., op. cit., p. 210.

22. 'The National System and National Board: A Reply to the Explanatory paper of the Commissioners of Nat. Education of Ireland. By the Commissioners of the Ulster Nat. Educ. Assoc., (1864) p. 5.

23. The Kildare Place Society was one of the most important of the Societies promoting Church education.

24. W. Mant, op. cit., p. 344.

25. Drew, op. cit., p. 6.

26. Extract from an address signed by the Primate and the majority of the Bishops. Christian Examiner Feb. 1845.

27. Protestant Defender January 6th 1849.

28. Speech of Rev. Hartley Hodson, Ibid.

29. Charles Reichel, Sermon on Education, Belfast 1862, p. 13.

30. The English educational system was edging towards this principle: "England's ideal continued to be schools in the hands of the leading Christian denominations, each assisted in some just proportion by the purse of the tax-payer." Chadwick, Pt. 1 op. cit., p. 345.

31. Reichel, op. cit.

32. Dawson, op. cit.

33. Dublin Evening Mail 29/4/1862. Quoted in I.E.G. 15/6/1862.

34. I.E.G. 15/5/1862.

35. "An Address to Teachers", Ibid., 15/7/1863.

36. Knox's obituary, Ibid., 27/10/1893.

37. In his closing speech Drew said: "... I learned that no man is more ready to give full and perfect toleration of the opinions of others who may differ from him." "... No man is farther removed from judging with any degree of severity the opinions and views of those who differ in them." Report of Conference, op. cit. p. 101.

38. G. A. Chadwick, The Irish Establishment and Irish Discontent, p. 1.

39. "Report of the Grand Anniversary Dinner of the Belfast Society", Belfast Guardian February 3rd 1835.

40. Report of the Conference of Archbishops and Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Irish Branch of the United Church of England and Ireland 1869.

41. The "gates" in question were presumably the gates of Londonderry, shut against James, the Catholic King of Great Britain and Ireland in 1689.

42. Report of the Conference of the Archbishops ... op. cit., p. 62.

43. G. A. Chadwick's pamphlet on Disestablishment went to a second edition.

44. The Catholic Bishop was Dr. Nulty. Ibid., p. 11.

45. Ibid., p. 13.

46. Ibid., p. 24.

47. Alfred Lee, the Incumbent of Ahoghill wrote prolifically on the subject. While as late as 1933, the following appeared on the dust cover of an official history of the Church of Ireland, commissioned by the General Synod.: "This work ... was undertaken under the auspices of the General Synod in order to show the continuity of the Church from the earliest times to the present day, and to make clear the justice of its claim to be ... the legitimate successor of the Church founded by St. Patrick." Alison Philips, A History of the Church of Ireland.

48. T. Roe, The Church of Ireland before the Reformation Belfast 1862.

49. Ibid., p. 9.

50. I.E.G. 21/8/1869.

51. Ibid., 27/10/1893.

52. McDowell, op. cit., p. 40 (in a letter to Archbishop Tait).

53. Owen, op. cit., p. 272.

54. Report of a speech by the Rev. Theophilus Campbell, P.D., 14/4/1849.

55. McDowell, op. cit., p. 32.

56. cf. p. 10 above.

57. One Anglican Bishop made no secret of his position as regards Dissenters and Catholics: "We (Anglicans) are hemmed in ... by two opposite descriptions of professing Christians - the one possessing a church without what we can call a religion; the other, a religion without what we can call a church..., the one so blindly enslaved to a supposed infallible ecclesiastical authority as not to seek in the Word of God a reason for the faith they profess; the other, so confident in the infallibility of their individual judgement, as to resist all authority in matters of religion." Quoted by Dr. Doyle (of an Anglican Bishop) and cited in Killen, op. cit., p. 420.

58. The Presbyterian, Killen, called Mant 'A Bigot of the purest water!'

59. Owen, op. cit., p. 272.

60. Bishop Mant, as we shall see, did not consider this meeting important.

61. Irish Protestant 1834-35 Vol. 1 p. 137.

62. Ibid., p. 149.

63. P.D. 30/12/1848.

64. Killen, op. cit., p. 364 (note).

65. 'Presbyterians still hated the Rector and Squire more than the 'defenders'.' M. Dewar, Orangeism p. 113.

66. Willis & Willis, op. cit., p. 538.

67. Drew, 'Twenty Reasons for being an Orangeman' P.D. 29/11/1848.

68. Clergy, yeomanry and gentry were enrolling "convinced that the time has come for their uniting in a powerful and defensive phalanx." Ibid., 13/12/1848.

