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MLitt(R) thesis

**The Presbyterian response to the famine years 1845 to 1855
within Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland**

**A thesis
presented to the School of Critical Studies,
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in

**fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree
of
Master of Letters**

by

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Matriculation number 8637721

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I declare that this thesis is entirely the product of my own work,
except where indicated, and has not been submitted by myself
or any other person for any degree at this or any other university
or college.

(Sgd.)   …………………………………….

December 10, 2011.

Abstract

The aim of this research is to determine the extent to which the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and its historical offshoot, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, responded to the challenge presented by the humanitarian catastrophe that arose to variable extents from the social, economic and political conditions prevalent in both countries during the famine crisis period from 1845 until 1855. The major victims were the landless unemployed existing at subsistence level or below. The prime method of research has been to focus upon surviving Church records covering sample parishes within the two geographical areas, namely, the Scottish Highlands and Islands and the four provinces of Ireland: Ulster, Leinster, Connaught and Munster. Each area will be shown to exhibit broadly divergent social and economic structures overlaid by devotional differences. Apart from the plethora of original Church and civil materials available in national archives, libraries and regional museums, research has been focussed on conventional sources for the church historian. These include the Acts of the General Assemblies, synod, presbytery and Kirk session records, statistical accounts, decennial census returns, contemporary national and local press reports, emigrant-ship passenger lists, memoirs, letters, published diaries, parish local histories and general literature. A debt is owed to earlier chroniclers and where resort has been made to published sources these have been acknowledged in chapter feet-notes. Religion played a significant role in shaping both private and public responses to the relief of the destitute. Yet, the conclusion must remain that the Presbyterian Churches were just one of the relief agencies that met the challenge of debilitating effects resulting from acute material scarcity within parishes from 1845, responding with vigour and compassion from the outset. Within the Scottish Highlands, for example, the Free Church of Scotland was foremost, providing both spiritual and material support to the population until civil authorities assumed the latter role. Thereafter, the Church remained an instrument of supervision and control over material distribution in conjunction with statutory local committees. In the long term, the spiritual and material support the Presbyterian Church afforded to impoverished families of all denominations and none, burdened with malnutrition, contagious disease, death and emigration, was an outstanding example of Christian service that proved assured at home and transportable with the dispossessed emigrants to their new abode overseas. The suggestion is that the strength of Presbyterian endeavour during the challenging famine years of the mid-nineteenth-century lay not just in external piety, but also in the committed Christian faith and practical witness of its communicants.

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Abbreviations

ADJ	Aberdeen Daily Journal
AJ	Aberdeen Journal
AUPA	Aberdeen University Photographic Archives (QM Library)
FCCHD	Free Church Committee on Highland Destitution (The)
FPC	Free Presbyterian Church
GRO	General Record Office (Edinburgh)
GWW	George Washington Wilson (Photographic collection (AUPA)
HMCFCS	Home Mission Committee of the Free Church of Scotland
IR	Innes Review
IRR	Indoor Relief Registers of Irish workhouses
IVRLA	Irish Virtual Research Library and Archive
JED	Jane Elisabeth Drummond (University of Glasgow)
JRS	John Rothney Stephen (M.Litt. Candidate)
NAI	National Archives of Ireland (Dublin)
NAS	National Archives of Scotland (Edinburgh)
NGS	National Gallery of Scotland (Edinburgh)
NLI	National Library of Ireland (Dublin)
NLS	National Library of Scotland (Edinburgh)
NRS	National Records of Scotland (Edinburgh)
NSA	New Statistical Account of Scotland, 15 Vols. (1845)
OSA	(Old) Statistical Account of Scotland, 21 Vols. (1791-99)
OS	Ordnance Survey
PHSI	Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland (Belfast)
PRONI	Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (Belfast)
RBC	Royal Bounty Commission
RSCHS	Records of the Scottish Church History Society
SCA	Scottish Catholic Archives (Edinburgh)
SHR	Scottish History Review
SSPCK	Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
TGSI	Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness
UFC	United Free Church
UTC	Union Theological College (Belfast)

The Presbyterian response to the famine years 1845 to 1855 within Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland

And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among
them, till they be consumed from the land that I gave unto them
and to their fathers (Jeremiah 24:10)

Chapter 1: Introduction to the structure of mid-nineteenth-century Presbyterianism

1.1 Parameters of research

In order to place mid-nineteenth-century Presbyterianism and its challenges within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in historical context, a brief introduction to the more important cultural, social, political and economic issues of the day is appropriate and will be visited in this opening chapter. Later chapters will expand upon those introductory themes which cannot be excised from events tied to the rapid social and economic change that forced a steady retreat by the Government from its long-held *laissez-faire* [1] policy in public affairs that marked the early years of nineteenth-century Britain. It must be stressed that the following chapters are not intended to be an ecclesiastical-based social, political and economic history of the exceptional material poverty that pervaded Ireland and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (hereafter Highlands, Fig.1.1) throughout the middle years of the nineteenth-century. Without doubt the period in both regions underwent a deep spiritual poverty which within the Presbyterian Church,[2] a denomination at the time comprised of the Established Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland and the Reformed Church of Ireland, that was alleviated to some extent by the recurrence of a series of spiritual 'revivals' and 'awakenings' that infused a new spiritual life into otherwise flagging congregations.[3]

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[1]   *Laissez-faire*: Belief in non-interference of the State in economic affairs was a fundamental Principle of British Liberalism for most of the nineteenth-century. It derived from Adam Smith, Malthus, and Ricardo and from the tradition of Jeremy Bentham (q.v. Chapter 3).

[2]   Holmes, 2000, 10. From the Greek New Testament, *Presbuteros*, a presbyter or elder or elders (1 Tim. iv:14) and denotes the structure of polity or pattern of government found in what are also called 'Reformed'.

[3]   Kirkpatrick, 2006, 62.

Various emphases have been placed by contemporary commentators and latter-day historians on the causes of the material scarcity which visited the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in the middle years of the nineteenth-century and weighed heavily upon the poorest classes of society, in particular, those existing at or

Fig. 1.1

Notional Highland / Lowland Boundary
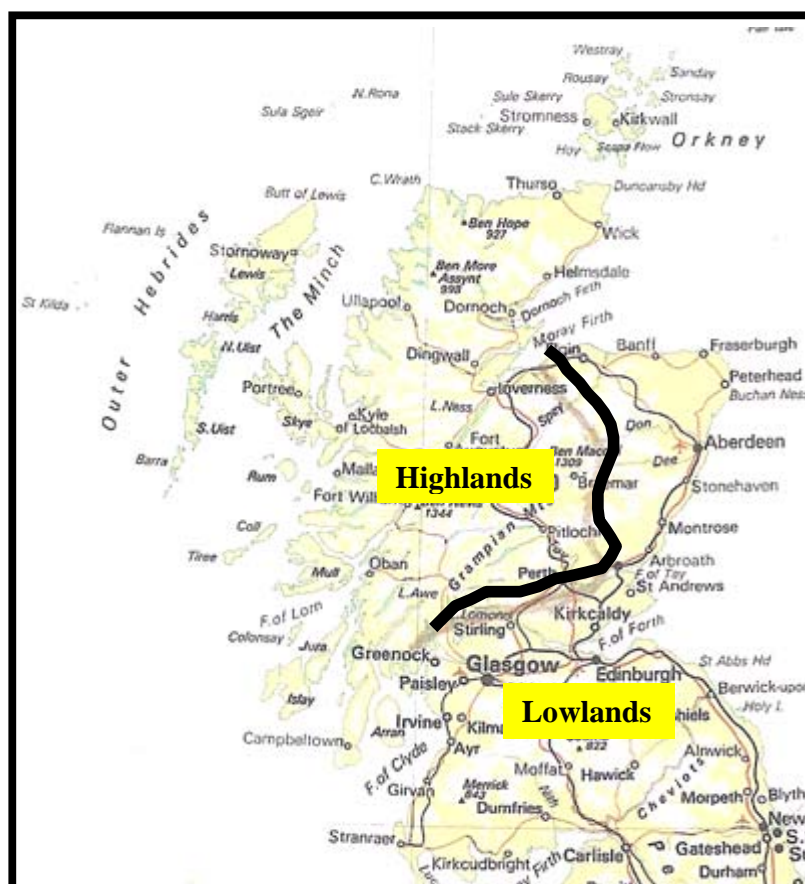
Adapted from C.W.J. Withers, *Gaelic Scotland: The Transformation of a Cultural Region*, London, 1988. Map prepared by University of Glasgow School of Geographical and Earth Sciences (JED).

below subsistence level, in those remote areas far removed from industry or other opportunities for gainful employment. For example, it has been argued, notably by Kinealy (2006), that the reason for scarcity of food in Ireland was political rather than economic.[4] Hunter (2000), on the other hand, argues that in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the cause of famine was "an economic rather than a biological

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[4] Kinealy, 2006, xvi (Introduction).

catastrophe".[5] Albeit these conflicting arguments may have validity, it will be suggested that the approach to such a complex historical event (set in a rapidly changing society, relentlessly transformed by late-eighteenth-century European Enlightenment reasoning as the precursor of firmly established Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions, both into an advanced stage of development [6] must remain multi-factorial, and that is the research strategy that has been followed throughout.

Fig. 1.2

The four provinces of Ireland
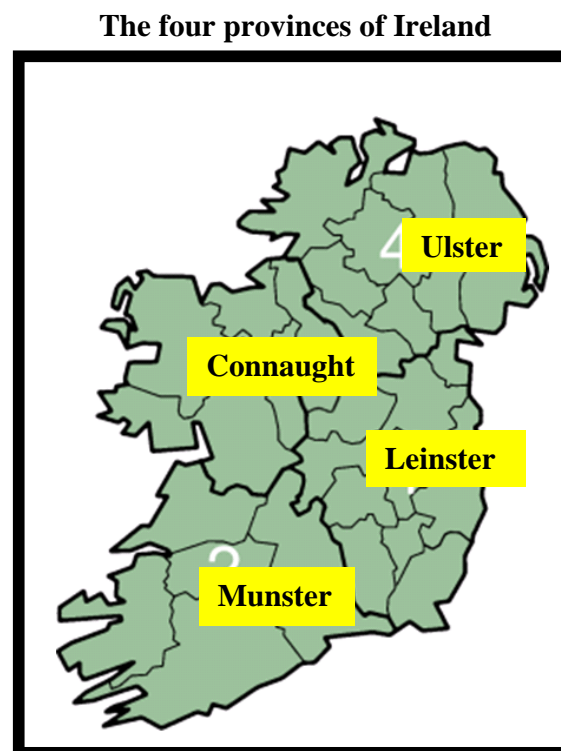
Originally there were five Irish provinces. Sketch prepared by the University of Glasgow School of Geographical and Earth Sciences. (JED)

1.2 Research aim to be achieved

It is generally acknowledged that little research to date has been attempted in tracing the part played by the Presbyterian Church, as historically constituted within Scotland and in Ireland, to alleviate the exceptional distress suffered by the population of both countries during the *Great Famine* years between 1846 and 1855. With few published

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[5]   Hunter, 2000, 91.

[6]   The progress made in agricultural husbandry can be gauged by comparison of conditions described in the Old and New Statistical Accounts.

works by recognised historians in this field for new researchers to build upon, the aim pursued in the following chapters is to establish a groundwork by setting down a foundation for further study by others. In other words, this research thesis may be considered a basic attempt to determine if at all possible, the extent to which the Presbyterian established Church of Scotland and its non-conformist subsidiary, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, together with the then recently constituted Free Church of Scotland, responded to the challenge popularly identified as *The Great Famine*,[7] or contemporaneously in Ireland as *An Gorta Mor*,[8] albeit the immediate effects in both regions lingered into later decades**.**

1.2.1 Research method pursued

The prime method has been to research surviving Presbyterian Church records in Scotland and Ireland from sample parish bounds within the two geographical areas of: (i) the Scottish Highlands identified by Devine (1995), as the north and west; and, (ii) the central and east [9] (Fig.1.1). Each geographical area, Devine contends, can be shown to exhibit broadly divergent social and economic systems impinging upon the devotional. Likewise, parish records have been examined from the four provinces of Ireland: Ulster, Leinster, Connaught and Munster (Fig.1.2). Apart from the generality of original Church and State materials available in national archives, libraries and regional museums, research has focussed on the conventional sources for the church historian. These include the Acts of the General Assembly, Synod and Presbytery records, Session Minute Books, Communion Rolls of which very few are available for the Dissenting Churches, statistical accounts, contemporary national and local press reports, ship passenger lists, memoirs, family letters, published diaries, local histories and general literature. Of particular value has been a search through the *Highland Destitution Papers* and associated Government correspondence in the *National Archives of Scotland* (*N.A.S*)

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[7]   Devine, 1995, Connolly, 1995, Villiers-Tuthill, 1997, Donnelly, 2001, Foynes, 2004.
[8]   MacAtasney, 1997, 111.
[9]   Devine, 1995, 1.

1.3 Limitations of Presbyterian Church records

In the course of this research it has been found that Presbyterian Church records are a limited source for detail covering the mid-nineteenth-century years of scarcity both in the Scottish Highlands and in Ireland. Since deposit of Kirk *Session Minute Books* and ancillary materials is not mandatory, in a number of instances these have been retained at their church of origin or in private hands and can only be viewed at the discretion of the particular Kirk Session or the private custodian. The *N.A.S.* is the repository of the *Old Parish Registers* (*O.P.R.*s) of the Church of Scotland prior to 1855. These include a record of baptisms and marriages conducted in parishes across Scotland. Deaths at that period were not recorded. Unfortunately not every birth or marriage has been entered in Session records. In some cases registers are incomplete or so damaged to render them illegible, or it can be assumed that session clerks have forgotten to record a family event. It must be remembered however, that baptisms had to be paid for which meant that many children were not baptised. Perhaps the most rewarding index of parish poverty has been that of the Kirk Session Poor Books providing some quantification of the extent of aid dispensed at varying periods and to whom.

In the interests of recording uniformity and accurate statistical compilation, the national compulsory system of registration of births, deaths and marriages was first introduced in Scotland on January 1, 1855 in compliance with the *Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act, 1854.*[10] In Ireland, similar registration was not made compulsory until 1864.[11] A useful source in this research has been the decennial Census Returns for 1841, 1851 and 1861, in particular that for 1851 which incorporates fuller and more accurate information than its predecessor in 1841.[12] This has allowed sample parishes to be studied in detail. Ship passenger records are found to provide the personal details of each emigrant in transit and include the physical condition and current state of health of the emigrant and occasionally, the emigrant's religious

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[10]   http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files/history/pdf
[11]   Kinealy, 2006, 6.
[12]   As example, between the census years of 1841 and 1851 the number of people enumerated at. South Uist dropped from 4,419 to 3,907. A note accompanying the hard census data reveals that Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, was the South Uist emigrants' preferred destination. However, conditions at Cape Breton, as the Presbyterian 'Normanites' found (Chap. 5.8.2), were little better than in the South Uist they left. Largely untouched by the 1560 Reformation in Scotland, South Uist has long been regarded as a predominantly Roman Catholic community .

affiliations. To augment the emigrant ship's permanent crew, passengers with special skills were recruited on an ad-hoc basis to assist in the welfare of their fellow emigrants.[13] In this connection, the presence on board of an emigrant clergyman is normally recorded.[14]

Political and religious history has determined that the major spread of strong Presbyterian congregations within Ireland is to be found in Ulster.[15] Those in the other three provinces, Munster, Connaught and Leinster are widely dispersed, smaller, and tend to be ephemeral with the passage of time. The most accessible records relating to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are held within the *Public Records Office for Northern Ireland* (*P.R.O.N.I.*) and the *Presbyterian Historical Society* (*P.H.S.*)*,* both located in Belfast.

1.3.1 Character of Presbyterian Church records

During the course of this research it has been found that the *minutiae* contained in Presbyterian Church records pertaining to Ireland bear a strong resemblance to those available for Scotland in that the concerns expressed deal mainly with the internal administration of the various Church courts. Session Minute Books record the erection and maintenance of Church property, the appointment and conduct of ministers and probationers, education, material provision for parish poor, and, almost overwhelmingly, the prosecution of moral offenders, albeit this aspect is steadily phased out as a disciplinary policy. Value judgements or other comment upon the mundane affairs of secular society are rare, and there is surprisingly little direct reference to the famine conditions which weighed upon the population during the mid-nineteenth-century. In this respect argues Paton (2006), the theology of the Church, would appear to have been one of compensation - "the glories of the next world would

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[13]   As a typical example of paid *ad-hoc* crew assistance on a voyage, the sailing-ship *Tasmania* sailed from Plymouth (with a full complement of Scottish, English and Irish emigrants) in July 1851 and arrived at Portland Australia on November 23, 1851, a voyage of 118 days. Emigrants employed during the voyage were a matron, a schoolmaster, a cook's assistant, a hospital assistant and four constables to maintain order. There were three births and five deaths during the voyage, but no minister of religion is recorded aboard on this occasion.

[14]   Harper, 1993, 292.

[15]   Kirkpatrick, 2006, 96-97, graphically shows the locations of Presbyteries and congregations in Ireland.

amply compensate the Godly for the travails of this world"; suggesting the perceived aim was to promote a warmer awareness of our duty to Christ, not to present social criticism.[16]

1.3.2 Introduction to the Workhouse system records

In consulting official records, cognisance has been taken of the Workhouse system (Section 3.8) introduced in the early-nineteenth-century as a means of reducing the increasing cost of providing for the parish poor. An English creation of the later eighteenth-century, the system was imposed upon the Irish population in terms of the 1838 Poor Law Act,[17] as centres for care and deterrence. Workhouses came to special prominence in Ireland during the *Great Famine* years and, due to the wretched conditions experienced by inmates, mainly over-crowding, high mortality rates and disease, remain indelibly recorded in the social history of Ireland. Workhouse records are available for consultation at the Irish National Archives, and the Irish National Library, both located in Dublin. Other records are retained at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast, and at various county libraries.[18] Hence, the Irish Workhouse Union Minute Books, Board of Guardian Minute Books, Indoor Relief Registers, and other related documents in which the details of every Workhouse inmate were recorded, form a valuable source to index the religious affiliation of both individuals and families, in particular to identify pauper Presbyterians within Ireland who, as suggested below (Section 1.4), may have been shunned by the alleged increasingly affluent middle-class Presbyterian communicant members regularly attendant at Church. Search of these complex records would seem to be a task that requires teamwork over a protracted period and has not therefore been engaged in this thesis. Diligent research in this area should however, provide a rational index of material deprivation suffered by Presbyterian communities and a testimony of any attempts at alleviation of distressed families and individuals literally incarcerated within the Workhouse.

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[16]   Paton, 2006 175.
[17]   *An Act for the More Effectual Relief of the Destitute Poor in Ireland.*
[18]   O'Connor, 1995, 269.

1.4 Nature and circumstances of the *Great Famine*

Most historians record that famine and scarcity were not novel occurrences in the Highlands and Islands. Hunter (2000), for example, claims that in the late-eighteenth-century, the region was estimated to suffer from food shortages in one year out of three and argues that such scarcities were essentially transient phenomena, the consequence of one bad harvest, or the inevitable consequence of reliance upon a system of subsistence agriculture.[19] Withers (1988) tabulates the years of bad harvests in the Highlands as 1740, 1756, 1782, and 1799, dates that have remained etched in folk-memory and are confirmed numerically from peaks in contemporary mortality records.[20] Whilst the famine of 1838 had been exceptionally severe and attracted Government intervention with a series of statutory relief measures, it fell short of the catastrophe that ravaged Europe in 1845 and the years immediately following. Into the midst of the population's trough of adversity had arrived a previously unknown virulent strain of blight which after a protracted period of years became identified as *phytophthrora infestans* (Section 2.5) a rapid spreading fungus that was not universal over the countryside in either place or time.

It will be suggested in the chapters following, that from the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, the steadily declining social and economic infra-structure of the country operated from a more complex base that harboured a wider range of factors and impacted in particular on the lower orders of society. Reference will be made to the increased clearance of estate land to pasture sheep, the progressive consolidation of small land holdings in the Eastern and Southern Highlands into single-occupancy large cattle-farms,[21] and the rise of the sporting estates, in tandem with a rapid demographic increase that, on restricted croft land, encouraged congestion leading to ever increasing sub-division of already inadequate holdings. These factors had been acerbated in earlier decades by the collapse of the West-coast kelp industry to which a large work-force had been attracted by estate owners during its relatively short life, the completion of canal and road construction, an unaccountable failure of the herring industry, a prolonged fall in cattle prices, the curtailment, if not suppression, of illicit whisky

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[19]   Hunter, 2000, 91.
[20]   Withers, 1988, 197.
[21]   Smout, 1969, 334.

distillation, the return of soldiers from Britain's wars, and, finally, the monopolisation of temporary harvest work in the Lowlands by migrant Irish labourers.[22] These disabilities were off-set to a degree by a boom in railway construction in the mid-1840s before industrial recession curtailed opportunities for work.[23] Thus it can be argued that the *Great Famine* of 1855-55 affecting one third of the total population of Ireland,[24] but by comparison, more manageable numbers in the remote areas of the West Highlands of Scotland, was essentially the culmination of a protracted period of steady economic decline in which failed harvests of the potato crop due to an unknown fungal disease in three seasons out of four was merely the catalyst.

In common with the estimation expressed in most historical sources it will be argued that Ireland had a similar demographic problem to that in the Highlands of Scotland in which too many people subsisted on progressively smaller patches of arable land. Lacking suitable large scale industry in its remote western provinces to sustain its potential workforce, hampered by the Corn Laws then in force, poverty and wretched living conditions were endemic. Albeit with its fertile soils a ready fount of agricultural produce, most of Ireland's crops and livestock was destined for export abroad, most of it beyond the ability of the poorer classes to purchase on a regular basis. As a result, monoculture of the potato to which was added milk and oats, as a sustainable diet was prevalent, if precariously so. These factors will be elaborated upon in later chapters.

1.5 Perceived ascendency of the middle-class Presbyterian

Assessing the impact of the *Great Famine* on all perceived classes of Presbyterians in Ireland has been problematic. Miller (1999) argues that returns received from clerical respondents in 154 out of 470 Presbyterian congregations throughout Ireland made claims that their flocks had not suffered unusually high mortality during those years of acute scarcity. As a counter-claim, states Miller, some 51 returns implied that mortality had increased. Such conflicting assertions suggests that overall, Presbyterians fared better during the famine years than their co-religionists in Ireland. Reported instances of Presbyterian deaths are not uncommon in Ireland's newsprint, but defy objective

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[22]   Hunter, 2000, 91.
[23]   Devine, 1995, 160.
[24]   Connolly, 1998, 228.

quantification since few Presbyterian congregations appear to have maintained burial registers.[25]

Similar disturbing instances of the effects of severe material scarcity tend to support Miller's contention that Presbyterians had evolved into two disparate classes, first, those that were regular communing members of their congregations, and second, local Presbyterians described as "the poor, not regularly connected with the congregation, or not immediately connected, or not strictly under pastoral care." [26] At the extreme position, for whatever reason, many families - the un-churched - belonged to no congregation. Miller's stated hypothesis therefore, is that there existed a body of "poor, nominal Presbyterians who were suffering from food shortage to a degree that was rare among those better-off Presbyterians who tended to be regular church members".[27] The circumstances would seem to apply to Ulster in particular where the greater density of Presbyterian adherents within the Province contrived to produce a wider range of social classes in which an increasing middle-class predominated. Such a social demarcation, argues, Miller, was not obvious in less-densely populated landward areas.[28] A subsidiary aim of this research has been to confirm or refute Miller's assessment.

Inferences, however, can be drawn from Presbyterian Church fiscal records relating to the condition and alleviation of the parish poor. In several parishes, particularly in the south and west of Ireland, where whole congregations became victim to the vagaries of destitution and its attendant diseases, no church records are extant for the famine years. Newspaper reportage suggests that a high percentage of the population succumbed to disease, particularly among the poorest classes existing in squalid cabins or within workhouses (Section 3.8) [29] and whose passing otherwise remained unremarked.

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[25] Miller, 1999, 166 cites a report in the *Belfast News Letter* of April 2, 1847, (Black '47) recording the death of a famished Presbyterian weaver, lately with his family the inmate of the local Workhouse outside Lurgan about fifteen miles from Belfast, which the family escaped to avoid fever and dysentery

[26] *Ibid,* 167.

[27] *Ibid,* 167.

[28] *Ibid,* 167.

[29] Workhouses were introduced in England and Wales in terms of the Poor Law Act, 1834 to provide indoor relief for the destitute and were incorporated in the Irish Poor Law Act, 1838. Historically, such institutions had a precedent in Houses of Industry set up in a 1703 Act of the Irish Parliament. An embryo workhouse opened in Cork in 1747 by Act of Parliament and in Belfast in 1774, funded by private charity. The definitive model of later workhouse building was that erected at

Typically, a local newspaper such as the *Ballina Chronicle,* published, in September 1849, the death notices of the more prominent members of the district who succumbed to a recurrent outbreak of cholera, citing those in the Ballina and Killala districts of County Mayo as the postmaster, the deputy weigh-master, the excise officer and the banker. No such newspaper obituary notices record the decease of individual unemployed labouring poor except where the death occurred in unusual circumstances. Useful for researchers in the absence of official records are local statistics recorded with some accuracy for the famine period under review. An example is reproduced as Appendix "G" below.[30] A further handicap to research is that early church records stored in Dublin were destroyed in the Irish Free State civil war of 1922. [31]

Use has been made of the *New Statistical Account* (hereafter *N.S.A.*) to establish the condition of Highland society in the years leading up to the mid-nineteenth-century famine period. If bias be apparent, it should be remembered that the statistical accounts, both *Old* and *New*, were composed by ministers of the established Church of Scotland who owed their intrusion to a patron, in most cases the local heritors [32] who were in the main extensive landowners. Not surprisingly, it has been found that obsequies tend to characterise reportage of this social class within the *N.S.A.*[33] Contemporary newspapers, both national and local, have formed an immediate source for famine conditions in both Ireland and the Highlands. These, however, project the politics of their publishers. Two notable broadsheets covering the famine period represented

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Southwell,Nottinghamshire, in 1824, and adopted as the pattern for those created by the New Poor Law Acts of 1834 (England and Wales, and 1838 (Ireland).

[30] *Ballina Chronicle*, September 5, 1849.

[31] By 1922, of the 1,643 Church of Ireland Parishes in Ireland, 1006 had unfortunately, lodged their records in the P.R.O. in Dublin, where they were destroyed in a fire during the Irish Civil War of that year. Fortunately, 637 Parishes retained their records in local custody and only the records four parishes survived the fire, giving a total of 641 Church of Ireland Parishes whose records survive intact.

[32] Heritor - A land-owner possessing immovable or heritable property who from the seventeenth-century unti1 1925, was responsible for the provision and maintenance of a church, a manse, a church-yard and glebe within his parish bounds, and until the late-nineteenth-century, also for the provision of a school. When church door offerings were insufficient to care for the poor, a heritor was responsible for assessments to increase the money available (Dunlop, 1993, 401). Apart from private landowners, a heritor could be the Crown, urban council, town magistrates or various denominations of the Church..

[33] Paton, 2006, 186, In *N.S.A.*, XIV, 185, Rev. Mackenzie is very respectful of, not to say obsequious towards, the Sutherland family, blaming the clearances on the previous owner, Lord Reay, who sold the vast Tongue / Durness estates to the Sutherlands in 1817.

Presbyterian interests: *Witness,*[34] a weekly newspaper supporting the 'Evangelical' wing of the Church of Scotland, reported world news in general, but with a focus on church affairs of all denominations, whilst the *Banner of Ulster* [35] promoted Presbyterian interests emanating both within and outwith Belfast. Use has been made of the *Inverness Courier* despite its tendency to quote Highland affairs from secondary sources.

In recent years, Irish historians of the *Great Famine* in Ireland have produced a number of general surveys and regional accounts, almost all of which treat the calamity from a Roman Catholic point of view that largely ignores the Presbyterian presence within that country.[36] From this perspective the inference must be drawn that Irish commentators view the famine era as an exclusively 'Irish' affair. Certainly, in the south and west of Ireland in the mid-nineteenth-century, there were considerably more Catholics than Protestants. It is therefore understandable that in proportion, as argued by Nesbitt (1999), more Catholics in Ireland died from famine and related diseases during those years, especially those from the lower strata of poor Catholics.[37] In the twentieth-century a number of short congregational histories have been produced by Presbyterian parish incumbents that make some brief reference to the *Great Famine* years. Theses have been consulted, but appear to be based on oral tradition and lack the immediacy and objectivity of contemporary reporting. From an abundant contemporary local press,[38] which daily reported detailed and harrowing accounts of the calamity, it is clear that many victims in Ireland were accorded an undignified despatch which militated against accepted Christian rites that, in normal times, marked the termination of an earthly pilgrimage (Plates 1.1 and 3.1).

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[34]   *Witness* - A newspaper promoting the interests of the Evangelical wing of the Church of Scotland that helped to develop public support essential for the formation of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843.The founding editor was Hugh Miller, monumental stonemason a noted geologist, born at the small coastal burgh of Cromarty on the Black Isle.

[35]   *Banner of Ulster* - The first copy of this Presbyterian newspaper was published on 10 June 1842, the bicentenary of the meeting of the first Presbytery at Carrickfergus, Ulster*,* in 1642.

[36]   Hickey, P., *Famine in West Cork* (Mercier Press, Dublin, 2002), a well-researched local history of the Mizen Peninsula, its land and land people, from 1800-1852, makes no mention of Presbyterians. The much quoted *The Great Humger* by Cecil Woodham-Smith (New York, 1962), is similarly devoid of reference to Presbyterians.

[37]   Nesbitt, 1999, 72.

[38]   Irish historical newspapers relating to the Provinces are available on the Intenet.

Brown, in his *Annals of the Disruption* (1893), was of the belief that that not a single person died of famine in the Highlands during the whole mid-nineteenth-century

Plate 1.1

Decorum the mark of a Highland Presbyterian Funeral

A Highland Funeral, Sir James Guthrie (1859-1930), 1882, oil on canvas. Most Presbyterian funerals were conducted from the house, never from the parish church. Only men attended the outdoor service and interment. Following tradition, women remained indoors. (Reproduction courtesy of Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries)

famine period.[39] Nevertheless, this last statement has proved difficult to substantiate since disease, if not scarcity of food, closely concomitant conditions, made its periodic appearance in several Highland areas and was not confined to social class or calling. For example, in the autumn of 1849, the *Inverness Courier* reported that an outbreak of Asiatic cholera occurred in Inverness to which Dr. John Nicol, "formerly Provost, eminent physician, scientific agriculturist and woollen manufacture", became victim.[40] In fact, reportage in the spring of that year had cited ten deaths from cholera in Inverness, which prompted suggestions from the public for sanitary improvement.[41] With a manageable mortality rate that bore scarce comparison with the greatly enhanced mortality estimates of Ireland during the famine years, it must be assumed that most if not all Highland victims received a dignified Christian burial according to the rites of their denomination even if no stone marked the lair (Plate 1.1).

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[39]   Brown, 1893, 654.
[40]   *Inverness Courier*, September 27, 1849.
[41]   *Ibid*, April 19 and 26, and May 3, 1849.

1.6 Presbyterian Church famine relief measures in perspective

Until state promulgation of the Poor Law Acts of the mid-nineteenth-century (England, 1834; Scotland, 1836 and Ireland in 1838), brought uniformity of relief to the needy, the poor were almost totally assisted by private charity, not least that provided by the Church. Whereas state provision under the new Acts, if scarcely generous was considered sufficient to avert starvation, it proved inadequate to meet the demands of the needy poor in times of exceptional famine conditions. In such an event, the Poor Law provision had of necessity to be augmented from traditional private charitable sources. Famine relief measures to alleviate complete destitution during the period 1846 to 1850 and beyond had an established precedent in those developed a decade earlier in the severe famine of 1836 to 1838. In both cases a wide spectrum of religious and secular bodies was involved in fund-raising to ensure the distribution of food to the needy through the organisation of *ad-hoc* local famine relief committees. The records reveal that the Presbyterian Church was only one of a number of denominations with a lead part in local famine committee affairs.

Most historians of the period agree that with its early establishment on a national scale of a Destitution Committee, the Free Church of Scotland was foremost in organising provision for destitute communities in the Highlands in the initial crucial period of scarcity from November 1846 until February 1847 at which point the Church's relief measures and funding were taken under central government control.[42] Thereafter the Presbyterian Church, as will be shown in later chapters, continued an ecumenical role within both the Highlands and in Ireland,[43] sharing with co-religionists the task of bringing spiritual and material sustenance to the famine stricken communities. In the latter task, clergy of all denominations were instrumental in supervising the work of the local committees set up under the *Central Board of Management for Highland Relief* following its inception as a Government agency in February 1847. Presbyterians can therefore be viewed as a 'niche group' in the larger government plan for famine relief. Of 'niche groups', claims Bowen (1998), the Society of Friends (the Quakers),

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[42]   Devine, 1995, 126.
[43]   MacAtasney, 1997, 102: (Notable were) the endeavours of the local clergymen (at Lurgan) of
        all denominations who laboured tirelessly to alleviate widespread destitution. Each relief committee
        had at least one cleric at its helm. Many more clergymen offered their services.

numerically a minor religious sect, achieved considerable respect for their relief efforts, particularly in the south and west of Ireland, incurring no animosity from the predominant Roman Catholic population.[44] The 1846 initiative of the Quaker Central Relief Committee in Dublin of collating information from remote districts of the country and acting upon it [45] appears similar to the Free Church initiative in the Scottish Highlands.

Whereas impressive sums were collected locally, the evidence is that considerable funding was raised overseas by a variety of bodies, even from those with no religious affiliation or genetic affinity with Ireland. Worldwide news coverage of the 1845 famine conditions, first in Ireland and in Scotland the following year, attracted thousands of contributors, of which the under-noted brief list (Table 3.2) is indicative of the diversity of donor, the geographical spread, and the scale and range of charitable giving.[46]

In respect of Ireland, Kinealy (2006) has found that the charitable response of people overseas, particularly those of Irish descent, but, as stated above, also from people who had no ties with Ireland, was an important part of private relief provision in that country.[47] Distance and quantity were clearly inconsequential; "To help as best he could", claims MacAtasney (1997), "in 1847 James Stuart sent some Indian meal from New York, thousands of miles way, to the value of £4, to be distributed to the poor by members of Donaghcloney Presbyterian Church in Ulster".[48] It is therefore creditable that, as argued by Devine (1995), more money was collected for victims of the potato famine *outside* Scotland than within.[49] This public response on a global scale [50] was achieved against a background of British government passivity which insisted in the early famine years that relief aid should devolve upon the land proprietors, not a few themselves fast becoming insolvent in the interests of their tenants.

[44]   Bowen, 1998,126.
[45]   Woodham – Smith, 1962, 157.
[46]   Information collated at the National Famine Museum, Strokestown Park, Roscommon.
[47]   Kinealy, 2006,162.
[48]   MacAtasney, 1997, 105.
[49]   Devine, 1995, 118.
[50]   Table 3.1 (page 50).

1.7 United Kingdom leadership during the 1845 to 1855 famine period

Following the insurrection of 1798 within Ireland, the Government of William Pitt, sensing a need for closer control, passed the *Act of Union, 1800*, with the purpose of creating a unitary state known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland with direct rule from London. In consequence of this legislation coming into effect from January 1, 1801, Ireland was represented in the House of Lords by four Bishops and twenty-eight representative Peers and in the House of Commons by one-hundred Members. A Lord Lieutenant overseeing Britain's interest in Ireland was installed in Dublin during such period as Parliament was in session.[51] As a political expedient, Catholic emancipation was granted in 1829.

British Government policy in the famine years from 1845 to 1855 was dictated by the leading political figures of the day and executed by senior civil servants. Of the latter, Charles Edward Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury from 1840 to 1859, assumed overall control of the Government's famine relief initiatives. Sir Robert Peel, Conservative (Tory) Prime Minister, resigned in December 1845, and then briefly re-elected, was replaced by the Liberal (Whig) Lord John Russell, in 1846. Russell, whose government was often split on Irish policy, remained Prime Minister for the rest of the famine years. His party's main policies, observes Donnelly (2007) were to continue grain exports, to terminate soup kitchens after only one season, to permit landlords to continue with clearances unopposed, and to rely upon the Poor Law Acts as the principal means of relief.[52] It was his belief argues Devine (1995), that Ireland's problems could only be solved with closer association with Britain.[53]

Sir John MacNeill, diplomat and surgeon, held office from 1845 to 1878 as chairman of the Poor Law Board of Supervision in Scotland erected in terms of the *Poor Law (Scotland) Act*. In 1851 MacNeill conducted a special enquiry into the conditions of the Western Highlands during which he personally inspected twenty-seven of the most distressed parishes. His *Report to the Board of Supervision in Scotland* discredited charitable relief as a panacea for Highland destitution and promoted assisted emigration

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[51] Connolly, 1998, 228.
[52] Donnelly, 2007, 30
[53] *Ibid*, 252.

as the only solution.[54] Prominent in famine relief measures in the Highlands, was Sir Edward Pine-Coffin, Commissary-General, despatched north in 1847 by Trevelyan to investigate the consequences of the failure of the potato crop in the Highlands which he did from his headquarters in Oban.

Influential as convener of the Free Church of Scotland Highland and Islands Committee during the famine years, and promoter of Free Church education as one remedy for unemployment and perennial distress in the Highlands, was the Rev. Mackintosh MacKay, minister of the United Parishes of Dunoon and Kilmun, and Moderator of the Free Church General Assembly in 1849.[55] Rev. MacKay was also convener of the Gaelic Committee.[56] Second in leadership only to the Rev. Thomas Chalmers within the Assembly was the Rev. Robert Smith Candlish, minister at St. George's Church, Edinburgh. Rev. Candlish proved an able administrator within the Free Church of Scotland Destitution Committee, for which 'fact-finding' purpose he toured the Highlands in 1845. In 1846 Candlish was appointed convener of the Free Church Education Committee and in the 1850 Assembly successfully opposed national schools in favour of sectarian schools by which system education and church were indivisibly related.[57]

William Forbes Skene, a lawyer, Secretary of the Edinburgh Committee, considered by Trevelyan to be a powerful administrator [58] was thereby appointed Secretary of the Edinburgh Section, Central Board of Management for Highland Relief. His counterpart in the west was Charles Baird, Secretary of the Glasgow Section, Central Board of Management, which operated in a subsidiary role to Edinburgh. James Chant, a veteran emigration official who had been sent to the islands on behalf of the *Highland and Island Emigration Society* to manage its affairs. Chant's remit was to confer with the agents of Highland proprietors and to make arrangements for the selection and shipment of emigrants. Significant contributors to destitution relief in the Highlands

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[54]   *Ibid,* 124.
[55]   MacLeod, in Cameron *et al*, 1993, 520.
[56]   Paton, 2006, 192.
[57]   Withrington, 1964, 113-4.
[58]   Devine, 1995, 128.

were Sheriff Graham Speirs, of Edinburgh, a leader in the Free Church Committee, and Sheriff Thomas Fraser, sheriff-substitute of Skye at Portree, who co-ordinated relief measures within the island and was the force behind the *Highlands and Islands Emigration Society* of the early 1850s.

Finally, an important if controversial figure in evangelical Presbyterian mission coupled with famine relief and education in the west of Ireland, was the Reverend Professor John Edgar, Chair of Systematic Theology at the Presbyterian Church Assembly's College in Belfast. Convenor of the Presbyterian Church Home Mission Committee in Ireland, Edgar was founder of the Temperance Movement in Ulster. It can be argued that the task of these public figures in famine relief during the late 1840s and early 1850s was made immeasurably easier by the active co-operation and unfailing industry at grass-roots level of the Presbyterian Church and its co-religionists in both Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland. George William Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon, an English politician, was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1847. His office had become virtually redundant with the passing of the 1800 Act of Union, but survived with ever lessening powers until abolished in 1922.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

In this thesis, the challenge presented to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland by the unprecedented scale of destitution resulting from acute famine conditions with their concomitants, disease and physical debility, is examined in its historical, moral, economic, political and cultural contexts. It will be argued that the catalyst for the scarcity that occasioned exceptionally high mortality rates within Ireland and to a much lesser extent within the Highlands of Scotland, leading to mass emigration from both countries, was the appearance from the European Continent of a hitherto unknown species of potato blight.

The research has been predominantly archival with emphasis upon mid-nineteenth-century Presbyterian Church records at every level of its courts, as a leading primary source. Deficiencies of objective reporting in relation to the *Great Famine* years have been recorded. The conclusion will be that all Church denominations participated in the

provision of famine relief for the destitute in association with other corporate bodies and private individuals. It will be argued that allegations of maladministration in the management and even distribution of material aid, together with accusations of proselytism in Ireland, did not significantly diminish world-wide Christian charity in the early famine years. Overall, the Church's moral duty steadfastly prevailed.

The first two chapters of the thesis form an introduction to the structure and distinctive character of mid-nineteenth-century Protestantism in general and in its subordinate form of Christian witness, Presbyterianism as practised in the Highlands of Scotland and by its sibling Church within Ireland. Chapter One introduces the aim and method pursued in the thesis and defines its parameters of time and place. Reference is made to the sources and nature of the Church records and documentary materials consulted. The nature and circumstances of the *Great Famine* and its antecedent history of a declining economy with its accompanying social and economic change are outlined. Presbyterian Church famine relief initiatives to curtail the impact of famine conditions have been placed in perspective. Finally, the leadership in Parliament and its notable servants overseeing relief measures in accordance with the prevailing philosophy of the age are introduced. Chapter Two surveys the structure and character of the mid-nineteenth-century Presbyterian Church as historically constituted within Scotland and in Ireland.

Chapter Three presents an over-view of the moral philosophies that dominated the decisions made in the provision of material relief by Church, State, and private sources throughout the duration of unprecedented scarcity, and suggests the panacea for protracted periods of destitution and its fatal consequences as one of two alternatives, migration or emigration overseas. The Workhouse as an economical means of providing relief for the lowest strata of destitute families will be discussed as a fruitful area for further study. Chapter Four presents a historical perspective of Presbyterianism, outlining its values and outreach and suggests the social class distinctions apparent within Presbyterian congregations that may have had a negative influence on charitable support. Chapter Five deals with the practical aspects of mid-nineteenth-century Presbyterian witness, briefly introducing the contemporary controversies that existed within its membership. Displayed as Appendix "H" are the

Presbyterian Church's fiscal arrangements with an assessment of its ability to support large-scale famine relief within its parishes.

Chapter Six will place Presbyterianism in the historical setting of the mid-nineteenth-century, reviewing the cultural, social, political, economic and moral structures that conditioned its Christian witness. Chapter Seven deals with the famine relief measures implemented by both Church and State in association with philanthropic agencies, world-wide. Chapter Eight surveys the response to the *Great Famine* within Ireland and the sectarian controversies that clouded the later provision of charitable giving. Brief reference is made to famine relief initiatives within the four provinces of Ireland, Ulster, Leinster, Munster and Connaught. Chapter 9 reviews the significance of the research presented in the thesis and creates an agenda for further exploration.

Chapter 2: Structure of the mid-nineteenth-century Presbyterian Church

> We, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a
> new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Peter 3: 13)

2.1 Presbyterian model in Church government

The Presbyterian Church,[59] according to Holmes (2000), was the dominant form of ecclesiastical government established in Scotland following the Reformation within that country in 1560. The model followed that developed by Jean Calvin's disciples, Theodore Beza in Geneva, Thomas Cartwright in England and John Knox in Scotland.[60] In contrast to the system of prelacy favoured by the universal Church of Rome and retained in modified form in the Anglican or Episcopalian Church structure, the Scottish Presbyterians erected a conciliar form of government exercised through a graded series of courts. These tribunals, in ascending order, the local Kirk Session of parish minister acting in concert with appointed elders and deacons, the Presbytery monitoring a group of parishes, the Provincial Synod overseeing a group of presbyteries and, at the summit, a General Assembly of the whole church. This fixed church courts was presided over in the General Assembly by an elected Moderator, notionally *primus inter pares*,[61] whose tenure of office was restricted to a single year, and reflected the Reformers' disinclination to vest final authority over the Church in parliament, privy-council or prince.[62] The Reformers' proclaimed intent, argues Holmes (2000) was not to erect a new church but to reform the existing church by bringing it back to its New Testament origins.[63]

Cameron (1972) observes that Heads I, II and III of the (First) *Book of Discipline* direct that the two primary notes or distinguishing marks of the Protestant Church were to be first, the "preaching of the Word" and second, "the right administration of the

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[59]   Holmes, 2000, 10. *Presbyterian* and *Episcopalian* come from the Greek New Testament. *Presbuteros*, a presbyter or elder, and *episkopos*, a bishop and *presbuterion*, a council of presbyters, (1 Tim. v: 17 and 19).

[60]   *Ibid*, 10.

[61]   *primus inter pares* - first among equals.

[62]   Kirk, in Cameron *et al*, 1993, 673.

[63]   Holmes, 2000, 10.

sacraments".[64] A third mark, programmed in the VII Head, directing the Exercise of Ecclesiastical Discipline,[65] though of lesser importance, came to dominate the pages of Presbyterian session records until the later-nineteenth-century. In essence, Presbyterians are distinctive in two ways, firstly in that they adhere to a pattern of religious thought known as Reformed Theology, and second, that they possess a form of government that stresses the active, representational leadership of both minister and church members. Following the 1560 Reformation in Scotland, argues Ansdell (1993), Presbyterianism as the political and administrative structure of the Church of Scotland, after a protracted struggle with the advocates of Episcopalianism, was not finally established until the Revolution Settlement of 1690. The ensuing secessions and conjunctions of the Reformed Church of Scotland of 1560 arising from disagreements over church principles and practice,[66] as presented by Burleigh (1960) in graphic form [67] are reproduced as Appendix "A". In doctrine, states Cameron (1994), the supreme standard of the Presbyterian Church as a whole was to be the word of God contained in scripture, allied to the subordinate standard of the *Confession of Faith*, promulgated in 1643 by a Westminster 'Assembly of Divines'.[68]

Throughout troubled years from 1560, argues Ansdell, the prevailing religious orientation of the Highlands was Episcopalian.[69] In 1690, Presbyterianism became the legal structure of the Church of Scotland albeit Presbyterians in Scotland were in the minority. Nonetheless, their legal status and Presbytery control of appointments and regulation of church discipline ensured that Presbyterians gained the upper hand.[70] Presbyterianism was seen by Highland people in general to be an external intrusion, but was welcomed in some parishes for its simple gospel message that appealed to Highland people in places predisposed to simpler, more "direct" religious expression in their learning process. In the event, the prelacy structure of the Episcopal Church remained relatively intact and remaining passive was not threatened with Government

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[64]   Cameron, 1972, 15.
[65]   *Ibid*, 165.
[66]   Ansdell, 1988, 91.
[67]   Burleigh, 1960, end page.
[68]   Cameron, 1994, 28.
[69]   Ansdell, 1998, 213.
[70]   *Ibid*, 1998, 17.

proscription. It seems clear that the personal religious persuasion of estate tenants in some cases was settled by the imposition of landowners whose own faith vacillated in the interests of personal gain. In order to be free from religious intolerance, the alternative course for many was emigration overseas. Prebble (1963) cites the case of Colin Macdonald of Boisdale, a landowner "who beat his tenants into the Presbyterian Church with his cane, and thus earned for it the enduring name of *Creideamh a' bhata buidhe*, the Religion of the Yellow Stick".[71] The principal religious denominations active in both Ireland and in the Scottish Highlands to whom the provision of spiritual and material aid to the needy was a founding moral duty are introduced below.

