TITLE

The Scottish Minister of the 19th century - his life, work, and relations with his people.

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Submitted for the degree of Master of Theology
The University of Glasgow
1972

SUMMARY

OUR AIM

We seek to present a picture of the life of the Scottish Parish Minister of the Nineteenth Century, both publicly among his parishioners and privately in his own home. We examine the nature of his work, both as pastor of his congregation and as a respected leader in his own community. Finally, and in particular, we note which of his duties, responsibilities and characteristics remained substantially unchanged throughout the century, and which of them suffered major change, with examination of the reasons thereof.

AS IT WAS in the EARLY DAYS

We establish that, early in the century, the minister's main duties centred on the pulpit, on Christian education and social service, and on house-to-house visitation; and we discuss whether, in the main, Scotland's ministers of that time were conscientiously discharging their duties and at the same time finding therein true satisfaction in a task which filled and rewarded all their time and energy.

The MINISTRY and the PEOPLE.

Finding that - despite disturbing instances of individual incompetence, fairly widespread inter-party rivalry, and a rather lax top administration in certain matters - Scotland's ministers of the period were on the whole conscientious and hardworking, we next estimate the minister's varying ability, through the century, to influence not only his church members but all within his parish, taking account, for example, of the growing difference between the relatively unchanging rural parish, where numbers remained manageable and old traditions lingered, and the rapidly expanding industrial parish where sheer increase in population made the task more and more difficult. In particular, we survey the steps the churches took to win the ear and the heart of the poorer town dwellers, through special schemes designed to provide

for them spiritually, physically, educationally and recreationally. Mention is made of the genuine widespread interest aroused by the great national ecclesiastical events of the century - e.g. the Disruption, the heresy cases, and the successive waves of revival - an interest which actually assisted ministers in their efforts to bring the message of the Church home to every man.

PASTOR and FLOCK

We study the main recurring commitments of a minister's week. We see both minister and congregation lay special emphasis on adequate studied preparation for pulpit and lecture room. We note the various events and circumstances which took the minister into the homes of his people, and see how his visits gradually altered in tone and emphasis with the passing of the years. Special attention is given to increasing efforts by many ministers to broaden their contacts with the younger people in their parishes, in Church and Sunday School, through day-school and week-night organisations, and through an increasing over-all informality of manner.

The MINISTER in the COMMUNITY

We recall an aspect probably more openly acknowledged last century than it is to-day - the part played by the minister in local administration. We see that several valuable public services now controlled by Government - e.g. Savings Banks, Libraries, Poor Relief - were personally directed, and sometimes inaugurated, by the minister from his manse. A brief look at the composition of representative local and civic bodies reveals that in most cases there was a seat permanently reserved for the Parish Minister. We also examine the extent to which a minister was liable to become personally involved in politics.

The MINISTER in his PRIVATE LIFE

Entering the manse, we note with respect the study, wherein hours of prayer, meditation and serious reading laid the foundations of the ministry. But it also appears that the manse kitchen and the glebe were frequently the centres of thriving and profitable 'industries'. As for any leisure 'off-duty' hours the minister might have, we briefly list hobbies which found his approval and even his active participation. There is also a review of conflicting 19th century opinions on the extent to which a minister might 'put off the clergyman' and indulge in secular pursuits.

The MINISTER as HOST

Still within the manse, we see something of its semi-public role as a source of food, clothing and cash for the needy itinerant caller, and as a lodging house to which the homeless traveller naturally turned. As this unofficial Christian charity could considerably add to a minister's domestic expenditure, we glance briefly at his income from stipend and other sources.

CONCLUSION

Drawing the evidence together, we determine the aspects of the minister's life and work which, over the century, underwent the greatest change. In particular, we note the declining power of the individual minister and the increasing prominence of the layman within the Church, and summarise the effect on the ministers themselves in their daily life, their work, their attitudes and their outlook.

PREFACE

The life and commitments of a Scottish minister of the present day are vividly enough known, with their endless demands on time, knowledge and study, personality, patience, and Christian dedication. But the Church in Scotland has evolved through recent centuries in somewhat tortuous and sometimes tempestuous fashion; and the day to day lives of both shepherds and their flocks, as they were even a century back, are shrouded in a mist of largely unstudied memories.

Anyone seeking to know and understand the patterns of our Scottish ministry six generations ago will find much of absorbing and fascinating interest - if he cares to browse among widely scattered records and reminiscences. It is the object of this study to draw together, from a wealth of diverse original sources, a clearer picture of what Scottish Church life meant to both minister and people through the long years between 1800 and the days of our immediate fathers, and to make real some of the problems and personalities which beset and led both preachers and hearers as generation succeeded generation. By this study, we may more fully understand what manner of heritage is ours, and how the labours, the successes, and even the failures of our forefathers have contributed to the building of our present Church in Scotland, in many ways so concerned for its future, in many ways so radiantly triumphant, and in all things resolute in its faith in the guiding hand of God.

C H A P T E R O N E

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THE MINISTER'S WORKING WEEK:

EVIDENCE FROM AROUND 1800.

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CHAPTER ONE: The minister's working week: evidence from around 1800.

'Six days shalt thou labour'

For as long as the Christian Church has had full-time professional clergymen, the world has had its tongue-in-cheek critics who have ventured the suggestion that such men are liable for only one day's work in each week. Evidence to support such a 'slander' in the present day, when these ordained servants are expected to be at the very centre of all the Church's considerable daily activity, could come only from a total 'outsider' casting the most casual of glances at the public duties of a lazy cleric; certainly we could not imagine any minister, even in a remote area, being able to confess that, after doing what both his conscience and his congregation reasonably suggest as his duty, he has several whole days in each week to devote to extra-ecclesiastical pursuits.

Immediate questions rise in our minds, therefore, when we read a pamphlet published anonymously in 1805 by the parish minister of Kilmany in Fife: 'The author of this pamphlet can assert, from what is to him the highest of all authority, the authority of his own experience, that after the satisfactory discharge of his parish duties, a minister may enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure for the prosecution of any science in which his taste may dispose him to engage.' [1] What, we want to know, comprised his 'duties' that they could be so quickly completed? Was our spokesman an example of what was then the exception or the rule? Did many clergymen of his day draw full-time stipends for part-time work?

Our interest, of course, is further heightened by the fact that the minister in question was none other than Thomas Chalmers, who is rightly regarded as the supreme

1 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, apostle of union': p. 35

guiding genius of the Free Church both in its conception, its birth and its rapid growth. Chalmers was to put his own record straight in a speech in the General Assembly in 1825 when he admitted without reservation that his earlier opinions had been uttered in ignorance and pride and were wholly in error; [2] we have, then, no thought of castigating a man whose labours for the Church of Christ were, said Sydney Smith, like those of a thousand men and not of one man, [3] who was hailed by Lord Cockburn as 'one of the four greatest Scotsmen of all time', [4] and whose two subsequent ministries in Glasgow did not allow for any idle moments of non-involvement in Christ's work.

Our aim, rather, is to discover how far the young Chalmers' views and behaviour were typical of his ministerial colleagues as the 19th century opened. Our aim is to gain a picture of the life the occupant of the Scottish manse lived as the 1700's gave way to the 1800's, and then to trace the changes that took place in its pattern throughout the 19th century. In so doing, we shall see how the character and scope of his daily work altered and how his relationship with his congregation and parishioners developed.

We might at first suspect that Chalmers' remarks in 1805 were the hasty comments of an inexperienced, rather arrogant, and none too dedicated clergyman finding himself bored with a small rural parish, and similarly we might imagine that his older, more committed brethren would be quietly going about their daily labours with the conscientiousness we to-day expect. Things, however, are much less simple than this. Certainly Chalmers was taken to task by Cupar Presbytery for his dereliction of duty on

2 'So I thought in my ignorance and pride. I have no reserve in saying that the sentiment was wrong, and that in the utterance of it I penned what was most outrageously wrong.' ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, apostle of Union': p. 36

3 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 130

4 Ibid. p. 130.

such a wide and regular scale, but we cannot thereby assume that his colleagues were living and behaving as we are accustomed to see our clergymen do. [5]

The same year, 1805, that saw the Church take note of a young man who was to be one of her leaders, marked the death of Alexander Carlyle who had been prominent in Church life for close on 50 years. Viewed in one way, this colourful minister of Inveresk might seem to afford a picture of a parish minister more in keeping with present-day ideals. He had, for example, the vision and the courage to begin a Sunday School in his parish at a time (1790) when these organisations were still widely distrusted and regarded as 'nurseries of sedition'. [6] His epitaph in the country churchyard, from the pen of the philosopher, Adam Ferguson, records that 'he was faithful to his pastoral charge, to his people a willing guide in the ways of righteousness and truth', [7] and a further tribute, from Chief Commissioner Adam, states that 'he had nothing in him that detracted from or was unbecoming the character of a clergyman'. [8] One of his successors in Inveresk found ample evidence that he had visited his people acceptably [9] and that 'his interest in the poorest of his flock was noteworthy', [10] while at national level he was clearly held in

5 Chalmers indeed claimed, 'I expend as much effort upon the religious improvement of my people as any minister within the bounds of my Presbytery'. JEAN L. WATSON: 'The life of Dr. Andrew Thomson': p. 80-81. Whatever we finally say of Chalmers in this regard, no man can accuse him of simple laziness: 'For five days each week he taught three classes of Mathematics and one of Chemistry'. (Donald Macleod: St. Giles' Lecture on Thomas Chalmers: 1882-83: p. 277 of published volume of Lectures - 'Scottish Divines')

6 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 103

7 J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle': 1860 ed. p. 576

8 Ibid. p. 568

9 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 123

10 Ibid. p. 123

high esteem, being elected Moderator of Synod [11] and failing in his bid to become Clerk to the General Assembly only on a second vote. [12]

We could hope, then, that in this man, in his life and work, would be seen both a healthier and a truer picture of the parish ministry in Scotland at the beginning of the 19th century than that which we would be able to draw from Chalmers' pamphlet. Against this, however, we have to set the undeniable evidence of Carlyle's autobiography where he admits that his congregation in Inveresk were reluctant to receive him as their minister because of his known un-ministerial behaviour, [13] and where the details he openly gives of his activities, once inducted, scarcely reveal one whom we to-day would recognise either as an unwearied pastor or as a shining example of righteousness. He was, for instance, frequently absent from his parish for long spells, and this for no other reason than to indulge his taste for the gay social life of London; [14] he confesses, without much sign of repentance, to 'philandering with the ladies', [15] to consuming vast quantities of claret to the extent that he would shun company where he thought the supply of this or similar beverages would be inadequate, [16] and to

11 J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle': 1860 ed. p. 474. (He was Moderator in 1766)

12 Ibid. p. 555. (The vote was taken at the General Assembly of 1789.)

13 'There arose much murmuring in the parish against me, as too young, too full of levity, and too much addicted to the company of my superiors, to be fit for so important a charge'. Ibid. p. 207

14 e.g. in 1758, he was in London and elsewhere in England from late February or early March until well through May. Ibid. p. 331-377.

15 Ibid. p. 92

16 Carlyle had no great love of joining in the traditional Presbytery dinners: 'Whatever number there were in company they never allowed them more than two bottles of small Lisbon wine'. Ibid. p. 64

revelling in leisure pursuits (dancing,[17] whist,[18] billiards,[19] theatre-going[20]) which were at this time 'out-of-bounds' to clergymen.

It is, then, somewhat difficult to reconcile the two portraits of this man. The historian, A. J. Campbell, is not alone in the view that Carlyle is less than fair to himself in what he has written, and that in fact the normal ministerial duties received much fuller attention from him than he records.[21] This may be so, but even at that, we would scarcely want to say straight away that we had found in him one whose life could fairly represent the mass of his Church of Scotland contemporaries. If, on the other hand, both pictures of him are accurate as they stand - that is, if Carlyle behaved as he himself seems to suggest, and if such behaviour was not only tolerated as permissible in

17 'I was very fond of dancing, in which I was a great proficient'. J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle': 1860 ed. p. 47
'I danced frequently in a manner prohibited by the laws of the Church'. Ibid. p. 208.

18 'We find Carlyle initiating Principal Robertson and Dr. Hugh Blair into the mysteries of backgammon and whist.... in the manses of the neighbourhood, he had set the first example of playing at cards at home with unlocked doors'. ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': p. 7.

19 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 122

20 A contemporary of Carlyle, the Rev. Thomas Whyte of Liberton, was suspended for six weeks by the Presbytery of Edinburgh for attending a performance of the tragedy, 'Douglas'. He was let off 'lightly' because in the theatre 'he concealed himself as well as he could to avoid giving offence'. J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle': 1860 ed. p. 315.

21 'There is good reason for believing that such things (journeys, pleasures etc.) did not occupy the space in Carlyle's life which they occupy in his book, and that he was a capable parish minister.' A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 103.

clergymen but was genuinely considered worthy of such glowing tributes - then quite clearly the concept of the ministry has undergone some very radical change somewhere along the line. In any event, wherever the truth may lie in this individual case, further and more widespread study is needed if we are to establish a picture that we could reasonably take as showing the normal daily life and work of the Scottish parish minister as the nineteenth century got into its stride.

MODERATES AND EVANGELICALS

One of our difficulties, of course, is that from about mid-way through the 18th century, the vast majority of the Church of Scotland's ministers were ranged in the two opposing and increasingly hostile camps of Moderates and Evangelicals, and each group was to become more and more intolerant of the other's interpretation of how the Christian ministry should be exercised. So bitter in fact did the exchanges between them become that a simple reading of the one side's estimate of the other's clergy could only lead a stranger to give thanks to God that the Christian Church in Scotland was able to survive a period when so much of its parochial leadership was of such unworthy character. The Evangelicals were particularly belligerent in their attacks on the life and work of what they considered to be the average Moderate minister. Much of their criticism, however, was born of their own fierce intolerance of any but their own kind; they regarded themselves as the sole possessors and purveyors of the truth with the result that they felt justified in saying that those who criticised them or even quietly differed from them were inevitably liable to the wrath of heaven.

So, then, we must be careful to differentiate between evidence of genuine neglect of essential duty which they were on occasion able to produce, and the vindictive criticism of honest servants of God whose only 'crime' was that they genuinely interpreted the functions of a minister in a different way. Many were the charges brought of ministers preferring the Arts to the Scriptures, of clergymen who were good shots but wretched preachers, of men who spent more

time looking after real sheep on profitable glebe-farms than they did seeking the lost sheep among their parishioners. [22] In some cases, no doubt, the men accused were over fond of worldly pleasure and profit, but not a few of the attacks stemmed just from the basic difference that existed in the way the two sides viewed the work of the ministry.

The Moderates believed, as William Neil says, 'that politics, literature, and the wide issues that affect men in all aspects of their environment are equally the concern of the ministry'. [23] So inevitably their concept of the ministry was enlarged beyond the mere pastoral care of a parish. The Moderates regarded all knowledge and learning as worthy subjects for the involvement of the clergy, and the indisputable fact is that from their number there came many notable successes in these wider fields which, not in any way unworthy, were yet far removed from the narrow road the Evangelicals would have had all ministers walk. In this regard, an extract from Alexander Carlyle's speech in the Assembly of 1791 is relevant: 'There are few branches of literature in which the ministers of the Church have not excelled; there are few subjects of fine writing in which they do not stand foremost in the rank of authors. We have men who have successfully enlightened the world in every branch. Who have written the best histories ancient and modern? It has been clergymen of this Church. Who has written the clearest delineation of the human understanding and all its powers? A clergyman of this Church. Who has written the best system of rhetoric and exemplified it by his own orations? A clergyman of this Church. Who wrote a tragedy that has been deemed perfect? A clergyman of this Church. Who was the most profound mathematician of the age

22 DONALD SAGE: 'Memorabilia Domestica': 2nd ed. 1899 'Dr. Downie of Lochalsh was a man of wealth and of gentlemanly manners, a princely landlord, an extensive sheep-farmer, a good shot, but a wretched preacher'. p. 188.

23 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 121.

he lived in? A clergyman of this Church. Who wrote the best treatise on agriculture.....' [24] These were no idle boasts and no mean tributes to Moderatism. A narrow parish ministry was not their ideal but they were not, as an inevitable result, totally indifferent to the basic spiritual needs of their parishioners.

At the same time, however, there were some awesome facts produced by the Evangelicals of clerical inefficiency and indiscretion which do reveal that not all Moderate-controlled parishes were receiving the spiritual attention and leadership that the national Church should have been providing. Here of course we must guard against making sweeping generalisations based on isolated examples of individual ministers' shortcomings. Neil Douglas, for example, tells of a Kintyre minister who in eight whole years never once visited or prayed with his sick parishioners. [25] This is regrettable, certainly, but in itself it would not constitute proof of any such universal trend within the Moderate party. Much more damaging, however, is the allegation that the whole of Inverness was without any ministerial visitation or examination for a considerable period of years, and that, further north, Thurso had no diet of catechism in the forty year period up to 1797. [26]

Two of the main duties of our clergymen to-day, as detailed in every service of ordination or induction, are to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments. [27] These, indeed, are and have been the basic inescapable duties of all generations of Reformed Church clergy, and certainly they were every bit as central last century as this. Clearly, then, it would assist us in our evaluation

24 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk' pp. 118-119.

25 JOHN MACINNES: 'The Evangelical movement in the Highlands of Scotland': p. 113

26 Ibid. p. 113

27 Ordinal and Service Book of the Church of Scotland: 3rd ed. 1962: pp. 20, 22, 35.

if we could discover how well or ill the average Moderate fulfilled this part of his 'remit', being ever careful once more to search out, as far as is possible, the quality of the whole forest and not be prejudiced by the stunted growth of a few individual trees. So, for instance, we can strongly disapprove of, but not immediately take as typical, the highland Moderate cited by John Kennedy - minister of Dingwall Free Church and an uncompromising anti-Moderate - who 'invariably preached a borrowed sermon which he had read so often that he himself was half asleep in delivering it'.[28] We cannot, either, assume that there was even one other cleric like the incredible incumbent of Duthil who apparently possessed only two sermons and whose attempts at variety lay solely in announcing different texts from time to time.[29] One thing is certain; he would not have given much assistance to the scheme operated in Caithness in the 1750's where the ministers had agreed that any new sermon they might produce would be passed round all their colleagues.[30] Much more heed, however, must be paid to the considered comment of A. J. Campbell who says that 'many of the later Moderates had lost faith in the office of preaching and, having

28 JOHN KENNEDY: 'The Apostle of the North': p. 70

29 JOHN MACINNES: 'The Evangelical movement in the Highlands of Scotland': p. 113.
Dr. Hanna, the biographer of Chalmers, tells of a minister who preached the same handfull of sermons over a number of years; eventually, the beadle was deputed to ask if, failing a whole new sermon, a new text might be supplied. 'Next Sunday, to the astonishment of the audience, the minister gave out a text from which he had never before preached.... Every Bible was opened at the place, and the listeners....leant back in their pews in eager anticipation of the new sermon'. Alas, however, after the reading of the text, from Genesis, the familiar sermon on Nicodemus was delivered exactly as before. SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE: 'Scottish Reminiscences': p. 81.

30 JOHN MACINNES: 'The Evangelical movement in the Highlands of Scotland': p. 113.

composed sermons to suffice for a year or two they were content to repeat them in rotation for the rest of their lives'. To support this claim, Campbell is able to cite no less a figure than Principal Hill of St. Andrews who had sermons for but three years.[31]

If, however, the Evangelicals sought to criticise the manner in which they felt too many Moderate clergy attended to their public duties, they were quite unsparing in the way they probed these men's private lives, bringing swingeing accusations of intemperance, immorality and thoroughly irreligious behaviour in 'off-duty' hours. Just a few examples from the many available show the gravity of the charges. Listen, for example, to Donald Sage, speaking of some of the ministers in Aberdeen Synod: 'Such was their general character as a body - many of them were so openly profane - that they were known as the most ungodly men in their respective congregations; two of them especially were, the faithful representatives of the genuine moderates of that day - they stuck at nothing, sabbath desecration, profane swearing, drunkenness, or the most open contempt of God's truth and ordinances'.[32] Of a similar nature is this comment of John Kennedy describing the highland Moderates that he knew: 'They were pests to all who were in earnest about salvation, and they formed a medium between the Church and the world through which the profanity of the ungodly came in to desecrate the House of God'.[33] On a further occasion he dismissed them in these terms: 'The only maxim in their code of morals was that a minister may do what he likes if he continues in safe possession of his living'.[34] Of importance too is the remark of

31 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 151

32 DONALD SAGE: 'Memorabilia Domestica': 2nd ed. 1899. p. 234.

33 JOHN KENNEDY: 'The Apostle of the North': p. 72.

34 Ibid. p. 99.

Dr. Norman Macleod, father of the saint of the Barony, who said, when leaving Campbeltown for Campsie in 1812, 'The only persons in the whole district with whom I parted without any feelings of regret were the clergy; in the course of a very few years, four or five libels were successively on our Presbytery table; they ended in the deposition of three members of Presbytery, while the fourth was withdrawn as the accused was insane; two of the remaining members of Presbytery were deposed'. [35] Even Alexander Carlyle knew that a minister's enjoyment of worldly pleasures could only be allowed to go so far and therefore felt bound to pass this judgment on a colleague in Yester - 'How to eat and sleep and drink were his sole care'. [36]

This last example, of course, takes us once more into the ranks of the unhappy individual 'cases' that can always be quoted; for our present study, however, perhaps only two other 'giants' are sufficiently interesting to merit separate mention. John Kennedy delights to relate the behaviour of an unnamed minister in the north who at the drinking bouts 'was the last to slide off his chair', not because, as we would hope, he was more abstemious than the rest but because 'he was more seasoned'. [37] The Rev. Roderick McKenzie, however, minister of Knockbain in the 1820's, was surely in a class by himself. His wide reputation as a man who could consume vast quantities of alcohol and still remain upright and in control of most of his faculties was climaxed when he challenged a notorious wine-bibber and glutton from England to a drinking competition and won. [38]

It may be that it would be well at this point

35 JOHN MACINNES: 'The Evangelical movement in the Highlands of Scotland': pp. 112-113.

36 J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle': 1860 ed. p. 95.

37 JOHN KENNEDY: 'The Apostle of the North': p. 70

38 DONALD SAGE: 'Memorabilia Domestica': 2nd ed. 1899: p. 285. 'The only symptom of inebriety which he ever showed was to speak somewhat thick and to snivel through his nose'.

to stop and look at the 'other side', at those who were so adamant that their Moderate brethren were unworthy examples to their flocks. In terms of numbers, the Evangelicals were very much in the minority until 1800 or so, and indeed it was only in the 1830's that their numerical strength equalled and on occasion began to surpass the Moderates in the General Assembly. In any attempt to evaluate their general character, we are hampered in comparison to the comments we could pass on the Moderates in that they - to their credit - were not so given to launching vitriolic attacks on their opponents. It very much depends, then, on which Evangelicals we take as our pattern.

One man, however, whom we should not ignore is Alexander Webster. He was, we are told, 'a prince among the Evangelicals', and was minister from 1737 to 1784 of the Tolbooth Church in Edinburgh - 'the best attended Church in the town' - which was commonly regarded by the Evangelicals as their 'Chief Citadel'. [39] He had there a congregation that was 'devoted to him', he inaugurated the fund for widows and orphans of ministers, and he had a considerable share in the planning of Edinburgh's new town. Furthermore he stood out as a staunch guardian of his congregation's moral and spiritual welfare by warning them not to attend his Church when Alexander Carlyle preached there - this because of Carlyle's active support of the commercial theatre. [40] Like the same Carlyle, however, Webster was rather a man of two sides. He was, for instance, 'held to be excellent company even by those of dissolute manners, while being a five bottle man, he could lay them all under the table'. [41] For Dr. Bonum Magnum, as he was rather

39 J. H. S. BURLEIGH: 'A Church History of Scotland': p. 292
A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 77.

40 J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle': 1860 ed. p. 242.

41 Ibid. p. 240.

fittingly nicknamed, 'aptness to pray was as easy and natural as to drink a convivial glass'. [42]

Where, then, do we go from here? Were the majority of the Moderates as bad as the record of some of them suggests? Were the Evangelicals any better if Webster could at any time be one of their leaders? Was the daily life, discipline and conduct of the Scottish minister at the outset of the 19th century as lax as we might, from some of the above quotations, deduce? To clear the air somewhat and to give much needed reassurance that God's work was not being widely neglected by those whose full-time responsibility was that work, we do two things. First, we note the considered verdicts of some of the leading historians and commentators, and second we look briefly at two Churchmen who would have been leaders in any generation and who served the Church of Scotland faithfully and well in the last thirty years of the 18th century. The one was a staunch Moderate, the other an unrepentant Evangelical. Yet, for more than 25 years, as colleagues in the same Church ministering to the same congregation, they worked happily and very productively side by side.

To begin with, then, what do the historians say? J. H. Millar, in 'The Literary History of Scotland' estimates that 'never before or since have Scotland's ministers been so learned and at the same time so free from the patois of pedantry or puritanism'. The Moderates, he said, 'defended the right of the ministry to live like normal human kind instead of being at the mercy of the canting humbugs who identified their prejudices with Presbyterianism'. [43] Next, we hear from J. C. Fyfe and a passage from his 'Scottish Diaries and Memoirs': 'Carlyle showed that a man could keep his humanity and his joy of life and at the same time be a good Christian and a worthy minister of the Gospel'. [44] Thirdly, we get support for

42 J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle': 1860 ed. p. 240-241.

43 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 124.

44 Ibid. p. 124.

this point of view from Cunningham: 'The Moderates had no rules to hinder them from doing as other Christians did, yet they were with few exceptions men of exemplary lives'. [45] Finally, A. J. Campbell in general terms finds both 'sides' largely innocent of the charges the one brought against the other, and at the same time, lists clearly the main duties that our ministerial forefathers were expected to fulfil: 'It is no longer possible to believe that the level of spiritual life was higher in one party or type than its rival.' [46] 'Throughout the country the standard of duty maintained by the parochial clergy was as excellent as at any other period'. For example, the Moderate was not a 'man of pagan mind and elastic morals, indifferent to the work of the ministry and addicted to the pleasures of the table. The average minister did his work faithfully according to the methods of the day. Preaching, catechising, visiting the sick, taking oversight of the parish school, and administering the poor relief of the parish - in such matters there was no difference between the Moderate and the Evangelical'. [47]

We turn now to an examination of those two men alluded to above who, while sitting on 'opposing front benches' in the General Assembly, yet combined most effectively in the parish of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh. Senior of the two was William Robertson whose father had become minister of that Church in 1733. After ministering first in Gladsmuir, East Lothian, and then in Lady Yester's, Edinburgh, the young Robertson was called to his father's old pulpit in 1761. In him, says Professor Burleigh, 'the ideal of Moderatism was realised'. [48] He was a historian fit to be talked of in the same breath as Voltaire, Hume and Gibbon; [49] he was, from 1762 until 1780, the undisputed leader of the

45 JOHN CUNNINGHAM: 'The Church History of Scotland': 2nd ed. Vol. 2, p. 413.

46 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': Preface p. 6.

47 Ibid. p. 100

48 J. H. S. BURLEIGH: 'A Church History of Scotland': p. 297

49 Ibid. p. 298.

Moderate Party with the 'management' or 'administration' of the Church in his hands; and he was, from 1762 until his death in 1793, not only what A. J. Campbell calls 'the model parish minister' but also the distinguished Principal of Edinburgh University. [50]

In 1767, he rather surprisingly received as his colleague the Evangelical John Erskine, but what was a potentially explosive situation with the yoking of two men who, theologically and ecclesiastically, were opposites, in practice proved to be a thoroughly amicable partnership, showing surely that a good Moderate and a good Evangelical were not only both faithful servants of God and the Church in their respective ways, but also that party considerations could take a poor second place to the main duties confronting a Scottish minister of this period.

We saw earlier, in the comments of A. J. Campbell, an outline of just what these duties were; confirmation and further amplification comes from the very fine biography of John Erskine written by Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood of St. Cuthbert's. Erskine served in three parishes between his ordination and his call to Old Greyfriars. He was for nine years in Kirkintilloch before moving first to Culross and then to New Greyfriars, and, in all three charges, his duties appear to have been largely the same. For each Sunday he had to prepare three discourses (two sermons and a lecture), while his week-days were spent in the catechising of his people (each household had to be visited, questioned, and exhorted at least once a year), in visiting the sick and the dying as often as the gravity of each individual case demanded, in administering the poor fund, and in taking an active share in the running of the various local charitable bodies. [51] Add to this the fact that he played his full part in the affairs of

50 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 96.

51 SIR HENRY MONCRIEFF WELLWOOD: 'The life and writings of John Erskine': p. 236.

Presbytery and the picture we have is quite unlike the picture painted by the young Chalmers of a parish ministry forcibly unemployed for large parts of each week. Even without added voluntary labours, Erskine and his conscientious colleagues would have been busy enough, yet Erskine found time to publish sermons, to issue pamphlets on matters of public interest (Catholic emancipation, the American War, etc.), and to learn Dutch and German when almost 60 years of age. [52]

We have already noted that his colleague, Robertson, was, in one critic's estimation, more than faithful to his parochial duties; when we read the following tribute to Erskine's ministry from the pen of his biographer, we can only hope that the people of Old Greyfriars fully appreciated their uncommon good fortune in having two such stalwarts to lead them: 'During the whole course of his ministry, Erskine served to make every part of his conduct, of his personal habits, of his time, of his public activity, and of his literary pursuits, to bear directly and constantly on his public or professional usefulness, in the service of the Gospel, as the great object of his life. In the private exercise of his pastoral functions, he was as indefatigable among the lowest of the people entrusted to him, and in the minutest services which he could render them, as in the most conspicuous efforts of his literature and talents'. [53]

It is true, admittedly, that all through our study we have sought to guard against generalising from the particular example, but there must be undeniable encouragement in the picture that comes from Old Greyfriars at the same time as Carlyle and Webster were in the limelight. We cannot, then, underestimate the differences between the Moderates and the Evangelicals as the 19th century opened; we cannot pretend that they were not there or that they did not cut deep, but we need not assume that the bleakest of pictures uncovered is the true one and that one side possessed a

52 SIR HENRY MONCRIEFF WELLWOOD: 'The life and writings of John Erskine': p. 316.

53 Ibid. pp. 397-398.

monopoly of dedication and sincerity.

As a group, the Moderates may well have paid less attention to theology in general and to preaching in particular than they should; [54] they may on occasion have swung too far towards a secular approach to life in their desire to integrate the Church and the Arts; there were without a doubt several distressing cases of clerical delinquency on the Moderate side in the period under review and the Moderate leadership was perhaps too quick to hush them up at the expense of the necessary disciplinary action; [55] there were some of their number who were open to the charge of being mere hirelings and stipendiaries; but there were sufficient men like Robertson to justify the confidence the historians feel as they review the overall state of the party. Likewise, the Evangelicals may well have contained more than a healthy share of intolerance within their ranks; [56] some of their number could be said to be

54 'In doctrine the Moderates were ostensibly if tepidly orthodox, but theology did not figure among their interests'. J. H. S. BURLEIGH: 'A Church History of Scotland': p. 303.

55 Robert Burns of Paisley speaks around 1820 of 'grossest instances of clerical delinquency being smoothed over as 'alleged breaches of decorum' and ministers condemned by civil courts being covered by ecclesiastical manoeuvring'. R. F. BURNS: 'Life and times of Robert Burns of Paisley': p. 114.
'During Robertson's leadership the General Assembly had to deal with several cases of clerical delinquency of a very gross kind. It was said of Robertson that he acquitted culprits of whose guilt there could be no real doubt'. A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': pp. 122-123.

56 'Evangelicalism was fiercely intolerant, aggressively dogmatic. It was true; it alone was true; and to oppose, to criticise, or even to doubt it was to incur the wrath of Heaven. Of those who did not accept its tenets it was accustomed to speak censoriously, bitterly, and on occasion calumniously'. A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 150.

illiberal and almost illiterate; there were perhaps traces of open hypocrisy, but their overall concerns were right and rightly expressed. Before we depart from this particular theme, one further comment from Erskine's biography is both relevant and reassuring in that, without qualification and without reference to either Moderates or Evangelicals, Wellwood shows that in his estimation one of the most essential, yet one of the most trying and demanding of ministerial duties, was being fittingly carried out: 'Visitation of the sick and dying is a labour of perpetual recurrence and it is in no country of Christendom more faithfully attended to than in Scotland'. [57]

PLURALITIES

Before, however, we take up in detail the changes that the 19th century brought to Scottish ministers in terms of the life they lived and the work they were expected to do, there are two further factors to be taken into consideration which could not but have had an effect on the concept of the parish ministry as the century opened. First, there was the continuing practice, exemplified as we saw in William Robertson, whereby a minister, in charge of a large parish, could at the same time hold an appointment within a neighbouring university. Might this not seem, on first glance at least, to be official 'recognition' that the 'statutory' duties of a parish were either insufficient to occupy a man full-time (and that therefore the young Chalmers was maybe not so far wrong after all), or that they were not considered to be of essential importance relative to what a gifted clergyman might be able to accomplish in specialist fields of education? Second, we must pay some attention to the kind of training divinity students were receiving in the Colleges to see if what they were being taught was properly fitting them for a serious and faithful discharge of the routine parochial duties to which most of them would go.

We look, then, at the whole business of plur-

57 SIR HENRY MONCRIEFF WELLWOOD: 'The Life and writings of John Erskine': p. 69.

alities and at the outset note just a few of the many examples one could quote. When Robert Burns of Paisley entered Edinburgh Divinity College in 1805, he found all three Professors drawing stipends as parish ministers. Dr. Andrew Hunter, for example, divided his attentions between the class of anything up to 200 trainee ministers and his large and 'somewhat rugged metropolitan parish'. Dr. Hugh Meiklejohn, on the other hand, had a much smaller and rather easier parish (Abercorn), but it was 14 miles distant from the University, and this at a time when travel and communications were far from easy. [58] Little better in this regard was Dr. Ferrie who, from 1813, was both Professor of Civil History in St. Andrews and minister of Kilconquhar some 12 miles away. [59] As late as 1824, despite opposition from Presbytery and Synod, Dr. Macfarlane was confirmed as minister of Glasgow, St. Mungo's - the foremost city Church - and as Principal of Glasgow University. [60] The attendant controversy was all the more heated because at this very time Thomas Chalmers was clearly demonstrating in a nearby Church just what a city minister's task really was.

In the city of Aberdeen in the same period, the minister of the important West Church was also a Professor in the local University, and in him, if we accept the verdict of W. G. Blaikie, all that was potentially dangerous in the system of pluralities was seen in reality, at least so far as this man's congregation was concerned: 'He did absolutely nothing for his flock beyond repeating his stereotyped prayers every Sunday morning and reading a drowsy discourse'. [61] Be that as it may,

58 R. F. BURNS: 'Life and times of Robert Burns of Paisley': pp. 26-27.

59 Ibid. p. 128.

60 Ibid. pp. 128-129.

61 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'Autobiography: Recollections of a busy life': p. 22.

the fact remains that even if there had been no pluralists guilty of neglect either of their flock or of their students, we would still, I feel, find it difficult to say that the practice was commendable; the dangers and difficulties inherent in it are altogether too great. In actual practice, however, there do appear to have been all too many pluralists who were at least open to the kind of criticism Blaikie offered with the result that rumblings of dissatisfaction with the practice grew markedly louder, coming to their peak in the early years of the 19th century. From pulpit and pew, from individuals and Church Courts, voices were raised in a bid to have the practice of pluralities discontinued.

The first query on pluralities came in 1779 over the position of George Hill, Professor of Greek in St. Andrews and minister of a town charge. In this instance the Synods of Fife, and of Stirling and Perth, sent up overtures to the Assembly regarding the whole matter of union of offices.[62] Opposition to pluralities in Glasgow found a very able leader in Stevenson MacGill who was inducted to the city's Tron Church in 1797. He had already made his convictions plain by turning down seven years earlier a plurality involving a St. Andrews parish and that University's Chair of Civil History on the stated grounds that the pastoral office was sufficient for the labours of any man and that 'unions of offices always had a very pernicious effect on both sides'.[63] This remained his position all through his ministry and on numerous occasions he was to reaffirm his total opposition to the idea that one man could do adequately what he regarded as two full-time jobs. For example, in one famous speech in Glasgow, he spelled out just how impossible he felt it to be for a town minister to do even his primary tasks fully: 'I appeal to the experience of my brethren of this city, to the most faithful and diligent, ... and I would ask them if they have been able to discharge their duties

62 JOHN CUNNINGHAM: 'The Church History of Scotland': 2nd ed. p. 389.

63 R. BURNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Stevenson MacGill': p. 169.

with satisfaction, if many most important duties they have not been forced to neglect, ... if they have not often felt their spirits sink into despondency at the thought of how little they have done for their people'. [64]

Edinburgh's counterpart to MacGill was Andrew Thomson who was inducted as the first minister of St. George's in 1814. Says his biographer, 'He regarded with contempt the man who, heedless of what was for the benefit of his people, thought only of gaining a higher income for himself'. [65] He himself said in a speech to the Assembly, 'I could no more perform what is justly expected of a Professor along with my labours as a parish minister than I could fly to the moon'. [66] Congregations, too, were beginning to speak up on this system which robbed them of their ministers' full pastoral care. For instance, the congregation of Colinton, Edinburgh, were objecting to the presentee in their vacancy, a Dr. Walker. In an attempt to pacify them and give them a sense of pride in their future minister, they were assured that he would very likely be appointed a Professor in the University. The result, however, was not pleasure but increased opposition: 'That makes the thing far waur' was the verdict of one spokesman; 'He will just mak' a bye job of our souls'. [67]

The first step towards abolishing the system was taken in 1817 with an Act of Assembly forbidding pluralities unless the minister's parish was in or near the University town. [68] Hitherto, the only relevant legislation

64 R. BURNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Stevenson MacGill': p. 215.

65 JEAN WATSON: 'Life of Dr. Andrew Thomson': p. 67.

66 Ibid. p. 68

67 Ibid. p. 73

68 JOHN CUNNINGHAM: 'The Church History of Scotland': 2nd ed. pp. 440-441.
In the Assembly of 1814, it was declared to be inconsistent with the fundamental laws of the Church for a minister to hold any office which required his absence from his parish; the defeated Pluralists, however, agitated successfully to have the whole matter remitted to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act. The ultimate Act, then, did not come until 1817.

was designed to prohibit a minister becoming too immersed in certain secular affairs; he was not allowed, for example, to be an M.P., a senator of the College of Justice, a tavern keeper or a major-domo.[69] He could, however, be factor of an estate or head of an Academy or, as we shall have cause to note later, a medical practitioner. The Act of 1817, then, was a beginning, but still it was possible for the minister of, say, the Barony or St. Cuthbert's - both churches were responsible for parishes with around 80,000 souls resident[70] - to hold down a university post. Clearly, therefore, agitation for total abolition was going to continue and success came in 1828 when the Royal Commission on the Universities reported that pluralities were 'inexpedient'.[71]

So far, then, as our present inquiry into the average minister's life and work is concerned, certain deductions can be made from the situation as it was prior to the introduction of anti-pluralist legislation. First and foremost, the testimony of many great parish ministers of the period was that their work demanded all their time and energies and that additional labours such as a University appointment must entail would inevitably lead to neglect of both duties. Secondly, it must have been very tempting for ministers holding twin appointments increasingly to forsake the mundane and often trying problems of a parish in favour of the more stimulating atmosphere of a University or College. Thirdly, although the number of men involved in such double appointments was necessarily small in relation to the total number of ordained ministers within the Church of Scotland, yet they were in prominent positions and their example must have encouraged at least some of their purely parochial brethren to underestimate the time that should be allotted to their clerical duties. Fourthly, Scotland's

69 JOHN CUNNINGHAM: 'The Church History of Scotland': 2nd ed. p. 389.

70 R. BURNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Stevenson MacGill': p. 192.

71 J. H. S. BURLEIGH: 'A Church History of Scotland': p. 318.

future ministers were all trained by pluralists and they must inevitably have deduced, even subconsciously, that the parishes awaiting them would not be too demanding on their time if their teachers could hold down city parishes and have time for University work as well.