69. Copy of Letter to 'Ulsterman' 'Commission of Inquiry! Belfast Riots. 1857 p. 257.

70. Messrs. Drew, Hartrick, MacIlwaine & T. Roe.

71. It was not till the 'fifties and 'sixties that Presbyterian Ministers began to join the Order in any great numbers. M. Dewar op. cit., p. 142. However in 1827, a visitor to Belfast claimed that 'the Presbyterians, who 30 years ago were almost to a man republicans and United Irishmen are now loyalists and Orangemen'. Christian Examiner December 1827. Perhaps the Presbyterian clergy were "leading from the rear"!

72. P.D. 2o/1/1849.

73. The 12th 'principle' to which the Christ Church Protestant Assoc. was committed was the Repeal of the Emancipation Act of 1829, 'since ... the Romanists have shown themselves to be unfit to have any share in legislation'. Dawson, op. cit.

74. P.D. 20/1/1849.

75. Rev. Richard Oulton, speaking at a meeting of the Ulster Protestant Assoc. P.D. 14/4/1849.

76. These were further principles to which the Christ Church Assoc. was committed. Dawson, op. cit.

77. P.D. 20/1/1849.

78. From a speech by Rev. T. Campbell. Ibid., 14/4/1849.

79. Dawson, op. cit.

80. Messrs. Hartrick, Drew, Campbell, Roe, Miller - at least.

81. The letter appeared in 'The Belfast Commercial Chronicle' under the pseudonym of 'Clericus Connorennsis'.

82. The lectures of 1857 were the sixteenth in the annual series. Commission of Inquiry .... op. cit., 1857 p. 254.

83. P.D. 24/2/1849.

84. MacIlwaine thought it worthwhile to publish the letters, Dorrian was of the opposite opinion.

85. 'Correspondence between Rev. W. MacIlwaine and Most Rev. Dr. Dorrian' 5/6/1865 p. 10.

86. Ibid., p. 61, note.

87. Ibid., p. 45.

88. Ibid., p. 33.

89. The 'elite' included Messrs. Drew, Dawson, MacIlwaine, Bland and Campbell.

90. Rev. Hugh Stowell 'The Nature and Character of Popery' p. 15.

91. Commission of Inquiry ... op. cit., Appendix 1, p. 250.

92. Ibid., p. 252.

93. Dawson, op. cit.

94. Commission of Inquiry ... op. cit., p. 6.

95. "With six or seven exceptions", the police force were "entirely Protestant' .... a great many of them have been Orangemen .... supposed to be sympathisers with the Sandy Row mobs." Ibid., p. 6.

96. Drew's reaction to this opinion was to preach the sermon again on February 14th 1858 to 'the largest congregation ever' Dawson, op. cit.

97. The titles included;

'The Sinners Friend';	Rev. W. MacIlwaine
'The Sinners Hope' ;	Rev. C. Seaver
'Conversion' ;	Rev. T. Roe
'The Lost Sheep' ;	Rev. T. Campbell
'Salvation' ;	Rev. E. J. Hartrick.

98. Commission of Inquiry .... op. cit., p. 12.

99. Ibid., Appendix V p. 254.

100. Quoted from Northern Whig 27/8/1857. Ibid., p. 264.

101. Quoted from Morning Post 5/9/1857. Ibid., p. 265.

102. Quoted from B.N.L. 5/9/1857. Ibid., p. 265.

103. Ibid., p. 13.

104. Commission of Inquiry: Belfast Riots, 1864. Dublin 1865. p. 319.

105. Quoted from Northern Whig 29/8/1857. Commission of Inquiry .... 1857 Riots op. cit., p. 265.

Conclusion

The history of the Church of Ireland in Belfast 1800-1870 is really the story of two Churches. The Church of the first quarter of the century was very much the 'Established' Church, assured of its place in Society, catering for the better-off classes who, according to some sources[1] were not all that enthusiastic in its support. The Church of these years was as much a civil institution as it was a religious one, collecting taxes, organising policing, and overseeing the renovation of the water supply, while at the same time providing the community with regular opportunities for worship.

The clergy in these years, consequently, spent much of their time on civic duties; they were men of political influence, and sometimes men who had been appointed because of political influence. Since their parishioners had little say in their appointment, the clergy of the parish church felt themselves to be under no obligation to respond to their wishes on any specific issue. Thus, as we saw in two cases,[2] the Vicar of Belfast simply ignored the demands of sections of his parishioners, and got away with it.

Until the arrival of Bishop Mant in thediocese, the Bishop in the early years of the century seemed to be a fairly remote figure. Often, as in the case of Alexander, he would have been merely a political appointee and so need not necessarily have had any particular commitment to the diocese, though Mant's commitment to his work would indicate that this was by no means the rule.