2.2 The Established Church of Scotland

For centuries, local control by the state was exercised through the Sheriff within his Sheriffdom and the clergyman within the bounds of his parish. In the mid-nineteenth-century the Established Church of Scotland remained under state control exercised through the operation of the Patronage Act, 1712.[72] The significant mid-nineteenth-century secession with a lasting legacy in the Highlands was the erection, at the conclusion of a Ten Years' Conflict within the Established Church, of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843. With a tendency to Moderatism [73] in its ministry, the Established Church of Scotland was synonymous in the minds of the poorer classes of society, with the landed interest. Following the late-eighteenth-century home mission crusades of itinerant preachers, the religious interest of the poorer classes, particularly in the Highland parishes, was drawn to the call of Evangelical Presbyterianism[74] both by its spiritual appeal and political undertones. In the Highlands, claims Ansdell (1998) (A), the emergent Free Church of Scotland had clearly benefitted from the evangelical

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[71]   Prebble, 1963, 199.
[72]   Ross, in Cameron *et al*, 1993, 649. The Patronage Act preserved the role of landowners in the appointment of ministers. Its origins lay in the Middle Ages when pious lairds built and endowed churches for which they appointed priests.
[73]   Burleigh, 1960, 295: Moderatism had its roots in the spirit of enquiry that characterised the Enlightenment. Moderate ministers tended to spring from the better educated landed class, and held the mores associated with that social stratum.
[74]   *Ibid,* 309: The root of the new evangelicalism was its emotional appeal in which the individual discovers a new warmth of religious experience of which the essence is a quickening sense of sin, and a joyful realisation of forgiveness through the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

activity that had taken place within the region in the decades leading up to the dramatic schism from the Established Church in 1843.[75]

The evidence seems to be that the response of the Established Church of Scotland to destitution in the Highlands in 1846 was low-key in contrast with the efforts of the new Free Church. From the outset, the Established Church had made no move to institute specific monetary collections in respect of the destitute areas:[76] its General Assembly's initial response was to view the people's distress as a divine retribution for sin and to promulgate *An Act appointing a Day of Humiliation and Prayer to be observed within the bounds of parishes*.[77] This spiritual act was supplemented by several Kirk courts transmitting petitions to the British government soliciting material aid for the destitute Highlanders.[78] Ultimately the policy of the Established Church was set at the Ordinary Meeting on December 30th, 1846, of the Presbytery of Edinburgh at which the motion was adopted not to make collections at the front doors of its churches but merely to issue a recommendation in favour of that object.[79] Devotional impetus, clearly strengthened in 'revivals' and 'awakenings' associated with evangelicalism in the Highlands and in Ireland, was realised in full within Scotland in 1843, when the breakaway new Free Church won over eighty-per-cent of the Highland population, but with the impediment of attracting less than twenty-per- cent of the ministers.[80] Nevertheless, though much diminished in communicants, the Established Church of Scotland survived albeit on limited fiscal resources. The affairs of the Established Church of Scotland are the subject matter of Chapter 7 below.

2.2.1 The Free Church of Scotland

At the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland in Edinburgh in 1843, a long held dissatisfaction with the continuance of the Patronage Act, which was viewed by the evangelical faction as the state's encroachment upon the spiritual independence of the Church, was again raised.[81] Patronage permitted the intrusion by

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[75]   Ansdell, 1998, 215 (A).
[76]   *Witness,* January 19, 1846.
[77]   Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Session. Ult., May 30, 1842.
[78]   *N.A.S.* -.CH2/557/10/73 (Argyle Synod, 1846).
[79]   *Witness*, January 2, 1847.
[80]   McArthur, 1989, 3.
[81]   Ross in Cameron *et al*, 1993, 337.

lay church heritors [82] of ministers into Presbyterian parishes in defiance of the call of individual congregations. In the secession from the Establishment that erected the Free Church of Scotland that same year, some 474 'non-intrusionist' ministers gave up their stipends, church buildings and manses to maintain that freedom.[83] Denied sites for church buildings and manses, the Free Church ministry was supported from a Sustentation Fund maintained by voluntary giving among its congregations.[84] In the first General Assembly of the Free Church, notes Burleigh (1960), Chalmers made it clear that "the movement was in no sense directed towards Voluntaryism.[85] Though we quit the Establishment, we go out on the Establishment principle; we quit a vitiated Establishment but would rejoice in returning to a pure one".[86]

In its doctrine the Free Church, more so than other denominations, tended to concern itself with personal morality and sin, argues Burleigh (1960). In consequence, the Free Church organised opposition to vice and gave energetic support to a wide range of educational, social and temperance agencies.[87] According to Drummond *et al.* (1975), the Free Church, from a Lowland perspective, was closely identified with those classes which were once described in Scotland as "well doing, that is to say, reasonably prosperous, even if not rich".[88] The business-man, the lawyer, the schoolteacher and the medical practitioner formed a leaven in the Free Church parish church roll. This prosperous social stratum creating a seeming professional imbalance in the democracy of a Presbyterian congregation accords with Simpson's (1947) view that "Free churchmen were the most intelligent and progressive of Scotsmen. They had a marked spirit of independence" and, (important in periods of public distress) "a willingness to

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[82] Heritors - In most cases, landowners, but included the Crown, Episcopalians and Roman Catholics.

[83] Brown (1893) in his *Annals of the Disruption in 1843*, names 427 Establishment ministers and 17 missionaries in foreign service who demitted to the new Free Church.

[84] It has been claimed that immediately after the union of the United Free Church with the Established Church in 1929, it was possible to identify the former Free Church member within the amalgamated congregations. These, it seems, contributed to the work of the Church more liberally, as evidenced in the more liberal contents of Weekly Freewill Offering envelopes.

[85] Voluntaryism: The concept that the Church should be maintained, and its mission to the world supported solely by the liberality of its faithful people. Thus the practice of dissenting churches was elevated into the Voluntary Principle. The Voluntary Controversy was initiated in 1829 by a proposed government bill to provide relief for Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland.

[86] Burleigh, 1960, 354.

[87] Burleigh, 1960, 309; Meek, 1988, 115.

[88] Drummond *et al*, 1975, 29.

give liberally".[89] However, in the Highlands, the Free Church drew a wider spectrum of support from evangelical Presbyterians that included the lower strata of society; the small tenant, the crofter and the landless labourer. It would seem, therefore, that the social dichotomy that was allegedly found within Irish Presbyterianism was absent at that period in the Highlands. Unlike most Established Church sanctuaries (Section 4.5), to ensure that the attention of the congregation is focussed solely upon 'the Word' as preached from the pulpit, as well as to permit the pure light of the Lord to enter upon His people, Free Church buildings were (and still are) internally devoid of stained glass and other irrelevant distracting decoration. Notable also is that the liturgy of the service is marked by an absence of musical instruments and hymns, the latter considered a frivolous creation of man. [90] In consequence, the metrical psalms as the creation of God recorded in scripture, take exclusive precedence.[91]

The greatly debilitated Established Church continued under the strictures imposed by the Patronage Act that was not repealed until 1874. In the period under review, the new Free Church was then campaigning in Parliament to erect church buildings in the face of opposition from numerous landowners, and thereby to establish a settled parish ministry.[92] As stated above, it is agreed among historians that the Free Church of Scotland was the first to act in 1846 with measures for the relief of famine in the distressed crofting districts within the Highlands..[93] Well placed to monitor distressed areas, the *Free Church Committee on Highland Destitution* conducted a survey within its Highland parishes to establish the extent of that year's harvest failure. According to Ansdell (1993), it found that as many as 200,000 people were destitute and that a further 200,000 would soon be suffering a similar plight.[94] The work of the Free Church of Scotland in relation to famine relief in the Highlands will be addressed in Chapter 7.

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[89]   Simpson, 1947, 175.

[90]   A Free Presbyterian would argue that it is a weak faith that requires these 'modern fripperies' to prop it up.

[91]   The introduction of musical instruments and hymns into the Free Church of Scotland liturgy is currently (2011) under debate.

[92]   *Inverness Courier*, June 17, 1846: "Mr. Fox Maule, had moved the second reading of his bill for compelling proprietors to grant sites to the Free Church. Sir James Graham opposed the bill, but in a conciliatory speech".

[93]   Ansdell, 1998, 147; Devine, 1980, 33.

[94]   *Ibid*, 147.

2.2.2 The United Presbyterian Church

Founded in 1847, the United Presbyterian Church, claims Gill (1993), was erected from a union of the Relief Church arising out of the second secession in 1761 and the United Secession Church of 1820.[95] The main presence of the U.P Church was in the towns and cities where its appeal rested in the rising class of business personnel and the hard-working classes on the way up. The U.P. Church remained an advocate of the voluntary principle proclaiming that it should support itself free from government intervention. It accepted that the state had assumed the role of providers by the Poor Law (Scotland) Act, 1845 and in consequence the U.P. Church repudiated the concept of a national church. In U.P. church government the place of the laity assumed dominance with executive power in the hands of a Board of Managers (Praeces) elected by the congregation rather than the minister who was excluded from board membership. Emphasis was placed upon preaching. In principle, the church kept an open table free to all communicants from other churches. Like the Free Church, the U.P. Church placed great emphasis on missionary work.[96]

Table 2.1

Presbyterian places of worship and church attendance within Scotland in 1851

(a) Presbyterian places of worship within Scotland recorded in the decennial census for 1851:

Established Church of Scotland	1,183
Free Church of Scotland	889
United Presbyterian Church	465
Other Presbyterian Churches	77

(b) Presbyterian Church attendance within Scotland in relation to sittings recorded in the decennial census for 1851:

Established Church of Scotland	45.8%
Free Church of Scotland	59.0%
United Presbyterian Church	55.3%
Overall	54.4%

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[95] Gill, in Cameron *et al*, 1993, 839.

[96] Mary Mitchell Slessor of Calabar (1848-1915), born in Aberdeen and later worked as a weaver in a Dundee textile mill, became a notable U.P. Church missionary in the later-nineteenth century.

2.2.3 Numerical strength of Presbyterianism in 1851 Scotland

The decennial census for 1851 that followed a marked recession in 1840's trauma of acute famine, associated fatal diseases and mass emigration, is revealing of the strength and diversity of Presbyterian witness within the nation. It will be noted above (Table 21) that approximately half the population of the country was non-attendant on a regular basis at Presbyterian places of worship and unlikely to contribute to church funds.

2.3 The Presbyterian Church of Ireland

In the wake of the Cromwellian plantation of Ireland in the mid-seventeenth-century, argues Connolly (1988), the Presbyterian Church model was firmly established in Ireland, particularly in Ulster, by Lowland Scottish settlers.[97] Hitherto the Protestant cause in the four provinces, Ulster, Leinster, Connaught and Munster, was represented by the Anglican-sponsored Church of Ireland erected in the earlier Tudor period. Connolly (1984) finds that in Munster, a predominately Roman Catholic province, some 22,000 English Protestants had settled by 1641.[98] An extension of the Established Church of Scotland witnessed the formation of a separate Presbytery of Ulster in Ireland in 1642 by chaplains of a Scottish army which arrived at Carrickfergus in Ulster to crush the rising in Ireland of the previous year. According to McDowell (1956), Irish Presbyterians at the beginning of the nineteenth-century were divided into three bodies, the Synod of Ulster (with its unorthodox appendage, the Non-Subscribing Presbytery of Antrim), the Secession Synod and the Reformed Presbytery (the Covenanters).[99]

The Presbyterians, McDowell states, were concentrated in Ulster, about fifty-per-cent of them residing in the dioceses of Down, Connor and Dromore (the counties of Antrim and Down). In 1841, notes Holmes (1985), there were seventeen congregations located in the south and west of Ireland,[100] all within areas that were to experience the severest destitution of the *Great Famine* years between 1845 and 1855. Twenty years later, adds Holmes, there were thirty-nine. Despite this clear outreach, the Presbyterian Church

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[97]   Connolly, 1988, 444.
[98]   *Ibid*, 445.
[99]   McDowell, 1956, 62.
[100]   Holmes, 1985, 112.

appears to have made little progress in the face of a tenacious Roman Catholicism. In Munster and Connaught, the western provinces hardest hit by famine and disease, indigenous Irish Catholics formed a clear denominational majority and made no discernible distinction between the few reformed congregations in their midst, whom they viewed collectively as Protestants. Further aspects of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland will be introduced in Chapter 8.

2.3.1 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (or Covenanters)

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland had its origins in the seventeenth-century and was formed from congregations who wished to adhere more strictly to the covenants of 1638 and 1642. In 1763 the first Irish Reformed Presbytery was erected and by 1800 it had twenty-eight congregations in counties throughout Ulster. It was not until the mid-eighteenth-century that congregations were formed with their own ordained ministers.

2.3.2 The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland (or Unitarians)

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland (or Unitarian) had its origins, according to Holmes (1985), in 1725. In 1829, awareness that some Presbyterian ministers did not subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith - a standard Reformed (Calvinist) statement of faith - at their ordination were in fact Arian [101] provoked a new phase of the conflict. This ended when seventeen ministers opposed to subscription seceded with their congregations to form the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, asserting the right of private judgement, denouncing all human authority in matters of faith. The Church later united with the Presbytery of Antrim and the Synod of Munster to form the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.[102] The Church remains today a minority denomination within the Presbyterian assemblage. [103]

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[101]   Around 318 CE, Arius, senior presbyter in charge of Baucalis, one of the twelve parishes of Alexandria, clashed with Bishop Alexander. Arius claimed that the Father alone was really God; the Son was essentially different from his Father. He did not possess by nature or right any of the divine qualities of immortality, sovereignty, perfect wisdom, goodness and purity. He did not exist before he was begotten by the Father. (*The History of Christianity*, Oxford: Lion Publishing plc,1997).

[102]   Holmes, 1985, 112.

[103]   At the present day, the Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland is constituted by three Presbyteries and thirty-four congregations.

2.3.3 Presbyterian Church relations with the Church of Ireland

Protestant anomalies were in evidence within the military presence in Ireland. Suffering the same disabilities as the Roman Catholic population, Presbyterian soldiers in the British army, claims Irwin (1890), were not allowed to communicate with a minister of their own church except that they received permission from the Episcopalian chaplain. This aggravating practice within Protestantism was rectified in 1847 when the associate Presbyterian minister of Ormond Quay Church, Dublin, in Leinster Province, with the support of the General Assembly, secured the appointment, for the first time, of Presbyterian chaplains to the army in proportion to the number of Presbyterian soldiers, and that their salary should be commensurate with that of Episcopalian chaplains.[104] These aspects of denominational intolerance will be elaborated upon in Chapter 8.

2.4 The Established Church of Ireland

The Church of Ireland, Anglican or Episcopalian, according to Byrne (2004), is the largest Protestant church in Ireland. Despite its government supported power, the Established Church was a minority denomination within a country dominated numerically by the Church of Rome. From 1537 to 1870 the Established Church of Ireland was the established state church governed by the English monarch.[105] According to Connelly (1998) the early decades of the nineteenth-century saw a widespread evangelical movement that sought by preaching and philanthropy to promote religious zeal in what has been termed, a "Second Reformation".[106] Where such commitment extended to the attempted conversion of the Catholic population, the result was to promote a 'Counter Reformation' by the Catholic hierarchy with allegations of 'proselytization' and 'souperism'.[107] The hostility shown to the Established Church of Ireland, argues Bowden (1988), "reflected not only the fact that it served a minority, but that the governing class in Ireland composed a large part of that minority".[108] These aspects will be enlarged upon in Section 2.5.1 below.

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[104]   Irwin, 1890, 259.
[105]   Disestablished in 1870 by the Irish Church Act of 1869, the Church of Ireland has been an independent, self-governing church, a member of the world-wide Anglican community.
[106]   Connolly, 1998, 92.
[107]   Souperism - The use of food relief ('soup') as a means of religious proselytising, especially during the Great Famine in Ireland.
[108]   Bowden, 1998, 39.

2.4.1 The Episcopal Church in Scotland

According to Sefton (1993), Episcopalianism has existed in Scotland from very early times. An early bishop, Sefton argues, was Ninian who came to a well-established Christian community at Whithorn, Wigtownshire, circa 400 CE.[109] The administrative structure of the Church remains hierarchical, a threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon, and conforms to the pattern set by the early Christian church of the bishop within his diocese.[110] The Episcopal Church in Scotland is autonomous and stands as a sister denomination to the Anglican Church. Proscribed following the supremacy of Presbyterianism as the established denomination in Scotland, the Episcopal Church re-emerged in 1712 by an Act of Toleration which formally permitted Anglican worship in Scotland. Of the conditions imposed, the dictate that Episcopal clergy swear an oath of loyalty to the Crown created two strains within Scottish Episcopacy, that of the 'juring' clergy who submitted to the oath, and that of the 'non-juring' clergy who refused. The Act stipulated that the Anglican form of service must be adopted.

The Episcopal Diocese of Aberdeen, claims Bertie (2000), continued to represent the eighteenth-century Episcopal heartland.[111] This claim has support from Lochhead (1966) who argues that Aberdeenshire, was the centre of Episcopacy and most of her priests were alumni of its two universities, King's and Marischal Colleges.[112] Following the decease intestate of Henry Benedict Stuart, Cardinal-Duke of York, son of the 'Old Pretender' James Francis Edward Stuart, in Rome in 1807, Episcopalians in Scotland were not perceived by government as a threat to national security and remained, as they had always done in the Highlands, free from persecution, relatively secure under the patronage of the wealthy landed classes. Until the later-nineteenth-century argues Lochhead (1966), the Episcopal Church remained a small and

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[109] Sefton , H.R., in Cameron *et al*, 1993, 296.
[110] Lochhead, 1966, 1.
[111] Bertie, 2000, 517: With the exception of one brief (1715-1721) period, there was a continuous succession of Bishops of Aberdeen. In 1784 the Diocese contained one-third of all Episcopalian clergy in Scotland, and three of the four bishops resided there. Nineteenth-century missionary activity was mainly targeted at Donside and Deeside which had hitherto lacked an Episcopalian presence (apart from a charge at Monymusk) and the City of Aberdeen.
[112] Kings (1495) and Marischal (1593) University Colleges were conjoined by the Universities Act, 1860 to form the University of Aberdeen. The latter was erected by the Earl Marshall Keith when the former declined to accept Presbyterian doctrine in its teaching. The last Episcopal Chancellor of King's University College was dismissed in 1560.

impoverished denomination in Scotland, six of whose seven dioceses predate the Reformation,[113] and self-styled as the "The Faithful Remnant - aulder than the Auld Kirk itself".[114] In the Bishopric of Argyll and the Isles, Episcopal congregations were small, widely dispersed and clearly in poor circumstances, most destitute members requiring assistance from the Highlands and Islands Emigration Fund to emigrate, mainly to Australia.[115]

2.4.2 Nonconformist churches in Ireland and Scotland

Minor nonconformist churches were represented in Ireland, and, like the Presbyterians, their stronghold was in the north - most of them having twice as many congregations in Ulster as were found in all the other provinces together. Generally, argues Bowen (1998), their mission was conceived as evangelical. The most important of these bodies was the Methodist denomination. By the time John Wesley died in 1791 there were sixty-seven preachers, twenty-nine circuits and about 14,000 Methodists in Ireland.[116] The Religious Society of Friends (The Quakers) had come to Ireland in the mid-seventeenth-century as Cromwellian settlers or as refugees from religious persecution. Their settlements were mainly around Lisburn in County Armagh and at Ballitore in County Wicklow. Uncharacteristic of that period in Ireland, argues Bowen (1998), Quakers, as already stated, were tolerated by Catholics and Protestants alike. Not only did they resolutely refuse to attack other religious bodies, but their example in the provision of famine relief perhaps helped to remind the Irish people of both denominations of their need for conciliation and toleration towards each other.[117]

2.5 Sectarian conflict in mid-nineteenth-century Britain

Few would disclaim that nothing is more bitter than religious intolerance. In Ireland, observes Kinealy (2000), there was a growing in Protestant anger by Irish proselytizers at the growth of Catholic political power.[118] Within both Ireland and Scotland as a

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[113] Lochhead, 1966, 11: The Episcopal Church in Edinburgh alone is post-Reformation, founded by Charles l in 1633.
[114] *Ibid*, 14.
[115] *Ibid*, 166.
[116] Bowen, 1978, 29.
[117] *Ibid*, 38
[118] Kinealy, 2000, 134.

whole in the mid-nineteenth-century there appears to have been little ecumenical tolerance between Protestant and Catholic, and, argues Bowen (1978), between Established Church and Presbyterian Church within Ulster.[119] Whereas Roman Catholic emancipation had been established nationally in 1829, the Presbyterian Synod of Argyle within Scotland found it necessary in 1846 to appoint a committee specifically for "watching over any proceeding that may be adopted for promoting the progress of popery and taking such measures as they shall deem expedient for opposing the same".[120]

At this same period, contemporary newspapers report at length "the late Popish excesses against Christians in Madeira" on which Portuguese island Dr Robert Reid Kalley [121] and the entire congregation of the Scots Kirk in central Funchal were savagely persecuted by the Roman Catholic mob and forced into exile,[122] an episode that will be elaborated in Chapter 7. Within Ireland, an attempt by the Established Church to institute a second Reformation was met by a Roman Catholic counter-Reformation that militated against an ecumenical, even-handed relief of the deserving poor. However, following the onset of famine in 1845-46, Kinealy (2000) suggests that animosities were initially put aside and, in support quotes from a nationalist newspaper, the *Freeman's Journal*, of early January, 1847,

> The Catholic and Protestant clergymen vie with one another in acts of benevolence. They are the most active members of relief committees - they confer together, remonstrate together, evoke together, the aid of a dilatory government, and condemn together its vicious and dilatory refusals. [123]

Whilst Kinealy's focus was directed on Belfast, there is further evidence that elsewhere in Ireland a spirit of ecumenism did transcend entrenched denominational animosities,

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[119] Bowen, 1978, 29.

[120] *N.A.S.,* CH2/ 557/10/ 83

[121] Dr. Robert Reid Kalley, a native of Ayrshire, was baptized in the Church of Scotland in 1809 by His parents and the foster parents who raised him wished him to prepare for the ministry. Young Robert was a religious sceptic and chose the College of Medicine and Surgery at the University of Glasgow. He graduated as a surgeon aged 20 and accepted an appointment as a ship's surgeon to gain experience before settling in Kilmarnock. As a medical missionary, Dr. Kalley arrived in Madeira on October 12, 1838. (Journal of Presbyterian History, Vol. 42, No.1, 3 Sept., 1964).

[122] *Witness*, September 26, 1846 and *The Apostle of Madeira: Dr. Robert Reid Kalley* by M. R. Testa in the *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Vol. 42, No.3, September 1964.

[123] Kinealy, 2000, 7.

for Irwin, (1890) claims that in the Munster parish of Summerhill in County Meath in 1846, a famine relief committee was appointed and:

> For once, denominational distinctions and sectarian bitterness were forgotten. The Dispensary doctor was appointed chairman, a kind-hearted Roman Catholic gentleman was appointed treasurer, and Mr. Craig (Presbyterian parish minister) was secretary.[124]

This early ecumenical approach to famine relief provision became clouded in the wake of political and religious intransigence. Foremost, argues Kinealy (2000) was a perceived need by Protestants to protect their own interests in the face of growing Roman Catholic power and ambition fostered by Peel's liberalising policies. This fear witnessed the reconstitution in a highly organised and militant form of the Orange Order in Belfast.[125] From that Ulster city, it would appear that a vigorous proselytizing mission to win the souls of poor Roman Catholics to Protestantism was conducted in tandem with relief provision.

2.5.1 Reformed denominations in the mid-1840's famine years

Underlying the secular activities attendant upon the provision of famine relief in mid-nineteenth-century Britain were a number of philosophical ideologies distinct from the durable moral philosophy reposing in orthodox religious teaching itself. The leading secular ideologies will be briefly addressed in Chapter 3.

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[124] Irwin, 1890, 296.
[125] Kinealy, 2000, 56.

Chapter 3: Introduction to prevailing mid-nineteenth-century attitudes to Britain's relief provision during periods of scarcity

> He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of
> the diligent maketh rich (Proverbs 10:4)

3.1 Philosophical dogma dominant within mid-nineteenth-century British government

According to Devine (1994), the prevailing social and economic policy within Britain by the middle of the nineteenth-century was dominated by a number of eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers; Francois Quesnay (1694-1774), founder of the French physiocrats and author of the *Tableaux Economique* (1758) [126] and the Scotsman, Adam Smith (1723-90), author of *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). Smith sought to explain the structure and organization of a nation's economy, including its resources in land, labour and capital as well as the progress of its agriculture, industry and commerce to produce what has been viewed as a *laissez-faire*,[127] economic concept. Smith's rational vision called for agrarian reform, to 'improve' uneconomic estates, and to modernize and unify Scottish society,[128] and in so doing created conditions fertile to the distress of subsistence communities at times of severe scarcity in the nineteenth-century. However, in promoting his vision of a *laissez-faire* 'market' economy based on individual pursuit of wealth, Smith conceded that it must be accompanied by social responsibility - a moral dimension catering for the welfare for those at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

Calvinism, argues Devine (2000) formed the root and branch of the Reformation in Scotland, and was a "key factor inspiring the great flowering of intellectual culture in the eighteenth-century, the Scottish Enlightenment" which, unlike its French counterpart, was a decidedly Christian Enlightenment.[129] To strengthen his argument, Devine cites William Robertson, Adam Ferguson and Thomas Reid as ministers of the

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[126] Quesnay's basic theme was that agriculture alone can produce a surplus, but he was limited in his thinking to describe the almost feudal agrarian conditions and social order of mid-eighteenth-century France before the onset of industrialisation reached that country. The political economy of Adam Smith encompassed a far wider field.

[127] *Laissez-faire*: leave matters to take their own course free from government intervention.

[128] Devine, 1995, 11.

[129] *Ibid*, 2000, 70.

gospel or, like Francis Hutcheson, sons of the manse.[130] Sher (1987) has argued that the driving force behind the Scottish Enlightenment was the Scottish Presbyterian clergy who, by the third quarter of the eighteenth-century, "had became far and away the most distinguished set of churchmen anywhere in the republic of letters and arguably the driving force behind the Scottish Enlightenment".[131] At parish level, among the simple but nonetheless perceptive laity, the clergy were recognized leaders of local opinion, and, in the view expressed by Caldwell (2008), must have offered a model of how it was possible to be Gaelic-speaking, as well as civilized and cultured.[132]

Extremely influential was the *Essay on the Principle of Population and its effects on the Future Improvement of Society,* published in 1798 by the clerical economist, Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) which, according to Byrne (2004), heavily influenced British government thinking on the question of poverty and its subsequent promulgation of the 1834 Poor Law Act in England and its later Scottish and Irish equivalents.[133] Malthus, argues Byrne, maintained that population always expands to the limit of subsistence and only grows when the means of subsistence permit. Hence, population tends to grow by geometric progression while the food supply increases arithmetically in the manner of simple interest. Any increase in the means of subsistence will be quickly consumed rendering starvation inevitable since mankind was consuming more than nature could produce. Thus the food supply will act as a check on population growth unless it is previously checked by self restraint, vice or starvation, afflictions that can only be alleviated by war or disease. Important for national Government's initial strategy in the mid-nineteenth-century famine period was Malthus' opinion that money spent on relief was wasted. Furthermore, Malthus argued, workhouses [134] should be established for severe distress but that conditions within them

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[130]   *Ibid*, 2010, 13.
[131]   Sher, 1987, 262.
[132]   Caldwell, 2008, 189.
[133]   Byrne, 2004, 190.
[134]   An Act of the Irish Parliament in 1703 provided for the setting up of a House of Industry in Dublin "for the employment and training of the poor thereof." In 1735, a similar institution was erected in the City of Cork for "employing and maintaining the poor, punishing vagabonds and providing for and educating foundling children". Belfast acquired its own workhouse in 1774 with funds provided by the Belfast Charitable Society. (O,Connor J., 1995). After 1845, parishes in Scotland could choose to set up workhouses. Those parishes, or Combinations (Unions) of parishes that operated formally constituted 'workhouses' in Scotland usually termed these institutions

should be hard.[135] In his theories upon checks on population growth, it can be argued that Malthus defied religious morality. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) [136] and his disciple John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) were the proposers of a consequential moral doctrine identified as Utilitarianism. By this controversial philosophical model, actions are not in themselves intrinsically right or wrong by their good or bad consequences; they are right in so far as they promote happiness - the greatest good for the greatest number - wrong if they promote the reverse of happiness. Social institutions claimed Bentham, exist for the benefit of the people and the test was what produced the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. According to Kinealy (2006), Government ministries from William Pitt to Lord John Russell were inspired by Bentham's philosophy.[137]

The personal philosophy of the able and experienced Charles Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in London, who determined government policy in relief provision in both Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland from the onset of famine conditions in 1845, must be considered. Foynes (2004) argues that Trevelyan, whose assumptions were shared by many others of his class, believed that poverty resulted not from genuine need but from laziness and indolence on the part of the poor themselves.[138] To Trevelyan, "depending on others was a moral disease; that self improvement came through self-reliance; material improvement came through moral regeneration".[139] There was to be no rabid dependence by the population. The best method of relief, advocated Trevelyan, was to create employment and allow people to buy food. In practice, labourers debilitated by malnutrition and disease over a protracted period, were unable to earn enough money to provide for their families. In consequence, both church and government ministers adhered to this dominant social

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'poor's houses' or 'poorhouses'. These bore little resemblance to the workhouses of England and Ireland.

[135] Byrne, 2004, 190.

[136] Jeremy Bentham was a patron of University College, London, to which institution he bequeathed his body for medical research. As some index of his eccentricity, he stipulated that his remains be clothed in his every-day wearing-apparel and publicly exposed in a glass fronted wooden case. Thus, Bentham's skeleton, attired as he wished, sits in the vestibule of University College, London, for all to see. Due to the difficulty of matching the pieces of his skull, the head had to be replaced with a wax replica, the original fragments consigned to the University safe.

[137] Kinealy, 2006, 8.

[138] MacAtasney, 1997, 108.

[139] Foynes, 2004, 34.

philosophy of the Victorian middle classes in their antagonism towards the demoralising effects of gratuitous relief - subsistence must be earned by labour. This altruism was to be found in Genesis 3.19; "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return". These beliefs Trevelyan brought to his work in the public sphere with evangelical zeal.[140] It can be argued that such a pragmatic approach to famine relief did not conflict with the religio-philosophical principle embraced by the Free Church Destitution Committee as expressed by Paton (2006), that "the poor and needy enduring the chastisements laid upon them by Him whose ways are faithfulness and truth, should experience, in the deliverance or alleviations thus afforded them, the mercy which accompanied judgement in His sovereign dispensations".[141]

3.1.1 Presbyterians and the Protestant Work Ethic

The timely engagement of the Free Church of Scotland in the initial formulation and co-ordination of famine relief measures in the Highlands of Scotland in 1846 could be viewed as a secular impetus arising from a notional Protestant work ethic entrenched, if not precisely articulated, in Calvin's religious philosophy with its emphasis on hard work, thrift, prudence and education, virtues adopted by the Scottish Reformers in the *Book of Discipline* in 1560. This idealism, it can be argued, is in accord with Devine's (1995) claim that "more than any other single factor the middle-class Victorian commitment to the work ethic played a central part in influencing the shaping of relief policies in the Highlands during the famine".[142] The notional Calvinist work ethic was preserved in the religious inheritance assumed by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland following its eventual establishment in 1690. Held fast by a spiritual anchor, perhaps implicit in Christ's final admonition to his disciples on a Galilee mountain, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations",[143] the ethic declares that whatever an individual's profession, work or means of livelihood, it must be viewed as a vocation, a calling that demands the best efforts to secure a positive outcome as if it was done for Christ alone.

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[140] *Ibid,* 2004, 34.
[141] Paton, 2006, 192.
[142] Devine, 1995, 127.
[143] Matthew 28: 19-20. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and , lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world".

By this philosophy, it can be argued, a spirit of enterprise was created among religious adherents that clearly manifested itself among Free Church Presbyterians at the onset of acute scarcity reported from the Highlands.

3.2 Popular perception of the Celtic peoples

Throughout the period, argues Fenyo (2000), contemporary written sources reveal that the Celts were regarded with a measure of 'contempt, sympathy and romance',[144] echoing Lowland perceptions emanating from political bias that had attended Celtic peoples both in Ireland and in Scotland over previous centuries. In Kinealy's (2006) view, the Irish people, poor and landlords alike, were "viewed by the British governing classes through a colonial lens" and who considered changes in Irish society preferable to providing relief.[145] The Rev. Malthus, argues Kinealy, (2006), made unashamed reference to "the rags and wretched cabins of Ireland",[146] a statement which took no account of the breadth of the Irish economy where a commercial and subsistence economy existed side by side, often intertwined. Representative of the pejorative writing on the industry of the Celt is that purveyed in the national press, by *The Times* resident Commissioner at Dingwall, Ross-shire, in 1846, that allows no concession to the severity of the physical and climatic restrictions bearing upon the rural population in both Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland (q.v. Appendix "C").[147] Whilst perhaps less pungent than the popular view of the Irish labouring classes, the pejorative image of the Highlander has been perpetuated in popular literature and by the visual media.[148] As a palliative to this view, Hook (1987) claims that in the wake of the eighteenth-century Scottish literary figures, Ramsay, Macpherson, Burns and others, that the avidly-read early-nineteenth-century popular literary works of Sir Walter Scott

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[144]   Fenyo, 2000, 46.
[145]   Kinealy, 2006, xxii.
[146]   *Ibid*, 2006, 2.
[147]   *Witness*, October 7, 1846
[148]   An extract from Chapter 5, 'Various Doings in the West', in the romantic novel, *Mr. Standfast*, by John Buchan, published in 1921, is typical. The captain of the ship *Tobermory* observed to Richard Hannay on the voyage from Greenock to the Western Isles: "The West Hielandman is no fond o' hard work. Ye ken the psalm o' the crofter? "O that the peats would cut themselves / The fish chump on the shore / And that I in my bed might lie / Henceforth for ever more!" The mid-twentieth-century novels of Lillian Beckwith, with similar derogatory allusions, were received with the disapprobation of most Highlanders.

"extended, completed and definitely propagated Scotland's romantic image"[149] and thereby transformed the caricature of the Highlander from his former stereotype of an uncouth savage into a truly heroic figure worthy of compassionate and enduring support in his time of extreme hardship. Within Ireland itself there seems to have been a perceived distinction between the 'industrious' people of Ulster and Leinster in the east and the 'laziness' that characterised the population of Munster and Connaught to the south and west. This widely-held view, according to MacAtasney (1997), was voiced in Lurgan, County Armagh, by the ratepayers' and property owners' objection to Lord Russell's Whig government Rate-in-Aid tax imposed in 1849.[150]

For the security of the British nation state, the ideal sought was a unified country under the British crown. In this endeavour, Ireland had proved a recalcitrant partner that was ever open to confrontation if not insurrection. Repeal of the Act of Union and the restoration of an Irish parliament were pursued vigorously by the Irish Repeal Party at Westminster. Although outwith the scope of this present research, political action in Ireland formed a run-up to the *Great Famine* years. The drop in charitable donations in Ireland, claims O'Grada (1999), was the result of a less sympathetic public opinion reflected in the very negative picture of Irish irresponsibility and dishonesty painted in the *London Times*, and the satirical weekly *Punch* and elsewhere.[151] As will later be shown, government officialdom took a contemptuous view of the destitute Celtic peoples at their times of greatest need. It has been argued that in consequence, the Westminster government, as a political expedient, failed to adequately address the plight of the Gaels who were often left to the traditional recourse of local philanthropic endeavour, in some cases exercised in return for estate work, or in many cases, assistance in emigration to the colonies.[152] On the eve of the *Great Famine*, Ireland was

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[149] Hook, 1967, 318.
[150] MacAtasney, 1997, 85.
[151] O'Grada 1999, 4.
[152] A massive statue of Queen Victoria, erected in 1908 on Kildare Street, Dublin, outside Leinster House (from 1922 seat of the National Parliament of the Irish Free State, now Republic of Ireland) was removed in 1948 after republican complaints that it commemorated the 'famine queen'. It was later erected in Sydney, Australia. Somewhat paradoxically, a nearby statue of the Prince Consort was allowed to remain *in situ*. In 1849 when Queen Victoria disembarked there during 'The Great Famine' years, Cork was renamed Queenstown in her honour. With the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, Queenstown reverted to its former name of Cobh (Cove of Cork).

exporting a large supply of food - mostly corn - to Britain annually.[153] With an exceptionally large underclass existing at subsistence level on a single crop, the potato,[154] and lacking both land and opportunity for work, people could not afford the luxury of a balanced diet. Nevertheless, the patterns of social, economic and cultural change experienced by the Celts during the famine period were being replicated in many areas of Europe [155]

3.3 Demographic increase in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century Europe

Various reasons for an immense increase in the Highland population from the mid-eighteenth-century have been advanced. Frequent reference is made in the *Old Statistical Account* (*O.S.A.*) to first, the introduction of vaccine inoculation against smallpox which greatly reduced child mortality,[156] and second, to the introduction of new crops brought from the Lowlands, notably the potato.[157] These novel innovations tended to improve physical well-being, especially among the lower classes. A third reason advanced in the *N.S.A*, was the increasing sub-division of crofting land among crofter tenants by which two or three families occupied one small lot (Plate 3.1) and sometimes one house.[158] The demographic trend was one of steady increase; in 1831, the decennial census recorded Scotland's population as 2,364,000; in 1841 it stood at 2,620,000, and in 1851 at 2,890,000.[159]

There is a sound argument for the thesis that population increase in both the Scottish Highlands and in Ireland was a prime cause of the region's poverty and destitution. This phenomenon was noticeable throughout Europe where Collins (1964) finds the

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[153] Kinealy, 2006, 2.

[154] McFarland, S.S., *Presbyterianism in Maghera: A Social and Congregational History.* (Maghera, 1985) states that while potatoes had a major place in the economy of the farm, potatoes were not the central element in the Presbyterian family's food. Oatmeal held that place. Wheat was little grown and little used; it only began to be grown around 1930, but for many a year it continued to play a second or third fiddle to oatmeal in the market in Maghera. The dependence in oatmeal was to play an important part in the Great Famine.

[155] *Witness*, 26 December 1846: "Great destitution and misery exist at present in Belgium. Indeed from accounts received, the two Flanders would seem to be but another Ireland".

[156] *O.S.A*, XX, 161.

[157] *Ibid,* 105.

[158] *N.S.A.,* 1841, 225.

[159] The 2004 decennial census records show Scotland's population as 5, 000, 800.

population of 187 million in 1800 had increased by mid-century to over 270 million and over 400 million by the end of the century.[160] Family emigration, states Balfour (1990), was considered by contemporary political economists to be the panacea for this 'Malthusian' conundrum of population and resources [161] that had led to pauperism in both Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland [162]

Plate 3.1

Croft land with its croft-house on the South Uist coastline

The geometrically measured croft land with its croft house located on poor soil was calculated to be insufficient for the maintenance of the tenant family. The kelp industry, in which both old and young were engaged on behalf of the landowner, helped pay the rent. These crofts on North Uist are scattered along the shores of numerous lochs that intersect the island. (GWW Collection, courtesy of Mark Butterworth).

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[160]   Collins, 1964, 369.

[161]   Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), born in Surrey, and ordained in 1797, anonymously published in 1798, his *Essay On the Principle of Population and its effects on the Future Improvement of Society* ,in which he maintained that population increases more rapidly than food supplies and is limited only by war, finance, poverty and vice. Wages should accordingly sink to subsistence level, to check the natural prolificacy of the labouring classes. (*Penguin Dictionaryof Modern History*).

[162]   Balfour, 1990, 515.

3.4 Social and economic conditions in mid-nineteenth-century United Kingdom

Mid-nineteenth century Britain still retained its feudal system largely intact. With no universal franchise it clung to its rigid class system in which everyone knew their place. Grinding poverty was alleviated by a strong sense of community with the nuclear family at its base. Mutual aid between families and within the immediate family in times of scarcity and unemployment was practised. Devine (1995) points specifically to the close relationship between the small tenants and the cottar class who were often relatives.[163] Thus, in September 1846, when distress became endemic throughout the Highlands, the *Witness* could report that:

> It is only those who have been conversant with the habits and character of the population of these counties (Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, Argyle) who know how much was done by private charity among themselves, to mitigate and soften, whatever ordinary calamities might befall those immediately around them.[164]

It was also the age of 'new money' amassed by the emergent class of industrial entrepreneur with a social conscience, prepared to dissipate excess wealth in philanthropy. In Scotland, the well-doing middle-class businessman embraced the Free Church in significant numbers and exercised his fiscal skills. Session records suggest that the Church still remained a significant but decreasing instrument of social control within the parish. By the mid-nineteenth-century, civil magistrate, local militia and organised policing assumed greater responsibility for state and local security. *Laissez-faire* as a government policy showed a marked decline with the promulgation of much social legislation. Individual responsibility, nonetheless, was still foremost in most relationships.

In conformance with Enlightenment thought, the Agricultural Revolution of the later-eighteenth-century had set afoot the progressive consolidation of former communal run-rig small-holdings into large single tenant farms to create a tiered workforce of crofters and cottars. In many respects the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland lagged well behind the more forward looking Eastern and Central Highlands with their closer connection to the Lowland region. A similar east-west economic divide was to be found in Ireland. Especially in the western regions of Ireland and in the Scottish

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[163] Devine, 1995, 51.
[164] *Witness*, September 16, 1846.

Highlands, geographical remoteness, an often forbidding landscape with a scarcity of arable soil,[165] and plagued with unpredictable extremes of weather at all seasons, had contributed to the trials of the indigenous population. Most historians agree that for much of the early-nineteenth-century, both Irish and Highland society was in slow decline and exhibiting impoverishment in the wake of the Napoleonic wars that ended in 1815. Duffy (2000) observes that much of Ireland's manufacturing was domestically based and suffered decline with the development of machine production in urban centres and an increase in foreign imports. With a rapidly rising population, the period also experienced a marked decline in agricultural produce.[166]

Frequent comment is made in the *N.S.A.* concerning the lack of large-scale industry to give employment within the Highland region. Ireland, with a similar social and economic structure to that prevailing in the Scottish Highlands was, in the nineteenth-century, an important producer and exporter of agricultural products. In the north-east province of Ulster, Belfast, Ireland's only large industrial city, was a producer of textiles and provider of employment to distressed migrants from the landward areas. Where hunger prevailed, the paradox seemed to be, as Woodham-Smith (1962) observes, that the starving in such remote places as Skibbereen, West Cork, (Plate 3. 2) "perished not because there was no food but because they had no money with which to buy it".[167] It is against a background of agricultural stagnation both in Ireland and in the Scottish Highlands that Collins (1964) argues that between 1850 and 1870, Western Europe reached the zenith of its power and prosperity.[168] In the historical time-line, the Industrial Revolution inaugurated in Britain in 1760, was by 1830 into its second phase with the development of railways and the extension of steam navigation greatly facilitating communication.[169] These technological advances were to play an important role in alleviating distress both in the Scottish Highlands and in Ireland.

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[165] The rocks of the Highlands are deficient of limestone and consequently the soil is acid and unfertile.

[166] Duffy, 2000, 88.

[167] Woodham-Smith, 1962, 165.

[168] Collins, 1964, 369.

[169] Ashton, 1968, 24.

3.5 Scarcity - a perennial global hazard

It is acknowledged that in general, the historical background of events in Ireland and in the Scottish Highlands during the period is well recorded elsewhere: Edwards and Williams (1956), Woodham-Smith (1962), Daly (1966), Devine (1980), Meek (1988), Withers (1988), O'Grada (1995, 1999), Ansdell (1992, 1996), Fenyo, (2000), Donnelly (2001), Kinealy (1994, 1997, 2000, 2006), and other modern historians have contributed to the corpus of research into what has come to be regarded as a significant humanitarian catastrophe. Viewed from a broad perspective, social, economic, cultural, political and geographical, conditions both in Ireland and in the Scottish Highlands were not dissimilar in varying degrees to those in most European agrarian countries. Only the scale of destitution and its lasting impact on the respective societies of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands marked any difference between the two. It is sufficient here to record that famine, due to successive poor harvests, at varying times and in various areas, was an ever recurring factor in the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable segment of society. The chronology of these recurrent phenomena in the early-nineteenth-century Highlands is expressed by the 1840 parish reporter from Kilmuir, Skye, to the *N.S.A.* in the following terms:

> The country has frequently been visited with scarcity; but it was so at four different times to such a degree of severity as to call forth public sympathy and aid. The general scarcity of *Bliadhna na peaserach* or the pease-meal year of 1792, is not yet forgotten. In the same manner, the hardships of want were severely felt in the years 1807 and 1817; but the distress of those seasons was trifling with that of 1836 and 1837, which will ever be memorable in the annals of this and other parishes.[170]

Withers (1988), on the other hand, cites the famine years of 1740, 1756, 1782 and 1799 that "prompted peaks in mortality in addition to a general out-movement from the Highlands" as exceptional traumatic periods for those in greatest need,[171] in effect, the crofters and landless labourers at the broad base of the economic pyramid.

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[170] *N.S.A.,* X1V, 271 (Kilmuir Parish, Skye, 1840). Cargoes of white pease (which had been intended for the troops engaged in the American war, but which on the announcement of peace were sent northwards) came to Ross-shire, and the pease distributed among the more needful and prevented famine starvation. Similar reports of the scarcity years of 1836 and 1837 are to be found in the report from the Parish of Strath, Skye, XIV, 314, (1840).

[171] Withers, 1988, 197.

The crisis years between 1845 and 1855 in the Highlands were of a different scale of destitution to any previously experienced, but at its worst, did not match the severity suffered by the population of Ireland, particularly in the south and west (Plate 3.2). With greater proximity to resources and relatively low mortality rates, relief for the destitute in the Highlands was manageable in comparison. On the other hand, the *Great Famine* or, as Woodham-Smith (1962) and Kinealy (2004) prefer, the *Great Hunger*,[172] changed the structure of Irish society permanently. Most historians are agreed that famine, malnutrition, disease, and abject material poverty almost wiped out Ireland's poorest social class. Use of the Irish language declined,[173] emigration became a way of life,[174] and people strove to completely erase all memories of this most catastrophic event in Ireland's history. Nevertheless, its unprecedented devastation has remained in folk-memory through successive generations to this present day.[175] However, as O'Grada (1999) points out, the evidence of much folk memory is flawed and confused. It is often, he claims, "consciously or sub-consciously selective, evasive and apologetic. It is short on analysis and context and usually innumerate"[176] The current interest in the *Great Famine* period by modern historians seeks to redress this alleged confusion.

Whilst figures remain indeterminate (see Table 3.1), the death of over one million of the population and the emigration, mostly to North America, with substantial numbers to Australia, of another million, was the reality of Ireland's traumatic experience. The catalyst for what is regarded by historians as the single greatest catastrophe of nineteenth-century Europe was a previously unknown species of potato fungal blight, *phytophthrora infestans* that entered the United Kingdom from the Continent in 1845. Fast in propagation but discriminate in its spread, its first appearance in Ireland was

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[172] Kinealy, 2006, xxiv.
[173] Duffy, 200, 94.
[174] The volume of direct emigration from Queenstown/Cobh during the years 1845-1851 is estimated at 72,000, much larger than that at any other Irish port, whilst Cork emigration via Liverpool averaged at least 25,000 a year in mid-century.(Crowley, 2005, 205).
[175] A modern popular folk-song, *The Fields of Athenry*, can be cited as typical of folk-memory with a clear anti-British political undertone. The Glasgow Celtic football club is currently attempting to eradicate the 'vile, vicious and racist' famine song from the tiny minority of its own support (*TheHerald*, 18 October 2008).
[176] O'Grada, 1999, 195.

allegedly in County Fermanagh that same year.[177] The failure of the potato crop was not unusual in Ireland; the problem by 1845 was the total dependence on the crop by the poorest families.[178] When the potato failed in an area stricken by blight and disease, the poorest people succumbed to malnutrition and disease to the extent of losing the will to survive, a condition reported in the *Cork Examiner* of 1847:

> A terrible apathy hangs over the poor of Skibbereen; starvation has destroyed every generous sympathy, despair has made them hardened and insensible, and they sullenly await their doom with indifference and without fear. Death is in every hovel; disease and famine, its dread precursors, have fastened on young and old, the strong and the feeble, the mother and the infant.

Whether or not Trevelyan rooted his philosophy in Genesis 3.19 - "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" - he was determined, argues Kerr (1994), to pursue that admonition with evangelical zeal while at the Treasury, opposed to giving or lending money for famine relief to the destitute in both the Scottish Highlands and in Ireland, preferring to let misery and distress run its course.[179] People, claims Litton (1994), were supposed to be self-sufficient and the attitude of the state was that to give them charity would be to weaken their ability to look after themselves. A culture of welfare dependency was to be avoided at all costs; the able-bodied destitute labourer encouraged to work and thereby provide for his family's maintenance.

3.5.1 Operation of the Corn Laws

A constriction to the social and economic condition of the population in the United Kingdom during the mid-nineteenth century, argues Briggs (1984) was the operation of the Corn Laws and the consistent demand for their repeal. The Corn Laws were clearly an exception to the doctrine of *laissez-faire*. Following the economic crisis of 1838-9, the Anti-Corn Law League was formed from a number of anti-corn law associations established throughout the nation.[180] As will be detailed in a later chapter, the national and local press contain frequent reports of rioting and deforcement leading to criminal proceedings against the perpetrators.[181] The paradox presented to the hungry poor was

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[177]   Kinealy, 2006, xxvi.
[178]   Foynes, 2004, 16. states that in March, 1846, the Skibbereen Poor Law Guardians estimated that 18 out of 20 of their population depended solely or mainly on potatoes for food.
[179]   Kerr, 1994, 197.
[180]   Briggs, 1984, 312.
[181]   *Inverness Courier*, 27/2/1847 (Avoch), 3/3/1847 (Wick), 10/3/1847 (Invergordon).

that large amounts of food were being produced in both Ireland and Scotland for export.