It would, therefore, be very easy to wonder at the fact that this unsatisfactory practice was allowed to continue unchecked for so long, and it would be perhaps natural to think poorly of those ministers who were content to draw salaries from two sources even though time did not permit them to give both jobs the full attention they merited. In fairness, however, we must recognise that the Scottish Universities were at this time unable to pay adequate salaries to their staff, with the result that the appointed Professors, to maintain a reasonable standard of living, required to have some other source of income. Furthermore, in the 18th century the ministers formed easily the most learned class in society, so that the Universities looked to the clergy to fill Professorial posts, not only in the Faculty of Divinity, but in the other Faculties as well. Therefore, while there were probably those ministers who craved a plurality simply as a means of augmenting a parish stipend, many more felt they had to retain their stipends to enable them to continue in their University posts.

This situation, of course, posed many problems for the able but conscientious minister who, called to a University appointment, dearly wished to accept but would not take the easy way out by claiming a plurality. So, in various debates prior to the filling of vacancies within the University of Edinburgh, Thomas Chalmers and Robert Candlish were two who made it plain that they would decline any appointment where the salary offered would not allow them to take up the work full-time. [72] Just how poorly the

72 WILLIAM WILSON: 'Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish': p. 57 and pp. 88-90: When there was a possibility of Candlish becoming Professor of Biblical Criticism in Edinburgh, several private individuals offered donations to augment the official salary. In the end, however, a pluralist was appointed.

Universities did pay their top men is seen when, as late as 1854, John Tulloch was appointed Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, with a salary of just £300.[73] However 'inexpedient', then, the system of pluralities may have been, there may well have been some justification for it at a time when University salaries were small and when the clergy were looked to to provide the expert tuition in so many different spheres of learning.

THE TRAINING OF DIVINITY STUDENTS

Turning now to the question of the training the divinity students were receiving at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, there are really three main points we must consider. First, we must see something of University education as a whole before concentrating on the Divinity Faculties so that we can have some idea of the standards demanded of the students and frame some estimate of how advanced the general level of their studies was. Second, we must look at the quality of the teaching within the Divinity Faculties, and third we must pay some heed to the syllabus, to the subjects these men were expected to teach. In this way we will learn something of how adequately the young ministers were prepared for the day when they would be inducted to their first charge.

If we were able to look in on the average University Class of this period, the first fact that would strike us very forcibly would be the extreme youth of very many of the students. Confining ourselves to those who were to make a name for themselves within the Church, we can quote example after example of university studies being begun at an age when our children to-day are only thinking of leaving Primary School. For instance, the following all entered University when only 12 years of age - in brackets is the year when each so entered: Thomas Guthrie (1815);[74]

73 MRS. OLIPHANT: 'Memoir of Principal John Tulloch': p. 121.

74 D. K. GUTHRIE and C. J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed.: 1874: Vol. 1, p. 45.

Robert Candlish (1818);[75] James Begg (1820);[76] Alexander Moody Stuart (1821);[77] Thomas Chalmers went one better by entering St. Andrews University in 1791 when only 11,[78] while in 1768, Glasgow College witnessed the arrival of a truly precocious child in the person of John Jamieson, aged 9. The same Jamieson, later to be a distinguished minister of the Secession Church in Forfar and in Edinburgh, entered that denomination's college in Alloa when only 14.[79]

As an almost inevitable result of such a young age of entry, the studies in most subjects were hardly able to be of an advanced nature. In particular it was extremely difficult to teach philosophy in any depth to what were virtually children. Latin was taught fairly thoroughly in Schools from a young age, and to a lesser extent Mathematics, but other subjects were given rather scant attention with the result that the Universities had to be much more like upper High Schools than anything we to-day would readily

75 WILLIAM WILSON: 'Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish': p. 10.
Wilson comments, 'According to the bad practice of entering college too young - a practice which was almost universal at the time.....'

76 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Vol. 1, p. 44.

77 KENNETH MOODY STUART: 'Memoir of Alexander Moody Stuart': p. 11.

78 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, Apostle of Union': p. 27.
It is worth noting that Chalmers was not admitted to University studies at this early age because of special ability displayed at school. Philip indeed says that at school he 'was thought dull and rather stupid'. p. 26.

79 JAMES PRIMROSE: 'The Mother Anti-burgher Church of Glasgow': p. 25.
'We are told of him (Jamieson) that when only four years of age he could read the New Testament'.

term 'a University'. A further weakness lay in the fact that there was no entrance examination and no minimum academic qualifications laid down for entry, [80] while within the universities there was little attempt at specialisation, and the students were not encouraged to sit degree examinations or to graduate. [81] In this last regard there is a delicious but disturbing tale of life in St. Andrews University in the late 1830's. A classmate of John Tulloch, the future Dr. Gray of Liberton, presented himself for his Latin degree exam only to be met by the janitor with the news that he had passed. When he protested that he had not yet sat the examination, the janitor was adamant, assuring him that the Professor had left definite word that he had in fact passed, adding, not entirely as an afterthought, 'The Professor is off to the fishing'. [82] To say the least, then, the Universities of 200 years ago were very different from their modern day counterparts.

Turning now to the Divinity Faculties and to the standard of teaching to be found there, we are confronted with a rather alarming mass of evidence that suggests that the Church was very poorly served in its Professors of this period. Before detailing some of this evidence, however, we must remember that the Professors were of the Moderate school and would therefore be unlikely to impress an out and out Evangelical. Also, students are never easily convinced of their Professors' abilities and perhaps no more stern critics can be found than would-be ministers as they view the established and senior members of the fraternity.

This said, however, there are some alarming allegations. Jupiter Carlyle, around 1740, dismisses the

80 The Rev. John Watson (the novelist Ian Maclaren), who entered university in 1866 at the age of 16, comments, 'One hopes that the day has come when no university anywhere will admit students without a matriculation examination, and when they will refuse to do the work of secondary schools. So far as I now can understand, I was simply a schoolboy at the University.' W. ROBERTSON NICOLL: 'Life of Rev. John Watson': p. 40.

81 J. R. FLEMING: 'The Church in Scotland': Vol. 1, p. 4.

82 MRS. OLIPHANT: 'Memoir of Principal John Tulloch': p. 8.

Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh as being 'Dull, Dutch, and prolix', [83] but does speak in rather more glowing terms of the teaching provided in Glasgow. [84] In St. Andrews, prior to the appointment of George Hill in 1788, the chairs were 'regarded as retreats for men who had nearly exhausted their energy in the ministerial office, who had passed the period of life during which new plans of intellectual effort are formed, ... and who rested satisfied with dwelling upon some of the commonplace topics of theology'. So said George Cook, one of the leading Moderates both before and after the Disruption. [85]

Up in Aberdeen, things seemed, if anything, to be slightly worse if the verdict of Donald Sage is to be accepted. Speaking in general terms of the University as he found it early in the 19th century, he says, 'My attendance at the Aberdeen Hall was of no benefit to me whatsoever; I knew nothing at all of theology or the Bible, nor was I made to know anything of them by my public teachers'. [86] If, however, he finds fault with all his teachers, he singles out for special mention Dr. William Laurence Brown who was Principal of Marischal College, Professor of Divinity, teacher of elocution, and minister of Greyfriars Church: 'I never heard him pronounce even once in his lectures

83 STEWART MECHIE: 'Education for the Ministry in Scotland since the Reformation': Part 1: Contained in 'The Records of the Scottish Church History Society': Vol. 14, Part 2, 1961: p. 121.

84 Carlyle admits that the Professor Divinity in Glasgow, the Rev. William Leechman, was 'a person thoroughly well qualified for the office, of which he gave the most satisfactory proof for a great many years'. J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle': pp. 67-68.

85 STEWART MECHIE: 'Education for the Ministry in Scotland since the Reformation': Part 1: Contained in 'The Records of the Scottish Church History Society': Vol. 14, Part 2, 1961: p. 122
See also: A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 134.

86 DONALD SAGE: 'Memorabilia Domestica': 2nd ed. 1899: p. 170.

during my four years' attendance at the Hall the name of Jesus Christ.' [87]

So far as the northern University was concerned, the gloom does not appear to have been temporary. Moving forward to the 1830's, W. G. Blaikie, then a student in Marischal College, has this to say: 'Some of the professors were of superior attainments, others deficient in the art of teaching, and one knew hardly anything of the proper subject of his chair'. [88] Blaikie further says, 'There was nothing in our Divinity Hall to make our studies attractive and there was no theological enthusiasm among us'. [89] The biographer of James Hamilton, the distinguished minister of Regent Square Church, London, is no more flattering regarding Glasgow's theological staff in the 30's, adding in his criticism some explanation for the unhappy state of affairs: 'In some theological classes a beneficial influence was exerted on the student but in others, if the young men did not educate themselves, they fared the worse. In some cases patronage had filled a chair in accordance with some obscure private connections in flagrant defiance alike of the public opinion and the public good. A person endued with a perennial childishness not very many degrees above absolute imbecility, might, if he gained the patron's favour, be placed in a chair in which he should doze and vegetate for half a century to the unspeakable injury of two generations'. [90] Thus patronage, so distasteful to so many congregations, afflicted the colleges; and not only in this way, because many of the all too rare bursaries for students were in the hands of patrons who disbursed them according to personal whim and not in accordance with need or ability. [91]

87 DONALD SAGE: 'Memorabilia Domestica': 2nd ed. 1899: p. 168.

88 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'Recollections of a busy life': p. 43.

89 Ibid. p. 54.

90 WILLIAM ARNOT: 'Life of James Hamilton': p. 63.

91 Ibid. pp. 67-68.

Most worrying of all, however, in the matter of the divinity students' training, was the fact that until well through the 19th century there was little attempt made at practical training. What we would regard as Practical Theology was not listed among the subjects covered, even inadequately, by the professors charged with the education of the ministry. The Assembly of 1842 suggested that a Pastoral Superintendent might be appointed by the Church within each University. An Overture to the Assembly of 1867 drew attention to the fact that the Church was giving no training in ministerial or practical work to those men who would shortly be her ministers. Two years later, a move was made to involve students in some of the practical work of neighbouring parishes in order to give them first-hand acquaintance with pastoral work, and in 1872 two special lecturers in practical theology were appointed to cover the four Universities. For all that, however, John Macleod of Govan still felt justified in saying in 1896, 'The truth is that at present, strictly speaking, the Church provides no ministerial training; that is to say, the training which she accepts may be merely academic, and it is provided, not by her but by the Universities'. [92]

Macleod himself did considerable pioneering work in this direction in Govan and would have done much more had he not died in 1898 when only 58 years of age. Cameron Lees, minister of St. Giles' Cathedral, invited the Edinburgh students to come to the Moray Aisle each week for lectures in practical matters, [93] but the fact remains that even at the end of the 19th century, divinity students,

92 STEWART MECHIE: 'Education for the Ministry in Scotland since the Reformation': Part 2: Contained in 'The Records of the Scottish Church History Society': Vol. 14, Part 3, 1962: p. 176.

93 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': Appendix 2: p. 453.
Maclean comments thus: 'At that time there was no practical training given in the Divinity Halls, and students were licensed to preach having been taught everything except how to preach and how to set about their work as ministers'.

though more fortunate than their colleagues of 100 years earlier, were still very inadequately prepared for the daily routine of administering a parish. As we think of the newly-ordained man in 1800, our sympathies are indeed with him and with his congregation, and we cannot but marvel that such a one-sided training nevertheless produced so many fine preachers and pastors. At this date in Scotland, even adequate experience in the pulpit was not afforded to the students, as they were not allowed to undertake Pulpit Supply which students to-day find such a valuable training ground. In this regard, a sentence from the biography of James Begg is apposite: 'In Begg's time (he was a student in the 1820's) I believe that a student preaching without licence would have been regarded as guilty of something of the nature of ecclesiastical insubordination'. [94]

So much, then, for what the would-be ministers were taught in those days; in the present day, that would be an end of this particular section of our review. There was, however, a vital factor in ministerial training at the beginning of the 19th century which very effectively would have set at nought even the most efficient and comprehensive training, and this we must at least note as it would seem to indicate a lack of concern on the part of the Church that her future ministers should be adequately trained for their life's work. Further, it might seem to suggest that the students themselves did not take their training very seriously and this in turn might make us wonder if they might not then tend to regard their subsequent ministries equally lightly. I refer to the practice whereby divinity students were permitted to go forward to be licensed even although they might never have attended any classes in any Faculty of Divinity.

In fact, it was not until 1827 that even one term's actual attendance at a Divinity Hall was made a necessary precondition in one seeking to be licensed. Prior to that, the Church recognised what it was pleased to call 'partial attendance' at such Halls over a period of six

94 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Vol. 1, p. 158.

sessions. Just how partial this could be is seen in the report issued in 1830 by the Royal Commission of inquiry into the state of the Universities of Scotland: 'The Church recognises what is termed irregular attendance which is in fact no attendance whatever'. [95] Two actual examples will illustrate the literal truth of this finding. Patrick Brewster was licensed by the Presbytery of Fordoun in 1817 after five incomplete sessions in Edinburgh and one incomplete session in Aberdeen. His idea of 'incomplete' was attendance at one meeting in each session. A similar case was cited by Dr. Andrew Thomson of St. George's in 1826: 'I know a gentleman, who is now a minister of the Church, who taught a school in the country; he came at the beginning of a session, enrolled, paid his fee, got his ticket, walked home and taught his school the whole winter. Then he came back and got his certificate of regular attendance'. [96] In theory, each Presbytery was supposed to supervise the training of such students who resided within its bounds, but in practice this, in many cases, proved a formality also. In passing, it is worth noting that Donald Sage who, as we saw, criticised Dr. Brown most severely, [97] attended only two sessions of that Professor's lectures with anything like regularity, when in fact the course took six sessions to complete. [98] It may be that many a Professor's reputation suffered unjustly at the hands of students who but rarely attended to judge for themselves.

As with the system of pluralities, however, there <u>can</u> be produced some justification for this practice of partial attendance. Bursaries were few and fees were not slight and many a student could not afford the luxury of all-out, full-time study. In addition, the parochial school

95 STEWART MECHIE: 'Education for the Ministry in Scotland since the Reformation': Part 2: Contained in 'The Records of the Scottish Church History Society': Vol. 14, Part 3, 1962: p. 162.

96 Ibid. p. 163.

97 See pp. 28-29.

98 STEWART MECHIE: 'Education for the Ministry in Scotland since the Reformation': Part 2: Contained in 'The Records .....' Part 3, Vol. 14: 1962: p. 165.

system in Scotland would have collapsed overnight if regular attendance at divinity classes had been insisted on. So many divinity students were also parish schoolmasters that the Church, who were of course in direct control of the country's education, were prepared to let the professional education of her future ministers suffer so that the general education of the country might be maintained.

What, then, do we say of the ministers of our country at the beginning of the 19th century? We can take pride in the fact that the Universities recognised them as being the intellectual cream of their former students and depended on them to fill many of their top academic posts. Despite the fact that the Church was failing to provide adequate practical instruction, yet the evidence is that Scotland could boast of having not only its great preachers and pastors but also a considerable army of dedicated men throughout the country quietly doing God's daily work to the best of their ability. It is certainly possible to point to glaring examples of ministerial inefficiency and clerical delinquency; one cannot ignore the bitter party squabbles that existed and which should have no place within any Christian Church; there would no doubt be those ministers, then as now, who regarded their ministerial duties as requiring only a few days in each week, but the fact is that God's work was being done in Scotland. The Gospel was preached, the poor were helped, the sick and dying lovingly ministered to, the schools superintended, and the people instructed and catechised in their own homes. Improvements there could be; changes there would have to be; but as Scotland entered the 19th century, the average minister was, in terms of the age in which he lived, a well-educated man, a busy man, and a conscientious and faithful servant of his God.

C H A P T E R T W O

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THE 19TH CENTURY MINISTER:
THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE MIGHT HOPE
TO SERVE AND INFLUENCE
BOTH THE MEMBERS OF HIS CONGREGATION
AND ALL HIS PARISHIONERS.

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CHAPTER TWO: The 19th century minister: the extent to which he might hope to serve and influence both the members of his congregation and all his parishioners.

'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel'

It is quite possible, of course, for a parish minister to possess all those qualities and attributes which we felt able to detect in the average Scottish clergyman at the beginning of the 19th century - he can be well-educated, industrious, and conscientious - and yet obtain small visible or measurable response from his parishioners as a whole. There are, for example, in our present day vast new housing areas where, despite many years of Herculean labours, the faithful minister can still see only a few hundred souls out of many thousands whose lives are, with any regularity, within the orbit of the Church. So far as the rest are concerned, one is forced to conclude that they would remain uninterested and uninvolved regardless of the worth or work of the Church's local representative.

In our present study, therefore, we must endeavour to trace not only the lines along which a minister's personal work-pattern developed as the 19th century progressed; we must also take stock of how far the whole population was willing to be touched and influenced by what the minister was doing. We must ask to what extent a minister could reasonably expect to enjoy an active relationship with all those who resided within his parish and see how his hold over them either increased or decreased as the years of the century passed, as his own interpretation of his parochial duties altered, and as life as a whole in Scotland took on what we would term 'a more modern look'. In short, we wish to discover whether the average minister attempted or could attempt to be minister to his parish as well as to his congregation, and to see if, in general, the people of Scotland were willing to let any with this double aim succeed.

TOWN AND COUNTRY

Right at the outset, however, we must recognise one great difficulty in reaching any general conclusion on such matters. To all intents and purposes, during the 19th century there were two quite different 'Scotlands'. There was the vast majority of the country, geographically speaking, which was still largely rural and where the way of life and the size and make-up of the population was slow to alter; and there were the industrial areas, centred mainly on Glasgow and Edinburgh, where, throughout the century, the arrival of thousands of immigrants from the country areas created enormous social problems of over-crowding, poverty and disease. The task facing a minister in such circumstances was quite unlike that which his brother minister had to contend with elsewhere in Scotland, and we shall need to examine his particular parochial problems as a separate item.

ORGANISATIONS, CLASSES, AND LECTURES

For much of the 19th century, of course, our present-day framework of week-night organisations within the Church Hall was totally unknown - the Boys' Brigade, for example, was not born until 1883, while the Woman's Guild was a further three years behind. Furthermore, there was not the same need then as now for regular fund-raising to maintain the Churches - in the majority of cases, the money obtaining from endowments and from the local heritors was sufficient to meet requirements - and it was not until the Free Church, newly established after the Disruption of 1843, was faced with the task of paying its ministers and school-teachers, and, at the same time, of erecting new buildings, that ordinary worshippers in Scotland in any large numbers were asked either to dig deep, and with regularity, into their own pockets, or to devise means of persuading non-Churchgoers to part with their money in the Church's cause. This being so, then, the Church, whether in the town or the country, lacked, at the outset of the 19th century, some of the

'weapons' which, in our own day, have proved most successful in involving the parishioners, as distinct from the members of the congregations, in her work.

She had instead to rely almost solely on the desire of the people to join in purely religious activities. First and foremost, of course, this meant that the Church had to depend on the Sunday services drawing the people, but these, early in the 19th century, were increasingly supplemented by week-night classes and lectures, always serious in tone, usually Biblical in theme, and almost invariably conducted by the local minister. Now, viewed from our present position in which it is extremely difficult to persuade the majority of our people to listen to the Church's message when it is undiluted and unadorned by some of the more secular trimmings of modern Church life, we could perhaps say that, in the circumstances prevailing at the beginning of the 19th century, any widespread popular interest in, and close connection with, the Church must reflect credit both on our Scottish ancestors as being inherently devout, and on the ministers who thus won their attention as being obviously both enthusiastic and efficient.

We have already, in the previous chapter, attempted an evaluation of the average minister's devotion to duty, and our findings there do not deny credit in this direction; we will very shortly probe facts and figures that, on the surface at least, indicate a genuine piety on the part of many ordinary men and women; in the meantime, however, we would do well to note certain elements in Scottish life at the beginning of the 19th century which, absent from life to-day, did help create an atmosphere in which the minister's task was made easier than we now know it to be, and in which it was more difficult for a man thoughtlessly to drift away from the Church. (In this, of course, we must state yet again that conditions in the large towns made things there substantially different.)

To begin with, the minister still claimed, as his right, entry to every home in his parish at least once a year to carry out the catechising of the children and the servants; later in our study we will have cause to look

further at this aspect of the minister's life, but it is relevant here to note that his overall bearing of authority and power on these visits helped keep on a firm path those who might have wavered in their allegiance to the Church. The Kirk Sessions, too, though lacking their near dictatorial powers of a century before, still carried considerable weight in a community, and it was a serious business to fall foul of them. Not unimportant was the fact that the Church disbursed the money in the Poor Fund until 1845 and controlled the Schools until 1872, so that it was clearly in an individual's best self-interests to maintain a fairly close connection with the local Church. [1] Most telling of all, however, was the fact that the Church's influence was still sufficiently strong throughout the land to ensure that, on the Lord's Day, even the openly profane could find little to be engaged in unless in the business of the Lord.

We could expect, then, that, in the early years of the 19th century, the average country minister would experience less initial difficulty than does his present-day colleague in gathering regularly a congregation which, in total, might at least come within sight of his parish potential. Nationally, as we see, many circumstances were in his favour, while at the individual domestic level, family prayers each night were still the rule rather than the exception, so that the rising generation was being conditioned to the idea that religion was a necessary and central part of life. Therefore, we are not unduly surprised that John Macdonald could record after his induction to Ferintosh in 1813 that 'with very few exceptions all the

1 Stewart Mechie comments thus: 'So long as the Church retained its control of the poor-relief system and of education, it could not be ignored by any citizen, not even by those who rejected its teaching and separated themselves from its worship and fellowship. Nowadays its influence is so indirect that masses of the population can ignore it'. (STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development: 1780 - 1870': Introduction p. 11.)

parishioners attend the Church'. [2] Likewise, we can understand how Henry Duncan, in so many ways a model country minister, was able to serve all his 1,100 parishioners in Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, without losing touch with even one family; [3] and by the same token we are not too unbelieving when Professor W. Garden Blaikie of the Chair of Apologetics and Pastoral Theology in New College affirms, 'The time was when a simple announcement of the intention to open a Bible Class would be sure to draw together the chief part of those whose presence was desired.' [4]

Two outstanding examples in proof of this last claim may be deemed sufficient. The Rev. Andrew Somerville, in later years the first foreign secretary of the U.P. Church, instituted a series of lectures, some weekly, some monthly, while minister of Dumbarton from 1830-1845. He lectured once a month on Daniel, taking, it seems, two and a half years to arrive at the eleventh chapter, but far from finding the topic or the rate of progress tedious, these lectures 'excited much interest' and 'effectually aroused Dumbarton'. [5] The same man lectured weekly to crowds of 120 on such subjects as 'effectual calling, justification, adoption, and sanctification'. [6] Now these would not be light discourses, nor, we can assume, were his sixteen lectures on 'the Mosaic dispensation as it was set up at Sinai'; [7] yet here again he records that he found no lack of attention in his hearers; rather were they 'unusually riveted'. [8] Not even the knowledge that he concluded each

2 JOHN KENNEDY: 'The Apostle of the North': p. 66.
3 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 38.
4 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'For the work of the ministry': 4th ed. 1885: p. 266.
5 WILLIAM GRAHAM: 'Autobiography of Andrew Somerville': p. 128.
6 Ibid. p. 117.
7 Ibid. p. 118.
8 Ibid. p. 119.

lecture with a searching series of questions directed to his hearers could diminish the attendance.

In the five years prior to the Disruption, the parish of Loudoun in Ayrshire witnessed similar scenes when the minister drew large crowds of the local weavers to his weekly lectures on Geology. [9] His first series saw attendances of 150 with as many again left outside, unable to gain entry to the crowded building. Finding more spacious accommodation, his second series boasted attendances of 600-700. [10] If similar examples could not be quoted from other rural parishes, one would be tempted to dismiss these as exceptional and look for special circumstances prevailing. One could imagine that the crowds in Loudoun were due in large measure to the rare genius of the minister in question who was in fact the young Norman Macleod, later to exercise such a profound ministry in Glasgow's Barony Church. But the fact is that similar stories could be told of many other parishes - Rosneath, for instance, where the elder Story had his crowded lecture-rooms; Ellon, where the young Professor Robertson was likewise successful; Arbirlot under the leadership of Thomas Guthrie; and so on - and we therefore must concede that there was this period in Scotland's history when our forefathers were naturally inclined to take an active interest in whatever the Church might do or organise. Some of their reasons may have been selfish; the lack of feasible alternative occupations for their leisure time would contribute also, but we cannot deny, in the early part of the 19th century, a concern for the Church and its

9 Donald Macleod claims that one of the main reasons that induced his brother to begin such lectures was the hope that thereby he might reach 'the more intelligent of the would-be philosophers, who stood aloof from Christianity'. In a letter to John Mackintosh, following the success of these lectures, Norman Macleod does in fact record with obvious delight that he had seen 'some of the philosophers in Church for the first time'. (DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 75 & p. 105).

10 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd Ed. pp. 104-105.

message more genuinely widespread than anything we witness to-day.

Such popular interest and concern, however, did not remain at this high level the whole century through. If we refer again to the lectures of Professor Blaikie, we find that he traces the crucial change in attitude to the 1870's on the grounds that, in his opinion, the minister had by this time lost that measure of public authority and private influence which could command automatic attention. [11] Both confirmation and explanation of this theory is found in the younger Story's experiences in Rosneath. For over 40 years up to 1859, the Rev. Robert Story ministered to that parish and in the process presided over many series of well-attended lectures. His very able son, later Principal Story, succeeded him and remained there until 1886, and one of the main changes he specifically notes in his own ministry as compared with that of his father is that the appeal of these mid-week lectures in the school-room steadily dwindled despite strenuous efforts to the contrary. [12] The decline was particularly marked in the 1870's, and the younger Story attributes this to the advent of penny papers and cheap magazines, and to the rapid development of the railways which brought the attractions of easier travel. In other words, the ordinary folk of Scotland were by this time being given more opportunity to think for themselves by being able to read views and opinions other than those presented from the pulpit; travel, as it always will, was opening up new horizons to them and introducing them to the differing ways both of the English and the continentals; and the civil authorities had taken away from the Church control of education and certain important aspects of social welfare, with the result that the local Church and its minister did not appear so omnipotent and omniscient as in former days.

11 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'For the work of the ministry': 4th ed. 1885: p. 266.

12 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 44.

One way or another, the average Scot was becoming more independent, more inclined to question and less disposed to abide quietly by tradition. Those willing to study now had access to the new philosophies, many of which were at odds with the doctrine of the Kirk, and Principal Rainy, accepting that the 70's and 80's were the crucial years when the Church significantly began to lose its popular hold, defines this fact as the most important single cause. [13] Those not academically inclined were nevertheless not so willing as in former years to endure week by week the outpourings of the pulpit simply because there was little alternative on offer of a Sunday. It is this point which Cameron Lees, minister of St. Giles' Cathedral, makes with refreshing honesty when, in a letter written in 1907 to Charteris, he says, 'The people, the young men in particular, are neglecting the Church because they find it a bore'. [14] As the century ended, then, the Church and its ordained servants had, even in the remoter country areas, a noticeably

13 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Vol. 1, p. 407.
'Hegelianism stirred currents of thought in Scotland which were sapping both the philosophy of 'common sense' and the theology of Calvinism. Professor Edward Caird was at the height of his influence in the University of Glasgow.....and.....he took many inquiring minds out into new and deep seas - not in all cases piloting them to port'.

14 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 431.
'I am afraid.....that we are in for a time of great apostasy in Scotland. I fear the country is leaving Christ. Sunday is becoming a day of amusement. Fathers and mothers tell me they can't get their lads to go to Church.....I preached in the evening to about 1,000, and most of them - nearly all - were women.'
Principal Story has the same fears when, in a tribute to Mrs. Oliphant written in 1897, he says, 'In these days when agnosticism seems to be thought a kind of distinction even in women.....' THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 288.

harder task in gaining the ear of their parishioners at large. The Church was having to adapt in many ways to meet the changing situation - the blossoming of something akin to our modern-day pattern of organisations was just one development, and at this we shall look later - and its ministers were having, more than formerly, to present their message in both a reasoned and an attractive way; their audiences which 100 years before had been almost automatically in their places before them now had to be won.

In these foregoing comments, we have perhaps concentrated more heavily on the week-night classes and lectures than on the Sunday Services. We did note, certainly, that Macdonald in Ferintosh had no complaints on this latter score.[15] Norman Macleod, too, records that the enthusiasm for his words mid-week was amply repeated each Sunday with 'the Church regularly crowded to suffocation with both stairs and passages occupied',[16] and in Kilmany, such were the crowds, both of parishioners and of visiting strangers, who were anxious to hear the preaching of the 'new' and 'Evangelical' Thomas Chalmers that the windows of the Church were removed to allow those who each week had to stand outside in the churchyard a chance to hear.[17] For all that, however, we must, I think, accept that Sunday attendances in the country areas saw the same general decline towards the end of the century as was noted in connection with the lectures, and for more or less the same reasons.

THE COMMUNION SEASON

What we must look at, however, as a separate item, is that

15 See pp. 37-38.

16 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 82.

17 DONALD MACLEOD: 'St. Giles' Lecture on Thomas Chalmers': 3rd Series: 1882-83: p. 282 of published volume of lectures - 'Scottish Divines'.

religious festival which, in the country districts, brought the whole parish to the Church more successfully than anything else ever did. On the occasion of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, during that period when it was regarded as the high-spot on the calendar, a minister really got a chance to 'get to grips' with his parishioners in a spiritual sense, and this not on the Lord's Day only, but for as much as five days at a stretch. The accepted pattern was that the Sacrament should be celebrated just once each year in each parish, generally in the summer months as much of the ceremony was enacted out of doors, usually in the Churchyard. The fact that each parish was thus 'rationed' as to its sacramental occasions did not, however, mean that the Church members were denied the Sacrament for the other 51 weeks of the year. The custom was that on a parish's communion Sunday, the neighbouring ministers converged on the scene of activity to lend support to their colleague and, in so doing, inevitably closed down their own churches. Such, however, was the appeal of the Sacramental occasion, and of the ongoings associated with it, that very often the people followed their pastors with the result that the more determined could contrive to be at some Communion Service almost every Sunday during the summer.[18] In fact, people walked cheerfully ten or more miles just to be present. Norman Macleod, for example, in his 'Memoirs of a Highland Parish', tells the story of the incredible devotion of a man of 90 who walked 10 miles over pathless hills just to get to the Lord's Table.[19]

Understandably, then, with the Communion an 'open event' for all the neighbouring parishes, the crowds

18 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 50.
A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 30.

19 NORMAN MACLEOD: 'Reminiscences of a Highland Parish': p. 307. 'Old John Cameron, with fourscore-years-and-ten to carry, had walked from Kinloch, ten miles across pathless hills. Other patriarchs, with staff in hand, had come greater distances.'

present could be enormous and quite out of proportion to the particular Church's normal membership. At Grandtully, in Perthshire, for example, 5,000 attended Communion in 1841 and 'hardly an individual moved' in the five hours that the main service lasted.[20] At one communion in Uig in Lewis, the crowd was put at 9,000,[21] and A. J. Campbell cites records of as many as 10,000 attending in a parish where the total population normally was only 1,000.[22] It was the custom, wherever possible, to have a famous preacher among the ministerial guests officiating, and this often served to accentuate further the problems of crowd control. In Aberdeen Gaelic Chapel, for instance, John Macdonald, the Apostle of the North, was the guest preacher at the Communion Season for a period of almost 20 years, and each time he was there the Church was so crowded that the minister usually had to find his way to the pulpit by climbing over the seats.[23]

Clearly, then, the parish minister was annually presented with a golden opportunity of impressing his people with the compelling relevance of the claims of the Gospel. Rightly handled, such occasions could have made a profound impact on many lives, always provided that the mood throughout was reverent and the conduct of both clergy and people seemly. Certainly there is abundant evidence to prove that the clergymen did not spare themselves physically. Writing of his father's ministry, the younger Story describes in graphic detail what the Communion Sunday could be like in the early part of the 19th century: 'It was a point of honour, in which each parish tried to

20 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th ed. p. 34.

21 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 85.

22 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 30.

23 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'The Churches of Aberdeen': p. 189, column 2.

rival its neighbour, that the Communion Services should be prolonged as much as possible, and it was by no means rare that, beginning at 11 a.m., they should drag their slow length along till 6 or 7 in the evening. While the Communicants were receiving the Sacrament at successive tables in the Church, the people outside clustered round the 'tent' in the Churchyard and listened to protracted preachings, one minister rising as soon as another sat down exhausted with as dauntless a devotion as that of Knight or Squire in the 'desperate ring' at Flodden.' [24]

The 'tent' was an erection looking rather like a cross between a bathing hut [25] and a sentry box [26] which afforded some protection from the elements for the officiating ministers, and as we see, it was well used by reason of the fact that, despite the vast crowds attending at Communion time, the actual numbers taking the bread and wine were normally very small. In the preliminary preaching which preceded the actual Sacrament, the Table was 'fenced', with those present being warned of the sin of going to the Table if their lives and conduct were unworthy. In the Highlands, particularly, this was so insisted on that the Sacrament came to be regarded not as a means of grace but as a 'mark of high spiritual attainment'. [27] So high could the 'fence' be in places that, as is remarked in the biography of Cameron Lees, 'The success of a preacher of the Gospel was judged not by the number he brought to the Holy Table, but by the number whose consciences were so touched that they had not the heart to come forward'. [28]

24 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the life of the Rev. Robert Story': pp. 50-51.

25 Ibid. p. 51.

26 ROBERT MACKENZIE: 'John Brown of Haddington': Paperback edition, 1964: p. 15.

27 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': p. 112.

28 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The life of James Cameron Lees': p. 67.

Roderick Macleod, inducted to Bracadale in 1823, was one of the acknowledged experts in this inasmuch as, out of a population of 1,800, almost all of whom attended at the Communion celebrations, only 8 were actual communicants.[29] His views on baptism were similarly strict and appeal was made to the Presbytery as the number of unbaptised children in the parish rose. The case dragged on for 20 years, but it did not prevent him becoming Moderator of the Free Church Assembly.[30] At the same time as Roderick Macleod was thus successfully 'fencing' the Table in Skye, another of the Macleod clan - Alexander - was doing much the same thing in Uig in Lewis. He was so pained at 'the deplorable spiritual ignorance of his people' that it was not until his third year in the parish that he authorised the first celebration of the Lord's Supper; even then there were only five communicants 'and at them the vast congregation looked on in dumb amazement'.[31] Neither Macleod, however, could quite equal the record of the incumbent in Duirinish where, from 1829-1840, communion was totally withheld on the grounds that there were no parishioners worthy of it. One parishioner is on record as saying 'If you had asked me to commit the greatest sin, you could not have frightened me half so much as by inviting me to sit at the Table of the Lord'.[32]

In parts of the north, too, the 'fence' was substantially re-inforced by the supervisory activities of 'The Men'. Sprung from the peasantry, these were austere, rigid, fanatical laymen who were venerated for their Godliness and who asserted power over minister and people alike. Under their spiritual tyranny, all poetry and music, all the arts and fancies of the Highland mind, were banished

29 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 1st ed. Volume 1, pp. 159-160.

30 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostle of the North': pp. 117-118, 120-121.

31 Ibid. pp. 81-83.

32 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 1st ed. Volume 1, p. 160.

as unclean. They organised Sunday night meetings in the homes of the people to make sure the day's sermons had been listened to and understood; they conducted the Friday Question meetings in the week of Communion, and, most important of all for this present theme, no one could partake of the bread and wine without their approval.[33]

Yet, all through the rural areas of Scotland, the men and women flocked to any Communion festival that was within reach. The ministers might not allow them within the Church or near the Table; the people themselves might very genuinely feel themselves unworthy of the Sacrament; yet they came and for five or more hours sat in the open air listening to a solid diet of preaching. It is only natural that we should wonder why. We know in the present day that the Communion Sunday does generally see a larger than normal attendance at Church, but there is nothing approaching the parish-wide interest on this day which the beginning of the last century saw, and those that come do so to partake fully in the Sacrament and not to watch. Where, then, lies the explanation of the events we have recounted? To begin with, we must accept that there was a real devotion and sincerity on the part of many of those who travelled long distances to be at the Sacrament. Much of it may have been tinged with superstition and fear; the ministers may have exercised a firm hold over many of their people that made them feel bound to attend; again, the lack of other amusements of a Sunday may have played a sizeable part, but devotion there certainly was in fair measure, and the long orations of the various ministers would not by any means all fall on indifferent ears.

For all that, however, part of the answer does lie in realising fully what we have already outlined, namely the fact that the Communion was not merely a one-day event; nor, as we shall shortly see, was it solely a religious

33 JOHN MACINNES: 'The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland': p. 211 ff.
JOHN MACKAY: 'The Church in the Highlands': pp. 216-219.

festival. Things began to happen on the Thursday prior to Communion Sunday when there would be at least two services. Friday was reserved for the day of questioning while Saturday again would have at least a further two diets of worship. We know already something of Sunday's marathon, and the whole affair was rounded off with a further two services on the Monday. Now even the preaching 'giants' of last century, in full training for the occasion, could not make two services occupy a whole day, and so, with attendances at the Thursday meetings usually sparse, there tended to be a holiday, almost a carnival-like, atmosphere about the place. To quote Story again, 'The religious exercises were varied by a good deal of eating and drinking, whether in the open-air or in the nearest public houses. An old clergyman of a parish near Rosneath used to remark with pride when an extra gathering attended his communion, 'It was a creditable crood; there was fourteen stane o' saumon eaten in the village.'[34] Life in Scotland in the early years of last century could be grim and drab, and it is little wonder that, with the Communion seasons offering a rare combination of religion and excitement, of sacred and secular, they were very popular.

We might disapprove of the unlikely combinations of events that were accepted under the umbrella of this High and Holy Feast; we could scarcely be sorry that the century saw many changes in this sphere, but there was here provided to the Church the priceless opportunity of reaching vast crowds of the ordinary people with the message of Christ, and to their credit, the ministers did not spare themselves. At the same time, however, it would be less than truthful to give the impression that the clergy treated the Sacramental Seasons as occasions for unremitting hard labour devoid totally of their lighter moments. In particular, the officiating clergy traditionally had a dinner on the Monday to mark the termination of that

34 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 51.

week-end's labours, and on occasion this dinner might not seem to us to have been the seemly end to a solemn religious festival. One in Argyllshire in the second decade of the 19th century carries this report: 'We drank, roared and sang, fired our grapeshot (nothing less than royal port), and bumpered every young lady in the country. About 8 in the evening, some were sick and others were groaning.' [35]

As we have already remarked, the 19th century was to see considerable change in the accepted Sacramental pattern. The changes were in two main directions. First, the individual communion seasons were gradually curtailed to exclude the Thursday and the Monday services, and second, there was a growing feeling that the Sacrament should be celebrated not once only each year on a grand scale, but several times each year with less attention to sheer size and length. This latter alteration was naturally more easily implemented in the towns than in the country areas where the parishioners had further to travel to get to Church, and where in any case radical change in something so sacred was more stubbornly resisted. So, for instance, as early as 1829 John Brown celebrated Communion every two months in Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh, and publicly advocated a weekly Sacrament. [36] Nevertheless, things were moving in the country parishes also, and the elder Story, before his death in 1859 had succeeded in introducing, first of all a second Communion Service in the year, and then a third. [37] Before his son left the parish in 1886, the total was further boosted to four per year. [38] Slowest to accept change, of course, were the true Highland areas, and

35 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the life of the Rev. Robert Story': pp. 51-52.

36 JOHN CAIRNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Brown of Broughton Place': p. 129.

37 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 68.

38 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 35.

even to-day we know that the process is not complete in that there are still those who feel that the Table is only for the few. Despite this, however, no less a figure than Donald John Martin of Stornoway took this stand in the 1880's: 'I would rather have one hundred at the Table who should not have been there than that one soul should be debarred whom Christ invited.' [39]

There was, then, throughout Scotland a definite and increasingly pronounced wind of change blowing through the practices and customs associated with the celebration of Holy Communion. Broadly speaking, we can trace three main reasons for the changes coming when they did. Firstly, we must recognise the effect of Robert Burns' poem, 'The Holy Fair'. This scathing indictment of the abuses of the Sacramental occasion was widely discussed and it most certainly encouraged a frank analysis by people and ministers alike of practices long accepted as hallowed. Secondly, just as we noted that the ordinary man and woman began to tire of the parish lecture and to turn elsewhere for information and recreation, so the people of Scotland unquestionably began to lose their enthusiasm for the protracted preachings spread over several days which made up the Sacramental Season. So, by the 1860's the Thursday and Monday services were universally so poorly attended that they were fairly generally omitted. These days, by this time, had come to be regarded by the people as holidays 'of the most secular sort' ideally useful for 'visiting their friends and generally amusing themselves'. [40] Incidentally, sacrificed along with the Monday services was the Monday dinner, and in its place was substituted a much more dignified and seemly Sunday lunch in the Manse. [41] The people were finding other interests and other sources of excitement, entertainment and education, and the ministers could not

39 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': p. 113.