Lay involvement in the 'mission' of the Church was virtually non-existent. Their main tasks were centred on the civic side of the church's work - with the collection of taxes and the maintenance of law and order. Self-determination on the part of the "people of God" was

was not only discouraged, but was not even considered as a live option. As Rev. A. C. MacCartney's actions in connection with the affair of Queen's mourning,[2] and with the voting on the new "independent" Church[3] indicated, any lay-initiative was simply dismissed without even a pretence of interest on the part of the "Establishment". The "becalmed" Church of these years was definitely a paternalist church - a church where the Vicar, - nearly by divine right - knew what was best for the people. That may have been one of the major reasons why it was becalmed.

In contrast, the Church of the late twenties and onwards might be justifiably given the title of the 'energetic Church', for whether or not one agreed with all that the Belfast clergy did in these years, it cannot be denied that the period is characterised by a great outburst of what must be called - with certain reservations - evangelical energy.

As we have seen, that energy was directed in various ways - towards the unchurched through the Church Extension movement, towards the nurturing of the faith by means of various church organisations and societies, and, in localised instances, towards remedial social work amongst the poor. But the impression is gained from a study of these years, that a disproportionate amount of the Church's energy was expended on rather insensitive prosyletism among the Catholic population.

In fact the Church's strategy would seem to have been significantly influenced by the need to oppose an ever increasing Catholic presence in the City. The Church Education Society was formed because of the need to retain the freedom to proselytise in the schools; the Church Accommodation Society ceased to operate because of the suspected Tractarian/Catholic sympathies of some of the members ofthe committee; and some clergy were quite willing to risk riot and bloodshed in order to enlighten the Catholic population as to the error of their ways.

Indeed when the question is asked as to why there was such a release

pf ecclesiastical energy in the thirties and the decades following the answer must not only indicate a rising population who needed to be ministered to, and a new evangelical fervour among clergy but also the crucial fact that an increasing percentage of that population was Catholic. One might even suggest that it was the Catholic Emancipation Bill of 1829, which, because it brought the Established Church to a realisation of the insecurity of her position, forced her into a frenzy of activity. Unfortunately that activity was sometimes as much concerned with returning to the pre-1829 political status quo,[4] as it was with reachingg the 'unchurched' whether be they Protestant or Catholic.

A more hopeful area in which we saw this energy released was that of lay-involvement in church affairs. Early in the century the laity were actively discouraged. Even Bishop Mant did not go out of his way to encourage them. It was Bishop Knox, with his annual diocesan conferences, his promotion of such ideas as Parochial Associations, and his endorsement of the '59 Revival, who did most to release the energy of the laity for the good of the Church. His episcopal encouragement may well have given the impetus to the formation of the Church Extension and Endowment Society (1862) which, as we have seen, was a lay-inspired movement from the beginning.

This aspect of Church life in Belfast in the'fifties and'sixties had far reaching significance, for it meant that laymen had alreadybeen initiated into responsibility in the Church prior to Disestablishment in 1869, and so they were in a position to contribute of their expertise to the running of the disestablished Church in the years following that date. And, according to Bishop Knox their contribution was not wasted, for the Church in the Diocese of Down Connor and Dromore, and therefore presumably in Belfast also, was very successfully organised in those post disestablishment years:

> "Never before, I venture to say, in the history of the Church has there been so little check to our spiritual progress, ... so little damage to our parochial system as we silently passed from the beaten track of prescribed duties, hedged in by written laws and State control, into the untried paths of self-government and liberty of action."[5]

Perhaps this more hopeful note is a good point at which to conclude this thesis.

Notes for Conclusion

1. cf. p. 34 above.
2. Ibid., pp. 43 / 45 above.
3. Ibid., p. 44 above.
4. Ibid., p. 108
5. Knox. Charge 1871 p. 4.

Appendix A

Perpetual Curate

"In the Church of England the technical name given before the passing of the Pastoral Measure, 1968, to a cleric who ministered in a parish or district to which he had been nominated by the Impropriator and licensed by the Bishop .... Curates thus licensed became perpetual. The ministers of new parishes and districts established by various 19th-cent. Acts of Parliament were also perpetual cures." (from 'The Concise Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church'. p. 393. Ed. E. A. Livingstone)

Author's Comment: The section underlined refers to most of the 'perpetual cures' in existence in Belfast during the period of the thesis.

Appendix B

The complete text of Thomas Drew's poem

"Long years the poor man lay despised, unknown,
With stern indifference familiar grown;
His little light and love grown cold and dim,
And Sunday shined no Sabbath day for him:
Idly, he sought the hearth, the field, or quaff'd,
With base compeers, th'intoxicating draught;
What may a weeping eye in sorrow sought; -
God gave command - the rich man's heart inquired,
How to accomplish what the poor desired?
The benison came! all glorious sight to see -
Churches were reared, capacious, fair, and FREE -
Where pews were open (void of lock or door)
And the poor man, with joy, resumed once more
His ancient station. He the Gospel hears -
Of Jesu's love - his welcome - pity - tears -
Aroused - delighted - finds a foretaste here
Of that blest Church, where saints shall yet appear:
Rejoices in the house which Charity has given,
And prays, "such woth may find it's home in Heaven!"'