Plate 3.2

Ireland's worst single disaster - The *Great Famine* - 1845-1850
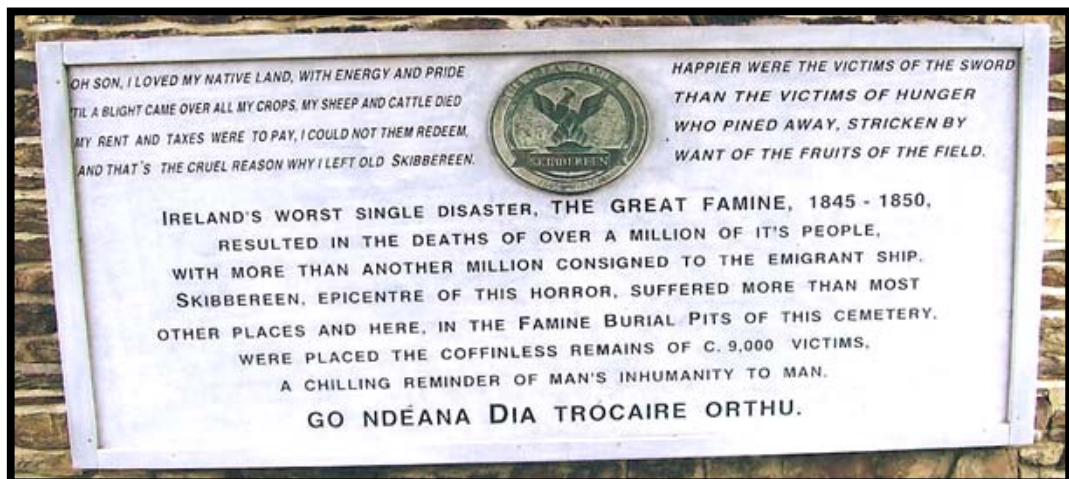
Abbeystrowry Cemetery, Skibbereen, West Cork. Some 9,000 coffin-less bodies were buried in pits underneath this green sward between 1845 and 1848 (photo, JRS)

3.5.2 Hazards of monoculture; the potato as a staple diet

There was no overall pattern of famine and destitution even within a single area of the landscape at a given time. Certain areas stand out as having suffered more completely than others. In 1846, The Famine Relief Committee found that potatoes represented up to 88-per-cent of the diet in the Highlands, and 25 per cent in the Lowlands. In Ireland, argues Green (1956), the counties of Donegal, Mayo and Kerry, where there was a complete dependence on the potato and where subdivision had been carried to its greatest extremes, can be taken as representative of conditions along the western seaboard where the ancient system of rundale (run-rig) land held in joint tenancies still prevailed.[182] Leinster, on the eastern seaboard of Ireland, clearly

Plate 3.3
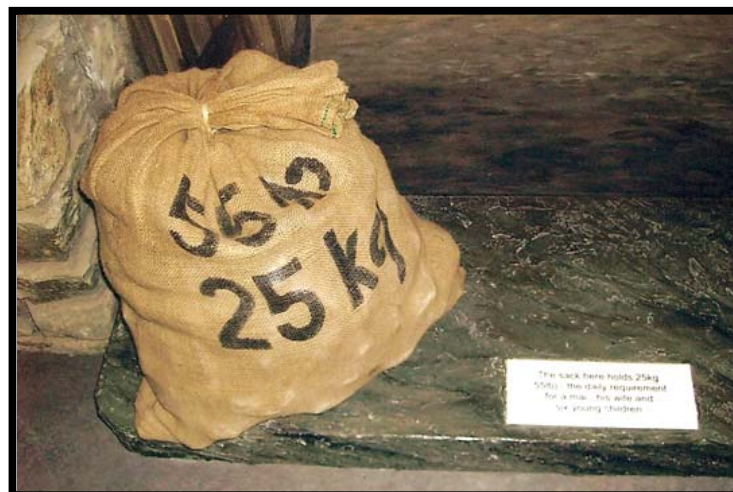
Sack holding about 25kg (55lbs) of potatoes, the daily requirement of a man, his wife and six young children. (National Famine Museum, Strokestown, Roscommon (JRS)

benefitted from its proximity to England and its markets. Most historians agree that around one million people in Ireland died in the Great Famine period. Whilst no precise figure can be given, recent calculations reproduced in Duffy (2000) suggest that in the south-west province of Munster, embracing counties Kerry and Cork with their exceptionally high mortality rates, particularly around Skibbereen, West Cork, contrast with conditions in the eastern province of Leinster as shown in Table 2.1 below:

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[182]   Green, 1956, 110.

Table 3.1

Mortality rates per Irish Province during the *Great Famine*

Connaught - 40%
Munster   - 30%
Ulster   - 21%
Leinster   -   9%

Similar contrasts are evident in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, where conditions on the island of Skye with its dense population existing in extreme poverty and destitution,[183] were distinct from those experienced on the island of Lewis with its long tradition of sea and loch fishing, and yet again with the Central Highlands which experienced minimal material distress. Macpherson (1971), commenting on the parishes of Moy and Dalarossie in the Scottish Highlands, makes a relevant point in relation to the part open to all Christian denominations during 1845-1855 famine period:

> There is no area of human activity where Christian insights are not to be brought to bear, and a very obvious area where this is needed in the rural Highlands is the revival of community life. The building up of community life, where economic and demographic circumstances are producing its breakdown, has a moral - even a spiritual - value which is a challenge to Christian action.[184]

According to its means the challenge willingly accepted by the Presbyterian Church.

3.6 Private initiatives in charitable provision

Checkland (1980) argues that piety was the great stay of Scottish Victorian philanthropy and drew its strength from the evangelical movement, especially in the first half of the nineteenth-century. Many people, states Checkland, felt that they were making a real contribution to the social improvement of their fellow men by giving generously to church funds.[185] It is a compelling argument that this potent evangelical drive was responsible for the prompt amassing of £15,000 by the Free Church of Scotland Destitution Committee to relieve famine conditions in the Scottish Highlands. The Presbyterian Church, however, had a tradition of giving that was embedded in the controversial voluntary principle which repudiated the concept of a national church,

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[183] *Glasgow Herald*, January 21, 1853.
[184] Macpherson, 1971, 267.
[185] Checkland, 1980, 30. Green, 1956, 110.

arguing that the church should support itself and not look for support from the state. The belief was that every congregation should support its own minister by voluntary contributions rather than relying on parochial endowments by the state, which, by its mid-nineteenth-century Poor Law legislation had assumed the role of provider and thereby curtailed the church's central role within the community

Until the mid-nineteenth-century social conscience produced state legislation to bring an even distribution of material aid, philanthropy was the prop that often sustained the poor and alleviated their sufferings. Working class life appears to have been little different in the squalor of industrial towns to which the landless steadily migrated. The mid-nineteenth-century was still a world where everyone 'knew their place'. Social mobility was comparatively rare. The old upper-classes of British society, born with money, titles and the education that ensured a seat in parliament as either a Tory (Conservative) or a Whig (Liberal), had an inbuilt sense of *noblesse oblige.* Refined social breeding was the hallmark of the kind, upper-class lady, Elizabeth Grant, dispensing soup and other victuals to the poor tenants on her husband's Irish estate of Baltiboys, in Co. Wicklow,[186] Of the notable large charitable bodies, the *British Relief Association,* a philanthropic society founded by wealthy businessmen in 1847 to relieve distress in remote parishes of Ireland and Scotland, attracted considerable sums of money worldwide (see Section 9.4).

Landowners had a moral duty to care for their tenants and cottar people. However, it has been argued that the owners of landed estates displayed an ambivalent attitude concerning their responsibilities towards tenants. Many Irish landowners tended to be absentee English upper-class raised on family estates in England, educated at English public schools, were Anglican in religious affiliation, and consequently indifferent to the hardships suffered by impoverished non-conformist Irish families who barely managed to subsist in good harvest years but relapsed into starvation in years that were not. On the other hand, while there were notable instances of indifferent landowners in the Highlands, to a greater degree than in Ireland, instances have been cited of proprietors who showed compassion for their tenants and ensured that distressed

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[186] Grant, 1991, 28.

families were supplied with sufficient food and estate work albeit in some cases the proprietors themselves were facing insolvency mainly due to unpaid rents. Contrary to the negative public image of the Sutherland family, it was reported that the Duke of Sutherland had spent £78,000 on his estates during the famine years to the benefit of his tenants.[187] Furthermore, the Highland Destitution files show that the Duke laid in large supplies of meal, including 3000 bolls of grain for the two western parishes of Assynt and Edderachillis. Again, in order to maintain his people at his own expense in 1846 and 1847, the Duke did not draw meal from Government stores or permit the people on his estate to accept relief from the Free Church or its successor, the Central Board of Management.[188] Whatever the Duke's motives, this is clearly an example of a proprietor who *did* exhibit care for his tenants from his own private means. Despite these paternalistic relief initiatives exercised by responsible land proprietors, session records frequently testify to the inability of impoverished Presbyterian communicants to contribute to church funds.

Table 3.2

Geographical range and diversity of charitable contributions towards famine relief in 1845-46

Queen Victoria	£2,500. 00. 00
Queen Victoria's servants	247. 12. 00
Indian Relief Fund	14,000. 00. 00
Freemasons of India	5,000. 00. 00
St. Petersburg, Russia, subscriptions	2,644. 00. 00
New Brunswick, Canada, subscriptions	1,640. 00. 00
Barbados subscriptions	2,000. 00. 00
Abdulmecid, Sultan of Turkey	1,000. 00. 00
Vicar Apostolic, Mauritius,	2,211. 00. 00
78th Regiment of Highlanders, India	140. 00. 00
Malta and Gozo	720. 00. 00
British residents in Mexico	652. 00. 00
Anglican Church, Amsterdam	561. 00. 00
Chocktaw Nation, Oklahoma, USA	170. 00. 00
Royal Irish Art Union	200. 00. 00
Irish Coast Guard	429. 00. 00
Workmen, Dowlas Iron Works	171.17. 10
Journalists, Punch magazine	50. 00. 00
Regent's Park Barracks, London	3,000. 00. 00
Baptist Chapel, Cambridge,	500. 00. 00
Convicts, prison hulk Warrior, Woolwich	17. 00
RC Diocese of Strasbourg	23,365 marks

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[187] *Inverness Courier* July 11, 1848.
[188] *N.A.S.* - HD19/5.

On the mini-scale of proprietorship, elements of charitable support to her estate workers during the *Great Famine* years was provided by Mrs. Elizabeth Grant, wife-in-residence of the landed-estate proprietor of Baltiboys House, in Leinster Province. Elsewhere, at Ballybay, County Monaghan in Ulster Province, people were saved from hunger partly due to the comparative benevolence of the Leslie family as land superiors. Mrs. Emily Leslie not only provided building work locally, but created land drainage and road construction projects.[189] In 1846 the local Ballybay Relief Committee raised £175 that included £100 from the Leslies. It need be said, however, that within such impoverished communities as Ballybay, at base level it was incumbent for neighbours to help one another in times of adversity.

Alongside the old landed class who derived their income solely from their estates, observes Devine (1995), was an increasing elite with 'new money' derived from industry and commerce that were not dependent upon rents from tenants and crofters, and were thereby insulated from the stresses of the old Highland lairds.[190] Wide publication of the famine conditions in both Ireland and in the Scottish Highlands attracted relief aid worldwide. However, as O'Grada (1999) claims, the lasting character of the Irish crisis led to 'compassion fatigue' with the efforts of most charities reaching a peak in early 1847 with relatively little forthcoming in 1848 and 1849.[191] Following a pattern of famine relief measures that had evolved from previous crisis years of hunger and its concomitants, malnutrition and disease, landowner policy was supplemented by government intervention in the provision of basic food and employment schemes.

3.7 Government model for famine relief measures

Absorbed into the United Kingdom in 1801, by the Act of Union, Ireland was governed from Westminster with executive power vested in a Lord Leutenant [192] and a Chief Secretary located at Dublin Castle. Both officials were appointed by, and responsible to, the British cabinet. In the United Kingdom parliament, claims Connolly (1995),

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[189]   Nesbitt, 1999, 73.
[190]   Devine, 1995, 94.
[191]   O'Grada, 1999, 43.
[192]   From the 'Black Year' of 1847 the post of lord lieutenant was filled by George William Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon.

Ireland was represented by 105 M.P.s out of a total of 656.[193]   Most were substantial landowners, insulated from the challenges facing the poor who were by law excluded from the franchise on grounds relating to property ownership and valuation. To replace hitherto inefficient systems of parish provision, a uniform system of poor relief in Ireland was provided by the Irish Poor Law of 1838,[194] an enactment modelled on the English Poor Law of 1834.[195] Both identical relief systems were governed by a Poor Law Commission. Central to the operation of relief was the Workhouse (Plate 3.4)[196] providing indoor relief, the character of which has been described by Litton (1994),[197] for pauper families and outdoor relief (soup kitchens)[198] for the workless able-bodied. To administer the system, Ireland was divided into 130 units known as "Unions". The ideal, argues Kinealy (2006), was that each Union, or combination of Unions, was to have its own Workhouse, centrally situated, near to a market town.[199] Food storage depots were installed near seaports and local committees appointed to supervise distribution. Most governments were concerned by famine because it could be the source of social unrest. In practice, the pattern of famine relief measures adopted in 1845 had evolved from previous crisis years of hunger and its concomitants, malnutrition and disease.

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[193]   Connolly, 1995, 34.

[194]   Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1838.

[195]   Poor Law (Amendment) Act, 1834.

[196]   The workhouse as an institution for relief of the poor had its origins in the building constructed at Southwell, Nottinghamshire, in 1824,by its founder, the Rev. John T. Belcher. Pioneering in its design, it influenced the New Poor Law of 1834 which established similar institutions across England and Wales. The workhouse system was extended to Ireland by the Irish Poor Law of 1838.The well-preserved Southwell workhouse has been acquired by the National Trust as a museum.

[197]   Litton, 1994, 23-24 (adapted): Indoor relief within the workhouse was provided as a last resort for destitute family units. Work-houses suffered from the evils of overcrowding, disease, poor nutrition and high mortality rates. Conditions were strict. Families were torn apart as women and men lived in different parts of the workhouse, and children were kept separate from adults. Inmates were forbidden to leave and the food provided consisted of two meals a day, of oatmeal, potatoes and buttermilk. Meals had to be eaten in silence. There were strict rules against bad language, alcohol, laziness, malingering and disobedience. Able-bodied adults had to work at such jobs as knitting or picking oakum (for women) and breaking stones or cultivating the workhouse garden (for men). Children could be given industrial training of some sort. The aim was to give the least amount of help possible and to discourage people from claiming what little there was available.

[198]   Outdoor relief, usually in the form of soup, was contrary to the terms of the Poor Law Act,1836, which restricted provision of material aid - food and apparel - solely to those destitute persons selected for indoor relief within a workhouse.

[199]   Kinealy, 2006, 24.

3.8 The Workhouse as a centre for care and deterrence

In Ireland, claims O'Mahony,(2005), Cork's first Workhouse was officially opened in April 1747.[200] In practice, the Workhouse scheme operated as a combination of care and deterrence which, with rigid supervision and obedience of inmates, was found adequate to relieve distress set within parameters of scarcity dictated by the vacillating quality of annual harvests. Poor relief, locally financed through a poor rate, could only be obtained through accommodation within a Workhouse. The English interpretation of destitution which proclaimed that "the lot of the able-bodied inmate of the Workhouse should be less tolerable than that of the lowest pauper outside", was imposed in Ireland.[201]

Plate 3.4

Parsonstown Workhouse, Birr, Co. Offaly, Ireland

Parsonstown Workhouse was divided into male and female sides with the male inmates usually placed at the right. At the front of the site was a small entrance block whose ground floor contained a porter's lodge, waiting hall ,and receiving rooms. Upstairs were the Guardians' Board Room, with small dormitories to each side, and store for inmates' own cloths in the attic above. Strict supervision and discipline were the key administrative measures within every Workhouse.
(http://users.ox.ac.uk/~peper/workhouse/Ireland/Ireland.shtml)

In the face of increasing operating costs, claims O'Mahoney (2005), between 1833 and 1836 a royal commission investigated the social and economic conditions of the poorer classes of Irish society and reported on the feasibility of operating within Ireland the

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[200] O'Mahony, 2005, 15.
[201] *Ibid*, 18.

English Workhouse system which had evolved under the *Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834*.[202] In consequence, some 163 Workhouses [203] were established throughout Ireland under the *Poor Law {Ireland) Act, 1838*. Architect for the many of Workhouses in England and Wales,[204] George Wilkinson, was assigned the task of designing the majority of Workhouses in Ireland on the Southwell, Nottinghamshire, prototype model.[205]

For administrative purposes, Ireland, with 163 Workhouses *in situ*,[206] was divided into 130 groups of parishes or Unions and subdivided into electoral districts. Unions were compactly designed with a market town at their centre.[207] Following the *Report of the Poor Law Inquiry Commission for Scotland*, in May 1844, that country retained its long-established system of parochial relief which was essentially one of outdoor relief. This measure was encapsulated in the *Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Act, 1845*. Consequently, no Workhouses were erected in Scotland. Although not compulsory, observes O'Connor (1995), Poor-houses distinct from Workhouses,[208] - seventy with accommodation for 18,000 inmates - were provided by individual parishes or unions of parishes for the whole of Scotland.[209]

When the *Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor* was created under the Poor Law (Scotland) Act, 1845,[210] claims Levitt (1988), it represented an important

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[202] *Ibid*, 16.

[203] Southwell Workhouse in Nottinghamshire, erected in 1824 to a design by the Rev. John Thomas Becher became the prototype for most workhouses in both England and Ireland. Incorporated into the design was the Panopticon, or Inspection House devised by Jeremy Bentham which permitted the master and staff to supervise inmates at both work and recreation from a central point.

[204] O'Connor (1995) states that 689 workhouses were built in England and Wales and that none been preserved as a historic building. This statement is incorrect since the workhouse at Southwell in Nottinghamshire, England, built in 1824, has been acquired in its original state by the National Trust in 1997 when the last inmates and staff moved out It is now open to view by the general public.

[205] O'Mahony, 2005, 19.

[206] O'Connor, 1995, 259-64.

[207] O'Mahony, 2005, 17.

[208] Scottish poor-houses were administered by the local parish and financed from the poor rate. Nuclear pauper families occupied adequately furnished small cottages. The poor-house system was not subject to control or supervision by a Board of Guardians.

[209] O'Connor, 1995, 208-11.

[210] In full citation, *An Act for the Amendment and better Administration of the Laws relating to the Relief of the Poor in Scotland*, 1845, passed on 4 August 1845.

departure in the ordinary administration of Scotland. For the first time, Scotland had central control imposed on its welfare system; not since 1846, when the Act became effective, had the British Government allowed a principal public department north of the border.[211] This new arrangement in provision for the needy did not exclude church influence in its execution, for in every 'burghal parish' or combination of parishes, a parochial board of managers was elected and to whom local administration of the poor law was entrusted. In the board's composition, the magistrates were to nominate four members, and four members were to be nominated by the Kirk session.[212]

3.8.1 Central government relief initiatives in the Scottish Highlands

With experience gained from intervention in the 1837-38 years of scarcity, the British Government was well placed to deal with severe famine conditions apparent in 1845. Though laggard in implementation, public work schemes under the direction of the Board of Works were re-introduced 1 August 1846.[213] Highland road construction, canal and bridge building to improve communications in remote areas were commenced. Crofters were expected to work eight hours a day, six days a week, to earn their ration of oatmeal. Perhaps the best-known Highland 'Destitution Road'[214] and 'Hunger Bridge'[215] are those constructed by local workers creating an efficient and safe carriageway between Ullapool and Gairloch in Wester Ross.

In the interests of needy landowners loans were made available under the Drainage Act that was enacted to provide for estate improvements. To supplement military reserves of foodstuffs, Indian corn was purchased from abroad and Royal Navy ships were utilised to convey food to strategically sited depots for disbursal by local committees.[216] When the Central Board of Management for Highland Relief assumed control in February 1847, responsibility for different regions of the Highlands was delegated to the Glasgow and Edinburgh Committees or 'sections' as they were known.

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[211]   Levitt, 1988, xi.
[212]   Lindsay, 1975, 222.
[213]   Donnolly, 2001, 70.
[214]   The 'Destitution Road' is commemorated in popular song by Alistair Hulet, The chorus runs: "But there's no use getting frantic / It's time tae hump yer load / Across the wild Atlantic / On the Destitution Road".
[215]   'Hunger Bridge' is the local name for the bridge at Kinlochewe.
[216]   *Witness*, January 20, 1847.

Each had a measure of independence from the parent body. The Edinburgh Section eventually assumed responsibility for Skye, Wester Ross, the Northern Isles and the Eastern Highlands; the Glasgow Section was entrusted with Argyll, western Inverness, the Outer Hebrides and the Inner Hebrides apart from Skye. The Central Board, cited by Devine (1995), had 117 members, including the Moderators of the Church of Scotland, the Free Church and the Relief Church, the Provosts of all the major towns, several landowners, Bishop Murdoch of the Roman Catholic Church, and the principals of Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities as 'extraordinary members'.[217]

3.8.2 Central government relief initiatives in Ireland

The systems of provision for the poor that had existed in England and Wales since the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601[218] were supplanted by The *Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834*. This legislation was extended to Ireland by the *Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1838,* by which the government accepted the burden of providing a uniform system of poor relief. By the terms of the Act, provision was made for the establishment and regulation of lunatic asylums and work-houses, organised into 'poor law unions' of which 130 were set out in an equitable geographical pattern throughout the country.[219] However, the provisions of the Act were unable to deal with the unprecedented scarcity of mid-nineteenth-century Ireland. Late in 1846, The *Witness* focussed on the kernel of Irish destitution:

> We have heard of a vast concourse numbering up to 2000 people, assembled at West Port, and proceeding to the seat of the Marquis of Sligo, for the avowed purpose of demanding work and food.[220]

Such reports justify O'Grada's (1999) contention that the Government under estimated the gravity of the crises in the worst affected areas of Ireland and the inadequacy of indoor workhouse provision and outdoor labour schemes to meet unprecedented famine that led to such measures as the promulgation of the *Drainage (Ireland) Act 1846* and the *Temporary Relief of Destitute Persons (Ireland) Act, 1847* (the Soup Kitchen Act)

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[217]   Devine, 1995, 127.
[218]   O'Mahoney, 2005, 14. The main objectives of the 1601 poor law were to establish a sense of local responsibility, to determine a reasonable amount of relief, and to identify those people eligible for relief. It encouraged children to work and serve apprenticeships. The poor law sought the suppression of vagrancy and to provide work as a means of welfare
[219]   *Ibid,* 17.
[220]   *Witness*, September 2, 1846.

which made provision for outdoor relief contrary to the terms of the *Poor Law Act, 1836* which restricted provision solely to indoor relief within the workhouse. Whilst Devine (1995) argues that the Government was determined that landowners should accept major responsibility for famine relief,[221] the newspapers in January 1847, could report large quantities of meal and foodstuffs despatched by the government from English seaports to Cork.[222] Though kept from public knowledge claims Kinealy (2006), the British government made secret arrangements for £100,000 worth of Indian corn and corn meal to be purchased in America and shipped to Ireland at the beginning of 1846.[223]

3.9 Migration and emigration as a panacea for destitution

Emigration from the Highlands had a long history before the famine years of the mid-nineteenth-century. From the early-eighteenth-century the increase in land rentals throughout the Highlands was a major consideration in prompting destitute people to seek a new life overseas. According to the *O.S.A.* this was the catalyst for the original movement of people from Skye and North Uist to America. Flattering accounts in letters from friends who had emigrated several years before prompted "several thousand from the western Highlands" between 1771 and 1775 to cross the Atlantic.[224] The distressed condition of people in the West Highlands produced a number of philanthropic emigration schemes. Of the options to execute an emigration policy in the Highlands, perhaps the best-known organisation was the *Highlands and Islands Emigration Society*, a charity formed in 1852, to induce the emigration of impoverished Scots to solve two problems, first, clearing the surplus population from landlords' property and secondly, the colonies' need for settlers. As an independently funded organisation, argues Balfour (1990) it was free from government regulations and parliamentary scrutiny.[225] Yet, as Balfour stresses, the Society proved effective solely as short-term response. Only in Skye was it responsible for the migration of almost 3,000 places before its dissolution in 1856.[226] Wherever possible, each of the larger

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[221] Devine, 1995, 100.

[222] *Witness*, January 17th and January 23rd, 1847.

[223] Kinealy, 2006, 46.

[224] *Ibid*, 46.

[225] Balfour, 1990, 478.

[226] *Ibid*, 515.

shiploads was accompanied by a minister of the Free Church of Scotland.[227] Otherwise, claims Harper (1993), ministers of the Protestant churches "preached aboard departing ships urging their hearers to uphold the ordinances of religion even in the absence of churches and ministers".[228]

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[227] *Ibid*, 479.
[228] Harper 1993, 292.

Chapter 4: Presbyterianism within the Reformed Church structure

> For when two or three are gathered together in my name, there
> am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20).

4.1 Historical perspective of Presbyterianism

The Highlands and Hebrides argues Brown (1997), were the last parts of the British Isles to be properly Christianized. This occurred mainly through the efforts of itinerant missionaries before 1000 CE. By 1700 CE their uncontaminated message had become diffused by successive waves of settlement which introduced a "varied culture of Celtic, Norse and superstitious customs".[229] By the beginning of the nineteenth-century, well settled pockets of competing religiosity were firmly established north of a notional Highland line suggested by Withers (1988), extending from Helensburgh in the south-west to the vicinity of Stonehaven in the north-east (Fig. 1.1).[230] Within this formidable, even forbidding geographical area that once supported half of Scotland's population, it has been argued that the denominational persuasion of the people largely followed the religious affiliation of the landowner.[231]

The Reformation that came to Scotland in 1560, claims Burleigh (1960), was committed to John Knox's *Book of Discipline*, a comprehensive plan for the ordering and maintenance of the Reformed Kirk consistent with the *Geneva Ordinances* of Jean Calvin. Adapted to Scottish needs, albeit devised for a single purely urban community, it was not appropriate for a whole kingdom.[232] This seminal Scottish document in which Kirk (1980) suggests the influence of Martin Bucer's Cologne is evident [233] was, in the interests of 'good ecclesiastical business', essentially a constitution and rule-book for the Reformed Church in Scotland. Its founding proposals followed the example of Reformed Churches on the Continent and in England where three of the six formulators, John Knox, John Willock and John Spottiswoode, had ecclesiastical experience during the reign of Edward VI. The *First Book of Discipline* [234] as it later

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[229]   Brown, 1997, 85.
[230]   Withers, 1988, 2.
[231]   Stephen, J.R. *Challenges posed by the geography of the Scottish Highlands to ecclesiastical endeavour over the centuries*. (Unpublished Ph.D thesis., University of Glasgow, 2004).
[232]   Burleigh, 1960, 165.
[233]   Kirk, 1980, 6.
[234]   A *Second Book of Discipline* setting out a revised formula for the Kirk was formulated, circa

became known was ancillary to the *Book of Common Order,* the first 'directory', to quote Burleigh (1960), for reformed worship in Scotland.[235] Both documents were accompanied by the *Scots Confession of Faith* a public statement of the Kirk's belief. However, due to the ever-shifting political and financial climate within the Scottish nation at that time, the ambitious proposals of the Reformers in the *Book of Discipline* were not ratified by the provisional Scots Parliament. Unable to agree among themselves what structure the Reformed Church (the Kirk) should adopt - "dyverse men war of diverse jugementis" [236] - denied the full benefices accruing to the Old Church, and thereby unable to provide for an adequate educated ministry, the Reformers were forced to accept a situation of compromise.[237] With experience set by 'privy-kirks'[238] that emerged in towns and burghs in the late 1550s, stress was laid on the 'particular kirk' or local congregation. Only at parish level, adds Cameron (1972), could the continuing work of Reformation be applied with some uniformity and success to maintain the "face of a visible kirk".[239] In the Highlands, observes Brown (1997), the Reformation had only a local effect because of a shortage of clergy and a lack of enthusiasm among the people.[240]

4.2 Establishment claims - Episcopalian or Presbyterian?

The first major schism to emerge in the newly reformed, if under-funded and inadequately staffed Kirk in 1560 was that between the competing advocates of Presbyterianism[241] and of Episcopacy.[242] At stake was the character of church government to be adopted in what was to become the nation's Established Church. Presbyterians held to an administrative structure of church courts; Kirk sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods and General Assemblies, each chaired by a moderator, a

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1578. It is regarded as the first explicit statement of Scottish Presbyterianism (Kirk, 1980, vii).

[235] Burleigh, 1960, 161.

[236] Knox, *Works*, ii, 92, quoted in Kirk, 1980, 3.

[237] Smout, 1969, 84 -85.

[238] Privy Kirk, a feature of Protestant organization in its earlier phase as an underground movement before the Reformers' victory in 1559-60. (Cameron, 1993, 679). See also *Register of the Ministers, Elders and Deacons of the Christian Congregation of St Andrews*, ed. D.H. Fleming, 2 vols. (SHS, Edinburgh, 1889-90).

[239] Cameron, 1972, 180.

[240] Brown, 1997, 85.

[241] Presbyterian: A form of church government by presbyters (elders) which has been dominant in Scotland since the Reformation (Cameron, 1993, 673). Ministers were known as Presbyterians from the Greek word *presbyteros* which translates as 'elder' (Sutherland, 2006, 7).

[242] Episcopacy: A system of church government by territorial bishops (Cameron, 1993, 295).

structure in which no one minister was to have power over another for any protracted period. The English *Westminster Confession of Faith* formulated in 1644, a fuller and more carefully systematic document than the *Scots Confession*,[243] with twenty-five articles stressing the individual contract between God and man, was adopted by the General Assembly as the subsidiary standard of faith, secondary only to the Word of God contained in scripture. Associated Westminster documents, notes Ansdell (1998) (A), included the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, the *Directory of Public Worship*, the *Form of Church Government* and a version of the metrical psalms.[244] On the other hand, the Episcopalian faction favoured prelacy, a hierarchical system with power resting in a series of ecclesiastical dignitaries; bishops and archbishops. The protracted in-fight within the Reformed Church that resulted under succeeding Stuart monarchs was to last for 130 years with the ascendancy of Presbyterianism as the administrative structure of the nation's Established Church. A cardinal principle to be pursued by the new Kirk after 1690 was freedom from state control in both its spiritual and business affairs.

The settlement reached in 1690, states Burleigh (1960), permitted Episcopalian ministers to remain in their charges if they signed a prescribed oath of allegiance to the joint sovereigns, William and Mary. This required a promise to submit to, and concur with, Presbyterian Church government and subscribe to the *Westminster Confession* "as containing the doctrine of the Protestant religion professed in this kingdom".[245] These formed the 'juring' clergy of whom 100 took the oath without seeking admission to the church courts. Many more 'non-juring' clergy, adds Burleigh, refused to take the oaths, especially in the north where these were not rigorously exacted.[246] Without the legally deprived, but continuing Episcopalian ministers, claims Ansdell (1998) (A), some Highland parishes would have been denied a measure of religious provision for some years.[247] This makeshift situation has led Brown (1997) to suggest that Presbyterianism, when it was introduced from the Lowlands, was looked upon initially

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[243]   Burleigh, 1960, 155.
[244]   Ansdell, 1998, 110 (A).
[245]   Burleigh, 1960, 264.
[246]   *Ibid,* 264.
[247]   Ansdell, 1998, 17 (A).

by the Highlanders as an alien intrusion.[248] In the nature of most religious denominations, anomalies within Presbyterianism were to surface in Ireland following its introduction by Scots settlers in the seventeenth- century

Plate 4.1

The Ordination of the Elders in a Scottish Kirk, 1891. J.H. Lorimer, 1856-1936 (Courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh).

4.3 The Presbyterian model in Church government

Presbyterianism**,** as defined by Kirk (1993)**,** is the form of church government by presbyters (elders) which achieved dominance in Scotland from 1690. It was, argues Kirk, a logical application of certain Reformation principles discernible in and after 1560. First, as stated above, was the Reformers' disinclination to vest final authority over the Church in parliament, privy-council or prince; and, secondly, in their emphasis in devising a system of representative government which subordinated the work of individual administrators to the supervision of a series of courts or councils. These ranged from the local kirk session (functioning as implied above, from 1558-9) of minister and elected elders and deacons, to the court of the superintendent (from 1561), the provincial synod (from 1561-2) and the General Assembly (from 1560) of the whole Church presided over by an elected moderator (by 1563) as temporary chairman,

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248   Brown, 1997, 86.

where decisions were reached by majority of votes. The importance which Scottish Reformers attached to conciliar government, exercised through a graded series of courts (with an appellate jurisdiction), on which elected elders were expected to have a voice at every level, was, states Kirk, a conscious attempt to apply Reformed understanding of the role of New Testament eldership (*presbyterium*) towards meeting the needs of a Protestant Church organised for a nation.[249] In simple terms, it is a form of Church government which emphasizes the individual and corporate responsibility of members; ministers and members must share in the organizing and running of every aspect of the Church's work.

The Presbyterian model set out in the Reformers' *Book of Discipline* required that every parish should have a church and a minister; a school and a teacher, supplemented by the work of a missionary and a catechist who, as Ansdell (1998) explains, would work with families directing questions from the catechism to produce a corresponding answer.[250] The parish minister, set apart, was to be regarded as the person appointed to preach and administer baptism and communion within the parish. Overall, to quote Macpherson (1971), there is no area of human activity where Christian insights are not to be brought to bear. As such, the role of the Church in any pastoral situation according to Macpherson may be said to be threefold, to preach the gospel, to aid the distressed and to extend the frontiers of Christian concern.[251] Hence, it is the view of Drummond *et al* (1975) that the Established Church has never regarded itself in any sectarian sense but simply as the Catholic or Universal Church within the land of Scotland.[252] From its foundation at the Reformation in Scotland, asserts Brown (1977), the Established Church with its parish churches, schools and officials, was a vital instrument of civil power in the vacuum of secular government, and imposed stability in society.[253]

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[249]   Kirk, in Cameron *et al* Dictionary, 1993, 673.
[250]   Ansdell, 1998, 96.
[251]   Macpherson, 1971, 267.
[252]   Drummond *et al.,* 1975, 41.
[253]   Brown, 1977, 68.

4.4 Origins of the Parish

According to Galbraith (1940), the parish was an ecclesiastical sub-division of the country before it became, owing to the administrative power being largely in the hands of the Church, a unit used in purely civil administration.[254] Though the parish was not part of the organisation of the Celtic Church, it had its origin, in many cases, in the geographical distribution of the missions of that Church.[255] As explained above, the Christianisation of the country took place through the labours of individual missionaries and saints operating from well-recognised centres.[256] Once established, the *quoad omnia*[257] parish evolved as the standard administrative unit within the Christian Church. With the Reformation transforming patterns of religious observance such that all parishioners were expected to attend worship every Sabbath, the logistical difficulties of getting people to church were formidable. Hence the complaint of the parish minister at Strath, Skye, in 1845:

> Public worship is generally well attended; but, owing to the extent of the parish, the ruinous state of the church, and the remote distance from it at which the great majority of the people reside, their attendance is much influenced by the state of the weather.[258]

Similar reports of unfavourable landscape, an absence of roads and bridges, remoteness, isolation, over-large parishes, lack of a settled ministry, and even lack of a church building, coupled to the seasonal needs of subsistence farming, 'scantiness of clothing', (reported from the parish of Tiree and Coll),[259] all militated against regular family church attendance, are endemic throughout the *N.S.A.* Furthermore, argues Meek (1987), there are numerous instances, much celebrated in the hagiographic tradition, of worship being conducted in the open air.[260] Later it will be shown that the successors of Chalmers' *Chapel of Ease* [261] congregations were the *quoad sacra* [262]

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[254] Galbraith, 1940, 456.
[255] *Artebert* (CE 1226) parish, and *Terbert* (CE 1500 and CE 1529) place, estate, parish, are the Earliest recorded use of the word parish to denote a specific area of land. (Scottish Place-Name Society Day Conference, Birnam, Perth-shire, May 8, 2010.
[256] Galbraith, 1940, 456.
[257] *Quoad omnia* - in respect of all things ecclesiastical and civil.
[258] *N.S.A.* XIV, 312 (Sleat Parish, Skye, 1840).
[259] *N.S.A*, Vll, 210 (Tiree and Coll Parish, Argyle, 1843).
[260] Meek, 1987, 27.
[261] *Chapels of Ease*: In the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the failure of the Established Church to create additional places of worship for the growing population led to the creation of independent chapels. These early chapels were the forerunners of Rev. Thomas Chalmers' great Church Extension Drive (Cameron, 1993, 162).
[262] *Quoad sacra* In respect to sacred things only, i.e. for ecclesiastical purposes only and without

congregations instituted by an evangelical led General Assembly in the passing of the *Chapels Act, 1834*, to grant these equal status to the old *quoad omnia* parishes.[263] Parishes were, and still remain, both ecclesiastical and civil units. As will be explained in a later chapter, Parochial Boards were set up in 1845, initially to administer the new Poor Law in Scotland. The last vestiges of these Boards, effectively administered through church sessions, disappeared at civil regionalization in 1975.

Plate 4.2

'Parliamentary' Church sited on the Island of Iona

Parish Church, Island of Iona, Argyll-shire. Built as a 'parliamentary' church in 1828 to Thomas Telford's design, its accompanying manse, built at the same time, is currently in use as a heritage centre. (photo-JRS).

4.5 Established Presbyterian Church building

Brown (1893) in his *Annals of the Disruption,* claims that the Presbyterian Church does not recognise the peculiar sanctity of consecrated buildings, emphasizing that 'the sacredness of divine worship, according to their ideas, depending rather on the spirituality and devoutness of mind with which the worshippers draw near to God.'[264] This, of course, accords with Jesus' teaching in the gospel of St. Matthew 18:20; "For

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civil responsibilities, jurisdiction or significance. The function of such a parish was to sub-divide a parish *quoad omnia* (in respect of all things ecclesiastical and civil), either because it was too big, or because the church associated with it was remote from the actual residences of the bulk of its parishioners.

[263] Lyall, F., 1993, 687..

[264] Brown, 1893, 242.

when two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". However, to understand the ethos of Presbyterian Church building in the Scottish Highlands and in Ireland, it is necessary to look at the social and political contexts of worship in Reformation Scotland. Older pre-Reformation churches in the Highlands had often been built on holy sites associated with earlier Celtic saints who, Dawson (1994) remarked, 'preferred isolation to comfort'.[265] Following the Reformation, states Dawson, Scottish Calvinism was able to take earlier forms and practices and adapt them to local use.[266] Whilst pre-Reformation buildings were retained, new spaces of worship were created internally to emphasize the primacy of the Bible as the Word of God. Pulpits, centrally sited, replaced the altar as the focal point of public worship. A Bible stand retained the bible as the source of authority in the life of the Church. Preaching assumed dominance within the liturgy. A baptismal font used during baptisms signified the covenant between God and the Church, welcoming the child into the community of the Church. Altars were removed and replaced by the communion table or nest of tables at which communicants moved forward in relays from the pews. There appears to have been no standard layout, since a long central communion table with benches running down the length of the church was a fixture of several mid-nineteenth-century Presbyterian Church furnishings as illustrated in situ at Lismore Parish Church in Argyll-shire, by Ferguson (2009).[267] Thus, at Farr in Sutherland-shire in the 1840s, the communion table was reported to accommodate about sixty-four communicants at one sitting.[268] Admission to the Lord's Table was attained on the basis of 'accredited' public profession of faith. Hence, a clear distinction, marked by the use of a communion token, a device instituted by John Calvin in the French Reformed Church, was established in the Scottish Presbyterian Church to distinguish between accredited members and adherents. Following the Scottish custom, the practice was carried to Ireland in the seventeenth century.[269] Decorative icons and images were removed in their entirety and former practices of burial were banished from within the church to the churchyard.

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[265]   Dawson, 1994, 243.

[266]   *Ibid*, 233.

[267]   Ferguson, 2009, 91.

[268]   *N.S.A.*, XV, 76, (Farr Parish, Sutherland, 1834).

[269]   http://antrimhistory.net/content.php?cdd=55

The British Government, being concerned with the religious instruction of the masses, set up a Parliamentary Commission in 1823, and embarked on a large-scale church building programme resulting in the so-called 'Parliamentary Churches' (Plate 4.2).[270] The Commission states Dodd (1971), proposed to establish forty-three additional churches in some of the most scattered and thinly populated parishes in the Highlands with a Government grant of £50,000.[271] A manse was required for each church building and a limit of £1,500 was set for each pair of buildings. Thomas Telford (1757-1834), architect and engineer to various parliamentary commissions, was asked to supply plans and specifications. Only thirty-two 'Parliamentary Churches' were built to Telford's design, although this was not always strictly adhered to; nineteen located in the Highlands and thirteen in the Islands. A notable example illustrated by Hume (2005), Croik Church at Ardgay, Sutherland, still in use, retains its original form with furnishings virtually unchanged since first built.[272] Hence, the Established Church of Scotland in the Highlands and Islands, before its disruption in 1843, was to maintain its witness in various buildings, different locations and at different levels.

By the mid-nineteenth-century most Presbyterian Church buildings, though plain and with little pretension, were of dressed stone construction with slated roofs as many early-nineteenth-century examples exhibit today. Several retained a secluded 'laird's loft', or as it was known in the Eastern Highlands, a 'waster laft'[273] for the exclusive use of the landowner and his entourage. By the 1840s however, Presbyterian Church building had become more ornate with the introduction of 'Heritor's Gothic' marked by a spire or steeple as a distinguishing feature on the landscape. This, states Kirkpatrick (2006), was also true in Ireland where about half of all Presbyterian Church buildings were erected or enlarged during the nineteenth-century, steeples there becoming fashionable. In particular, some 400 manses were erected in Ireland in the fifty years

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[270] MacDonald, 2002, 73.
[271] Dodd, 1971, 113.
[272] Hume, 2005, 264: Croik Church, Ardgay, Sutherland, in *1000 Churches to Visit in Scotland*, published by Scotland's Churches Scheme, Edinburgh. The old-style communion table and original pulpit are still in place within Croik Church. The east window is renowned for messages scratched in 1845 by evicted inhabitants of Glencalvie.
[273] Waster - a term applied to the tenant or owner of land (Chambers Concise Scots Dictionary, 1985), See also 'The Packman' in *Hamewith and Other Poems* by Sir Charles Murray (1927) who makes a sly dig at the heritors who were known for their reputed parsimony: "An' when they made him elder, wi' the ladle it was gran', / To see him work the waster laft an' never miss a man"

after the 1840 union of the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod to form the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This impetus for new Presbyterian Church building in Ireland was sustained by the creation of a Church and Manse Fund in 1853.[274] A common feature of Irish Presbyterian Church buildings - Cork and Cobh [275] are examples - was to have the words, *Scots Church,* engraved into the stonework above the main entrance door. This does not imply a church building exclusively for the use of Scots worshippers, but that it is a place where the doctrines preached are in accordance with those of the Established Church of Scotland.[276]

According to MacDonald (2002) in his review of evangelical Presbyterian practice in the Hebrides, the elders continue to sit apart from the congregation in a demarcated space below the pulpit commonly referred to as *an suidheachan mor* (the big pew).[277] The praise is led by a precentor (always a man)[278] who, standing at the front and facing the congregation, will choose a tune from the Scottish metrical psalmody and initiate the singing on the instruction of the minister. In Gaelic worship, the precentor will sing the phrase - 'giving out the line' - which is then repeated by the whole congregation.[279] At Kilmuir Church, North Uist, one of the few remaining Gaelic-essential charges, during the morning Gaelic service, the traditional precenting of Gaelic psalms is currently retained in the liturgy, but significant change is afoot.[280] Reformed discipline, though weakening by the mid-nineteenth-century still prevailed; at Farr in Sutherland shire, people were expected to be punctual in attending 'family and village examinations', and to be proficient in the Shorter Catechism.[281]

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[274] Kirkpatrick, 2006, 61.' The Church House complex in Fisherwick Place, Belfast, marks the high water mark of elaborate Presbyterian building in Ireland'.

[275] Erected in 1856, the former Presbyterian Church at Cobh now serves as a Heritage Museum for the town.

[276] Crowley et al, 2005, 230.

[277] MacDonald, 2002, 71.

[278] The precentor – In the days before many people had learned to read and church organs installed, the precentor stood below the pulpit, but above the pews, and "gave out the line" of a psalm which was then repeated by the congregation. It is still the practice in the Free Church of Scotland (Wee Free) in the Highlands and Islands.

[279] MacDonald, 2002, 72.

[280] Kilmuir Church, North Uist, in *1000 Churches to Visit in Scotland*, Scotland's Churches Scheme (Edinburgh, 2005, 438). However, a plenary session of the Free Church of Scotland, held in Edinburgh on 19 November 2010,voted to allow the use of musical instruments and hymn singing in church for the first time since the Disruption of 1843.

[281] *N.S.A.,* XV, 77, (Farr Parish, Sutherland, 1834).

The downside to acceptance of Presbyterianism is to be found in the social change which transformed the character of its Celtic adherents. Meek (2001) asserts that Presbyterianism was the principal cause of the decay of secular culture in Skye where many revivals took place in the nineteenth-century.[282] In 1841, the Duirinish, Skye, parish reporter to the *N.S.A.* made the following observation:

> The people have become less social . . . It was, as is well known, customary for neighbours to visit each other's houses nightly, and to while away part of the long winter evenings, in reciting tales and traditions, singing songs, or playing some musical instruments. Now, all this is completely given up. It is with difficulty that a tradition regarding the once most popular characters or events can be picked up' The 'tales' or '*Sgeulachandan*' seem to be totally forgotten. It is rare to hear a song sung, and still rarer to hear the sound of pipe or violin. It is to be lamented that the traditions of the Highlands have been irrecoverably lost.[283]

This tendency to morbidity and depression, manifest in a loss of natural gaiety, has characterized the West Highlands and its people. However, it could be said that the evangelical minister and his congregation stood closer to each other than in the other denominations and was thereby well placed to support those in need both spiritually and materially.

4.5.1 Established Presbyterian Church extension in the Highlands

Lack of a settled ministry,[284] over-large parishes [285] and lack of well-maintained parish church accommodation,[286] disabilities current in the remote Highland parishes typified by Assynt in the early 1840s, seem to have remained a chronic problem for the Reformed Church in general up until the first half of the nineteenth-century. Burleigh (1960) finds that Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), later to be a key figure in the schism of 1843 which created the Free Church of Scotland, had campaigned vigorously for a programme of church extension in the Highland region. In the third quarter of the eighteenth-century the failure of the Established Church to create sufficient places of worship for a growing population led to the creation by the Moderate dominated General Assembly of 1798, of independent chapels known as *Chapels of Ease* [287] (referred to in 3. 4). With no area allocated to it, and no Kirk session of its own, the chapels operated as alternative sanctuaries of worship to the local parish church and

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[282] Meek, 2001, 2.
[283] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 358, Duirinish parish, Skye, Inverness-shire, 1841.
[284] *N.S.A., XV*, 116, (Assynt Parish, Sutherland, 1840).
[285] *Ibid*. 1840.
[286] *Ibid*. 1840.
[287] Burleigh, 1960, 321.

remained, at first, out-with the control of local presbytery. In effect the staffing of these chapels, was seen to create a two-tier ministry, anathema to the structure of the Reformed Church.

4.5.2 Highland Sabbatarianism

Sabbatarianism is founded on God's fourth commandment to Moses and the people of Israel gathered at Mount Sinai.[288] With a long history dating from the Celtic Church, the Scottish Church remained theoretically sabbatarian through the Middle Ages. In the *Book of Discipline*, the Scottish Reformers neglected to formulate a fully developed sabbatarian theory of Sunday to guide their newly erected Kirk, and in consequence, Sunday observance was left to the disciplinary judgment of individual Kirk sessions supported by the local magistrates. Inspired by the Haldane evangelical mission of the 1790s, argues Needham (1993), the nineteenth-century was the great age of Scottish sabbatarianism, both in terms of its publications and its drive to bring the nation closer to the ideals of the fourth commandment.[289] Introduced to the Highlands in the late-eighteenth-century wave of evangelicalism, sabbatarianism has precariously retained, longer than most areas, a more traditional practice in the face of social change.[290] Some features of strict sabbatarian observance maintained by adherents to the Free Church of Scotland above the Highland Line are reproduced as Appendix "I".