40 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 39.

41 Ibid. pp. 38-39.

hope to maintain, on the former scale, wide popular interest in five days of open-air preaching. Thirdly, however, it must be pointed out in fairness that the Church did not consent to make changes only because of lapsed public interest. Many of the ministers were actually in advance of their parishioners in advocating change, realising that Burns and his fellow critics were in many respects justified, and accepting that the Church would have to adapt its approach to suit the changing attitudes and abilities of the people.

Summing up, then, we can say that the average country minister in 19th century Scotland, busily and efficiently attending to the duties expected of him, was able, in some places for as much as the first 70 years of the century, to be minister to his parish as well as to his congregation. In some cases indeed, his regular congregation would virtually comprise the whole body of his parishioners; elsewhere, he could count on near parish-wide attendance on special occasions, and he would be aware of genuine parish-wide interest in any public work that he might undertake. In the last quarter of the century, however, for the reasons we have already noted, he had to contend more and more with competing forces, and it became steadily more of a struggle to hold the ear of all the people when so many other 'voices' were clamouring for their time and attention. (In our study so far, we have of course been concentrating on the purely 'religious' functions of the minister and on how the people as a whole responded to these; in later chapters we will look in detail at the other community services the minister very frequently was able to render - service in providing parish libraries, savings banks, and even medical attention, for example - and we shall see then the very valuable hold this could give him over his people.)

THE INDUSTRIAL PARISH

Turning now to the industrial areas of Scotland and to our assertion that their parish ministers, throughout the whole of the 19th century, were confronted with several very

sizeable difficulties which were totally unknown to their country colleagues, we can perhaps best begin by noting one very basic difference between the two sets of clergymen in regard to their pastor-people relationship which was clearly recognised as early as 1797. In that year, Dr. Stevenson MacGill, later to be Professor of Divinity in Glasgow University, was inducted to Glasgow's Tron Church from the parish of Eastwood on the outskirts of the city, and one of the points his biographer, Robert Burns of Paisley, fairly makes relative to the change of sphere is this: 'In a country charge, the people of the parish and the members of the congregation are generally speaking one, and the labours of the clergyman through the week are thus concentrated on those families whom he addresses from the pulpit on the Sabbath. It is different in a large town, where, from obvious circumstances, it is impossible to identify the two; and hence it is that the minister of a city parish becomes, almost by necessity, a pluralist; he has a large parish over whose ecclesiastical interests he must preside.....and whose families he must catechise and visit; in addition, he has a congregation which may or may not be gathered from the parochial locality and yet whose families he must make himself acquainted with by personal visitation if he desires to be really a useful minister to them'. [42] This 'double-task', frequently too large for one man, even with an assistant, adequately to accomplish, ever posed a problem, as indeed it still does to-day in our city-centre charges, and the over-burdened minister was in the position of having to choose to neglect either his congregation or his parish; we cannot be surprised that, in the vast majority of cases, it appears that the parishioners were the losers. Professor Charteris certainly felt this to be the general situation when, commenting in 1870 on the large number of Glaswegians who never attended Church, he said, 'What are the ministers doing? They are incessantly engaged all the hours of the day and many of the night in keeping their

42 ROBERT BURNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Stevenson MacGill': pp. 39-40.

congregations together, for it is considered that those who attend his church are a minister's stock-in-trade and that he must 'mind his business'. [43]

We might feel free to criticise such an outlook more strongly if it were not for a second main point of difference we must consider when comparing the work of town and country ministers. In the early part of the 19th century, the towns of Scotland did not possess sufficient church buildings or sufficient seats within their buildings to house the rapidly expanding population. Now generally speaking, the country areas were adequately provided for in this regard even if, as the historian Cunningham says, some of the churches were in poor condition. He in fact speaks of roofs in daily danger of collapse and of too many churches still with earthen floors and no seating; [44] there were even parishes in the western highlands where there had been no church since the Reformation. [45] Nevertheless, the country areas could, by and large, boast Church accommodation adequate for the population's needs, even if the whole population was regularly to attend worship. The situation in the towns, however, was very different. When Chalmers went to the Tron in Glasgow in 1816, for example, the population of Glasgow was three times what it had been thirty years earlier, yet there had been no new church built. [46] So far as Edinburgh was concerned, the Government Commission of 1838 reported that there was room then for only 48% of the population within the existing churches. [47] The ministers, then, feeling a natural responsibility to those who attended their Churches Sunday by Sunday, and finding the duties

43 REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': pp. 214-215.

44 JOHN CUNNINGHAM: 'The Church History of Scotland': 2nd ed. Volume 2, p. 419.

45 Ibid. pp. 419-420.

46 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 177.

47 Ibid. p. 216.

involved in this more than sufficient for the other six days of the week, can not too hastily be condemned for failing to launch massive missions within their parish areas especially if their Church buildings were already comfortably filled with their 'gathered' congregations.

What was undeniably needed in the 19th century, then, was additional Church building projects whereby town parishes could be reduced to manageable proportions and where the ministers would be able to build up an active relationship with both parish and congregation. Because, however, our present study is concerned with the individual parish minister's response to the problems facing him and not with national Church policy, we must leave to one side any detailed survey of the way the Church extension programme was undertaken. It is sufficient to note that two factors - the drive of Chalmers and his Church Extension Committee, and the formation of the Free Church - brought about the provision, by the early 1850's, of one third more Church accommodation than was needed for the whole of Scotland's population. [48] Between 1835 and 1841, Chalmers' committee had 222 new churches opened, [49] while in the first two years of the Free Church's existence, no less than 500 new buildings were dedicated. [50]

One point emerging from all this, however, is very relevant to any study of the town minister's work and relationship with his people. We might accept that, with too few men and too few churches, there would inevitably be those within each parish whom the minister could not properly reach and who would remain outwith the Church. What is disturbing, however, is the fact that the vast majority of

48 J. R. FLEMING: 'A history of the Church in Scotland: 1843-1929': Volume 1, p. 105.

49 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, Apostle of Union': p. 82.

50 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland: 1843-1929': Volume 1, p. 65.
By the Assembly of 1848, the number of completed buildings had risen to over 700.

those who were thus outwith the Church belonged to one class of town-dweller, namely the poor. Three examples from the 1830's illustrate this very clearly. In this period, Robert McCheyne carried out a survey in two poorer areas of Edinburgh, the Lawnmarket and the Canongate, and discovered that less than one in seven of the inhabitants had any active Church connection. [51] Thomas Guthrie, coming to the similarly poor parish of Old Greyfriars as colleague to Mr. Sym in 1837, found that in the first 150 homes he visited, there were not as many as five people in regular attendance at any House of God. [52] In Glasgow, in a survey carried out during the building of Cambridge Street U.P. Church, it was shown that only 5% of the inhabitants of the Port Dundas area of the city went to any Church. [53] We find a similar situation, and at the same time see underlined the dilemma facing the gifted town minister of the period, when we look at the ministry of Thomas Chalmers in the new St. John's Church in Glasgow. Moving to this charge from the Tron in 1819, Chalmers regularly preached to crowded congregations; St. John's quickly became one of the wealthiest and most prosperous churches in the country; [54] and yet in its parish area, more than one in three of the adult population had not even a nominal connection with any Church, [55] while in the parishioners' homes stark poverty was an everyday reality. Chalmers' personality and preaching commanded a large congregation, but it was made up, almost entirely, of the wealthier classes who travelled

51 ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': pp. 42-43.

52 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1: p. 196.

53 JAMES BROWN: 'Life of John Eadie': p. 66-67.

54 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 183.

55 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, Apostle of Union': p. 42.
There were 2,161 families in the parish, and 845 of these had no seat in any place of worship. 'Even such a figure gives no adequate idea of the extent to which church-going habits had been relinquished'.

considerable distances to attend St. John's. The people around the church doors would never have benefited from his ministry without a conscious drive by Chalmers to include them in his plans.

There was, then, this considerable gulf between the poorer classes and the Church. What, we must ask, was the cause? Norman Macleod, in his ministry in Loudoun, said that, in the years before his induction, the Church was regarded by the poorer people as being 'Tory, aristocracy, and middle-class farmer', [56] and that the popular heroes hitherto had been Tom Paine and Robert Burns; and it may well be that, in the towns, with the poorer classes condemned to live in hopeless overcrowding and in thoroughly insanitary conditions, an atmosphere of revolt was present that showed itself in opposition to the Church which was regarded as middle and upper class. Again, while Church offerings were not, as we remarked earlier, a regular burden on the worshipper in the early part of the century, there were other items of expenditure which most certainly kept the poorer people from Church. It was Thomas Guthrie who remarked, 'You cannot ask one to go to the City Chamberlain and pay 6/- for a seat who would bless you for six pennies to buy meal for his children'. [57] Seat rents were high, and this, together with the expensive mode of dress deemed necessary for attendance at Church, meant that many who might have wished to go to worship felt debarred.

It must be admitted, however, that the parish ministers themselves were all too often not without blame so far as the absence of the poor from their Churches was concerned. They were admittedly overworked; they had their congregational responsibilities to fulfil; but too many shrank from the distasteful business of visiting the

56 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 198.

57 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1; p. 367.

poor in their wretched homes; too few were willing to risk losing their wealthier 'gathered' congregation by seeking to draw in those who were so unequal socially. James Begg, minister of Newington Free Church, was one who did undertake vigorous work in this direction; one of his visits is vividly described in a letter published in 1849: 'We plunged into a black opening more like the mouth of a coalpit than the entrance to human habitations; we were almost knocked down by the horrid vapour by which we were assailed; the population of the ruinous tenement was greater than that of a considerable country village, and these human beings were in far more uncomfortable and wretched circumstances than any sensible farmer's cattle'. [58] Such were the conditions the ministers of Edinburgh faced, and Glasgow was, if anything, even worse. Little wonder, then, that there were ministers of the sort described here by Thomas Guthrie: unwilling to enter the closes of his people, his only concession to their existence came once a year when 'he went to the mouth of each close, uncovered his head, raised his gloved right hand, and asked a divine blessing on the inhabitants.' [59]

We can understand such behaviour but quite clearly we can not condone it. What, therefore, was needed, in addition to increased accommodation and man-power in such areas, was for special provision to be made within the existing churches to allow the poorer parishioners to attend without expense or embarrassment. Further, there was a clear need for the Church, nationally and through its parish ministers, to work actively for the dramatic improvement of the conditions under which the poor had to live.

THE CHURCH AND THE POOR: SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICES

Thomas Chalmers was perhaps the first really to make a move

58 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Vol. 2; pp. 130-1.

59 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1; p. 369

to make the Church easily available for the poor by introducing in St. John's a third Sunday service, in the evening, which was to be attended only by the poor.[60] Thomas Guthrie followed the same line of approach and, while colleague in Old Greyfriars, he regularly conducted Sunday afternoon services in the Magdalene Chapel in the Canongate where the poor parishioners got in first and free of charge, and where passers-by witnessed the rare spectacle of the richer citizens being willing to queue outside and take any places that remained.[61] Moving to the newly opened St. John's Church in Edinburgh in 1840, Guthrie went even further in that all the seats in the area of the Church were reserved free for parishioners.[62] The success of this move was remarkable. All 650 seats were regularly occupied by the very parishioners Guthrie had hoped to attract; more than that, many unable to find a place, got in where they could and it was quite normal for many worshippers to clamber up and sit on the roof around the ventilating apertures. They could not possibly see the service in progress; their 'pews' were rough planks laid across the rafters; the air they breathed was foul; yet week by week they came, eager to hear the preacher who so obviously cared for them.[63]

The minister who is most noted for his determination to take the Church to the poor and bring the poor to the Church is Norman Macleod. In Loudoun, where, as we saw, he drew crowds of the ordinary people to his mid-week lectures, he established an evening service for those who 'excused themselves from going to Church at the ordinary

60 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 183.

61 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd Ed. Volume 1: p. 189. 'The gold ring and the goodly apparel were at a discount with us where the respectable stood in the passages, and the poorest of the poor occupied the pews'.

62 Ibid. p. 388. The gallery, with 350 sittings, was let to applicants from all parts of the city.

63 Ibid. p. 388.

hour on account of having no suitable clothing'. [64] Moving to Dalkeith in 1843, he found there nearly thirty parishioners who genuinely lacked attire fit for the Church and set up a fund to provide clothes for them. [65] In the Barony Church, Glasgow, where he ministered from 1851 to 1872, he was able to involve the poor of his parish in the life of the Church to an extent never before seen. In 1857 he began special evening services where none were admitted except they were in working clothes. So insistent was he on this that he had a 'posse of elders' stationed at the Church door with instructions to turn back anyone showing any signs of respectability. [66] The success of this move was seen in the fact that 'the pews were filled with men in fustian jackets and women, bareheaded, or with an old shawl drawn over their head, and dressed, most of them, in short gown and petticoat.' [67] Macleod was never in favour of segregating worshippers according to wealth and social position; it was a theory which he thoroughly deplored; he adopted it, however, as a necessary short-term measure to overcome the problem that existed. So the Barony became not only a crowded preaching-station to which the well-to-do willingly travelled, it became a parish Church where all were welcome irrespective of wealth or dress or position. So, as the century progressed, the individual churches and their ministers began to grapple

64 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 74.

65 Ibid. 1st ed. Volume 1; pp. 229-230.

66 Ibid. 2nd ed. p. 262.
Donald Macleod quotes an English newspaper's report of one of these evening services. The reporter had to dress up in suitably dirty looking working clothes, and even then he was worried that the elders on duty might recognise him or see that his hair was suspiciously tidy. He comments with some surprise that 'none of the seat cushions were removed; no, nor the pew Bibles or Psalm books, a plain proof that, by the test of several years, the poor could be trusted'.

67 Ibid. p. 261.

seriously with this problem which for too long had been lying ignored on their very doorsteps. Chalmers was the first to act; Guthrie followed his lead; Macleod set a whole new standard in parochial care and concern, and others, notably James Begg and A. H. Charteris, continued to urge that no man should be denied the right to worship God within his local church whatever his wealth or station in life. Charteris in fact had notable success in this regard in the Tolbooth Church in Edinburgh. While Professor of Biblical Criticism in Edinburgh University, he took over the running of this ailing Church which was in a poor area and very poorly attended. Assisted by divinity students, he established evening services on Macleod's pattern to which only people in moleskins and working clothes or with shawls over their heads instead of bonnets were admitted.[68] What is perhaps most encouraging in this developing side of the Church's work is the fact that lasting benefits did seem to come as a result of these special services arranged for those hitherto neglected by the Church. The police in Glasgow, for instance, reported that not infrequently well-known thieves were present to hear Macleod in the Barony[69] and they willingly attested that many hundreds of lives were, through his services, 'reclaimed from lawless habits'.[70] Little wonder that Macleod could boast, 'I do not envy Wellington at Waterloo'.[71]

THE CHURCH AND THE POOR: HOUSING CONDITIONS

Up to this point, we have concentrated almost solely on those moves which individual ministers made to involve

68 REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': p. 162.

69 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 261.

70 Ibid. p. 264.

71 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 200. Macleod left this note in his journal: 'By God's mercy I have crammed the church with people in working clothes. This is grand. I do not envy Wellington at Waterloo'.

their poorer parishioners in the life of the Church in regard to the Sunday services of worship. Clearly, however, much more needed to be done if the Church was to gain the ear and the confidence of this section of society on any large and continuing scale. A belated interest in their spiritual welfare, without a corresponding active concern for their physical and material welfare, could only go so far in convincing them that the Church was in earnest about its claim to care for all. In the long term, of course, what was needed more than anything else was a dramatic improvement in the housing conditions of the poor, while in the short term, consideration had to be given to providing wholesome activities for the leisure time of the working classes.

On the matter of housing, we could well imagine that we are again taken into the realm of national Church policy and therefore outwith the scope of our present enquiry. This, however, is not the whole story. Certainly, the General Assemblies did become more active in their drive to see housing improved - the Church of Scotland, for example, appointed a Commission on the Religious Condition of the People in 1891, and its reports dealt, among other things, with poverty and housing; [72] - certainly, too, the nationwide activities of such prominent Churchmen as James Begg and W. G. Blaikie cannot be underestimated - Begg took a leading part in the formation of the Edinburgh Co-operative Building Society in 1861, he

72 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': 1843-1929; Volume 2; p. 177.
The Commission sat for six years under the chairmanship of Dr. Marshall Lang and visited all parts of the country. Its final report, published in 1896, covered many topics - the state of the mining population, the fishing industry, farm labour, poverty and housing, intemperance, Sunday work etc. In 1892, Glasgow Presbytery of the Church of Scotland had appointed a Commission on the Housing of the Poor which 'did good work in at least calling attention to a crying necessity'.

persuaded the Government to include a question in the census of that year asking the number of apartments in each house, [73] and he never ceased to publicise facts and figures showing appalling overcrowding with as many as seven and eight adults regularly living in one single room. [74] Blaikie published a book entitled 'Better conditions for the working classes', and this sold in vast numbers and became a standard work on the subject. The fact is, however, that individual parishes, through the drive and dedication of their ministers, were able to show the way in practical help and accomplish a very great deal despite obviously limited financial resources. For example, the Rev. William McKenzie, minister of North Leith Free Church following the Disruption, was the first to involve a local Church in the sphere of house building, erecting for the poor 8-10 houses 'of a superior kind'. [75] Then, in the neighbouring charge of Pilrig Free Church, W. G. Blaikie developed this idea and built his first row of cottages in Leith Walk in 1849, completing a fourth and final row in 1862. In all, Blaikie superintended the erection of 62 dwellings, costing £7,000 and let at an average annual rental of £7. [76] The individual churches,

73 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 2, p. 324. Answers to this question revealed that in Scotland there were 226,723 houses which had only one room, 7,964 of these being windowless, while in Edinburgh there were 121 families living in single rooms without windows, and 13,209 families - say 50,000 persons - living in houses of one apartment with a window. (These and other figures are quoted by J. R. FLEMING in 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, p. 152.)

74 Begg frequently told of the street in Hawick where there were 42 single apartments each 12 feet by 14 feet housing a total of 347 people; that is, there was an average of 8 people to each. (THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 2, p. 285.)

75 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'Recollections of a busy life': p. 156.

76 Ibid. p. 158.

then, proved that even in the face of a national problem of mammoth proportions, much could be done where there was a real concern for the welfare of those who were in their spiritual care.

THE CHURCH AND THE POOR: LEISURE ACTIVITIES

If, however, it was scarcely possible for many individual churches to effect large-scale improvements in the costly matter of housing, we might imagine that it was a very much easier business for ministers and Kirk Sessions to provide attractive accommodation and worthwhile activities for their poorer parishioners' enjoyment in their leisure time. Quite understandably, with conditions in their homes made intolerable through squalor and overcrowding, they spent no longer in them than was absolutely necessary. In the early years of the 19th century, however, their only refuge outwith the walls of their homes was in the numerous public houses which the towns possessed. Concerts were few and far between; during the two winters which Alexander Carlyle spent as a student in Glasgow (1743-45), that town had only one concert, [77] and even as late as 1870, Edinburgh had only two concerts in a full year. [78] In any case, additional concerts would scarcely have provided the poorer classes with the kind of entertainment they would have enjoyed. There were, too, occasional public lectures, organised mainly by the Churches, but the men and women from the slum tenements scarcely saw in these the haven in which to spend their free time. The result was that the public houses enjoyed a virtual monopoly so far as the poorer classes' leisure hours were concerned.

With the Church, however, becoming more and

77 J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle': p. 75.
The concert was given by Walter Scott of Harden, a noted violinist; 'his band of assistants consisted of two dancing-school fiddlers and the town-waits'.

78 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The life of Alexander Whyte': p. 175.

more alive to its responsibilities to this section of society, this was clearly a situation that could not be allowed to continue. There were, however, three very considerable problems that any individual minister determined to effect a change had to face. First, there was the fact that suitable Church Hall accommodation in which to establish anything in the way of a club to act as a counter-attraction to the pubs was almost entirely lacking. Secondly, and hand in hand with this, there was no established network of week-night activities which could be expanded or adapted to appeal to those whose second home was the public house; as we saw, it was into the last quarter of the 19th century before the organisation-structure as we know it to-day began to appear. And finally, the public houses, and the wares they sold, had a vice-like grip on the working classes in the towns. In Glasgow and Edinburgh in the 1830's, there was on average one licence to every 14 or 15 homes, with one quarter of the working classes' earnings going to the licensees; in Cleland's statistics of Glasgow, dealing with the year 1840, we read that '30,000 people in Glasgow are drunk every Saturday night', and not just drunk, but 'in a brutal state of intoxication'. [79] Thomas Guthrie, visiting the parishioners of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh, in the 1830's reckoned that nine-tenths of the poverty, wretchedness, and Sabbath breaking that he found was traceable to 'that detestable vice of drunkenness'. [80]

Little wonder, then, that Guthrie was one of the pioneers in seeking to provide, through the local churches, worthwhile alternative attractions which might weaken the hold of the public house. To this end he patronised, in 1855, a series of cheap concerts on Saturday evenings in which singers, pianists and violinists sought to provide healthy entertainment for those who would never

79 These and other facts and figures covering many areas of Scotland are quoted by STEWART MECHIE in 'The Church and Scottish Social Development', 1780-1870; p. 84.

80 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 260.

have considered going to one of the infrequent orchestral concerts in the city.[81] Determined to cast his net still wider, however, he established working men's clubs which were virtually public houses without drink; that is, they offered all the attractions of the public house - comradeship, warmth and a spaciousness beyond anything the people's homes could provide - but without the drunken aftermath.[82] Norman Macleod worked on the same principle in Glasgow where he established a most successful refreshment room - the first of several in the city - where, in alcohol-free surroundings, working men could get food, well-cooked, at cheap prices, and where in addition there was a comfortable reading-room.[83] A similarly successful venture was launched by Charteris in the Tolbooth Parish in Edinburgh where the 'Holly Tree', offering tea, coffee, a reading-room and a games room, was more than a home from home for the inhabitants of the Lawnmarket,[84] and where as many as 400 customers could be counted in a single day.[85] In the 1880's, Donald John Martin took this idea to Stornoway, only with the added 'bonus' that his coffee shops were opened in what had been the area's two pubs - Martin had bought the property at his own expense.[86]

81 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 280.

82 Ibid. p. 280.

83 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 232.

84 REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': p. 165.

85 Ibid. p. 167.

86 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': pp. 97-99.
One notable failure in this field was W. G. Blaikie who, in the parish of Pilrig near Edinburgh, tried to establish a working men's club with newspapers, games etc. provided; it was not a success. (W. G. BLAIKIE: 'Recollections of a busy life': p. 159.)

So the first and third of the three problems as outlined above were being tackled by individual ministers with no small measure of success. At a later point in our study we shall take note of the activities of those clergymen whose authority locally was such that they had many public houses within their parish bounds closed down; we shall also glance briefly at the growth of the Temperance movement; but for the present we simply note with satisfaction that, without recourse to prohibition, without even a self-imposed policy of total abstinence, ministers and their Kirk Sessions were now showing not only a willingness but a determination to compete with the public houses for those men and women whom they had almost entirely neglected just a few years before.

Turning now to the second problem we mentioned, namely the lack during much of the 19th century of any established pattern of week-night activities centred on the parish Church in which the poorer parishioners might take part, we need make mention at this point of only one specific development. We are presently concerned with noting the means whereby individual ministers were able to establish closer contact with their poorer parishioners who had hitherto ignored, and been ignored by, their local churches; we need not therefore embark on all-embracing surveys of those week-night activities which, for a wide variety of reasons and to meet different needs, appeared on almost a national scale before the 19th century ended. What is very relevant for our present study, however, is the emergence of certain special mid-week classes held within the Church premises in which the poor and uneducated parishioners were offered training in the basic disciplines and skills necessary to assist them to raise their standards of life to a higher level.

These classes - the forerunner of modern further education schemes - were designed solely for that section of society whose position, relative to the Church, we are considering. Prominent in organising these classes were James Begg, two of the Robertson brothers, and Norman Macleod. Begg, minister of the Middle Church, Paisley,

from 1831 to 1835, detailed one of his missionary assistants to conduct evening classes in English, reading, writing and arithmetic.[87] William Robertson, minister of Irvine U.P. Church from 1843 to 1886, and his elder brother James, minister of Newington, Edinburgh, had teams of office-bearers and members of their congregations carrying out similar work,[88] while Norman Macleod, with classes of over 200 enrolled, had a staff of fully certificated teachers. In these classes, 'the interesting spectacle was presented of grown-up men and women, many of them married, patiently toiling at different standards from the alphabet upwards'.[89]

THE CHURCH AND THE POOR: SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN

At the same time as these 'crash courses' were being very successfully introduced for the adult population of the towns' poorer quarters, individual churches and their ministers were taking steps to provide systematic education for the children of these areas who otherwise might well have grown up no better equipped to succeed in life than were their parents. It had of course been the great aim of the Reformers that each parish should have its school and that all children should attend. In the towns in the early 19th century, however, this aim was far from being realised. The rapid increase in the number of children to be catered for, due to the great influx of families from the country areas, created its own problems, while the situation was made considerably worse by the fact that many of the working class parents showed little interest in whether their children were educated or not, expressing themselves unable or unwilling to pay the necessary school fees.

87 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 1, p. 254.

88 ARTHUR GUTHRIE: 'Robertson of Irvine': 3rd ed. p. 89.
Anon. 'James Robertson of Newington': p. 119.

89 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. pp. 231-232.
'Schools of a similar nature had been attempted before, but had failed from insufficient care being taken in the appointment of teachers'.

Here again we cannot digress to review the steps taken by the Church, at national and Assembly level, to press for improvements; we note simply that in 1872 the state took over from the Church complete responsibility for education in Scotland. Before this, however, certain individual ministers tackled this problem at their own local level, often with remarkable results, and we must allow ourselves some consideration of the work of these men who felt a Christian duty towards those children within their parishes who were being reared in hopelessly overcrowded homes by careless or drunken parents who were unwilling or unable to provide even a basic education for them.

Dr. Andrew Thomson, inducted to St. George's, Edinburgh, in 1814, was probably the pioneer in this field, having a school built in connection with that Church. Not only did he himself teach for a time in the school, but he compiled several of the text books used in the various classes. [90] Working on a larger scale was Thomas Chalmers who, while in St. John's, Glasgow, provided schools for 700 of the poorer children of his parish in which the fees were much lower than those normally charged. [91] Not surprisingly, Norman Macleod was active in this work also, and he was able in a period of ten years to provide 2,000 additional school places for the children of the poor. [92] To achieve this he appealed direct to the rich citizens of Glasgow who responded magnificently. Macleod also instituted a scheme whereby children from the Barnhill Poorhouse were boarded out with decent living, respectable folk so that their education would not only be in the academic sphere. [93]

Most successful, however, in his efforts to

90 JEAN L. WATSON: 'Life of Dr. Andrew Thomson': p. 31.

91 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, Apostle of Union': p. 43.

92 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 1st ed. Volume 2, p. 10.

93 Ibid. 2nd ed. p. 241.
This scheme worked well, but further, more advanced, projects, although welcomed by the Poorhouse Board in principle, were never put into operation.

provide education for the poorer children was undoubtedly Thomas Guthrie. In many ways his work was more national than parochial - it most certainly had nation-wide repercussions - and yet his schools were established originally on a parish basis. In 1845 he printed a circular drawing attention to the fact that in the three previous years, 740 children under 14 (245 under 10) had been committed to prison. [94] He further estimated that in Edinburgh at that time 1,000 boys and girls were growing up 'ignorant in the midst of knowledge, savages in the midst of civilisation, heathens in the midst of Christianity'. [95] By 1847, he had established three of his 'Ragged Schools' where, free of charge, 265 children received 'porridge and broth as well as a sound education'. [96] These schools, hailed by the author Thackeray as 'the finest sight in Edinburgh', [97] gave an all-round education, provided clothes where these were needed, gave the children nourishing meals, and even afforded the rudiments of industrial training.

What these schools achieved no one can ever fully estimate; they were the making of many children who otherwise would never have risen above the squalor of their infant surroundings, and they demonstrated clearly to the Church and to the country what could and should be done for all similar children. One set of figures is certainly worth noting: In 1847, the year in which the Ragged Schools were founded, 'over 5% of the prisoners in Edinburgh were under 14, while in 1851, the number had fallen to less than 1%'. [98] This was no mere happy coincidence but further proof of the worth and the success of what Guthrie was doing.

94 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 114.

95 Ibid. pp. 114-115.

96 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 173.

97 Ibid. p. 174.

98 Ibid. p. 174.

If the most successful schemes to assist the poorer children were launched by Guthrie, surely the most novel originated in the home of W. G. Blaikie, the ministerial house-builder of Pilrig. We should perhaps omit reference to this scheme in our present study as it was master-minded, not by the minister but by his wife; furthermore, for most of the 20 years it was in operation, Blaikie was not a parish minister but a Professor in New College. It does show, however, what one individual, in the name of the Church, could accomplish. Mrs. Blaikie's twin aims were to help the rising generations to a better life and at the same time alleviate the problem of overcrowding in the towns. She therefore inaugurated a scheme in the 1860's whereby children were taken from homes in the towns, where the parents' poverty or drunkenness made their lives intolerable, and were settled with decent families in Canada. To our ears there may seem a certain callousness in such action, even although the children were taken away with their parents' permission. The scheme, however, was undeniably popular and, by all accounts, operated to the lasting benefit of the children. The greatest number of children 'exported' in this way in any one year was 809. [99]

We can see, therefore, that so far as the relationship between the Church and the poorer working classes of the towns was concerned, the 19th century ended on a much brighter note than seemed possible even half-way through. Parish ministers were increasingly being seen to be caring actively for the all-round welfare of their poorer parishioners; their housing, their recreation, their education, their children's future, were all being regarded as matters on which local churches could take positive Christian action. Supremely, their spiritual wellbeing, for too long neglected, was also being more adequately catered for. Special services, free of all seat charges, were being arranged where the poorer men and women would not feel out of place, and Sunday Schools were being established specifically for the poorer children - Thomas Chalmers in

99 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'Recollections of a busy life': pp. 314-327.

St. John's Parish had almost 50 such Sunday Schools in operation,[100] Norman Macleod in the Barony had 12,[101] and Guthrie organised one to meet each Sunday evening where 300 such children were in regular attendance.[102] Before the century ended, the state had taken over responsibility for Poor Relief, for education, and for other developing welfare services; the Church, therefore, was deprived of some of its more direct means of contact with the working classes, but the important link had been established, and the yawning gap between the Church and the poor of Scotland's towns was closing. It could scarcely be hoped that the situation in the expanding towns could ever be made to match that which existed in the small country parishes. In the rural areas, life changed very slowly, old customs lingered on, incomers were few, and the minister could establish a truly personal contact with each and every one of his parishioners. This could never be possible in Glasgow or Edinburgh. Likewise, in the country areas, the minister could respond personally to cases of hardship or suffering among his flock. So, for example, Andrew Thomson had his glebe at Sprouston, Roxburghshire, sown with oats to be sold at cost price to his parishioners in a time of scarcity;[103] similarly, Henry Duncan, in Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, had a corn boat sent from Liverpool and sold

100 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, Apostle of Union': p. 43.
In the above work also we learn that when Chalmers was inducted to the Tron Church, he was saddened to find that, with a population of 11,000 in his parish, only 100 children attended Sunday Schools. (p. 41.)

101 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 232.

102 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 185.
This Sunday School was conducted by Mr. D. Duncan, one of Guthrie's elders.

103 JEAN L. WATSON: 'Life of Dr. Andrew Thomson': p. 17.

its contents at cost price,[104] he countered local unemployment by giving work on his glebe to those who were idle,[105] and he brought cartloads of flax from Dumfries for the womenfolk to spin when times were hard.[106] The country ministers could do this; they were working with relatively small numbers; they knew and were known by their parishioners who, almost to a man, formed the sum total of their congregations. In the towns, not even a Norman Macleod could establish such an intimate understanding with all his parishioners. Sheer numbers, and a constantly changing population, made this impossible. For all that, however, the Church, through the devoted and tireless work of individual parish ministers, was winning its battle to gain the ear and the confidence of the poorer classes within the towns.

THE INDUSTRIAL PARISH: CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Before, however, we leave our consideration of the distinctive problems facing a minister in the industrial towns of Scotland in the 19th century, one further point must be clarified. In what has gone before, we may have given the impression that while the poor were universally absent from the Church until positive steps were taken to draw them in, the wealthier classes not only flocked to the Church but more than adequately filled all the available Church accommodation. In actual fact, however, the pattern of Church attendance in the towns was never as clear cut as this. The biographer of Andrew Thomson, for instance, states that in the years before Thomson came to Edinburgh in 1810 'it had been the fashion of the gentlemen of the city to despise going to Church - they left Church-going to the ladies'.[107] It was not the poorer males

104 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 40

105 Ibid. p. 165.

106 Ibid. p. 347.

107 JEAN L. WATSON: 'Life of Dr. Andrew Thomson': p. 101.

of the city who are here referred to; the well-to-do in Scotland's towns were not by any means all devoted to the Church. Further, those who were so devoted were most assuredly not necessarily convinced of the desirability of supporting their respective parish churches, but rather travelled to whatever churches offered the style of preaching which they favoured. We have already noted that the crowds travelled considerable distances to hear men like Macleod, Chalmers, and Guthrie, and we saw how this fact made still more difficult full contact between such orators and their more humble parishioners. In addition, however, the willingness, even determination, of such a large body of worshippers to be itinerant in this way, posed real problems for those town churches which, no more successful than their competitors in involving the poor around their doors, lacked the popular orator to attract the rich.

For much of the 19th century, then, the town churches did tend to present two sharply contrasting pictures depending on the popular appeal of the occupant of the pulpit. There was without doubt the depressing picture of churches very poorly attended. The Government Commission of 1838 reported that there were then 11,000 unlet sittings in the Church of Scotland buildings in Edinburgh and a further 9,000 sittings unlet on the Dissenters' side;[108] as we saw earlier, this was at a time when there was only Church accommodation in the city for 48% of the population.[109] Glasgow was no better, and Cameron Lees of St. Giles' Cathedral speaks of churches in that city where, so poor was the attendance at worship, that 'you might fire

108 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centureis of the Church of Scotland': p. 216.

109 See p. 53.
At a Church Extension meeting held in Edinburgh in 1838, Thomas Guthrie quoted one of the findings of the Government Commission, namely, that 'between forty and fifty thousand people in Edinburgh habitually absent themselves from the house of God'. (DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 374.)

a gun and hit no one'. [110] We see, then, that the well-to-do did not all flock to Church; we notice that the churches were not so universally crowded that the poorer worshippers could not have been accommodated at the normal hours of worship; and we realise that the assertion that all town ministers were so busy caring for large 'gathered' congregations that they were physically unable to undertake mission work among their poorer parishioners, is most certainly not the truth in every case.

At the same time, however, there was the encouraging side to town-Church life with the 'successful' churches regularly crowded to capacity. We know from our earlier investigations that their success was somewhat deceptive in that their crowded pews did not necessarily represent thorough-going parochial concern and activity; nevertheless, we do see some remarkable proof of our ancestors' concern for what the Church was doing and saying. For example, Rose Street Secession Church in Edinburgh was the scene of many a remarkable crowd during the seven-year ministry of John Brown in the 1820's. On Sundays, this preacher had frequently to be led from the session house to the pulpit hand to hand across the tops of the pews, so many were the worshippers crowding the passages and stairs. [111] Public enthusiasm for his week-night lectures was on a similar scale, even although his lecture themes - one notable crowd-puller being on 'Uriah the Hittite' - were not such as we to-day would think of terming 'popular', and his beadle, James Chalmers, had to be proof against the half-crowns offered by ladies anxious to get in before the doors opened. [112] Incidentally, it seems that all Brown's beadles were the better of qualifications in crowd control because when he moved to Broughton Place, the combination of

110 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 235.

111 JOHN CAIRNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Brown of Broughton Place': p. 104.

112 JOHN BROWN: 'Horae Subsecivae': Second Series: p. 94.

vast crowds and poor ventilation within that Church left the harassed official with an unusually large number of fainting cases. Here at least, however, his work was not without its lighter side by virtue of the remedy prescribed to revive the casualties - 'He cut their stay laces which ran before the knife and cracked like a bow-string'. [113] (If fainting cases are a source of disturbance to those inside the Church, there were occasions when they were a blessing to those still outside. J. P. Struthers of Greenock tells of his own attempts to hear Dr. Alexander Whyte on one of his tours; when he arrived at the Church, all the seats were taken and the doors were shut. Struthers was informed by a spectator that the building was crammed and that hundreds, unable to gain entry, had gone home. 'Well', said Struthers, 'if the building is so full as that, somebody will be sure to turn faint, and then will be my chance.' Accordingly, he kept running round the Church, watching the various doors, until indeed one person was conveyed out of the building by two of her friends. He took his chance, went in, and 'heard such words from Dr. Whyte as I trust I shall never forget'. [114])

Brown's crowds, of course, were won from all over the city, and this pattern was repeated in other churches in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee wherever a true orator held the pulpit. In 1836, for instance, Robert Murray McCheyne instituted Dundee's first mid-week prayer meeting in St. Peter's Church and the novelty, coupled to the personality of this spiritual giant, drew regular attendances of over 800. [115] Principal Caird was inducted to Lady Yester's, Edinburgh, in 1847, and to the West Park Chapel, Glasgow, ten years later. In both Churches, he preached to congregations that more than filled every pew. In Edinburgh, a large number of the morning congregation remained in their places after

113 JOHN BROWN: 'Horae Subsecivae': Third Series: p. 284.

114 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': pp. 314-315.

115 ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': p. 71.

the benediction so that they might make sure of their seat for the afternoon service, [116] while in Glasgow, 'each week crowds queued outside and were grateful to obtain standing room'. [117] Up in Aberdeen, Greyfriars Church witnessed vast crowds of worshippers as a regular feature of the ministry of David McTaggart (1848-1857), and on several occasions police were needed to keep control during the normal Sunday services; their presence was an absolute necessity at the time of seat-letting. [118] As we saw, seat rents were most certainly high in relation to the ability of the poorer people to pay them, but in popular churches there were plenty men and women clamouring to obtain sittings. In St. George's, Edinburgh, for instance, during the ministry of Andrew Thomson, it often took many years of petitioning the Town Council - the body which controlled the letting of seats - for a whole family to obtain accommodation. [119]

So, within the towns, both rich and poor had to be drawn to the Church; no parish minister could here depend simply on his rank or authority to fill the pews. The poor had to be won over by a sincere show of loving concern; special provisions had to be made; they had to be treated, initially at least, as separate congregations. The rich for their part were more naturally inclined to become involved within the Church but they were specially attracted, not by personal interest shown in them, but by the gifted preacher and orator. Where the ministers did make the effort to attract the poor, where the orator did faithfully exercise his talents, then the people of Scotland were not indifferent. We have seen enough to know that our forefathers were more than willing to respond to the voice of Christ in His Church whether in the country areas where life changed but slowly or in the rapidly expanding towns.

116 CHARLES L. WARR: 'Principal Caird': p. 101.

117 Ibid. p. 166.

118 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'The Churches of Aberdeen': p. 23, Column 2.

119 JEAN L. WATSON: 'Life of Dr. Andrew Thomson': p. 103.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

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THE EXTENT TO WHICH CERTAIN OF THE GREAT ECCLESIASTICAL 'INCIDENTS' OF THE 19TH CENTURY COLOURED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARISH MINISTER AND HIS FLOCK.

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CHAPTER THREE: The extent to which certain of the great ecclesiastical 'incidents of the 19th century coloured the relationship between the parish minister and his flock.

We have, then, looked at the measure of involvement and personal contact which the average parish minister in town and country could expect to have with his parishioners during the 19th century. Before going on to look at the average minister's daily life - how he spent his time in study, in preparation for the pulpit, in visitation of his flock, in recreation and so on - we ought perhaps to note that in the 19th century there were certain significant ecclesiastical 'incidents' which, while national in consequence, yet inevitably coloured the relationship between the individual minister and his congregation.