(T. Drew: 'The Church in Belfast' op. cit., p. 9.)

Appendix C

The purpose of the 'Clergy-Aid Society'

"The Society was organised for the purpose of endeavouring to supply, by co-operative exertions, the deficiencies of ministerial attendance, and to provide opportunities of assembling for divine worship according to the forms of the United Church of England and Ireland."

(W. Mant. Memoirs of the Rt. Rev. Richard Mant. op. cit., p. 356.)

Appendix D

The Rules and Regulations of the Church Accommodation Soc.

1. "That the object of this Society shall be to provide additional Churches or Chapels of Ease where most required; to aid in enlarging Churches, and to contribute towards completing Churches or Chapels now in progress.'
2. Funds for these objects shall be raised by Donations, payable either at the time of subscription or by instalments of two, three or four years ....
3. The Lord Bishop of the Diocese shall be President.
4. Donors of £300 or upwards shall be Patrons; and of £100 or upwards, shall be Vice Patrons.
5. The Archdeacons of Down and Connor, being members shall be Vice Presidents.
6. Donors of £10 or upwards, or Clergymen contributing £10 or upwards by parochial collection or otherwise, in one sum shall be members.
7. The funds of the Society shall be vested in Five Trustees being severally donors of £50 or upwards, who shall be elected by the members at a general meeting to be called for the purpose.
8. The management of the affairs of the Society, and the administration of its funds shall be entrusted to a general committee, consisting of the President, Patrons, Vice patrons, Vice Presidents, Trustees

and seven beneficed clergymen and seven laymen .....

9. Sub-committees shall be formed in the several Rural Deaneries, to solicit contributions, to maintain a correspondence with the general committee; and to promote the objects of the Society.

10. In every case of making a grant for providing a Church or Chapel, the committee shall take care that the tenure of the site be such, if possible, as to allow of its being made over in perpetuity, or order that the building may be legally consecrated.

11. All Churches or Chapels provided by the Society shall be submitted to the Diocesan for consecration, if possible; and if not capable of being legally consecrated for licence as places for public worship; and Divine service shall not be celebrated in any Church or Chapel, unless the building be consecrated or licenced according to law, and then no other service, but the prescript form as provided by the Church of Ireland shall be used.

12. Before pledging themselves to any undertaking, the Committee shall be satisfied that there are means of securing public worship in the proposed building ...

13. In all cases where an endowment ... shall be offered .... the Committee shall be authorised to build or assist in building the proposed Church or Chapel. And the minister shall from time to time be nominated and appointed by Trustees ..... one of the Trustees being the incumbent of the Parish wherein the Church or Chapel is to be erected.

14. In any case where it may be desired to erect a School for Education, according to the doctrine and discipline of the Church, under the same roof with a chapel, the Committee shall be at liberty to contribute towards the erection ...

15. The committee shall have the power to receive Donations for specific purposes signified by the Donors, and in accordance with the avowed objects of the Society as well as for its general uses, and to assist in carrying such specific objects into effect."

(Great Meeting for Church Extension op. cit. p. 29.)

Appendix E

The Diocese of Down and Connor has been a united diocese since before the Reformation. It extends over the North Eastern corner of Ulster, its boundary North of Lough Neagh being the River Bann, so that it not only includes within its boundaries all of County Antrim, but also Coleraine (or that part of it which lies East of the Bann) and Portstewart which are both situated in County Londonderry. In the South it extends along the coast to the village of Dundrum, with its western boundary stretching roughly in a line North to Hillsborough, then veering violently to the West - doubtless to include thelatter parish - thence continuing in a North Westerly direction to reach Lough Neagh just north of Ballinderry.

The city of Belfast is partly in The Diocese of Down and partly in Connor. The river Lagan which runs through the centre of Belfast is the Diocesan boundary. On the northern shore is Connor and on the southern is Down. However up until 1870 most of the city was in the Diocese of Connor, with the exception of St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett (see Figs. I and II).

The Diocese of Dromore was united with the above/See in 1842. The addition of Dromore in effect meant that the new united Diocese extended over the whole of Counties Antrim and Down, though also including Coleraine

(Co. Derry) in the North and Portadown (Co. Armagh) in the south. "The union took place on the 9th of April 1842 by the decease of the Right Rev. Dr. James Saurin, the last Bishop of the See of Dromore; on which event, under the provisions of the Church Temporalities Act, the Bishopric of Dromore, as an independent See, was suspended, and the revenues became the property of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Ireland, while the spiritual oversight of the diocese devolved upon the Bishop of Down and Connor."

(W. Mant, op. cit., pp. 408-409.)