4.6 Social class of Presbyterian congregations

Apart from identifying by name the status of deserving poor, Presbyterian Church records *per se* for the Highlands and Islands are largely silent on parishioners' occupational category. The *Old Parish Registers (O.P.R. s)* in use until 1854 record baptisms and marriages, but no deaths. Whilst family name and domiciles are recorded, occupational status is not. More revealing are the population summaries compiled by individual parish reporters to the *N.S.A.* and the progressively detailed minutiae recorded in the national decennial census returns of 1841 and 1851. The Parish of

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[288] Exodus 20, 8-10: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, etc".
[289] Needham, 1993, 738.
[290] In Britain, the Isle of Lewis has remained the last outpost of Sabbatarianism, but the ferry operators, Caladonian-MacBrayne, against strong church opposition, propose to conduct a Sunday passenger service by mid-2009.

North Uist clerical reporter to the *N.S.A.* cites a number of identifiable social classes on the island; gentlemen farmers who set a praiseworthy example in moral habits, small tenants, the common people who are sober and industrious, and the poorer and more ignorant given to vice and immorality. Overall, the reporter avers, it is the "better sort who are most regular in their attendance at religious worship and ordinances". [291]

In such a remote and varied geographical area, occupations tend to be specific to a particular landscape. Whilst subsistence agriculture was widely practiced throughout the Highlands, 400 families in North Uist were engaged in kelp manufacture, the only industry on the island.[292] This was also true of the parish of Lochs in Lewis.[293] The *N.S.A.* can tell us, for example, that 'the population of Assynt, who live in straightened circumstances along the shore-line, have the benefit of fishing as a livelihood'. Assynt's main village, Lochinver, clearly a centre for service industries, has shops and several unspecified tradesmen.[294] The decennial census returns for the Highlands and Islands from 1841 onwards display occupational status in which 'agricultural labourer' forms a prolific entry. Hence, for the island of Jura in 1841, some 55 of the 211 heads of families have a clearly-listed skilled occupation; boat-builder, brewer, cartwright, church officer, cooper, miller, hand-loom weaver, and so on. In Lochaline village in Morvern, is found an army pensioner, an engineer, a merchant-seaman, a joiner-apprentice, a spirit dealer, a tailor and a mason. No reference is made to devotional affiliation, but it can be assumed that in times of plenty, the occupations listed may have maintained the majority of the population with a life-style marginally above subsistence level irrespective of denomination. All too often in the *N.S.A*, however, the comment of the Kilfinan, Argyll, reporter that "The people in general are in poor circumstances" is a description replicated by reporters for other Highland parishes.[295] It is clear from session records that in the 1840s, the Established Church of Scotland in keeping with its Reformation principles, still attracted all social class of adherent into communion even though in the Highlands and Islands, the social class that

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[291] *N.S.A.*, 1845, XIV, 173 (North Uist Parish, Inverness-shire, 1837.
[292] *N.S.A.*, 1845, XIV, 178 (North Uist Parish, Inverness-shire, 1837).
[293] *N.S.A.*, 1845, XIV, 165 (Lochs Parish, Lewis, 1833).
[294] *N.S.A.*, 1845, XV, 114.(Lochinver, Assynt Parish, Sutherland, 1840).
[295] *N.S.A.*, 1845, VII, 371 (Kilfinan Parish, Argyll), 1843).

predominated was undoubtedly the poor. On the other hand, argues Bowen (1978), the Presbyterians in Ireland admitted that whilst few aristocrats belonged to their communion, neither did the poor. It was noted that half the paupers in Belfast, Londonderry and Monaghan workhouses in 1853 were members of the Established Church, while a quarter of them were Roman Catholics. Bowen adds, "It has often been said that Presbyterianism is not a religion for a gentleman, but the statistics of the Ulster workhouses rather seen to indicate that it is not a religion for a beggar-man".[296] Some support for Bowen's view can be extracted from the baptismal roll of Hollymount Presbyterian Church, Co Mayo, in the west of Ireland, for 1846, which listed the fathers' occupation as:

> Minister, Farmer, Steward, Foreman, Ploughman, Shepherd, Smith, Keeper, Forester, Gardener, Constable, Sub-Constable, Merchant, Shoemaker, Carpenter, Accountant, Clerk, Guager.

Similarly, in the east of Ireland, the Minutes of Committee of the Presbyterian congregation of Waterford record in the 'Notices of Marriage':

	Male	**Female**
06 Apr 1847	Baker	Unemployed
24 May 1848	Master mariner	Widow
22 June 1848	Army sergeant	Spinster
1849	Engineer	Spinster
27 Feb 1850	Mariner	Servant
20 Aug 1850	Private soldier	Servant
18 Oct 1850	Lance Sergeant	Servant
03 Apr 1851	Private soldier	Book binder
05 Feb 1852	Private soldier	Spinster
19 Apr 1854	Master mariner	Not stated
16 June 1856	Constabulary	Milliner

In south-west Ireland, the Baptism and Marriage Registers of Trinity and Queen Street Presbyterian Church in Cork City, covering the famine period between 1847 and 1855, reveal a distinctly middle-class congregation and one unlikely to have been victims of the severe destitution that characterized the county as a whole.

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[296]   Bowen, 1978, 32.

4.7 The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is a daughter Church of the Established Church of Scotland. According to Reid (1867), Barkley (1959), Holmes (1985, 2000), Kirkpatrick (2006), the roots of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland can be traced back to 10 June 1642, when the first organised Presbytery of Ulster was introduced by chaplains attached to Scottish regiments stationed in Carrickfergus, ten miles north of Belfast on the shore of Belfast Lough, in the wake of an Irish Catholic uprising in 1641.[297] However, Presbyterianism in Ireland was evident from the time of the Plantation of Ulster in 1610 when, argues Connolly (1998), some Presbyterian ministers followed Scots settlers and took livings in the Episcopal Church of Ireland.[298]

Table 4. 1

Thompson's seven periods of Irish Presbyterian history [299]

1.	Up to 1641	when Presbyterianism was within the Irish Church.
2.	1642 to 1661	when Presbyterianism as a separate entity was established.
3.	1661 to 1690	when Presbyterianism was suppressed.
4.	1690 to 1780	when Presbyterianism was under legal difficulties.
5.	1780 to 1870	when Presbyterianism was tolerated as a church.
6.	1870 to 1920	when Presbyterianism had equal status with all churches.
7.	1920 to the present day	when Presbyterianism is one church in a divided society.

During the reign of King James 1 (James V1 of Scotland) a large number of Scottish Presbyterians emigrated to Ireland. Under Cromwell congregations multiplied and new presbyteries were formed. After the Restoration, non-conforming ministers were removed from parishes of the Established Church, but the Irish administration could not afford to alienate such a substantial Protestant population and Presbyterianism was allowed to continue in the country, with the stipends of ministers paid through the *regnum donum* - literally, 'the King's gift'.[300] A useful chronology is provided by Thompson (2005) in his suggestion that Irish Presbyterian history may be divided into seven periods which he has tabulated in Table 4.1 above. In the eighteenth century the

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[297] Kirkpatrick, 2006, 9.
[298] Connolly, 1998, 459.
[299] Thompson, 2005, 19.
[300] The *regium donum* was an annual grant of £600 to Presbyterian ministers inaugurated by Charles II in 1672. Payments were halted under James II but reintroduced at an increased rate of £1, 200 by William III in gratitude for Protestant support for the Williamite case in Ireland (Byrne, 2004, 263)

Presbyterian Church in Ireland was weakened by emigration to colonial America and by division over subscription to the Westminster formularies, which encouraged Scottish Covenanters and Seceders[301] to form congregations and presbyteries in Ulster. The restoration of subscription in 1835, notes Bowen, led to union with the Seceders to form the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.[302]

The rivalry between the Established Church and the Presbyterian Church in Ulster, argues Bowen (1978), was intense. While the former body purported to serve the whole of Ireland, the Presbyterians were primarily concerned with northern affairs and consequently its ministry confined its pastoral role to membership of its own communion. Presbyterians scorned the Episcopal Church for both religious and ecclesiastical reasons, add Bowen, and prided themselves as the true defenders of Protestant and British culture in the north of Ireland.[303] Rivalry also existed between Presbyterians and indigenous Roman Catholics as Baillie (1947) found at Ballina, County Mayo, in the west of Ireland. There, states Baillie, Roman Catholics found it difficult to distinguish one brand of Protestantism for another, unfairly suspected them of being connected with the party of the ascendancy, and perhaps 'landlordism', not realising that Presbyterians were drawn mostly from estate employees and not from the proprietors. They also seemed insensitive that Presbyterians in Ireland suffered the same disabilities under the Test Act as their Catholic fellow-countrymen.[304]

Ulster Presbyterianism within itself, argues Bowen (1978), did not present a united front. One of its great weaknesses in the early years of the nineteenth-century was its several divisions. Indeed, as early as the 1740s, following secession over subscription to the Westminster Confession, its two major bodies emerged as the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod.[305] By the nineteenth-century, states Byrne (2004), awareness that some of those that did not subscribe to the Westminster Confession were in fact Arian provoked a new phase of the conflict. In consequence, seventeen ministers and

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[301]   Seceders - see Chapter 5, note 73.
[302]   Bowen, 1978, 29.
[303]   *Ibid*, 29.
[304]   Baillie, 1947, 2-3.
[305]   Bowen, 1978, 31.

elders, opposed to subscription, seceded from the Synod of Ulster, met at Belfast on 25th May 1830, and formed the 'The Remonstrant Synod of Ulster' asserting the right of private judgment, denouncing all human authority in matter of faith. This led to the restoration of obligatory subscription to the Westminster Confession within the Synod of Ulster and facilitated union with the Seceders in 1840 to create the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.[306] The Non-subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland formed in 1910, remains as a legacy to Presbyterian secession. The link between Irish and Scottish Presbyterianism was re-invigorated in 1843 when, to quote Brown (1893) from his *Annals of the Disruption*:

> Of the sister Churches who came to the aid of the Free Church, the first to stretch out a helping hand was the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. On the morrow of the Disruption, within twenty-four hours after the event, a deputation of Irish brethren, with Professor Killin at their head, appeared in Tanfield to offer their cordial greetings, which they did in warm and cordial terms.[307]

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[306]   Byrne, 2004, 279.
[307]   Brown, 1893, 544.

Chapter 5: Practical aspects of nineteenth-century Presbyterian witness

> Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined
> to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also
> they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and
> Saul. (Acts 11: 25-30).

5.1 Fiscal arrangements within the Presbyterian Church

In principle, claims Brown (1997), the burden of maintaining church finances devolved upon the landowners who formed the Board of Heritors within each parish. The Board was not an ecclesiastical court, Brown explains, but a civil court under the supervision of the Court of Session.[308] Ecclesiastical records for the mid-nineteenth- century Highlands and Islands indicate that the fiscal resources available to the Presbyterian Church were far from affluent and required careful management. In the parish of Harris in 1845, it was reported that "The church collections are so trifling, that a distribution of the funds rarely takes place",[309] whilst in the parish of South Uist, "there are no church collections, the people being so poor that nothing can be collected in that way for religious and charitable objects".[310] Some Kirk sessions, such as that at Assynt in Sutherland, recognized distinct classes of poor and dispensed relief on a pro-rata scale.[311] Although minor variations in the provision of both human and material resources are evident in church records, some few imprecisely traceable to Highland destitution, sources of ecclesiastical income were in general derived from permutations, shown in the Session Cash-book extract in Appendix "H", culled from a relatively remote Protestant church in the central Highland region in 1846.

There is little variation in the detail of session cash-book entries throughout the Highlands. Establishment Kirk reportage in the *N.S.A.* suggests that primacy was accorded to the weekly collection or freewill offering taken at the church door,[312] or, as at Cawdor, County of Elgin,[313] collected within the church pews by elders using long-

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[308]   Brown, 1997, 68.
[309]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 158 (Harris Parish, Inverness-shire, 1841).
[310]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 196 (South Uist Parish, Inverness-shire, 1837).
[311]   *N.S.A.* XV, 117 (Assynt Parish Sutherland, 1840). The poor are divided into three classes, and get respectively 4s. 2s. 6d. and 2s. each.
[312]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 143 (Glenelg Parish, Inverness-shire, 1836).
[313]   County of Elgin as cited in the *N.S.A*., latterly Morayshire, now Inverness-shire.

handled wooden box ladles.[314] In 1848, the second successive year of Highland famine, the Free Church of Scotland's General Assembly promulgated a *Declaratory Act anent Church-door Collections and Minister Supplements*:

> Declare that in the circumstances in which this Church is now placed, the main and primary object of the ordinary Church-Door Collections must necessary be the supplementing of Minister's Stipends, it being for the most part, more expedient that the relief of the poorer members of the Church should be provided for by the occasional and extraordinary appeals.[315]

Voluntary contributions by heritors formed an irregular source of income for relief of the poor.[316] In certain parishes, but not all,[317] pew rents and seat letting dues,[318] mainly used for the benefit of the poor, followed the erection of pews in the later-eighteenth century. The Proclamation of Banns reflected a monetary pledge of marriage and to make a charge for the marriage ceremony.[319] Marriage fees [320] and fees for baptism [321] also helped to increase the income of Kirk sessions which tried to ensure that all the children's names were registered on its roll, albeit the date of birth may be obscure. Until the early 1840s, fines imposed by the Kirk session were generally for "ante-nuptial fornication" and "petty delicts" that formed a regular source of income.[322] Hitherto fines imposed by magistrates on 'petty delinquents' were passed on to local Kirk sessions.[323] Interest from bequests [324] and legacies [325] also formed an intermittent

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[314] The collection ladles at Cawdor Parish Church are still in use to this day, probably the last congregation in Scotland to maintain this old tradition.

[315] Acts of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, XVII, Edinburgh, 30 May 1848.

[316] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 158, 356 (Duirinish Parish, Skye, 1841 - donations from two heritors). *N.S.A.*, XIV, 158 (Harris Parish) 'Desirable if proprietors should give an annual allowance'. *N.S.A,.*VII, 710 (Argyle County).

[317] *N.S.A..* XIV, 116 (Assynt Parish, Sutherland, 1840). Many pre-nineteenth-century Highland Churches had clay floors and no seating. Elderly and infirm women would carry to church a small stool known in the eastern Highlands as a 'creepie'.

[318] *N.S.A.,* XV, 116 (Assynt Parish, Sutherland, 1840).

[319] *N.A.S.,* CH2/914/2/112 (Applecross Session, 1861). The Kirk Session finding that there have been some difficulties between the Clerk and Church officer as to the fees for proclamation of Marriage Banns, resolved that hereafter the following shall be the scale of Fees, viz., for three proclamations 8/-: for two 9/-:and for one 10/- to be paid to the Clerk before the proclamations which shall hereafter be proclaimed by the Church officer who shall receive them from the Clerk, the one half of the fees when he is instructed by him to proclaim them. Closed with prayer.

[320] *N.S.A.,* VII, 371 (Kilfinan, Parish, Argyle, 1843).

[321] The normal expectation was that baptism should take place on the next preaching day after birth. This reflected the Calvinist insistence that it be administered 'in the face of the congregation' and also the rejection of the notion that babies should be consigned to hell or limbo and hence needed emergency baptism (Cameron, 1993, 57).

[322] *N.S.A.,* XIV, Portree Parish, Skye, 1841).

[323] *N.A.S.,* CH2/914/2/98 (Applecross Session, 1836).

[324] *N.S.A.,* VII, 666 (Kildalton Parish, Argyle, 1844).

[325] *N.S.A.,* XIV, 356.(Duirinish, Parish, Skye, 1841).

boost to a session's poor fund. Most parishes derived a portion of their annual income from mortifications [326] or from the interest on mortified money. Small sums for the Poor's Fund also accrued from the interest on session monies deposited in a bank,[327] and from the rental of mort-cloths for covering coffins at a funeral.[328] Annual donations by landed proprietors [329] and gifts of money or meal made to the Kirk sessions by individuals or societies helped to supplement income for poor relief. [330] Although frequently mentioned in the *N.S.A.*, the power to raise money for the poor by an assessment on all inhabitants was used very reluctantly by Kirk sessions.[331] Well recorded in session records is the sale of paupers' effects after death to provide the session poor's fund with a small but steady income. In this respect, one of the conditions of being placed on the poor's roll was that a pensioner should agree to give up his effects to the Kirk session.[332] Also clear is that special collections were made in times of exceptional need within the parish, or in the wider field of Christian giving.[333] When session funds were temporarily exhausted, parish poor were frequently supported by the charity of neighbours.[334] With the implementation of the Poor Law (Scotland) Act, 1845, heritors and church sessions ceased to be the main source of aid to the poor. Whilst creating uniformity in the provision of aid to the poor, this single piece of secular nation-state legislation may be seen as a clear retraction from the centuries when the Church was the Godly commonwealth that ruled society. It will readily be seen that in years of apparent plenty, the average Presbyterian Church funding from within its parish sources, was barely sufficient to sustain the parish poor. In years of exceptional scarcity, such as those experienced in the mid-nineteenth-century, only the machinery of government supplemented by the philanthropy of a wider public could hope to limit the scale of human disaster.

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[326] *N.A.S.*, CH2/914/2/98 (Applecross Session, 1845), *N.S.A.*, XV, 148 (Kildonan Parish).
[327] *N.A.S.,* CH2/914/2/98.(Applecross Parish, 1845).
[328] Brown, 1997, 69.
[329] *N.S.A,* XV, 148 (Kildonan Parish, Sutherland, 1840).
[330] *N.A.S.,* CH2/914/2/98 (Applecross Session, 1845).
[331] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 321 (Sleat Parish, Skye, 1840).
[332] *N.S.A.,* CH2/698/1/27 (Reay Parish, Sutherland, 1845).
[333] *N.S.A. ,* XIV, 155 (Uig, Lewis). 'The parishioners, as circumstances permit, and exigencies demand, make collections for religious and charitable purposes, but the amount of these is small, from the extreme poverty of the inhabitants'.
[334] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 321 (Sleat Parish, Skye, 1840).

5.1.1 Expenditure from Presbyterian Church funds

Most session records throughout the Highlands and Islands show similar patterns for the disbursal of Kirk session funding in the mid-nineteenth-century to meet the needs of Christian witness. Apart from the erection of church buildings and repairs to the fabric, salaries had to be found for the schoolmaster, session officer and precentor.[335] The catechist was normally funded from the Royal Bounty [336] but in the lean years of the mid-nineteenth-century frequently required presbytery support to buy food.[337] Whereas poverty was an endemic state to most people throughout the Highland and Islands in the mid-nineteenth-century, the typical recipient of poor relief in the 1840s can be illustrated from the Poor's List maintained by the session at the 'parliamentary' Kirk on Tiree.[338] In this record are cited the old and sickly, the elderly widow, the orphan, the lame, the blind, the idiot and the dwarf of which there were two females on the island.[339] The purchase of clothing, and sums of money to purchase clothing given to the poor,[340] together with charitable donations to the destitute stranger,[341] are recurrent items recorded in session cash books. The provision of fuel and medical care complement the provision of coffins and funeral expenses for the poor.[342] These categories of disbursement, as shown above, can be traced in the eastern Highland landward parish records of Braemar from 1846 to 1850 (Appendix "H"). Monies were regularly required for the 'Schemes of the Church'[343] but in years of destitution, such as that experienced on Mull in September 1847, the mandatory sum required by provincial synod could not always be remitted in full from session funds.

> The Presbytery of Mull have to report to the Synod that in several parishes of their bounds, collections were made this year for the Schemes of the Church but that owing to the destitute condition of one and the many claims made in consequence thereof on another class of their

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[335] *N.A.S.,* CH2/330/4/202. (Portree Presbytery, Skye, 1854). A precentor was the leader of singing in church in the absence of musical instruments or choir. The precentor 'gave out the line' of the psalm which was repeated by the congregation.

[336] Meek, 1993, 733: The Royal Bounty: was an annual sum of money (originally £1,000) first given by the King in 1725, and administered by the Royal Bounty Committee of the Established Church. The money was use initially to strengthen the Presbyterian presence in 'the popish parts' of the Highlands by employing itinerant ministers, itinerant catechists and probationers.

[337] *N.A.S.*, CH2/330/4 (Skye Presbytery, 1853).

[338] *N.A.S.,* CH2/482/1/401 (Tyree Session, 1842).

[339] *N.A.S.,* CH2/672/2/112 (Applecross Session), CH2/672/3 (Cromarty Session, 1847).

[340] *N.A.S.,* CH2/21/4/93 (Braemar Session, 1846).

[341] *N.A.S.,* CH2/21/4/93 (Braemar Session, 1846).

[342] *N.A.S.,* CH2/21/4/93 (Braemar Session, 1846).

[343] CH2/312/6 (Ross and Tain Synod, 1846).

people the Presbytery were unable to make a general effort throughout their bounds towards collecting for the Schemes of the Church.[344]

A further burden on parish expenditure was the unofficial system of pauper lodging houses or poors' houses maintained by local Kirk sessions, made available to accommodate nuclear families as a single unit. (Plate 5.1) Generally built as single-storey terraces and not subject to the Poor Law Board of Supervision, each house was supplied with basic furnishing to provide the occupants with a degree of comfort.[345]

Plate 5.1

Craigwell Parochial Poorhouse, near Aboyne, Aberdeen-shire

Craigwell Parochial Poorhouse (renamed Kirkton Cottages) east of Aboyne, Aberdeenshire, opened in the late 1840s as twelve small family dwellings. These were locally administered rather than under Central Board of Supervision control. (photo - www.workhouses.org.uk)

Apart from what can be surmised from session cash books, surprisingly little is recorded within Highland kirk records concerning the destitution so widely and

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[344] *N.A.S.,* CH2/557/10/99 (Mull Presbytery 1847).

[345] Plate 2.4 (page 44) shows that workhouses erected under the nineteenth-century Poor Law legislation were substantial buildings to which destitute families from congested areas were committed to earn their keep. Male was separated from female, children from parents. Whereas the workhouse satisfied the official need to accommodate large numbers, within less densely populated areas in Scotland, an unofficial system of pauper lodging houses or Poor's Houses maintained by local kirk sessions were available to house nuclear families intact. Over one hundred such small local Poor's Houses were erected in Scotland and many survive as normal dwelling- houses. As an example, two terraces each of eight houses formerly the Craigwell Poorhouses, but now renamed Kirkton Cottages, east of Aboyne, Aberdeenshire, are currently maintained by Hoseasons as holiday homes to rent (Plate 4. 1).

graphically reported in the national press in the middle years of the nineteenth-century. However, in July 1847, the Kirk session of Cromarty Parish placed on record:

> At the same time the Meeting divided the sum of seven pounds sterling collected on the church here on the 14th March last for the Destitution in the Highlands among fifty-six persons and families in needy circumstances and not on the Poor Roll of the Parish.[346]

In its carefully reported domestic affairs, the Kirk appears to have been almost exclusively concerned with spiritual matters. Yet, when the initial acute scarcity of food was reported from the Highlands, the General Assembly, through its hierarchy of courts, called upon congregations to observe a special Day of Humiliation and Prayer. In September 1846, the Synod of Argyll moved as follows:

> In as much as the dispensations of Providence by which we have been visited with the failure and threatened with the total loss of the potato, indicates the wrath of God against us for sin, it is becoming and necessary for ourselves under the hand of the Almighty and for this purpose the Synod order a day to be set apart within their bounds for Humiliation and Prayer on which people of all classes shall be called upon to acknowledge their sins, to implore forgiveness and to render thanksgiving for mercies.[347]

Lacking the material resources to meet the exigencies of famine relief on an exceptional scale, the Synod transmitted a secular memorial through its Moderator to His Grace, the Duke of Argyll, with a request that he petition the Lords of the Treasury in Her Majesty's government "in the earnest and anxious hope that they may be guided in devising such measures as my tend to mitigate existing, and to avert more aggravated, distress".[348]

5.2 Patronage in the Kirk

The suppression of the clan system by Act of Parliament in 1747; the widening rift between landowners and the tenant population, fuelled by the policies associated with 'patronage' and latterly, by policies associated with economic 'improvement', would seem to have produced geographical tensions in the Kirk structure. Patronage, claims Burleigh (1960), had been a characteristic mode of endowing the Western Church since medieval times, and implied a right of property, incorporated into later Acts of Parliament.[349] 'Patronage' permitted the patron, usually a substantial landowner, in

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[346]   *N.A.S.,* CH2/672/3 (Cromarty Parish, 1847).
[347]   *N.A.S.*, CH2/557/10/73 (Argyle Synod, 1846).
[348]   Burleigh, 1960, 279.
[349]   Dunlop, 1993, 401: Heritor - a landowner possessing immovable or heritable property in a

association with the body of heritors,[350] to intrude a minister of their choice, upon the congregation. Intrusion, however, was in direct conflict with the right claimed in the (First) *Book of Discipline* of a congregation to call its own minister. In some cases, states Burleigh, landowners included Parliament, Jacobites and Episcopalians,[351] and in consequence, patronage came to be viewed by many as a tool of vacillating Government policies. In 1690, patronage had been abolished by the Presbyterians, only to be restored by the Patronage Act of 1712, in the form that it had been in 1592. It was basically a piece of English legislation designed to ensure that the Crown was in control of the spiritual affairs of the Church. In the words of Ross (1993), this re-instatement of the Patronage Act in 1712 was to be "productive of more mischief in Scottish ecclesiastical life than any other single piece of legislation," [352]and was, adds Macleod (1996), at the root of the multiplicity of denominations in the fragmented Church of Scotland.[353] The specific issue in 1843 was the spiritual independence of the Church, which meant the right of church courts to choose their own ministers free from state control. Patronage, continues Macleod, appeared synonymous with securalisation of the Church and control by the landed interest. Only the voice of the people, so it was believed, could secure an evangelical ministry. In 1843, a clear majority of Highland people removed from the Established Church.[354] Until patronage was finally abolished in 1874, argues Brown (1990), 'intrusion' of ministers by landlords into vacant pulpits

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parish. Together, heritors formed a quasi- corporation for the management and disposal of those parochial concerns to which they were entitled on their own to take action. They had to provide and maintain the parish church, manse churchyard and glebe. When church door offerings were insufficient for the care of the poor, heritors were responsible for assessments to increase the money available. The provision of schools was also a matter for them, but in the nineteenth century this provision became the responsibility of state appointed bodies. The work of heritors ended after the passing of the Church of Scotland (Property and Endowments) Act of 1925, in preparation for the Union of the Churches in 1929.

[350] Burleigh, 1960, 277.
[351] Ross, 1993, 649.
[352] Macleod, 1996, 214.
[353] *Ibid*, 146.
[354] Brown, 1990, 77. The tensions created in the newly Established Kirk by the issue of patronage, prompted the growth in 1733, in the non-urban Lowlands, of the original Secession Church. This led to further divisions between Burghers and Anti-Burghers in 1747 over the taking of the 'Burgess Oath,' followed by Auld Lichts and New Lichts, a division over the role of magistrates in religion, followed by Lifters and Non-Lifters, a division over the lifting of the elements at communion. In the 1733 Secession, the Kinross congregation desired to call a neighbouring popular minister, Ebenezer Erskine, but the Kinross Heritors intruded another, alleged less satisfactory candidate.

continued to dominate Kirk affairs locally and nationally, and had particular moment in the political and economic interests of Highland congregations.[355]

5.2.1 Moderatism in the Kirk

As a policy of the Established Church of Scotland, claims Sefton (1993), Moderatism had its origins in King William and his adviser in Scottish affairs, William Carstairs (1649-1715). Carstairs, chaplain to King William and four times Moderator of the General Assembly, counselled that it was an integral part of Church teaching to abjure bloodshed and bitterness and "to be moderate in all things".[356] However, it was during the eighteenth-century, and especially in the latter half, argues Burleigh (1960), that Moderatism was dominant in the Established Church of Scotland. Moderatism, suggests Burleigh, had its roots in the spirit of enquiry and criticism that characterised the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Moderate ministers, Burleigh avers, tended to spring from the better educated landed class, and held to the mores associated with that social stratum. It is not therefore surprising that the first principle of the Moderate regime in the Assembly was that patronage must be obeyed regardless of the opposition in the parishes. Patrons, the argument ran, were men of position and education better able to judge the qualities of ministers than the unlettered folk who formed the bulk of congregations.[357] This seeming adherence to the interests of landowners by the Moderate faction in the Assembly set up a tension that gravitated the bulk of Highland tenants towards Evangelical support. It is in the tension between Moderate and Evangelical that the Established Church in the Highlands, when under Moderate dominion in the Assembly, was not free from the charge that by giving at least tacit support to the landlords' policies, they colluded in the subsequent depopulation of Highland estates.[358] In brief, to quote Lynch (1991), 'Moderate ministers in the Highlands represented the landowners, their factors and the wealthier single tenants; increasingly Evangelicals spoke for the lower social class of crofters and cotters',[359] a view countered by Ansdell (1998) who found an equal scatter of affluent and educated

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[355] Sefton, 1993, 595.
[356] Burleigh, 1960, 295.
[357] Hunter, 1974, 99.
[358] Lynch, 1991, 365.
[359] Ansdell, 1992, 182.

Evangelicals alongside the poorer, lower classes on the Isle of Lewis in the mid-nineteenth-century.[360]

5.2.2 Evangelical Presbyterianism in the Kirk

Overall, argues Peckham *et al* (2004), the Kirk did not change dramatically between the late-seventeenth and the mid-nineteenth-century;[361] its outreach, however, was moulded by the new spirit of Evangelicalism that impacted upon the Highlands.[362] The root of the new Evangelicalism, states Burleigh (1960), was its emotional appeal, in which the individual discovers new warmth of religious experience of which the essence was a quickening sense of sin, and a joyful realisation of forgiveness through the grace of God in Jesus Christ.[363] Meek (1988) adds that the Evangelicals placed great emphasis on personal salvation, with a very clear line drawn between the godly and the ungodly. Sudden conversions were common as individuals "came under the Word" and found higher moral standards in life.[364] With a firm allegiance to personal conversion and personal commitment, Evangelicals could not be described as radicals, but in the Highlands where the movement flourished, they were unwittingly the mechanism for democratic change in land tenure that was achieved in the late-nineteenth-century.

By the last decades of the eighteenth-century, argues Meek (1991), itinerant Presbyterian evangelists were supplemented by a number of dissident itinerant preachers from the Lowlands who were laymen dispatched by missionary societies that had an interest in Highland mission. Committed to reach people in mountainous areas remote from both parish Kirk and manse, the itinerants' aim was to achieve the conversion of Gaelic people to evangelical Presbyterianism. Emerging first in the Lowland areas of Scotland, it was perhaps inevitable, writes Macleod (1998), that this

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[360] Peckham *et al,* 2004, 27: The SPCK and other societies did much to bring education and reading of scriptures to the people. So the groundwork for evangelical ministry was laid by catechists and the newly established schools.

[361] Peckham *et al*, 2004, 76.

[362] Burleigh, 1960, 309.

[363] Meek, 1988, 115.

[364] Macleod, 1998, 220. Evangelicalism rests on three pillars. First: an absolute and unquestioning adherence to the Bible as the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God. Second: acceptance that Christ alone is the road to salvation. And, third, the need for *personal* salvation, for a personal experience of Christ as one's own Lord and Saviour. In its Calvinist form, which the Highlands knew, the utter sovereignty.

new missionary fervour would spread into the 'dark parts' of the Highlands.[365] Important to the spread of this new lay Evangelism, argues Meek, was the missionary work of the Haldane brothers, Robert and James, founders in 1797 of the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Home*. The Haldane brothers' aim was to re-invigorate throughout Scotland as a whole a 'vital religion' in the manner of the Church's foreign mission in countries abroad. Arguably a Lowland intrusion, devotional awakenings and revivals, observes Meek, succeeded the activities of itinerant Dissenting preachers in the Highlands. To support this, Meek cites the mission work of the itinerant Baptist minister, Dugald Sinclair, from his base at Bellanoch, near Crinan, for the durable spread of that denomination throughout mid-Argyll and the Inner Hebrides islands of Colonsay, Tiree, Islay, Mull and Skye.[366] At this period in the west Highlands, claims Meek, evangelical Christianity assumed an excessively emotional aspect. Yet, the missionary activity of a handful of itinerant ministers and lay preachers throughout the Highlands and Islands seems not to be the definitive story in the spread of Evangelism. Other forces at work in society clearly built upon and expanded the initial evangelistic emotional fervour fanned by charismatic preachers and Awakenings. Perhaps apposite for the west Highlands and Islands in general, it is Ansdell's (1992) opinion that:

> Evangelicalism arrived in Lewis through the agency of the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders. It came with education, literacy and with a compelling certainty. The initial successes of the Evangelicals brought about a change in the social structure of the island. A new group was added to Lewis society and quickly became the dominant group. They were dominant, not in a material sense but by virtue of moral and intellectual leadership. In addition, as a result of this network of teachers, catechists and elders the evangelicals were able to penetrate every family.[367]

Following Brown (1893) in his *Annals of the Disruption*,[368] Meek (1993) claims that a new class of evangelical lay preacher that emerged in the Highlands from the 1700s, '*Na Daoine* - the Men', who acted as custodians and leaders of experiential religion among Highland Presbyterians.[369] Drawn from the lower strata of Highland society, usually crofters themselves, but including elders, catechists and schoolmasters, 'The Men' had a profound conviction in their religious belief, a thorough knowledge of the Bible, and set exacting standards in spiritual observance. In no way despised as rivals

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[365] MacLeod, 1998, 62. .
[366] Meek, 1991, 59-91.
[367] Ansdell, 1992, 197.
[368] Brown, 1893, 544.
[369] Meek, 1993, 558

by the majority of parish ministers, "the Men", adds Meek, "were both evangelizing zealots and natural leaders, capable when the time came in the nineteenth century, of uniting crofting communities into concerted action against the perceived excesses of the landlords".[370]

Devotional 'revivals'[371] and 'awakenings' associated with fervent Evangelical Presbyterianism, argues Meek (1993), must be placed in a wider international context of religious experience as the population of Europe became more mobile with the possibility of emigration to the New World.[372] From the eighteenth-century, continues Meek, Scottish revivals can be seen as part of a North Atlantic phenomenon, and were usually associated with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The intensity of the preaching on occasion resulted in members of the congregation fainting, swooning and engaging in other obtrusive reactions. A founding figure in the movement was the preacher, theologian and missionary within his native America, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) who was an influence on the English evangelist George Whitefield (1714-1770). Whitfield preached at the Cambuslang Revival of 1742 at which both Lowland and Highland Ministers were present. This, argues Meek (1993), was one way in which evangelicalism was introduced into the Highland region to fill a vacuum caused by the lack of an established ministry and overlarge parishes. Without doubt, the sacrament-based revivals in the Highlands were also closely linked to the growing body of Calvinist Evangelical Presbyterian ministers who came to Highland parishes from the Lowlands after 1800. Irish Presbyterians, argues Holmes (1985), had their own tradition of 'revival' experienced in the early-seventeenth-century by settlers in the Six Mile Water valley.[373] It was this same phenomenon, adds Holmes, which inspired the Presbyterian revival of 1859 that spread out from the area of Kells in County Antrim, Ireland.[374]

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[370] *Ibid*, 559.
[371] *Revival* is a term to be found in Psalm 85:6-7. "Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.
[372] Meek, 1993, 711.
[373] Holmes, 1985, 121.
[374] Kirkpatrick, 2006, 62.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, however, there remained considerable tension in the Highlands between Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, for despite the Relief Act of 1793 and full Roman Catholic emancipation granted in 1829, the Established Synod of Argyll found it necessary at their meeting in September 1846, to instruct its standing Committee anent the Progress of Popery as follows:

> The Synod appoint the same Committee for watching over any proceeding that may be adopted for promoting the progress of Popery and taking such measures as they may deem expedient for opposing the same.[375]

Similar tensions, argues Ansdell (1998), existed at this period between Presbyterians and Episcopalians and between Presbyterians and Protestant dissenters.[376] Whereas each denomination was to contribute to the relief of destitution in the famine years of the nineteenth-century, the approach could not be considered entirely ecumenical.

The history of the Established Church of Scotland is one of division, secession [377] and reunion, clearly illustrated in Burleigh's (1960) 'path of critical analysis' chart (Appendix "A").[378] From the chart it will be seen that in 1820 the two larger and more progressive groups, popularly known as the 'New Licht Burghers' and the 'New Licht Anti-Burghers' united to form the United Secession with 325 congregations, some of them in England and Ireland. By 1839 these had united with the Relief Church in 1847 to form the United Presbyterian Church. According to Drummond *et al* (1975), the United Presbyterians depended heavily on the craftsmen and small tradesmen, people of initiative and enterprise, and these were drifting into the towns where the strength of the church was ultimately to rest.[379]

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[375]   *N.A.S.,* CH2/557/10/63 (Argyll Synod, 1846).
[376]   Ansdell, 1998, 89.
[377]   Drummond *et al.,*1975, 43: The Secession Church, starting with four ministers in 1737, by 1746 had forty-five ministers and congregations and this rate of increase continued through the century. If members of a parish church were dissatisfied with their minister or anything else they found a welcome among the Seceders. By 1799 they had split into four groups mainly over adherence to the Westminster Confession. The Secession Fathers had regarded themselves as pillars of orthodoxy the true upholders of those Calvinist standards from which the eighteenth century Moderates had silently withdrawn their loyalty. Individualist to a man, they reflected within the Church the pattern of pushing, competitive bourgeois society. It is not unfair to say that they were a one-class Church, rooted in that grade of society which was industrious, hardworking, sober and thrifty, and likely to prosper in the world.
[378]   Burleigh, 1960, end chart
[379]   Drummond *et al.,* 1975, 44.

The division with the greatest moment socially, politically and financially, on the destitution years of the mid-nineteenth-century years in the Highlands and Islands was undoubtedly that which followed the Disruption in the Established Church of Scotland in 1843 following a Ten Year Conflict between Moderate and Evangelical factions in the General Assembly over the operation of the Veto Act of 1834.[380] The problem facing the emergent Free Church of Scotland in the West Highlands, argues MacArthur (1986), was that it had over 80% of the population in its congregations, and less than 20% of the Ministers. Though there were Church funds for the building of churches and manses, adds MacArthur, these were not normally available until after the appointment of a Minister.[381] The role of the Free Church in meeting the challenge of the destitution years following 1846 will be addressed in Chapter 6. Meanwhile, it is Brown's (1997) view that the 1843 cleft in Established religion "undermined parish unity and communal worship and allowed dissent to proliferate".[382] Nevertheless, the Established Church of Scotland claims Drummond *et al.* (1975),

> still operated her parochial system effectively outside the industrial areas and the cities, that she struggled to make it work in the unchurched sections of society, that she acknowledged a responsibility to the unchurched and that they, when they needed help, considered themselves as attached to her. She had the great advantage that it did not cost money to share in her worship. The Church of Scotland was still the Church of the country, more vigorously by far than her opponents chose to think.[383]

5.3 Education in the Reformed Church

In 1560, the Reformers determined to institute a basic level of literacy among the population in order that individuals at all levels of society could read the Bible and understand the sermons that formed the basis of the new Church's method of communicating with the laity. Within the school curriculum, emphasis was consequently placed upon an ability to read. Hence, distinct from the practice followed by the pre-Reformation church in which an uneducated laity could only follow the Roman Vulgate form of teaching by the clergy through the medium of religious art and icons displayed within the church edifice. Consequently *The Necessity of Schooles*

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[380] Ross, 1993, 845: Veto Act, 1834, granted congregations power of veto in ministerial appointment. The evangelical party within the Church of Scotland had long believed that the law of the Church allowed that no presence should be 'intruded' by a patron on any congregation contrary to the will of the people.
[381] MacArthur, 1986, 3.
[382] Brown, 1997, 67.
[383] Drummond *et al.,* 1975, 38).

formed an important Head in Knox's *Book of Discipline* in 1560 as a prelude to establishing parochial schools in every parish throughout Scotland:

> For as the youth must succeed to us we ought to bee carefull that they have knowledge and erudition to profit and comfort that which ought to be most dear to us, to wit, the kirk and spouse of our Lord Jesus.[384]

In practice, the Reformers' ambitious plan for parochial schools was only achieved over a protracted period. A series of Acts of the Scottish Parliament in the seventeenth-century, those of 1616, 1633, 1646 and 1696, imposed taxation on local landowners to support schools within their parish bounds. Parochial education forms a recurrent topic in Highland church records of the mid-nineteenth-century. References are varied. For example, in 1846, in the eastern Highlands, the Provincial Synod of Ross and Tain observed that "public attention was much engrossed with the subject of education", and supported "religious instruction in Gaelic to the inhabitants in their native tongue".[385]

5.3.1 Education as a political expedient

Brown (1997) argues that: parochial education was part and parcel of the control of the people exercised jointly by the State and the Church. Certainly, leading modern historians, Withrington (1962), (1993), Withers (1982), Durkan (1959) and Ansdell (1998) have argued that education in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries in the Highlands was not merely conditioned to instill in the individual ability to read and write in order to acquire knowledge in general, but a vehicle to satisfy other objectives that included politics and religious persuasion. Hence, from its inception in 1709 for the political expedient of unifying the nation state and promoting its security, the *Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (S.S.P.C.K.)*, founded for the express political purpose of furthering the cause of the Hanoverian Crown by first, attempting to root out the Gaelic language and to promote English as the preferred language of national unity; second, to convert Scottish Highlanders from entrenched Episcopalianism to Presbyterianism; third, to curtail the spread of Roman Catholic mission; and lastly, to dispel superstition and its association with economic backwardness.[386] "Only after English had replaced Gaelic", argues Withers (1988),

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[384]   Cameron, 1960, 130.
[385]   *N.A.S.*, CH2/312/6 (Ross and Tain Provincial Synod, 1850).
[386]   Ansdell, 1998, 95.

reiterating the official view held at the time, "would the Highlands be civilized, loyal and industrious".[387] In practice, the *S.S.P.C.K.* educational aims were pursued with questionable success.[388] To achieve its purpose of Anglicisation the Society maintained peripatetic schools [389] in remote landward areas that were subject to resurgent Roman Catholicism allegedly allied to politically motivated insurrection with which the Gaelic language was reputedly associated. Ignored, as Ansdell (1998) points out, was the fact that many Gaelic-speaking loyal Highlanders were Protestant at this period.[390]

Plate 5.2

Decline of the Gaelic sermon within the Presbyterian Church
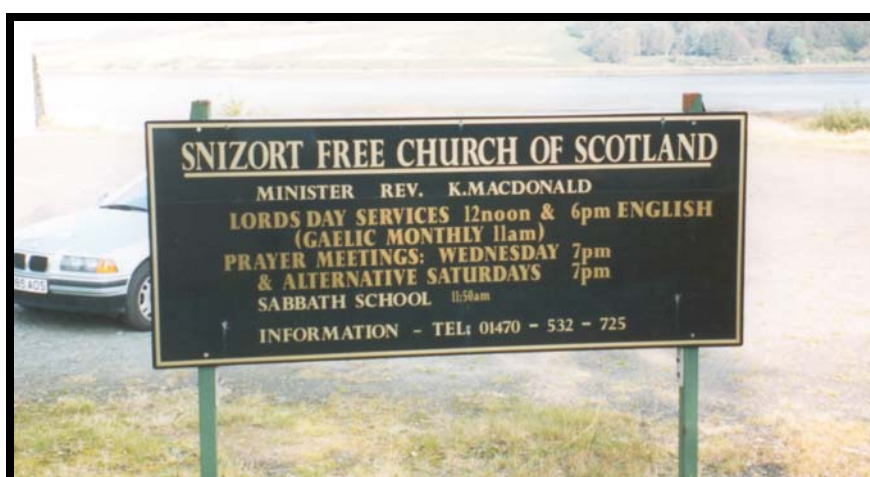
Snizort, Isle of Skye, Free Church notice board proclaiming monthly Gaelic services that perhaps indicates fundamental social change and linguistic decline. (photo - JRS).

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[387]   Withers, 1988, 110.

[388]   West Highland people tended to become anglicised through intercourse with Lowlanders during seasonal migration in search of employment.

[389]   *S.S.P.C.K.* peripatetic schools were settled in a community for a year to eighteen months then moved on to another location. They seldom operated in a district that did not have a parish school and teacher maintained by the landowner as required by law. Some landowners tended to avoid this obligation.

[390]   Ansdell, 1998, 95.

The vacillating policies of the *S.S.P.C.K* in education within the Highlands since the early years of the eighteenth-century attempted to eradicate the Gaelic language - "the Society's design was not to discourage any proper means of instruction in the principles of Christianity but to forward the same, and yet not to continue the 'Irish' language but to wear it out, and learn the people the English tongue",[391] had, by 1825, actively sponsored its encouragement. By the mid-nineteenth-century, with a notable failure to achieve its founding aims, *S.S.P.C.K* schooling lapsed into abeyance. In its lifetime, argues Withers (1988), the *S.S.P.C.K.* was the most significant educational agency throughout the eighteenth-century and for the first part of the nineteenth-century serving the great majority of Highland parishes. Its success during this period rested on its ability to re-adjust its operating principles in order to achieve its founding aims.[392]

According to Duffy (2000), the accelerating abandonment of the Irish language had begun well before the Great Famine visited Ireland in 1845. The sharp increase in mortality and massive emigration had the effect of decimating the language that has since been increasingly retained as a minor second language by select sections of society world-wide.[393] It can perhaps be argued that in the mid-nineteenth-century, language still played a key role in the cultural, social and spiritual life in both Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland. Gaelic, argues Ansdell (1998), was valued by the evangelicals as the most suitable language by which people could learn to read the Bible and thereby a strong link was forged between Gaelic and the gospel.[394] This tradition, claims Withers (1984) is still retained in Free Church worship in the Highlands (Plate 4.1) where preaching the sermon in Gaelic is the preferred option of the congregation, particularly in the Hebrides.[395]

5.3.2 Education as a religious expedient

Following the Disruption in 1843, the new Free Church of Scotland, appointed its own Education Committee and, as Withrington (1993) tentatively observes, by 1847 some

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[391] *N.A.S.*, GD95/1/2: 104.
[392] Withers, 1988, 164.
[393] Duffy, 2000, 94.
[394] Ansdell, 1998, 107.
[395] Withers, 1984, 54 and 96.

500 schools were supported in some form by the Free Church Education Committee. By 1850-1 this presumed total had risen to at least 640 or to just over 700. At least 124 of the Free Church schools had been in existence before the Disruption and taken over in or since 1843.[396] From reportage in the *N.S.A.* it is clear that parochial schools were only one of a number of educational initiatives in the mid-nineteenth-century catering for local educational needs of Highland people. From the decennial census returns, Withrington (1993) has found that in 1851, there existed 2,321 schools which were recorded as having no religious attachment.[397] After 1811, states Lynch (1991), Gaelic Society schools began to be established that gave a more comprehensive coverage of the Western Highlands and Isles, and also taught girls in significant numbers for the first time.[398] In 1824, non-sectarian Assembly Schools, were set up in a number of Highland parishes by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

As an example of the educational scatter available in a remote Highland parish, seven educational institutions were listed by the Assynt, Sutherland, Presbyterian reporter to the *N.S.A.* in 1840, and are typical of the period. Included are schools maintained by the parochial board,[399] three peripatetic schools of the *S.S.P.C.K.*,[400] the Edinburgh Gaelic School Society, the Glasgow Gaelic School Society, the General Assembly Education Committee School,[401] and the Inverness Education Society schools.[402] Significant mention is made that "The Bible is read daily in all our schools, and attention paid to the religious instruction of the pupils".[403] Female Schools [404] and Subscription Schools

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[396]   Withrington, 1993, 79.
[397]   *Ibid*, 80.
[398]   Lynch, 1992, 366.
[399]   Parish schools were established by law in 1696 and became the traditional means of education in Scotland. The schools were financed by a levy on the heritors of the parish, the principal landowners. The heritors appointed the schoolmaster and provided him with a fixed salary and a dwelling-house. (Carlaw, M., and Ogston, D., 2005, 13)
[400]   *The Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge*, mooted in Edinburgh in 1705 and founded in 1709, was essentially a political expedient to unify the nation by means of a Christian education provided in the Society's system of peripatetic schools.
[401]   *The Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge*, mooted in Edinburgh in 1705 and founded in 1709, was essentially a political expedient to unify the nation by means of a Christian education provided in the Society's system of peripatetic schools.
[402]   *N.S.A.*, XV, 77 Kingussie Parish, Inverness-shire, 1835.
[403]   *N.S.A.*, XV, 117, Assynt Parish, Sutherland, 1840.
[404]   *N.S.A*, XV, 671, Killarrow and Kilmeny Parish, Islay, 1843.

[405] were supplemented by teaching within the home by parents and grandparents. In the parish of Barvas, Isle of Lewis, in the mid-nineteenth- century, it is reported that; "The Gaelic is the only language, and has been from time immemorial; and it is spoken, in the opinion of competent judges, with grammatical correctness and classical purity".[406] The importance of this new turn in education in the Highlands can be appreciated when it is realized that the first complete Bible in vernacular Gaelic, able to be read by a majority of the population, was first printed in 1801.