THE DISRUPTION OF 1843

The most notable of these 'incidents' was, of course, the Great Disruption of 1843 which split the Church into the Old Established Church and the new Free Church. We have already seen the bitter hatred that could exist between the rival Moderates and Evangelicals, although we concluded that, in their respective ways, the good Moderate and the good Evangelical were both faithful in their essential duties. What we must look at now is the extent to which the link between the individual minister and his congregation was strong enough to withstand the splitting of the National Church. That is, we must ask if the minister normally exercised such an influence over his people that his decision, even in such an important issue as this, would almost automatically be their decision also. Alternatively, of course, we might find instances where a congregation made their choice in advance of their minister and where the known outcome of their decision then influenced the minister in making up his own mind.

One thing is certain; the men and women in the pews were genuinely interested in the issues which led eventually to the Disruption. This fact, of course, is hardly surprising when we consider that the principal debate

centred on the workings of Patronage which gave the Patron of a parish the right to force a minister on the congregation even where the whole congregation had expressed themselves opposed to the presentee. In 1841, for instance, John Edwards was inducted to the parish of Marnoch when only one member of the congregation, the local tavern-keeper, had signed his call, and this was only one of several bitterly contested inductions in the years leading up to the Disruption. [1] Quite clearly, then, those men and women who took their Church membership seriously could not but be interested in such a struggle, centred as it was on their own democratic rights and privileges. Furthermore, the choice facing each minister was going directly to affect each worshipper whether he liked it or not, because in any large split within the National Church many congregations would either find themselves without ministers or else they would, in 'going out' with their ministers, be faced with finding from their own pockets the money to pay stipends and to erect churches, manses and schools. They had also a further even more personal worry in that with the majority of the lairds siding with the Moderates, many of them would stand to lose both house and job if they decided for the Evangelicals.

If, even at that, however, there was any doubt as to whether the average person in the pew would be interested in the pre-Disruption struggles, the manner in which the debates were carried on settled the issue. Sunday by Sunday, the parish pulpits became platforms from which, in bold and often provocative language, the evils of the opposing views were denounced. Day by day, the leading personalities on both sides of the Assembly were touring the country and drawing vast crowds to hear and to discuss the principles involved. Interest, then, was maintained and the pews were filled. Henry Duncan, for example, spoke to

1 JOHN CUNNINGHAM: 'The Church History of Scotland': 2nd ed. Volume 2, p. 486 ff. et passim.

1,000 in Huntly in 1840, and this despite bad weather; [2] a similar number stood for two and a half hours in a barn in Stenton near Haddington to hear Dr. Guthrie. [3] 2,000 attended a debate in the Abbey Church, Arbroath, and showed their enthusiasm for the Evangelical cause by drowning out all opposing speakers with their hissing and drumming of sticks, [4] and in the West Church, Edinburgh, when the Disruption seemed inevitable, no less than 3,200 turned up to hear Dr. Candlish. [5] The ordinary worshippers, then, were concerned; they felt involved, and they sought to be informed.

And yet, when we come to analyse the results after 1843, we have to admit that in the majority of cases the congregations, almost to a man, sided with their ministers and made the same decisions as they did. What happened in Loudoun, for example, is typical of what happened in many parishes. There Norman Macleod addressed his congregation for three and a half hours on why they should not join the Free Church. In all that time, 'not a soul moved' and almost everyone opted to remain in the Church of Scotland with their pastor. [6] In the Highlands, particularly, the congregations accepted what their own ministers advocated. In these areas, individual ministries could be of very long duration, a minister could very frequently be succeeded by his son thus ensuring continuity of ideas and of affections (at this fact we will have cause to look later), and therefore in a very real way much of the loyalty formerly

2 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 275. 'I was told that the coldness and threatening aspect of the weather had kept numbers away'.

3 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 53.

4 Ibid. 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 171.

5 WILLIAM WILSON: 'Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish': p. 144.

6 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. pp. 126-127.

shown to the clan chiefs had transferred itself to the ministers who were, in their areas, virtual kings and bishops.[7] So, for example, in Sutherland, where the clergy were virtually 100% behind the Disruption, out of a population of 25,000 only 219 remained within the Established Church. The people of Lewis reacted in a similar way and there, with the ministers equally solidly behind the Evangelicals, only 460 out of 23,000 declined to 'go out'.[8]

There was, then, a very real link between the ministers and their congregations in this matter. Hard facts are not easy to produce of the influence working the other way, that is of the minister being more or less directed in his own decision by the prior decision of his people, but there is more than the occasional hint that this was sometimes so. We note, however, the bond that did exist, particularly in the Highlands and in the country areas between pastor and flock. In the towns, the situation was inevitably rather different. The gathered congregations had, in the years prior to the final split in 1843, allied themselves to ministers whose views they accepted and therefore we would not have expected any massive upheavals in this context. One thing is certain, and that is that the tie between minister and people was very considerably strengthened as a result of the Disruption. The ministers who joined

7 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 65.
ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'Dr. George H. Morrison': p. 66.
As late as 1875, Dr. James MacGregor of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, made this comment on Church life in the north of Scotland: 'The people were in the grip of a zealous but intensely bitter order of Free Church ministers, and they followed their bidding with a loyalty as blindly devoted as ever they had given to their feudal chieftains'. (THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 265.)

8 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 1, p. 433.

the Free Church felt a real debt of gratitude to their congregations who sacrificed so much to maintain them and provide Churches; the congregations respected all the more those men who were willing, for a cause in which they believed, to walk out on security for themselves and their families. The Established Church, too, though it took some years to recover from the loss of close on 500 of its ordained ministers, did go on to new strength and here again a firmer congregational bond was established in many cases between minister and people.

At the same time, however, as individual ministers and their congregations were being bound closer together, the two groups of ministers were most certainly moving even further away from each other, and now this hostility was spreading all too rapidly to the congregations of the two conflicting denominations. The more outspoken ministers of the Free Church denounced the Established Church as 'a stinking pond', a 'common sewer', a 'house full of rats'. [9] Hugh Miller, the influential editor of the Free Church Journal, 'The Witness', gave this advice, 'Let the parish minister be regarded as virtually the one excommunicated man of the district, the man with whom no one is to join in prayer, whose Church is to be avoided as an impure and unholy place, whose addresses are not to be listened to, who is everywhere to be put under the ban of the community'. [10] That this advice was acted on is seen in parish after parish where the two sets of ministers 'passed each other on the road as if plague-stricken'. [11]

Taking their lead from their spiritual overlords, the rival worshippers, while displaying commendable unity in themselves and praiseworthy determination to support their ministers and their Churches, indulged in quite unChristian acts towards any members, lay or ordained,

9 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': pp. 247 and 260.

10 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 301.

11 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 203.

of the opposition. Going to an induction in Uig shortly after the Disruption, the ministers representing Lewis Presbytery of the Church of Scotland could find no one willing to row their boat; even to do this for clergy of the Established Church in this Free Church paradise would have been a mortal sin. The ministers, therefore, had to row themselves, almost drowning half-way because a staunch Free Churchman had seen it as his solemn duty to remove the plug from their boat. [12] Even the traditional peace of the Lord's Day was frequently shattered as rival groups passed each other on the road to their respective churches. At times, words were scarcely adequate artillery as we see from this snatch of conversation recorded by the elder Story one Sabbath in Rosneath: 'Was it no' a mercy it was the Sabbath Day and a borrow't umbrella that I had in my haun', or as sure's death, I would ha' felled him'. [13] W. G. Blaikie shows us how deep the feeling of resentment could be between the supporters of the two denominations. A family servant, Betty Ross, who was none too well off, nevertheless declined to take any of the money left to her by her cousin because he had been a minister of the Moderate Party. [14] The situation, then, was decidedly unhealthy and unlovely. In 1864, Norman Macleod visited Ross and Sutherland and summed up his feelings thus: 'The feelings of the Free Church to the Establishment are hardly equalled by those of the Roman

12 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 15.

13 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 306.
Thomas Guthrie claims that the nation-wide division into Free Church and Established Church spread to the younger members of society: 'Families were divided, nay, the very boys at school ranged themselves into hostile camps of Moderates and Non-Intrusionists'. (DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 27.)

14 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'Recollections of a busy life': p. 52.

Catholics in Galway to a Protestant missionary, or those of the Mohammedans in Damascus to a Christian'. [15] Eleven years later, Dr. MacGregor of St. Cuthbert's could find no improvement: 'If the Apostle Paul had preached from the pulpits of the National Church, no Highlander belonging to the Free Church would have believed himself orthodox had he crossed the threshold to hear him'. [16] As late as 1886, a Free Church missionary wrote to his friend, 'My first object is to win souls to Christ, my second is to smash the Church'. [17]

Our task in this study is to review the minister's life and work and to see how his relationship with his congregation and parishioners developed. The Disruption and its aftermath most certainly made each minister's life more eventful; for those who 'went out' to the Free Church, it made their life materially more challenging and hazardous. It affected also the type of work which the minister, however he decided in 1843, had to undertake. For those who stayed within the Established Church, there was often a difficult period of regrouping and consolidation; for those who joined the new denomination, their main work initially was concerned with raising money, erecting buildings and maintaining morale. It was, however, in the minister's relationship with his people that the events of 1843 brought most change so far as the scope of our enquiry is concerned. In many small towns and villages, for example, where hitherto the Church had been a focal point of parish unity, and where the minister had been the great friend in common to young and old, rich and poor, the Disruption came in to split the community in two. The new Free Churches which were so speedily erected brought bitter rivalries and in the name of Christ, old friendships and associations were shattered. In these areas where the one minister had been able to equate his congregation with his

15 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 351.

16 THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 265.

17 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 71.

parish, there was now a competitive intolerant congregationalism. Elsewhere, as for example in the Highlands, where the move to the Free Church was well nigh unanimous, the incoming ministers of the Established Church had to learn to exercise a ministry where the basic courtesies were denied him by rival pastor and flock alike. The Disruption battles were keenly followed by the Church members in Scotland; the points at issue and the manner in which they were debated through the length and breadth of the land may have led many men and women to think more seriously about Christ and His Church than would otherwise have been the case; and the ties between a minister and his congregation, already strong, were very probably made still stronger by the events of 1843. John Cairns may have been right when he affirmed that the Disruption was 'one of the greatest blessings to the Church of Christ and to the world';[18] nevertheless, it cannot be denied that there was here proved that though the two denominations' ministers and people might claim to be acting in love of Christ, they had not yet learned in any numbers to love their fellow men. There was more than a little truth in the joking aside of Cameron Lees who, describing a visit he paid to Egypt and the Holy Land, says, 'On reaching Calais, I asked a fellow-traveller, a priest, whether he knew Dr. Begg or Dr. Candlish, and on his shaking his head by way of negation, I felt I had at last got into a Christian country.'[19]

THE HERESY CASES

The second of the significant ecclesiastical 'incidents' of the 19th century at which we must glance briefly might more correctly be described as a series of incidents. In the period under review, several notable heresy cases

18 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, Apostle of Union': p. 80.

19 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 130.

were brought before the Assemblies and excited a good deal of general public interest with, once again, the layman manifesting a clear desire to be involved and informed. It is not our present task to trace the course of the heretics' trials, nor can we state in detail the nature of the various heresies. It must be sufficient to note that the ordinary worshipper did take an interest in these questions which were of a consistently complex and intellectual nature, and we must note how the relationship between minister and people was, in some of these cases, affected.

John McLeod Campbell, inducted to the parish of Row, Dunbartonshire, in 1825, was deposed by the General Assembly in 1831 for adhering to views on the Atonement which conflicted with orthodoxy. [20] The rights and wrongs of the judgement do not concern us here; what does concern us is the fact that a petition was presented to the Assembly signed by nineteen-twentieths of his parishioners expressing their 'affection and regard' for him as a minister and pastor. [21] The bond here was stronger than any allegation or even decreed finding of heresy. Furthermore, after he was deposed, McLeod Campbell's following became even greater; no doubt notoriety played its part; the people would be curious to see and hear a heretic; yet the personality and sincerity of the man ensured that he would be no seven days' wonder. He preached in a tent in Bonhill in 1831 to a crowd of 2,000; the same number gathered on an Oban moor; a Greenock Churchyard somehow accommodated 6,000 to hear him. [22] All this was remarkable enough; what was much more remarkable was the fact that from 1833 until ill-health forced his retirement in 1859, he preached successfully to an independent

20 JOHN CUNNINGHAM: 'The Church History of Scotland': 2nd ed. Volume 2, p. 447.

21 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 157.

22 Ibid. p. 161.

congregation meeting in Glasgow's Lyceum Hall. [23] It is interesting to note that an edict was issued to be read in all Churches warning of the dangers of hearing him and even threatening that any who did hear him would be denied the Sacraments. [24] This in itself would swell rather than diminish the crowds, but his prolonged success, and the unswerving devotion of the people of Row, do show that in the hearts of many men and women in Scotland at this time, the man was more important than the message, and the individual's desire to worship God as he chose, more binding than any decree of the national Church.

The cases of Robertson Smith and Edward Irving are rather different. Smith was never a parish minister, but at the age of 23 was appointed Professor of Old Testament in the Free Church College in Aberdeen. He was deposed in 1881 for views, mainly on the authorship of sections of the Old Testament, which were out of line with Free Church thinking. [25] Irving, a former assistant to Chalmers in St. John's, was excommunicated by London Presbytery in 1830 [26] and finally expelled from the ministry of the Church of Scotland. [27] On a flying visit to Edinburgh in 1828, he drew vast crowds to a lecture on the Book of Revelation held at 5 a.m., [28] while at his meeting in Kirkcaldy on the same trip the crowds were so large that the gallery of the Church collapsed, killing 35 people. [29]

23 D. CAMPBELL: 'Memorials of John McLeod Campbell': Volume 1, p. 102.

24 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 158.

25 The various stages of Smith's case can be followed in 'The Life of Principal Rainy' by PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: Popular edition: Volume 1, pp. 306-403.

26 ST. GILES' LECTURES; THIRD SERIES: 1882-83: p. 251 of published volume of lectures - 'Scottish Divines'.

27 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 153.

28 CHARLES L. WARR: 'Principal Caird': p. 106.

29 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 144.

For our present purposes, we need only note the vast public interest in both these men and in the views which they put forward. The people of Scotland were, as the century progressed, more and more able and willing to think for themselves and to ask questions on matters which formerly had been taken on trust. The individual parish minister, as we remarked when noting the reasons for the declining attendances at Church services towards the end of the 19th century, was going to have to be able to support his teaching and his preaching with reasoned argument. The popular interest in the fate of these 'heretics' ensured this and made still more certain that the time was quickly going when the combination of 'the minister's word and accepted practice' would be bound to carry the day.

THE REVIVALS

The other ecclesiastical feature of the 19th century which has a direct bearing on our present study and at which we must now look is the number of religious revivals that were seen in different parts of Scotland during this period. There were three main surges of revival: in 1839 and immediately after, there was the movement which originated in Kilsyth and then spread to Dundee, Perth, Aberdeen and beyond. The leaders of this movement were all ministers of the Established Church - W. C. Burns, Robert Murray McCheyne, John Milne, Alexander Somerville - and with the exception of Burns, all were parish ministers at the time. In 1858 came a second wave; again, parish ministers were directly involved - Moody Stuart, for example - but for the first time in Scotland, compelling lay evangelists were the main orators. The third period of revival began in 1873 and centred on the American genius of Moody and Sankey.

Clearly, our present duty is to see how the parish ministers reacted to these revivals, to see how far the average parish minister was involved in them in an active way, and to attempt to discover how far the parish Churches experienced a lasting benefit as a result of the revivalists' work. The movement begun in 1839 in Kilsyth,

then, is most directly associated with the parish structure of the Church and falls to be considered first and in most detail. The scent of revival was not new in Kilsyth - the people here had joined in the Cambuslang awakening in 1742 in which George Whitefield was prominent - and indeed it was at a service to commemorate the earlier revival that the first stirrings of the new movement were seen. [30] W. C. Burns preached at Kilsyth - his father was the parish minister there - and intimated a follow-up meeting on the Tuesday morning. For this, the Church was packed to capacity and the crowds would not let the meeting conclude until five hours of worship and preaching had been completed. [31] Alexander Smellie comments that the people in Kilsyth were so moved that the pubs were forsaken and all saw that 'the age of Christ's miracles was not past'. [32]

Burns returned to Dundee where he had been deputising for Murray McCheyne in St. Peter's Church. Here, too, the revival fire was lit and meetings were held each night for several weeks with additional prayer meetings in private homes. [33] Perth, too, was stirred under John Milne, minister of the town's St. Leonard's Church, and with Burns actively assisting, some incredible scenes were witnessed. It was not uncommon to see more people queued up outside St. Leonard's an hour before the start of the meetings than would have several times filled the Church, [34] and on occasion at least, the stampede for seats was so great that when the doors were opened several people were injured. [35] Once started, these meetings, whether in Kilsyth or Perth or Dundee did not quickly conclude. Beginning at 10 a.m., they could regularly go right through until 3 p.m.

30 For details of the Cambuslang Awakening, see 'The Church History of Scotland' by JOHN CUNNINGHAM: 2nd ed. Volume 2, pp. 314-318.

31 ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': pp. 130-133.

32 Ibid. p. 133.

33 Ibid. p. 134.

34 ISLAY BURNS: 'Memoir of Rev. W. C. Burns': 4th ed. p. 145.

35 Ibid. p. 145.

with a further evening meeting often lasting from 6 p.m. until the small hours of the next morning. Prayer meetings catering for young and old sprang up in the surrounding villages and hamlets, [36] and Islay Burns, the brother of the evangelist, tells us that 'the mountain glen, the solitary haugh, even the noisy loom shop became vocal often with the sounds of prayer and praise, or witnessed the solemn converse of brethren who at eventide talked with burning hearts of the things that had come to pass in those days.' [37]

After Perth, Burns went north to Aberdeen, and here again his preaching met with success. Some of the mill girls, for example, were seen to take Bibles to work after being influenced by him, and this was certainly something which had never been seen before. [38] Glasgow was not so involved in the Revival movement as were the cities further north, but here again a few parish ministers did do their utmost to present the Gospel challenge in the style favoured by Burns and Milne. In Anderston Parish, for example, the Rev. Alexander Somerville held meetings each night of the week, with the exception of Saturday, for three months and the crowds attending were considerable. [39]

We have, then, dwelt in some detail on the facts of the Revival movement begun in 1839, and we have done so because, as we observed, this was a home-grown revival with the leadership coming from the parish ministers of the areas involved, and because we do see here a picture of unusual public interest in the preaching of the Word of God. The large towns were not so directly affected and therefore there was not here an instrument for drawing the poor in these areas to the Church, but in so far as Glasgow and Dundee and Aberdeen were concerned, it was the poorer classes, rather than the wealthier merchant classes, who were

36 ISLAY BURNS: 'Memoir of Rev. W. C. Burns': 4th ed. p. 99

37 Ibid. p. 100.

38 Ibid. p. 167.

39 A. N. SOMERVILLE: 'Precious seed': Biographical Sketch, p. 14.

most interested in the Revival.

In the Revival which began in 1858, part of a wave which had begun in America and then spread over the English speaking world, [40] the leading speakers were, as we remarked, lay evangelists [41] although they worked in co-operation with those parish ministers who were in sympathy with their aims and methods. In particular, the Free Church was by this time firmly established and so was able to afford this movement an official approval which no denomination had been able to give the earlier Kilsyth movement. Cunningham, for example, Moderator of the Free Church in 1859, described it as 'the greatest movement since the Reformation'. [42] In Scotland, this Revival centred on Edinburgh and on Moody Stuart's St. Luke's Free Church. Elsewhere it spread to Glasgow and Aberdeen and Perth where once again John Milne, returned to St. Leonard's after a spell in Calcutta, booked the City Hall and for 70 consecutive nights filled it to capacity. [43] The third series of revivals to come to Scotland in the 19th century came as a result of the visits of Moody and Sankey in 1873, 1881, and 1891. Again, the Free Church leaders welcomed the signs of revival and men like Andrew Bonar and Donald John Martin not only shared in the organisation of the Evangelists' missions but determined to reap the local harvests in their own parishes also. [44] There was, however, a notable change

40 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, pp. 111-116.

41 e.g. Brownlow North, Reginald Radcliffe and Hay Macdowall Grant.

42 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, pp. 111-112.

43 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th ed. p. 297.

44 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': p. 79 ff.
Martin comments, 'The whole town was powerfully moved. In shop and office, on the street and in the field, the universal theme was Salvation'.

in that the Established Church also took an interest in the Americans' activities with no less a person than A. H. Charteris, Professor of Biblical Criticism in Edinburgh, visibly active in their first two campaigns.[45]

It is no easy task to evaluate the long-term success of these revivals; nor is it a simple matter to measure the effects for good that they had on the individual parishes of the land. We can say, however, that the 1858 movement and, to an even greater extent, the Moody and Sankey visits, did leave many a worthwhile mark on Scottish Church life, both nationally and locally, which did not fade away for many years, if at all. For instance, both these revival movements did lead to a real deepening of devotion within many congregations and in all the main denominations; in particular, congregational prayer meetings were in many places stirred to a wonderful new life. J. R. Fleming, for example, cites the claim made in the United Presbyterian Synod that one out of every four communicants in that entire Church was regularly present at monthly, fortnightly, or weekly prayer meetings as a direct result of the 1858 surge of revival;[46] and Alexander Whyte records that the Moody and Sankey meetings so revitalised his prayer meetings in St. George's that they had to be held in the Church instead of, as formerly, in the Hall.[47] As a further welcome and lasting result of the Americans' visits, there was sown the precious seed of co-operation between the Free Church and the Established Church; the importance of this coming together, even in a limited way, of what had been virtual enemies cannot be overlooked. The ministers were at last beginning to realise that they could work together on the basic issues of the

45 REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': pp. 282-287.

46 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, p. 115.

47 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 164.

Church, and the congregations were starting to see something of what the denominations had in common as against concentrating solely on those factors that divided them. Most encouraging of all, however, was the fact that this American-inspired wave of revival did join concern for salvation with positive efforts for man's welfare; for example, the provision of free breakfasts for those in need, increased mission work to the outcasts, and much of the Y.M.C.A. work sprang directly from this spiritual re-awakening.[48] Ministers who became involved in the revival work at this time, and their sessions and members who were likewise involved, saw that the Gospel of Christ was not only concerned with the improvement of man's physical and material conditions.

It was in this regard that the earlier revivals in the century may be said to have been too one-sided. Moody Stuart wrote in 1855, 'The only thing I care for is the salvation of the lost. It has long seemed to me that the only way in which I could do any good in the world was in the salvation of souls',[49] and the same idea was frequently re-iterated by Milne and Burns in the earlier awakening in 1839. These preachers had little or no social message; this present life was for them simply a testing ground for fitness to enter the life to come;[50]

48 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, p. 236.
Fleming further quotes the remarkable claim made by Professor T. M. Lindsay in 1883 when he said that three-fourths of the whole number of students in the Faculties of Arts in the Scottish Universities who were taking a full undergraduate curriculum were preparing for the ministry of the three Presbyterian Churches of Scotland. This, he said, was 'chiefly due to the aftermath of the Moody revival'. (Volume 2, p. 216.)

49 KENNETH MOODY STUART: 'Alexander Moody Stuart': p. 134.

50 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 172.

their preaching was rather more akin to the sternness of John the Baptist than to the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. These men preached to the emotions of their hearers and, successfully though they did this, the long-term results were not nearly so spectacular as those seem after the Moody and Sankey visits.

It was largely this appeal to the emotions of the worshippers that disturbed many of the Presbyteries to such an extent that several of them instituted enquiries into the possible harmful effects on the people of Burns and Milne and their associates. We would expect, of course, that the Moderates would be opposed to such a stir and show of energy in the name of religion, and yet Aberdeen Presbytery, for example, produced a report not unfavourable to the Evangelists. [51] They did criticise the lateness of the hour at which the meetings often finished on the grounds that the commendable practice of having family worship at a respectable hour each evening was put in danger; they were uneasy at the way young children were being caught up in the revivalists' frenzy; but most of all they were disturbed, as were most sections of the Press, at the high emotional content of the evangelists' addresses. [52] Now in this matter, we to-day have to exercise caution in any comments we might make; there was in the 19th century a much greater tradition of open weeping in Church, as a normal occurrence, than we ever expect to-day. There was the old woman in the Pleasance district of Edinburgh whose outlook was typical of so many; speaking of Dr. Alexander Whyte, she said, 'There is no preacher whom I so willingly hear for he aye gars me greet'. [53]

51 ISLAY BURNS: 'Memoir of the Rev. W. C. Burns': 4th ed. pp. 184-187.

52 There was also considerable opposition to Milne's meetings from the ordinary inhabitants of Perth, and on one occasion at least this opposition manifested itself in a way that we to-day would readily recognise: 'The walls of Mr. Milne's Church, and other places, were scrawled over in chalk with figures and sentences, some ridiculous, some abusive and vile'. (HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th ed. p. 23.)

53 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 315.

Andrew Bonar makes it clear in the pages of his diaries that he would heartily respect such a sentiment for there we find many comments of this sort, 'there were many tears in the Kirk on the Sabbath', [54] while almost as frequently we find him lamenting that such a thing happened all too rarely for his liking during his eighteen-year ministry in Collace, Perthshire. In the north of Scotland, particularly, there was a more lachrymose tendency in worship than we could now countenance with any peace of mind. John Macrae, minister of Lochs in Lewis from 1857 often had to stop in the middle of his sermon because of the people's sobbing, [55] while James Kennedy, minister of Aberfeldy Congregational Church in the 1820's says that 'uniformly as he drew to a close, the place became a scene of weeping'. [56] John Macdonald, the Apostle of the North, officiated at a memorable communion service in Uig, Lewis, where 'there was a burst of universal sobbing and every face was astream with tears. The cloths of the communion tables were so wet with tears that they had to be wrung out'. [57]

Admittedly, it was those ministers who were to join the Free Church or who were in the Free Church when founded who most regularly evoked this emotional response in the ordinary course of Sunday worship, but the fact is that this kind of behaviour was not something new when the revivalists' words produced it on a larger scale. Nevertheless, we must surely feel that the perhaps too staid Moderates were right to question campaigns where day by day the same men and women were reduced to the same tearful state. There is always the place for the true emotional response to the preaching of the love of God as the individual becomes aware of his own sinfulness and of God's redeeming mercy. Essen-

54 MARJORY BONAR: 'Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Letters': pp. 75, 86, 93 etc.

55 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 25.

56 Ibid. p. 138.

57 Ibid. p. 87.

tially, however, this can only be the personal response of the individual under conviction; it can not meaningfully be a corporate response to be looked for or encouraged as a regular nightly occurrence. Yet this was precisely the pattern at the meetings in Kilsyth, Perth and elsewhere conducted by Milne and Burns. Burns reports one meeting in 1839 in these terms: 'At last their feelings became too strong for all ordinary restraints and broke forth simultaneously in weeping, wailing, tears and groans, intermingled with shouts of joy and praise from some of the people to God. Some were screaming in agony; others, and among these strong men, fell to the ground as if they had been dead'. [58] This unfortunately was no isolated incident, and Burns minutes another meeting thus: 'To me, looking from the pulpit, the whole body of the people seemed bathed in tears, old as well as young, men equally with women', [59] and there are many similar accounts. There are also all too many occasions like the following described by McCheyne: visiting a school in St. George's Parish, Edinburgh, in 1839, he says, 'I preached to many weeping children'. [60]

The revivals, then, give further evidence of the willingness of the Scot of the 19th century to consider seriously the claims of the Church; the earlier two movements illustrate the great difference between those who favoured the Free Church and those who stood by the Established Church, at least so far as preaching and missionary work were concerned. The Free Church preachers tended to emphasise soul-winning above all other considerations; indeed at times this appeared to be their only consideration

58 ISLAY BURNS: 'Memoir of the Rev. W. C. Burns': 4th ed. pp. 95-96.

59 Ibid. p. 151.
In speaking of another meeting at which he spoke, Burns registers what he clearly held to be a great triumph: 'Glory to the Lord; we had some of the gentry there in tears'. (p. 207)

60 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th ed. p. 35.

despite the obvious physical and material needs of their people. The final wave of revivals, sparked off by Americans though they were, did bring many more lasting benefits both to the Church as a whole, through the dawning of co-operation between the two denominations, to individual parishes as ministers determined to capitalise on the men and women who were encouraged to a new interest in religion, and to the more needy members of society in that the Americans' Gospel took account of all mankind's needs, physical as well as spiritual.

C H A P T E R F O U R

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THE PARISH MINISTER
OF THE 19TH CENTURY
IN STUDY AND IN PULPIT.

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CHAPTER FOUR: The parish minister of the 19th century in Study and in Pulpit.

We have seen, then, that the parish ministers of last century were not by any means all of one mind or opinion in many fundamental matters; their divisions - Moderates and Evangelicals, Established Church and Free Church, for example - were real and cut deep. We have seen that there could not be, even within a single 'party', any agreed nationwide strategy; the methods that might succeed in the simplicity of traditional country life could not cope with the complexities of developing industrial life. We have noted that as the century wore on, the country clergymen were struggling to retain the active involvement of all their parishioners in the life of the Church while their dedicated brethren in the towns were beginning to give signs that the Church there was concerned both to win the eternal souls and to improve the worldly lot of even the poorest parishioners. And all through the century we have been made aware of the fact that our ancestors were prepared to be interested in the doings of their Church, both local and national, to a much greater extent than is the case to-day.

Our task now is to establish as far as is possible what was the day to day pattern of life lived by the parish minister of the 19th century. We want to see how his average week was occupied; we want to see him in his study preparing for the work of pulpit and lecture-room; we want to see him in his rounds of visitation taking the Church into the homes of his people; we want to see him as a leading public figure taking his place in community affairs; we want, too, a glimpse of his leisure time pursuits so that we might build up a picture of the whole man.

With such above-mentioned factors as party allegiance and geographical situation considerably affecting a minister's outlook and approach to his daily work, it might seem highly unlikely that we could ever arrive at any

kind of generalised picture which would be tolerably accurate for the whole of Scotland at any given moment. One fact, however, does help us greatly. When considering the verdict of the historians as to the respective merits of Moderates and Evangelicals, we observed that the better, more faithful and conscientious representatives of both sides - the Robertsons and Erskines of the Church - did agree as to what constituted the basic ministerial duties; as we saw, A. J. Campbell listed these as 'preaching, catechising, visiting the sick, taking oversight of the parish', [1] while the biographer of John Erskine recorded that this fine Evangelical prepared for each Sunday two sermons and a lecture and occupied much of the rest of his week in catechising, visiting the sick and dying, and in taking an active share in the running of the various local charitable bodies. [2] We have, then, this common launching-pad for this section of our study; individuals' methods might vary; content and style of sermons might be very different; the ministers' visits might range in style from a dispensing of the merest gossip to the fulfilling of a high spiritual exercise; but the fact is that these were among the fundamental inescapable duties expected of all ministers in Scotland throughout the last century regardless of the denomination or party to which they belonged. If there were those like the young Chalmers who took these duties lightly and discharged them in a perfunctory manner, it is to be regretted, but it is of secondary importance in this section of our review where our aim is to determine and examine the daily mode of life of the wholehearted minister who was faithfully discharging his appointed duties according to his own beliefs and his people's needs.

'Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel'

Our whole study began with a reference to the 'slander'

1 See p. 15.

2 See p. 16.

that ministers traditionally work only one day in each week; [3] we will not retrace our steps further in rejecting such a theory, but we could perhaps best begin our review of the minister's week by looking at that portion of his time which might be spent in any week preparing for the labours of that particular day. In this, we can accept that Erskine's quota of three addresses to be prepared for each Sunday represented the normal amount of such work confronting the parish minister as the 19th century opened. It is true that not every country church had its two separate services each Sunday; it is true also that the expository lecture gradually lost favour; but Erskine's pulpit work-load was fairly standard throughout Scotland for at least the first half of the century.

Now any attempt to calculate how many hours in the study would be needed to prepare three such addresses must recognise that there are several factors involved which could vary greatly with the individual. For example, we will want to have some idea of the average duration of each finished address; we will have to discover if the minister was allowed in the pulpit to read verbatim what he had prepared, if he was allowed by custom only a few brief notes to assist his flow of words, or if in fact he was expected to memorise completely all that he planned to say from the pulpit; we must establish also whether the ordinary worshippers considered it desirable for their ministers to have prepared their sermons down to the last jot and tittle or whether they valued more highly the spontaneous address, delivered more or less impromptu in human terms but with the inspirational support of the Holy Spirit throughout. Such information is clearly very necessary if we are ever to gauge the number of hours of diligent study that pulpit preparation demanded each week. But at the same time, we must recognise that an individual minister's personal preferences in any of these matters - sermon length, delivery, degree of preparation - might very easily over-rule accepted practice. There are always

3 See p. 2.

those who find preparation easy and make rapid progress; there are always those who can speak with a spontaneity that appears more carefully prepared than the efforts of others who may have laboured hours and days in a pursuit of polished eloquence. With all this in mind, then, we go on to see what general points can be made and what general trends noted in regard to the century under review.

THE LENGTH OF THE SERMON

Dealing with the average length of a sermon, we have already observed that at the Communion seasons brevity was not considered a virtue. We have seen, too, that in revivalist surroundings W. C. Burns and others like him could hold large congregations with sermons of several hours' duration. In one week's preaching tour in 1842, for example, Burns kept the attention of 4,000 hearers in Blair Atholl Churchyard for over five hours, preached equally successfully at Fortingall for four hours, and completed a further eight or nine memorable sermons of around three hours each. [4] The Communion season, however, was always a special event, and Burns was a quite exceptional orator with a nation-wide fame; we cannot, therefore, consider such facts and figures as fairly representing the normal weekly diets of worship within the parish churches. For reliable and relevant information so far as they are concerned, we must turn rather to the biographies of the parish ministers themselves. In this way we learn that James Begg, whose main ministry was in Newington Free Church, Edinburgh, [5] John Caird, who held charges in Edinburgh, Perthshire and Glasgow between 1847 and 1868, [6] and John Macleod, minister of Govan Old Parish from 1875 to 1898, [7] were three preachers whose normal weekly sermons

4 ISLAY BURNS: 'Memoir of the Rev. W. C. Burns': 4th ed. pp. 238-241.

5 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 1, p. 99.

6 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 219.

7 R. S. KIRKPATRICK: 'Ministry of John Macleod': p. 25.

are mentioned as being never under the hour; longer still were the sermons of Norman Macleod of the Barony, even in his special services for the poor, [8] Murray McCheyne in St. Peter's, Dundee, [9] and Dr. MacGregor, minister of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, from 1873 to 1910; [10] all three regularly delivered sermons which in length were nearer an hour and a half.

Now it is true that the examples we have quoted are all of preachers at the top of their profession and possessed of a power and a personality that could capture and keep a person's interest more readily than could the average journeyman preacher doing his honest if not always inspired best; but all the evidence points to the fact that their sermons, in length, were within the limits laid down by prevailing custom. In other words, they were not succumbing to the temptation to preach longer in the knowledge that men and women found them compelling orators. Writing of the normal Sunday services in Scotland in the 1840's, Dr. Charles Warr says that the sermons were 'of at least an hour's duration', [11] while Norman Maclean remarks that Cameron Lees in his three ministries was quite the exception in that his sermons never exceeded 20 minutes

8 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 275.

9 ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': p. 48.

10 THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 151.
Frances Balfour records that MacGregor's sermons were 'long at the first writing, and grew longer with revision'. (p. 18). MacGregor himself was very conscious of this length and not over proud of it. He said, 'It is a positive disease which I can't get the better of'. (p. 160). The minister of Crathie knew this failing in MacGregor just as surely as he knew Queen Victoria's marked preference for the shorter sermon. Accordingly, he gave MacGregor this timely advice when he was due to preach in that Church: 'You are already aware that the three great secrets of success here are, Brevity, Brevity, Brevity'. (p. 457).

11 CHARLES L. WARR: 'Principal Caird': p. 97.

at a time when 'other ministers were reckoned by the hour'. [12] Example after example can be quoted to support these statements, and we can therefore fairly state that for the greater part of the 19th century, Scotland's ministers were delivering each Sunday two sermons, ranging in length from sixty to ninety minutes, with, in addition, an expository lecture not markedly shorter. (In passing, it is interesting to note that the services were made lengthy not only by these protracted sermons but by the inclusion of prayers which in many churches amounted to an all-embracing review of current ecclesiastical, political, and social events. [13]) Naturally, there were exceptions; Cameron Lees, as we saw, was one; Thomas McLauchlan, minister of Edinburgh Gaelic Church from 1849 to 1886, was another. His father, inducted to the parish of Moy in 1806, regularly preached for 80 minutes, but he himself always kept within half that time. [14] Generally speaking, however, the normal sermon for the 19th century would be around or just over the hour with no substantial change in this accepted pattern coming until very late in the century. The historian, James Fleming, in fact

12 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 104.

13 Charles Warr describes the prayers thus: 'The prayers - the first of which not infrequently lasted for forty minutes - were almost invariably an interminable meander over the whole field of orthodoxy from the Fall of Man to the Last Judgment'. (CHARLES L. WARR: 'Principal Caird': pp. 96-97.)
We might wonder if such length in the Sunday services was generally popular; with some it certainly was, and Donald John Martin can quote the situation in the parish of Lochs in Lewis where 'a deputation once waited on their minister to say that a service of two hours was rather short - would he not give them three hours?' (NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of the Rev. Donald John Martin': p. 61.)

14 W. KEITH LEASK: 'Dr. Thomas McLauchlan': p. 138.

pinpoints the early 1900's as the time when the traditional long sermon was replaced on a wide front by addresses of some thirty minutes' duration. [15]

THE SERMON: EMPHASIS ON THE POWERS OF MEMORY

With, then, three hours or so of public speaking looming before him each Sunday, we would scarcely be surprised if we found the normal parish minister, not specially gifted in extempore speaking, confined to his study for long periods in each week. Making this more likely still was the fact that for much of the century congregations almost universally expected their ministers to preach without any kind of visible notes in the pulpit to assist them; even a single sheet with the barest paragraph headings earned a man immediate disapproval and even open rebuke. In his biography of John Eadie, ordained as minister of Cambridge Street U. P. Church in 1835, James Brown makes this absolutely clear: 'In the estimation of the Scottish people, power of memory ranked highest among the requisite gifts of the occupant of a pulpit'; [16] according to Brown, 'the gallery watchers reported any paper that was disfiguring the fair page of the Bible; if there was any, this could blast even the very best reputations, particularly in rural areas'. [17] Equally clear is the comment of Alexander Gerard in his lectures delivered to the students of Aberdeen University and published by his son in 1799: 'In most places

15 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 2, p. 194.
We have already noted Queen Victoria's preference for the shorter sermon; when King Edward came to the throne, his preference in this matter was even more marked and his instructions more precise; Cameron Lees makes this comment in a letter written in 1903: 'The service (at Crathie) is very short and the preacher is not allowed to preach more than fifteen minutes; so whenever my time was up, I had to stop like a run-down clock'. (NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 415.)

16 JAMES BROWN: 'Life of John Eadie': p. 12.

17 Ibid. p. 74.

it would be unnecessary to attempt proving that this exercise of memorising what is to be said is incumbent on a public speaker'; [18] in further clarification, he quotes the words of Bishop Burnet: 'Reading is peculiar to this nation and is endured in no other'. [19] There were certainly the ministers who did rely on notes to see them through their sermons; there were a few who insisted on having the full script in front of them in case their memory failed; and there were the individuals who went further still and dared to flaunt convention by reading word for word from their prepared manuscript. William Anderson, minister of John Street U. P. Church, Glasgow, in the 1840's was one who championed the minister's right to read his sermons, [20] while, of course, Thomas Chalmers, who held large congregations spell-bound wherever he preached, read all his sermons and read them obviously and closely. [21] The hope of the people in the pews, however, was that their ministers would not be 'readers'; indeed, so adamant were some congregations and office-bearers on this matter that not even the possibility of a complete memory failure on the part of their ministers swayed them in the slightest. The Rev. John Watson (the novelist Ian Maclaren) tells of his experience in Logiealmond, Perthshire, where he ministered from 1874 until 1877; an elder advised him early in his time there that should his memory fail during the sermon,

18 ALEXANDER GERARD: 'Pastoral Care': p. 349.

19 Ibid. p. 349.

20 W. R. THOMSON: 'The First Relief Church in the West': p. 49.
Anderson was further ahead of his time in that he was the author of 'An apology for the Organ' at a time when 'to speak of instrumental music in connection with divine service was regarded as little short of impiety'. He was also brought before his Presbytery for daring to quote Shakespeare from the pulpit, a 'crime' which he confessed to committing four times in fourteen months. (pp. 48-49.)