Godkin described the United Dioceses thus:

> "Down and Connor contain nearly the whole of the great Protestant counties of Down and Antrim, and a small portion of the county of Londonderry, embracing an area of 1,141,462 statute acres. Dromore contains part of the county Down, and some portions of the counties of Armagh and Antrim, having an area of 288,512 statute acres. Each diocese has its staff of dignitaries, as if the three cathedrals were still existing in all their glory. The net value of the bishopric is £3,524. The number of benefices in Down is 38, perpetual cures, 10; total 28. The net income of the clergy is £10,688. In Connor, the number of benefices is 53; perpetual cures 23; total 76. The net income of the clergy is £13,682. Dromore contains 24 benefices and 4 perpetual cures; total 28. The net income of the clergy is £8,292."
>
> (Godkin, Ireland and her Churches, pp. 461-2.)

Appendix F

Sovereign of Belfast

In 1613 Belfast was constituted a Corporation with a Sovereign and 12 Burgesses (the modern equivalent of the Sovereign would be the Lord Mayor). The appointment of the Sovereign and the Burgesses was in the gift of the Chichester family, the local landowners and Earls of Donegal. Thus the Chichesters held the reins of both ecclesiastical - being Patrons of the Parish Church - and civil power in Belfast. This often resulted in the Vicar of Belfast also being appointed Sovereign.

Biographical details of some of the Belfast Clergy

Robert Bland

Born in Queen's County; entered Trinity College Dublin June 3rd, 1811, aged 16; obtained a B.A. in 1816 and M.A. 1819. He was ordained in the Diocese of Ferns in 1817, and in 1820 went to the parish of Knockbreda as curate and in 1824 became Perpetual Curate of St. George's where he stayed until 1836. After a ten year 'gap' he became District Curate of Whitehouse in 1845 and stayed for four years. He died at Whiteabbey, Belfast October 1880.

John Bristow

Born in Co. Antrim, April 28th 1833; B.A. Trinity College, Dublin; Divinity Testimonium 1857. He was ordained Deacon in 1857 and took a curacy in Kilcommon in Ferns where he stayed for two years. 1859-65 Vicar of Glengraig; Incumbent of Holy Trinity, Belfast 1865-66; Rector of Knockbreda 1866-73; Incumbent of St. James, Belfast 1873-1909. He died in Dublin in 1909, aged 76.

Theophilus Campbell

Born in Co. Dublin 1811. He entered Trinity College Dublin in October 1828 at the age of 17. It seems to have taken him ten years to gain his B.A. (1838), another eleven, his M.A., and another thirty his B.D. and D.D. (1879). Ordained deacon in 1838 for the curacy of Munterconnaught 1838-39. The years from 1839-43, he spent in England as Rector of Tunstall, Staffs. In 1843 he came back to Ireland as Perpetual Curate of Holy Trinity Belfast where he remained for twenty-two years. He was later to become successively, Archdeacon (1886-87) and then Dean (1887-94) of Dromore. He died at the Rectory, Lurgan April 23, 1894. (Swanzy's Succession Lists of the Diocese of Dromore, 1933.)

Charles Seaver Courtenay

Born 1805 in Co. Down, and entered Trinity College Dublin in 1822 where he gained a B.A. in 1827, and an M.A. in 1832. He was ordained in 1827 for the curacy of Ballyeaston; 1831 Curate of Upper Falls; 1832-49 Perpetual Curate of Ballymacarrett. The remainder of his ministry was spent in Culfeightrin, where he died in 1865.

Thomas Drew

Born in Limerick, October 26th 1800; entered Trinity College Dublin, 8th June 1819 and graduated with a B.A. 1826, receiving the further degrees of LL.B. (1841), M.A., B.D. and D.D. (1842), and being admitted 'ad eundem D.D.', Cambridge 1844. He was ordained deacon in 1827 for the curacy of Skerry and Rathcavan (Broughshane) in Connor and was priested in 1828. He moved to the Christ Church Belfast as Perpetual Curate in November 1832. In 1859 he accepted the Precentership of Down from Bishop Knox. He died eleven years later having gone to reside in Dundrum, Co. Down.

(W. S. Leathem, A History of the Church of Ireland in St. Mary Magdalene Parish, Belfast. pp. 104-105.)

Edward May

Born 1783, the son of Edward May and the Marchioness of Donegal. He matriculated at St. Mary's Hall, Oxford in 1800, and became Vicar of Belfast nine years later, holding the position for ten years. He died at the age of 37 in Pisa, Italy.

Thomas Miller

Born (1802) in County Clare into a 'Rectory family', entered Trinity College Dublin in 1830, where he gained a B.A. in 1837, and was later awarded an M.A., B.D. and D.D. degrees. He was ordained priest in 1839 and worked in the Dublin diocese until 1841 when he became Chaplain of

Chaplain of the Ulster Magdalene Asylum and Episcopal Chapel as well as Chaplain to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant. Between 1842 and 1848 he was Incumbent at Muckamore and later at Templepatrick. In the latter year he became Vicar of Belfast and remained there until his death in 1872, at Clapham, London.