The education of lower social class children in mid-nineteenth-century Scotland was diverse both in the quantity received by the child and the quality of teaching. In the Highlands, claim reporters to the *N.S.A.*, parental poverty,[407] the need for child labour in agriculture, tending cattle, lack of suitable clothing,[408] and, frequently, geographical remoteness [409] if not parental indifference [410] precluded attendance at the plethora of educational schemes instituted by legislation, organizations, adventurers, philanthropists and parents themselves. As severe material scarcity began to impact on the Highland population in the mid-1840s, a number of private and little published philanthropic schemes to improve education for children in the remote areas were formed. *The Association for the Religious Improvement of the Remote Highlands and Islands in Connection with the Free Church of Scotland* was one such body. Composed of a committee of upper-class ladies committed to provide decent clothing to enable children and other destitute persons to attend Church and school where the poverty of the people denied them the basic essentials considered necessary for a dignified life. Three other objectives were first, to plant aid-schools in Highland districts where conventional schools could not be sustained; second, to give assistance to promising young men to pursue their studies for the ministry; lastly, to provide an agency to

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[405] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 233, Portree Parish, Skye, 1841.
[406] *N.S.A.,* XIV, 147 (Barvas Parish, Lewis, 1836).
[407] *N.S.A.,* XIV, 196, South Uist Parish, Inverness-shire, 1837.
[408] *N.S.A.,* XIV, 196, South Uist Parish, Inverness-shire, 1837
[409] *N.S.A.*, XV, 148, Kildonan Parish, Sutherland-shire, 1840: "The parish school is situate near the manse, but, owing to the great extent of the parish, many families are prevented from sending their children to it'. See also, *NSA*, XIV, 233, Portree Parish, Skye, 1841.'There are two districts in this parish so remote, that they are inaccessible to the parochial and all other schools. These are the districts of Glenmore and the Braes'
[410] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 355, Duirinish Parish, Skye, 1841

combat Popery in the Highlands. The Island of Harris was focused upon by the Association as a place of special educational need.[411]

Highland schools, however, suffered from the vagaries attendant upon the population in the mid-nineteenth century. In South Uist, education was neglected by the population, "owing to their poverty and consequent inability to pay school fees", and "the necessity of their employing the children at work, and herding cattle"[412] Examples of lesser educational disabilities punctuate the *N.S.A.* In the Inner Hebrides Island of Skye in 1847, the committee appointed to examine schools in the parishes of Portree and Snizort reported to Presbytery that "due to the prevalence of measles and destitution, the parish schools could not be assembled during the preceding month".[413] Whilst schoolteachers in general were entitled to demand fees, money was so scarce in some Highland parishes in the mid-nineteenth-century that, "many people make some remuneration by supplying the teacher with provisions and fuel".[414] In remote landward areas, school buildings and equipment were often primitive.

Private school education was available for the well-to-do upper classes. Formality of education in the Highlands, argues Withers 1988) was not achieved until the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872 which terminated the work of the General Assembly schools, the schools of the Gaelic Societies, the *S.S.P.C.K.* schools and the scatter of lesser educational enterprises.[415] In terms of the Act, the onus was placed upon parents to send their children to school. By the mid-nineteenth-century, Roman Catholic and other non-Presbyterian denominational schools offered an alternative form of education that conformed to their religious ethos.

Apart from the seeming plethora of schools in Scotland, the new Free Church of Scotland from 1843 erected its own schools in addition to, and separate from, the existing schools of non-established churches, notably the Episcopal Church in Scotland

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[411]   http:www.abdn.ac.uk/-Itu004/ws/Thomson/17-15txt.htm

[412]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 196 (South Uist Parish, Inverness-shire 1841).

[413]   *N.A.S.,* CH2/330/4 (Portree Presbytery, Skye, 1847).

[414]   *N.S.A.,* XV, 117 (Assynt Parish, Sutherland, 1840).

[415]   Withers, 1988, 163.

and the Roman Catholic Church. Girls Schools provided an introduction to literacy and numeracy skills but more importantly, the domestic skills of spinning and weaving. There were also publicly-funded schools paid for by heritors or town magistrates; schools supported from donations by others than heritors or magistrates; subscription schools open in winter when children were free from manual work; and private or adventure schools with no official support, whose teachers were entirely dependent on fee-income from the parents of their scholars.

Plate 5.3

Rural schoolroom typical of the mid-nineteenth century

The Village School (1851) Sir George Harvey (1806-76). (Courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland). Note the poor lighting, the flagstone floor, the sparse furnishings, the air of informality and seeming inattention of the pupils.

The Establishment's school curriculum, as the *N.S.A.* makes clear, depended heavily on the Bible and the catechism to prepare children for a life of obedience to the Kirk. With elected school boards dominated by clergy and local elites, education like religious observance, remained an adjunct to the wider relationship between church and people which maintained social order in rural communities.[416] Despite its partial demise in 1843 the moral duty of the Established Church remained as secure as it had been throughout its history and upheld the standards recorded some years earlier by the Assynt Parish reporter to the *N.S.A.* who could confidently assert that, "the Bible

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[416] Brown, 1997, 74.

is read daily in all our schools and attention paid to the religious instruction of the pupils"[417] In this exercise, both Bible and Shorter Catechism prepared children for a life of obedience to the Church.[418]

5.3.3 Free Church of Scotland education policy in the Highlands

Despite the euphoria experience in establishing the new Free Church of Scotland with its grandiose claims to be the true church of the Scottish nation, and its overwhelming success in the Highlands, its embryonic years were fraught with disharmony within its General Assembly, not least, argues Withrington (1993), the divergent views expressed on the policies and practice to be followed within its proposed Educational Scheme.[419] Against a background of estate clearance, emigration, unemployment and increasing material scarcity in Highland districts, the siting of church premises on estate land that met opposition from Established Church proprietors, the Free Church Education Committee found that promised subscriptions to the school building fund were slow in coming in or not paid at all.[420] Further, the annual collections for schoolteachers' salaries were no longer keeping pace with the rising numbers of new teachers applying for admission to the Educational Scheme.[421] It was incumbent that the Education Committee maintain the standard of education envisaged in the first *Book of Discipline*, first, in order to produce the educated ministry of which there was a dearth in Highland parishes and, second, to educate Highland children to an acceptable standard that would increase their opportunities for employment in the wider world.[422]

In 1846, the Rev. Robert Candlish was appointed Convener of the Free Church Education Committee. His forceful argument for a specific Free Church Education Scheme to the exclusion of national education embracing all denominations was

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[417] *N.S.A.,* XV, 117 (Assynt Parish, Sutherland, 1840).
[418] Brown, 1997, 74.
[419] Withrington, 1993, 84.
[420] *Ibid*, 84.
[421] *Ibid*, 84.
[422] There was a tradition in large lower-class Highland families for at least one young member to achieve a University education supported by his labouring family members under the principle of 'six to row and one to steer'.

accepted by the Committee members.[423] Similar controversies were voiced concerning the nature of post-school education and the erection of Free Church colleges for the training of ministers. Debate centred on the erection of Edinburgh Free Church College as the sole centre for theological training, or to diversify with additional colleges sited in Aberdeen and Glasgow. With the adoption of the latter policy, the mid-nineteenth-century saw the foundation of three Free Church colleges, New College, Edinburgh, Christ's College, Aberdeen and Trinity College, Glasgow. Whilst a dearth of ministers fluent in the Gaelic language was seen to be an impediment to Christian witness in the Highlands, an Act of the Free Church Assembly in May 1848, sought to relieve this perennial disability:

> The Assembly empower the Home Mission Committee to name Lowland ministers, who, associated with ministers having the Gaelic language, may proceed, in the course of the present summer, to such districts of the Highlands and Islands as may be fixed upon, with the view inquiring into the spiritual and temporal necessities of the people in these parts and making manifest the deep interest which this Church takes in their welfare.[424]

5.3.4 Connaught schools of the Rev. Dr. John Edgar

The impact of education, it has been claimed, instilled in the indigenous Celtic races of both Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, the vision of a wider world. Whilst the Old and New Testaments were by the early-nineteenth-century available in vernacular Gaelic[425] for personal readership, the ability to understand, converse and write English opened avenues in 'white collar' appointments previously closed to a large majority the Gaelic-speaking lower classes isolated in remote landward areas. The translation into Irish language of the Book of Psalms had been completed in 1826, and many native Irish speakers had been instructed in the basic skills of reading, writing and translation to increase opportunities for earning a living by honest means.[426] In 1826, argues Simpson (1981), the newly founded Home Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in an aggressive mode, determined to bring the Scriptures to the indigenous Roman Catholic population through the medium of their own Irish language.[427] Of the several philanthropic initiatives in Ireland, *The Belfast Ladies' Association for the Relief of Distress in Connaught,* was formed by a

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423   Withers, 1993, 92.
424   Free Church of Scotland Acts of the General Assembly, Edinburgh, 30 May 1848, Session 20.
425   The complete vernacular Gaelic Bible was first published in 1801.
426   Simpson, 1981, 4.
427   *Ibid*, 5.

committee composed of seventy-two women in response to a letter from the Rev. Dr. John Edgar published in the *Banner of Ulster* newspaper in September 1846, entitled *A Cry from Connaught*. The aim of the Association was to have destitute women taught in some branch of textile manufacture in their own homes and thereby alleviate their material poverty.[428] The inference can perhaps be drawn that the alleged Presbyterian proselytising mission to the west of Ireland instigated by the Rev. Dr. Edgar 'rode on the back' of the Belfast Ladies' philanthropic endeavour.

Women were particularly involved in the collection and distribution of private relief. Ladies' associations were formed in Ireland and England. The ready response of such *ad-hoc* voluntary organizations as *The Belfast Ladies' Association for the Relief of Distress in Connaught,* cited above, the *Cork Ladies' Relief Society*, the *Dublin Ladies' Relief Association* which raised funds from England had their origins at that period. *Newry Benevolent Female Working Society,* modelled upon the Belfast Society, provided employment for women in spinning, knitting and needlework.[429] The *Society of Friends* (The Quakers) also maintained a Ladies' Committee that contributed to the charitable work of the men.[430] Such kindred organisations generally had affluent upper-class women as patrons.

5.4 Education in Ireland

Under the Test Act, Roman Catholic parishes in Ireland had been left intact and priests had to be registered or leave the country. No Catholic could teach in a school, nor were Catholics allowed to send their children abroad for education. As non-conformists, Presbyterians were similarly persecuted. This draconian prohibition led to the clandestine establishment of 'hedge schools', rudimentary classrooms catering for fee-paying Catholic pupils of all ages condemned by law, claims Connolly (1998) to meeting in hedgerows, ditches sod-cabins, barns and church sacristies where a rudimentary form of education was provided. 'Hedge schools' however, were not

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[428] Miller, 1999, 71.
[429] Kinealy, 2006, 165.
[430] By the mid-nineteenth-century the Quakers had become a predominantly middle and upper-middle class body, prominent in textiles, shipping, railways, and retailing. The Society's committee financed and supervised the establishment of soup kitchens entirely free from imputations of proselytism that bedeviled other sectarian bodies.

restricted to Catholic pupils but attracted Presbyterians, especially in the north.[431] The cabin schools were similar institutions that were conducted in stealth. Their aim was to engage salaried Roman Catholic Irish speakers to teach, in their own cabins, children and adults to read and write in both Irish and English.[432]

In Ireland, according to Byrne (2004), National Schools providing primary education for all children had been established by the British Government in 1831 and were originally multi-denominational, governed by a six-member Board of Education composed of two Catholic, two Church of Ireland, and two Presbyterian clergymen.[433] The published ethos was that "National Schools have no religious discrimination at entry". This ecumenical initiative establishing the multi-purpose school was strongly opposed, principally by the Roman Catholic Church on the grounds that the Bible had to be read daily in conjunction with religious instruction that did not accord with Catholic teaching. The hope that a mixed education would dispel traditional animosity between denominations was not to be realised for the Roman church chose to maintain its own schools, albeit financed by the British Government.[434] From 1845 the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland assumed responsibility for schools for which they issued a grant. The stance of the Roman Church on child education was proclaimed in 1850 at the Synod of Thurles in County Tipperary by four archbishops and twenty bishops. Protestant proselytism in any form was condemned and endorsement was given to separate Catholic denominational education and the establishment of a Catholic university. As previously the case, Catholic children were to continue receiving moral and educational training in exclusively Catholic schools.[435]

The regulations for the conduct of the educational system in Ireland were not founded on statute but on a series of instructions contained in a letter from Edward Stanley,

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[431]   Connolly, Oxford Companion to Irish History, 1998, 237-8.
[432]   Simpson, 1981, 5; 'Aggressive mode' - "The Home mission took root with two main branches, the one conservative, and the other aggressive. The conservative branch brought forth much fruit with ten new congregations added to the fold each year. The aggressive branch, the bringing of the Scriptures to the Roman Catholic people was a somewhat different matter."
[433]   Byrne, 2004, 108.
[434]   Kinealy, 2000, 135.
[435]   Donnelly, 2001, 243.

Chief Secretary for Ireland to the Duke of Leinster. The chief purpose of the national system was to educate children of all persuasions in the same school. To monitor the system, a superintending Board of Commissioners of Education in Ireland was created However, the churches exerted powerful pressure on the weak Board of Education and within decades the national system became *de facto* denominational.[436] In Scotland Roman Catholic dioceses openly maintained their own denominational schools in response to the granting of Catholic emancipation in the early-nineteenth-century. Education finally became compulsory for all children aged between 5 and 13 with the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872.[437] As a political initiative in the early-twentieth-century, the Liberal Government introduced state funding of Catholic schools which retained their distinct religious education, access to schools by priests and requirement that school staff be acceptable to the Roman Catholic Church.[438]

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[436] Byrne, 2004, 108.

[437] The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) founded in 1847 is the oldest teachers' trade union in the world. It owes its inception to concern about the effect on the changes in the system education in Scotland on teachers' professional status.

[438] Education (Scotland) Act, 1918. The Act was carried through Parliament by H.A.L. Fisher, the first academic to be appointed a Minister for Education. Its terms raised the formerly lowly status of schoolteachers into the middle-classes by doubling the salary and improving pensions. The Act provided many ancillary services that included nursery schools, special centres for defectives and regular medical inspection of pupils. To discourage religious discrimination, funding was provided for Roman Catholic and Episcopalian schools that had previously been voluntary schools. (Oxford Review of Education, Vol.32, No.1, Feby 2006, pp.5-21).

Chapter 6: Cultural, social and economic structures in mid nineteenth-century Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland.

> If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they. (Ecclesiastes 5: 8)

6.1 Decline of a pastoral society

Until the mid-eighteenth-century it could be confidently argued that agriculture ruled society. On the landscape there was an interaction between man and animal in which the animal represented capital. In the Highlands of Scotland and in Ireland, man and animal shared space, not only on the landscape but, as claimed below, within the primitive confines of the family dwelling-house. South of Withers' (1988) notional Highland line [439] (Fig.1.1), the industrial revolution inaugurated in Britain in 1760, was by 1830, into its second phase with the development of the 'cold-blast' technique (Plate 6.5) of iron smelting facilitating among other durable products, the construction of railways linking the main centres of population.[440] North of the Highland line, for reasons associated with difficulty of access due to treacherous seas, forbidding landscapes, poor roads, scarcity of bridges, shallow acidic soils and remoteness from markets, large scale commercial undertakings held little prospect for potential investors.

In contrast to the more progressive Lowlands, Highland society, although increasing demographically, was in slow decline and had been exhibiting impoverishment in the wake of the Napoleonic wars that ended in 1815. As early as the mid-eighteenth-century observes Macinnes (1988), it was evident that the economy of the Highlands undoubtedly lacked the depth and diversity manifest in the Lowlands.[441] Politically distant from the seats of central government in Edinburgh and London, claims Smout (1986), and economically distant from the world's markets, opportunities for employment throughout the Highlands from the mid-eighteenth-century have

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[439]   Withers, 1988, 2: The comparative study of eighteen early maps suggests that a notional Highland Line extends in a north-easterly direction from Helensburgh in Dunbartonshire to Stonehaven on the Aberdeenshire coast.
[440]   Ashton, 1968,
[441]   Macinnes, 1988, 78.

remained scarce.[442] Scotland in effect possessed two economies, Highland and Lowland. With a rapidly increasing population, and scarce opportunity for the lower classes to obtain work, many of these socio-economic problems were applicable to Ireland, especially to the south and west of that country. The sheer scale of the destitution problem first in Ireland in 1845 to be followed on a much lesser scale in the Scottish Highlands in 1846 could no longer be ignored at the highest levels of nation state.[443]

Plate 6.1

'Centrical' church within the planned township of Inveraray

Glenaray & Inveraray Parish Church. View of 'centrical' church from South-East. Designed in 1792 to house two congregations, English speaking and Gaelic, a solid wall separated the two. The Gaelic portion was converted to a church hall in 1957. The centrality of the building can be inferred from its 'island' location in the 'planned' township's wide main street. (photo - JRS)

The later-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century landowner-enforced economic relocation of estate populations from the Highlands' inner glens and straths - the 'Clearances' - to the coastal areas or to overseas colonies had largely been completed

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[442] Smout, 1986,1, "From London they (Highlands and Islands) were as remote as the moon, From Edinburgh known mainly as the source of deviant religion and political behaviour, and of suspect social habits".

[443] *NSA*, XIV, 200, Glenshiel parish, Ross & Cromarty, "It cannot be said with truth, that the class of people of which the great majority of the population consists, enjoy the comforts of life in even a moderate degree. Poorly fed, scantily clothed, and miserly lodged, there is a life of penury and toil"

by the later 1850s. Some removals had been accomplished benignly,[444] but the forcible eviction of 110 families consisting of 603 souls from Sollas, North Uist,[445] reported in the *Inverness Courier* of 14 August 1849, confirms that this economic measure was still a policy pursued by land proprietors in the Hebrides. Whilst instances of benign evictions to make way for sheep are reported throughout Lewis in the early 1840s, MacIver (1982) finds that forced evictions and emigrations came later to Lewis in a period when whole townships were forced to move to other villages, often carrying the roofs of their houses'.[446] Inspired by the Enlightenment drive for rationalization and order in human affairs, the establishment of planned villages with 'centrical' kirks (Plates 6.1 and 6.2) and wide streets with measured feus, dressed-stone houses with slated roofs, followed from the example of the progressive landowner, Archibald, 3rd Duke of Argyll, who caused Inveraray in 1743 to conform with this pattern.

Plate 6.2

Planned village of Ballater, Aberdeen-shire, established 1808, showing its rational grid geometry of street pattern. The yellow spot marks site of its 'centrical' Established Church of Scotland, built 1798 as 'the kirk on the muir' which predates the village. (Ordnance Survey) www.nls.uk/maps/os/air-photos)

Following this early lead, by the early years of the nineteenth-century, planned villages, a few in the West Highlands but mainly in the Eastern Highlands (Plate 6.2), had been created to absorb and retain for economic reasons on estates, the displaced population from the glens and to act as central places of commerce and small industry

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[444] Watson and Allen, 1990, 37: The Glen Tanar deer forest in Highland Aberdeenshire, was formed in 1855, at which time a number of families were cleared from their farms on the south side of the Tanar between 1855-8. These families were given holdings elsewhere on the extensive Huntly estates. These may well have been Catholic families served by a priest at Deecastle. Like earlier removals from the Mar estate in Upper Deeside, depopulation of the Glen Tanar estate seems to have proceeded amicably. Only estate workers were retained in their homes by the new sporting proprietor.

[445] *Inverness Courier*, August 9, 1849. Details of this incident are recorded in *N.A.S.* AD58/ 85 and AD58/ 86.

[446] MacIver, 1982, 276.

6.2 Popular perception of the Celtic Peoples

Throughout the period, argues Fenyo (2000), contemporary written sources reveal that the Celts were regarded with a measure of "contempt, sympathy and romance", [447] echoing Lowland perceptions emanating from political bias that had attended Celtic peoples both in Ireland and in Scotland over previous centuries. It is John Major, writing in 1521, proposes Dickinson (1953), who first noted the cultural distinction in speech, life and conduct, between 'Wild Scots', inhabiting the forests and mountains of the North, and Lowland 'House-holding Scots'. [448] In fostering this connection among a disparate set of indigenous groupings, Withers (1988) makes mention of the *Miorun mor nan Gall* - the great ill-will of the Lowlander towards the Gaelic-speaking culture area, or *Gaidhealtachd*. [449] The assumption is that, even prior to the early-sixteenth-century, the Highland population carried the early-twentieth-century stigma of an under-developed 'race'.

As will later be shown, government officialdom took a contemptuous view of the destitute Celtic peoples at their time of greatest need. It has been argued that in consequence, the Westminster government, as a political expedient, failed to adequately address the plight of the Gaels who were often left to local philanthropic endeavour, in some cases exercised in return for estate work, or in many cases, assistance in emigration to the colonies. Nevertheless, the patterns of social, economic and cultural change experienced by the Celts during the period were being replicated in many areas of Europe. The *Cork Examiner* of September 6, 1847, was scathingly vitriolic in its reporting of English attitudes to destitute Irish emigrants:

> The *Saunders* (newspaper) of Friday furnishes us with an affecting statement of the privations and wretched condition of a steamboat-load of unfortunate people who were flung, as it were, on the Quays of Dublin, having been driven from the hospitable shores of our "sister" England. The ship-load of Irish destitution was composed of Irish reapers and Irish paupers; the latter of whom were grabbed up by the humane officials of generous England, and thrust on board a steamer, without provision for the voyage, or shelter against the inclemency of the weather, and the exposure of the wild night and an open deck. So that England was freed from the human rubbish, what cared the merciful Poor-law authorities and their tender-hearted officials. If the wretches died on the voyage, itwas only one of those casualties that daily happen.

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[447]   Fenyo, 2000, 46.
[448]   Dickinson, 1953, 8.
[449]   Withers, 1988, 5.

A decade later, despite the progressive removal of Catholic disabilities with the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829,[450] the *Glasgow Herald* of June 30, 1857 could still carry a report that:

> Several Catholic gentlemen of Glasgow are most anxious to establish a Catholic society that would be the exponent of Catholic feelings and the promoter of Catholic interests. There will soon be a Catholic club that will bring public opinion to bear on the grievances to which the Catholic poor are exposed in the public institutions of Glasgow.

6.3 Demographic increase and social pressure

The sheer growth of population in the Highlands and Islands was a striking feature remarked upon by many reporters to the *New Statistical Account (N.S.A.)* and formed a prime cause of poverty and hunger in many areas throughout the Scottish Highlands, as it did in even greater measure in Ireland. Sub-division of land, argues MacIver (1982), was "at once the result and cause of a rapidly increasing population".[451] The roots of this demographic problem were complex and not unrelated to the social pressures on the rural population largely controlled by estate proprietors in pursuit of their economic interests. In 1841 the population within Scotland was shown to be 2,620,000. By 1851 it had grown to 3,718,316 due to natural increase, but undoubtedly augmented by Irish immigration both permanent and temporary.[452]

The elements that combined to impoverish the seemingly excessive Highland population by the mid-nineteenth-century have been catalogued in the *N.S.A.* report submitted in 1840 from the Parish of Kilmuir on Skye. In this report the parish incumbent refers back to the period of severe destitution in the famine years of 1836-38. In several respects the debilitating elements at work in the Highlands were applicable to an even greater degree to the remoter areas in the west and south of Ireland. The primary cause of destitution, proposes the Kilmuir minister, was a "redundancy of population, occasioned by an injudicious system of management".[453]

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[450] Catholic emancipation: Roman Catholic landholders received the right to vote. The fee for voting was raised from 40 shillings to 40 pounds, disenfranchising the majority of Catholics.

[451] MacIver, 1982, 275.

[452] Census, 1841. Sixteen per cent of Glasgow's population recorded as Irish born (44,000 out of 270,000).

[453] *N.S.A.,* XIV, 272 (Kilmuir Parish, Skye) 1840.

This population excess can perhaps be illustrated from the nineteenth-century decennial census returns for the Island of Skye (Table 6.1) in which the peak years in several parishes range from 1821 to 1851.

Table 6.1

Decennial census returns for the seven Island of Skye parishes 1801-1891

YEAR	Kilmuir	Snizort	Duirinish	Portree	Bracadale	Strath	Sleat	TOTAL
1801	2555	2144	3327	2246	1865	1748	1903	15788
1811	2752	2275	3361	2729	1869	2107	1936	17029
1821	3387	2789	4147	3174	2103	2619	2608	20827
1831	3415	3487	4765	3441	1769	2962	2957	22796
1841	3625	3220	4983	3574	1824	3150	2706	23082
1851	3177	3101	5330	3557	1597	3243	2531	22536
1861	2846	2639	4775	3159	1335	2664	2330	19748
1871	2567	2326	4422	2928	1113	2562	2233	18151
1881	2562	2120	4319	3191	929	2616	2060	17797
1891	2394	1908	3933	3176	920	2392	1850	16573

Source - 1981 Census Return for Highland Region Vol.4.

The errors in the system of land management, claim all seven Skye clerical parish reporters to the *N.S.A.,* were embedded in "the frequency of early and improvident marriages, encouraged by the introduction of the lotting system[454] which, in its turn, gave rise to bad husbandry",[455] a point examined below. The evils inherent in overpopulation, allegedly encouraged by Highland landowners to increase the kelping workforce in the coastal fringes, were exacerbated by increasingly higher rents for arable land.[456] This situation encouraged the continued subdivision of crofter lands, to create a demographic imbalance shared by the impoverished small tenants in Ireland at that period. Across the Irish Sea, claims Duffy (2000), rapid population growth in that country, particularly within the Western provinces of Munster and Connaught, is evident from the Irish decennial census records (Table 6.2) covering the period from 1821 to 1841. [457]

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[454] *N.S.A.,* XIV, 235 (Portree Parish, Skye) 1841.
[455] *N.S.A.,* XIV, 272 (Kilmuir Parish, Skye) 1840.
[456] *N.S.A.,* XIV, 283 (Kilmuir Parish, Skye) 1840.
[457] Duffy, 2000, 89.

Table 6.2

Demographic growth in Ireland's provinces, 1821 to 1841

Leinster	12.3%
Ulster	19.4%
Munster	23.8%
Connacht	27.8%

In the latter year, 1841, the Irish census records a population figure of 8,175,124, but does not include sub-tenants, the social group most affected by famine and disease. In 1851, the population of Ireland was reduced to 6,552,385, a decline of 1.6 million.

Plate 6.3

Dispossession and removal faces the poor tenant for unpaid rent [458]

Rent Day in the Wilderness. Sir Edwin Landseer (1802-73). Social and economic contrast between a pleading, impoverished tenant family and the agent of wealthy proprietors of a Highland sporting estate. (Courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh)

6.4 Landlord and tenant relationships

Unlike the unfertile condition of the landscape found in large tracts of the Highlands of Scotland, states Somerville (1994), the "gently undulating country-side" typical of Roscommon in Connaught Province, with few hills, retained soils composed of "rich, deep, heavy loams, high in the scale of fertility, (and) are to be seen in almost every locality". Much of this rich soil remained uncultivated due to reluctance by the landlords to grant tenure to an impoverished and starving population on their estates. Furthermore, landlords would neither employ the starving population nor allow them

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[458] Section 6.8, page 128, last paragraph.

to be employed.[459] Historians of the period have frequently recorded an insensitive approach by Irish absentee landlords to the sufferings of their tenantry as alleged in the following 1847 passage from Spencer Walpole's 'History':

> The lairds of Western Scotland showed the Irish landlords an example which the latter might have followed with advantage. In too many cases the absentee Irish landlords remained either in London or abroad, and allowed their agents to take advantage of the crisis to clear their holdings and eject their tenantry. They clamoured for Government aid, and they protested against the injury to their own estates by the application of a poor law to Ireland. The Scotch laird on the contrary, submitted to his own ruin in a vain attempt to save his people, and when he applied to Government sought no relief for himself, but only demanded help for his tenantry. [460]

The probability is that there was a scatter of both caring and negligent landlords across both the Highlands and in Ireland. Landownership did not tie the proprietor slavishly to his estate, the running of which was usually entrusted to the hands of a factor (Plate 6.3). Walpole's fulsome praise of the virtue attached to the lairds on Western Scotland in respect of their paternalism towards their estate tenantry must be set against less patronising reportage from the *Times* correspondent based at Fort William, Inverness-shire in October 1846 that describes a fairly standard pattern of estate management:

> The largest landholder in this district is a gentleman named Cameron of Lochiel, the head of Clan Cameron, better known here by the name of "Lochiel". By reputation this gentleman is an amiable and benevolent man. He, however, chooses to live absent from his estate. His factor lives at Inverness, sixty miles off. Two thirds of his estates are let in immense tracts, to two chief tenants as sheep walks, who pay him about L4, 000 a year rental, and both these tenants are south-countrymen and absentees. Now, is it in the nature of things to expect an ignorant and naturally lazy peasantry to improve under such circumstances? You have here an absentee landlord, an absentee factor, and absentee farmers, leaving none but a few shepherds and ignorant peasants in the country.

The paradox of land ownership, argues Wightman (2010), was that historically the land had been held by the people in common, but with the imposition of feudalism, and later the Reformation appropriation of church lands, it was illegally annexed by powerful bodies and legitimized by Scots law in 1617.[461] In this land theft, the poor, observes Wightman, had no lawyers.[462]

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[459]   Snell, 1994, 77.
[460]   Barron, 1903, 123, Walpole quoted.
[461]   Wightmen, 2010 49, Acts of Registration and Prescription, 1617, designed to legitimise the theft of church lands, legislation that is extant today.
[462]   *Ibid*, (q.v. bibliography).

Commenting upon employment, the Highlands parish reporters to the *N.S.A.* cite as significant causes of poverty in the mid-nineteenth-century, a failure of the once prosperous, labour-intensive, kelp trade,[463] the lack of manufactures, industry and commerce,[464] the cessation of public road making, and "mismanagement of the domestic economy".[465] Immediately crucial to the wellbeing of the population was a failure of the herring fisheries,[466] a fall in the value of black cattle,[467] and the perennial frequency of inclement weather.[468] To these impediments it has been suggested that emigration from Skye in particular and probably general elsewhere, left behind aged and infirm relatives without support and unable to fend for themselves. It is commonly accepted by historians of the period that the Scottish Highlands were an especially deprived area materially, socially and culturally due to the 'clearance' of inland subsistence-farming communities to accommodate more remunerative sheep-runs let to southern flock-masters. Whist generating a small measure of employment for families retained on cleared land, the early-nineteenth-century saw the rise of the Highland sporting estate as a commercial undertaking. Finally, a marked decrease in illicit distillation, a traditional staple in meeting rentals throughout the Highlands and in Ireland, resulted from changes in government taxation of spirit production [469] which made it, in the words of the *N.S.A* parish reporter for Tiree and Coll, "an unprofitable concern".[470]

At the lower end of the penal scale in Ireland, the illegal distillation of whiskey as a cottage industry (Plate 6. 4) for a limited commercial purpose that involved evasion of duty payment appears to have continued, and may have brought some small cash advantage to the hungry family. Denied paid employment by landowners, cottier tenants and landless individuals, as well as impoverished denizens of Irish towns, ensured that the civil authorities found it difficult to retain social control over a

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[463]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 272 and 282 (Kilmuir Parish, Skye) 1840.
[464]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 253 (Portree Parish, Skye) 1841.
[465]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 272 (Kilmuir Parish, Skye) 1840
[466]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 272 (Kilmuir Parish, Skye) 1840; *N.S.A.,* XIV, 230 (Portree Parish, Skye) 1841.
[467]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 272 (Kilmuir Parish, Skye) 1840.
[468]   *N.S.A.,* XIV, 272 (Kilmuir Parish, Skye) 1840.
[469]   This form of black economy was finally suppressed by Parliamentary legislation; firstly by the Small Stills Act, 1816, and thereafter by the Illicit Distillation (Scotland) Act, 1822, and the Excise Act, 1823, which made illicit distillation uneconomic for the individual operator.
[470]   *N.S.A.*, VII, 209 (Tiree and Coll Parish) 1840.

destitute population seeking any means to survive. Whilst attracting little attention from historians, due probably to the later destruction of public records, contemporary Irish newspapers record the full catalogue of criminal acts that include homicide, more common in Ireland at that period argues Connolly (1998), than elsewhere within the United Kingdom, as a backcloth to the Great Famine years.

Plate 6.4

Ireland's black economy: illicit whiskey (poteen) paid rents
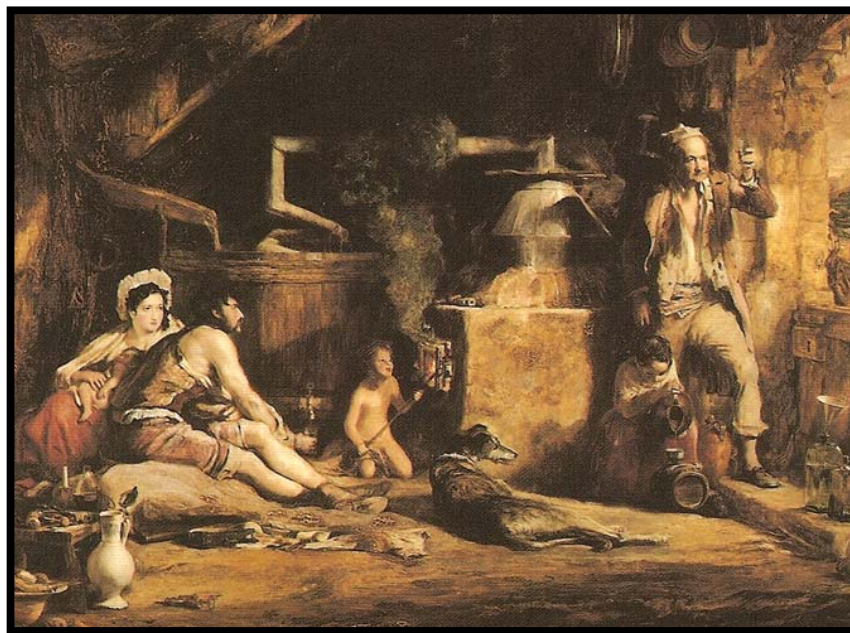
The Irish Whiskey Still (1840). David Wilkie (1785-1841). Illicit whiskey distillation helped to pay the tenant's rental dues as it also did in the Scottish Highlands. (Courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh).

The Scottish Highlands and Ireland did not suffer in isolation. On a global scale, by the middle of the nineteenth-century, poor crops, potato blight, recurrent famines and associated disease formed challenges to largely low-income peasant populations. The panacea universally suggested by church and state authorities was migration and emigration. As a corollary, Harper (1988) finds that in many European countries, for a plethora of reasons mostly unconnected with famine, emigration and migration peaked in the early 1850s.[471] Although attracting scant publicity in the mid-nineteenth- century and beyond, it has been Devine's recent (2007) opinion that more

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[471]   Harper, 1988, 234.

people emigrated overseas from the Lowland region of Scotland than from the Highlands and Islands.[472] An explanation of the social and economic factors that determined migration and emigration from the Highlands and from Ireland will be reviewed below.[473]

6.5 The Industrial Revolution and its impact

A frequent complaint of reporters to the *N.S.A.* was the lack of industry in the Highlands and Islands to absorb the potential workforce removed from their traditional subsistence way of life. Small local industries suitable to the landscape provided a limited income. For example, the *N.S.A.* reports boat-builders, weavers and tailors to be found in the parish of Lochs in Lewis,[474] and the universal run of cottage industries such as spinning and stocking knitting at Edderachillis in Sutherland,[475] all representative of fairly general occupations engaged in throughout the Highlands to facilitate the payment of land rents and, not uncommon, rent arrears.

On a larger scale, legalised distilling provided steady employment in the Islay parish of Killarrow and Kinmeny.[476] In order to exploit the mineral wealth of their estates and maximise income, landlords developed a number of extractive industries. Stone quarrying is frequently mentioned in *N.S.A.* parish reports,[477] slate quarrying at Ballachulish and Easdale, mineral extraction at Strontian,[478] iron smelting at Bonawe, Argyll-shire (Plate 6.5),[479] and coal mining at Brora, Sutherland.[480] Salt production was an occupation pursued in East-coast localities.[481]

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[472]   Prof. T.M. Devine; BBC 2 - 2007, *Scotland's History; The Top Ten* (Panel discussion).
[473]   Snell, 1994, 87.
[474]   *N.S A.*, XIV, 165 (Stornoway Parish) 1841.
[475]   *N.S A.*, XV, 129 (Edderachillis Parish) 1840.
[476]   *N.S.A.,* VII, 670 (Killarrow and Kilmeny Parish, Islay) 1843.
[477]   *N.S.A.,* XV, 38 (Golspie Parish) 1834. *N.S.A.*, XIV, 121 (Stornoway Parish) 1841.
[478]   Mineral extraction at Strontian, Argyle, was established in 1724 and a number of mines were intermittently worked. These were re-opened in 1847 and 1901 but closed for good in 1930.
[479]   Constructed in 1753 close to the River Awe, Argyllshire, whose water powere its enormous bellows, and Glen Nant, whose birch and oak trees provided a sustainable source of charcoal, Bonawe cold-blast furnace survived innovations from the iron industry to remain active until 1876. At its height, the ironworks employed over 600 people, most of them Gaelic-speaking local inhabitants 'coaling' in the woods. Owned by a Cumbrian firm, the furnace itself was operated by skilled and semi-skilled English-speaking workers from the south.
[480]   Brora coal mine was established in 1578 by Jane, Countess of Sutherland, who opened the first 'bell-pit' mine. Coal was extracted for almost 400 years until closure in 1974.

Plate 6.5

Iron smelting at Bonawe, Argyll-shire: a durable small industry

Cold-blast furnace used in the process of iron smelting at Bonawe, Argyll-shire from 1753 until 1876. At its height, the ironworks employed over 600 people, most of them Gaelic-speaking local inhabitants 'coaling' in the woods. Owned by a Cumbrian firm, the furnace itself was operated by skilled and semi-skilled English-speaking workers from the south. An example of a durable industry that benefitted crofters at nearby Taynuilt during the famine years of the mid-nineteenth-century. (Photo - JRS).

Perhaps the most important industry to determine the economic welfare to the small tenants of the Highlands from the later years of the eighteenth-century and the first decades of the nineteenth was the production of kelp. Whilst this industry sustained the coastal population, greatly enlarged by estate proprietors who were the principal benefactors, in reasonable comfort during its relatively short tenure, the parish reporter at Stornoway pointed to its pitfalls for the longer-term economic health of the communities involved:

> Kelp is the principal manufacture of this parish. It is almost impossible to tell how many are employed in the work - for young and old, male and female, all who are able to carry a creel of ware, or help to fill it, are engaged in manufacturing it at different times, for three months, from the time of cutting the ware, till the solid mass is weighed on board the vessel. But when thousands are engaged, all the summer season, crofts and lots are neglected, potato fields are overrun with weeds, consequently the return is small, and part of the gain by kelping is lost in their potato crop; their cattle are much neglected; corn fields are destroyed; and the tenants distressed for rents. Many of the herd boys that should attend the cattle during the summer heats are kelping, many beasts are lost in mossy veins, and fall from rocks, when they run wild during an excessively hot day - so that in this way, the gain by kelp becomes a loss. The kelping system is thus a great obstacle to agricultural improvement.[482]

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[481]   *N.S.A.,* XV, 44 (Brora Parish) 1840.
[482]   *N.S.A.*, XIV, 134-135 (Stornoway Parish) 1841.

At its height, adds MacIver (1982), the kelp industry consumed much valuable seaweed, a natural manure for the soil, that was lost to arable farming. In all four parishes of Lewis, "seaweed and natural manure had at all times to be supplemented by the old sooty thatch from the roofs of the houses"[483] The loss of this declining coastal industry to cheaper foreign competition, coupled with the onset of an unfamiliar disease in the potato crop by the mid-nineteenth-century, exacerbated the chronic problems of demography and geography. These economic tribulations contributed significantly to the spiritual challenges faced by the Presbyterian Church and sister denominations in the mid-nineteenth-century.

6.6 The Agricultural Revolution and its impact on land tenure

The Agricultural Revolution of the later-eighteenth-century had set afoot in Scotland the progressive consolidation of former communal run-rig small-holdings into single tenant large farms to create a tiered workforce of small farmers, crofters and cottars. Technical innovations in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, argues Carter (1979), coupled with high commodity prices made it profitable for a new class of capitalist farmers to invest their own money in advancing the material forces of agricultural production as already practiced in England. These innovations, continues Carter, included the rotation of crops, manuring, drainage, enclosure, the erection of steadings and improvement of cattle stocks consequent upon the growth of a cattle feeding industry. In turn, the high rents which farmers were able to offer persuaded landlords to risk capital in the farms, particularly if with Government drainage loans they could borrow the capital at subsidised interest rates.[484] The social and economic effects of consolidation produced a marked contrast between the low lying fertile Eastern and less favoured mountainous and remote Western regions of the Highlands. The pattern of agricultural improvement was consequently diverse in both time and place. In the Eastern parish of Golspie in mainland Sutherlandshire, the reporter to the *N.S.A,* could confidently state in 1834 that:

> Nor is it too much to say that the system of farming, at present in this parish, does not fall short of the best modes of farming, in any part of the kingdom. The farmers have very good houses, with two public rooms; and they have their wheeled carriages for personal and family

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[483]   MacIver, 1982, 279.
[484]   Carter, 1979, 40.

use. Sub-letting is abolished. The small tenants, or cottars, live in decent cottages built with stone and lime or clay, with glass windows; and their fare is correspondingly better.[485]

Improvement in general was far-reaching on the Highland mainland; the continuing construction of roads, as recorded in the remote Northern parish of Edderachillis, meant that many tenants could acquire carts.[486] Conditions a decade later on the remote and infertile island of Lewis appear somewhat different:

> There are no lands in the parish of Lochs that can properly be called arable. The plough is not used at all. The people rear their crops on small, detached spots, and cultivate the ground with spades. That notorious implement of Scottish Highland husbandry, 'the crooked spade', is much used in this parish. There is not a sufficiency of food produced in the parish to support its inhabitants. The wants of the inhabitants in this respect can be relieved at Stornoway. Indeed the soil, but more especially the climate is not favourable for agriculture.[487]

Attempts made at agricultural improvement on Lewis were distinguished by a singular lack of success, argues MacIver (1982), for in the *Inverness Courier* of 1844 he finds that, "Thousands of the poor islanders are in a wretched condition; the worst fed, worst clothed, and housed peasantry in Britain are to be found in this remote uncultivated Island".[488] Conditions were little better on the adjoining Long Island [489] parish of Harris. Here the 1840s clerical reporter to the *NSA* presented a dismal view of his charge; kelping for two months of the year was the only industry since inshore fishing had proved unsuccessful. Church collections were so trifling that distribution of funds to the deserving poor rarely took place.[490] The Harris proprietor, Catherine, Dowager Countess of Dunmore, appalled at the material poverty within her predominantly Established Church [491] population of 4429 [492] needy souls, saw the retail possibilities of the rough cloth turned out by two sisters, the Misses MacLeod in the village of Stroud, whom she sent to Alloa and Paisley to develop their skills. These they taught to other Harris women and an old cottage industry was re-created with the new tweed cloth (*cor mor*) that was both durable and proof against rain. The Dunmore estate staff was clothed in the tweed which so impressed the Countess's social circle that by 1850, Harris Tweed was selling in London. Shortly, a vast market

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[485] *N.S.A., XV, 44 (Golspie Parish) 1834.*
[486] *N.S A., XV, 129 (Edderachillis Parish) 1840.*
[487] *N.S.A., XIV, (Lochs Parish) 1833.*
[488] MacIver, 1982, 270.
[489] Long Island is a local soubriquet for the adjoining geographical areas of Lewis and Harris.
[490] *NSA*, XIV, 155 (Harris Parish) 1841.
[491] Predominantly Free Church after 1843 Disruption.
[492] Census, 1841.

was established, not just for the sporting gentry, but for the workforce of ghillies, bailiffs, beaters, and outdoor servants retained by the country's big houses.[493] Both sexes in Harris, and ultimately those in Lewis, were to find a steady and reliable income working at the loom that largely replaced the short kelping season.

In Ireland, argues Daly (1966), the consolidation of farms and the decline in the number of labourers meant that post-famine Irish society tended to be dominated by the values, mores and lifestyle of the farmer. From census records Daly finds that more than one third of all Irish houses in 1841 were one-roomed cabins; by 1861 they constituted less than ten-per-cent of the housing stock and housing standards continued to rise throughout the remainder of the century. This improvement reflects the disappearance of the labourers and an improvement in housing standards among Irish farming families.[494] As this chapter will show the marked material poverty of a significant majority of the population in both the west Highlands of Scotland and in Ireland during the mid-nineteenth-century will become apparent.

6.6.1 Farming structures in mid-nineteenth-century society

The *N.S.A.* informs its readers that the classes of people on the land in the mid-nineteenth-century were firstly, the landed proprietors who managed their own estates through factors or managers. Secondly, gentlemen farmers, essentially capitalist farmers holding their lands by long lease from the proprietors. Thirdly, established from the early-nineteenth-century, small tenants or crofters whose strictly limited landholdings were held on short leases, or without a lease at the will of the proprietors.[495] Finally, a large impoverished group variously referred to as 'cottars', 'lotters' or 'squatters' on patches land held by family or friends, but with no rights to land whatsoever. It was the latter two classes - small tenants and 'lotters' - that were to suffer most in the famine years of the mid-nineteenth-century. Hence, claims Carter (1979), the Free Church crusaders attacked the capitalist large farm system, in particular those lairds who evicted the peasant class in order to avoid a potentially

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[493] Lawson, 2002, 61.
[494] Daly, 1966, 120.
[495] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 174 (North Uist Parish) 1837.

heavy Poor Law assessment.[496] This attack on the land policies of the lairds, concedes Carter, may have been a criticism of the Auld Kirk, the established Church of Scotland which harboured "evicting lairds and grasping capitalist farmers".[497]

Plate 6.6

Nineteenth-century cultivation of croft-land on the Island of Skye

A later-nineteenth-century crofter family cultivating their arable land on the Inner Hebrides island of Skye. The male members turn the soil with the *cas chrom* or wooden crooked spade. Regarded as a mark of poverty, implement was more efficient in turning the rocky soil than the metal plough which a family could rarely afford. The women are placing sea-weed on the lazy-bed potato drills as a form of manure. (G.W.W. photos, courtesy of Mark Butterworth, (2010).