21 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, Apostle of Union': p. 88.

he should simply give out a psalm until he had regathered his thoughts. [22] Quite clearly, such a device, which would seem to many of us an acute source of embarrassment to all concerned, was infinitely to be preferred to the introduction of even a single sheet of human manuscript into the pulpit. [23] More entrenched still, however, were the congregation of Duke Street Secession Church in Glasgow; The Rev. Robert Muter ministered there from 1800 to 1842; in his old age he offered to return half of his stipend if he was allowed to read his sermons instead of memorising them as previously. It was all in vain, however; 'the stern anti-burgher guardians of the old customs refused to compromise'. [24]

Speaking in general terms, then, the ministers of last century were committed to delivering around three hours of sermon material in each Sunday and to delivering every word without the aid of notes. Fleming again traces a general change in attitude to the early 1900's by which time, he says, the use of notes and even straight reading was becoming more acceptable. [25] It must appear doubly inevitable, then, even allowing for the fact that there would be those who could prepare such material both quickly and efficiently, and recognising at the same

22 W. ROBERTSON NICOLL: 'Ian Maclaren; the life of the Rev. John Watson': p. 72.

23 This being so, our sympathy must be with the controversial Edward Irving who, licensed in Kirkcaldy, 'signalised his first sermon by dropping it accidentally on the head of the precentor'. (RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 144.)

24 JAMES PRIMROSE: 'The Mother Anti-burgher Church of Glasgow': pp. 49-50.
When Donald Macleod (the biographer and brother of Norman of the Barony) was being considered for the vacant charge of Lauder, he was specifically asked if he would give an assurance that he would not read his sermons. (SYDNEY SMITH: 'Donald Macleod of Glasgow': p. 72.)

25 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 2, p. 194.

time that there would be those who either from choice or laziness scorned elaborate preparation, that the ordinary ministers would indeed spend a considerable number of hours in each week in the work of sermon preparation. Here again the biographies tell their tale. Norman Macleod, for example, records that it took him eight hours to write one sermon and four subsequent readings on the Saturday to memorise it.[26] Principal Rainy tells his father that his sermons cost him seldom less than eleven hours study.[27] James Begg states that he devoted each Wednesday and Thursday to the writing of his sermons, and utilised each Friday and Saturday in memorising them.[28]

Once again we must observe that these examples are taken from among the ranks of the preaching 'giants', but the extent of their labours in this sphere would appear from the evidence available to be little less than their less famous but none the less sincere colleagues found to be necessary. In fact, surveying the total evidence of the biographies reviewed, we conclude that most conscientious ministers found that they had to devote the working time of around three days in each week to the business of drafting, writing, and memorising their pulpit material. As we have mentioned, there were the notable exceptions. We leave to one side those who paid scant attention to such preparation through their own indifference or laziness, but there are certain cases worthy of mention in which the time of preparation was surprisingly brief but in which the end result was consistently successful.

Donald John Martin in Stornoway, for example, frequently did not know an hour beforehand what his text would be,[29] while the famous W. C. Burns would often stand silent in the pulpit for three or four minutes

26 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed., p. 83.

27 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 1, p. 113.

28 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 1, p. 99.

29 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of the Rev. Donald John Martin': p. 274.

at the beginning of a sermon while flicking through the pages of the Bible in search of a suitable text from which to preach. [30] There can have been few who so trusted in the leading of the Holy Spirit and whose results so amply justified that trust; Norman Macfarlane very fairly comments - 'Congregations that were in suspense at the start were in an ecstasy of delight at the finish'. [31] Less spectacular, perhaps, but still outwith the normal pattern, was John Macleod in Govan; his morning sermon was completed from start to finish on the Saturday forenoon, and his evening preparation was fully accomplished in one hour on the Sunday afternoon; that is, his sermon took him less time to prepare than it took to deliver. [32] Ian Maclaren, however, paints what was the usual picture for most ministers when he says that for sermon preparation the Bible was regarded as a woodyard; the planks would be selected on the Tuesday after which they would be treated with saw and plane before finally being nailed together into a useful article of furniture. [33] In practice, most ministers wrote out in full what they wished to say - we have examples preserved of sermons written out in this way for almost all of the great preaching figures of the 19th century - and then committed to memory all the salient points and as much of the precise phraseology as they felt desirable. Further, it appears to have been widespread practice for the minister to have in his pocket or in some other easily accessible place the full manuscript in case his memory should fail. Murdo Mackenzie, who ministered in Clachan, Kilmallie and Inverness between 1870 and 1911, freely admitted that he never went into the pulpit without his full script in his pocket 'in case I should stick' [34] and there were many who

30 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': pp. 274-275.

31 Ibid. p. 275.

32 R. S. KIRKPATRICK: 'Ministry of John Macleod': p. 24.

33 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': p. 276.

34 ELLA S. MACKENZIE: 'Rev. Murdo Mackenzie': p. 9.

took this similar sensible precaution.

There is perhaps no single reason we can find for the emphasis the worshipper placed on the need for the ministers to preach without the aid of notes. Mrs. Oliphant, in her biography of Principal Tulloch of St. Andrews, suggests that a memorised sermon gave the people the 'pretence of extempore speaking', [35] the thought being that true extempore speaking was what they would have preferred but that it was realised that few men were capable of it. There is certainly truth in this; in every age, there have been those who have felt that sermons and, even more particularly, pulpit prayers, should be more at the spontaneous dictation of the Holy Spirit and less obviously a result of cold detached preparation in the study some days before the actual service. The memorised sermon, then, could well have been something of a compromise, an acceptance of something which, while known to be second best, yet appeared like the ideal. It is also relevant, however, to remember that the sermon in the Scottish Reformed Church was always the centre and the climax of any service of worship; this being so, there would be those worshippers who would feel most strongly that it should be carefully and prayerfully prepared, and they could feel more sure that the necessary hours of preparation had in fact been spent if the finished article was delivered from memory and not either read from a perhaps hastily written page or stumbled over in an embarrassing exhibition of genuine extempore speaking. On this point, too, it is proper to note the utter rejection of any preacher who dared to preach a sermon which properly belonged to someone else. It did not matter how good the sermon might be or how relevant; the eminence of the original author was not considered; the preaching of another's discourse was universally regarded as unforgivable. Thomas Guthrie, in his autobiography, states that any preacher who was discovered resorting to this practice was considered

35 MRS. OLIPHANT: 'Memoir of Principal John Tulloch': pp. 28-29.

'guilty of a disgraceful, if not a dishonest transaction, of something far worse than smuggling, illicit distilling of whisky, or evading custom-house duties'. [36]

Incidentally, it is interesting to discover that, while a minister might not borrow a fresh sermon from a distinguished colleague, and while he incurred immediate disapproval if he read his own new and diligently prepared material, he could, without inevitable censure, repeat the same sermon over and over again. Norman Macleod of the Barony, for example, freely admitted that he had preached one particular sermon on at least fifteen occasions including a service attended by Queen Victoria at Crathie. [37] We might not be surprised at this practice if the congregations in each case were different. There are numerous examples, however, where this was manifestly not so. John Cairns of Berwick, for example, regularly undertook strenuous preaching tours. The physical strain was considerable, but the intellectual effort was less than otherwise it would have been because of the fact that he confined himself to just a few sermons which he rarely altered. Alexander MacEwen tells us that in the congregations where Cairns was well known a few smiles would be seen when a familiar text was announced; they were, however, 'smiles of pleased recognition'. 'Plain people would boast how many times they had heard the same sermon from him and would indeed be rather sorry if the sermon was a new one'. [38] The same minister was paid a tremendous compliment by his office-bearers in that, in a time of overwork, they suggested that he should repeat previous series of lectures instead of preparing new ones. [39] It is a mark of Cairns' ability and personality that the numbers attending this series of repeats were not less than when they were first delivered.

36 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 63.

37 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 380.

38 A. R. MACEWEN: 'Life and Letters of John Cairns': p. 646.

39 Ibid. p. 453.

A similar situation existed in Liverpool during the ministry of John Watson. Robertson Nicoll tells of a member of Watson's Church who was absent from a particular evening service. The sermon that night was on 'the peace of God'; she had heard Watson deliver it twice before, yet, when she discovered what she had missed she was visibly upset and she records that 'the entire family circle condoled with me in my loss'. [40]

The worshippers, then, greatly preferred the memorised or the extempore sermon; either way it could convince the congregation that the Holy Spirit was being allowed the freedom to direct the preacher's words. It gave the assurance also that what they were hearing was in fact the result of the careful preparation that the climax of the service deserved, and it encouraged those listening to believe that the sermon was the minister's own work and not a borrowing of someone else's labours. And from the minister's point of view, this custom allowed him to see the faces of the congregation right throughout his sermon with all the benefits that this always brings. It necessarily meant added hours in the study mid-week, but the vast majority of the ministers took this part of their week with great seriousness and did not grudge any of their time spent in this way. Indeed for many these were hours of near total withdrawal from the world with the study door firmly closed against all but the most urgent caller. For example, one of the lay missionary assistants in Berwick says that his 'bishop', John Cairns, had a way of letting callers at this time know, without discourtesy, that he wished them to hasten their departure. [41] Alexander Somerville, Free Church minister in Anderston, Glasgow, from 1844 to 1877, was even more determined that his Saturdays - his most valued time of preparation - would not be interrupted; his servant was well used to receiving this instruction: 'Now if the Queen calls to-day,

40 W. ROBERTSON NICOLL: 'Ian Maclaren; Life of the Rev. John Watson': p. 108.

41 A. R. MACEWEN: 'Life and Letters of John Cairns': p. 318.

tell her I am sorry I cannot see her till Monday'. [42] Some ministers literally went into hiding so that their peace would be guaranteed. Thomas Guthrie, for instance, locked himself in the Church Vestry; [43] Dr. James MacGregor, while in Paisley High, regularly retired to the Church steeple; [44] and Robert Finlayson, minister of Lochs in Lewis from 1831 to 1856, made good use of a nearby cave. [45] The Rev. Archibald Browning of Tillicoultry, who died in 1858, ensured his privacy rather more simply in that he preferred to write his sermons in bed; the end result, however, justified, to himself at least, this somewhat unusual approach: 'I always come to bed when I want to make a good sermon', he said. [46]

The majority of the ministers, however, simply made good use of their studies; they let it be known that casual callers would not be welcome during these hours, and their servants were instructed to deal politely but firmly with any who would have interrupted them unnecessarily. It was a serious business to make ready sufficient material to occupy in a suitable way three hours of pulpit time each week and the men responsible took it seriously.

THE 19th CENTURY SERMON: ITS STRUCTURE

Before we leave this aspect of the minister's week, however, there is one final observation which we can in fairness make and which perhaps goes some small way towards explaining how our ministerial forefathers could, without reference to any notes, discourse on the Scriptures with a greater fluency

42 A. N. SOMERVILLE: 'Precious Seed': p. 45 of the Biographical Sketch.

43 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 190.

44 THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 18.

45 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 63.

46 Anon.: 'James Robertson of Newington': p. 17.

and length than many of us to-day would find possible.

There is a type of sermon in which it is almost easier to speak at length than it is to speak briefly and succinctly. We are accustomed to-day to sermons which are close-knit in their construction, which are tied firmly to the initial text, and in which the flow of ideas follows a logical and easily discernible pattern. It would indeed have been very difficult for the average minister to prepare and memorise adequately three hour-long addresses of this highly disciplined sort. Rather easier, however, would be the preparation of a sermon which more resembled a loosely connected ramble through a diversity of subjects and where the text acted as more of a starting point than an anchor. In such sermons, length is not in itself difficult to achieve; nor is the finished work necessarily difficult to commit to memory in a manner that will prevent the preacher 'sticking' in the pulpit. In such sermons, the preacher's favourite themes can, with regularity, be incorporated so that his flow of words is almost guaranteed; in addition, if several of the sermon headings get displaced in the pulpit delivery, there is not the same damage done as the construction is sufficiently loose-fitting to permit of sudden re-arrangement. [47] Now the fact is that, in the 19th century, not a few of the ministers favoured this style of sermon. When James Hamilton of Regent Square Church in London was a student, he wrote in his day-book in 1838: 'Some preachers use their text as a louping-on-stane; if by help of it they can only get mounted they do

47 In fact, it was very common to construct one's sermons with very many 'heads'; in addition, each 'head' could contain several sections and sub-sections so that only the very alert in the pews would be able to spot that certain paragraphs as delivered might more suitably have been placed in a different order. The acknowledged expert in the matter of 'many-headed' sermons was Boston of Ettrick; one of his sermons has 86 heads, another 76, and there are many with well over 50. (SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE: 'Scottish Reminiscences': p. 79.)

not care how far they go from it or if they ever see it again'. [48] We have seen that Charles Warr, in his biography of Principal Caird, described the pulpit prayers of the 1840's as 'almost invariably an interminable meander over the whole field of orthodoxy from the Fall of Man to the Last Judgment'; [49] we note now that he went on to say that the sermons were 'more often than not a repetition of the subject of the prayers on a more flamboyant and incomprehensible scale'. [50] In John Galt's fictional masterpiece, 'The Annals of the Parish', we might imagine that he was guilty of some exaggeration in making his minister-hero, Micah Balwhidder, preach sixteen different sermons on a single text, 'Render to Caesar', [51] but we have yet more extreme examples from the realms of fact; Alexander Stewart, for example, minister of Cromarty from 1824 to 1847 and the elected successor to Dr. Candlish in Free St. George's, Edinburgh, preached on the Red Heifer of the Book of Numbers 'for an endless series of Sundays and always with freshness'. [52]

Such facts and comments are not quoted here in an attempt to belittle either the sermons or the preachers of the last century. Styles and tastes change with the years, and if the average sermon then was less rigidly constructed than we to-day expect, we cannot for a moment disguise the fact that there were many compelling orators who used that style to great effect. We are concerned simply to note any factors that helped lessen the great burden of preparation that lay on each parish minister. In the end of the day, however, we can only conclude that preparation for the pulpit was almost universally regarded as the first

48 WILLIAM ARNOT: 'Life of James Hamilton': p. 104.

49 See p. 102.

50 CHARLES L. WARR: 'Principal Caird': pp. 96-97.

51 JOHN GALT: 'Annals of the Parish': 1910 ed. p. 15.

52 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 42-43.
Stewart published a volume of his skeleton sermons entitled 'The Tree of Promise': it is entirely occupied with the sacrifices and ritual of the Aaronic period.

and most important charge on a minister's time. Principal Tulloch of St. Andrews was in no doubt on this point; 'Sermon writing is a minister's first duty' was his expressed opinion; [53] Professor W. Garden Blaikie, too, was equally insistent on this matter in the lectures he delivered to the students of New College, Edinburgh; 'Pastoral visitation, though so desirable, is a duty inferior to that of the pulpit and it is not to be allowed to interfere with its efficiency'. [54] Most dogmatic of all, however, was Dr. Fairbairn of Newhaven who is quoted in these terms by Alexander Whyte: 'Prepare for the pulpit; above everything you do, prepare for the pulpit. Should it at any time stand with you between visiting a deathbed and preparing for the pulpit, prepare for the pulpit'. [55] We would not, I imagine, be happy to think that the ministers of the Gospel in any generation were carrying out this last instruction to the letter, but the spirit of such advice was heeded by Scotland's ministers in the 19th century. The century did end with a gradual curtailment of the length of the normal sermon; the worshippers were gradually to become more tolerant of the use of notes to assist the delivery of the sermon; the ministers were more and more finding their time taken up with the developing framework of week-night organisations; but throughout the century under consideration, the sermon was the climax of worship, and preparation for this climax was the number one priority, occupying often as much as three days in each week in the minister's schedule of work.

53 MRS. OLIPHANT: 'Memoir of Principal John Tulloch': p. 48.

54 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'For the work of the ministry': 1874 ed. p. 287.

55 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 155.

C H A P T E R F I V E

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THE 19TH CENTURY PARISH MINISTER: THE VISITOR TO THE HOME.

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CHAPTER FIVE: The 19th century parish minister: the visitor to the home.

The other major recurring duty of every ministerial week was that of visiting the people in their homes. In the early years of the 19th century, this, generally speaking, involved the minister in doing two things. As an invariable routine, and working to a rota, he had to pay systematic catechetical visits to each household at least once in every year; in addition, he had to be ready, at any time, to pay a visit or a considerable number of visits to any home where there was illness or where death seemed imminent.

'From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures'

For the first fifty or sixty years of last century, the catechetical visits continued to be of a formal and even of a severe nature. In these visits, the children of the household were examined, with every child of eight years of age and over being questioned individually. The words of the catechism, for example, had to be fully known, even if they were not anything like fully understood; [1] certain psalms and other passages of Scripture had likewise to be recited without stumbling, and each individual had to be able to repeat the particular passage which had been prescribed for him on the previous visit. Any hesitation or uncertainty brought immediate disgrace to the child and earned subsequent public rebuke for the parents for failing in their parental responsibilities. Following the children's examination, the servants were subjected to much the same kind of enquiry, and the whole affair was concluded with a solemn admonition and address to all the members of the

1 John Cairns of Berwick tells of meeting a child of nine in the early 1870's; 'he could not tell me in what county he lived, but when set agoing he could answer the question, What is man's chief end? ....' (A. R. MACEWEN: Life and Letters of John Cairns': p. 719.)

household, couched always in terms relating to their personal situation and duties. [2] Just how searching the minister's questioning at this time could be, and how personal were the matters he was permitted to raise, is seen from the lectures delivered in Aberdeen University by Alexander Gerard. Published in 1799, these lectures formed the course of instruction which the Northern Divinity students would receive who would be going to their first parish in the dying years of the 18th century or very early in the 19th century. Dealing with the minister's conduct of catechetical visits, Gerard says, 'The minister may inquire how the husband and wife behave to each other, give them directions for the practice of their several duties, point out to them faults of conduct.....he may examine the masters and the servants, how they treat each other, he may inculcate on parents the obligation of taking care of the virtuous education of their children.....he should recommend family religion, particularly the reading of the Scriptures'. Recognising that families frequently met together for such catechetical visits, Gerard offers this advice: 'In this case, the minister has a fit opportunity of inquiring on what terms they live with one another.....a minister may direct neighbours to keep an eye on the conduct of each other, to admonish each other privately whenever they find one another guilty of a fault, or wanting in any duty. By this means, they may be rendered useful monitors to each other'. [3]

Understandably, perhaps, such catechetical visits were scarcely looked forward to in the average household, but it was difficult to escape them. Despite the fact that the visits were frequently conducted during the hours when people were normally at work, employers generally seemed to grant ready enough release to their

2 SIR HENRY MONCRIEFF WELLWOOD: 'Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine': p. 70.
A. H. CHARTERIS: 'The Life of Professor Robertson': pp. 40-42.

3 ALEXANDER GERARD: 'Pastoral Care': pp. 213-215.

workers when the time of their annual examination was due. Two examples will illustrate this last fact very clearly. Andrew Somerville, Secession minister in Dumbarton from 1830 to 1845, had a system whereby his elders distributed cards to those families shortly to be visited; each card stated the precise day and hour that the minister would call so that everyone could arrange to be present. So successful was this method of working that Somerville was able to record, 'I have gone over the whole congregation without a single member being absent, no master refusing the workman leave of absence for the short time that I was to be in the house'. [4] A similar procedure was followed by John Cairns in Berwick: again the day and hour of each visit was intimated well beforehand, and, as in Dumbarton, 'the merchants and shopkeepers of the towns never hesitated to let young people away from business in order that they might attend'. [5]

According to Principal Story, it was in the 1860's that many ministers finally departed from the practice of formally catechising each household, introducing instead a less severe and rather more informal type of visit. [6] In the lowlands of Scotland particularly, the former school-master-like severity and the rigid question-and-answer formula did give way to a more homely approach; in the highlands, however, such a change was considerably later in coming. The Rev. Murdo Mackenzie was minister of Kilmallie Free Church from 1873 to 1887 and all through this period his diets of catechising remained true to the traditional pattern. His wife attests that 'at the catechising old and young were subjected to a most searching examination as to their historical and spiritual knowledge'; in a very descriptive phrase, she says that her husband on these occasions turned the adult mind inside-out and shook it. [7]

4 WILLIAM GRAHAM: 'Andrew Somerville, an autobiography': pp. 120-121.

5 A. R. MACEWEN: 'Life and Letters of John Cairns': p. 326.

6 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 44.

7 ELLA S. MACKENZIE: 'Rev. Murdo Mackenzie': p. 19.

So far as the lowlands were concerned, we should be very prompt to note that the visits of the minister that replaced the former visits for the purpose of catechising the members of the household were not in any way of a light or frivolous nature. Always they were occasions of religious significance; always there was a time of prayer with the family and very often also a formal address. Whereas, however, a minister might spend thirty minutes in each home examining on the catechism, the general tendency was for the newer less formal type of visits to be considered capable of being concluded in half that time. There was a growing belief that there should be greater contact between the minister and his people so that a strong relationship might be established between pastor and flock. Greater informality when the minister visited the home did much to achieve this; the knowledge that the minister was not coming as an examiner made for a more relaxed atmosphere; and the shorter duration of the visits meant that the minister was thus able to visit each home more frequently.

We must emphasise, however, that the ministers left their people in no doubt that their visits had an entirely serious religious purpose; the greater informality was in no way an indication that they would fritter their time away in the idle exchange of gossip. John Watson of Liverpool, for example, could be guaranteed to stay no more than fifteen minutes in each house, and he let it be clearly understood that in that time 'business was to be done and gossip left out'. [8] John Macleod's assistants in Govan were under orders to complete not less than fifty house to house visits each in every week; understandably, then, they adhered to the same brisk timetable with all the emphasis being on a helpful word and a prayer. [9] Alexander Whyte, who talked scathingly of pastors

8 W. ROBERTSON NICOLL: 'Ian Maclaren: Life of the Rev. John Watson': p. 121.

9 R. S. KIRKPATRICK: 'Ministry of John Macleod': p. 277.

in the previous century who spent their visits 'cursing the weather and telling and hearing of the approaching marriages', [10] never allowed himself the chance of falling into the same trap. He had, by nature, 'no small change of conversation' and he took care that none should develop, often staying in a house only long enough to repeat a verse of a hymn and say a prayer. [11] It does in fact appear that many ministers, conscious of the great break with tradition that this style of visiting entailed, had a dread of secular conversation coming in to detract from the serious purpose that they still felt their visits must have. On the rare occasions when John Caird in Errol found himself forced into the 'interchange of banalities' in the farmhouse or cottage, he said he experienced a 'thorough-going exhaustion' [12] which the more normal, and mentally more arduous activities of visitation never caused him.

It is undeniable, however, that these visits, brief and serious in tone though they were, were much more popular than the former diets of catechism. They succeeded in their aim of bringing minister and people closer together; they showed the church members that their ministers were truly interested in them as people and not just as machines for storing and reciting the Scriptures and the catechism; the ordinary men and women of Scotland felt that now their ministers were interested in their daily lives and in their domestic surroundings, and there was a genuine pride obvious when the minister had paid a visit to their homes. To have John or Norman Macleod utter a prayer in one's house was a matter to boast of for many a day; the hymn quoted by Whyte or the tracts left by Cameron Lees or Guthrie were for ever precious. [13]

10 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 308.

11 Ibid. pp. 362-363.

12 CHARLES L. WARR: 'Principal Caird': p. 121.

13 Whyte's visits could be very brief, but they were often tinged with a real homeliness; in one home, for example, he formally quoted a well known verse of Scripture, and then, at the door, added, 'Put that under your tongue and suck it like a sweetie'. (G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 364.)

John Eadie was one of the pioneers in introducing a note of informality into the visit of the minister. In the 1840's, while minister of Cambridge Street U. P. Church in Glasgow, he ceased the practice of giving an address in each home, insisting only that each visit should end with prayer. [14] Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, Edinburgh, advocated an even greater departure from tradition in the lectures on Pastoral Theology which he delivered to the Edinburgh Divinity students towards the end of the 19th century: 'Avoid', he said, 'ostentatiously talking religion and the unctuous use of Scriptural phrases, but seek opportunity naturally to leave a word that may be remembered; do not think it necessary always to conduct a formal service; pray with the family if there is an opportunity, but do not think that the visit is wasted if there is none'. [15] One who gave practical expression to this kind of advice was the very gifted George Morrison of Wellington Church, Glasgow. He was inducted to this Church in 1902 as colleague to Dr. Black, and therefore this part of his ministry lies wholly outwith the century which is our primary concern; we do see in him, however, an outstanding example of the 'new' pastor. He himself said, 'Pastoral work is the crown of my ministry': he averaged not less than one thousand visits in each year, and all of them were methodically indexed by him for future reference: [16] his congregation were devoted to him and many are the tributes to the real blessing that his visits to their homes brought; and yet thirty or forty years earlier, the form and content of these visits would have been thought unsatisfactory both by his ministerial colleagues and his devout Church members.

Morrison, of course, was fortunate in that his senior colleague, Dr. Black, was of a like mind in many

14 JAMES BROWN: 'Life of John Eadie': pp. 88-89.

15 THE HON. LORD SANDS: 'Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, Edinburgh, and his times': p. 294.

16 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'Dr. George H. Morrison': pp. 179-180.

matters relating to pastoral visitation. He had, for example, told the congregation that they should not 'expect their minister to conduct religious exercises at their homes as a regular thing'; in explanation he had pointed to the deadening influence that conducting formal devotions as often as ten times in the one day could have on even the most pious individual. [17] This, then, made the congregation more receptive to Morrison who very soon decided that readings from the Scriptures and the saying of prayers would normally be restricted to visits where there was illness or trouble. Morrison in fact admits, 'I often used to lose the happy freedom of Christian intercourse by the haunting thought that I must get a prayer offered before leaving'. [18] Black and Morrison were, then, representatives of the coming style of parish ministers who regarded happy, social, Christian fellowship and sympathy as worthwhile ends in themselves, who saw house to house visitation as the means whereby they could come to know and be known by their people so that in any trouble or difficulty help could more easily and more naturally be given, and who endeavoured to take a genuine interest in their people's life as a whole. To this end, Morrison followed the practice adopted by Alexander Whyte in St. George's, Edinburgh, and sent innumerable personal post cards to supplement his regular visits. [19] Any promotion or success that any of his people gained was marked at once in this way; impending journeys, worrying news, bereavements even in far off branches of the family, were likewise matters to warrant a card; indeed it seemed that nothing happened to any member of any associated family without Whyte and Morrison keeping track of it in this way. The cards were by no means elaborate; often there would be only a single sentence or a text; but by such methods, and by the more frequent, more homely, house-to-house visitation, the close contact between minister and people which had been

17 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'Dr. George H. Morrison': p. 180.

18 Ibid. p. 180.

19 Ibid. pp. 181-182.

established initially through the catechetical visitations was not only being preserved but was in fact being strengthened inasmuch as the bond was more of love and less of fear.

Throughout the 19th century, then, the conscientious parish minister had his routine pastoral visitation which had to be faithfully attended to and which, no matter the area, the period, or the type of visitation favoured, inevitably demanded a considerable number of hours in each week. James Begg, for example, devoted each Monday and Tuesday afternoon to this regular form of visitation;[20] Norman Macleod, Alexander Whyte, Dr. Brown of Rose Street, and James Robertson of Newington, appear to have spent regularly three afternoons each week in this work, while those like John Macleod who needed[21] rather less than the normal time for formal sermon preparation gave over almost every afternoon to the task of meeting the people in their homes. Obviously it is not possible to arrive at any meaningful average so far as the number of such visits a minister might complete in a year is concerned; there are too many factors which inevitably varied both with the individual nature of each parish and with the personal convictions of each minister. From the figures quoted in the various biographies, however, we can affirm with confidence that Scotland's ministers in the last century did not spare themselves in their determination to be with regularity in the homes of their people; we can further state, from the evidence of the labours of men like McCheyne, John Macleod, and James Begg, that Morrison's thousand visits in a year did not represent a level of pastoral activity peculiar to one fortunate parish; the faithful parish minister, spending two or more days in each week preparing his sermons, willingly gave

20 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 1, p. 99.

21 R. S. KIRKPATRICK: 'The Ministry of John Macleod': p. 64.

as much or even more time to the task of routine visitation. [22]

It would in fact be possible, on a superficial reading of the evidence, to imagine that the ministers were divided as to which duty, preaching or visiting, was truly the more important. We have seen, for example, that the advice of Principal Tulloch, of Professor Blaikie, of Alexander Whyte and others was that sermon preparation was the number one inescapable duty laid on any minister. [23] Against this, we could set quotations from men of equal merit which might seem to exalt the task of visitation above even that of preaching. From Alexander Gerard's lectures in Aberdeen, for example, we could draw this comment; 'The lower sort will reap more benefit from half an hour of private conversation, prudently conducted, than from the sermons of a whole year'. [24] Again we could quote the words of Robert Burns, minister in Paisley from 1811 to 1845: 'Visiting is the very life-blood of a successful ministry: if we don't go to the people, they won't come to us'. [25] Even more convincing might be the testimony of John Macleod in Govan who stated that for him visiting was the 'primary duty of a faithful pastor'; 'nothing', he declared with vigour, 'could better promote the designs of the arch-enemy of human souls than that the shepherds of the Church should shut themselves up in their studies'. [26]

22 We gain some idea of how far some of these ministers must have walked in a year - much of it in the course of visiting their people - when we read that Cameron Lees, who carried a pedometer, walked 2090 miles in 1910, that is when he was over 75 years of age. (NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 299.)

23 See p. 114.

24 ALEXANDER GERARD: 'Pastoral Care': p. 116.

25 R. F. BURNS: 'Life and Times of Robert Burns of Paisley': p. 50.

26 R. S. KIRKPATRICK: 'Ministry of John Macleod': pp. 64-65.

In very few cases, however, does it appear that ministers consciously came to the point of deciding to relegate to a place of lesser importance either their sermon preparation or their routine visitation. In certain very busy town charges, there had certainly to be a strict disciplining of time and work, but for the majority of men, these were seen as complementary rather than rival duties in any faithful ministry. If preaching could be said to make the bricks, systematic visitation cemented them firmly in place. This latter work might with some men occupy rather more hours in the week than would the former; nevertheless, we would, I think, be justified in abiding by our former statement that preparation for the pulpit was almost universally regarded as the first and most important charge on a minister's time. The overall weight of advice offered in the Divinity Colleges was to this effect, and individual ministers did seem to regard the time they set apart for preparing for the pulpit, however long or short that time might be, as less open to interruption or cancellation than were the hours normally allocated to visitation. Chalmers frequently claimed that a 'house-going minister makes for a Church-going people', [27] but he never for a moment meant this to be used as justification for shoddy pulpit preparation; Stevenson MacGill is quoted as saying that 'the minister who is never seen, save once a week in the pulpit, can hardly expect to acquire or to keep a very strong hold of the affections of his people', [28] but this is no more than the stating of a necessary but perhaps obvious truth relating to one aspect of the minister's life. The ministers of the 19th century, then, saw clearly that preaching and visiting were the two main recurring occupations of each and every week; they allotted them often an almost equal period of time; they were seen as essential partners in any true ministry. The work of

27 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 381.

28 R. BURNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Stevenson MacGill': p. 40.

preaching and preparing for preaching, however, was seen as the major duty in terms of strict importance; it could not be postponed; it dare not be shirked; and, except in real emergency, the study doors, during the hours of preparation, remained firmly closed.

As far as the congregations were concerned, however, it is possible, I think, to detect a definite change in attitude as the 19th century progressed. For the first fifty or sixty years of the century, the minister's visit, as we saw, was not greatly looked forward to as there was very often little genuine warmth or friendliness apparent. In such circumstances, we can understand it if the minister was judged by his efforts in the pulpit. As the nature of the house visits changed, however, so the people's standard of judgment began to change also. Lord Sands, for example, in his biography of Dr. Archibald Scott, says, 'Among the humbler classes in Scotland generally, visitation of the people in their homes is the accepted gauge of ministerial efficiency'. [29] Now Dr. Scott, minister in St. George's, Edinburgh, at the close of the 19th century, held, as we saw from his lectures to the Divinity students, decidedly modern views as to the style of visitation a minister should adopt. [30] Lord Sands' comment, writing as he did in the early part of the 20th century, shows not only that this approach to congregational visitation was increasingly common, but that it was popular to the point of being one of the main determining factors in a congregation's mind in forming a critical estimate of any minister's worth. There was, then, this shift in emphasis. Week-night organisations were making their appearance in large numbers and the minister was expected to be in the midst of them; the minister's visit to the home had lost its former severity; the Sunday sermons were considerably shorter and there was not the same sacred importance

29 THE HON. LORD SANDS: 'Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, Edinburgh, and his times': pp. 56-57.

30 See p. 120.

attached to the methods of delivery; the minister was much more frequently amongst his people as a man among men, with the result that, for the ordinary man and woman, the extent to which he possessed the personal, even the common touch, assumed great importance. Speaking at the Baptist Union in London in 1899, Robertson Nicoll, editor of the British Weekly, said, 'A minister is tempted to conclude that he will do his best work in visitation and organising; it is not so. If the preaching is not the life of the Churches, if it is dried up, everything will fall. The real test of a preacher's character is not the number of miles he walks or the number of meetings he addresses, but his diligence in doing the work for which God set him apart'. [31] Even at the end of the 19th century, the majority of Scotland's ministers would probably have agreed with this statement; one could not, however, be as certain that the members in the pews would have reached such a clear-cut decision.

'Pure religion is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction'.

When first turning to the question of the minister's visitation of his people, we mentioned that this involved him primarily in doing two things. Having seen, then, something of the routine side of this work, we look now at his response to the needs of the sick and dying. Earlier in our study, when comparing the Moderates and the Evangelicals, we noted with satisfaction that Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood felt able to say that 'Visitation of the sick and dying is a labour of perpetual recurrence and it is in no country of Christendom more faithfully attended to than in Scotland'; [32] on a careful review of the evidence available, it appears that this, the verdict on the situation at the outset of the 19th century, was justified comment; further, it is a verdict that could

31 JANE T. STODDART: 'W. Robertson Nicoll': pp. 127-128.

32 See p. 19.

fairly be reached at any time during the 19th century. As before, we are concerned, not with the lazy parish minister who can be found in any generation, but with the truly dedicated man of God seeking to discharge faithfully his divinely appointed duties, and the fact is that no matter where we look, whether in the north or south, whether in the towns or in the rural areas, no matter at what period we look, whether before or after the Disruption, and no matter whether we consider the Established Church, the Free Church, or the Secession Churches, the evidence is that the honest parish minister was extremely diligent in his ministry to the sick and the dying.

We read, for example, that Murray McCheyne, who was himself almost continually in ill-health, would visit anyone who was sick as often as six or seven times in just two or three days and that he would continue such attention until either the patient recovered or he died. [33] John Milne, too, visited all his invalids at least once each day and if, for any reason, he was unable to call in person, he invariably sent a note or a card or a tract, all with pencilled texts for the invalid or his relatives to look up. [34] William Robertson, inducted as minister of Irvine Secession Church in 1843, took this duty so seriously that he willingly visited the sick whenever they were in most need of comfort or whenever they were normally at their brightest. So we read that midnight visits were no novelty to him, nor were they regarded as an inconvenience. [35]

In the same way, distance was not seen as a barrier to duty. Norman Macleod tells of ministers in the north of Scotland who would, without grumbling, walk sixteen or more miles to visit one parishioner who was sick. [36] James Begg, at the age of 72, journeyed from

33 ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': pp. 74-76.

34 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th ed. p. 323.

35 ARTHUR GUTHRIE: 'Robertson of Irvine': 3rd ed. p. 76.

36 NORMAN MACLEOD: 'Reminiscences of a Highland Parish': p. 88.

Edinburgh to Moffat to call personally on one of his flock who had taken ill while there on holiday. [37] On a similar errand, Thomas Guthrie crossed the Border into England on one occasion. [38] Example after example of this kind of devoted attention can be quoted from all corners of the land; distance was no object in face of this call to service; the hour of day or night was never considered; even the sacred hours of sermon preparation were sacrificed - despite the advice of Dr. Fairbairn quoted earlier [39] - if word came of one of the flock lying ill.

All this is in itself most praise-worthy, but it is of importance to realise that these visits were not simply seen as occasions for reading comforting words from the Scriptures and for offering prayers to God for the sufferer. Even in the days when the routine ministerial visit was concerned with the catechism and little else, the minister was at pains, wherever possible, to care not only for the spiritual needs of the sick but for their physical needs also. For some, this meant carrying in buckets of coal, chopping firewood, cooking a meal, or seeing to the ordering of the necessary household provisions; J. P. Struthers of Greenock, for example, tells with obvious pleasure that he succeeded in making a plate of porridge to the satisfaction of his oldest member while she was confined to bed. [40] For others, however, their acts of mercy on these occasions showed a devotion which in some cases amounted to real courage. Typhus and cholera were all too frequent visitors to our country during the last century, and always they brought widespread suffering and large numbers of deaths. In the typhus epidemic in Glasgow in 1865, for instance, over 1,100 people died. [41]

37 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 2, p. 20.

38 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 181.

39 See p. 114.

40 A. L. STRUTHERS: 'Life and Letters of John Paterson Struthers': p. 194.

41 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 151.

In such situations, many ministers became not only pastors but nurses and even doctors. Skilled medical attention was scarce in many places; the people lacked the knowledge and the ability to take the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection, and, most important of all, there was such a fear of these diseases that once a house became infected, no outsider would cross its door.

So the ministers went where others would not go, and they did what no one else would do. Thomas Guthrie, for instance, was the only person in Arbirlot in the epidemic of 1834 who was willing to enter infected houses and care for the sick. [42] John Milne was similarly on his own in this work in Perth, [43] while John Eadie in Glasgow actually made it his invariable rule to visit all infected homes whether he was needed as a 'nurse' or not. [44] Norman Macleod's father in Torrance, and the elder Story in Rosneath were two who on occasion had to see such work through to the bitter end in that they dressed and coffined the bodies of those who died of fever and whose relatives, for fear of infection, would not go near. [45]

Equally valuable was the willingness of many of the most popular ministers in the towns to include in their parish magazines and even in their Sunday services practical advice on hygiene and on steps to beat infection. Norman Macleod, for example, included in his special evening services for the poor purely secular advice of this sort; [46] Principal Story devoted part of the Rosneath

42 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, pp. 144-145.

43 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th ed. p. 323.

44 JAMES BROWN: 'Life of John Eadie': p. 89.

45 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 1st ed. Volume 1, p. 38.
ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 73.

46 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 264.

magazine to elementary medical hints, [47] and James Begg and others travelled throughout the country giving lectures under the auspices of such bodies as 'The Glasgow Auxiliary of the London Ladies Sanitary Association'. [48] It was a sign of many ministers' determination to contribute positively to the fight to eliminate the threat of such epidemics that they co-operated with local Medical Officers of Health in schemes of health education which they inaugurated. Dr. MacGregor of Glasgow's Tron Church, and Alexander Somerville of Anderston were two who organised teams from their congregations to 'preach the unknown doctrines of fresh air, pure water, and whitewash' [49] as part of the City of Glasgow's efforts to combat the cholera outbreak of 1866, and there were many others of their colleagues throughout Scotland who saw such action as a valid part of their ministry to the sick.

In the early part of the 19th century, particularly in rural areas, some ministers actually set out to care medically for their people as an everyday practice and quite unconnected with any specific emergency. Some, like Thomas Guthrie in Arbirlot in the 1830's, simply kept a medicine chest in the manse and acted as dispensers in the absence of any qualified dispensers. [50] Norman Macleod's grandfather in Morven had done the same, [51] and up until as late as the 1850's there were parishes - Garrabost for example - which were still dependent on the manses for their medical supplies. [52] Others, like Patrick

47 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': pp. 178-179.

48 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Vol. 2, p. 378.

49 THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 173.
A. N. SOMERVILLE: 'Precious Seed': pp. 15-16 of the Biographical Sketch.

50 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Vol. 1, p. 144.

51 NORMAN MACLEOD: 'Reminiscences of a Highland Parish': p. 32.

52 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 202.