Arthur Chichester MacCartney

Born in Co. Antrim, 1779 and entered Trinity College in 1792 where he was awarded a B.A. in 1797 and an M.A. in 1814. It is said that while in T.C.D. he overheard some people plotting against the government and informed the authorities. As a result he had to fight three duels, and was then refused ordination. He joined the army and was Capt. R. A. in the Peninsular War. After his military service he was ordained and became Vicar of Templepatrick 1813-43 holding it in conjunction with the Vicarage of Belfast 1820-43. He died May 16th 1843.

William MacIlwaine

Born 1805 in Dublin. Entered Trinity College in 1826, became a Scholar in 1829 and received his B.A. in 1832. His M.A. followed in 1841, his B.D. and D.D. in 1868. He was ordained for the curacy of Dromore in 1833, and besides that, held several other curacies in the following two years, including one in Liverpool. In 1835 he became curate of St. George's and a year later was made rector. In 1877 he was made a Canon of St. Patrick's. The writer of his obituary in the Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette described him thus: "He was at once a poet and skilled student in Divinity, a Preacher and platform orator, an archeologist and geologist." (Swanzy's and Leslie's Biographical Succession Lists of the Diocese of Down.)

Thomas Wellesley Roe

Born in Queen's County 1817, and entered Trinity College Dublin in 1835, receiving a B.A. in 1840 to which he later added M.A. (1870), LL.B. and

LL.D. (1871). He was ordained in 1841 for the Diocese of Sodor and Man. He held two curacies in Ireland (Maguiresbridge and St. Mathias's Dublin) before accepting the Incumbency of Ballymacarrett, where he remained until his death in 1889.

(Leslie's Clogher Clergy and Parishes 1929).

Charles Seaver

Born 1820 in Co. Armagh and a B.A. 1839, M.A. 1871 and B.D. and D.D. in 1887. He was ordained deacon in 1843 in Dublin Diocese, worked for ten years as a curate in the parishes of Mullaghbrack (Armagh) and Sandford (Dublin), before becoming Perpetual Curate of St. John's Laganbank, Belfast in 1853. He later was made successively Archdeacon and Dean of Connor. He died in 1907.

(Swanzy's Dromore Succession Lists.)

Unless otherwise indicated the source of these 'biographies' is Leslie's Succession Lists of Connor Diocese - unpublished, typescript in R.C.B. Library, copyright R.C.B.

Episcopal Biographies

William Dickson

Son of the Very Rev. James Dickson, Dean of Down, he was born in 1744. He attended Hertford College Oxford from which he received his B.A. (1767), M.A. 1770, and D.D. by diploma (1784). From 1770-83 he held various livings in the South of Ireland. He also was appointed First Chaplain to the Earl of Northington, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He became Bishop of Down and Connor in 1783 and remained there until his death in 1804. (He died at the house of Charles James Fox - an old school friend.)

(Swanzy's Dromore)

Nathaniel Alexander

Born 1760 in Co. Derry. Received a B.A. from Emman. College Cambridge

in 1783 and an M.A. in 1787. He was ordained in 1782 and went as curate to Aghadowey in 1783. He was Precentor of Armagh 1796-1802 and was consecrated Bishop of Clonfert in March 1802; translated to Killaloe in 1804 and thence to Down in the same year and in 1823 - yet again - to Meath. He died in Dublin in 1840.
(Leslie's Armagh Clergy and Parishes.)

Richard Mant

Born 1776 at Southampton, where his father was the Master of the King Edward VI's Grammar School. He was educated at Winchester College and Trinity Oxford where he was made a Scholar, and received his B.A. in 1797. In 1798 he was elected to a fellowship of Oriel College, and in the summer of the following year obtained the Chancellor's prize for the English Essay - the subject being "Commerce". He was ordained in 1802 and "commenced the active labours of the ministry by officiating during the College vacations, under his father in the cure of the parish of All Saints, Southampton." After being priested in 1804, he became curate at Buriton in Hampshire. He was elected Bampton Lecturer at Oxford and lectured under the title: "An Appeal to the Gospel". In 1813 he accepted the office of Domestic Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury and in 1815 became Rector of St. Botolph's Bishopsgate and of East Horsley. He was consecrated Bishop of Killaloe and Kilenfora, and was translated to Down and Connor in 1823, where he remained until his death in 1849.
(W. Mant. Memoirs ...)