The extent of consolidation and its social effects varied between districts. Large and small farming units intermixed. In the low-lying, fertile East-coast areas North of Inverness large units of over a hundred acres have been recorded, whereas in the Highland areas of Aberdeen-shire and Perth-shire, 'family' sized holdings of ten to sixty acres were often more common. Typically, in 1851, William Ritchie of Torran, Glengairn, in the Highland Western region of Aberdeen-shire, is recorded as a farmer

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[496]   Carter, 1979, 163.
[497]   *Ibid,*, 164.

of 25 acres employing three servants, one of whom was his son.[498] The mountainous North-west, with its long hard winters and infertile land, was more suited to rearing livestock than crops. In this connection, drovers moving livestock to Southern markets or 'trysts' played a vital role in the survival of many Highland communities. By the mid-nineteenth-century, droving was facilitated by the advent of steam navigation less subject to the vagaries of wind and wave.[499] So too was the seasonal migration of young men and women to the south in search of work.[500] However, by the middle years of the nineteenth-century Highland temporary migrants faced competition from Irish immigrants workers prepared to work for lower wages.[501]

The pattern of agricultural advance in the mid-nineteenth-century, however, was not even. In many respects the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland lagged well behind the more forward looking Eastern and Central Highlands with their closer connection to the Lowland region with its more extensive dry, acid free, arable soils. "Wet winters and springs take the pith out of the soil", observed the 1841 Stornoway reporter to the *N.S.A.*, who further expressed an opinion that:

> The island of Lewis is a full century behind other parts of Scotland, in agriculture and domestic improvement, the town inhabitants of Stornoway excepted, and a few tacksmen. With respect to agricultural improvement, it is the most backward of all the Hebrides. [502]

Nevertheless, the same parish reporter found a dozen good farms in the Stornoway parish where "the south country implements of husbandry may be seen, as iron ploughs and harrows". These modern implements were beyond the economic reach of the small tenants and cottars who "worked the ground with the Chinese plough, of one stilt or handle, the cas-chrom.[503] In Ireland, peat was traditionally cut by hand

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[498] Census Return 1851; Civil parish of Glenmuick, Tullich and Glengairn. Aberdeenshire.
[499] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 229 (Portree Parish) 1841.
[500] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 347 (Duirinish Parish) 1841.
[501] *Witness*, February 3, 1847.
[502] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 121 (Stornoway Parish) 1841.
[503] *Ibid*, 131 MacIver, 1982, 277, finds that the caschrom or 'crooked spade' continues in use where cultivation of earth involved earth among fixed stones and loose stones where the plough would not go.

using a turf spade known as a *slean* or *slane* [504] which appear similar in use to the *loy*.[505]

This distinction between large farmer and small tenant was a marked feature of mid-nineteenth-century Highland agriculture and frequently reported in the *N.S.A.* Likewise, in the south and west regions of Ireland geographical remoteness, an often forbidding landscape, a scarcity of arable soil, excessive population existing at or below subsistence level, and plagued with unpredictable extremes of weather at all seasons, contributed to the trials of the indigenous population. Ireland, with a similar social and economic structure to that prevailing in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland was, in the nineteenth-century an important producer and exporter of agricultural products. At this point it may be pertinent to reiterate Woodham-Smith's (1962) observation that the starving in such places as Skibbereen, West Cork, "perished not because there was no food but because they had no money with which to buy it".[506]

6.6.2 Irish landowners and the conacre system

Irish landowners, more so than their Scottish counterparts, were to an extent, absentees from their estates, a perennial problem highlighted in Lord Devon's Commission Report in 1844:

> John Donellan, Parish of Carn, County of Roscommon, deposed that he held fifty acres; and that the head landlord was never seen on the estate; that there was an agent who was never seen on the estate but to collect rents; that his name was Thomas Berry, a lawyer living in Dublin; that he, Donellan, had spent upwards £100 in building a house; was now served a notice to quit, and could not get a halfpenny for what he expended, though a former agent the present agent's father, had promised to allow half the expenses.[507]

In common with Irish land tenure in 1844, the inland County of Roscommon within the province of Connaught, retained a landholding system whose poverty stricken rural population faced similar tenurial disabilities to that of the cottars and lotters in the Highlands of Scotland. This, according to Somerville (1994), was the system of

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[504] Byrne, 2004, 286. Slean (Irish-*sleachan*) A narrow spade with a wing-bladed shaft for cutting turf.
[505] Loy - a narrow spade (unspecified) featured in the 1907 stage drama, *The Playboy of the Western World* by J.M Synge..
[506] Woodham-Smith, 1962, 165.
[507] Snell, 1994, 78

conacre, [508] by which four-fifths of all the Roscommon inhabitants extracted their bare subsistence from the land by 'hiring it in conacre' from the other tenants.[509] Unable to pay enormous rents, the conacre holders paid with their labour. The conacre system, states Somerville (1994), "gives the peasant and his family their twelve months meagre food in a piece, renders shop-keeping impossible for they have no money to go to provision shops with. It had been virtually the currency or substitute for money for millions of the Irish peasantry".[510] To be denied a conacre, claims Somerville, was to be denied leave to live.[511] Akin to the small tenants in the Highlands of Scotland, it was the want of manufactures and commerce that reduced the peasantry to submit to the conacre system.[512]

Plate 6.7

Subsistence farming: West Kerry, Ireland, conacre field system

West Kerry conacre field system in Munster Province. Similar plots of soil would have permitted an extended family unit to subsist in reasonable health based on the mono-culture cultivation of the potato. Lots of half acre to two acres were let at high rents to labourers and smallholders. Poorer land at lower rents raised only potatoes. (photo - JRS)

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[508] Conacre - land rented for the taking of a single crop, most commonly of potatoes (Connolly, 1998, 108).

[509] Snell, 1994, 78.

[510] *Ibid*, 83.

[511] *Ibid*, 87.

[512] *Ibid,* 84.

Not all Irish landowners, however, were insensitive to the distress of their tenants due to crop failure; *The Cork Examiner* in November 1846 reported that:

> It is understood that Lady Carberry, widow of the late Lord Carberry, in consideration of the loss her tenants have sustained this year, intends to make no demand for rent on her extensive estates in his country. She has even, it appears, intimated her intention, any sums be received, not to appropriate any portion to her personal use, but to reserve the amount in trust for the purpose of benevolence.[513]

The pragmatic approach of the Irish landowner to the management of his estate is perhaps revealed in Lord Devon's commission report of 1844 in which the allegation that Irish landlords preferred to have tenants-at-will, since:

> The man who has a fixed tenure considers that he cannot be put out. He immediately mismanages his farm; he sub-lets and sub-divides, and so the whole thing is destroyed. A man who has it only at will, knows that, if he conducts himself as he ought to do, his tenancy-at-will is as good as a lease, and he will use his best exertions to have his land in the most profitable and beneficial order.[514]

The *Great Famine* in Ireland, observes Daly (1966), resulted in the consolidation of farm holdings; one farm in four disappeared between the years 1845 and 1851, with the entire decline concentrated on holdings of less than fifteen acres.[515]

That grain supplies continued to be available in both Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland is evident from reportage in the national and local press of criminal proceedings being instituted against the perpetrators of rioting and deforcement of grain wagons proceeding to shipping ports for export.[516] By 1847, food riots and attacks upon shops were commonly reported in the Irish daily press.[517] Paramount to the social and economic condition of the small tenants throughout the United Kingdom during the mid-nineteenth-century was the operation of the Corn Laws and the consistent demand for their repeal coupled with Free Trade in the case of manufactured goods.[518] Following the economic crisis of 1838-9, states Briggs (1984), the *Anti-Corn Law League* was formed from a number of anti-corn law

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[513]   *The Cork Examiner*, 27/ 11/ 1846.
[514]   Snell, 1994, 86
[515]   Daly, 1966, 120.
[516]   *Inverness Courier*, 27/2/1847 (Avoch); 3/3/1847 (Wick); 10/3/1847 (Invergordon).
[517]   *The Cork Examiner*, 14/ 10/ 1846 (food riots in Galway), 06/ 02/1847 (food riots in Cork)
[518]   *Inverness Courier*, 28/ 01/1846. *Inverness Courier*, 27/2/1847 (Avoch); 3/3/1847 (Wick); 10/3/1847 (Invergordon).

associations established throughout the nation as a pressure group to lobby Parliament for repeal.[519] This was finally achieved in 1846.

6.7 Patterns of Destitution

There was no overall pattern of famine and destitution even within a single area of the landscape at a given time. Certain areas stand out as having suffered more completely than others. In Ireland, argues Green (1956), the counties of Donegal, Mayo and Kerry, where there was a complete dependence on the potato and where subdivision had been carried to its greatest extremes, can be taken as representative of conditions along the western seaboard where the ancient system of rundale (run-rig) land held in joint tenancies still prevailed.[520] In the extreme South and West provinces of Connaught and Munster, with exceptionally high mortality rates in the later 1840s, particularly around Skibbereen in West Cork, contrasts in severity with conditions in the Eastern provinces of Leinster and Ulster. Similarly, in the Highlands of Scotland, conditions on the Island of Skye with its dense population existing in extreme poverty and destitution,[521] were distinct from those experienced on the Island of Lewis with its long tradition of sea and loch fishing.

Despite a failure of herring-fisheries[522] in the 1840s, some remote areas of the Highlands, as at Latheron Parish in Sutherland, subsisted adequately on coastal fishing coupled with agriculture as a secondary occupation. In other Northwest coastal locations, the small island populations on Hirta, St. Kilda,[523] on Mingulay [524] and Handa [525] augmented their crofting economy with the age-old global exploitation of sea fowls and their eggs, feathers [526] and oil, from coastline settings with steep cliff

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[519]   Briggs, 1984, 312.
[520]   Green, 1956, 110.
[521]   *Glasgow Herald*, January 21, 1853.
[522]   *N.S.A.*, XIV, 236 (Portree Parish) 1841; Vol. XIV, 272 (Kilmuir Parish) 1840.
[523]   Steel, 1965, 25.
[524]   Buxton, 1995, 65; also Murchison, TM., 1958, in TGSI, Vol. XLII (1953-59) 314.
[525]   *N.S.A.*, XV, 132 (Edderachillis Parish) 1840.
[526]   It has been estimated that at least 240 feathers from the Solan Goose or Gannet were necessary to make one comfortable mattress. Most birds were harvested by one man being lowered over the cliff edge by a rope secured around his waist and stunning the nesting birds with a baton. On dropping to the sea below, the stunned birds were collected by other men in boats.

faces.[527] (Plate 6.8). Hence, in the parish of Edderachillis, Sutherlandshire, the twelve families tenanting the island of Handa in 1840, found:

> employment of a very hazardous character, by resorting to the daring enterprise of going a-fowling among the precipitous rocks around the island from whence they bring, at the immanent risk of their lives, a vast quantity of sea fowls and eggs, to be used by them for food , and the feathers to be disposed of to their mainland neighbours.[528]

Plate 6.8

Harvesting fulmar sea-birds on the remote Island of St. Kilda

Carrying-in the fulmar catch from the cliff-tops to village street, Hirta, St. Kilda in the later-nineteenth-century. The fulmar and other sea-birds formed a staple source of food for the island population, and of commercial value in oil and feathers when exported to the mainland. The solan goose (gannet) and the puffin were also consumed in great numbers as well as their eggs. (G.W.W. Collection, Courtesy of the University of Aberdeen archives).

The annual cull of the young solan geese on the remote North Atlantic island of Sula Sgeir[529] by licenced menfolk from Ness, Isle of Lewis, continues.[530] This hazardous means of subsistence was also common on the South-Western seaboard of Ireland

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[527]   Murray, 2008, 4.

[528]   *N.S.A.*, XV, 132 (Edderachillis Parish) 1840.

[529]   Sula Sgeir - The word 'Sula ' refers to the word ganner, or solan goose ; 'Sgeir' emphasises the fact that it is simply a rock (Murray, 2008, 11).

[530]   Murray, 2008, 3.

where Murray (2008) records its presence on the Blasket Islands close to the Dingle Peninsula in County Kerry.[531]

By exploiting this traditional food source, seaboard communities possessed an insurance against famine denied to those dwellers inland that possessed neither the skills nor the equipment let alone the fortitude to take part. This geographical imbalance of steep high sea cliffs and undulating inland straths, emphasizes a disparity in the degree of famine scarcity to be found even amongst close communities settled haphazardly across the landscape.

6.8 Crofters, cottars and lotters

The problems of relocating people indigenous to the straths and inland glens of the Highlands to the new coastal crofting villages sited on inhospitable fringes of land, usually 5 acres per lot, calculated with the mathematical geometry that characterized 'planned villages', are well chronicled in the Highland Destitution Papers. To subsist, the crofter required secondary employment that often involved temporary migration. In the main, the decanted people had no experience of fishing in heavy seas and strong currents. Neither could they afford boats and fishing tackle although these were to be provided from government sources with instruction in their use. The local committee at remote Applecross in Wester Ross concluded in May 1847, that the best way for the impoverished population to secure fish was to procure fishing lines of which 62 long lines and 52 small lines were applied for.[532] In practice a similar scheme introduced at Strath, Island of Skye, in 1848 was found to be unsuccessful since in summer the menfolk of necessity were absent in the south for several weeks temporary paid employment.[533] In 1853 the burden of the crofter was lucidly stated in the *Glasgow Herald*: "The fisherman-crofter is the most miserable of all men, being neither fisher nor farmer, and yet depending on potatoes and herring to feed sometimes a dozen children all year round".[534]

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[531] *Ibid,,* 4.

[532] *N.A.S.*, HD 21/ 14.

[533] *N.A.S.*, HD 8 / 3.

[534] *Glasgow Herald*, January 21, 1853.

Deterred by the dangers attendant upon inshore fishing, the challenging conditions facing crofter-tenants reported from the Parish of Glenshiel may be used to exemplify the poverty of the poorest classes occupying land throughout the Highlands and Islands on the approach to the mid-nineteenth-century:

> The tillage of the land is chiefly in the hands of the lotters and cottars. Each lot consists of from one or two acres of hanging ground, a great portion of which is generally rock or bogs. A part of this patch is always planted with potatoes, and the rest sown with barley or oats. The manure used for the potatoes is always sea-ware, the dung being reserved for the barley. The tillage is chiefly accomplished with the 'crooked spade' and instrument well adapted for the cultivation of steep or stoney land.[535]

Cottars, observes Devine (1988), were not recognized as tenants of land. The distinction between the poorer crofters and cottars was often blurred.[536] In many districts, continues Devine, the cottars were often the kinsmen of tenants or simply members of extended families living in separate households but gaining a living from the same small area of land. Even in good seasons, cottars eked out a precarious existence close to the margins of subsistence and in bad seasons, unlikely to possess savings to tide them over. Consequently, cottars could only survive because of the widespread assistance provided by neighbours in time of need. Lacking a sufficiency of arable soil, cottars were the most committed to mono-culture,[537] in the majority of cases, the cultivation of the potato.

On North Uist (Plate 3.1) it was reported in 1837, "that there were no less than 390 families not paying rents, but living chiefly on the produce of small spots of potato ground given them by some of their neighbours and relatives".[538] The extent of material poverty throughout the Highlands in the 1840s that resulted from this deprived manner of existence can be gauged from frequent references in the *N.S.A.*, one example of which was reported from the Parish of Portree, Skye:

> The poor tenants are almost invariably under the necessity of having their cattle under the same roof as themselves without partition, without division, and without chimney; their houses, therefore, are smoky and filthy in the extreme; and having little of either night or day clothing, and their children nearly approaching to absolute nakedness, they are fully as much without cleanliness in their persons as they are in their houses. No people on earth live on

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[535] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 205 (Glenshiel Parish) 1836.
[536] Devine, 1988, 9.
[537] *Ibid*, 9.
[538] *N.S.A.*, XIV, 181 (North Uist Parish) 1837.

more simple or scanty diet, than those of this parish. The greater number of them subsists on potatoes of the worst kind, sometimes with, but oftener without, fish.[539]

The principal complaint of the people states the *N.S.A.* reporter from the Parish of Stornoway on Lewis was of high rents and short leases.[540] Leases granted by landowners were either long term of nineteen years' duration or short term of around 10 years or less. The North Uist parish reporter recorded that "the tacksmen only have leases in this parish. Their duration varies from seven to fourteen years. The small tenants have no leases at all".[541] Many in this large underclass throughout the Highlands and Islands with strictly limited holdings were merely tenants-at-will of the landowner.[542] Finally, an extremely large impoverished group variously referred to as 'cottars', 'lotters' or 'squatters' on patches of land held by family or friends, but with no rights to land whatsoever. Leases, then, were carefully controlled, and the movement of entire communities from the landscape could be effected by force of law in the form of a *Summons of Removing* or warning-away notice set out in the following terms:

> to hear and see themselves decerned & ordained by Decrees and Sentence of Court to flit and remove themselves their Wives Bairns Families Servands Subtenants Coaters & dependants and all and sundry their Goods and Gear forth & from their pretended Possessions above mentioned and leave the same void Redd and patent at the term Whitsunday being the fifteenth of May next to come, to the end the Pursuer by himself or servants may enter thereto Sett use and dispose thereof at pleasure in all time coming. [543]

6.8.1 The crofter-fisherman as economic slave in a cash economy

Caird (1987) argues that consolidation of small farming tenancies created a social structure that varied throughout the Highlands. In the early years of the nineteenth-century, 'townships' or crofting allotments, usually on marginal land in proximity to the seashore, were laid out by landowners as an economic innovation to absorb the displaced population from the inner glens and straths. In this new social and economic structure, crofters were to be labourers first and agriculturists only second.

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[539]   *N.S.A.*, XIV, 226 (Portree Parish) 1841.
[540]   *N.S A.*, XIV, 130 (Stornoway Parish) 1841.
[541]   *N.S.A.*, XIV, 175 (North Uist Parish) 1837.
[542]   *N.S.A.*, XIV, 174 (North Uist Parish) 1837.
[543]   Nicolson, 2001, 26: Summons of Removing or Warning Away Notice - a bureaucratic mechanism by which the terms of a lease were changed, or by which the landlord gave it to someone else at a higher rent. It was a sign of something already being at an end, not the instrument by which it was ended

The most common category of crofting tenant was the crofter-fisherman. Lowland land surveyors were commissioned by Highland landowners to make a survey and plan of their estates, and to write an agricultural report on the same.[544] In many cases, but not all, little compassion was shown for the break-up of inland communities and the removal of individual families to the new coastal crofting allotments. These were laid out in geometrically apportioned strips or lots in conformity with the lie of the land, and restricted in size to perhaps 5 acres in order to ensure that the holdings would be part-time occupations. As an inducement for their tenants to concentrate on the hard and degrading additional work of the coastal kelp industry, in which the landlords took the profit from the sale of kelp ash, Macnab (1965) finds that rents were either waived or set at a low level. In consequence of this revolutionary change in landscape use, the indigenous population was to experience a new form of economic existence based on a cash economy.[545]

6.8.2 The potato as a subsistence crop worldwide

Of major importance to cottars and lotters, the potato had become established as the major staple, if not the only staple, in the diet of the poorest classes in the population of both Ireland and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. In 1846 the Free Church Famine Relief Committee found that potatoes represented up to 88 per-cent of the diet in the Highlands, and 25 per cent in the Lowlands. In appraising the value of the potato to the economy, MacArthur (1990) cites a letter from an unnamed minister in Mull:

> The potato … was not just a food item. It was also a source of income from exports, both directly as a commodity itself and indirectly through the pigs and poultry fed on it. The consequent scarcity of money meant that most people could no longer purchase meal.[546]

Initially resisted by the peasantry of Continental Europe, argues Devine (1988), by the later decades of the eighteenth-century potatoes were grown extensively as a subsistence crop (Plate 6.8). With a capacity to grow in any soil and variation of climate, potatoes were early adopted in both Ireland and in Scotland to satisfy the

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[544]   Caird, 1987, 68.
[545]   Macnab, 1965, 534 - article - *The Scots Magazine*: The Golden Fringe.
[546]   McArthur, 1990, 1.

basic nutritional needs of the small farming tenants and landless classes in society. Crofts, it will be recalled, were not designed to support a family by agriculture alone; they were designed to retain an estate workforce engaged in kelping, fishing and distillation (Plate 6.4) as a means of paying the rent. It was in this large section of the population, crofters, cottars and lotters, that potatoes assumed dominance, if not dependence, in the daily diet (Plate 3.3). With an unusually high yield, continues Devine (1988), it has been estimated that an acre under potatoes provided as much as three to five times as many calories as an acre in grain crop. Impervious to wind and rain as grain crops were not, potatoes could be easily stored and required no additional labour to make them edible.[547] Unfortunately, the potato permitted further fragmentation of limited arable plots and contributed to the growth of population. In Morvern, Argyleshire, the parish incumbent reported to the *N.S.A.* that, "Their ordinary food is simple in the extreme, consisting chiefly of milk, fish, and above all, potatoes, in the Highlands at least, the staff of life".[548]

Failure of crops, especially in two or more successive seasons, had for centuries been the source of scarcity and famine in most European counties, but in the early 1840s, claims Daly (1966), the appearance in Europe of a previously unknown species of potato blight, *phytophthora infestans*,[549] not identified as such until many years later, emerged as the source of a human suffering world-wide. The *Inverness Courier* reported on November 5, 1845 that:

> The failure of the potato crop in Ireland was now known to be extensive, almost every district of the country being affected. A Cabinet Council had been held at which it was believed the situation had been discussed. In the North of Scotland the potato crop was stated to be fully an average, and wholly free from disease. There was a little in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen, and a good deal in Fife-shire. The disease was severe in Belgium and Denmark, and had also appeared in Sweden. It was reported that the crop had suffered badly in Canada.

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[547] Devine, 1988, 14.

[548] *N.S.A.,* Vol. VII, 187 (Morvern Parish) 1840.

[549] Daly, 1966, 53: Blight is caused by *phythopthera infestans*, a fungus which multiplies in hot, damp weather and can be quickly disseminated by wind or mist. Rainwater carries the spores from the leaves of the potatoes to the roots and causes the tubers to become infected. A whole field can be destroyed in a matter of hours.Daly, 1966, 53: Blight is caused by *phythopthera infestans*, a fungus which multiplies in hot, damp weather and can be quickly disseminated by wind or mist. Rainwater carries the spores from the leaves of the potatoes to the roots and causes the tubers to become infected. A whole field can be destroyed in a matter of hours.

In the summer of 1845, claims Hunter (2005) at Cape Breton's St. Anne's Harbour area of Eastern Canada, the Revd. Norman MacLeod, a native of Assynt Parish in Sutherland-shire, and his 'Normanite' followers (Plate 6.7), due to the unproductive nature of the soil, became reliant on a single crop - potatoes - as a main subsistence diet. In that year, and for several summers thereafter, the potato crop was devastated by blight. "Poverty, wretchedness and misery", it was reported in 1848, "have spread throughout the island of Cape Breton. People were running continually from door to door with the ghastly features of death staring from their very faces".[550] MacLeod and his little congregation, in earlier anticipation of spiritual freedom and security of land tenure in Canada, had fallen victim to the hardships experienced by the starving population in their former Scottish homelands.

Whatever its debilitating social affects on the Highland population, without doubt, the *Great Famine* of 1845 to 1855 was a major catastrophe that changed the pattern of social, political and economic life within Ireland forever with its estimated death of over one million people and the emigration of another one million. The Irish cottier or labouring class, Daly (1986) finds, was the major casualty of Ireland's famine years. Deprived of the bare means of subsistence, this class was disproportionately numbered among its victims, and those who survived found a continuation of their old lifestyle increasingly difficult.[551] It is now agreed by most historians of the period that famine in the Highlands of Scotland was scarcely comparable with the Irish experience. Whilst severe in terms of previous famine experience, access by steamship to remote areas in most weathers, greater proximity to resources, and relatively low mortality rates, was manageable in comparison.

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[550]   Hunter, 2005, 159-166.
[551]   Daly, 1986, 120.

Plate 6.9

Clachtoll Bay, Stoer, Assynt, memorial to the Rev. Norman Macleod

Commemorative marble slab-stone marking birth-place of the Rev. Norman Macleod, evangelical leader of the "Normanites", at Clachtoll Bay, Stoer, Assynt, Sutherland. In 1845, the Rev. MacLeod and his Presbyterian followers encountered famine conditions due to failure of the potato crop at Cape Breton, Canada (photo-JRS).

6.9 Emigration - a final solution?

Until the end of the eighteenth-century emigration from Britain to its colonies overseas, for whatever reason, had been a purely personal decision for the individual or families involved. Some compelling reasons for Highland emigration in the 1790s are listed in the *O.S.A.*:

> The sudden rise in the land-rents was certainly the original cause of emigrations from the isle of Skye and Uist to America. Those who found a difficulty in supporting their families when the rents were low, could not be persuaded that any exertions in industry would enable them to live with any degree of comfort, when raised a third more at least. This determined several of them to look out for asylum somewhere else. Copies of letters from persons who had emigrated several years before to America to their friends at home, contained the most flattering accounts of the province of North Carolina, were circulated among them. The implicit faith given to these accounts made them resolve to desert their native country, and to encounter the dangers of crossing the Atlantic to settle in the wilds of America. From 1771 to 1775, several thousand emigrated from the western Highlands to America, among whom were more than 200 from North Uist. These in their turn gave their friends at home the same flattering accounts that induced themselves to go, so that these countries would in a short time have been drained of their inhabitants, had it not been for the American War.[552]

By the middle years of the nineteenth-century, emigrants were increasingly enticed by colonial agencies through assisted passage schemes, newspaper advertisements,

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[552]   *O.S.A*, XX,.117.

the distribution of handbills promoting the prospect of cheap farmland or delayed rental payments, with a view to attract able-bodied emigrant families and single persons possessed of manual skills. Many did not conform to the popular image of the destitute Highlander, since, Harper (2003), quoting *Scotsman* reports of 1848 that of 5,165 steerage and 277 cabin passengers, mainly west Highlanders who left Glasgow and Greenock in the first six months of that year, "a good number were in possession of considerable sums of money and were well supplied with clothes and provisions for the voyage, while a shipload of Highlanders who sailed from Ardrossan around the same time, had taken a good quantity of property".[553]

For those impoverished families who could not afford the voyage, a number of private schemes[554] were erected, most notably *The Highland and Island Emigration Society*, initially conceived by Sheriff-Substitute Thomas Fraser of Skye as a small-scale charitable initiative to enable more islanders to emigrate under the auspices of the *Colonial Land and Emigration Commission*. This, argues Harper (2003), followed after the cessation of the ineffective government funded famine relief and improvement schemes.[555]

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[553] Harper, 2003, 94.

[554] A notable precursor of the Highland and Island Emigration Society was the Rev John Dunmore Lang's Bounty Scheme of 1838. Between 1852 and 1857, the HIES assisted almost 5,000 individuals to emigrate to Australia and New Zealand. Many unemployed Highlanders who were drawn by the rapid growth of shipbuilding and heavy engineering preferred to live and work in and around Glasgow and the Clyde burghs. Others favoured Dundee and Aberdeen, but in most cases the migrants formed distinct Highland communities and attended their Presbyterian church. The decennial census records indicate that the Scottish Highlands lost approximately one third of its population during the mid-nineteenth-century to permanent migration and emigration. It has been estimated that over one million native Irish residents followed the latter course.

[555] *Ibid*.51.

Plate 6.10

Social change in the Highlands carrying hope of new opportunity

The Last of the Clan (1865), Thomas Faed, (1826-1900). Emigration had been part of European culture for centuries before 1845. In the Scottish Highlands, land clearance, population pressure, unemployment, opportunity to acquire cheap land, freedom of worship, all featured as push-pull factors in emigration overseas (Courtesy of Glasgow Museums & Art Galleries).

Forcible clearance of land for economic reasons can be attributed to the removal from Rhum in 1826 of 300 out of 350 islanders to Cape Breton, Canada, by the landlord, Maclean of Coll.[556] The sheer scale of the major mid-nineteenth-century destitution problem whose catalyst was the appearance of potato blight, first in Ireland in 1845, to be followed on a much lesser scale in the Scottish Highlands in 1846, could not be adequately relieved from parish church resources, or ignored at the highest levels of state. Family emigration, states Balfour (1990), was considered by contemporary political economists to be the panacea for this 'Malthusian' conundrum of population and resources (Section 3.1) that had led to pauperism in both Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland.[557]

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[556] Balfour, 1990, 515..
[557] *Ibid*, 484.

Plate 6.11

Ireland's *Hunger Memorial,* Manhatten, NewYork.

Scene from the *Irish Hunger Memorial,* Battery Park, Manhatten, NewYork. The quarter-acre site has significance for the Irish Poor Law Amendment Act of 1847 in which the penal 'Gregory clause' deprived land-holders exceeding that area of famine relief. [1] The memorial surround contains stones from each of Ireland's 32 counties. Soil and vegetation are from the Connemara wetlands whilst the roofless two-room field-stone cottage, dating from the 1830s, formerly occupied by six generations of the Slack family until the 1960s, was brought to New York from the townland of Carradoogan near Allymass, County Mayo. Today, almost 800,000 New York citizens trace their ancestry to Ireland. (photo-JED)

Emigration was a solution that was advocated by not a few parish reporters to the *N.S.A.* Indeed, Government policy favoured emigration as the sole remedy for the crisis of poverty and destitution. Considerable opposition, claims Balfour (1990), in the first year at least, came from Free Church clergymen.[558] In the event emigration depleted many Highland congregations - and reduced church funds available to succour the parish needy. Nevertheless, emigration to the colonies overseas as an option to existence on the coastal wasteland far from their familiar surroundings was for most destitute families a hazardous enterprise.

For the Irish emigrants of 1847, the "coffin ships" were harbingers of fever that caused many deaths at sea and in the quarantine compounds upon arrival at their final destinations. Major Mahaon, proprietor of Strokestown Park, Roscommon, in

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[558]   Balfour, 1990, 484.

Connaught Province,[559] chartered three ships on which he paid assisted passage for 1,000 of his tenants to Canada. Almost half of these people died of disease during the voyage due to the combination of their already poor physical condition and the unsanitary environment on board the "coffin ships", For his seemingly draconian estate policies, Mahaon was the first landlord to be assassinated during the *Great Famine* period. [560].By the close of 1847, claims Edwards *et al* (1956), at least 20,000 immigrants, some thirty-per-cent of the entire Irish emigration to Canada, had perished, cholera and typhus the main complaints. Notable were the appalling fever conditions within the quarantine station on Grosse Island on the St. Lawrence River. [561]

The famine almost wiped out Ireland's poorest social class, the landless labourer. Use of the Irish language declined, emigration became a way of life, and people strove to completely erase all memories of this most catastrophic event in Ireland's history.[562] On the whole, argues Bowen (1978), the problem of emigration was of less concern to Protestants because there were fewer of them. Emigration, adds Bowen, proved to be of great importance in the Protestant refuge colonies, which acted almost as training and departure camps for converts from Catholicism who were leaving Ireland, because there was no room for such *cait breac* in the radically divided society.[563] Once settled in their colonial situation, the evidence seems to be that both Protestant and Catholic families lived in peaceful harmony within the same communities.

Highland emigration to the Antipodes, argues Harper (2003), was sporadic rather than steady, the product of short-lived schemes. Much larger numbers went to Canada which had a longer history of Scottish settlement.[564] Of the options to execute an emigration policy in the Highlands, perhaps the best-known organisation was the *Highlands and Islands Emigration Society* previously referred to in Section 6.9. As

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[559] Stroketown Manor House now serves as Ireland's National Famine Museum.
[560] Edwards et al, 1956, 371.
[561] Strokestown Park National Famine Museum visitors' handbill, 2007.
[562] Bowen, 1978, 189.
[563] Harper, 2003, 51 and 369.
[564] Balfour, 1990, 478.

an independently funded enterprise argues Balfour (1992), it was free from government regulations and parliamentary scrutiny. Yet as Balfour stresses, the Society proved effective only as a short-term response. Only in Skye was it responsible for the migration of almost 3,000 persons before its dissolution in 1856.[565] The role of the clergy in migration and emigration will be reviewed in Chapters 7 and 8 below.

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[565]   *Ibid,* 515.

Chapter 7: Presbyterian response to mid-nineteenth-century Highland famine

> For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and
> ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked,
> and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in
> prison, and ye came unto me (Matt. 25:35).

7.1 The Established Church of Scotland famine relief policy

It may be recalled from Chapter 1. that failure to appropriate the patrimony[566] of the 'Old Church' at the Reformation in Scotland in 1560, the schemes envisaged for the new found Protestant Church outlined in John Knox's *Book of Discipline* could not be implemented in full as originally planned. In Scotland, argues Lindsay (1975) in order to regularise material aid for the destitute in society, Poor Law legislation had been promulgated in 1503, 1579, 1661 and 1672 by the national government in which 'cruiked folk' were named as being proper objects for relief.[567] This last piece of legislation placed the onus of caring for the poor jointly upon Kirk sessions and the substantial land owning classes who were known in law as the Heritors.[568] In 1690, following a 130 year gestation period in which the administrative structure of the Reformed Church in Scotland under Stuart kingship vacillated between Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism the latter prevailed to add new energy in the care of the poor. To frustrate the seamless engagement between Heritor and Kirk session in the Highlands, the landowning classes as Brown (1997) observes, tended to look to the south and to England to maintain a social identity conferred by the Episcopal Church.[569] This denominational anomaly, reflected in the absentee landlord who stood accused of failing to maintain church buildings and schools within the bounds of the parish as required by law, was perhaps more frequent in Ireland than in the Scottish Highlands.[570]

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[566] Patrimony: Includes Stipends; Teinds; Thirds of Benefices: Stipend is the living
 received by a full-time minister on most Churches. Teinds. or tithes, the 'tenths' of produce
 for uses such as maintenance of the clergy, the upkeep of church property and relief of the poor.
 of Benefices was an ambitious scheme to finance the ministry of the Kirk after the Reformation
 using funds derived from the old Church (Cameron, N., ed., Dictionary of Scottish Church
 and Theology, Edinburgh, 1993, 649).
[567] Lindsay, 1975, 32.
[568] *Ibid*, 117.
[569] Brown, 1997, 85.
[570] Barron, 1903, 123, Walpole quoted.

According to Smout (1969), from the fifteenth-century, for relief purposes, the parish poor in Scotland fell into two categories, the able-bodied vagrant poor who required punishment to show them the error of their ways, and the helpless impotent poor, victims of old age, disease or disability, who formed the sector of the community entitled to share in parish relief.[571] Sixteenth-century legislation, observes Donaldson (1977), incorporated three principles that long guided Scotland's poor relief. Firstly, the responsibility for a pauper lay with his or her parish of origin. Secondly, there was to be no assistance for the able-bodied.[572] In addition, the legislation dictated that the Poor's Fund in any parish could be supplemented by a levy, half on heritors and half on the tenants or occupiers of land to cover any shortfall in parish Kirk funds. This levy could be supplemented by collections at the church door and by voluntary funds raised by interested persons.[573] This Act of 1672 remained the foundation of the Scottish Poor Law until 1845. In consequence, until the 1845 enactment, the Kirk continued to dispense material aid, both in cash and in kind, in terms of the late-seventeenth-century legislation, concentrating on the impotent poor, through its parish ministers and their sessions after careful investigation into the material and moral condition of the recipients. As argued in Chapter 1, even with supplementary boosts from special collections, the funding for the poor in the parish as recorded in session registers was seldom adequate for the purpose. Scotland was still a poor country in relative terms, and its Highland rural population, whilst contributing to the collection plate within their limited means could scarce afford to be overly generous. The minutiae of funding as recorded in most session registers has already been detailed in Appendix "H".

7.1.1 Adversity as a chastisement on the Lord

The disasters in both Ireland and in the Highlands, claims Devine (1988), were depicted as "the awful signs of God's wrath, the chastisement of the Lord".[574] It will be clearly seen from the enormity of the disaster that without exceptional material giving from both temporal funds and philanthropic endeavour on a wide scale, that

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[571] Smout 1969, 84.
[572] Donaldson *et al,* 1977, 174.
[573] *Ibid,* 174.
[574] Devine, 1988, 118-9.

social devastation could not be contained. Certainly the initial response by the Free Church of Scotland Committee on Highland Destitution at its November 1846 inaugural meeting was to assert the theological meaning of what had occurred, stating that the famine was a justified punishment of the wicked by God. This view, argues Paton (2006):

> presents one aspect of the believing mind - the interference of God, which, irrespectively of all its results, it were the duty of the Church to impress, and not less of all connected with our Church to receive, with humility, and with godly fear. When the Lord's judgements are abroad in the earth, let us be found learning righteousness, and humbled under the mighty hand of God, because of our sins. [575]

Nevertheless, whilst the spiritual manna might provide comfort and solace to the hungry, the people's greater need at that time was health and strength-giving nourishment of the body to remain fit for work if such could be found. In this endeavour, the need met an ambivalent response from the Kirk. Greatly reduced in its membership and with a consequent decrease in its fiscal income, the initial response of the Established Church of Scotland to public adversity was to promulgate an "Act appointing a Day of Humiliation and Prayer" in the following terms:

> The General Assembly, having considered the Overtures for a Day of Humiliation, and being deeply impressed with the continued tokens of Divine displeasure still resting on the Church, and on this highly favoured and guilty land, did, and hereby do, appoint Thursday, the 1st day of July, to be set apart as a day of solemn humiliation and prayer, with special reference to the distressed condition of the country; and the General Assembly earnestly invite the co-operation and concurrence of other denominations of Christians in the observance of that day; and appoint their Moderator to prepare a suitable pastoral address.[576]

In due course, there was no move by the Established Church to institute a general monetary collection in respect of famine victims in the Highlands.[577] Its General Assembly's policy was set at the ordinary meeting of the Presbytery of Edinburgh on December 30, 1846, in which the motion was adopted not to mandate that collections be made at the front doors of its churches but merely to issue a recommendation to Kirk sessions to favour that object.[578]

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[575]   Paton, 2006, 192.
[576]   Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, XXX, Sess. Ult., May 30, 1842.
[577]   *Witness* - January 19, 1846.
[578]   *Witness* - January 2, 1847.

7.2 The Church and the Scottish Poor Law of 1845.

In 1845, with the passing of the Scottish Poor Law in approximate imitation of the 1834 Poor Law south of the Border, notes Withers (1986), the duty to administer poor relief was nominally removed from the Kirk and placed in the hands of a civil central Board of Supervision, appointed annually. The Board's link with the Parochial Board of the parish operated through an Inspector of Poor who was responsible for implementing the law within the parish.[579] From 1845, therefore, the Kirk session was no longer directly responsible for its poor within the parish, although it retained an advisory role. Session records indicate that the undistributed balance of money was handed over to the newly appointed Inspector of Poor. Parish ministers, and selected elders elected annually formed the statutory Parochial Board and thereby the Kirk maintained a second tier executive role in administering relief to the needy within the parish. In this respect, the Kirk session in certain landward parishes acted as trustees for pauper lodging houses or alms houses of which previous reference has been made (Section 5.1.1).

Most Kirk session records contain a stereotype entry establishing a statutory Roll of the poor within the parish which would award a fixed sum to the recipient. For example, Kintail session records show that on 20 November 1845 the session proceeded to make up a Roll of the Poor of the parish that "conformed to the terms of the Act of Parliament passed in the ninth year of the reign of Queen Victoria, entitled, *An Act for the Amendment and Better Administration of the Laws relating to the Relief of the Poor in Scotland*.[580] However, the Church, in all its denominations, did not conform entirely to what could be seen as an exclusive system of poor relief. Those who were physically handicapped or diseased were still supported by parochial relief if their disability prevented them from earning a living. Thus in 1847, the Cromarty Session records proclaim that: "At the same time the meeting divided the sum of seven pounds sterling collected on the Church here on 14th March, last, for the Destitution in the Highlands among fifty-six persons and families in needy

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[579] Withers, 1986, 20: Change in the Scottish poor law took place over a period of two years and owed much to the Disruption of the Scottish Church in 1843.

[580] *N.A.S.* - CH2/ 1204/ 1/ 103

circumstances and not on the Poor Roll of the Parish".[581] Consequently a balance was maintained between the temporal provision and Kirk provision that ensured the minimal level of subsistence at unexceptional times of need.

7.3 The Free Church of Scotland provision for the needy

From the foregoing it will be seen that from the sixteenth-century Reformation onwards, churches of all denominations in the Highlands of Scotland and in Ireland despite growing government intervention, maintained the Christian founding moral duty to the population in both spiritual and material terms, particularly in times of need, whether it be in relation to the individual or to the community at large. In the discharge of this principle, claims Brown (1893) in his *Annals of the Disruption*, the twofold ministry - the temporal and the spiritual - went well together.[582] In that seminal volume, Brown lists 474 'non-intrusionist' [583] ministers who signed an *Act of Separation and Deed of Demission* in 1843 and thereby seceded from the Church of Scotland to form a parallel evangelical-focused denomination, the Free Church of Scotland.[584] The effect this significant disruption produced on Establishment congregations was felt keenly in specific areas. In the wake of the 1843 Disruption, claims Ansdell (1992), the new Free Church membership created a denominational imbalance throughout the country. In the Highlands, argues MacArthur (1989), whereas some eighty-per-cent of the population adhered to the new Free Church, only twenty-per-cent of its ministry elected to do so.[585] On Skye, one in eight Establishment ministers 'came out', whilst Lewis was reduced to one Free Church minister for its population of 22,000. There, less than 500 communicants remained in the Church of Scotland.[586] Outside the parish of Stornoway, the Established Church

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[581]   *N.A.S. - CH2/ 672/ 3.*

[582]   Brown, 1893, 654.

[583]   Non-intrusionist ministers: Until finally repealed in 1874, the Patronage Acts vested power in the heritors (landowners) to intrude a minister of their choice into a parish church against the wishes of the congregation. This situation was effectively state control of the church and worked against spiritual freedom. It was crucial to the erection of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843.

[584]   Brown, 1893, 649.

[585]   MacArthur, 1989, 3.

[586]   *Ibid,* 3

of Scotland was unable to organize Kirk sessions or contribute to church collection schemes.[587]

From its support, claims MacArthur (1989), in all except the propertied classes, the new Free Church raised £1.5 million pounds and erected 654 churches within four years,[588] a testimony to the acumen and energy of its leadership and the fiscal support provided by the business and professional classes in the cities.[589] It could thus be argued that nineteenth-century evangelicalism and industrialism had much in common since the former taught that the first duty to man was to look to his own personal salvation, a self-regarding doctrine that fitted well with the habits and motives of industry. Despite its apparent success, there remained a concurrent disharmony within its Assembly. Much acrimonious debate, as outlined in Section 5.3.3 centred, as Withrington (1993), argues, on the controversy of national schooling and the establishment of Free Church colleges for the training of ministry.[590]

The acrimony engendered in the acquisition of Free Church building sites and the provision of parish clergy were but two major challenges faced by the new Church. A third was undoubtedly the dearth of basic subsistence food, especially in the Highland counties, that had become crucial in 1846, in the wake of poor harvests and chronic unemployment. As already argued, the years of intense scarcity experienced throughout the Highlands between 1846 and 1848 had a precedent set a decade before. Then, distress attributable to inclement weather and successive failed harvests, had been alleviated at the onset not by a timely government intervention, but by the traditional compassion of neighbours towards each other in times of scarcity, and implemented by the philanthropic generosity of the public at large. Of that earlier famine era, the parish minister at Portree, Skye in 1841, paid fulsome tribute to charitable giving on a global scale when he proclaimed that, "were it not for the seasonable relief afforded by public contributions in every part of the British

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[587] Ansdell, 1992, 183.

[588] MacArthur, 1986, 1.

[589] Devine, 1988, 119.

[590] Witherington, 1993, 79-97.

Empire, both at home and abroad, the great body of the lower order of the community would have been swept off by the most appalling starvation".[591]

7.4 The Free Church Committee on Highland Destitution

Alarmed at the gradual deteriorating condition of the Highland population, in the early autumn of 1846, the Free Church conducted a detailed survey into the importance of the potato in the Highland diet. According to Ansdell (1998), forty-four areas were selected in the Highlands. The results, Ansdell claims, showed the potato was one-half to three-quarters of the food consumption in thirty-four-per-cent of the areas surveyed and in some areas the potato formed as much as eighty-eight-per-cent of the food consumption. Of the thirteen areas most dependent on the potato, nine were in the Islands.[592] Seventy-six-per-cent of ministers in the crofting areas said their area had experienced entire failure of the potato crop.[593] In the collection of funds and their disbursal in appropriate direction, argues Devine (1988), the Free Church of Scotland had two advantages: first, it had a powerful motivation to act since a large number of its followers lived in the region where distress was most acute, and second, the Free Church had a loyal following within the cities who could be expected to contribute aid to their brethren in the Highlands.

In 1846 the population of the Highlands, argues Devine (1988), probably gained indirectly from the tragedy which engulfed the people of Ireland. The potato blight struck Ireland a year earlier and very quickly produced extremely serious social effects. Worldwide publicity of the exceptional Irish tragedy had by this time attracted substantial charitable donations from a number of organizations overseas to relieve destitution in that country. A similar interest was evident in the Highland crisis.[594] Addressing the task with promptitude, the Free Church's Destitution Committee raised more than £15,000 throughout Scotland albeit the Committee

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[591] *N.S.A.,,*X1V, 218 (Portree Parish, Skye, 1841).
[592] Ansdell, 1998, 146.
[593] *Ibid*, 147.
[594] Devine, 1988, 117.

lasted as an independent operation for only a few months from November 1846 to February 1847.[595]

In September 1846, at the time when catastrophic famine conditions in Ireland and its causes were widely reported in the national press, overtures to the severe scarcity of food in the Scottish Highlands began to make their appearance. Professor More of Edinburgh, in his address to the Committee of Commission of the Free Church, appealed to the land proprietors in the West Highlands to alleviate the condition of their tenants to whom mutual aid was no longer sufficient to meet their needs:

> The calamity we believe and know falls most heavily along the north-west and western coasts of the Highlands of Scotland and over the whole of the Western Islands - we would hope that within this range individual proprietors of the soil will be found who are not wanting in the duties of property.[596]

In the majority of cases, as previously argued, proprietors with little exception appeared to respond to their 'duties of property' as far as means would allow. Free Church concern for the well-being of parishioners of every denomination in the Highlands together with a tentative strategy for the adoption of interim relief measures were tabled by Dr. Robert Smith Candlish, parish minister of St. George's, Edinburgh, and Destitution Committee member, at a meeting of the Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh on September 7, 1846, when he "begged to move that the Presbytery overture the approaching Synod to take into consideration the judgments of God impending over the land, and generally to consider what steps should be taken in the circumstances".[597] The evidence seems to be that individual Free Church relief initiatives preceded co-ordinate action. For example, the Free Synod of Argyle, on September 2, 1846, commented on the failure of the potato crop and the sufferings of the people within its bounds, and recommended that collections be made in their respective congregations and preaching stations to render aid in cases of special suffering. It was then acknowledged that "the sufferings were so greatly spread, so much in amount, that any such offerings at the utmost extent of Christian generosity

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[595]   *Ibid,* 126.
[596]   *Witness* - September 16, 1846
[597]   *Witness* - October 10, 1846.

on the part of congregations, could not be expected to yield anything like temporary relief".[598]

7.5 The Home Mission Committee of the Free Church of Scotland

The Home Mission Committee of the Free Church, meeting in Edinburgh on November 21, 1846 to discuss the severe famine conditions reported from the Highlands, considered it had a "solemn duty to set their hand to this divinely commanded labour" of relieving further distress in that region. At the same time, in view of the on-going disputes with landowners in acquiring sites for the erection of Free Church buildings, the commissioners wished to make public "their own perfect readiness to assure those proprietors that, instead of the Free Church wishing to injure the existing temporal relations in any way, the agency to be employed should be such as would show full readiness and desire to co-operate with the proprietors, on whom such a heavy and sudden calamity had come, and ought to be an object with the agency to be employed".[599] The Committee made its own ecumenical stance clear with the following statement:

> We conceived one duty of that Committee would be to address respectfully the landed proprietors of those extensive districts where the existing destitution prevailed: and to set forth to them the principles of the Free Church's actions in this emergency: that it was not in any sectarian spirit the Free Church viewed it, or undertook the duty; but as an associated body of professing Christians, seeking to discharge a duty to which they felt themselves called in the all-wise providence of God. They would state, as a matter of course, that it was not only to those of their own communion the Free Church contemplated sending the measures of relief which their limited resources would command, but wherever there was destitution, could the Free Church but even touch the extremity, and throw in its iota or mite, in the way of alleviation or temporary relief, that there it would endeavour so to do on the footing of Christian duty.[600]

In November 1846, when extreme distress had been confirmed in the Highlands, the Rev. McIntosh Mackay was appointed convenor of the Free Church Assembly's Committee on the Destitution. Mackay was also convener of the Gaelic Committee. These two committees, claims Paton (2006), dealt respectively with the administration of the collection of relief for the Highlands and with the provision of ministers for the Highlands.[601] At its meeting on 2nd December 1846, the Free

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[598]   *Witness* - September 16, 1846.
[599]   *Witness* - November 21, 1846.
[600]   *Witness* - November 21, 1846.
[601]   Paton, 2006, 192.

Church Commissioners of Assembly took a pragmatic view of the Church's ability to meet the challenge of relief provision in the Highlands:

> In the first place, it seems to be supposed that we, as a church, are about to take, or have already taken upon us, the task of relieving the whole destitution of the Highlands; next, that our interference will do no good, but will do the great mischief of preventing the Government and the proprietors, the proper parties, from coming forward; and lastly that the proprietors are the only parties who are morally bound to take upon them this onerous task, and that they are able to do so. Now, as to the first of these points, it is not and never was, the intention of the Commissioners of Assembly to assume for the Church this task - a task which it were little better than madness in us even to attempt.[602]

Highland landowners, despite criticism for absenteeism and failure to convey building land for Free Church properties, were not entirely opposed to Free Church interests. Ansdell (1992) found that in Lewis there was a large measure of support for the Evangelicals from the proprietors. The ministers who remained with the Church of Scotland on that island were more estranged from the proprietors than were those who moved to the Free Church. Most of the Lewis people supported the Free Church, but so did most of the tacksmen and many of the more affluent and educated members of Stornoway society.[603]

Destitution committees had been set up by a number of bodies, but historians are agreed that the Free Church of Scotland was the first to act positively with measures for the relief of famine in the distressed crofting districts of the Highlands and Islands.[604] With a dual concern for the welfare of the Highland population irrespective of creed, the Commission of the Free Church Assembly authorised a survey within its Highland parishes to establish the extent of potato failure and distress widely reported in the nation's media. According to Ansdell (1992), the Free Church collators found that as many as 200,000 people were destitute and that a further 200,000 would soon be suffering a similar plight.[605] Local press reporting at the time, however, claimed a more conservative figure of "upwards of 100,000 souls".[606] The response of the Commission of the Free Church Assembly was to authorise a collection within its churches to support relief measures within the

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[602] *Witness* - December 2, 1846.
[603] Ansdell, 1992, 182.
[604] Ansdell, 1998, 147; Devine, 1980, 33.
[605] *Ibid*, 147.
[606] *Inverness Courier*, December 2, 1846.