Forbes of Bonharm, acted as district vaccinators, [53] although this practice did not long survive into the 19th century. For the first forty or more years of the century, however, there were parish ministers who, in addition to their more normal duties, were acting as virtual General Medical Practitioners for their parish areas. For instance, Mr. Kirkwood in Holywood, Dumfries, was famous for miles around in the 1830's as a good, if rather inadequately trained doctor; [54] at the same time, the people of Bellshill in Lanarkshire were entrusting their health to John Jamieson, the Relief Church minister, who had attended a few medical classes in his youth, [55] while in Aberdeen, Dr. Thomson, minister of St. Clement's Church until his death in 1838, managed to treble an already generous stipend by caring for the sick in body as zealously as he could ever care for the sick in soul. [56] In fairness to Dr. Thomson, it must be added that he was a fully qualified doctor and, by all accounts, an exceptionally skilful one.

Several points emerge from the foregoing facts. Firstly, it is undeniable that Scotland's ministers did, as a whole, take very seriously their duties towards the sick and the dying; they visited them faithfully and frequently and endeavoured to make their visits times of practical help as well as occasions of spiritual comfort and reassurance. In some cases, this devotion to duty knew no bounds whatsoever and the ministers willingly risked their own health to care for those who, in many cases, could never hope to be well again. Such actions undoubtedly strengthened the bond between Church and people and the long term effects could only be for the best in terms of the Church's standing and influence in the eyes of the

53 W. KEITH LEASK: 'Dr. Thomas McLauchlan': pp. 22-23.

54 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 1, p. 94.

55 W. R. THOMSON: 'The First Relief Church in the West': p. 33.

56 DONALD SAGE: 'Memorabilia Domestica': 1899 edition: p. 228.
ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'The Churches of Aberdeen': pp. 56-57.

people. Secondly, we see from the facts quoted that the various denominations and their faithful ministers developed, as the 19th century progressed, an increasing sense of their responsibility towards total community welfare. The Christian ministry to the sick and the dying was seen to involve much more than religion alone, and was seen to be concerned not only with a person's fitness for the life to come but with everyone's right to as healthy an existence in the present world as was possible. This development in the Church's outlook was, of course, just one part of the growing awareness we noted earlier that, particularly in the rapidly expanding towns, there were many men and women living more at animal than human level. Thirdly, we see a further area where there could be said to be justification for ministerial pluralities. We saw earlier that, in certain circumstances which did exist in Scotland at the end of the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century, one could justify a minister holding both a parochial and a University appointment. Similarly, the lack of adequate professional medical skill in Scotland for the first half of the 19th century made it almost imperative that, where a minister had even elementary medical training, a union of offices should be encouraged. Certainly this is the line taken by Alexander Gerard in his series of lectures in Aberdeen to which reference has already been made; he lists involvement in teaching, agriculture, and medicine as permissible occupations in ministers, always assuming - and with this we could never disagree - that they were to some extent qualified in these matters. [57] Incidentally, it is perhaps surprising that we find few examples of ministers being involved in the kindred spheres of dentistry and veterinary medicine. There was a minister near Cameron Lees in Strathconan who was acknowledged to be an adequate 'cow doctor'; [58] Henry Duncan in Ruthwell was, to his

57 ALEXANDER GERARD: 'Pastoral Care': pp. 232-233.

58 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 75. 'As a minister he was of no account, but as a 'cow doctor' he was a man greatly esteemed and valued not only in his own but in neighbouring parishes'.

complete satisfaction, his own dentist, but he declined to try his skills on anyone else. [59] These apart, however, ministerial examples of these attributes are decidedly few. Finally, it is, surely, a mark of the respect that Scotsmen had for their ministers, and a sign of the inherent trust they had in what their ministers did, that such a vital matter as one's health was entrusted to them even although in some cases their medical knowledge was severely limited. Here is further proof, that, in the early years of the 19th century at least, the minister did occupy a unique position in many communities.

The Church member of last century, then, could expect to be visited by his minister at least once in each year if he remained healthy, with many additional calls if his health failed. Furthermore, his minister was not slow to call if family circumstances, apart altogether from ill health or bereavement, seemed to him to warrant it. Any breath of scandal would bring him quickly on the scene; any momentous decision was usually taken after advice received from the minister in a visit; supremely, of course, unaccustomed absence from Sunday worship virtually guaranteed in many places a swift personal enquiry from the minister as to the cause. In part, this is further evidence to show the hold that a minister had over his people; in part it reveals a dictatorial attitude that drove men to attend worship regularly when, given complete freedom of choice, they might have been only occasional in their attendance; in part, it stemmed from an honest desire in the minister to keep his people in the straight and narrow; we must, however, acknowledge that very often the minister's concern at the absence of a familiar face from Church was a further sign of his determination to carry out fully his ministry to the sick. Illness could arise with terrifying suddenness; often it would have been too late to await a further Sunday and observe attendances then. So John Milne in Perth spent

59 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of the Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 206.

each Sunday evening in the work of visiting those whom he had missed from their pews, giving, where possible, a resume of the day's sermons.[60] Others, like Andrew Bonar in Finnieston and Alexander Campbell in Irvine Secession Church, waited until later in the week, but their thoroughness was no less complete.[61] All things considered, then, we would, I think, be justified in agreeing wholeheartedly with Alexander MacEwen who, in his biography of Cairns of Berwick, says that the unflagging regularity with which ministers visited their people has, more than anything else, 'given the clergy of Scotland a hold upon the Scottish people'.[62]

60 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 1869 edition: p. 437.

61 MARJORY BONAR: 'Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Letters': p. 188.
ARTHUR GUTHRIE: 'Robertson of Irvine': 3rd edition: p. 43.
Guthrie says that Campbell 'beat up Sunday absentees in the course of the following week'.

62 A. R. MACEWEN: 'Life and Letters of John Cairns': p. 326.

C H A P T E R S I X

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THE 19TH CENTURY MINISTER:
HIS CONTACT WITH
THE CHILDREN OF HIS PARISH.

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CHAPTER SIX: The 19th century minister: his contact with the children of his parish.

'Suffer the little children to come unto me'

CHURCH AND SCHOOL

We have noted already that the minister paid particular attention to the children of the household in any catechetical visit; something of a formal link, then, between the minister and the young people of his parish was thus established and accepted. What immeasurably strengthened this link, however, was the fact that, until the State took over responsibility for education in 1872, the schools of Scotland were Church controlled with the supervision of their work in the hands of Presbyteries and parish ministers. Now quite clearly this official tie-up between the Church and the schools afforded the conscientious parish minister considerable opportunity for influencing the young people in his area in their impressionable formative years. The further fact is that in many parishes there was much more than just this official link existing between the Church and the school. For instance, many of the school teachers were divinity students who, while thus earning a living and keeping the educational system operative, were proceeding to ordination by fulfilling the requirements of 'partial' attendance at Divinity College which we mentioned earlier.[1] In the normal run of things, they could be expected to be in full sympathy with and to co-operate with the parish ministers. Again, not a few of the teachers were 'stickit' ministers; that is, they were ministers of the Church, fully qualified and licensed, who, meanwhile unable to gain a parish, taught in the schools to provide themselves with an income. Prior to the Disruption there were considerably more ministers seeking churches than there were vacant charges, with the result that a man could have a fairly lengthy wait between leaving College and receiving a call. In the days of Patronage, this delay was apt to be further prolonged if the candidate did not have the ear of a Patron.

1 See pp. 31-33.

The bond between Church and school was further strengthened by the fact that the schoolmaster was frequently both Session Clerk and Precentor - for both of these offices he received a small annual payment - and might be, in addition, the district catechist. Frequently, then, the minister and schoolmaster were close friends; often they would discuss confidentially together parish problems and difficulties, with the result that Norman Macleod fairly describes the schoolmaster as 'the minor canon in the parish cathedral'. [2]

There was, then, a great deal that kept church and school close together, and therefore the minister who took his school duties seriously had ample scope to get to know and to influence the children within his parish. How seriously the individual ministers and even the Presbyteries took their duties of supervision is, however, open to question. In the parish of Eastwood near Glasgow, Stevenson MacGill, who ministered there from 1790 to 1797, did take pains to superintend with regularity the various schools in his parish, 'not satisfying himself with the annual and perhaps formal inspection of them by the members of the Presbytery'. [3] Dr. James MacGregor, minister of Paisley High from 1855 to 1862, likewise took this matter seriously and one list of his labours shows that he visited no fewer than eighteen schools in his work of superintendence. [4] Earlier in the century, Henry Duncan of Ruthwell had most certainly done much more than any Presbytery would ever have asked in that he willingly spent several hours in the parish school each week in an attempt to win the confidence of the scholars and in a desire to increase their interest in their studies. [5] When carried

2 NORMAN MACLEOD: 'Reminiscences of a Highland Parish': pp. 204-220.

3 R. BURNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Stevenson MacGill': p. 18.

4 THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 23.

5 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 66.

out to the letter, then, the duties of school superintendence could, in a parish with several schools, involve the minister in a considerable amount of work; where a man had a particular interest in this side of the work, there was virtually no limit to the time he could spend in it.

On the other hand, it is undeniable that in many parishes, the duties of supervision were taken rather more lightly both by minister and Presbytery. As an example, we can quote the experience and testimony of Thomas Guthrie who was inducted to the parish of Arbirlot near Arbroath in 1830: 'I was seven years in Arbirlot, and while I believe I was just as attentive as my neighbours, I do not recollect of being three times in the parish school, though it was next door to me, except on those occasions once a year when the Presbytery committee came to examine the school. The truth is, Presbyterial supervision was very much a decent sham; to sit for weary hours hearing a-b ab, b-o bo, was the driechest business I ever had to do with, and well do I remember to have seen how often the watches were pulled out to see how time went; and the truth is that if 'the diet of examination' had not been followed by another kind of diet in the Manse - a committee dinner and a sociable crack with the brethren - there would have been very few at the diet of examination'. [6]

We must be cautious, then, in affirming that school duties necessarily occupied much time in the average minister's week. With the man who was particularly concerned with the welfare of his parish schools, with the man who perhaps had been himself a schoolmaster earlier in his career, there was ample work which he could legitimately do. For the rest, however, this part of ministerial duty did not loom large in the weekly diary of engagements. Nevertheless, we can never underestimate the effects on the children of the close links, however formal some may have become, between their Church and their school, and we can

6 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': p. 297, Volume 2.

understand the decision of the Free Church to erect their own schools to preserve for their youngsters the precious harmony between these two great centres of early training. The Bible was the main text book, something that continued for some years even after the state take-over in 1872, and suitable parts of the Book of Proverbs formed many a first reading book. One good effect of this was, as the historian J. R. Fleming says, 'that no child could leave school without the deep-rooted conviction that the Bible was the greatest book in the world'. [7] Even where the teacher was neither a divinity student nor a 'stickit' minister, he had to subscribe to the same Confession of Faith as had the ministers at their ordination. Inevitably, some of the Church's influence was lost following the events of 1872; new text books did in time come in to replace the Bible's virtual monopoly; tests and examinations in Bible knowledge were discontinued; and the Presbytery lost overall control of education within the bounds. Generally speaking, however, ministers had little difficulty in gaining a position on the city and parish school boards, [8] and if the individual minister was keen, there was still considerable scope afforded to him for being actively involved in the running of the schools. In fact, the biographer of John Macleod of Govan says that 'the routine duties of the Board were numerous and exacting', and adds that Macleod was not content to stop at the routine but busied himself in the work of his local schools. [9]

THE CHILD AND THE SUNDAY SERVICES

It would be appropriate at this point, having looked at the minister's official, almost obligatory, contact with his young parishioners through the schools, to discover

7 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 2, p. 215.

8 Ibid. Volume 2, p. 213.

9 R. S. KIRKPATRICK: 'Ministry of John Macleod': p. 54.

what steps he took in other directions both to win the friendship of the children and to make them feel at home within the Church. Did his normal morning service, for example, contain any part specifically geared to the young worshippers who were present? Was the entire service on occasion consciously planned with them in mind? Did he take an active part in whatever Sunday Schools, Bible Classes and mid-week organisations there were? Outwith the pulpit, and away from the Church, did he make a real attempt to share the interests of young people so that they would come to regard him quite naturally as a friend, thus making it easier for them in adulthood to pass on to Church membership and service?

As far as the normal Sunday services were concerned, the last century did witness very considerable changes in just this sphere. For the first fifty years of the 19th century, the average service in Scotland did not contain anything which we to-day could term a 'children's address'; nor were specially designed family services by any means common. For instance we only possess one manuscript for a children's sermon from the pen of Thomas Guthrie who died in 1873; nevertheless, we know very well that Guthrie was passionately concerned for the spiritual and physical welfare of the children of his Edinburgh parish; his Ragged Schools and his special Sunday Schools, already noted,[10] are more than adequate proof of this. The simple fact is, however, that within the established pattern of worship there was no place allotted to any item specially for the children. Again, Andrew Bonar, minister of Finnieston, Glasgow, until his death in 1892, and Alexander Whyte, who finally resigned his charge of St. George's, Edinburgh, in 1916, were two ministers of many who, though very fond of children and genuinely concerned for their spiritual growth, considered that three or four children's sermons a year - delivered usually the Sunday following

10 See pp. 68-69.

the Communion season - were sufficient.[11]

In explanation, we must remember the great importance attached to the catechetical visits of the minister to each home and the detailed questionings on matters of faith and doctrine that these visits entailed. As we saw, the children were the first concern in the catechising of any household. We can therefore affirm that for the first fifty years or so of the 19th century - longer in the highlands - the conscientious parish minister did have this personal and detailed contact with all the young people in his area; he knew them by name; he knew their attainments and abilities so far as the Scriptures and the Catechism were concerned; and, in many ways, a minister who was thorough but not too severe in his diets of catechism could do a great deal to ensure that the young people under his care were being systematically trained in the faith and were being adequately prepared to take their place, knowledgably, in Church. Furthermore, for much of the last century, the home was expected to provide sound elementary Christian training; the majority of Church-going parents did take this obligation seriously and much of the basic teaching which to-day we have to attempt in Sunday School and in the children's sermon was imparted round the home fireside. The result was that the young people came to their family pews on a Sunday much better informed than do their 20th century counterparts. In one way, then, we could say that the ministers did not need to pay the specific attention to the young people within the normal services that they do to-day; the work of Christian education was being fairly thoroughly carried out in day school, in the home, and, of course, in the annual diets of catechism.

This, however, is not the whole story. The fact is that the Church service in Scotland was, by tradition,

11 MARJORY BONAR: 'Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Letters': p. 261.
G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 311.

a very solemn occasion; there was little room in it for the lighter touch which an address to children so often requires. Likewise, many of the ministers were themselves solemn and scholarly to the point that they lacked the ability to come down to earth in such an atmosphere and communicate successfully with the young mind. Out of the pulpit, many of these men did unbend and become great favourites with the children, but their interpretation of the dignity of their sacred office, and the traditional mood of public worship prevented, for a considerable time, any intrusion into the Sunday service of an address of a type that might appeal specially to children. It must also be remembered that, for much of the century, there was no need to 'attract' young people to Church with items of special interest to them. The influence of the Church was such that their parents saw to it that they duly attended week by week. The ministers, then, did not early in the century see the need to cater specially for the young worshippers, nor was it felt appropriate with the pattern of worship as it was. They did, however, know their youngsters by name, they did take a real interest in their spiritual growth, and they were concerned that they should in due time take their full place within the Church.

As the century progressed, however, changes did come into the structure and content of the service so far as attention to young worshippers was concerned. One of the pioneers in this was James Robertson, minister of Newington U. P. Church from 1848; he was one of the first to include in each of his morning services a part specially for the children, and his biographer claims that the success with which he incorporated this into the accepted framework of worship did a great deal to make this practice more general.[12] Robertson also introduced periodic services where everything was planned to appeal to the younger people, and he always made sure that visiting preachers knew that in his church this age group was not to be for-

12 Anon. 'James Robertson of Newington': pp. 16-17 of Preface by John Ker.

gotten; in a typical letter to one brother minister who was to occupy his pulpit, he said, 'Please remember to bring a handful of tender grass for the lambs.' [13]

Before the weekly children's sermon as part of normal worship became widespread, however, other schemes were being tried in various parts of the country to hold the attention of the young. Some ministers, for instance, utilised a ten or fifteen minute period immediately following the morning service during which they asked the children questions on the theme and development of the morning's sermon, clarifying any point on which there appeared to be difficulty. Alexander Moody Stuart, inducted to St. Luke's, Edinburgh, in 1837, used this method of approach with considerable success. [14] More common, however, was the introduction of a third Sunday service designed first and foremost for children. Dr. Archibald Scott in St. George's, for example, held such a service on the first afternoon of each month and both he and the children greatly enjoyed it. [15] Archibald Charteris, inducted to Glasgow's Park Church in 1863, held this type of service every Sunday afternoon at 1 o'clock, that is in between his regular morning and afternoon services, [16] while in Govan, John Macleod, introducing an evening service in place of the former afternoon one, used the afternoon hour for organising weekly services for the young. [17] Very interesting was the practice adopted in Cowcaddens Free Church by William Ross who ministered there from 1883 to the end of the century. At each Sunday morning service, the pews in the centre area of the Church were clearly labelled 'Children Only', and during the second or third hymn each week, the children filed in from the hall to

13 CHARLES JERDAN: 'Scottish Clerical Stories and Reminiscences': p. 107.

14 KENNETH MOODY STUART: 'Alexander Moody Stuart': p. 64.

15 THE HON. LORD SANDS: 'Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, Edinburgh, and his Times': pp. 63-66.

16 REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': p. 92.

17 R. S. KIRKPATRICK: 'Ministry of John Macleod': p. 30.

occupy their seats. 'The next item in the service was the recitation of the text for the day by a selected number of the boys and girls called on by name from the pulpit'. This was followed by an address to the children and the whole institution was called the 'Children's Church Society'. [18]

As the century ended, then, the young worshipper was being more widely recognised as an important and distinct member of the congregation. There are various reasons for this welcome development. To begin with, we would, I think, be justified in seeing here further proof that the Church in Scotland was becoming increasingly aware that the Gospel it proclaimed was for all men, of all types and ages, and that therefore it had to be so presented that it made appeal to all who heard it. Further, we noted earlier that as the 19th century was drawing to a close, the younger adults, particularly the males, were drifting away from the Church; there was, then, the real danger that their children would neither be taught the fundamental Christian principles at home nor would they be sent to Church with the automatic insistence of earlier generations. With the old catechising largely discontinued, the Church had to be prepared positively to attract the young people to its services, and, once there, it had to make sure that they were given teaching suitable for their years and experience. Of great importance also was the Education Act of 1872. Ministers no longer had the easy access to the day schools they had formerly enjoyed; the syllabus could not be so heavily slanted towards religion and the Scriptures; and therefore the Church had to take upon itself more of the direct religious education of the young, and this encouraged the ministers to adapt their Sunday services accordingly. All this, then, coupled to the fact that the ministers themselves were perhaps more willing to appear human in their contacts with their parishioners, meant that

18 J. M. E. ROSS: 'William Ross of Cowcaddens: A Memoir': pp. 157-158.

the children could more genuinely look forward to a Sunday. There is certainly no doubting the fact that these changes were heartily approved of by the youngsters, and their natural respect for their ministers was only increased by a new bond of affection in those parishes where children's sermons were regularly and successfully included in public worship. We have seen that Dr. Alexander Whyte in St. George's, Edinburgh, did not himself deliver many such sermons; [19] when, however, he obtained the services of an assistant with gifts in this direction, he was not slow to use him. [20] One of his assistants in the 1890's was George Morrison, later minister of Wellington Church, Glasgow. His sermons to the children were so genuinely popular that many of the children in St. George's wished to spend their summer holidays in Thurso - the town where Morrison had begun his first ministry in 1894 - so that they might hear more of them. [21] So the century that opened with the ministers of Scotland knowing their young folk but paying little special attention to them when in the kirk pews, ended with a much greater awareness of the particular spiritual needs and difficulties of this age group, and the result was surely entirely satisfactory in that a much stronger bond of friendship was thus being established between the ministers and those who in future years would form their congregations and office-bearers.

THE MINISTER AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Turning now to the question of the minister's personal involvement in the work of Sunday Schools and Bible Classes, we must deny ourselves any attempt at a history of the Sunday School movement in Scotland. Our concern in this study is to see the minister at work amongst his people,

19 See pp. 139-140.

20 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 311.

21 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'Dr. George H. Morrison': p. 55.

and therefore it is only within this context that we can look at the development of this branch of Church life in Scotland during the 19th century. When speaking of Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, we noted in his favour that he had the vision and courage to begin a Sunday School in his parish in 1790, and we quoted the comment of A. J. Campbell to the effect that at this time such organisations were widely distrusted and viewed as 'nurseries of sedition'. [22] In fact, Sunday Schools are said to have originated around 1760 in Brechin with Mr. Blair, one of the ministers of the town, as the founder of the first school, [23] but it was to be many years before they gained anything like general acceptance in Scotland. For this, the ministers were largely responsible. The General Assembly of 1799, for instance, denounced Sunday Schools on the grounds that they enabled unauthorised teachers to teach children, thereby weakening the authority of the ministers and lessening the parents' sense of responsibility for maintaining religion in the family. [24] Furthermore, with the day schools firmly in the hands of the Church at this time, the children were already receiving from professional teachers, generally approved by the Church, Christian education during five days of each week, and the ministers therefore felt that there was no real need to introduce Sunday Schools. [25]

22 See p. 4.

23 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 17.

24 A. H. CHARTERIS: 'The Church of Christ: Baird Lectures for 1887': p. 38 of published volume of lectures.

25 The Rev. Alexander Campbell, inducted to Irvine Secession Church in 1809, had a rather simpler reason for forbidding Sunday Schools; 'To him it was a disturbance of the day of hallowed rest'; accordingly, he held his classes on the Saturday afternoon. (ARTHUR GUTHRIE: 'Robertson of Irvine': 3rd ed. p. 43.)

In some cases, it was the elders who, despite the wishes of their minister, were reluctant to see Sunday Schools introduced; e.g. Free St. Luke's, Edinburgh. (K. MOODY STUART: 'A Moody Stuart': p. 63.)

Again, however, the 19th century saw a change in attitude and by the 1830's, many of the parishes had their Sunday Schools in operation, and as in former days it had been the ministers who had opposed them, so now it was the ministers who established them and, in their initial stages, formed the main body of teachers. We have many examples of Sunday Schools with over 100 pupils and just the minister in charge. Very soon, however, the lay members of the Church, trained usually by the ministers, were introduced into this sphere of work; the Sunday Schools, then, formed in time a valuable means of giving active participation in the Church's work and witness to the lay members who, hitherto, had been too much neglected in Scotland. The ministers changed their attitude towards Sunday Schools for many of the same reasons that brought them to include within the Sunday service items couched in terms that the young could understand; certainly, the decline in the formal catechising at home and the suspicion that parents were not perhaps as thorough in their work of home education as they might have been, helped underline the desirability of having Sunday Schools. Important also, however, was the growing awareness on the part of many ministers that the children, on a Sunday, had very little which they could, with any pleasure, do. We saw enough earlier of what town housing was like to realise that many hours on a Sunday compulsorily spent in such squalid and overcrowded conditions was far from desirable.[26] Out of doors, too, things were depressing for youngsters on a Sunday. Public parks and shops alike were closed with not even an open shop window to brighten their day. The public houses, however, were open - it took the Forbes Mackenzie Act of 1854 to bring Sunday closing to them - with the result that for more than half of the century, the Sunday streets were drab and even unsafe for youngsters, while their homes were unbearably overcrowded. Quite apart, then, from the desirability of giving them further Christian

26 See pp. 61-63.

training, Sunday Schools, particularly in the towns, came to be seen as a definite social blessing which the Christian Church could and should provide. The ministers, speedily backed up in most cases by their Sessions, [27] responded with a will and Sunday Schools became very soon an integral part of Church life in Scotland; with a like speed, these Schools proved to be very popular with the children and Schools with many hundreds of pupils became commonplace. Robert Burns in Paisley, for example, had over 1,000 in his Sunday Schools in the 1830's, [28] while Norman Macleod in the Barony had over 1,400 regular scholars. [29] In his Baird Lectures delivered in 1887, Archibald Charteris actually quotes cases of children who were determined each week to attend as many different Sunday Schools as was possible. By going the rounds of those that met at different times, some were able to attend four or five each week, and he even quotes the case of one child who crammed in attendance at seven Sunday Schools each week. [30]

Although it was not until 1890 that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland provided an official Sunday School syllabus, [31] almost every Christian congregation had by that time its Sunday School. The parish ministers must receive the credit for the rapid introduction of this agency once they were convinced of the good that could thereby be accomplished; they deserve, too, the credit for teaching, single-handed, large classes in this new area of service; it is further proof of the ministers' genuine concern for the physical and spiritual welfare of the youngsters of their parishes. In the end of the day, however, as fine a result as any to come from the growth

27 See p. 145, footnote 25.

28 R. F. BURNS: 'Life and Times of Robert Burns of Paisley': p. 51.

29 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 232.

30 A. H. CHARTERIS: 'The Church of Christ: Baird Lectures for 1887': p. 201 of published volume of lectures.

31 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 2, p. 219.

of the Sunday School movement was the great impetus it inevitably gave to lay involvement, and to this whole question we will return.

So far as the minister's active concern with general mid-week organisations for young people is concerned, there is little that we need say at this stage. We have noted that it was only in the last quarter of the 19th century that what we would to-day regard as 'youth organisations' came to the fore. In these, certainly, the minister was involved, but much of the direct leadership, as for example in the Boys' Brigade movement founded in 1883 by William Smith, rested with the growing band of active laymen. As an example of how busy mid-week a really live Church had become by the 1890's we could do no better than cite Govan Old Parish under John Macleod who ministered there from 1875 to 1898. At that time, this Church had, in addition to three Sunday Schools and a daily service, four instruction classes, a system of house-to-house collectors, district visitors, a mothers' meeting, a church choir and a junior choir, a Dorcas Society, a young men's literary association, professionally taught classes in cooking and domestic economy, a Boys' Brigade Company, Girls' Clubs, and an Evangelistic Association. [32] Macleod and his team of four or five assistant ministers were most certainly at the heart of this magnificent hive of activity, but by no stretch of the imagination could they be said to lead all these groups; by this time, the lay influence was strong and the lay power was being put to great and effective use.

Earlier in the century, it would have been genuinely difficult for ministers to establish much in the way of week-night activities for young people. Church Halls were not plentiful prior to the 1840's, and even young children of nine or ten years of age had to work long hours in factories; a working day of eleven hours was regularly

32 R. S. KIRKPATRICK: 'Ministry of John Macleod': pp. 41, 118, and 129.

demanded of them, with a reduction to nine hours on Saturdays. Week-night organisations, then, could not easily be introduced for young people whose main need in the evening was to get sufficient sleep to enable them to work adequately the next day. Donald Macleod, for instance, was made very aware of this problem in his Linlithgow parish. Inducted to that charge in 1862, he wished to provide classes to teach the children reading and writing. From a very early age, however, the children of that area were employed in 'closing' boots and shoes with the result that Macleod found them so tired at night that no real progress could be made by way of night schools. He therefore took the bold step of including such training in his Sunday morning classes. [33]

Although not for children, a feature of many 19th century ministries was the minister's class for young men and women. The word 'young' was in fact apt to be interpreted very liberally, especially where the minister was a famous and popular lecturer. We noted, for example, Norman Macleod's crowded classes in his three ministries, and we commented on the similar success attending Brown in Rose Street and Somerville in Dumbarton. [34] These classes, held either on a Sunday evening or mid-week, were the nearest the Churches came early in the century to having any kind of activity for younger people outwith the ordinary services. The minister almost invariably conducted them, and the drain on his time preparing for these classes must have been considerable. A lecture might normally last around one and a half hours which made it in effect a further sermon to be prepared each week. The most notable series of lectures were undoubtedly those delivered in St. George's, Edinburgh, by Dr. Alexander Whyte. His men's class was attended regularly by almost 600 people, and an almost similar number attended his class for women. [35]

33 SYDNEY SMITH: 'Donald Macleod of Glasgow': p. 84.

34 See pp. 38-39, and 74.

35 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 326.

MINISTER AND CHILD: INFORMAL CONTACT

Reverting, however, to our specific enquiry as to what the minister did to establish helpful and friendly relationships with the young people of his parish, there is just one further area in which we might profitably seek to see our 19th century colleague at work. We have seen him at work in the school, in the diets of catechism, in the Sunday Schools, and in the Sunday services; what now of his day to day contact with the youngsters in the streets, in the informal surroundings of their games and away from the school or the Church buildings? As we might expect, there are wide differences of approach on the part of the ministers to this. There were those who were all too frivolous in their attempts to amuse the children; Alexander Carlyle tells of two ministers from Dumfriesshire who 'had a great turn for fun and buffoonery and wore their wigs back to front and made faces to divert the children in the middle of a serious discourse.' [36] We can only be happy that very few like this appear in the pages of Church history, even although Carlyle assures us that they were none the less 'pious and orthodox clergymen'. [37] Rather more common, perhaps, particularly in the stern north, were those ministers who went to quite the other extreme and refused to unbend at all, even outwith their official sacred duties and even in their contact with very young children. John Macrae, inducted to the parish of Lochs in Lewis in 1857, was a typical representative of this austere brigade. His adult congregation 'had a fear of him' and 'children fled hurry scurry at the sight of him'. [38] Likewise, the young people in Stornoway in the 1850's and 1860's fled from the approach of the Rev. Peter Maclean who 'breathed an air of stern sanctity as if he had been sleeping with John the Baptist'. [39]

36 J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle': 1860 ed. p. 23.

37 Ibid. p. 22.

38 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 27.

39 Ibid. p. 160.

Happily, however, the vast majority of Scotland's ministers in the 19th century found a middle way between these two extremes. They kept the children's respect for themselves and their office, but at the same time won their confidence through a sufficiently childlike appreciation of what they enjoyed most in life. Robert Candlish, for example, was not above joining enthusiastically in some of their games; [40] Principal Rainy made a point of reading the Boys' Own Paper each week so that he could talk knowledgeably with his own and other people's children; [41] (incidentally, he also regularly read of trends in women's fashion through the pages of a ladies' journal so that he could converse easily with his wife and daughters;) John Milne and Cameron Lees were two of many who usually carried with them a supply of booklets and tracts especially suitable for children; these they gave to any youngsters with whom they spoke. [42] In many places, however, the approach was more basic in that the ministers, going their rounds of their parishes, came to be seen as a reliable supplier of fruit and sweets and even of pocket money. For instance, William Dunn, minister of Cardross from 1838 to 1881, was a great favourite with the local children as his coat-tail pocket 'seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of red apples'; [43] Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, a somewhat stern man who 'discouraged all undue familiarity and levity', was one who disbursed sweets very freely to children whom he met; this was, says Lord Sands, his biographer, 'his only levity'. [44]

40 WILLIAM WILSON: 'Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish': p. 59-60.

41 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 2, p. 94.

42 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th ed. p. 321.

43 EUNICE MURRAY: 'The Church of Cardross and its ministers': p. 160.

44 THE HON. LORD SANDS: 'Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, Edinburgh, and his Times': p. 18.

Special occasions and circumstances were also frequently marked by ministers with gifts for their young parishioners. Each New Year in Rosneath, for example, the younger Story invited all the children of the Sunday School to the Manse where they were given oranges and cakes, [45] while in Greenock, J. P. Struthers never visited any child in hospital without taking him a 'poke' of sweets. [46] Most consistently generous, however, was John Milne in Perth. We have noted that he distributed booklets to children in considerable numbers; he also gave them many a sixpence and shilling as he encountered them in the streets, although not without expecting something in return. 'He used frequently to promise children sixpence or a shilling if they could learn a certain Psalm or Chapter and repeat it to him. His card would frequently be handed in to Mrs. Milne by some boy with this pencilled on it: 'Give the bearer sixpence if he repeats the 53rd of Isaiah'. [47] Milne indeed had a genuine love of children, and he had in addition the ability to get on their level; Horatius Bonar pays this tribute - 'He was very fond of children, and almost every child in Perth knew him. Constantly, in the street, he would stop to play ball with one, or throw the skipping rope with another. One writes, 'He used to be so kind to our children one winter, giving them slides.....' [48]

If, then, we can speak in general terms, leaving to one side those ministers who were so weighed down with spiritual affairs that they had quite forgotten that they were once boys themselves, and making allowance for the differing natures and temperaments in men which inevitably affected their relationship with children, we can, I think, say that throughout the 19th century the

45 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 158.

46 A. L. STRUTHERS: 'Life and Letters of John Paterson Struthers': p. 352.

47 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th ed. p. 195.

48 Ibid. p. 351.

Church and its ministers were genuinely concerned for the spiritual progress of the young citizens of Scotland. The century certainly saw considerable changes in the methods of approach used to bring these young folk within the fold of the Church, but the basic interest in them was always there. When, as the century progressed, steps had to be taken both to attract the young people and to educate them, it is to the ministers' credit that very rapidly the necessary action was forthcoming; together with the ever increasing number of involved laymen they established both on Sundays and throughout the week a programme of activities which was both attractive and educational.

C H A P T E R S E V E N

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THE MINISTER AND THE COMMUNITY:
HIS PUBLIC ROLE.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: The minister and the community: his public role.

'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works'

We have looked, then, at the minister's Sunday commitments and at the degree of preparation these might require; we have seen him engaged in the visitation of his people and parish; and we have taken note of the extent to which he might be actively involved with his young people. We pass on now to a study of our 19th century minister in his more distinctly public role. In particular, there are two spheres of public service to be considered. In the first place, we must look at those agencies and institutions which, while set up for the benefit of the whole community, were organised and administered solely or largely by the minister. Secondly, we must see the minister's position relative to the main secular bodies, whether governmental, community or whatever, within his parish.

THE MINISTER AS ORGANISER

Dealing first, then, with those community agencies voluntarily established and organised by the minister, we have, early in the century at least, to think mainly in terms of savings banks and libraries. (We do not, of course, forget the initiative of many ministers in providing additional schools and further education classes and in creating comfortable meeting places in the large towns for the poorer parishioners; at such achievements we have already looked.) It will be appropriate at this stage also to see the part the minister played in administering the funds for the relief of the poor in his area.

SAVINGS BANKS

The Savings Bank movement in Britain owed its origin to clergymen. In England, the minister responsible was the Rev. Joseph Smith of Wendover, while in Scotland the genius was

the Rev. Henry Duncan of Ruthwell near Dumfries. [1] Duncan first heard of Savings Banks in Germany; he then published articles about their worth in the Dumfries and Galloway Courier, the paper which he edited, and his Ruthwell Bank opened in May 1810. It is important to realise that Duncan was no mere titular head of his bank; he acted most ably as its actuary until his death; he himself gave sound advice and practical help to those, many of them parish ministers, who were interested in opening similar banks in their own areas; and in 1819 and 1835 he went south to London to assist the Members of Parliament in drafting the Parliamentary Bills which were to govern Scotland's Savings Banks. [2] The great popular attraction in the new banks lay in the fact that they afforded the ordinary working people an opportunity of saving week by week such small amounts of money as they were able to put aside from their wages; the existing banks did not accept deposits of less than £10 whereas Duncan's aim was that as little as a shilling or less should be able to be lodged at a time. That the men and women of Scotland were appreciative of this innovation is seen by the fact that in 1818, just eight years after the Ruthwell opening, there were, outside of Glasgow and Edinburgh, 130 popular Savings Banks in Scotland with about a thousand members and £30,000 in deposits. [3] As we said, many of these early banks were established by the parish ministers and were in fact run from the manses; among those ministers who did institute savings banks for their communities were the Rev. Robert Lundie of Kelso - a direct disciple of Duncan [4] - the younger Story in Rosneath, [5]

1 STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development: 1780-1870': pp. 38-40.

2 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': Chapters 9-13 passim.

3 STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development: 1780-1870': p. 39.

4 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 100.

5 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 56.

Archibald Charteris in Edinburgh's Tolbooth Church, [6] Norman Macleod in the Barony - his was one of the first congregational penny savings banks in Glasgow [7] - William Hamilton in Strathblane, [8] and Thomas Guthrie in Arbirlot. Guthrie's autobiography shows very clearly how such banks - his was one of those operated from the manse - were organised and how great a say in the running of them the ministers had: 'I was the entire manager, giving money out only on a Saturday morning, the regular time for its transactions, and that only on a week or fortnight's notice, but receiving it in the shape of a shilling, the lowest deposit, at any time and any day, Sunday, of course, excepted'. [9] He further adds, 'The success of the bank and library I attribute very much to this, that I myself managed them. They were of great service by bringing me into familiar and frequent and kindly contact with the people. They trusted me, where they would not others, with a knowledge of their money affairs. The lads and lassies liked that their minister should see that they were economical and self-denying and thriving even in this world and that they should rise in his good opinion'. [10]

Quite obviously, this was one aspect of its work which the Church could neither wish nor expect to retain indefinitely. As the desirability of having a national network of savings banks became apparent, independent banks, with professional staff and official security-conscious offices inevitably came in; [11] the Post Office

6 REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': p. 163.

7 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 232.

8 WILLIAM ARNOT: 'Life of James Hamilton': p. 6.

9 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 108.

10 Ibid. Volume 1, pp. 140-141.

11 Guthrie could be said to be a trained bahker; between being licensed and being called to Arbirlot, he worked for two years in the bank at Brechin. (Ibid. Volume 1, pp. 106-107.)

Savings Bank also made its appearance and prospered, even although the younger Story said it was 'strangled with red tape'. [12] The ministers, however, were among the very first people both to see the need for such a system of popular banking and to take positive action to meet that need; such banks did give them, as Guthrie said, a further strong link with their people; they did prove yet again that the ministers were highly respected and trusted individuals; they did encourage thrift among the poorer people; and in addition, they helped the working classes to prepare for the future, so that in time of adversity, they would not be, as in time past, utterly dependent on the parish poor relief.

POOR RELIEF

Until the Parliamentary Act of 1845, the relief of the poor in Scotland 'rested in the hands of the Kirk Session, supported by the heritors in country parishes and by the magistrates in the burghs'. [13] The Kirk Session drew its money for this purpose from the Sunday collections taken at the Church door (as we saw earlier, offerings were not uplifted on present day lines for the upkeep of the Church and the payment of the minister), from special gifts offered by wealthy individuals for this work, from mortifications, and from sundry odd fees and fines. [14] The sum available from such sources, however, tended to be small and insufficient to meet the various appeals made, particularly in times of bad harvests or unemployment. In Ruthwell, for example, the average annual income for the poor fund was just £25. [15] There was, therefore, a strong

12 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 56.

13 STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development: 1780-1870': p. 65.

14 ELIZABETH S. HALDANE: 'The Scotland of our Fathers': pp. 146-147.

15 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 61.

movement as the 19th century progressed in favour of a system of compulsory legal assessments so that adequate money would be available for poor relief. After considerable initial opposition, the Church as a whole turned in favour of this idea; particularly in the rapidly expanding towns, it was increasingly difficult for the Kirk Sessions to cope with the large numbers lodging claims for assistance. In addition, the Disruption of 1843, which virtually split the Church in two, created, on the one hand, around 500 Kirk Sessions who needed every penny to erect buildings and pay salaries, and, on the other hand, left an almost like number of Churches and Sessions which were depleted in numbers and considerably weakened financially, and which had an almost inevitable feeling of resentment towards those who had 'gone out' to the Free Church.

The voluntary system of poor relief, therefore, could not continue in operation with any degree of efficiency, and so the Act of 1845, establishing nationally a system of legal assessments, took the care of the poor out of the hands of the Churches; parochial boards were set up to administer poor relief but it is worth noting that members of the kirk sessions continued to serve on these boards for almost fifty years. Although the majority of the ministers did in the end support this state system of poor relief, there were many, when it was first suggested, who strongly opposed it. Thomas Chalmers, for instance, was an implacable foe of state charity, and in his eight years in Glasgow (1815-1823) he showed what the voluntary system of poor relief could accomplish when it had dynamic and able leadership and the support of conscientious assistants. [16] Duncan in Ruthwell was a further staunch supporter of the voluntary system of poor relief, [17] and so one of his hopes in establishing his bank was that the habit of saving would enable people

16 STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development: 1780-1870': pp. 71-72.
J. H. S. BURLEIGH: 'A Church History of Scotland': p. 315.

17 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': pp. 61 ff and 160 ff.

to help themselves and their relatives if times got hard.