Robert Bent Knox

He was the son of Charles Knox, the Archdeacon of Armagh, and was born in 1808. He graduated from Trinity College with a B.A. in 1829 subsequently receiving an M.A. (1834) and a D.D. per Lit. Reg. (1849). He was also awarded an LL.D. from Canterbury. He was ordained deacon and priest in

1832 in the Diocese of Kilmore, subsequently becoming Chancellor of Ardfert (1834-49), Treasurer of Limerick 1841, Prebendary of St. Munchin's, Limerick 1841-49 and Bishop of Down Connor and Dromore May 1st 1849. In 1886 he became Archbishop of Armagh and remained so till his death in 1893.

(Swanzy's Dromore.)

Some Parish Stastistics (1868)

St. Anne's (Shankill) - Connor Diocese.

The Parish Church for Belfast. It was built in 1784, replacing an older church on the same site which faced onto Donegal Street, and lay between Academy Street and Talbot Street.

Population: H.M. Commissioners gave the number of Established Church members for the whole parish of Belfast in 1868 as 24,534.

Incumbents:
1772-1809: William Bristow
1809-1820: Edward Chichester May
1820-1843: Arthur Chichester MacCartney
1843-1845: Thomas Walker
1845-1872: Thomas Fitzwilliam Millar.

Patron: The Marquis of Donegal.

St. George's (Upper Falls) - Connor Diocese

A perpetual curacy. The Church was opened in 1816 as a 'Chapel of Ease' for St. Anne's. It was situated at the East end of the High Street, between Church Lane and Forest Lane.

Population: Included in the total for the parish of Belfast.

Incumbents:
1816-24: William Worthington.
1824-36: Robert Bland
1836-80: William MacIlwaine.

Patron: In 1836 it was the Vicar of Belfast, but by 1868 the patronage had been vested in a group of Trustees.

St. Patrick's Ballymacarrett - Down Diocese

A Perpetual curacy. The Church was opened in 1827, and was situated on the eastern shore of the Lagan, in what was then the village of Ballymacarrett.

Population: Given as 2,686 by the Commissioners in 1868.

Incumbents:
1827-32: John Potts
1832-49: Charles Seaver Courtney
1849-53: George Bennett
1853-57: John H. Duke (Duck in the Preacher's Book)
1857-89: Thomas Wellesley Roe.

Patron: Incumbent of Knockbreda.

Christ Church - Connor Diocese.

A perpetual curacy. The Church was opened in 1833, and was situated at the corner of Durham Street and College Square North.

Population: Included by the Commissioners in the total for Belfast. In 1852 a census carried out by the curate, Abraham Dawson, put the population at 7,109. (Dawson, Annals of Christ Church.)

Incumbents: 1833-59: Thomas Drew
1859-62: Robert S. Gregg
1862-71: Robert Hannay.

Patronage: Vested in a group of Trustees.

St. Mary Magdalene - Connor Diocese

A perpetual curacy. The Church was opened in 1839, and was situated in Donegal Pass.

Population: Included by the Commissioners in the total for the parish of Belfast.

Incumbents: 1839-41: Robert Harvey
1841-43: T. F. Millar
1843-46: E. J. Hartrick
1846-80: Walter Riddall.

Patron: Patronage vested in a group of Trustees.

Holy Trinity ('Trinity') - Diocese of Connor.

A perpetual curacy. The Church was opened in 1843 and was situated at the end of Trinity Street, on the other side of Clifton Street from the Poor House.

Population: Included by the Commissioners in the total for Belfast.

Incumbents: 1843-64: Theolphilus Campbell.
1864-66: John Bristow
1866-84: Issac Deacon.

Patron: Patronage vested in Trustees.

St. Paul's - Connor Diocese

A perpetual curacy. The Church was opened in 1851, and was situated on York Road opposite the 'Northern Counties Railways Terminus'.

Population: Included by the Commissioners in the total for Belfast.

Incumbents: 1851-1879: Charles Allen

Patron: The Vicar of Belfast.

St. John's, Lagan Bank - Connor Diocese

A perpetual curacy. Situated on the West shore of the Lagan, just off East Bridge Street, the Church was opened in 1853.

Population: Included in the total for Belfast. In fact the population that was 'expected' to concentrate around the church never materialised, so that in the 1930's Bishop McNeice in The Church of Ireland in Belfast, recommended that St. John's "should be removed to one of the new" where it could be put to better use.

Incumbents: 1853-1907: Charles Seaver

Patron: Patronage vested in Trustees.

St. Mark's Ballysillan. - Connor Diocese.

A perpetual curacy. Situated to the North of the City in what was then the village of Ligoniel on the northern outskirts of the city.

Population: 595 members of the Established Church.

Incumbents: 1856-84: James Marshall

Patron: Vicar of Belfast.

St. John's (Upper Falls) - Connor Diocese.

A perpetual curacy. Situated on the western outskirts of the city - a community formerly cared for by the clergy of St. George's. Church opened in 1861.