Highlands, an initiative, claims Brown (1893) that realised the £15,000 referred to above, from throughout Scotland.[607] On November 21, 1846, the Free Church empanelled its Committee on Highland Destitution which organized the distribution of material and spiritual aid throughout the West Highlands and Islands to breach the vacuum until central government assumed full responsibility for relief measures on February 4, 1847.[608]

7.6 Resolutions of the Free Church General Committee on Highland Destitution

In early December, 1846, the Free Church General Committee on Highland Destitution formulated its strategy to meet the challenge of scarcity throughout the Highlands with a plan of operation listing thirteen rules. These are reproduced below as Appendix "C".[609] Each district was to have a local Distributing Sub-Committee monitored by visiting members of the General Committee who would be conveyed to the West Highlands by the Free Church schooner *Breadalbane* (Para 7.7). The visiting members were to report back to the General Committee from time to time (Rule 1). Relief measures were to be concentrated on the families of cottars, the most vulnerable group in Highland society, and that as a general rule, no food shall be distributed to the families of rent-paying tenantry (Rule 3). Detailed records were to be kept by the Distributing Sub-Committee in distribution books supplied for the purpose, these to be carefully kept and preserved and returned to the General Committee (Rule 5). However altruistic this rule, deficiencies in its operation soon became apparent after the Free Church relinquished its task to direct Government control in February 1847. For example, the inspection by the General Committee's visiting member of the local Distributing Sub-Committee at Gairloch in Ross-shire, in his report of August 3, 1847, chronicled evidence of 'imperfect management' in the absence of a Convener, and Sub-Convener, and the non-production of any documents as minutes, schedules, receipts or expenditure . . "for the Committee, as a Committee seemed to hold no meetings, and exercise no control".[610] At Lochcarron that same week, irregularities were found in the distribution of meal to "improper applicants"

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[607] Brown, 1893, 654.
[608] *Witness* - February 6, 1847.
[609] *Witness* - December 16, 1846
[610] *N.A.S.* - HD 22/ 6.

resulting in "overgrown lists" containing those persons who had "refused their hired labour to neighbouring farmers". Provision was made for an agent in Glasgow to arrange accommodation and suitable clothing for migrant workers on arrival in the city, and to provide for dependents in the Highlands during the workers' absence (Rules 9 and 10). Most important, claims Paton (2006) was the Destitution Committee's proposal that receipt of relief, and membership of Distributing Local Committees to oversee distribution of relief, should be an ecumenical affair. The Free Church, Established, Episcopalian and Catholic Churches, should be equally represented.[611]

7.7 The Free Church Schooner *Breadalbane*

Faced with the scarcity of ministers following the Disruption, the Committee of the Free Church found it necessary to provide by means of private subscriptions, a small but sturdy schooner, suitably adapted for the purpose of conveying itinerant ministers released from their own parish for a season to and from the more remote localities of the West Highlands and Islands, especially those lying out of the usual lines of communication. Built at Fairlie on the River Clyde in 1844, the *Breadalbane* [612] schooner, according to Brown (1893), proved to be "admirable suited for the purpose" until disposed of due to increased running costs at the end of the 1853 season, by which time Highland shipping services along the west coast had improved.[613] Brown is effusive on the utility of the *Breadalbane* in the missionary outreach of the Free Church in the dearth of pulpit supply in the remote coastal areas of the Highlands at that period:

> Our chief concern here, however, is with the spiritual work of the Church, and her efforts while ministering to the religious wants of the people. Nothing was more remarkable at that time than the eagerness with which congregations assembled to listen to the Gospel. It had to be announced that a Free Church minister had arrived in any district, and crowds flocked to hear him, and would sit the livelong day listening to him. They were thirsting for the Gospel.[614]

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[611] Paton, 2006, 192.

[612] MacArthur, 1986-88, 4: Contrary to popular tradition the vessel was not presented by the Marquis of Breadalbane, though he contributed £50. The name was chosen as a complement "more than well-merited and fitly bestowed" on the nobleman who was the most prominent supporter of the Free Church in the provision of sites and other matters. See also Brown , 1893, 269, on the liberality of both the Marquis of Breadalbane and the dowager Marchioness to the new Free Church

[613] Brown, 1893, 652.

[614] *Ibid,* 655.

At the meeting of the Home Mission Committee of the Free Church on November 21, 1846, referred to above, approval was given to make use of the *Breadalbane* to carry supplies from depots established by central government at Tobermory, Portree and Stornoway to relieve the destitute West Highlanders.[615] Initially, claims Brown (1893), the services of the Free Church schooner had been invaluable in a voyage of inquiry to ascertain where the pressure of want was most severe.[616] The Islands of Skye, Barra, South Uist, North Uist, Benbecula, Harris, Tyree, Coll, Iona, Ulva, and the greater part of Mull and Eigg were visited. The log book for 1846 reproduced by MacArthur (1986-88) indicates that on October 10, 1846 the *Breadalbane* shipped ten sacks of oatmeal and sailed for Tobermory.[617] The schooner's summer programme was completed that year on November 14, 1846 [618] by which time the seas would have been extremely rough. The 1847 log indicated the *Breadalbane* had carried from the Oban depot, oat meal, pease meal, wheat and barley to Ross, Dervaig, Salen, Tobermory, Iona, Ulva, Gometra, Tyree and Coll. Immediate help was therefore given to the Inner Hebrides before Government store-ships arrived from the Thames.[619] According to Brown (1893), on these voyages the spiritual accompanied the material:

> We can easily understand what one has stated, that the sensation in whole congregations and districts was very great when the *Breadalbane* appeared in the offing. Many a day the sight of her flag had been a cordial to the hearts of poor people hungering for the bread that perisheth as well as for that which endureth unto everlasting life.[620]

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7.8 The Central Board of Management for Highland Relief

Following government intervention the three existing relief committees - that of the Free Church and the two General Committees which had been nominated by public meetings in Edinburgh on December 18, 1846 - were consolidated into two independent committees, or 'sections', based in Edinburgh and Glasgow, each responsible for a designated area of the Highlands. The handing over of the Free Church Destitution Fund and administration papers to the newly created Central

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[615]   *The Witness* - November 21, 1846.
[616]   Brown, 1893, 654.
[617]   MacArthur. 1989, 12.
[618]   *Ibid,* 18.
[619]   *Ibid,* 18.
[620]   Brown, 1893, 654.

Board of Management (hereafter the Board) for Highland Relief took place at a meeting within Free Presbytery House, Glasgow, on February 4, 1847.[621] The Board's remit to co-ordinate and control both committees was centred in Edinburgh. To recap on Section 3.8.1, the Edinburgh Section (founded December 18, 1846) assumed responsibility for the distressed districts of Argyll Skye, Wester Ross, the Northern Isles and the Eastern Highlands whilst the Glasgow Section (founded January 6, 1847) became responsible for western Inverness, the Outer Hebrides and the Inner Hebrides apart from Skye. The Central Board, claims Devine (1995), had 117 members, including the Moderators of the Church of Scotland, the Free Church and the Relief Church, a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, the Lord Advocate, the Solicitor-General, the Provosts of all the major towns, the principals of Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities, and several landowners.[622]

Whilst the existing charities continued to provide assistance, they had their former independence usurped by the Government. Charles Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Sir Edward Pine-Coffin, Commissary-General, and Sir John McNeill, Chairman of the Poor Law Board of Supervision in Scotland, remained the controlling presence until the mid-1850s. All of them, argues Devine (1995), had a crucial effect on the policies adopted by the Central Board.[623] The parish Church, however, with its local knowledge and close personal relationship with people within its bounds, retained a key role in overseeing the distribution of supplies to ensure the welfare of the local communities irrespective of religious affiliation. This is apparent in the Harris flour case of February 1847, when the Free Church clergyman and his elders at Lochmaddy in South Uist prevented the forcible removal of 300 barrels of flour from the depot there by local residents.[624] In another instance, the same Free Church clergyman withheld the distribution of charity meal from several who he knew had stolen meal on a previous occasion.[625] Following its erection in early 1847, the Central Board resolved to adopt the Board of Works policy on the provision of

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[621]   *Witness* - February 6, 1847.
[622]   Devine, 1995, 128.
[623]   *Ibid,* 124.
[624]   *NAS*, AD 58//84, *Destitution Papers*, Conditions on the Island of Harris.
[625]   *NAS*, AD 58//84, *Destitution Papers*, Conditions on the Island of Harris.

relief and endorsing the Free Church principle that relief should only be given in return for labour, in effect the view held by Charles Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary to the Treasury, who had assumed overall charge of government relief measures in the Highlands and in Ireland. The directive to the Local Committees was unambiguous;

> The Local Committee shall hold it as a general rule that work of some kind should be given in exchange for relief; and shall impress upon the people that food given is not a gratuitous gift, but has to be paid for in one way or another.[626]

A brief survey of the government's public works schemes has been introduced in Chapter 3.

7.9 Directed out-movement of Highland labour

Both temporary and seasonal migration from the rural Highlands and Islands to the urban Lowlands, argues Withers (1988) was a vital element in the demographic and economic experiences of eighteenth and nineteenth century Scotland. Both forms of migration reflected the capitalist transformation of Highland society and increased following failure of the Highland potato crop between 1836 and 1850.[627] Most jobs for temporary and seasonal workers, both male and female, were normally low skilled and attracted a minimum wage. The origins of church schemes for directed out-movement of Highland labour appear to lie in a resolution of the Free Church of Scotland Synod of Argyll in September 1846:

> . . . that great benefit would be conferred by a number of steamers being sent round the west coast and islands of Argyleshire [*sic*] to convey the young and able-bodied of the population to the Lowlands, and such parts as have lines of railway in progress of construction, and where demand for labour exists, this being rendered necessary by the poverty of the people.

To encourage such temporary and seasonal migration by sea the Free Church Relief Committee, in that same month, attempted to obtain the services of Royal Navy vessels to transport men from the Hebrides to seek Lowland employment. However, this proposal was met with the customary intransigence towards government involvement in public distress articulated by Charles Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury to whom the prospect of dependence was anathema:

> It is easy to convey people from their homes: the landed proprietors might, without assistance, send any number to Glasgow by the passage-steamers at a few shillings a head . . . All things considered, I am convinced that this is a branch of the subject which must be left entirely to

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[626]   *NAS, Destitution Papers*, Plan of Operation, Second Statement of the Free Church of Scotland.
[627]   *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol.14. Issue 2. April 1988.128-150.

the proprietors and the labourers themselves without any interference on the part of the Government.[628]

As work on the Caledonian Canal - commenced in 1801 as a Government 'job creation scheme' for destitute Highlanders - neared completion,[629] the Free Church Relief Committee proposed the temporary migration from the Highlands of unemployed men to railway construction, then a major source of employment on the Scottish mainland where a number of separate private companies were engaged.[630] By late September 1846, following the onset of famine period, the *Inverness Courier* reported that so many Highlanders worked on the construction of the Aberdeen railway system that the Free Church appointed a catechist to provide for their spiritual welfare.[631] Nevertheless, this form of employment had its limits for the *Witness*, February 3rd, 1847, carried a statement from David Ferguson, Free Church Missionary, Dunblane, that:

> Having been informed that a body of men from the Highlands had arrived in the town in search of work, and had been disappointed in procuring it, I immediately went to the office and, to my surprise, was informed that no work was to be had. . . (I) was told that in consequence of an influx of Irishmen, that necessity no longer existed, and besides that the number alleged to be required had been exaggerated.[632]

By the end of 1847, the country entered into a period of industrial depression which caused work on railway construction in the south and east to be halted and the workforce made redundant. In consequence, unemployed Highlanders returned home to their families in large numbers, to face bare subsistence with the support of local relief committee assistance. Despite this setback in a major work initiative, the concern of the Free Church in ministering to the spiritual and material needs of Highland people appears to have continued unabated.

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[628]   *NAS*, AD 58/82, Mr. Trevelyan to Sir E. Coffin, Treasury, September 29, 1846.
[629]   *Inverness Courier*, May 11, 1847. The Caledonian Canal which cost three times over budget was to prove obsolete shortly after completion. Ships had rapidly increased in size with the result that the larger vessels were precluded from passage through the locks.
[630]   Devine, 1995, 160: In 1846 and 1847, no fewer than twenty-seven separate companies were building permanent way tracks. Three hundred miles of track were under development utilising the labour of 3000 horses and 29,000 men.
[631]   *Inverness Courier*, September 23, 1846.
[632]   *Witness*, February 3, 1847.

7.10 Emigration and the Scottish Churches

Some observations upon emigration from the Highlands have been made in Chapter 6 above, but little reference has been made there to the role of the churches in this social movement. While some Scottish Church clergy continued to advocate migration and emigration out of Christian concern, Cameron (1993) argues that no consistent policy appears to have been adopted.[633] Not a few ministers of the Established Church, reporting to both the *O.S.A.* and *N.S.A.*, were emphatic that migration and emigration was the panacea for over-population and unemployment. Reporting to the *N.S.A.* in 1840, the Rev. John Mackinnon, Parish of Strath, Skye, highlighted a major obstacle rooted in the psyche of the Highlander:

> …the result of similar calamities (famine of 1836-38) can only be prevented by striking the evil at the root, by the establishment of a systematic emigration conducted upon proper principles, and holding out such inducements as will overcome the *amor patriae* so strongly implanted in the breast of every Highlander.[634]

In the Highlands the mid-nineteenth-century vogue for emigration, whether forced or voluntary, meant that whole congregations were depleted as in the case of Glen Calvie, Ross-shire in 1845, when, claims MacKenzie (1946), eighteen families consisting of ninety-two persons were evicted from their homes to harbour in the open within the Croik parish churchyard.[635] Other congregations were totally removed from the landscape - notably Roman Catholic - whose members were closely bound to an indigenous peasant culture. Emigration, however, tended to result in a social imbalance with the young and fit departing the land and leaving the old and infirm at home. Landholders appear to have been ambivalent towards emigration, some opposed emigration since it reduced the potential workforce on estates, whilst others favoured emigration in order to reduce the obligatory upkeep of their tenant families. In those areas where both mass emigration and migration were practised, it greatly depleted church congregations with the result that less money accrued to support the parish needy.

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[633] Cameron 1993, 292.
[634] *N.S.A*, XIV, 314, (Strath Parish, Skye, 1840).
[635] Mackenzie, 1946, 128.

Once embarked on the emigrant ships at their port of departure, the spiritual needs of the emigrants were met by ministers who preached on board departing vessels, urging their hearers to uphold the ordinances of religion even in the absence of churches and ministers.[636] One of the primary concerns of many emigrants argues Cameron (1993), was to establish spiritual leadership in their new communities by securing the services of a minister from home.[637] Presbyterian worship was formally brought to Adelaide, Victoria, Australia, in 1839 when the first Scottish settlers brought with them their religious traditions and spirit of their homeland. Wherever possible, claims Harper (2003), each of the larger shiploads was accompanied by a minister of the Free Church of Scotland.[638] In the 1840s adds Harper, Otago on South Island, New Zealand, was developed specifically as a Presbyterian community by the Free Church of Scotland. When the Island of Lewis was forcibly depopulated by its landowner between 1846 and 1848, the Free Church, argues Devine (1995), supplied the Rev. Mr. MacLean, minister from Harris, to travel with the emigrants.[639] Prominent in meeting the spiritual needs of Presbyterian emigrants settled in Upper and Lower Canada and the Maritimes until it merged in 1840 with the General Assembly's Colonial Committee, was the Glasgow Colonial Society which provided over forty ministers to serve in those areas.[640]

Emigrants were enticed with "promises of a well-ordered Christian society, good educational facilities and unambiguously Scottish culture".[641] However, despite its well published re-assuring claims, the ambitious aim of the Free Church to encourage emigration failed to realise its full potential due to the emigrants' apathy in spiritual matters once arrived at their chosen destination. More encouraging is that according to MacMillan (1967), by 1851, within the Free Church Synod of Eastern Australia, established in 1846, there were five Free Church ministers in Victoria, six in New South Wales, two in South Australia and two in Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania).[642] Most recorded instances of clergymen accompanying Scottish emigrants came from

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[636]   Cameron 1993, 292.
[637]   *Ibid*, 292.
[638]   Cameron, 1990, 479.
[639]   Devine, 1995, 219.
[640]   Harper, 2003, 342.
[641]   *Ibid,* 108.
[642]   MacMillan, 1967. 48.

the Highlands.[643] In summation, the evidence seems to indicate that wherever Highland emigrants of whatever denomination settled in new lands, the Church of Christ followed quickly to fill the spiritual vacuum.

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[643]   Harper, 2003, 342.

Chapter 8: Presbyterian response to mid-nineteenth-century famine conditions in Ireland

> And he humbled thee, and suffered ye to hunger, and fed thee
> with manna . . . that He might make thee know that man doth
> not live by bread only, but by the very word that proceedeth out
> of the mouth of the Lord doth man live (Deuteronomy 8:3).

8.1 Paucity of church records in Ireland

Mention has been made in Chapter 1.2.1 of the destruction by fire in 1921 of the Four Courts building, Dublin, which housed the Public Records Office and the 1821-1851 Irish census materials stored there. Also destroyed in the 1921 fire to the later inconvenience of researchers, were many parish church registers. During World War I the Government had pulped the 1861-1891 censuses to leave 1901 as the oldest surviving census record in Ireland. To overcome the absence of census records prior to 1901, *Griffith's Survey* of Ireland (Table 8.1), a taxation list, has been frequently used as a substitute.[644] In this document, the name of the occupier of land and buildings is listed as the person responsible for paying the tax. It is the only major surviving list of where people lived just prior to and just after the mid-nineteenth-century *Great Famine* era in Ireland. As stated in Chapter 1, collections of Presbyterian Church records may be consulted at the *Public Records Office for Northern Ireland* and at the premises of the *Presbyterian Historical Society,* both located within Belfast. As yet (2010), lacking a modern retrieval system, research can be time consuming.

8.2 Sectarian conflict in Ireland

Few historians would disagree with the Edwards *et al.* (1956) assertion that it would be almost impossible to overrate the part played by religious or sectarian feeling in Irish life during the early-nineteenth-century.[645] Undiminished by the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church predominated in all four provinces of Ireland.[646] According to Edwards *et al*., in Ulster its denominational adherents, noted for their

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[644]   Griffith Survey, 1861; http.www://from-ireland.net/Griffith/maghera.htm
[645]   Edwards *et al*, 1956, 62.
[646]   Originally there were five provinces but over the course of time the smallest one, Meath, was absorbed into Leinster. These provinces began as little more than loosely federated kingdoms with somewhat flexible boundaries, but in modern times they have become associated with groups of specific counties though they have no legal status.

fecundity, formed over sixty-two-per-cent of the population; in Leinster eighty-five per cent, and in Munster and Connacht ninety-five and ninety-six per cent respectively. In only a limited area in the northeast (the diocese of Down, Connor and Dromore) did Roman Catholics amount to less than fifty-per-cent of the total population.[647] Some indication of the denominational mix of an Ulster community in which province Presbyterianism had its main base, may be inferred from the *Griffith's Survey* (1861) in which ratepayers in the townland of Ballybay within the Monaghan Presbytery, are recorded as:

Table 8.1

Denominational mix within Ballybay townland, *Griffith's Survey* (1861)

Location	Catholic	Protestant
Main Street	112	96
Church Lane	3	3
Castleblaynay Road	9	7
Monaghan Road	34	12
Meeting House Lane	19	11

Although selected at random, and perhaps not representative of Ulster as a whole, the numerical correspondence in Ballybay township of Roman Catholics to Protestants that included a strong presence of Presbyterians, suggest that in the prevailing social climate of suspicion, even hatred, the denominations existed in uneasy peace. Few Roman Catholics, argues Baillie (1947), willingly accepted that the Presbyterian Church in the North had been the backbone of the movement for independence known as the *United Irishman,* and that some Presbyterian clergymen had been put to death for promoting that cause during the insurrection of 1798, and others imprisoned or banished.[648]

Following the British government's grant of Catholic emancipation [649] in 1829, Ireland's denominational imbalance, most clearly seen in Leinster, Connaught and Munster, led to a general strike of tithe-payers over large areas in the south and west.

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[647] Edwards *et al*, 1956, 64.

[648] Baillie, 1947, 2-3.

[649] Catholic Emancipation was the term first used in the 1790s to express the demand of Irish Catholics for the right to sit in parliament, to be members of the privy council, to hold senior governmental positions and become king's counsels and county sheriffs (Byrne's Dictionary, 2004).

In this politically-motivated action the majority of the tithe payers, states Edwards *et al.* (1956), "saw no reason why they should support a church which could render them no spiritual assistance and which moreover, they believed to be engaged in propagating heresy and error".[650] Typical of the nature of this on-going sectarian conflict was the *Witness* newspaper report in March, 1847, of a destitution committee meeting in Connemara, County Galway within Connaught Province:

> The reverend gentlemen (Roman Catholic priests) insisted that soup should not have been dispensed on this week to the poor, it being the first week of Lent, and imputed base and dishonourable motives to the Protestant clergymen who issued tickets for that purpose. This was opposed by the Rev. W. Crotty, Presbyterian minister (who replied),"It will serve no purpose to fight here about your laws and customs. What am I to know as a Presbyterian clergyman of your Ash Wednesdays and Good Fridays? My duty as a member of this committee is to relieve the poor, as far as in my power, without reference to sect or party." [651]

The above account is illustrative of the claim that in discharging their Christian duty, Ireland's Presbyterians were invariably open-handed in meeting the needs of the distressed poor irrespective of religious affiliation.

Bolstered by a powerful political and numerical denominational presence in the country, it is the opinion of Edwards *et al.* (1956) that the Irish priesthood remained completely independent of British government control.[652] Several instances of abuse of the British Government Relief Fund by clergy of the Roman Catholic Church entrusted to its proper distribution are to be found within contemporary Irish newsprint. As example, in November 1846, the *English Presbyterian Messenger* carried the report that:

> We begin to observe some great abuses already in carrying out the benevolent designs of the Government. It was resolved "that public works of national benefit should be undertaken, so as to give employment to the poor, in a way conducive to the permanent improvement of the country". We observe in the Irish papers, at the sessions at West Muskerry, Father O'Driscoll applied to build a chapel at Dedishane: L.500 granted. Father Lee applied for L.1000 to repair Macroon Chapel: We say that this is a gross misappropriation of public money. [653]

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[650]   Edwards *et al*, 1956, 66.

[651]   *Witness*, March 3rd, 1847. The Rev. William Crotty appears to have been the one-time R.C. priest who served as a minister in the Presbyterian Church at Birr in Munster Presbytery (see para. 7. 6).

[652]   Edwards *et al*, 1956, 66.

[653]   *English Presbyterian Messenger*, November 4, 1846.

It might be argued with some justification that the building works at those two Christian edifices would have provided paid employment to a number of destitute labourers and enable them to make some provision for their families. However, a report of even date in the *Mayo Telegraph* comments upon the difficulty facing the destitute Roman Catholic paupers in obtaining work permits committed to the control of, and distribution by, the Irish priesthood:

> The poor have complained that the priests having refused to return them for employment, although aware of their destitution, until they had paid their dues. This complaint is not from a single individual, nor such conduct imputed to an isolated clergyman. The poor wretches driven to desperation have vowed and declared that if their reverences would give them a ticket, their first earnings would go in liquidation of their sacerdotal debts. But no, the humane pastors would punish them for their neglect of the Church's rights.[654]

The evidence, however, seems to suggest that despite the occasional widely reported abuse of Relief Fund money by members of the Roman Catholic clergy, and the petty sectarian animosity quoted above, that during the Great Famine years, every denomination made provision for its parishioners from its own resources, and collectively assisted the local councils in dispensing material aid provided from Government sources. Kinealy (2006) makes the claim that Roman Catholic famine aid continued beyond 1847 when many other forms of private relief had dried up. Because of its overseas network, argues Kinealy, the Irish Catholic church was able to attract money of which some of the largest amounts were raised by the Catholic parishes in Britain and the United States. A committee specifically for the relief of Irish poor was established in Rome in January 1847. Despite these charitable endeavours argues Kinealy, the Vatican found it necessary to criticize the laziness of the Irish bishops in fund raising for the poor; their thanklessness for relief aid collected, and for their wrangling with one another.[655]

In the closing years of the eighteenth-century, the evangelical movement spawned by the Wesley brothers, Charles and John, and their co-religionists began to gain ground rapidly in both Great Britain and in Ireland to which Charles paid several visits. As noted in Chapter 2, Evangelicals preached the saving necessity of fully absorbing Christian dogma, and maintaining an intimate concern for the individual soul. Stress

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[654] *Mayo Telegraph,* November 28, 1846.
[655] *Ibid.*

was laid on the vital importance of a warmly felt realisation of God's purpose and in proclaiming the need to learn His will through a diligent search of the scriptures. Mission was at the root of the evangelical movement that was vigorously promoted by the Church of Ireland in what came to be viewed as an attempt at a second Reformation. The result, argues Edwards *et al.* (1956), was that crusading Protestantism in its several divisions found itself confronted by resurgent Catholicism.[656]

Plate 8.1

The Scots Kirk, Funchal, Island of Madeira, Portugal

The Scots Kirk, Funchal, Madeira, built circa 1847. Closed after Dr. Kalley's expulsion from the island, it was consecrated in 1895 as a Scottish Presbyterian Church maintained from Edinburgh. Some original interior furnishings still exist. Currently an outpost of the Presbyterian Church of Portugal in which language services are conducted. (photo - JRS)

8.2.1 Pattern for religious intolerance - Dr. Robert Reid Kalley

Recorded history has shown that in both Ireland and in Scotland there appears to have been pockets of ecumenical intolerance between Protestant and Catholic that was not alleviated by the mid-nineteenth-century. In this connection, frequent admonitions to parish clergy surface within Kirk records covering the mid-nineteenth-century years of unprecedented scarcity. For example, as already mentioned, the Presbyterian synod of Argyle in 1846 found it necessary to appoint a committee specifically for

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[656]   Edwards *et al*, 1956, 70.

"watching over any proceeding that may be adopted for promoting the progress of popery and taking such measures as they shall deem expedient for opposing the same".[657] This seeming intransigence to co-operate in God's purpose militated against the spirit of the British government's grant, albeit for political reasons, of Roman Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

On a wider perspective of Presbyterian outreach, contemporary newspapers reported at length, "the late Popish excesses against Christians in Madeira", on which Portuguese island Dr. Robert Reid Kalley [658] (introduced in Section 2.5.1) and the entire congregation of the Scots Kirk in central Funchal (Plate 8.1) were savagely persecuted by the Roman Catholic mob and forced into exile.[659] This seeming digression from events on the British mainland, it is submitted, has relevance to the divergent attitudes displayed by the co-religionists in both Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland. Roman Catholicism, despite its modern claims to ecumenism, stands on an unyielding political and economic base upon which the Vatican in Rome is unswerving in its gospel-based claim[660] instigated by Gregory the Great in the sixth-century, CE, to be the universal church of Christendom, and by divine right, the power over all nations.[661]

Despite the British government's increase in Catholic relief measures from the late-eighteenth-century as a political initiative, the intransigence of the Roman church to

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[657]   *N.A.S.,* CH2/ 557/10/ 83.

[658]   Dr. Robert Reid Kalley, a native of Ayrshire, was baptized in the Church of Scotland in 1809 by his parents and the foster parents who raised him wished him to prepare for the ministry. Young Robert was a religious sceptic and chose the College of Medicine and Surgery at the University of Glasgow. He graduated as a surgeon aged 20 and accepted an appointment as ship's surgeon to gain experience before settling in Kilmarnock. As a medical missionary, Dr. Kalley arrived in Madeira on October 12, 1838 (Journal of Presbyterian History, Vol. 42, No.1, 3 Sept., 1964).

[659]   *Witness*, September 26th, 1846 and *The Apostle of Madeira: Dr. Robert Reid Kalley* by M. R. Testa in the Journal of Presbyterian History, Vol. 42, No.3, September 1964.

[660]   It has been claimed that the Roman Catholic Church assumed primacy from the text in Matthew 16:18-19. 'And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

[661]   Papal claims to universality, and to be rightfull possessors of both crown and sword, introduced by Pope Gregory the Great (509-604), can be viewed at http://www.acts1711.com/claims.htm

accommodate competing faiths was exhibited in the public concern[662] shown for the welfare of Dr. Robert Reid Kalley, a wealthy evangelical Scottish medical missionary and educator who assumed leadership of the 'privy' Scots Kirk and its congregation at Funchal, Madeira,[663] in Catholic dominated Portugal, between 1838 and 1846.[664] Invoking an Inquisition law of 1603 against heresy, argues Testa (1964), the civil authorities, at the instigation of the Bishop of Funchal, ordered the arrest of Dr. Kalley and committed him to prison on the island where he was to remain for six months without bail [665] and his Kirk converts persecuted.[666] The circumstance of Kalley's incarceration was raised at the Free Church of Scotland, Glasgow Assembly on October 23, 1843, when,

> It was further moved and unanimously agreed to, that it be remitted to the colonial committee, to take under their immediate consideration the case of Dr. Kalley of Madeira, to adopt such measures, with a view to procure his liberation (if it should be found he is still in bonds), as it may be competent for him to employ; and farther, to convey to Dr. Kalley, on the part of this House, the expression of their deep and unfeigned sympathy with him in the sufferings he has been called to endure in the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ.[667]

Following release, Kalley and his Portuguese congregation of "Calvinist heretics" were subjected to further harassment led by the Catholic clergy on the island. Ultimately, Kalley's house and personal effects were reduced to ashes by the "Catholic mob", whilst Kalley and his family were clandestinely [668] removed by a Royal Navy ship to exile in Brazil where he continued his missionary calling from 1855 to 1876. Kalley's Portuguese converts were later forced into a *diaspora* from Madeira, most to settle in Demerara Guyana, South America.[669]

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[662] *Witness,* September 26th, 1846: "We appeal to Madeira, where, the instant that God's truth appears, it is pounced on by Popery, as the vulture pounces on its prey, and nothing but the extinction of that truth, or the blood of its adherents, will appease the wrath of the Popish mob".

[663] The Scots Kirk during Kalley's tenure as a missionary in Funchal possessed no purpose-built sanctuary, but its converts met within his house and other homes on the island. Anathema to the Bishop of Funchal was the English translation of the Bible which Kalley freely distributed to the island converts who had only heard the Roman version read to them in church. As an educator of the poor, Kalley had taught English language on the island.

[664] *Witness*, September 26th, 1846.

[665] Testa, 1964, 12.

[666] Cameron, 1993, 451.

[667] The Free Church of Scotland, Glasgow Assembly, 23 October 1843, Session 10.

[668] Kalley, disguised as a sick woman and carried in a hammock from the British consulate, was ultimately taken on board the British vessel *Forth*, at the time anchored in the Bay of Funchal.

[670] Abstract from a wall-plaque outside the Scots Kirk, built circa 1847 in neo-Gothic religious architecture and set in a small garden. Some of the original furnishings still exist. In 1895 the

8.2.2 Pattern for religious toleration - the Maynooth Grant

By 1840 both the Catholics and the Presbyterians were receiving subsidies from the state. In the case of the latter this went back to 1672, when the Presbyterian clergy - an offshoot of the church establishment in Scotland - received the *regium donum*, literally an annual grant of £600 inaugurated by Charles II. By 1845 this grant had increased to about £35,000.[670] If the records of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland indicate little ecumenical accommodation for the Church of Rome in the mid-nineteenth-century, then a major British political and religious controversy during that period was the decision of Sir Robert Peel's government to increase the annual grant awarded to St. Patrick's College and Seminary at Maynooth, Co. Kildare,[671] from £8,928 to £26,360, as claimed by Connolly (1998), and provide a capital sum of £30,000 for building extensions ostensibly to curb the ongoing political unrest in Ireland.[672] However, the Protestant community as a whole was disinclined to accept the government funding of Catholic education, a concern that was expressed at the Free Church of Scotland Assembly, Edinburgh on June 3, 1845, in a letter to the court of Queen Victoria:

> May it please Your Majesty: We have observed with regret and alarm the introduction of a Bill into both Houses of Parliament, the object of which is legally to recognise and support the Roman Catholic faith – which we conscientiously believe to be essentially anti-Christian and idolatrous, dishonouring to God, and ruinous to the souls of men - by granting large contributions and endowments to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth in Ireland.[673]

8.3 Patterns of Protestant witness in Ireland

Presbyterianism in Ireland, argues Baillie (1947), both was and is to this day in many parts, little understood. On the one hand, as already stated, Roman Catholics, found it difficult to distinguish one brand of Protestantism for another and unfairly suspected

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building was dedicated to St. Andrew and inaugurated as a Scottish Presbyterian Church. It has since been transferred to the Presbyterian Church of Portugal.
[670] Byrne, 2004, 263.
[671] The Royal College of St. Patrick and Seminary was established at Maynooth in Co. Kildare by an Act of Grattan's Parliament in 1795. Hitherto, Roman Catholic priests in Ireland had received their training on the European continent, mostly in France. With the onset of revolution in France and the expulsion of religious orders following the closing of seminaries, the fear that returning Irish priests might spread revolutionary ideas in Ireland detrimental to the British Crown. With the gradual removal of the penal laws it seemed pertinent in the interests of national security to permit Irish Roman Catholics a national seminary. Maynooth seminary is today a constituent college of the University of Ireland.
[672] Connolly, 1998, 353.
[673] The Free Church of Scotland Assembly, Edinburgh on June 3, 1845, Session 19.

them collectively of being connected with the governing classes, and perhaps 'landlordism', not realising that Presbyterians were drawn mostly from state employees and not from the proprietors.[674] Until the nineteenth-century, Presbyterians suffered some of the same disabilities under the Test Act as their Catholic fellow-countrymen. Under the penal laws it was illegal until 1782 for Presbyterian ministers to perform marriages, even between Presbyterians. Only from 1845 could they legally marry a Presbyterian and a member of the Church of Ireland. Baillie further argues that in their struggle for civil and religious liberty, Presbyterians supported and paved the way for Catholic Emancipation. [675]

With such a concentration of Presbyterians in Ulster, it is reasonable to suppose that the social range accommodated a wide spectrum of the social classes even if some of the population were Presbyterian in name only. Not all were from a well-doing middle class as is sometimes supposed. The lack of material affluence in the parish of Clogher, County Tyrone, may be judged by the following Presbytery of Omagh report to Synod compiled by the Rev. John Hanna:

> In consequence of the general depression during the last few years, a large number of families connected with its congregations have been so reduced as to be unable, from want of decent clothing, to appear in the House of God on the Sabbath and others have been obliged to emigrate.[676]

Poverty, however, appears not to have been the prerogative of the Presbyterian laity, for Edwards *et al.* (1956) claim that probably the poorest body of clergy were the Presbyterians who usually were married men.[677]

It seems clear from the statistical scatter of presbyteries and congregations throughout the Irish provinces shown in Kirkpatrick's (2006) sketch map,[678] that Presbyterianism held little appeal to Irishmen outside Ulster in which province by far the largest concentration of its adherents is to be found. Edwards *et al.* (1956) has calculated that about fifty-per-cent of Presbyterians resided in the diocese of Down, Connor and

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[674] Baillie, 1947, 2.
[675] *Ibid*, 2.
[676] Murphy, 1958, 111.
[677] Edwards *et al*, 1956, 69.
[678] See Kirkpatrick, 2006, 96-97, for map of presbyteries and congregations in Ireland.

Dromore (the counties of Antrim and Down).[679] One of the great weaknesses of Ulster Presbyterianism in the early years of the nineteenth-century, claims Bowen (1978), was its several divisions,[680] a hallmark it can be claimed, common to most religious practice. Hence, argues Edwards *et al.* (1956), Irish Presbyterianism at the beginning of the nineteenth-century, was divided into three bodies; the synod of Ulster (with its unorthodox appendage, the Presbytery of Antrim), the Secession Synod, and the reformed presbytery, popularly known as the Covenanters.[681] In July, 1840, a new Presbyterian Church court was constituted in a union between the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod to become identified as The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.[682] In doctrine argues McIlrath *et al* (1975), this new amalgam remained strictly Calvinistic, imposing subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith upon both ministers and ruling elders at ordination, as it does to this day.[683] A possible legacy of unrest within Irish Presbyterianism is suggestive from the number of communities with more than one Presbyterian congregation that are identified as First, Second and Third. To explain this plurality of Presbyterian witness, some 'histories' acknowledge frequent disputes over doctrine, or the choice of minister, or simply the need for more church building as communities expand over time, has led to the creation of new congregations.

According to Bowen (1978), the rivalry between the Established Church and the Presbyterian Church in Ulster was intense. While the former body claimed to serve the whole of Ireland, the Presbyterians, as suggested above, were primarily concerned with northern affairs and generally ministered to members of their own communion. In this respect, Presbyterians prided themselves as the true defenders of Protestant and British culture in the north of Ireland.[684] Despite their public rivalries, the one issue on which the Established Church and the Presbyterians found agreement was the threat by Roman Catholicism to the Protestant hegemony in Ulster.[685] Yet, the

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[679]   Edwards *et al*, 1956, 6.
[680]   Bowen, 1978, 31.
[681]   Edwards *et al*, 1956, 70
[682]   Kirkpatrick, 2006, 58.
[683]   McIlrath *et al*, 1975, 123.
[684]   Bowen, 1978, 29.
[685]   *Ibid,* 30.

evidence seems to be, as suggested above, that despite their inherent differences, all three main denominations took an ecumenical stance in the organising of famine relief. One positive example recorded at the Ulster Presbyterian parish of Castledawson in County Londonderry, with an insertion in the Session minute book by the parish minister in 1848, states that the Relief Committee was "composed of the local magistracy, the clergy of all three denominations, Episcopalians, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians". Despite the reported ecumenical aberrations alluded to above there seems no reason to suppose, as previously argued, that a similar measure of co-operation was not present within other the Ulster parishes during the Famine years.

Overall, the mid-nineteenth-century famine in Ireland with its capacity to foster plague and debilitating disease had no respect for individual status or religious denomination. Those that suffered most, argues Nesbitt (1999), were the undernourished landless poor, the unemployed labourers, the cottars and small farmers, particularly in the West and South of the country, whose diet was almost exclusively the potato. This class of people claims Nesbitt, was virtually wiped out by the *Great Famine*.[686]

8.4 Presbyterians within the Province of Ulster

Ulster retained a reputation as the one province of Ireland that was least affected by the *Great Famine.* Kinealy (2000) argues that Ulster was the most industrious and prosperous region in Ireland and Belfast, a centre for industrial production, was its pre-eminent town.[687] Despite the claim of relative prosperity and general well-being of the more industrious population in the Northern Province of Ireland, Duffy (2000) has computed that approximately twenty-one-per-cent of Ulster's population died in the *Great Famine* from starvation and disease.[688] In support of significant percentage of human casualties, Barkley (1959) claims that due to the failure of the potato crop, people from the landward areas crowded into the cities where they could be found dying in the streets from the debilitating effects of these twin maladies of starvation

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[686] Nesbitt, 1999, 72.
[687] Kinealy, 2000, 13.
[688] Duffy, 2000, 92.

and disease. At that period there was a dearth of hospitals and workhouses in Belfast, and since fever followed in the wake of hunger, Presbyterian Meeting Houses were used for that purpose.[689]

Ulster Presbyterianism, claims Bowen (1978), was primarily concerned for the survival of the reformed faith in a state of 'vital godliness' and for the maintenance of Ulster's Protestant culture. An extension of the mission beyond Ulster's borders, continues Bowen, had comparatively little appeal to Presbyterians and they showed no real interest in trying to rival the Roman Catholic Church or the Church of Ireland as those communions battled over questions of establishment and ascendency in Ireland as a whole.[690] Bowen's view is perhaps open to challenge since the tone and content of the published 'letter' by the evangelical Rev. Professor John Edgar, writing from a Presbyterian manse in Connaught, coupled with his association in the philanthropic work of the Belfast Ladies' Association, suggests otherwise. The missionary initiative of the Rev. Edgar during the *Great Famine* years in Ireland is reviewed below.

From the heavy concentration of Presbyterian parishes illustrated in Kirkpatrick's (2006) sketch map of Ireland,[691] the complexity of the religio-social balance in the province of Ulster becomes apparent and is a clear index of the comparatively large Presbyterian community located in that province. In the opinion of Edward *et al.* (1956), large numbers of Presbyterian farmers, if not Presbyterians in general, predominated in the social and professional life of Ulster's capital city, Belfast.[692] From the onset of the *Great Famine* in 1845, argues Murphy (1958), only in Ulster could the labourer supplement his earnings by selling home produced linen.[693] Even this failsafe form of subsistence occupation appears to have been precarious in the face of technological advance that introduced machine spinning in manufactories and forced a dramatic contraction in handloom weaving as a formerly universal cottage industry. Miller (1999) argues that in East Ulster a class of poor Presbyterians was

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[689]   Berkley, 1959, 3.
[690]   Bowen, 1978, 34.
[691]   Kirkpatrick, 2006, 96-97.
[692]   Edwards *et al*, 1956, 64.
[693]   Murphy, 1958, 110.

created by forcing down the earnings of numerous handloom weavers to subsistence levels before the potato failure raised the cost of that subsistence. This situation argues Duffy *et al.* (1997), was also the case in South and West Ulster, North Leinster and in North Connaught.[694] The economic downturn in the cottage-based textile industry leading to family impoverishment, may dispel the belief expressed by Edward *et al.* (1956) above, that Presbyterians tended to be found among the economically secure middle classes. Presbyterian Church records and miscellaneous local histories confirm that many lower-class communicants of Presbyterian congregations in Ireland suffered hardship during the *Great Famine.* In consequence, due to a significantly high emigration and migration from the land, the finances of the Presbyterian Church suffered accordingly, with the result that the Church's capacity to assist the able-bodied unemployed and other categories who did not meet the criteria of the Poor Law Act for state aid, must have been seriously impaired.

Distress among Presbyterians in Ulster, as stated above, has been alluded to in a number of parish church 'histories'. Murphy (1958), records that following the convention set by the Protestant church as a whole, Omagh Presbytery, ordered special services to be held monthly on week days "in reference to the calamities with which it has pleased Divine Providence to visit the country", and recorded the following resolution to alleviate the distress that had befallen its own clergy:

> The Presbytery resolve to recommend that Glenhoy be this year a special exception from the Government regulation as to the amount of stipend to be paid in consequence of the families of that Congregation having been greatly injured in their circumstances by the loss of the potato crop.[695]

Writing of Ballybay parish in County Monaghan in which the prosperity of the population for centuries had been built on its textile industry, Nesbitt, (1999) claims the population was disproportionately high and contained a very high percentage of the kind of people who would be most vulnerable to a potato shortage; the unemployed, the labourers, the cottars and the small farmers. At the onset of the *Great Famine* in August 1845, unemployment figures within the County had increased sharply due to the continuing decline in the spinning of linen yarn and the

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[694]   Duffy *et al*, 1997, 88.
[695]   Murphy, 1958, 110.

home weaving of linen cloth over the previous two decades.[696] A Presbytery visitation of Derryvalley congregation in 1846, argues Nesbitt, found that several members could not make any stipend payment. Elsewhere in Monaghan, First Ballybay and Derryvalley parish Kirk sessions were issuing transfer certificates to members vacating the impoverished countryside and emigrating to America.[697]

Congregations suffered the social effects as people were forced to leave home and move from the area with the continuing failures of the potato crop throughout the remaining years of the 1840s. Nesbitt has found that from 1841 to 1851 the Monaghan population dropped from 200,407 to 141,758, a 29% reduction: that of Tullycorbet Parish from 5,096 to 3,283, a 36% reduction: Aughnamullen Parish by 31.3%: Ballybay Parish by 29.5%: Bowelk townland from 168 to 61: Cordevlis from 117 to 66: Corbrack from 171 to 67: Corfad from 143 to 67: Corrybrannon from 123 to 33: Knocknamaddy from 115 to 52, and Lisnavean from 105 to 50.[698] It must be assumed that the consequence of this disruption in Monaghan if not elsewhere in Ulster clearly brought a decline in spiritual life and attendance at Sunday worship that affected Presbyterian Church finances and thereby the ability to provide relief to the needy within the parish

Increasing poverty within Ireland had already meant that workhouses [699] had been built, that at Castleblayney being the nearest to Ballybay. By October 1845, claims Nesbitt (1999), there were some 40 Presbyterians in Castleblayney Poor House, almost half of them children.[700] To alleviate hardship, by the spring of 1846 public

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[696]   Nesbitt, 1999, 74.
[697]   *Ibid*, 75.
[698]   *Ibid,* 75.
[699]   Workhouses erected under the nineteenth century Poor Law legislation were substantial buldings to which destitute families from congested areas were committed to earn their keep. Male was separated from female and children from their parents. Wheres the workhouse satisfied official need to accommodate large numbers, in Scotland, within less densely populated areas, an unofficial system of pauper lodging houses or poors' houses maintained by local kirk sessions were available to house families intact. Built as single-storey terraces and not subject to the Poor Law Board of Supervision, each small house was supplied with basic furnishings. Over one hundred such small local poors' houses were erected in Scotland and many survive as normal dwelling-houses. As an example, two terraces each of eight houses formerly the Craigwell Poorhouses, but now renamed Kirkton Cottages, east of Aboyne, Aberdeenshire, are currently maintained by Hoseasons as holiday homes to rent.
[700]   Nesbitt,1999, 72.

works schemes had been introduced and food distribution centres were established. The principal item of nourishment was soup, a vegetable broth or 'stirabout', cooked in large metal cauldrons (Plate 8.2) and dispensed by the local Relief Committees. In 1845 and 1846, claims Nesbitt, everyone was affected by scarcity to some degree. Protestants suffered as much as the Catholic population. Nevertheless, whilst the Monaghan people suffered hardship, they did not starve.[701]

The mortal hazards of selfless pastoral care by clergymen of all denominations in tending to the spiritual and material needs of the poor have been detailed by Irwin (1890). Installed at Dundalk in 1828, the Rev. James Beattie, Presbyterian minister, died on December 28, 1851, of fever, caught in the discharge of his pastoral duty. He was succeeded by the Rev. William McHinch, who was installed there, June 15, 1852. Mr. McHinch died in 1860, of fever, caught, as in the case of his predecessor, whilst engaged in ministering to the sick.[702]

Plate 8.2

Iron Cauldron used in the production of "stirabout"

Iron soup cauldron of a standard pattern normally used in the production of a thin soup colloquially referred to as "stirabout": National Famine Museum of Ireland, Strokestown, Roscommon, Eire. (photo - JRS).

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[701] *Ibid*, 72
[702] Irwin, 1890, 309.