We cannot but admire the great work of Chalmers in a difficult area of Glasgow; he made the voluntary system work and he proved also that such a system did not necessarily demand a great deal of time or money. After four years of operations in St. John's, the work of poor relief needed only one hour per week and some £280 per year.[18] Likewise we cannot but admire the efforts of Duncan to get the people to help themselves; in addition to setting up a bank for them, he reconstituted their earlier Friendly Society which provided assistance in time of accident, disease, or bereavement,[19] and, as we have already noted, he himself provided work on his glebe for those who were temporarily unemployed so that they would not get into the habit of drawing money without working for it.[20] For all that, however, the introduction of a state system of poor relief was inevitable. In the small country areas (Ruthwell, for example, had a population of only 1,100) a man of ability and resourcefulness could, as Duncan clearly showed, keep things going tolerably well. In the growing industrial areas, even a genius like Chalmers - and there could be few like him - would before long have found the burden of work altogether too great and the sums of money available too small.

So the Act of 1845 took from the minister and session the responsibility of caring financially for the poor. In so doing, the minister was certainly saved considerable time and worry; it cannot have been a pleasant duty to interview the claimants for relief, to inquire into the character and background of those who were passing through one's parish and seeking assistance on the way, and to realise that in any event the funds available were inadequate to meet genuine need. It can be argued, of course, that, with the ending of this Church control and

18 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, Apostle of Union': p. 44.

19 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': pp. 62-64.

20 See pp. 71-72.

the disappearance of the voluntary system, the ministers lost some degree of influence over the poorer people of their communities. Hitherto, with the poor funds in the control of the Church, it was in a person's best self interests to retain some connection with the Church; [21] now this 'motive' for attending Church was lost. We cannot, however, regret this in any real way. As the 19th century progressed, the Church was in many ways losing its former automatic hold over people; we have seen how education, opportunities for travel, and the state take-over of the schools all meant that the Church had to fight more positively to gain the ear of the people, and we cannot believe that this was a bad development. Neither a national Church nor an individual minister is strong whose strength depends on fear or ignorance or financial hardship on the part of those who occupy the pews.

PARISH LIBRARIES

To our modern ears it is perhaps surprising to hear of parish ministers initiating fairly complex ventures in the realms of finance. We saw that Thomas Guthrie had worked for two years in the bank at Brechin before being inducted to his first charge, [22] but his ministerial colleagues who helped pioneer the savings bank movement appeared to be undertaking these responsible duties without any prior training or experience. It is all the more to their credit, therefore, that their banks were both popular and efficient. It is, however, very much easier to understand why the early attempts to introduce libraries to the rural communities of Scotland were directly sponsored by the parish ministers. The minister's love of books is eternal and it was very natural that, with the great upsurge in literacy among the working classes of Scotland, the impetus to put good books within their reach should come from those who already

21 STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development: 1780-1870': p. 11 of Introduction.

22 See p. 156, footnote 11.

possessed and treasured well-stocked libraries themselves. Here again, Duncan in Ruthwell was to the fore, giving much of the initial money and many of the first books himself. [23] Very early in this field also - the first in the Secession Church - was John Brown, later of Rose Street, Edinburgh, who started a library in Biggar in 1814; when he left, eight years later, this library contained 143 books. [24] Thomas Guthrie opened one in Arbirlot, having taken a collection for this purpose at the opening of his new church; the collection raised £15 which was good when the people's normal Sunday collection, for the poor, was a halfpenny, with the more generous rising to one penny. Guthrie himself comments, 'The £15 left the good people in a state of prostration, exhausted and astonished at their own liberality'. [25] Many other ministers established parish libraries as the 19th century progressed: Balmer in Berwick Secession Church, [26] Charteris in St. Quivox, Ayrshire, [27] and Eadie in Cambridge Street U. P., [28] were three whose libraries proved very popular; Eadie's, for example, catered for as many as 400 readers in a year. Perhaps the most enterprising scheme was devised by Donald Macleod in Lauderdale; establishing a series of mid-week study meetings in various farmhouses throughout the parish, he carried with him each week a knapsack with books which formed an early travelling library. Both the meetings and the books proved highly popular. [29] Here again, then, we

23 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 68.

24 JOHN CAIRNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Brown of Broughton Place': p. 72.

25 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 125.

26 A. R. MACEWEN: 'Life and Letters of John Cairns': p. 245.

27 REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': p. 62.

28 JAMES BROWN: 'Life of John Eadie': p. 101.

29 SYDNEY SMITH: 'Donald Macleod of Glasgow': pp. 76-77.

must give due praise to the ministers for undertaking this additional, and sometimes personally expensive work. The Church, through its schools, was determined that the rising generations would be able to read; the Church, through its ministers, was determined that the best literature, especially those books relating to the Protestant faith, should be easily and cheaply available so that they could use this ability to the best advantage.

MINISTERIAL LEAVEN IN SECULAR AFFAIRS

Moving on now to the minister's position relative to the various public bodies and committees that he would find within his parish area, there are three directions in which we might travel. We can recognise first of all that there would be those ministers who had themselves specialised interests and who would therefore make a point of concerning themselves actively with the relevant local body; so we find, for instance, that Robertson Nicoll, inducted to Kelso in 1877, served on the committee formed to organise the town band. [30] Our primary task in this study, however, is to build up an overall picture of the average parish minister and his work; we need not, therefore, pursue further this line of enquiry and cite additional examples; it will be sufficient to realise that the ministers were quite likely to be involved locally in some such way.

We must, however, pay rather more detailed attention to the second area of community involvement open to the occupant of the manse; we refer to those situations where tradition decreed that a minister should be 'on the committee', and where the ministers normally complied even when the matters discussed were outwith both their interests and their abilities to give knowledgeable advice, and where the expenditure of time could be ill-afforded. Thomas Chalmers comments thus: 'The peculiarity which bears

30 JANE T. STODDART: 'W. Robertson Nicoll': p. 60.

hardest upon me is the incessant demand on all occasions for the personal attendance of the ministers. They must have four to every funeral or they do not think it has been genteelly gone through. They must have one or more to all the committees of all the societies; they must fall in at every procession; they must attend examinations innumerable, and eat of the dinners consequent upon these examinations; they have a niche assigned them in almost every public doing and that niche must be filled up by them'. [31] As an example, Chalmers records that, as a member of one local committee, he spent an hour in grave deliberation over the future of a gutter. [32]

Over forty years later, the situation had apparently not changed much for the minister of the Tron Church, Glasgow, because Dr. MacGregor, then the incumbent, remarks somewhat testily, 'There is the same insistence on the attendance of the clergy at every committee and at social and philanthropic functions called into being for the waste of time of ministers and laity'. [33] While we might feel that this rather overstates the case, we can recognise that the ministers lived very full lives and could not lightly spend their time in trivialities; likewise, we can sympathise with Chalmers' feeling of exasperation. At the same time, however, all this merely underlines yet again the fact that throughout the 19th century, and particularly in the first sixty or seventy years of the century, the Church and its ordained leaders were 'given their place' in the forefront of society. It would, too, be a mistake to play down the influence in many non-ecclesiastical spheres which the ministers were thus able to exercise, and he was a wise parish minister who sought to be seen and, where competent, to be heard in the administration of the secular side of his community's affairs.

31 THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 147.

32 Ibid. p. 147.

33 Ibid. p. 147.

Thirdly, and probably most important of all, we must take account of those public bodies on which the ministers actively sought to serve, in many cases becoming their chairmen and leading organisers. Here it is not always easy to confine oneself to a strict parish setting; often movements which began within a parish had repercussions over a much wider area. Stevenson MacGill, licensed in 1790, is a fine example of one who became deeply involved in social and philanthropic works at parish level and who saw his plans and ambitions reach fruition over a very wide area. He was personally involved in establishing a house of refuge for juvenile delinquents, in opening the Magdalene Asylum for females of ill-habits, and in forming a society to help old men in destitution. In addition, in a time of dearth, he actively superintended soup kitchens in the east end of Glasgow. Being concerned for the welfare of prisoners, he published a pamphlet in 1809 on this subject and had the immense satisfaction of seeing many of his suggestions incorporated into the new prison in Paisley. [34]

One whose work owed much to MacGill's example was his biographer, Robert Burns of Paisley. Going to that town in 1811, and remaining there until his emigration to Canada in 1845, Burns was both the faithful parish minister to a very demanding parish, and the devoted pastor to a large congregation. As Provost Murray of Paisley rightly says, however, 'this was only half and probably the lesser half of his labours'; 'in the truest and best sense of the word, he was a citizen of the town; he threw himself with the whole force of his character into every good work; during his long residence, there was no public question, no movement or organisation having for its object the social and political amelioration of the people, or the material, moral, or spiritual wellbeing of the community which did not command and receive his

34 R. BURNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Stevenson MacGill': pp. 43-44, 46, and 301-307.

eloquent advocacy and indefatigable working'. [35] He was connected with Hutchesons' Charity School, was chairman of the directors of the Infirmary, and president for many years of the Philosophical Society. He 'laid great stress on pure water and savings banks' and did much to help poor folk emigrate to New Zealand, Canada and Australia. [36] It would indeed be difficult to conceive of a parish minister with a greater sense of community responsibility, and, as with MacGill, Burns' ideas became famous far beyond his own town; he was the author of the work which, known simply as 'Burns on the Poor Law', was for many years regarded as the standard text book on this and kindred subjects. [37]

Burns and MacGill were certainly quite outstanding in their determination to be at the heart of any worthwhile community endeavour, but they were not alone in this among their ministerial colleagues. Andrew Thomson, minister of St. George's, Edinburgh, from 1814, 'took upon himself a large part of the management of the city charities and of those benevolent institutions which have for their object the alleviation of the miseries of mankind', [38] and we would, on the whole, be justified in saying that the average parish minister of the 19th century was likewise not only concerned for the success of such organisations but was actively involved in their operations. There were, of course, those who felt that the essentially sacred nature of their calling could not permit them to become caught up in any secular affairs however praiseworthy; A. J. Campbell states, for example, that there was a type of Evangelical who had a mind 'ever suspicious of any activity which was not professedly religious' [39] and there certainly were within the ranks of

35 R. F. BURNS: 'Life and Times of Robert Burns of Paisley': pp. 93-94.

36 Ibid. p. 93-95.

37 Ibid. pp. 90-91.

38 JEAN WATSON: 'Life of Dr. Andrew Thomson': p. 83.

39 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 24.

the ordained clergy of Scotland throughout the 19th century those who were clearly of this mind. The Evangelical Magazine in 1810 quotes this extract from the diary of a deceased minister, 'Let me never sit long with any of my people who do not talk about their souls; I find the company of carnal persons, though they may not be very immoral, injurious to my soul'; [40] Andrew Bonar records in his diary that on occasion he felt unsettled because he had been 'conversing much with men and was much outwardly engaged'; [41] elsewhere he says that he counted it as a 'leisure not often indulged in to have a few hours without much thought of God'. [42] Such men, however, who could not have brought themselves to discuss Chalmers' gutter [43] for even five minutes, were in the decided minority, and their numbers grew steadily less as the century progressed.

The considerable majority of Scotland's ministers, then, were happy to play their full part in community affairs; they did not forget of course that their main task on earth did not lie here; they did not contest for leadership in the secular arena where able and Christian laymen were to the fore; and they were in no position to instigate from their own purses schemes of social aid. Their great contribution lay in their enthusiasm, their sense of responsibility, their experience of leadership, and their Christian vision. This, coupled with the position of influence which the parish minister enjoyed ex officio, meant that the voice of the Church was willingly heard in courts and committees far removed from the ecclesiastical sphere. As a final word on this section of our review, we would do well to quote the advice of W. G. Blaikie to students training for the ministry of the Free

40 'The Evangelical Magazine': October 1810: Diary of lately deceased minister: p. 394.

41 MARJORY BONAR: 'Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Letters': p. 92.

42 Ibid. p. 35.

43 See p. 163.

Church; although Blaikie's lectures belong to the last thirty years of the 19th century, his views on this subject fairly accurately reflect what was the majority opinion throughout much of the hundred years in question; we must understand, of course, that, by the time Blaikie wrote, educated laymen were coming to positions of importance within the Church and were showing themselves able to relieve the minister of some of his more peripheral duties: 'It is in many ways desirable and important that the ministers of the Gospel should encourage and so far as other duties permit personally promote various forms of philanthropy, but it must be clearly understood that these do not constitute their primary work'. [44] 'For the minister to do work which our laymen are equally able to do and which forms a wholesome occupation for their leisure hours, would be singularly misdirected policy'. [45] 'Work which is merely useful or merely benevolent but not distinctively Christian, is not necessarily suitable employment for a minister'. [46]

JAMES BEGG

As a postscript to the above paragraphs, there are two matters to which we must refer briefly. First of all, although, as we have stated, our primary concern is to arrive at an understanding of the minister at work in his parish, it would be wrong to omit entirely reference to the great national achievements, in terms of social benefits won for the working classes, of one who was at the same time a devoted parish minister within the Free Church. We have already seen something of individual parish ministers' attempts to improve housing and education on a national scale. We have observed how the teaching of MacGill and Burns was put into practice far beyond their

44 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'For the work of the ministry': 1874 edition: p. 26.

45 Ibid. p. 354.

46 Ibid. p. 355.

own parishes; and it would be ungracious to keep silence on the fine work of James Begg. We have seen his nation-wide agitation to improve the housing of the poor; [47] we note now that he was largely responsible for securing the Saturday half-holiday for shopkeepers; [48] he campaigned successfully to have Princes Street Gardens opened free to the public, setting something of a national precedent, and he was in the lead in attempts to have adequate wash houses and model lodging houses established in Edinburgh. [49] Here again, his efforts led to success not only in the capital city but elsewhere in industrial Scotland. His opponents in the Free Church might call him 'the evil genius of the Free Church' [50] because of his opposition to the proposed union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church in the 1860's and 1870's, but the fact remains that in any survey of the parish minister's involvement in the affairs of his community and nation, Begg must rate a most honoured mention.

THE PARISH MINISTER AND POLITICS

The second part of our postscript concerns the 19th century minister's involvement in politics. Here again, however, we must be careful to confine our attention to any signs that the parish minister might have wished or have been able to mould the political opinions of his people. Here, the generally held view is that it was considered distinctly unwise for a minister to declare too emphatically his party allegiance lest he should seem to clothe his personal opinions on these secular matters with the authority belonging to his sacred office. So it was that Patrick Brewster,

47 See pp. 61-62.

48 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 1, p. 199.

49 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 2, pp. 144 and 195-196.

50 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 2, p. 50.

inducted as minister of the second charge of Paisley Abbey in 1818, found himself in considerable ecclesiastical hot water over his championing of the Chartist cause, [51] while no less commanding a personality than Dr. Alexander Whyte of St. George's, Edinburgh, received a letter from thirteen of his prominent members, including eight elders, expressing the opinion that 'a minister cannot give active support to a political party in matters of acute public controversy without to a greater or lesser extent compromising his congregation'. [52] This letter came about as a result of Whyte's publicly declared views on the vexed Irish question, and thereafter, although Whyte cherished his political convictions every bit as ardently as before, 'he scrupulously refrained from giving any public sign of his political faith'. [53] Brewster's troubles stretched over eight years and involved him in protracted hearings before Presbyteries and Commissions of the General Assembly. In addition, the Commanding Officer of one of the regiments stationed in Paisley issued an order prohibiting his men from attending the Abbey Church on the days when Brewster preached because of certain insulting references to the military. The fact is, of course, that all the Chartists' main aims, save the extreme plea for annual Parliaments, have long since been granted, and we would not to-day consider anyone, Christian minister or not, dangerously extreme in advocating their policies; for example, the Chartists sought such commendable innovations as manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, and payment for members of Parliament. Brewster's 'crime' was that, while a parish minister, he had become actively involved in political matters and had asserted his particular views on controversial issues with no little vehemence. [54]

51 STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development': pp. 100-118.

52 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': pp. 251-252.

53 Ibid. p. 252.

54 STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development': pp. 100-118.

In the main, then, the ministers accepted the need to be publicly impartial in the sphere of politics and kept a decent silence on matters of party argument. Two points only need be made by way of slight qualification; in the first place, the 19th century did see certain great political issues on which the ministers did speak out boldly without any feeling that they were thereby trespassing on politicians' soil or that they were out unfairly to influence their people; these tended to be issues of international importance where definite Christian principles were felt to be involved. Three examples will demonstrate the nature of this clerical involvement in politics and surely clear them of the charge of becoming embroiled in narrow inter-party strife: Andrew Thomson and many of his brother ministers set out to secure the abolition of the slave trade still being carried on in the colonies; [55] Burns and others saw a Christian interest in the repeal of the Corn Laws and the introduction of Free Trade; [56] there was a petition sent to Gladstone - signed by 1,600 ministers including almost all the ministers of the Free and U. P. Churches - supporting the defence of the Christians in the Turkish Empire against the Russians. [57] On matters such as these, ministers did not hesitate to mount public platforms and to publish strong-worded pamphlets; nor could we to-day seek to condemn them for showing Christian concern in matters clearly affecting many thousands, even millions, of lives.

The second qualification is to remind ourselves of what is probably true in any age, namely that a well loved and respected minister can, almost subconsciously and without any deliberate effort, influence many of his people politically. A sentence from the biography of Robert Burns of Paisley is apt: 'He declined to descend

55 JEAN WATSON: 'Life of Dr. Andrew Thomson': p. 84.

56 R. F. BURNS: 'Life and Times of Robert Burns of Paisley': p. 97.

57 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 196.

to the political arena but did not deem it inconsistent with the sacredness of his office or as calculated to rub off his clerical enamel to indicate distinctly his political preferences'. [58] Many of his colleagues declined to be so specific and indeed felt it wrong to let their preferences be known; nevertheless, in many parishes throughout Scotland, the flock who devotedly followed their pastor's leading in things spiritual, were also frequently influenced by him in matters political even although no word of party controversy ever passed his lips in public.

58 R. F. BURNS: 'Life and Times of Robert Burns of Paisley': p. 96.

C H A P T E R E I G H T

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THE 19TH CENTURY MINISTER:
HIS FAMILY LIFE,
HIS HOBBIES, AND HIS RECREATIONS.

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CHAPTER EIGHT: The 19th century minister: his family life, his hobbies, and his recreations.

We have seen our 19th century minister, then, involved in many of his regular weekly duties; we have seen him labouring faithfully to prepare for the Lord's Day; we have seen him going to his people in their homes; we have seen him superintending the schools; we have seen him as one of the leading public figures in his parish and community. In short, we have already seen enough of the demands made on him through these official and public responsibilities to know beyond any doubt that his days and weeks must have been filled well nigh to capacity; indeed, we are left wondering if he had any time left for more personal or domestic pursuits. Often with a large family, did he have much opportunity to enjoy real family life? With a genuine love of books, did he find sufficient time for private study? If he was a man disposed to having hobbies or to enjoying sport, were there sufficient hours in the day to allow him to devote even a short time to such recreation?

THE MANSE FAMILY

Particularly in the early years of the 19th century, the minister's family was often to be pitied. Many of the stipends were very small; the manse, as we shall see in more detail in the next chapter, was expected to provide hospitality to all comers, with the result that the manse wife had often to show great ingenuity in keeping her own family adequately fed and clothed. To assist the domestic economy, she frequently acquired skills in spinning and in making blankets, while other regular manse industries were tanning, salting, and the making of butter, cheese, and candles; and as a matter of course, the minister's wife and children assisted actively in the farm work of the glebe and in looking after the sheep and cattle which provided them with additional sources of revenue. The manse children's lot in life was made more difficult still,

however, by the very fact of which we have become increasingly aware, namely that their father's life was so crowded that he was prevented from spending much time with them. Thomas Guthrie, for example, speaks of the 'sad fate' of many Edinburgh manse families where the ministers, 'spending the whole day in the service of the public, retire to spend the evenings within their studies away from the children, whose ill habits and ill doing in their future career showed how far they had been sacrificed on the altar of public duty'. [1] Statement of the extreme though this may be, this comment nevertheless does draw attention to what was an all too common failing in manse life where young children, assured by their mothers that they had a spiritual Father, were too dependent on the same source for information on their earthly father. For his part, Guthrie wisely resolved to spend as many evenings as possible in the parlour with his children; [2] Candlish and Rainy were two more who, though unceasingly busy on official matters, always sought to make time for entering into their children's games and interests. [3] With many, however, this effort was not made, and the children grew up remote from their fathers; inevitably, as the 19th century progressed and as the ministers' commitments by way of week-night activities increased, this threat to manse family life increased.

1 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd edition: Volume 1, pp. 190-191.

2 Ibid. p. 190.

3 WILLIAM WILSON: 'Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish': pp. 59-60.
'When his children were anticipating and planning some amusement, and found that at the time their father was to be from home, they gladly postponed the time of their expected enjoyment for the sake of his companionship in it. 'We will wait', they said, 'till he comes back that we may have some fun'.
PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 2, pp. 93-97.

HOURS OF PRIVATE STUDY AND MEDITATION

If, however, too many ministers were prepared, albeit reluctantly, to allow their outside duties to deprive them of a well-balanced family life, surprisingly few, even among the busiest of them, were willing to forego their daily hours of private study, reading, and meditation. To this end, many a manse study was occupied from a very early hour each morning as, in quietness and solitude, the occupant devoted himself to his books and his prayers. No matter how busy the previous day may have been; no matter how late it was before he was able to begin his night's rest; no matter how hectic a day stretched out before him, the average minister felt as did Robert Murray McCheyne who regarded prayer as 'the initial necessity of every day': 'I feel it is far better to begin with God', he said, 'to see His face first, and to get my soul near Him before it is near another'. [4] We find, therefore, that Duncan in Ruthwell frequently rose as early as 4 a.m.; [5] Thomas Guthrie, and Thomas Gardiner, minister of Old Machar Free Church, Aberdeen, from 1861, were regularly at work by 5 a.m., [6] and Norman Macleod, Murray McCheyne, Andrew Bonar, and Archibald Charteris are just four of many who never lay in bed beyond 6 a.m. [7] In very few instances could

4 ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': p. 41.

5 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 260.

6 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 191.
ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'The Churches of Aberdeen': p. 164.

7 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd edition: pp. 235-238.
ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': p. 86.
MARJORY BONAR: 'Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Letters': p. 32.
REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': p. 83.
In a letter, Charteris makes it very plain that this habit of early rising was not confined to special occasions: 'I still rise at six ..... and never otherwise'.

we even suspect that this practice was followed for any other reason than from the desire to have these uninterrupted hours of study before facing the non-stop business of the normal parish day. In the devotional diary of Alexander Moody Stuart, minister of Free St. Luke's, Edinburgh, following the Disruption, we read that each night, during the night, he awoke every hour and a half or two hours, struck a light, and stood to read a few verses of the Bible. [8] To many a less devout soul, there must seem here to be a trace of the belief that self-punishment in the name of religion is honourable and pleasing to God; there is in certain minds the idea that one must continually be denying oneself pleasure and even basic comfort to comply the more perfectly with God's will. Now with Moody Stuart, there may have been something of this feeling in his mind. Andrew Bonar writes in his diary that it was his burning ambition to spend every moment in communion with God so that for him, any undue length of time spent in idle unproductive sleep was of necessity a waste. Generally speaking, however, the ministers rose at what their modern counterparts might find a disturbingly early hour, not because they hated their beds or thought sleep sinful, but so that their own studies and private devotions would not be neglected. [9] There is, too, the fact that at this early hour the manse, always bustling with activity, would be quiet and conducive to study. With the several manse servants busily carrying out their various duties, with

8 KENNETH MOODY STUART: 'Alexander Moody Stuart': pp. 275-276.

9 The Rev. John Watson, minister in Liverpool from 1880, was one minister who put on record, half in fun, half, one would think, in earnest, his personal lack of enthusiasm for this over early rising; noting this habit recorded, as we have done, in many famous biographies, he says, 'This early rising.....a needless irritation unto the generations following'. (W. ROBERTSON NICOL: 'Ian Maclaren: Life of the Rev. John Watson': p. 101.)

the flourishing 'home industries' going on apace, and with the inevitable audible reminders of an often large family, peace and quiet, throughout the normal working day, was not only likely to be disturbed from outwith the manse walls.

So it was that in many of Scotland's manses, the study lights would burn from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. as whole chapters of the Bible were committed to memory, as the great classics were read and re-read, as the latest devotional literature and Biblical commentaries were combed and summarised in personal note books, and as long, detailed, and personalised prayer was offered both for the world and for the local parish. In many manses, this period of study was continued long after breakfast and morning prayers; Donald John Martin in Stornoway and Alexander Somerville in Anderston regularly went to their churches during this period of the morning and prayed for their congregations by name in each pew.[10] We cannot begin to calculate the effects for good that such a careful and disciplined life of study and devotion must have had on both pastor and flock. The minister, with his systematic reading, would have his mind continually filled and re-filled with thoughts and ideas which would help him both in his pastoral work and in his weekly work of sermon preparation; with such a well-stored mind as these avid readers must surely have had, the preparation of the more lengthy sermons expected during last century would be a rather easier exercise than in our modern situation where a minister rarely disciplines himself to undertake two or more hours of serious reading each day. So far as the congregations were concerned, if we believe at all in the power of prayer, we must believe that these early hours of each day, when the ministers determined to meet with God before meeting with men, paved the way for many great works

10 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of the Rev. Donald John Martin': p. 85.
A. N. SOMERVILLE: 'Precious Seed': p. 43 of Biographical Sketch.

of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps here we have one of the main reasons for the enthusiasm for the real things of the Church and of religion which we have noted as existing - at times to a most surprising degree - among quite ordinary folk in the Scotland of last century. Changes in society and in the way of life have no doubt contributed to the decline in popular interest in the organised Church; it may be, however, that the Church's ordained servants, by allowing their public contacts with men to curtail their private contacts with God, have contributed in large measure also.

THE MINISTERIAL HOBBIES

When we turn to look at the 19th century ministers in relation to their hobbies and leisure activities, we are right away confronted with two conflicting attitudes on the part of the ministers themselves. On the one hand there are those like Andrew Bonar and Murray McCheyne who did not consider it right for a minister to have 'free' time to squander on secular pleasures however harmless these pleasures might in themselves be. On the other hand, we have men like Archibald Scott, Principal Story, and Donald John Martin who enjoyed sport - in the case of the three men mentioned, their great hobby was golf [11] - and who saw nothing against ministers having their moments of innocent relaxation like other people. In addition, of course, we have such a man as Alexander Carlyle who, in an age when theatre-going and card playing were occupations firmly closed to ministers, delighted in both and publicly enjoyed also dancing, billiards and golf. [12] We have

11 THE HON. LORD SANDS: 'Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, Edinburgh, and his Times': p. 275.
THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': pp. 226, 311, and 340.
NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': pp. 138-142.

12 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 122.
See also earlier passage on p. 6 and at footnote 18.

already attempted an estimate of Carlyle as a minister of the Gospel; [13] it is sufficient to note here that he was an individualist in his hobbies, both in the nature of them and in the time he seemed to spend on them. [14]

Dealing first, then, with those men who disapproved of men of the cloth having moments of God's time to fritter away in trivialities, we have already noted that Andrew Bonar said that he regarded it as a 'leisure not often indulged in to have a few hours without much thought of God'; [15] in point of fact, his diaries make it plain that he came to regard such hours as more of a definite sin than as a permitted break from duty; Murray McCheyne was similarly unbending in his attitude towards a minister's use of time. There were few things he dreaded more than 'worldly amusements' in the families of professing Christians, especially ministers; 'The extent to which novel reading, dancing parties, private theatricals, card playing, luxurious feasting and dressing, loose,

13 See pp. 4-7 and 14-15.

14 We have seen that Carlyle and a fellow minister were in trouble over their love of the theatre (p. 6); theatre-going was to remain a questionable pursuit for ministers for some considerable time, but, despite that, it cannot be denied that it increased steadily in popularity among the clergy. As early as 1784, important business at the General Assembly had to be taken only on those days when the celebrated actress, Mrs. Siddons, was not appearing in the Edinburgh playhouse. When Mrs. Siddons was due to appear, 'all the younger members of the Assembly, clergy as well as laity, took their stations in the theatre by three in the afternoon.' (J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle': 1860 ed. pp. 322-323.) Dr. James MacGregor, minister of Glasgow's Tron Church, was spotted by an elder sitting in London's Adelphi Theatre in 1866; the elder threatened to report the matter to the congregation, to which MacGregor replied, 'They won't believe you, so you need not tell them'. (FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life of James MacGregor': p. 177.)

15 See p. 166.

frivolous and profane song singing, with other exhibitions of utter worldliness, prevail even in professedly Christian families with the sanction and under the eye of office-bearers of the Church would hardly be believed'. [16] In any attempt to catalogue ministerial pastimes, such men's lives would contribute nothing; not even on Saturday or Sunday evenings would Bonar unbend; rather did he see it as the direct work of Satan himself when thoughts entered his head that he might turn his attention momentarily to things other than the direct work before him as a parish minister called of God. [17]

As we would expect, it was within the Free Church, and particularly in the Highland areas, that such rigid views were most pronounced, and in the Session and Presbytery records there are many instances of displeasure being recorded at what were considered unseemly sports and recreations. Dancing was a favourite object of attack; for example, the Rev. A. M. Bannatyne, minister of Union Free Church, Aberdeen, from 1886 to 1890, delivered a hard-hitting attack in Presbytery on what he christened 'flings and springs and close-bosomed whirlings'. [18] Professor Ian Henderson is undoubtedly correct when he states that this section of Free Church opinion 'fell into line with the straiter English sects and began to damn harmless amusements'. [19]

The majority of Scotland's ministers, however, were much better disposed to the idea of pleasant recreation for the good of both body and mind, and many of them knew themselves both how to take and enjoy a few hours away from their work. In any age, a real hobby is a very personal thing, and therefore in any survey of ministers' hobbies in the last century we would expect

16 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th edition: p. 327.

17 MARJORY BONAR: 'Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Letters': p. 77.

18 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'The Churches of Aberdeen': p. 224.

19 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 132.

to cover a wide range of activities; this is indeed the case, for we find clerical forefathers who enjoyed angling,[20] hunting,[21] rambling,[22] cricket,[23] croquet,[24] chess,[25] botany,[26] novel reading,[27] and many

20 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': pp. 143-147.
THE HON. LORD SANDS: 'Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, Edinburgh, and his Times': p. 275.
THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 77.

21 Ibid. p. 77.
DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 456.

22 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'Dr. George H. Morrison': p. 184.

23 THOMAS CASSELS: 'Men of the Knotted Heart': pp. 45-50.
A. L. STRUTHERS: 'Life and Letters of John Paterson Struthers': pp. 45 and 194.

24 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 482.

25 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 31.

26 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'Dr. George H. Morrison': p. 185.

27 Dr. Marcus Dods was on occasion rebuked gently by his colleagues for reading so many of the 'lighter' books; they had to admit, however, that 'he did not turn over the leaves of the most ephemeral publication without taking something out of it for his pulpit and platform lectures'. (G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 111.)
Dr. James MacGregor of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, could enjoy a novel, but he had reservations about developing too great a taste for such literature: 'A good novel now and then is a good thing; but as dangerous a thing as I know'. (THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 141.)

other sports and pastimes besides; if we leave to one side the pleasure almost all ministers derived from their large personal libraries, [28] the favourite pastime for the clergy would appear to have been golf [29] even in those areas where the more narrow minded in the congregations felt that a lusty swinging of wooden clubs was not fit occupation for a man of God. Up in Stornoway, for example, Donald John Martin - a Free Church minister incidentally - loved his golf, but his parishioners were scandalised; they felt that the ministry was too sacred a calling to be associated with any form of recreation or amusement; they expected their minister to be dressed at all times in broadcloth and silk hat; when Martin persisted in indulging his taste for golf, his clubs were openly condemned as 'the clubs of Satan' and not a few folk walked out of a neighbouring church when he went there to assist at the Communion season. [30] In the main, however, the people of Scotland were quite willing that their ministers should have their hours of leisure, and in the main the ministers succeeded in finding even a short time each week to devote to those secular activities that particularly attracted them. No men of the Church were ever busier than Norman Macleod and Alexander Whyte; it would have been easy for their week to have been filled with official business; both of them, however, successfully retained a few hours of each Saturday for their

28 Robertson Nicoll's father was minister of Lumsden Free Church; his income never reached £200 a year, yet he accumulated a library of 17,000 books. 'Every shilling he could spare from a strictly frugal life went to the enlargement of his library'. 'In later life he began to buy duplicates, for as he said to his son, 'You are never really safe with one copy of a good book'. (JANE T. STODDART: 'W. Robertson Nicoll': pp. 10-11.)

29 See footnote 11 on p. 177.

30 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': pp. 138-142.

favourite forms of recreation and relaxation. 'Every Saturday, Macleod took the only walk of the week which had no object but enjoyment': [31] each Saturday evening, Whyte withdrew to his room to read the Spectator, the New Statesman, and the Saturday Review. [32]

We would not wish to condemn those ministers who, like Bonar and McCheyne, felt themselves unable to indulge in any form of secular recreation; we would not doubt the sincerity of their beliefs; nevertheless, we would feel compelled to support the views of those who, none the less sincerely dedicated to the work of Christ, saw in seemly sports and hobbies a source of refreshing renewal for body and mind; nor would we discount the theory of A. K. H. Boyd who felt that ministerial participation in popular sports could help regulate the conduct of such sports and could lead to a closer link between the Church and the ordinary people: 'I have known injudicious clergymen', writes Boyd, 'who did all they could to discourage the games and sports of their parishioners. They could not prevent them, but one thing they did, they made them disreputable. They made sure that the poor man who ran in a sack or climbed a greased pole felt that thereby he was forfeiting his character, perhaps imperilling his salvation'. [33]

It would scarcely be correct to include in the list of ministerial hobbies the willingness to farm the glebe. With many men it was a matter of absolute

31 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed.: p. 225.
His companion on these walks was very often the 'heretic' John Macleod Campbell of Row.

32 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': pp. 126, 287-288, and 618.
'The first habit which he taught his young wife was to read the Spectator regularly'. (p. 126.)
Whyte's long admiration for the Spectator was, however, diminished when it 'turned upon Mr. Gladstone'. (p. 127.)

33 A. K. H. Boyd: 'The Recreations of a Country Parson': First Series, p. 142.

necessity that their glebes should be made to yield the maximum income to augment the official stipend. This is not to suggest, of course, that farming in this way was not enjoyed by many of the ministers who resorted to it for financial reasons. Many of these men did count their work on their land as recreation and as pleasure, and they had the added confidence of knowing that farming was a non-ecclesiastical occupation universally approved for ministers; those who might find golf or fishing rather questionable pursuits for a man of God had no objections to him in his role as a tiller of God's soil. With some ministers, however, farming developed until it became neither a mere hobby nor a straight forward economic operation; in not a few instances, the glebe farms became the model farms in their areas, with many agricultural improvements being introduced first in the ministers' fields. [34] Henry Duncan in Ruthwell, for example, had a large glebe of some fifty acres and it was among the most advanced in the country so far as farming methods were concerned. 'Though originally a sterile soil, Duncan's glebe had become the most productive farmland in the neighbourhood; he felt it a duty to show an example here; many were the experiments in draining, in ploughing, in reaping etc., which, from time to time, were made under his inspection'. [35] All this was commendable enough in the cause of good agriculture, but, as we saw earlier, it had the added benefit in that Duncan's parishioners were able to benefit directly from his determination to keep making improvements to his glebe; when other employment in the area was scarce, he was able to give them work in ditching, draining and generally improving the manse grounds. [36] In Ellon, too, there was a very find glebe farm run by the parish minister, the future Professor

34 A. J. CAMPBELL: 'Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland': p. 102.

35 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of the Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 86.

36 See p. 72.

Robertson. He too was a pioneer in many successful experiments in farming procedure and he was in fact the first in Britain to introduce a new method of manuring which proved very popular. [37] Of the many names we could cite when speaking of notable ministerial farmers, however, that of Dr. John Gillespie deserves special mention. Minister of Mousewald near Dumfries and a Moderator of the Church, he had such an active and expert interest in farming that he was known as 'the minister of agriculture for Scotland'. [38]

With the exception, then, of certain ministers within the Free Church, Scotland's clergymen did generally manage to secure their moments of relaxation away from parochial cares. With some, these leisure hours were spent in exercise for the body - sports of one kind or another; with others, free time was devoted to almost educational pursuits - the reading of some of the serious periodicals, studies in some branch of science, or the learning of a foreign language; [39] while for those in the country areas, leisure hours often meant much hard work in the fields, but work rewarded with increased income and a wider variety of fare for their tables. It is our opinion, however, that, no matter how they chose to fill their 'off-duty' hours, so long as there was there nothing to contradict their main calling in life to lead men to God, and so long as there was nothing done that would destroy the true sacredness of their office, these men were both benefitting themselves mentally and physically by cutting themselves off, even for a short time, from their ministerial duties, and they were serving in a very real way to make clear the truth that the God of the Christian faith is ever concerned with the whole man and with every moment of a well balanced life.

37 A. H. CHARTERIS: 'The Life of Professor Robertson': pp. 45-47.

38 REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': p. 8.

39 We have already commented on the Rev. John Erskine's feat in learning Dutch and German when almost 60. (See p. 17.)

THE MINISTER: A CITIZEN OF THIS WORLD?

'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world'

We have been speaking of the minister's hobbies and we have now asserted that some hobby or recreation helps a clergyman to live a properly balanced life; the fact that Bonar and McCheyne would disagree has been mentioned,[40] but there is here a much wider issue affecting more than whether a minister in the last century should have played golf or chess or whether he should have had a mind wholly above such things. There is here the question of how much a minister at any point in time should be of this world. Particularly within the Free Church there did seem to be a belief that this world mattered very little; we saw earlier that certain preachers and evangelists had little or no social message - salvation of men's souls was all that was of importance to them;[41] the next world had to be so meticulously prepared for that there was little time for bothering with conditions in this life. We must now recognise that there were several notable ministers who lived out their whole lives in a somewhat rarified atmosphere where every thought, word, and deed had to be entirely religious in content, and we might thoughtfully consider whether this was and is the correct attitude of mind to have as a full-time ordained servant of Christ's Church.

In a way, this is simply the continuation of the former extreme Moderate versus extreme Evangelical controversy, and much of the testimony given then could apply here also; there was more to it, however, particularly when this conflict of attitudes persisted and in some ways even grew as the 19th century advanced. Andrew Bonar felt that every moment of every day had to be spent in direct awareness of God; even walking from one house to another he would 'redeem the time' by praying.[42] He was genuinely

40 See pp. 166 and 178-179.

41 See pp. 92-93.

42 MARJORY BONAR: 'Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Letters': p. 89.

worried one holiday season when he saw his family 'so full of spirits in the country that they may have for the time bidden farewell to God in their heart'. [43] In some ways Bonar is extreme, but in many other ways he symbolises the attitude of mind of certain of his influential Free Church brethren. They never for a moment 'put off the clergyman' no matter what they were doing. John Milne, for example, would never have been mistaken for anything but the Free Church minister that he was. Horatius Bonar says of him: 'I may safely say that he never wrote a letter, however short, without some sentence or word or leaflet that spoke the man of God'. [44] 'If he met a man in the street, he had some ready word of peace to greet him with. If he went into a shop, he would take occasion from the articles he was buying to say a word in season. If he drove in a cab, he would not part from the cabman till he had given him some little book or spoken some text or reminded him of his higher calling'. [45] 'He did not feel he had done anything undignified when, one evening in the streets of Perth, he gave full chase to three boys who ran away from him as he was trying to persuade them to come to his Sabbath School; nor did he think he had done anything out of the way when he got up on the engine, amid smoke and dust, and drove along for a stage in order to talk with the driver and the stoker'. [46] Of the same mind was James Robertson of Newington U. P. Church: 'When he was travelling by railway, or walking in a country road, or entering a house on a casual errand, he was looking out for opportunities for dropping a seed word;' [47] for example, when arriving home in a cab, the door was never opened for him at once as it was known he would always talk ten minutes with the cabman as part of his 'wayside sowing'. [48]

43 MARJORY BONAR: 'Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Letters': p. 295.

44 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of Rev. John Milne': 5th ed. p. 321.