Population: 396 members of the Established Church.

Incumbents: 1859-60: Joseph Rawlins
1860-86: Charles Gaussen.

Patron: Vicar of Belfast.

St. Luke's (Lower Falls) - Connor Diocese

A perpetual curacy. Situated on the Northumberland Street, then fairly open ground, between the Shankill Road and the Falls Road, the Church was opened in 1863.

Population: Included by Commissioners in Belfast total.

Incumbents: 1863-90: William Cotter.

Patron: Patronage vested in a group of Trustees.

St. Mary's - Connor Diocese.

District Church. Situated on the Crumlin Road on open ground, but not far from a large flax-spinning mill. The Church was opened in 1868.

Population: Included in the total for Belfast.

Incumbents: 1867-75: Charles Beauclerk.

Patron: Patronage vested in Trustees.

St. Stephen's - Connor Diocese - was built after 1868, and so does not appear in the 1868 Commissioners Report. It was the first 'Free Church' in the Diocese, i.e. there were no pew rents. It was situated on Millfield, a built-up area between Divis Street and Peter's Hill.

Incumbents: 1869-1903: Richard Irvine.

Patron: Patronage vested in Trustees, among whom were the Vicar of Belfast and the Bishop of Down and Connor.

The Mariner's Church - Connor Diocese. Though it was built after 1868 (1869) it does appear in the Report, probably because the congregation was formed in 1855. Situated on thedisused Ormonde Market in Corporation Street.

Population: The Church was built to serve the seamen from the

neighbouring docks, as well as the fairly heavily populated area round it.

Incumbents: 1855-58: G. A. Patton (The congregation had been formed in 1855)
1858-65: Simon Fawcett
1865-67: H. G. Wilson
1867- : John Stewart

Patron: Patronage vested in Trustees.

St. Andrew's - Connor Diocese. Opened 1870. Does not appear in the Report. Situated in Hope Street (then Mill Lane).

Incumbent: 1868-70: S. E. Bugsby

Patron: Patronage vested in Trustees.

St. Matthew's - Connor Diocese. Though the present Church was not consecrated until 1872, a small church dedicated to that Saint, had been opened in 1839 having been built mainly through the efforts of Thomas Drew.

A perpetual curacy. Situated at the Old Shankill Graveyard near the intersection of Tennent Street and Shankill Road.

Population: Included in Belfast total by the Commissioners. Up until 1870 at least, there were few people living close to the church.

Incumbents: 1839- : 'Mr. Agar'
1860-75: John Crossley (He later became Incumbent of the new Church)

Patron: Vicar of Belfast.

The information for these statistics has been taken from:

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FIG I.

A NEW & CORRECT PLAN OF THE TOWN OF BELFAST,

Drawn & Engraved

EXPRESSLY FOR THE PRESENT WORK;

— 1822. —

J. THOMSON ESQ^R

Reclaimed Ground

FIG II

MAP OF BELFAST,

SPECIALLY PREPARED FOR

The Belfast & Province of Ulster Post Office Directory

By WARD BROTHERS, BELFAST.

1870.

TABLE REFERENCE TO THE RECEIVING OFFICES AND PILLAR AND WALL BOXES.

× Ballymacarrett	W.B.
× Ballymacarrett	P.B.
× Botanic Gardens	do.
× Carlisle Circus	do.
× Chichesville	do.
× Commercial Buildings	do.
× Co. Down Railway	Letter-Box.
× Court House	P.B.
× Docks, Great George's St.	do.
× Donegall Pass	do.
× Donegall Place	do.
× Donegall Square	do.
× Lagan Village	W.B.
× Lisburn Road	P.B.
○ Malone Road	R.O.
× May Street	P.B.
○ Mount Pottinger	R.O.
× Nor. Counties Railway	Letter-Box.
× North Howard Street	P.B.
× North Queen Street	do.
× Peter's Hill	do.
○ Shankhill Road	R.O.
× Townsend Street	P.B.
× Ulster Railway	Letter-Box.
× York Street	P.B.
○ Do.	R.O.

S T A N N S W A R D

S O U T H W A R D

S T G E O R G E S W A R D

D O C K W A R D

B A L L Y M A C A R R E T

Tidal Basin

Abercorn Basin

Queen's Island

Victoria Channel

Belfast Lough

Lagan River

Blackstaff River

Crumlin Road

Donegall Pass

Donegall Place

Donegall Square

Chichester Street

Linen Hall

Belfast Harbour Office

Northern Counties Railway Terminus

Great Victoria Street

Great Northern Railway

Central Railway

Belfast and County Down Railway

Ulster Railway

District Lunatic Asylum

Infantry Barracks

Workhouse

Botanic Gardens

Mount Pottinger

Ballymacarrett Road

Newtownards Road