8.5 Presbyterianism within the Province of Leinster

The Province of Leinster appears to have weathered the 'Great Famine' in Ireland with fewer casualties recorded. Duffy (2000) has computed that 9% of the population died during the period.[703] Located on Eastern coast of the Irish Sea on a short sea-crossing from England, the Province of Leinster was in a favourable position to secure material resources for its needy population. Within the Presbytery of Dublin, one notable advance towards firmly establishing the credibility of Presbyterianism as a denomination within the Protestant Church in Ireland, and indeed within the United Kingdom, has been focussed upon by Irwin (1890). The Rev. Richard Dill associate minister, Ormond Quay Church within Dublin City, incensed by the religious discrimination practised against of Presbyterian soldiers in the British army, with the support of the General Assembly caused the appointment for the first time, of Presbyterian chaplains to the army in proportion to the number of Presbyterian soldiers, and that the chaplain's salary should be the same as Episcopalian chaplains.[704]

8.6 Presbyterianism within the Province of Connaught

The Province of Connaught, observes Barkley (1959), was stricken with peculiar severity.[705] Duffy (2000) has computed that approximately 40% of the Connaught population died during the *Great Famine* years.[706] When the extent of suffering borne by the Irish population as a result of the potato failure in 1846 was realised, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland ordered services of 'special humiliation and prayer' in its churches, but, claims Miller (1999), recommended no direct steps to relieve the suffering.[707] In September of that same year, the Rev. Professor John Edgar, chair of Systematic Theology at the Assembly's College, Belfast, convener of the Presbyterian Home Mission, an advocate of temperate habits and of schools in Ireland to dispel 'ignorance'[708], particularly that amongst the

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[703] Duffy, 2000, 92
[704] Irwin, 1890, 259: When minister of Dublin in 1847 or 1848 Rev. Richard Dill found that should a Presbyterian soldier be taken ill he was not allowed to speak with a minister of his own Church, except he could first obtain the permission of the Episcopalian chaplain.
[705] Berkley, 1959, 3.
[706] Berkley, 1959, 3.
[707] Miller, 1999, 169.
[708] It may be assumed that the Rev. Edgar refers not merely to the absence of non-denominational

disadvantaged female population, was conducting evangelical services in the West of Ireland when he became aware of the starving condition of the people. To solicit material aid coupled with a new spiritual direction, the Rev. Edgar published an article in *The Missionary Herald* of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, entitled *Cry from Connaught: An appeal from a land which fainteth by reason of a famine of bread and of hearing the words of the Lord.*[709] The purport and tenor on Edgar's writing was perceived as a direct challenge to its teaching by the Roman Catholic hierarchy:

> I advocate no proselytism in a bad sense and no bribery, but I desire to impress on all minds that it is not by formal dogmatic theology, or regular systematic preaching, that we are to commend ourselves to the understandings and hearts of our unenlightened countrymen: neither is it by a fierce onset of controversial war. We must send prudent, experienced men, of sweet and homely spirit, kind and generous souls, into the bosom of Roman Catholic families: to take an interest in their household affairs, to manifest parental regard towards their children, secure their confidence, and make them feel as an honest mother. [710]

To support his letter of appeal both spiritually and materially, the Rev. Edgar formed an association with the *Belfast Ladies' Association for the Relief of Distress in Connaught* that, by 1849, was instrumental in raising over £15,000 which was used initially to establish industrial schools in Connaught where the skills of knitting and needlework were taught with a view to promoting self-reliance and industry in the pupils to enable them to gain paid employment. Instruction was conducted in an environment that promoted the spiritual truth of the Bible, a tactic, states Kinealy (2000) that was strongly opposed by the Catholic hierarchy.[711] By 1850, claims Kinealy (2006), the Association had employed thirty-two schoolmistresses within the Province who worked under the direction of the resident ladies.[712] However, claims Kirkpatrick (2006), these were largely forced to close as the Roman Catholic Church became more proactive in establishing its own system.[713] That out of the *Belfast Ladies' Association* funding, according to (Thompson, 2005), Dr. Edgar caused

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education, but to ignorance of the true word of the Lord contained in scripture as understood by Presbyterians.

[709] The Revd. Prof. John Edgar wrote his letter of appeal to fellow Presbyterians from the former Kilalla manse.

[710] The *Missionary Herald* of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1846, 376.

[711] Kinealy, 2000, 135.

[712] Kinealy, 2006, 166.

[713] Kirkpatrick, 2006, 60.

fourteen Presbyterian Churches to be erected there within ten years,[714] was additionally held by the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy as a further challenge to its traditional hegemony. Despite his seeming inflammatory statements, Bowen (1978) argues that the Rev. Edgar cannot be blamed for the relative failure of the Presbyterian missions among the Roman Catholics in the South.[715] The physical help given by organisations like the *Belfast Ladies' Association* was substantial, partly Bowen claims, because few Presbyterians suffered to any extent during the famine years**,**[716] a claim that has been disputed (q.v. Section 8.5) above by Barkley (1959) and Duffy (2000). Presbyterians in the West of Ireland in the early 1840s were mainly of the same social class as those in the North and East. As already mentioned, the Baptism Roll at Hollymount Presbyterian Church, County Mayo, in Connaught Province, indicates the father's occupation to be, minister, farmer, steward, foreman, ploughman, shepherd, smith, keeper, forester, gardener, constable, sub-constable, merchant, shoemaker, carpenter, accountant, clerk, and gauger.[717] This occupational scatter would suggest that Presbyterians in the West of Ireland, though denominationally a small group, were reasonably prosperous in material terms and capable of considerable self-help as a community in times of scarcity. Nevertheless, the scale of the human trauma that overtook this community in the later 1840s can be surmised from the inscription penned on the flyleaf of the Hollymount Session Book in the following terse undated comment:

> Many inhabitants perished from hunger and disease. Many more sought a home in other lands. Thousands of acres left in haste and unoccupied. To fill the breach and find outlet for their energy and capital, Scotland and England began to contribute . . . those belonged to the Presbyterian Church . . enterprising sons. In these circumstances this congregation had its origins. During the year 1853 some famers from the north of England and a few stewards and shepherds settled in the neighbourhood of Hollymount. Soon after settlement   they applied to the Presbytery of Connacht for occasional supplies of preaching. This request was willingly granted.[718]

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714   Thompson, 2005, 65.
715   Bowen, 1978, 34.
716   *Ibid*, 33.
717   Baptismal Records, Hollymount Presbyterian Church, County Mayo, retained by Presbyterian Historical Society, Fisherwick Place, Belfast.
718   Flyleaf handwritten inscription, Session Book, Hollymount Presbyterian Church, Co. Mayo, Connacht Province.

8.7 Presbyterianism within the Province of Munster

Duffy (2000) finds that approximately thirty-per-cent of the Munster Province population died in the *Great Famine* years. Whilst famine and disease were rampant in this remote area of Ireland, it is difficult to compute the percentage figure for Presbyterian deaths. The evidence suggests that Presbyterian Church congregations located in numerous town-lands throughout Ireland were relatively small, perhaps consisting of a few families and liable to be extinguished in the face of social change if not theological disagreement. Such appears to have been the case at Bandon in the Presbytery of Cork in Munster Province, where, as Irwin (1890) claims, the first Presbyterian minister at the townland had been ordained in 1670. By 1841, Presbyterianism in the locality had been reduced to a shadow of what it previously was. In due course the Bandon congregation "slowly and silently fell away", ostensibly due to Arianism preached in church.[719] Whereas West Cork suffered severely from famine and disease, there is no record of that small congregation's part in the relief of local distress. Entries in the baptismal and marriage records of Trinity and Queen Street Presbyterian churches within Cork city suggest that by the Great Famine period, the Bandon congregation had been absorbed into the fellowship of these churches. In 1846, at Fermoy in Munster Presbytery, the congregation consisted of twenty families and the average attendance at the Lord's Supper was thirty-two. Subject to periodic amalgamation, the support available to the needy from parish resources, on many occasions must only have been spiritual.

In 1848, the Presbyterian Church at Birr in Munster was fortunate to secure the professional services of Dr. A. W. Wallace who came there as the representative of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. Dr. Wallace's medical skill was the means of alleviating much distress and suffering in the dark days of the famine and the cholera.[720] An index of the ecumenical nature of the church's famine provision may well be drawn from the fact that the Rev. Crotty, formerly Father William Crotty before conversion, had served as missionary in Birr, Roundstone, Galway and

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[719] Irwin, 1890, 201.
[720] *Ibid*, 223.

Conemarra.[721] The Rev. Crotty's Christian outreach to people in need has been cited in Section 8.2, above.

Whereas the freewill offering within a church might decline, there appears to be enterprising selfless individuals who in time of greatest need in the community, come to the fore. In this respect the record of the Presbyterian congregation of Summerhill, Co. Meath, Presbytery of Munster, is illustrative of the magnanimity and enterprise of its leadership during the *Great Famine* in Ireland. Like other Presbyterian township churches, Summerhill, claims Irwin, (1890), owed its origin to the patronage and fostering care of the local landed family, the Langfords, to whose members its first ministers were chaplains.[722] In 1846, argues Irwin (1890), the labouring classes at Summerhill had no provision made against the onset of famine. Public works were established, but the famished men were unable to work. A government loan was secured and brought partial relief. A Relief Committee was appointed and for once in that area, denominational distinctions and sectarian bitterness were forgotten. The Dispensary doctor was appointed chairman, a Roman Catholic gentleman was appointed treasurer, and Rev. Craig, (Presbyterian minister) was secretary.[723] The privations of the famine year told heavily on the health of the inhabitants, and a virulent fever gripped the parish. Rev. Craig, who during the famine time had been in frequent contact with the Government authorities, was requested by them to make arrangements for the erection of a temporary fever hospital. With the concurrence of the doctor (then in delicate health) and the local clergy, he undertook the responsibility of caring for the sick and dying:

> Day and night Mr. Craig passed through the wards. Notebook in hand, he examined every patient and reported to the doctor, who made out prescriptions accordingly. In cases of death, which occurred every day, he went personally to the dead-house, and ordered the coffins. Many acts of heroism were performed in the famine-time and in the years of the fever and cholera, but none more heroic than those of the Presbyterian minister of Summerhill.[724]

A search through the Committee Minute Book of Waterford Presbyterian Church, Presbytery of Munster, reveals no reference whatever to destitution, famine, eviction or emigration visited upon the Waterford congregation during the mid-nineteenth-

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[721]   Kirkpatrick, 2006. 253.
[722]   *Ibid*, 293.
[723]   *Ibid,* 293.
[724]   *Ibid,* 296.

century famine period. However, an entry on page 44, dated August 14, 1851 suggests that the population suffered material poverty in common with their fellow countrymen in the west of the province:

> The Treasurer brought the state of the Funds of the Church before the meeting and pointed to the cause of the deficiency in some of the members paying no rents for their seats though repeatedly applied to. It was unanimously resolved that a fixed rent be paid in future for the sittings, in no case to be less than £1 annually for a pew, or 10/- for a single sitting.

Although the extant records of Presbyterian churches are incomplete for the reasons stated in Chapter I, it may be concluded that Presbyterians did suffer from material scarcity and were subject to disease in common with their Christian co-religionists. Since most landward congregations appear to have been small and where state aid provided under the Poor Law legislation was not available, parish church aid must have been basic. Yet, as stated above, few Presbyterians are on record as having died through malnutrition or lack of basic material needs; disease, however, respected no social class.

8.8 The Church of Ireland and the Second (Episcopal) Reformation

The Church of Ireland, according to Connolly (1998), is the largest Protestant church in Ireland and claimed to cater for the religious needs of the whole population. From 1537 to 1870 it was the established state church headed by the English monarch. Edwards *et al.* (1956) has found that nearly all the Irish peers, the bulk of the landed gentry, many of the great commercial families, and the majority of the professional classes belonged to the Establishment.[725] However as Edwards argues, in the mid-nineteenth-century Church of Ireland adherents numbered only eleven-per-cent of the population. At least eighty-per-cent of the inhabitants of Ireland were Catholics, and about eight-per-cent were Protestant dissenters - for the most part Presbyterians.[726] The Irish Catholic majority tended to ignore denominational distinctions within the Protestant minority with the result that the perceived bigoted activities of the one branch were visited upon the other. Kinealy (2000) avers that the main perpetrator of proselytisation was not solely the Church of Ireland, but included the Presbyterian

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[725]   Edwards *et al*, 1956, 64.

[726]   Connolly, 1998, 92. . Following disestablishment in 1870, the Church of Ireland has been an independent self-governing church, a member of the world-wide Anglican community.

Church in Ulster.[727] It is Kinealy's added opinion that Belfast was a major centre for proselytisation and that some of the Protestant churches acted as a conduit for Scottish missionaries to undertake a religious crusade in other areas across Ireland.[728]

During the years of acute scarcity in mid-nineteenth-century Ireland, the missionary activity of the Established Church coupled with its material provision for the needy of all denominations, and none, gave rise to conflict with the Roman Church which viewed the use of food relief as a means of religious proselytisation [729] to further a notional Second Reformation that was met by a Catholic Counter-Reformation. Nevertheless, argues Connolly (1998), the existence of well-provisioned missionary settlements in such destitute areas as the Dingle peninsula in County Kerry and Achill Island off the coast of Mayo "undoubtedly created great temptation for all concerned".[730] Despite these undertones, Edwards *et al.* (1956), argue that an influential section of opinion considered that the clergy of the Establishment were a valuable substitute for the absentee landlords in their care for starving estate tenants. In many cases the clergy, who were themselves frequently of landed stock and familiar with estate administration, dispensed charity and advice and held office in the commission of peace for the country.[731]

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[727] Kinealy, 2000, 7.

[728] *Ibid,* 10.

[729] Proselytization and Souperism refers usually to the widely held belief that on the parish level it was a policy of the parson and his family to give relief aid only to those of the hungry people around them who were willing to surrender their traditional faith for a bowl of soup, stirabout or other pottage, which would keep them alive (Bowen, 1978, 185).

[730] Connolly, 1998.

[731] Edwards *et al*, 1956, 68.

Chapter 9: Conclusion: Assessment of Presbyterian Church responses to famine 1846-1850

> For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. (1 Peter 24-25)

9.1 Significance of the research thesis presented

It is generally acknowledged by historians that few contemporary written accounts have been published in relation to the *Great Famine* years in Ireland that can be considered historically objective, and seemingly none in Scotland where the latter phases of estate clearances predominate. Newsprint and travelers accounts provide an often sensational picture to satisfy the readership. Much has been retained in an Irish oral tradition that, replete with political bias, remains extant. Otherwise, an accurate record of events has been retained in archive correspondence supported by census returns and abandoned ruins on the landscape as visible proof of social and economic change. In the Highland of Scotland where similar icons to migration and emigration prevail, the effects of the famine years are subsumed in an acceleration of a long established process of clearance from the inner straths and glens by estate landlords for rational economic purposes. Despite the prominent part assumed by the embryonic Free Church of Scotland in creating an administrative structure to provide material support for the starving population in the Highlands and Islands, and raising substantial funds to meet the crisis on the short time, no specific account, objectively researched, seems to have been published concerning the part played by Presbyterian involvement in providing succor in the Highlanders' hour of need irrespective of denomination or none. Hence, this thesis may be regarded as a foundation block for further research upon this topic.

9.2 Creation of an agenda for further exploration

Reference has been made in Chapter 3.8 to the importance of Workhouse records as an aid to research the scale and quality of destitution suffered by the Presbyterian population of Ireland during the historical period under review. It is now understood that a team of prominent Irish historians have embarked on the groundwork for this

project involving all aspects of Workhouse incarceration, and publication of the researchers' data is awaited.[732] Since the Workhouse as a purpose-built institution housing the destitute within society's poorest echelons formed no part of the Scottish Poor Law, and the incidence of death by starvation in the Highlands reportedly negligible, it can be ignored as a useful index of abject poverty in that area.

9.3 Salient characteristics of the historical period under review.

In the foregoing chapters, aspects distinctive of the character of the Presbyterian Church in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and its co-religionist off-shoot in Ireland have been examined within the historical setting of the mid-nineteenth-century. More specifically, the parameters of the research area have been set to encapsulate the period from 1845 to 1855, although, as mentioned [733] the effects emanating from this period of extreme material scarcity and public distress lingered for several decades thereafter.[734] The stated aim has been to determine the extent to which the Presbyterian Church responded to the challenge presented by the period of unprecedented scarcity, poverty, starvation and disease experienced to varying degrees and geographical locations within both countries that especially in Ireland occasioned an exceptionally high mortality rate alleviated only by mass emigration overseas. Due to factors favourable to the Scottish Highlands, namely, its lower demography in relation to that of Ireland, its lower mortality rate, its proximity to centres of industry in its Lowland area, the debilitating effects of the years of acute scarcity proved much less so. The wider focus has been on the challenge presented to all co-religionists, including landed proprietors and wealthy entrepreneurs in both geographical areas, following in the wake of the age-old recurrent problem of successive failed harvests that ever impinged heavily on the lower orders of society, albeit in this instance sourced to a previously unknown potato blight. Since religious belief is inextricably interwoven into the fabric of human existence, it has been considered necessary to introduce throughout the text, reference to the social,

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[732]   Research conducted under the auspices of the Irish Virtual Research Library and Archive. One of the most important sources is the Indoor Relief Registers (IRR) in which the name and personal details of each workhouse inmate is supposed to be recorded.

[733]   Chapter 1.2.

[734]   *Ibid* 1.2.

economic, political and philosophical background that conditioned a compassionate response from diverse quarters to what has been described as an exceptional humanitarian disaster.

It has been claimed that the character of both Scotland and Ireland in the mid-nineteenth-century was still basically that of a feudal society in which ordinary people had limited title to land which remained in the possession of a feudal superior or landowner. Whilst social mobility was possible, most people knew their place and were admonished for 'attempting to get above themselves'. It has been argued that large sections of the rural population lived in poverty as did the workforce which occupied the growing industrial towns. As a rule, the poorer classes formed close-knit family units inured to hardship through recurrent periods of scarcity. The suggestion has been that family unity was frequently maintained through sub-division of miniscule croft-land tenancies in which monoculture of the potato was the main subsistence root crop for man and beast. Even in years of good harvests, over-population of the land [735] has been argued as a leading cause of poverty and hunger for the poorest classes.[736] Where mutual aid within an impoverished community was not forthcoming, the parish church has been shown to be a provider of limited support from its Poor's Fund.[737]

9.4 Nineteenth-century piety and philanthropy assessed

It has been suggested that the nineteenth-century has come to be regarded by historians as an age of increasing piety and of philanthropy [738] to which causes individuals and charitable bodies on a global scale were prepared to devote their surplus wealth to assisting the needy within the community in conformance to Christian principles.[739] It has been shown that the famine years in the Highlands and in Ireland clearly evoked sympathetic response from all social classes and a wide spectrum of institutions. Notable was the *British Relief Association*, a philanthropic

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[735]   *Ibid* 5.3
[736]   *Ibid* 2.5.2.
[737]   Table 1.2.
[738]   Chapter 2.6.
[739]   Table 1.1.

society founded in 1847 to relieve distress in remote parishes of Ireland and Scotland. This charity consisted of some of the wealthiest merchants and industrialists in Britain. About £470,000 was raised in England, America and Australia before 1850, a considerable portion which derived from subscribers responding to the issuing of the two 'Queen's Letters' of 1847 in which Queen Victoria appealed for aid for Ireland. Queen Victoria herself contributed £2,500 to this cause.[740] Such generous donations involved money that clearly did not flow from church resources, but in all probability was sponsored by those with a committed church connection. A comparison of a random session roll against the corresponding 1851 decennial census return indicates that many communicants of the newly erected Free Church of Scotland were drawn from the entrepreneurial section of the public and able through their involvement in trade and industry to furnish the schemes of the church with substantial endowments. This is evidenced by the massive building programme which erected expensive church accommodation, much of it designed in Heritor's Gothic to surpass those of similar buildings erected in earlier years by the established Kirk. Although new on the scene, the Free Church clearly could amass the financial resources to aid the impoverished and starving Highlanders in the short term. It has been claimed that on the lesser scale of philanthropy, women were particularly involved in the collection and distribution of private relief. Ladies' associations were formed in Ireland, Scotland and in England. The ready response of such *ad-hoc* voluntary organizations as *The Belfast Ladies' Association for the Relief of Distress in Connaught,* and the *Association for the Religious Improvement of the Remote Highlands and Islands in connection with the Free Church of Scotland,* with numerous mid-nineteenth-century kindred organizations has already been cited.[741]

Due perhaps to the vacillating perception of the masses such charitable endeavours appear not to have remained constant, for it has been suggested that there was a noticeable dichotomy in the public perception of the Celtic races that had a marked effect on public giving after the first Great Famine year. The distressed Irish Celts had in fact lost their former liberal public support mainly due to widely read

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[740]   *Ibid*, 161-2.
[741]   Chapter 4.3.2.

newsprint imputations of Irish irresponsibility and dishonesty.[742] Whilst it has been claimed that historically the Highland Celt had been regarded with contempt by the Lowlander, the avidly-read early-nineteenth-century popular literary works of Sir Walter Scott had transformed the public image of the Highlander from his former stereotype of an uncouth savage, into a truly heroic figure worthy of compassionate and enduring support in his time of extreme hardship.[743] Not least, it can be argued, in sanitizing the image of the Highlands and Highland culture was the mark of approval bestowed by Queen Victoria and her consort, Prince Albert, in the later 1840s when they acquired the Balmoral estate in Aberdeen-shire as their summer residence.

9.5 Avenues of employment open to the poorer classes

Turning again to avenues of employment available to the Highland population, it has been argued that due to remoteness from markets, no major industry had taken root to absorb the potential workforce in their own localities. Clearance of an indigenous population from the inner glens and straths by estate owners for economic reasons had been on-going since the late-eighteenth-century.[744] Communities were broken up and congregations thereby dispersed with the result that the collective weekly input to church funding was understandably diminished. It has been explained that in the West Highlands, since the early-1800s, dispossessed families had been confined to geometrically-apportioned croft-land tenure in unfavourable coastal locations, an existence subsidized by fishing, kelping, temporary migration to seasonal work in the Lowlands, and general labouring locally, carefully calculated to provide a subsistence income for the lower strata in what still remained essentially an agrarian society. Much the same evil patterns of overpopulation within the conacre system of land tenure;[745] dispossession of land, inability to find employment on the land, lack of major industry, resulting in the abject poverty and distress that characterized the two provinces to the south and west of Ireland.

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[742]   *Ibid* 5.2
[743]   *Ibid* 2.2.
[744]   *Ibid* 5.4.
[745]   *Ibid* 5.7.

Only small industries involving mineral extraction, fishing and forestry competed with work on the new Highland sporting estates.[746] However, these occupations provided bare sustenance for only a minority of families. It has been argued, that the traditional summer migration of Highland folk to temporary Lowland employment was diminished in the face of competing labour, particularly for railway construction, road building, harvesting and general labouring that was more readily available to temporary migrant workers from Ireland at less cost. It has been shown that the Free Church of Scotland assisted in finding temporary employment with accommodation for migrant Highland workers to the Lowlands whilst supporting their families at home.[747]

9.6 The vagaries of agriculture in perspective

Clerical reporters to the *N.S.A.* argue that the mid-nineteenth-century was well advanced in improved farming techniques resulting from the Agricultural Revolution that encouraged the improvement of landed estates and the steady development of single large farms.[748] Ireland, with its rich soils and verdant pastures was a profitable producer of crops and husband of animals, much of it for export to England and the Continent, to the detriment of its burgeoning population whose abject poverty prevented families from buying basic necessities. The consequence was that there remained a very large indigenous population throughout the Highlands and in Ireland precariously existing on the monoculture of the potato, a vitamin-rich root crop that flourished on small patches of indifferent soil in all conditions of climate.

9.7 The contribution of industry assessed

Whilst agriculture remained important, urbanisation marked the character of the Scottish Lowland industrial landscape. 'New money' took precedence over that held by the old landed class, money from which, it has been suggested above, the Church was to benefit. As previously suggested, piety was at its most extreme in the nineteenth-century.[749] The Christian spirit that underpinned the rising entrepreneurial

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[746]   *Ibid* 5.5.

[747]   Appendix "C".

[748]   Chapter 5.6.

[749]   *Ibid* 2.6.

class was to find expression in its material contribution to the distressed landward areas from which its industrial workforce was largely drawn. It has been a claim that Presbyterian congregations in Ireland, with a marked concentration in Ulster, were small and suffered the same hardships as the other provinces of Ireland due to a recession in the cottage-based textile industry.[750] It must therefore be assumed that parish church funding could not have extended a deal of material liberality to the deserving poor within the parish.

It has been emphasized by historians that the occurrence of severe famine conditions was not uniform across the landscape of either Ireland or the Scottish Highlands.[751] The remote south and west provinces of Ireland suffered severely in comparison with those in the north and east. Similarly, certain remote areas of the northern Highlands encountered famine conditions that were not apparent in the east and central areas. Even the occurrence of the devastating potato blight, for reasons then unknown, was selective.

9.8 Government responses to the Great Famine assessed

By the early decades of the nineteenth-century, the parish gradually ceased to be the centre of social control as its traditional functions were gradually absorbed by the state.[752] The systems of provision for the poor that had existed in England and Wales since the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 were supplanted by the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834. This controversial piece of state legislation was extended to Ireland in 1838. For the first time, the Church had lost its dominant position in both the community and the nation state. Although care of the parish poor fell to the state the Presbyterian Church continued to support those whose name was not recorded on the parish Poors' Roll in terms of the new Poor Law legislation.

As stated previously, local relief committees generally incorporated clergymen of all denominations on the board. Mention has also been made of the statutory schemes of public works that included road, canal and harbour construction, land drainage

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[750]   *Ibid* 7.4.
[751]   *Ibid* 2.7.
[752]   *Ibid* 6.2.

schemes, the engrossing of farmland with a view to modernizing the system of agriculture, and to encourage estate improvement in general.[753] To this end the government promulgated a Drainage Act and loans were made available to impoverished landowners in both the Highlands and in Ireland to employ their tenants in estate improvement and road building.[754] In the event, it has been claimed that public works became a failure due to excessive demand and were phased out in March 1847.[755] Added to these government initiatives, it will be recalled that the crisis periods of scarcity were alleviated by relief commissions and the establishment of food depots in distressed areas under the control of local relief committees

9.9 Relief provision of the Presbyterian Church assessed

The contribution of the Presbyterian Church to famine relief in the Highlands and in Ireland must be considered against the wider perspective of the provision made by a variety of sources, both religious and secular, on a global scale.[756] Apart from overseas aid, it has been argued that relief funding accrued from public subscription, charitable foundations, philanthropic individuals, and the British government at Westminster. Considered against this extensive background of philanthropy, the material provision initiated by the Presbyterian Church appears modest in comparison. It is generally agreed by historians that the initial input of material aid to the Highlands was that made by the new Free Church of Scotland which led from the front in assessing the needs of the Highland congregations and, over a period of several winter months, initiating relief measures that were later usurped by the Government Board of Management. It has been argued that in early December, 1846, the Free Church General Committee on Highland Destitution formulated its strategy to meet the challenge of scarcity throughout the Highlands and Islands with a plan of operation listing thirteen rules.[757] These have been reproduced as Appendix "C".

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[753] *Ibid* 5.6.
[754] *Ibid* 6.8.
[755] Kinealy, 2006, 100.
[756] Table 1.1.
[757] Chapter 6.6.

As a leading institution of social control within the community, the Church, in all its denominations, clearly fulfilled a key role within the local committees as supervisors of relief distribution in close association with government appointed servants. Appendix "C" shows that Free Church ministers encouraged the unemployed within their parish to seek seasonal work in the Lowlands and made provision for their reception at sites of potential employment and also for the upkeep of their families at home during those periods of temporary absence. It also set the rules for the distribution of food and material goods to the needy and oversaw the work of the local committees.

9.10 Efficacy of the emigration policy.

Long before the onset of the 1845-55 famine years, migration both permanent and temporary together with emigration overseas made its appeal to families throughout Europe for a variety of personal reasons that included seasonal work in the former case and religious freedom and the prospect of abundant cheap farming land in respect of the latter. Until the closing years of the eighteenth-century with its upsurge in Highland estate clearance, much of this population movement overseas had been voluntary. Though substantial numbers emigrated from the Highlands, it has recently been argued by historians that more people emigrated from the Scottish Lowlands, a fact that has hitherto escaped historical observation. [758]

In conclusion, the verdict must be that the Presbyterian Church contributed decisively to both the spiritual and material wellbeing of destitute communities within the Highlands of Scotland and throughout Ireland during the famine period. Initial aid to the destitute was provided unconditionally to all from the outset and immaterial the devotional persuasion or none of the recipient. That the Presbyterian Church's prompt organization of funds to provide and distribute material aid in the Highlanders' hour of need may have formed but a small part in the overall pattern of famine relief, it must be viewed as a decisive action that prevented a humanitarian disaster before the national government's intervention. In the long term, the spiritual support the Church

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[758]   Devine, 2008, BBC History Forum.

afforded to impoverished families burdened with malnutrition, contagious disease death and emigration, was an outstanding example Christ's work among His people that proved transportable with the emigrants to their new abode overseas.

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Appendix "A"

Divisions and Reunions of the Scottish Church, 1690-1929

(A Church History of Scotland, J.H.S. Burleigh, OUP, 1960)

1700

1750

1800

1850

1900

1950

1690 PRESBYTERIANISM RESTORED

EPISCOPAL

EPISCOPALIANS REMAIN OUTSIDE NATIONAL CHURCH

1705

1712 PATRONAGE ACT

CAMERONIAN

EXTREME COVENANTERS ALSO REMAIN OUT

1712

1733 FIRST SECESSION

UNDER ERSKINE IN OPPOSITION TO PATRONAGE

SPLIT OVER TAKING
1747 THE BURGESS OATH

'ASSOCIATE SYNODS'

1761 SECOND SECCESSION
UNDER THOS. GILLESPIE IN PROTEST AGAINST PATRONAGE

BURGHERS

ANTI – BURGHERS

STANDS FOR STATE CHURCH IN A COVENANTED STATE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

LIBERAL EVANGELICAL AND ANTI-COVENANTING

RELIEF CHURCH

AULD LICHTS

NEW LICHTS

1799

1806

1820

NEW LICHTS

AULD LICHTS

FAVOUR STATE CONNECTION AND COVENANTS

OPPOSE CONNECTION WITH STATE : HOLD VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE ANTI-COVENANTING

UNITED SECCESSION

FAVOUR STATE CONNECTION AND COVENANTS

REUNION
1839

1843 DISRUPTION

1847

FAVOURS STATE CONNECTION AND STATE SUPPORT OF CHURCH

FREE CHURCH

1852 MAJORITY JOIN FREE CHURCH

1876 ALMOST ALL CAMERONIANS JOIN FREE CHURCH

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN

1892

1900

FREE

FREE

UNITED FREE

1929

150 HIGHLAND CONGREGATIONS REMAIN OUT OF 1900 UNION

FREE CHURCH

U.F. CONTINUING OPPOSES STATE CONNECTION AND STANDS FOR GREATER THEOLOGICAL LIBERTY

BROKE FROM FREE CHURCH IN PROTEST AGAINST THE SLACKENING OF CONFESSIONAL STANDARDS : CONSERVATIVE

FREE PRESBYTERIANS

NOW APPROX 3000 MEMBERS

ORIGINAL SECESSION CHURCH

ONLY A TINY REMNANT NOW LEFT

CHURCH

PRESBYTERIANISM IN IRELAND

(Main Divisions and Unions)
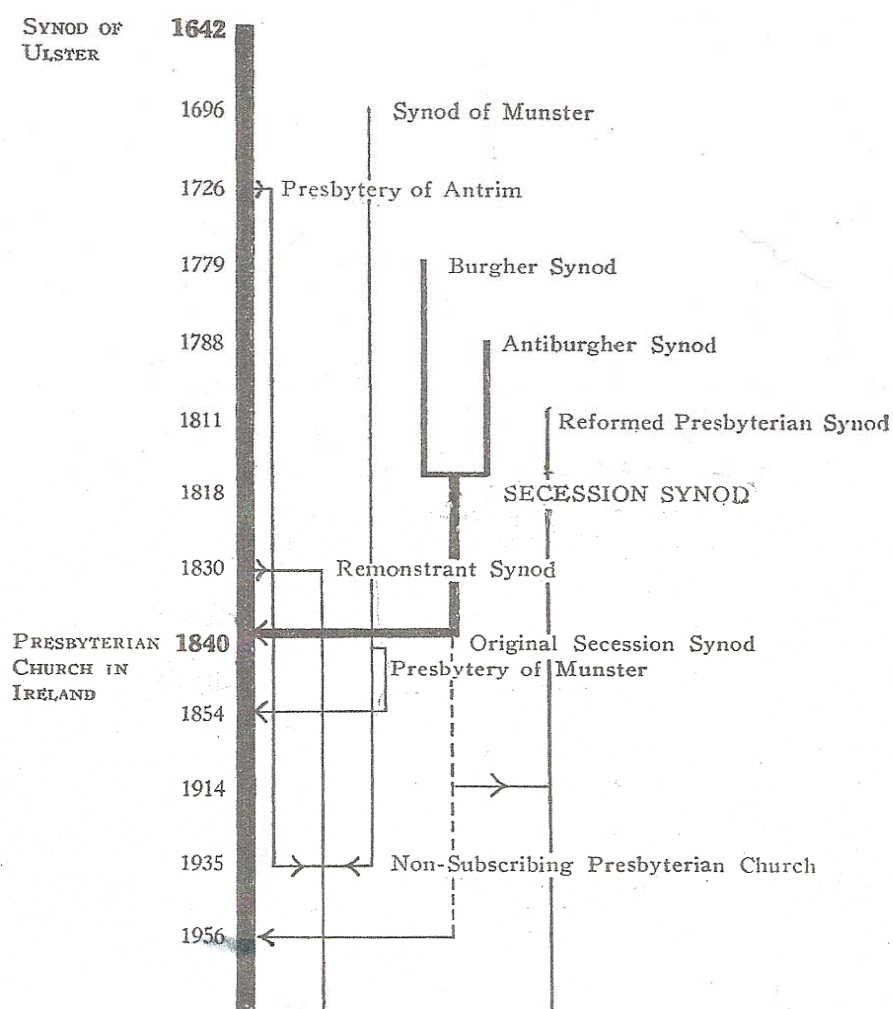
Reproduced from *A Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*
Prof. John M.Barkley, (Belfast, Church House Publications Board, 1959)

Appendix "C"

**Resolutions and documents of the Committee of the Free
Church relative to destitution in the Highlands and Islands
December 16th, 1846**

.
The following rules have been adopted by the Committee:

(1) That in each district of accessible bounds a distributing sub-committee shall be formed by the visiting members of the general Committee, who shall repair to the spot; and that the Free Church schooner shall be placed at the disposal of the visiting members, who are hereby instructed to make up and transmit a report of their visitations to the General Committee from time to time,

(2) That the distributing sub-committee in each district shall consist, if possible, of five members, male heads of families within the district, and whether members of the Church or not, of good report among the people.

(3) That until the first report of the visiting members be transmitted to the general Committee, and considered at a meeting of the same, duly called, as a general rule, no food shall be distributed to the families of the rent-paying tenantry, but to the families of cotters, whose entire destitution of food shall have been ascertained to the satisfaction of the Distributing Sub-Committees, or of the visiting members.

(4) The meal be distributed by weight: no individual to receive more than one week's supply at a time; parties receiving it for themselves or their families appearing personally at the place of the Distributing Sub-Committee's meeting; that the distribution shall be at the rate of one pound of meal *per day* to each full-grown individual, and one half pound *per day* to children, under twelve years of age: the Distributing Sub-Committee to be supplied with

wooden dishes containing a certain number of pounds' weight; the meal to be measured in presence of the parties receiving it.

(5)   That the Distributing Sub-Committee shall be supplied with distribution books, in which shall be regularly entered, at its appropriate date, each distribution made to each individual or head of a family, the place of residence, the age of the male heads of families; the number and ages of the children (at home) of each family, the quantity supplied to them at each distribution; the distribution book of each district to be carefully kept and preserved, and returned to the general Committee.

(6)   That in each district within which, or within access to which any works are in progress, at sight of proprietors or others, where wages are offered, it shall be a special instruction to the Distribution Sub-Committee, not to receive or grant any applications for aid to any able-bodied male inhabitant, who is ascertained to have declined to labour at the wages offered.

(7)   That it shall be a special instruction to the visiting members of the general Committee to assemble the male population of each district: to communicate with them publicly the Committee's rules of distribution: and then and there, in name of the general Committee, to make offer to the able-bodied male population of work in the South of Scotland, at remunerative wages; and fixing a day and place when such persons shall be received, either on board the Free Church schooner, to convey them within convenient distance of steamers plying to the Clyde, or on board those steamers, when within convenient distance of the district.

(8)   That the visiting members be supplied with a portion of the Committee's fund, in order that, in cases of ascertained necessity, such able-bodied men may be supplied by them with the sums necessary to defray their expenses to Glasgow: and that each of them be furnished by the visiting members with a ticket, bearing the name of the party, the sum of money advanced to him by

the visiting member, and the address of the Committee's agent in Glasgow, whose business it shall be to have such persons conveyed to the place or stations where work has been procured for them.

(9)   That it shall be competent for the Committee's agent in Glasgow to supply each such person with a proper and comfortable workman's dress, when applications shall be made for the same - the persons receiving such dress or suit of working-clothes to carry them from the Committee's agent to the employer, a card bearing the sum due to the Committee's Fund by this individual, the said sum to be deducted from wages at the rate of (blank) per week, till the whole be paid.

(10)   That a labourers' book shall be kept by the Committee's agent in Glasgow, in which shall be regularly entered the name of each individual, the name of his parish, his place of residence there, the amount of aid received by him from the Committee's Fund, his destination to which he is sent as a labourer, and his employer's name, occupation and address.

(11)   That when the above offers shall have been intimated in a district, any able-bodied man, under fifty years of age and unemployed at home, who shall have declined this offer, shall be considered as excluded from all share in the distribution of food by the Distributing Sub-Committee; but that in the case of married men having families at home, where there may be special circumstances in Providence debarring the acceptance of such offer at the time, the Distributing Sub-Committee of the district shall have discretionary power to deal with it, but at sight and inspection of, and responsible to, the visiting members of the general Committee who may again repair to the district.

(12)   That in every district within which, or within reasonable distance of which, improvements are carrying forward, or other works by the proprietor or other party, for the benefit of the people, the visiting member of the general

Committee, before publication of the above offers, shall put themselves into communication with the proprietor or his local agents, and have conference with him or them as to the expectancy of the above rules to suit the exigencies of the people or to promote their comfort; this Committee desiring to have full and amicable understanding with the local proprietors of the soil and that no undue interference may take place between such proprietors and this Committee in its actings.

(13)   That a copy of these rules be transmitted to the several proprietors in the Highlands and Islands, in the name of this Committee, with a circular explanatory of this Committees in prosecution of the duty that has been entrusted to their care.

Appendix "D"

Free Church of Scotland famine survey

December 16th, 1846

For the obtaining of full and accurate local information, the Committee are issuing the following queries in schedule form to the ministers of the Free Church, in the Highlands and Islands, and to other respectable and responsible parties, in absence of ministers, and these queries are prefaced thus:-

It being necessary to transmit this schedule, for information, to others besides ministers of the Free Church, the queries are framed applicably to a parish, or district of a parish. Ministers are respectfully entreated to frame their answers embracing the whole population, and others, the whole population of the district of the parish where they reside.

N.B. - It is specially to be kept in view, in filling up the schedule, that the scale of *ordinary pauperism* is not the object of the Committee's enquiry, but destitution consequent on the failure of the potato.

(23 queries listed)

Covering letter from Convener of Committee.

Two considerations: -

(1) That in filling up the schedule, no statement made in regard to the extent of the destitution or the number of persons really destitute, of food not actually ascertained, or capable of full proof if called to question. Where any doubt exists in your own mind as to the actual number of individuals of families really destitute of food, the committee beg to request that your statement be rather within what you know to be the fact, than it should be one iota beyond it; though, of course, the Committees' great desire is to have all their information thoroughly accurate.

(2) The strong necessity there is of your anxiously guarding the whole people within your reach from cherishing unfounded extravagant expectations what the Free Church, by this movement on their behalf, can really do for them, towards relieving their distress. When you consider the immense number of families within the bounds of the Committee's operations already, it is feared bordering on actual starvation, the number of human beings which the scenes of this destitution present, and the limited, the very limited, amount of funds, at the very best, which the Committee expect to be placed at their disposal - and when you consider the time which has yet to elapse before any relief can be had from any product of the soil, you will perceive the vast importance of the people's realising, that this movement of the Free Church, is made, not with any prospect of hope of its being itself able to supply the wants of the people. In the spirit of faith and charity, which this Committee implore may be given to us all, our Church is desiring *to do what she can* with full under-understanding; at the same time, of how little she *can* do compared with the magnitude of the existing distress.

Let it then be distinctly and plainly understood, that the great object of our our present enquiry is - that the information sought, when received, should put us in condition to plead the cause of our suffering fellow-countrymen, both with the public at large, and with the Government of our land. We seek your aid to put us in such condition. Not a day is to be lost.

Appendix "E"

The Celtic Race in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands

Representative of the pejorative writing purveyed by the Southern press, is that of Mr. Foster, *The Times* resident Commissioner, at Dingwall, Ross-shire, who reported on September 25th, 1846 that: -

The traveller through the western and southern parts of Ireland, where the pure Irish are to be found, and with them, invariably, distress, if there be any in the country, continually hears such observations as, 'By Dad, I'll not take the throuble'. It is not just the *trouble* of doing anything which prevents everything being done which ought to be done. At Scull Bay, in Cork, a clergyman there told me that the people, though starving, would not go out in the bay and fish, and had always some excuse, that they had either no tackle or no boat, till he offered them both his own and whatever they chose to take either, but the *trouble* of launching the boat was too great for them, and they never used it. Instances of this kind among the Celtic race in Ireland are common to the whole west coast. Ought we to wonder that the poor people, when left to their own guidance and impulses - this being the way they invariably manage everything - should be poor and wretched, and in periods of dearth should starve? So if you travel in the Highlands among a kindred Celtic race, similar occurrences are as commonly met with - the answer given to your enquiry about the non-supply of ordinary produce will probably be, 'they couldna be fash'd about it'. Like the 'trouble' in Ireland, the fear of being 'fash'd' in the Highlands stands greatly in the way of comfort and prosperity.

Reprinted from *Witness*, October 7th, 1846.

Emigration from the United Kingdom during the twenty-five years, from 1825 to 1849 inclusive.

Years	North American Colonies	United States	Australian Colonies and New Zealand	All other Places	Total
1825	874	5,551	485	114	14,891
1826	12,818	7,063	903	116	20,900
1827	12,648	14,526	715	114	28,003
1828	12,094	12,817	1,056	135	26,092
1829	13,307	15,678	2,016	197	31,198
1830	30,574	24,887	1,242	204	56,907
1831	58,067	23,418	1,561	114	83,160
1832	66,339	32,872	3,733	196	103,140
1833	28,808	29,109	4,093	517	62,527
1834	40,060	33,074	2,800	288	76,222
1835	15,573	26,720	1,860	325	44,478
1836	34,226	37,774	3,124	293	75,417
1837	29,884	36,770	5,045	326	72,034
1838	4,577	14,332	14,021	292	33,222
1839	12,658	33,536	15,786	227	62,207
1840	32,293	40,642	15,850	1,958	90,743
1841	38,164	45,017	32,625	2,786	118,592
1842	54,123	63,852	8,534	1,835	128,344
1843	23,518	28,335	3,478	1,881	57,212
1844	22,924	43,660	2,229	1,873	70,686
1845	31,803	58,538	830	2,330	93,501
1846	43,439	82,239	2,347	1,826	129,851
1847	109,680	142,154	4,949	1,487	248,089
1848	31,065	188,233	23,904	4,887	248,089
1849	41,367	219,450	32,091	6,590	299,498
Total	808,740	1,260,247	185,286	30,911	2,285,184

Reproduced from the *Illustrated London News*, July 6, 1850.

Appendix "G"

Medical statistics relating to a cholera epidemic within the Ballina and Killala districts, County Mayo, published in the Ballina Chronicle on September 5, 1849.

	Ballina District	Ballina Hospital	Killala District	Killala Hospital
Remaining under treatment on the 28th August	82	68	4	9
New cases since up to 3rd September	38	12	2	4
Deaths within that period	2	3	2	2
Recovering within same period	25	26	-	3
Remaining under treatment on 3rd September	84	51	4	7
Total cases during the existence of the epidemic	345	223	49	59
Total deaths during same period	109	93	24	24

Appendix "H"

Fiscal accounts of a typical Highland Protestant church in 1846

Braemar Church of Scotland session records, 25 May 1846.[759]

Collections and Distribution for the Year 1846.

Expenses

May 23	Proclamation Money	5/-
Aug. 17	Colonial Scheme	£2.10/-
Sept. 14	Pair of shoes, Elizabeth. Forbes	7/-
Oct. 26	Funeral expenses of body found on the hills	10/-
Nov. 2	Travelling family	5/-

Collected

Jany. 4	For General Assembly Education Scheme . .	£1. 0. 0d
April 25	Colonial Scheme	£1. 6. 8d
April 26	Home Missions	£1. 2. 0d
June 27	Jewish Scheme	£3. 0. 0d
Decr. 4	Collected for Aberdeen Infirmary	£1. 10. 9d
Decr. 27	Foreign Mission	£1. 2. 0d.

Braemar Church of Scotland session records, 15 May 1849.[760]

Distributed

Paid	Precentor's salary	£3. 0. 0d	
Paid	Church Officer's salary	£2 0. 0d	
Paid	Session Clerk, salary	£2. 0. 0d	

Also to poor strangers of which
the Session approved £0. 4. 6d

Braemar Church of Scotland session records, 24 May 1850.[761]

Balance in Box since last distribution . . . . <u>£1. 0.10d</u>
Remains for distribution £10. 6. 4d
Distribution as per Cash Book . . . . <u>£8. 4. 0d</u>

Balance remaining in Box £2. 2. 4d

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[759] *N.A.S.*, CH2/217/4/93 (Braemar Kirk Session, 1846). Braemar was scarcely touched by the Reformation in Scotland and remains a strong Roman Catholic enclave. In late 1714 the village witnessed the raising of the standard of the failed Jacobite Rising under the Earl of Mar to restore James 111 to the throne, a cause that ended at Sheriffmuir on November 13, 1715...
[760] *N.A.S.*, CH2/217/4/101 (Braemar Kirk Session, 1849).
[761] *N.A.S.*, CH2/217/4/101 (Braemar Kirk Session, 1850).

Appendix "I"

The Sabbath Road

Abtracted from *Willie Gavin, Crofter Man, A Portrait of a Land and its Rituals*, David Kerr Cameron, Edinburgh, Birlinn Limited, 1995).

The Gavins were kirk folk and always had been: the psalms were their rod and had sustained them through many a bad *hairst* and the kind of crofting catastrophe that two or three sick beasts could bring. The Sabbath was holy and they kept it. Boots that were going to the kirk in the morning would have to be cleaned the night before; broth was made, ready for re-heating; potatoes pre-peeled, were potted and set down at the side of the fire ready for salting and setting on to boil the moment the croft's folk come in from the sermon. Not a needle stirred from its case, not a darn was done, and if you were too late in discovering it you went to the kirk with a hole in the heel of your sock uncomplaining rather than break the Lord's Commandment. Bairns were kept in their best suits all day to discourage the temptation to play; no newspapers were glanced at (for fear of eternal damnation) and the only book read was the Bible. About that old countryside, it was said, there were small places where uncompromising men, well up to the turn of the century (and maybe beyond it), carried the *neeps* to their byre beasts that day in muddy armfuls in their best suits (and sometimes in their best patent boots) rather than turn a barrow wheel and defile the Sabbath, though on any other day they would bow to nobody.

On Saturday nights Willie Gavin shaved the frail grey stubble from his chin, a week's growth that would be unless there was an Oddfellows' meeting or a funeral intervening. It was a pre-Sabbath ritual. His cut-throat came out of its thick cardboard case in the *closet* drawer to be stropped sharp on the strap that hung between Spurgeon and the kitchen mirror and had, it was hinted darkly, been put to other uses. Latterly, when the years had shaken his hand, there was hardly a time when the old man did not nick the thin skin of his cheek, or his chin, and on winter nights he would need the *closet* mirror on the table, and the small paraffin lamp beside it, to see his work. Unless he was bedded with illness, Willie Gavin went unswervingly to the kirk,

and unless you were at death's door you were expected to go with him. For when he took the kirk road he carried his brood with him: as many of his kin and cottared daughters as could be conveniently assembled at the croft beforehand - and as many of their bairns as were reasonably presentable and could be relied on not to disgrace him.

For long after coming to the croft the Gavins had kept faith with the Free Kirk, the crofter's kirk, in the small quarrytoun. It had been Old John Gavin's kirk and likely his mother's kirk before him. Each Sabbath the Gavins had walked up through Laverockhill's fields to cross the old ridge track and strike on to the Cadger's Road that led all the way to the sea and brought the herring from it still, creeled on a lass's back. In Willie Gavin's grand-mother's time - she had been forty at the Disruption - the Free Kirk had been strong in the land. Its fiery and demanding God had been taken round the country side like a beacon and even Old John, strong though he was in the faith, had been later discomfited whiles, as he sat in the pew, by the unexpected announcement: 'Brethren, there will be a service this afternoon in Mister Gavin's barn, at three'.

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Always the kirk had been there, for good or for ill. The pull had been strong. From all corners of the old countryside folk had flocked to the great kirkings and conventicles of the past - to the five-day Sacraments when first the Free Kirk was born - in their threadbare plaids and their poor shoes, and likely Grace among them. A plurality of preachers has wrestled in relays for souls on the bare hillside and the psalms, precentor-led, had been sung line by painful line. Folk then had not needed the Book for many could not read. At the end, and in their excesses, the big preachings had left the folk weeping and unstable, prostrated at times among the gravestones. For all that, the kirk had been good to the crofter folk, with the seed from its *girnal*, the *siller* for a milk cow from its session funds. Folk did not forget: that lived long in the memory of the crofter men.

Epilogue

When out of poverty is born
A dream that will not die,
And landless, weary folk find strength
To stand with heads held high,
It's then we learn from those who wait
To greet the promised day,
'The Lord is coming, don't lose heart,
Be blessed; prepare the way.'

Kathryn Galloway
(CH4 291)