45 Ibid. p. 335.

46 Ibid. p. 336.

47 Anon. 'James Robertson of Newington': p. 14 of Preface.

48 Ibid. p. 285.

With such men - and we could recount similar behaviour on the part of W. C. Burns, Murray McCheyne, and others - talk of hobbies or no hobbies is only to look on the surface; to inquire whether they would serve on secular committees is likewise to miss the real point; the question is whether such men, 100% clergymen all the time, present the ideal to be aimed at - whether it be in the 19th century or in any other century - or whether in fact their undoubted piety served to discourage honest men and women from attempting to live Christian lives within and according to the teaching of the organised Church; in addition, we must ask if they were not in practice distorting human life as God meant it to be by separating into two completely watertight compartments the sacred and the secular. Many in their parishes naturally regarded these men as showing the kind of life the Church wished all men and women to live; they set such a stern standard, however, and they were so uncompromisingly critical of those who did not match up either in aim or achievement, that the ordinary folk were perhaps justified in feeling the demands of the Church unreasonable and the way of life advocated detached from reality. In the present day, members of a church who disagree thoroughly with the central message of their minister can very easily transfer their membership to a neighbouring church where the expounded doctrine is in greater keeping with their own position; there are, however, not a few in such a situation who will rather break loose altogether from all organised religion, declining either to attend their former church or to move to another one. In the 19th century, it was difficult for a person to bring himself to 'turn' from the Free Church to the Established Church; personal bitterness continued for many years with the result that under the ministries of the very narrow Free Kirkers, some men and women were to all intents and purposes lost from the Christian Church. Such ministers did draw round about them a very loyal band of people who shared their opinions, but the net result may well have been that many an ordinary worshipper was driven away. Of course, the Church never did exist at any time to win people

in by preaching only what the people wanted to hear; the Christian Church exists to preach the truth; we must wonder, however, if the Bonars and Milnes preached the whole truth. As the 19th century progressed, as travel and education broadened the Scotsman's mind, as the Church had to face much greater competition even on a Sunday for men's time and interest, a too narrow approach to living could only make the more human parishioners feel that Christianity was not for them; they would not do anything by way of pleasure that was unseemly or offensive to public decency; yet for an honest enjoyment of harmless pleasures they were branded as less than righteous by God's ordained representatives, and the effect cannot have been for the good or the strength of the Church.

Humour is at any time only one part of a person's make-up, but for most men it is an invaluable and a God-given part; again, however, humour as we would think of it found little or no place in the lives of the Bonars and Milnes of the Church. Now this is not simply to say that in their official clerical moments humour was outlawed. There was after all no other side to them where the shafts of humour could shine through. Immediately we want to contrast this with other great ministers of both the Free and Established Churches. Thomas Guthrie and Archibald Scott, for example, were gifted with a creative ability in humour. It was never allowed to intrude in the pulpit - 'I never saw a shadow of a smile pass over the congregation of Free St. John's', says Dr. Hanna, a colleague of Guthrie's [49] - but in private conversations, their humour, though never boisterous or undignified, was both valuable and valued. Norman Macleod, too, was a great humorist, being a very able cartoonist and mimic. As a student, some of his family wondered if he was not too full of fun to make a fit minister of the Gospel; [50] their

49 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, pp. 192-193.

50 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 25.

fears were groundless, however; kept properly in its place, his humour added greatly to the appeal of his personality. Donald John Martin - in many ways as serious and devout a man as one could ever meet - had a great, even uncontrollable, sense of humour, and his pastoral ministry was all the more winning for it. [51]

What, then, are we to say? Were these men and others like them - Cameron Lees and John Cairns for example - all the greater because, though they served the Church most ably and faithfully, they honestly and openly enjoyed some of this world's pleasures and amusements? Would they have been greater still as ministers of the Gospel if they had been as self-denying as their narrower brethren? It may be too easy to say it is all a matter of temperament. A man may be without gifts in sports or hobbies; he may have no interest in secular enjoyments; he does not automatically, however, seek to prevent those who are so gifted and interested from having their hours of relaxation away from work. We have to-day a fear that the world is exercising a pull to lead men away from the Church; it may seem to us that in the last century there were those clergymen who were trying hard to pull the Church totally away from the world. Professor W. Garden Blaikie offers some advice to the theological students of New College which may be deemed both wise and constructive; he is dealing specifically with the question of a minister and his use of humour; the implications of his words, however, would bear a much wider application: 'Gravity or seriousness should lie at the foundation of the character of the Christian minister.....but a little playfulness of character in private has a wonderful opening effect, especially on the young'. [52]

51 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of Rev. Donald John Martin': pp. 128-134.

52 W. GARDEN BLAIKIE: 'For the work of the ministry': 1874 edition: pp. 364-365.

C H A P T E R N I N E

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THE EVER OPEN DOOR
OF THE
19TH CENTURY MANSE.

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CHAPTER NINE: The ever open door of the 19th century manse.

'I was an hungred, 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'.

Up to this point, when considering the minister and his contacts with his parishioners, we have tended to concentrate on those occasions, often rather formal, when he purposely left his manse to go to where the people were. We have thought, for example, of his meeting with his people in Church, Sunday by Sunday; we have watched him on his rounds of his parishioners' homes; we have seen him on this committee and that committee met to deliberate on community affairs. What we have till now too little considered are those circumstances which induced the people to go to the manse and seek actively a meeting with their minister. We have, it is true, observed that the local savings bank and the parish library were frequently operated from the manse and that thereby the parishioners could be regular visitors to the minister's home. [1] Visits to make use of such facilities, however, scarcely constitute the personal and confidential interviews that we wish now to consider. We have already remarked without comment that the manse was at one time a virtual hotel open to receive all who might come; [2] we have seen that during the hours of sermon preparation there was never an over warm welcome for the caller at the manse door, [3] and we could have deduced from this both that there were many who went to the manse for one reason or another, and that at other times of the week they were willingly received. We must now, however, look in more detail at the 'public role' of the manse.

1 See pp. 154-157, and 160-162.

2 See p. 172.

3 See pp. 110-111.

HELP FOR THE NEEDY

Over the years, the Scottish manse had, fairly universally, come to be regarded as the natural 'port' to make for in any storm, but as the individual ministers showed more friendly interest in their people's home life, this custom waxed stronger, and in particular those men who went out of their way to minister to the too often neglected poorer classes reaped a vast harvest of house callers. It was said of Robert Burns of Paisley, for example, that 'long rows of poverty-stricken people reached out from his study desk into the street, eager to pour into his ready ear the diary of their woes'. [4] Thomas Guthrie said that each day his Edinburgh home was 'besieged by crowds of half-naked creatures, men, women and children shivering with cold and hunger'. [5] Norman Macleod of the Barony felt that the Devil should be called BELLzebub because of the many interruptions suffered by hard-working ministers who were trying to snatch a few hours undisturbed in the seclusion of their studies. [6] Dr. James MacGregor of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, felt this burden equally heavy; when in Paisley (1855-1862), he said that these interruptions were the 'hardest cross' of his profession. [7]

We could of course play down this whole matter by reminding ourselves that these needy people resorted to the manses because, for much of the 19th century, there was little alternative. The state made little or no provision for helping such folk; the funds for the relief of the poor were, as we saw, controlled by the ministers and Kirk Sessions until 1845; [8] educational

4 R. F. BURNS: 'Life and Times of Robert Burns of Paisley': p. 92.

5 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 192.

6 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed. p. 291.

7 THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 76.

8 See p. 157.

standards were low with the result that in official business the minister was the obvious person to turn to for guidance. It is nevertheless significant to see the faith which helpless men and women had in their Church and in their ministers, and it is to the great credit of our clerical forefathers that, generally speaking, this faith was not misplaced. The minister never knew just what problem would confront him as the maid ushered in a caller. Norman Macleod's grandfather in Morven often found that he had to be both lawyer and judge and settle a feud between individuals or even between whole families. [9] The elder Story in Rosneath was frequently taken from his studies by parties who felt that he should be free to show them personally over the nearby glen. [10] Mr. Bower, minister of Old Monkland early in the 19th century, opened his door on more than one occasion to find a woman parishioner bearing her breakfast plate of porridge which he was asked to examine as evidence that her husband did not provide her with sufficient to eat. [11]

In the main, however, the callers at the manse were seeking assistance with either employment, clothing, food or money. Not all ministers were in a position to do what we saw Henry Duncan could do in Ruthwell and personally employ such people on the glebe, [12] but many were the ministers who, by their influence, could find work for the willing person. John Macleod in Govan, for instance, was particularly noted for this, and his was the first name mentioned in his parish by those who found themselves out of work - 'they had unbounded faith in the Doctor's omnipotent ability to get them work', and he frequently succeeded. [13] To meet the incessant demand for

9 NORMAN MACLEOD: 'Reminiscences of a Highland Parish': p. 32.

10 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 79.

11 THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 1, p. 19.

12 R. S. KIRKPATRICK: 'The ministry of John Macleod': p. 46.

13 See p. 72.

warm clothing for the winter on the part of those whose purses would not stretch to providing it, some Churches formed clothing societies where a central reserve of good usable clothes was kept. Thomas Guthrie and Norman Macleod were two ministers who organised such a society to great effect. [14] In practice, however, it was generally left to the minister and his wife to deal with this problem and many manses became almost second-hand clothes markets. It took great ingenuity to keep supply ahead of the very firm demand and in those cases where supplies did fail, it was not uncommon for the minister himself to give of his own private wardrobe. A. D. Grant of Mount Park Free Church, Greenock, for example, was forever appearing in a new coat while some needy person would be noticed wearing his previous one. [15] Donald John Martin went even further on one occasion; he gave away his last pair of trousers and had to spend the rest of the day in bed while his tailor hurriedly produced replacements. [16]

The genuine willingness of the clergy to assist those who presented to them tales of hardship is perhaps seen most clearly of all, however, in the amount of hard cash parted with on the manse door step; not only did established parishioners receive such aid, but the itinerant poor, who might never have been in the parish before and who might never again return to it, were given such financial help as the ministers could afford. G. H. C. Macgregor, both in the East Free Church, Aberdeen, and in his later London charge in Notting Hill, adopted a strict practice of tithing all his income from all sources, with one tenth being set aside to give to those who called on him for help. [17] William Robertson, minister of Irvine U. P. Church

14 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Volume 1, p. 372. DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 1st ed. Volume 1, pp. 229-230.

15 THOMAS CASSELS: 'Men of the Knotted Heart': p. 37.

16 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of the Rev. Donald John Martin': p. 250.

17 DUNCAN C. MACGREGOR: 'George H. C. Macgregor: a Biography': p. 245.

from 1843, was similarly systematic but further increased his generosity to good causes by consistently doubling the largest subscription given by any other individual to appeals of which he approved. [18] Stevenson MacGill, minister of Glasgow's Tron Church at the beginning of the 19th century, was open-handed to the point of recklessness in that he got himself into debt on a number of occasions because of the large sums he gave to those in need. [19] In Perth, John Milne made it his practice to go to the bank each month, pay the necessary bills, and there and then give away the rest of his funds to the poor. [20]

THE MANSE AS A HOTEL

Callers at the manse door, then, could go away with high hopes of a job; they might well have silver in new-found pockets, and as often as not they would enjoy a warming bowl of soup in the kitchen before moving on. In the north of Scotland, however, and particularly in the early years of the last century, manse hospitality did not end even here. On occasion, the callers might express a wish to remain within the manse for a period of time until their fortunes improved, and, incredible though it may sound to our rather more inhospitable ears, many manse families did

18 ARTHUR GUTHRIE: 'Robertson of Irvine': 3rd edition: p. 84.

19 ROBERT BURNS: 'Memoir of Dr. Stevenson MacGill': p. 316.

20 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': 5th edition: p. 202.
In addition to the more normal methods of securing money to assist the poor - tithing, sacrificial giving, special collections - some ministers had most original 'schemes' whereby even additional coppers might be made available. J. P. Struthers in Greenock, for example, made a point of diluting his ink with water, thereby saving around threepence a year; this money, with the proceeds of other economies, went to charitable purposes. (THOMAS CASSELS: 'Men of the Knotted Heart': p. 66.)

keep 'open house' in this way and provide what amounted to free hotels. In the parish of Morven, Norman Macleod's grandfather had a family of sixteen; in addition, however, he had, living in cottages on the glebe, various shepherds, boatmen, and ploughmen, who were, to some degree at least, maintained by the occupants of the manse. For all that, he still managed to stretch both his house and his stipend to care for the tourists, the traders, and the 'gentlemen of the road' who automatically sought out the manse. [21] In Ruthwell, Dr. Duncan likewise opened his own door to many friendless outcasts of society who might stay with him over a period of months until their situation improved. [22] In Rosneath, the elder Story's roll of visitors could total a dozen or more in a single day, ranging 'from the peer to the peasant', with the 'old companion, the needy suppliant, the hungry tourist, and the perplexed foreigner' all looking to him for help. In Rosneath, no caller was ever disappointed, for, as his son remarks, 'the manse door was like the heart of its owner, ever standing open to receive all who chose to enter'; no matter his rank, each caller 'was received and entertained with the most expansive hospitality and goodwill'. [23]

Principal Rainy's grandfather was minister of Creich at the end of the 18th century; the picture we are given of life in that Sutherland manse shows the situation that held good in so many similar manses throughout Scotland as the 19th century opened: 'The manse had almost a public function, for there was no inn near and people arrived at all hours to find shelter and a welcome'. It was not a large house but it was run on the principle that

21 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed.: p. 3.
NORMAN MACLEOD: 'Reminiscences of a Highland Parish': pp. 32-33.

22 J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of the Rev. Henry Duncan': p. 93.

23 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story': pp. 250-251 and 339.

'where there is heart-room, there is house-room'. 'On Saturday evenings and Sundays the Manse was always quite full as many came great distances to Church': it was thought no unfair imposition that they should spend a good part of the week-end at the manse; in addition, as we saw in Morven and Ruthwell, 'the manse was seldom without one or two friends or acquaintances who, being in reduced circumstances, were invited to stay in the manse'.[24] Norman Macleod is surely correct when he sums it up in this way, 'The ingenuity with which guests were accommodated in the manse was equalled only by the skill with which a very limited income was made to cover the expenses of housekeeping and looking after a large family'.[25] 'No manse was ever so full but that, like a bus, one more could be taken in'.[26] Perhaps the most penetrating observation, however, comes from one of Thomas Guthrie's servants in Edinburgh who had seen previous service in a small inn: 'This house is just like a public, only there's nae sillar comes in'.[27]

This is one sphere where we cannot possibly offer any comparison between conditions to-day and conditions in the last century. The State, with its abundance of welfare provisions, has taken over completely the Church's former role as the helper of the poor and none can be in any way sorry that this is the case. It was an unenviable task for any minister to have to judge on the merits of each appeal only to realise that neither he nor his church had sufficient funds truly to assist all those who could make out a case.[28] Whatever else we may say, however, we must record our unbounded admiration for our ministerial fore-

24 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 1, p. 8.

25 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd ed.: p. 23.

26 Ibid. p. 304.

27 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 320.

28 See p. 159.

fathers who did face up to the needs of their parish whether those in need attended their church with regularity, or not. It would have been easy, with limited resources, to distribute money or food or clothing only to those whom they knew; in some parishes, this may well have been the practice, but overwhelmingly the evidence is of generosity to all regardless of residence or religious convictions. We would not to-day find many ministers or many ministers' wives who would open their homes to a collection of travellers and beggars; we would not expect them to do so; yet this is precisely what so many of them did during the first half or more of the last century. Certainly there were no hotels in many areas; certainly, there was no social security or unemployment payments; this does not diminish, however, the willing spirit of sacrifice shown by many of our parish ministers; this does not lessen the honour they must receive for personally caring for the needy.

THE MINISTER'S STIPEND

It is perhaps not unreasonable, in view of what has gone before, to ask just how well paid the minister of the 19th century was. Were stipends so large that monetary assistance could be given to strangers without causing hardship to the manse families? The facts suggest rather the opposite; for ministers with no private income to fall back on, stipends were frequently on the low side for even ordinary needs. Indeed, right from his student days, a minister found that the financial provisions made for him were, in many cases, all too slender. To-day, a divinity student can eke out his bursaries and grants by undertaking pulpit supply. As we saw, however, this practice was, in the 19th century, actively discouraged [29] with the result that the would-be minister was denied both the money and the experience which his modern counterpart enjoys. In addition, his position was made even more difficult by reason of the fact that many of the bursaries which were available were in the hands of

29 See p. 31.

patrons who awarded them, not according to financial need or academic ability, but according to personal whim or fancy. [30]

Even when licensed, a minister's financial worries were not at an end. Until the Disruption in 1843 created an immediate need for some 500 additional ministers in Scotland, supply exceeded demand, and many men, some very distinguished scholars among them, had to wait for several years before entering their first charge. Figures are difficult to come by, but it appears that in the first thirty years of the 19th century, an average of 150 students were licensed each year, while the normal number of vacancies occurring in any one year was not much above 30. [31] Some men certainly went abroad to the colonies or to the mission field, but many had to resort, as we have seen, to teaching in the day schools. [32] Those unable or unwilling to mark time in this way could only live a Micawber-like existence 'waiting for something to turn up'.

Marcus Dods, for example, later to be Principal of New College, had to wait for eight years and be rejected by twenty-one vacant congregations before he received a call. [33] Robert Candlish of St. George's, Edinburgh, languished well over two years without a charge of his own, [34] while Cameron Lees and Dr. James MacGregor, [35] later to be two of Edinburgh's most distinguished ministers, both began to learn Gaelic in the hope that this might open the door to a church more quickly, even if it were in a remote highland glen. Even when a man finally received a

30 See p. 29.

31 STEWART MECHIE: 'Education for the Ministry in Scotland since the Reformation': Part 3: Contained in 'The Records of the Scottish Church History Society': Volume 15, Part 1, pp. 10-12.

32 See p. 135.

33 G. F. BARBOUR: 'The Life of Alexander Whyte': p. 109.

34 WILLIAM WILSON: 'Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish': p. 41.

35 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'Life of James Cameron Lees': pp. 40-41. THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 9.

call, the minister still had his monetary problems. The small rural church - the normal scene of a first ministry - did not pay a large stipend; their large manses needed more furniture than a probationer could easily buy; and the expenses of the induction which were met by the person being inducted were considerable.

Thomas Guthrie is the perfect example of the shortcomings of the system as it then operated. He experienced a five-year gap between licence and ordination; he had been at university preparing for the ministry for a period of ten years, and in those fifteen years, 'five as a journeyman, ten as an apprentice', he had received only five guineas in the Church's service. [36] Yet, when he was inducted in 1830 to the parish of Arbirlot, he was presented with a bill for £60 - £30 for fees to the Crown, with a similar sum to pay for the dinner he had to provide for members of the Presbytery and the local gentry. [37] When he finally received his stipend, he commented that it was more of a 'starving' than a 'living', noting that 'some gentlemen pay their French cooks, and many merchants their clerks, a larger salary than he receives who has charge of their souls, and in whom they expect the piety of an apostle, the accomplishments of a scholar, and the manners of a gentleman'. [38] The sense of the injustice of this situation was to remain with him right through his ministry even when he personally was receiving a much more adequate stipend in Edinburgh, and in his address as Moderator in 1862, he spoke of the need for an adequately financed ministry: 'I would tempt no man to enter the Church by the hope of wealth, but I wish no man to be deterred from it by the certainty of poverty: that stands as a barrier at the moment - I don't say between the Church and the higher classes, but between the Church and the middle classes of society'. [39]

36 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Vol. 1, p. 110.

37 Ibid. pp. 117-118.

38 Ibid. p. 60.

39 Ibid. Volume 2, p. 256.

We have already seen enough of this man's great work for Christ to know that Guthrie was no mere mercenary; it is, therefore, no surprise to find that his opinions on such matters are fully supported by many of his colleagues throughout the 19th century. In the early years of the century, Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk comments that 'the stipends keep no pace with the rising prosperity of the country, and the ministers are degraded in their rank by the increasing wealth of the inferior orders'. [40] In the 1830's, the parish minister of Ellon - the future Professor Robertson - was forced to live outwith the official manse for the first two years of his ministry because of the great costs involved in furnishing and maintaining that large house. [41] The next decade saw John Caird inducted to the established Church in Newton-on-Ayr where he had what Charles Warr describes as a 'starvation stipend'. [42] As late as the mid 1870's, Professor Blaikie stated that 'in the great majority of cases the minister is subject to considerable financial pressure and needs a self-denial that amounts to heroism'. [43] Without doubt, however, the most disturbing claim is made by Andrew Somerville, Secession minister in Dumbarton from 1830 to 1845: in his autobiography he states that 'it is an ascertained fact that more ministers die in the first three years of their ministry than in the next ten years' and he affirms that this is so because their financial hardship, with prolonged poor feeding, while students undermined their health to such a degree that they could not stand the strain of leading a congregation. [44]

40 J. H. BURTON: 'Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle': 1860 edition; p. 527.

41 A. H. CHARTERIS: 'Life of Professor Robertson': p. 37.

42 RONALD SELBY WRIGHT: 'Fathers of the Kirk': p. 216.

43 W. GARDEN BLAIKIE: 'For the Work of the Ministry': 1874 edition: p. 375.

44 WILLIAM GRAHAM: 'Andrew Somerville': p. 55. Somerville quotes the fact that even although Thomas Guthrie was the son of a Brechin provost, he could only afford to eat meat twice in a six month college session. Oatmeal was the standard student diet.

Accepting for the moment that these foregoing statements are all to be taken at their face value, there is an interesting domestic side-issue which we might consider briefly here. In Scotland during the last century, it was fairly generally the case that ministers' wives were drawn from the upper levels of society. It was considered fitting by the lairds, by the landed gentry, and by the titled families, that their daughters should marry into the Church; with the amount of work, both social and educational, that was expected of manse wives, this tradition was by and large for the good of the parishes; in addition, such women normally brought with them a sound private income and a sizeable capital sum by way of a dowry; thus was many a minister saved from future financial embarrassment when his stipend proved unequal to the demands made upon it. It would be fair to say that this latter point was not lost on Scotland's clergy. An issue of the Evangelical Magazine in 1822 carried an article openly alleging that, because of poor stipends, there were ministers who made money 'the principal object of pursuit' in women to be their wives.[45] In Rosneath, the elder Story, who had just seen a lady reject his proposal of marriage, was given this pointed advice by a friend: 'If you marry a wife without money, you are ruined for life; it is all stuff about a 'treasure in herself'; you are not a money-making man but you are sufficiently inclined to be an expensive one and therefore you must get money with your wife'.[46] We would not wish to suggest for a moment, of course, that more than a very few ministerial marriages were in this way 'marriages of convenience'; we simply remark on this outlook which, even subconsciously, may have helped cement into marriage a blossoming friendship. The undoubted fact is that, while many ministers married exceptionally well socially and financially, this is no more than we would expect, knowing as we do that the parish minister ranked with the local nobility in position, in prestige, and in education. They were truly worthy suitors for the daughters of the aristocracy.

45 EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE: January, 1822: p. 12.

46 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 76.

On the same domestic front, it is perhaps worthy of note that many ministers seemed to regard it as inherently desirable that they should have a wife right throughout their active parish ministry; that is, if a first or second wife was snatched away in childbirth or by some outbreak of fever - two events that we find recorded with distressing frequency - the minister did often consciously seek a successor after a seemly time - generally regarded as a year - had been allowed to elapse. The reason for this practice was, perhaps strangely, domestic rather than parochial; it was not often that a minister was moved to consider prompt re-marriage by the thought of what a wife could achieve within the church or within the parish; more commonly, it was the fear of confusion in the running of the affairs of his own house that made him realise that a wife's touch was needed. It is when we realise the implications of this that we may wish in some ways to revise our views on the poverty of the average minister. The fact was that throughout almost all of the last century, even the poorest manses had their servants. The minister was away from home a good deal on necessary duties and could not, even if he were capable of it, supervise and control these servants; a suitable wife, coming from a family where several servants were employed, was an invaluable 'foreman' in the manse kitchen; she had both authority and experience and, as we saw, many such ladies of the manse organised their staff so well that very profitable home industries were established which added to the family income.[47] We can, of course, appreciate the usefulness, even the necessity, of a wife in such circumstances, but we would need to ask again for a definition of the poverty which so many ministers were said to endure. To-day, a manse servant is something of a rarity; the minimum stipend does not, unaided, stretch to such assistance, and yet 'poverty' would hardly describe the condition of modern servant-less manses. For the minister of the 19th century, however, it was quite unthinkable to be without at least two servants; his position in the community

47 See p. 172.

demanded it. So we find that W. G. Blaikie, inducted to the very modest parish of Drumblade in 1842, employed a man for the glebe, a maid for the house, and a girl for the cows and poultry.[48] By the same token, when A. K. H. Boyd of St. Andrews wished to describe a manse where there was poverty, he began, as we to-day might, by pointing to bare carpets, unkept gardens, and a library too devoid of books; his last example, however, is drawn straight from the last century - 'the servants are of the inferior class, coarse and insolent'.[49]

A minister's poverty, then, was relative only to the position he was expected to hold in society; he could not live as his ordinary parishioners lived; he had to maintain a home which in these measurable ways at least resembled the homes of the local gentry. His high-born wife could not be asked to undertake menial domestic duties which she had not known in her father's house; where he might well have been able to live comfortably enough within the limits of his stipend, he had to stretch and augment this stipend to raise himself and his household to the socially approved level. When we realise that this was the position he was in, we might well conclude that herein lies one of the main reasons for the regrettable fact we noted earlier in our study, namely the fact that for too long the Church as a whole in Scotland rather neglected the poorer classes.[50] Particularly in the towns, the Church was the possession of the middle and upper classes and the minister, as we saw, devoted himself almost entirely to them. It may well have been, however, that the minister was a prisoner of tradition in this and that only a strong man like Thomas Chalmers could have broken out of this prison. A minister's whole way of life, even within the four walls of his private home, was influenced by his contact with the wealthy classes; he not

48 W. G. BLAIKIE: 'Recollections of a busy life': p. 78.

49 A. K. H. BOYD: 'The Recreations of a Country Parson': Second Series: p. 226.

50 See Chapter 2, pp. 34-76.

only seemed remote to the poorer people; in many ways he was remote. At the same time, we would have to admit that many ministers must have had a vested interest in retaining the traditional set-up. As we saw, they were not in themselves men of wealth; Scotland drew her ministers from the middle classes rather than from the aristocracy, with the result that they needed the wealth that could come to them from wealthy patrons and benefactors who viewed them with favour. A minister going out of his way to fraternise with the inferior social classes would quickly lose his congregation and his influence and, possibly, his sources of stipend supplementation. Certainly, he would forfeit his chances of receiving a call to any of the great churches of the land.

Further evidence to support the idea that it was difficult for most ministers to rebel against the traditional patterns in this realm is provided in the many examples we have of parish ministers being given very large gifts by their congregations to mark some milestone in their lives; stipends in most kirks were low, but such presentations could be most generous; obviously, it was the wealthier classes who could contribute most meaningfully to such gifts and it was clearly desirable, from a material point of view, that the ministers should not appear out of sympathy with their benefactors' way of life. Silver plate, silver candlesticks, and gold watches were the most popular routine gifts which ministers could expect to receive from various bodies or individuals who wished to express appreciation. On retiral, or on attaining one's jubilee, however, the amount of hard cash given to a minister could be surprising indeed. When Dr. Cunnihgham retired, for example, he received no less a sum than £6,900; [51] Dr. Candlish received £5,600, [52] and Dr. Guthrie [53] and Principal Rainy [54] both collected £5,000. When Andrew Bonar celebrated fifty years in the

51 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 419.

52 Ibid. p. 419.

53 Ibid. p. 420.

54 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 2, p. 267.

ministry, his Finnieston congregation gave him £4,000, [55] while in Liverpool, Dr. Watson (Ian Maclaren) was presented with a cheque for £2,600 to make his new-found leisure time more enjoyable. [56] It is admitted right away that the figures quoted refer to great public personalities; many outwith mere parish surroundings would contribute generously to such testimonials, but the fact remains that even in the ordinary parish in Scotland, a minister, beloved of his congregation and in harmony with his wealthy neighbours, could hope to receive a most handsome gift at such landmarks in his life.

It was a matter of common occurrence also for a congregation to rise to great heights of generosity if their minister took ill. Long continental holidays for convalescence were financed at no expense to the invalids and anything that money could buy which might aid recovery was provided. William Robertson of Irvine U. P. Church took seriously ill in 1871; to assist him back to health, he was provided with a free holiday and a gift of £5,927 which was subscribed by just over 90 of his friends. [57] The minister of Dingwall Free Church until 1884 was John Kennedy; on each occasion that he was forced to travel to improve his health, 'purses of gold were thrown at him'; 'hundreds of guineas at various times filled his lap from the hands of sympathetic admirers'. [58] One would not immediately think of either Irvine or Dingwall as being centres of great wealth; one would hesitate to suggest that undeniably fine men like Robertson and Kennedy sought to preserve the kindly favour of the wealthy for selfish reasons; these facts, however, do show that Scotland's ministers, though not particularly well paid month by month, could have their financial position greatly improved

55 MARJORY BONAR: 'Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Letters': p. 371.

56 W. ROBERTSON NICOLL: 'Ian Maclaren: Life of the Rev. John Watson': p. 351.

57 ARTHUR GUTHRIE: 'Robertson of Irvine': 3rd edition: pp. 290-291.

58 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 246.

by the generosity of their wealthier parishioners, and taken over all, this fact must have gone some way at least to making ministers not unwilling that the class structure in Scotland should be retained and that the Church's position and their own position in that structure was not entirely unsatisfactory. The ministry of George Morrison in Wellington Church, Glasgow, is, as we have remarked before, outwith the 19th century and therefore outwith our direct concern. In his ministry, however, we do see how generous a well-to-do congregation could be to one who was a great minister and friend to them. In 1919, he attained to his semi-jubilee in the ministry and received a gift of £500; [59] the following year, he turned down a call to St. George's, Edinburgh, and was rewarded with a further £200 from a relieved congregation. [60] In 1926, his congregation gave him over £400 to meet his expenses as Moderator of the United Free Church Assembly; [61] £500 followed twelve months later when he celebrated 25 years in Wellington. [62]

59 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'Dr. George H. Morrison': p. 110.

60 Ibid. p. 114.

61 Ibid. p. 118.

62 Ibid. p. 161.

C H A P T E R T E N

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THE SCOTTISH PARISH MINISTER:
A FINAL REVIEW OF
THOSE ASPECTS OF HIS LIFE AND WORK
WHICH UNDERWENT THE GREATEST CHANGE
DURING THE COURSE OF
THE 19TH CENTURY.

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CHAPTER TEN: The Scottish parish minister: a final review of those aspects of his life and work which underwent the greatest change during the course of the 19th century.

We have seen our 19th century minister, then, in many roles. We have seen something of the training he would receive; we have seen him involved in the 'party' struggles of which the last century had many; we have seen him preaching the Word of God at the various services and classes; we have followed him on his rounds of his people's homes and seen that his manse was the scene of many return visits; we have glimpsed his domestic life, his family commitments, and his leisure occupations. In short, we have tried to paint a picture of our minister which is many-sided and detailed and from which we can see with some clarity the kind of life he lived and the kind of work he had to do. In conclusion, we must look at our findings as a whole and attempt to see those areas in his life where, during the 19th century, the greatest changes took place.

1. THE POWER OF THE MINISTER

In the first place, we are bound to record that the sheer overall power of the parish minister did, in many measurable ways, decline as the 19th century advanced. This is not to say, of course, that a graph of ministerial power would register an all-time high in 1800 with a steady unrelenting fall thereafter. Indeed, as we shall remind ourselves, in the north and in Free Church strongholds, the graph would reach its peak in the period from 1840 to 1860. It would be simplest to consider the varying levels of the minister's general authority under three heads - his standing in the community at large as a respected public figure, the effective measure of control he was able to exercise over the daily lives and pursuits of all his parishioners irrespective of their active Church connections, and his power to have his own way as moderator of his kirk session and as pastor of his specific congregational flock.

(a) The Minister as a public figure

Summing up first, then, on the question of the minister's public position and prestige, it would seem that in the 19th century there was, perhaps surprisingly, little change. He began the century - in rural areas at least, and Scotland was still largely rural in 1800 - as second in importance only to the laird; he was the father-figure of the parish; he was widely consulted on all manner of subjects, many of them far removed from the ecclesiastical sphere. In an age when the class structure in society was strictly honoured and adhered to, he ranked with the highest ex-officio, and at a time when the educational opportunities and attainments of the working classes were all too poor, he was, by reason of his own training and by virtue of his exalted office, almost regarded as omniscient. By the time the 20th century dawned, it is true that the rigid class structure that had existed a hundred years before was beginning to crumble. Democracy had become not only a popular slogan but an increasing reality; the rapid growth of the industrial towns had created a whole new aristocracy of merchant tycoons whose standing in their communities was based on material wealth quickly amassed and not on centuries of breeding and tradition. The minister's position in society, therefore, was not guaranteed as it once was. Furthermore, the provision of something approaching adequate educational opportunities for all, the increased specialisation in education, and the rapid development in science and medicine, meant that the local minister was no longer regarded as, nor was he expected to be, the fount of all knowledge.

Yet, with all these changes and with all this progress, the minister's age-old position as a respected leading member of society was not materially challenged or altered; he still served on all the major public bodies; his friendship was still coveted by the ordinary men and women of Scotland, and he was still given a special place in his community even by the mounting number of those who did not participate regularly in the organised church. It is true that the state had denied him the automatic right to a top

place in certain areas of public life - he was, for example, no longer the area representative of the controlling body for education; he no longer personally distributed the funds for poor relief; his home no longer housed the libraries or the savings banks; he would not have been allowed, even if he had wished, to dabble untrained in medicine; the state had in these matters necessarily and very wisely superseded and supplanted him; but the same state was both eager and anxious to retain his voice and his wisdom in the newly established state boards and committees, and it was anxious to dignify and elevate these bodies in public opinion by having serve actively on them the local representatives of the Church. In terms, then, of legal automatic power in the community as a whole, in terms of real inbuilt guaranteed authority in matters of public concern, the minister had certainly suffered real losses during the hundred years under review; but in practical terms, he was no less 'at the top' of society in 1900 than he had been in 1800; this position was still safe-guarded, not now by law perhaps, but by a most effective combination of tradition, official favour, and popular request.

(b) <u>The Minister's control over his parishioners</u>

We do, however, find some fairly substantial weakening of the minister's power and authority when we turn to consider the measure of control he was able to exercise during the 19th century over the daily lives of his parishioners as a whole, although in very few instances would we feel moved to say that such loss of authority was to the real detriment either of the individual minister or his national church. In 1800, the kirk session still exercised its old privilege of summoning to its meetings those suspected of being involved in scandalous or immoral behaviour as well as those who had without apparent satisfactory reason absented themselves from public worship or violated the strict sabbath code. Very early in the century, however, this practice was dropped; the people of Scotland were becoming increasingly unwilling to submit to such courts, to suffer the ignominy of their public reprimands, and to give their hard earned money to pay their

fines. There was too the real question of whether more harm than good was being done by exposing innocent minds at Sunday worship to the detailed chronicle of misdemeanours of those being rebuked. The Church, then, discontinued this method of supervising its people's lives and morals, and therefore, the minister, as moderator of the kirk session, lost his former powers as judge in the session court.

For all that, however, many ministers kept and for a time even increased their ability to regulate what their people might do on the Sabbath; here they were supported by a very strong popular tradition of reverence for the Lord's Day which in many cases amounted to rank superstition. That is, a sizable portion of the population of Scotland was eager not only to back up those ministers who were determined to keep the Sabbath Day utterly holy, but to report to kirk sessions and presbyteries any other clergymen who seemed to be themselves transgressing the strict code of Sabbath observance. So long as this powerful and watchful combination of clergy and laity remained numerically strong, the sanctity of the Sabbath remained unbroken, and the restrictions imposed effectively controlled the Sabbath activities of everyone whether in sympathy with the Church or not. When, however, the laymen began in increasing numbers to demand a relaxing of the old controls and a liberalising of the Lord's Day to bring the Scottish Sunday more into line with the Continental Sunday, then those ministers who wished to preserve absolutely the status quo were inevitably fighting a losing battle. In other words, the parish ministers were not by their own inbuilt power over the people keeping the iron grip on the Sabbath; rather were they the official public guardians of what many of the people wished, through a combination of reverence, superstition and fear, to see preserved. To this extent, then, we cannot simply say that the breaking down of the Sabbath barriers during the last thirty years of the 19th century was due only to a loss of power and a loss of control by the clergy. It was due to a considerable extent to a changing attitude on the part of many of the lay people.

For all that, however, as guardians of the Sabbath and as executives responsible for supervising that day's activities, the parish ministers did wield considerable

power, and they used this power very often to exert what we would regard as an absurd and artificial control in their determination to keep the Lord's Day untouched by secular intrusions. According to Thomas Guthrie, for example, in his childhood 'whistling was regarded as being as fit an occupation for the Lord's Day as profane swearing'; [1] apparently this was held by some to apply even to the feathered kingdom; Peter McKenzie, editor of the "Reformers' Gazette", told Norman Macleod of a true incident in Perth early in the 19th century. In that town there was an elder of the Kirk who kept birds, one of which, a starling, had a fine ear for old Scots tunes; one Sabbath, the minister passed by and chanced to hear it singing 'Over the water to Charlie'; he was so outraged that he ordered the elder to strangle the bird or to demit his office. To his eternal credit, the man chose to demit. [2] If there were no other similarly outrageous stories authenticated, we could put this down to the eccentricities of one very narrow minded clergyman. It does not stand alone, however, and there are many similar tales that could be told of ministers erecting immense barriers round the Sabbath Day and banning within the space of these sacred twenty-four hours the most innocent actions. For instance, the Rev. Duncan Mathieson, minister of Knock from 1831, suspended from Church membership for a year a teacher who was in training for the ministry because he had boarded the Monday morning boat for Skye late on the Sunday night. [3] Such actions in the name of Christianity could not win our approval to-day, and when the ministers

1 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd edition: Volume 1, p. 19.

2 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd edition: p. 378.
Sir Archibald Geikie tells of one lady who rose specially early each Sunday morning, her first duty being to carry down to the cellar her 'merry-hearted and loud-throated' canary so that its carol might not disturb the solemnity of the day. (SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE: 'Scottish Reminiscences': p. 127.)

3 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 110.

lost such powers of rebuke and censure through the popular demands for a more liberal Sabbath, we cannot find it in ourselves to express regret. Likewise, we cannot honestly feel that the cause of true religion in Scotland was damaged when devout laymen ceased to rebuke their ministers for every little breach of the Sabbath tradition. Early in the 19th century, for example, there were several ministers in trouble with their people for daring to shave on the Sabbath - the Rev. Alexander Bower, minister of Shiprow Relief Church in Aberdeen was actually taken to Presbytery by his managers in 1805 on this and similar trivial charges, [4] while the young Thomas Guthrie was given this advice on his first preaching trip to Ross-shire, 'Speak of shaving on the Lord's Day in Ross-shire, and you need never preach here more'. [5] Even as late as the 1920's, some earnest souls withdrew their membership from a Free Church in Skye when the minister's wife had the temerity to give birth to a son on the Sabbath.

The Sabbath, then, lost, bit by bit, its black and shuttered look. Scotland was able to look more and more to England and the continent as travel became easier and this had its undoubted effect in making men and women want a freer attitude towards Sunday. Also in regard to travel, the vast sums of money invested in the expanding railway networks made the railway companies determined to persuade the maximum number of people to travel by train; the Church, then, could not have been surprised that the railway companies attempted to stimulate popular demand for Sunday rail services. Better educational facilities meant that ordinary men and women could read and reason for themselves and inevitably they asked searching questions of this one day in seven which was almost like an island in the midst of reality; in this regard, the Bampton Lectures for 1860 on 'Sunday, its origins, history and present obligations' caused a great stir and enjoyed a wide circulation in printed form. With the relaxing of the Sabbath code

4 ALEXANDER GAMMIE: 'The Churches of Aberdeen': p. 202.

5 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd edition: Volume 1, pp. 21-22.

came of necessity the trimming of the minister's executive powers to control what their people, even their own Church people, might do on a Sunday; as we said, their own power alone never was sufficient to keep the tight grip on the day that had existed. This, however, cannot be seen as a bad development for the welfare of the Church. The Church could not continue to influence people through superstition, and it could not hope, nor should it have wished, to retain its congregations through clamping down on anything that might in any way compete with or detract from the services of public worship. We have, therefore, nothing but praise for those ministers who had the courage and the vision publicly to advocate a decent liberalising of the Sabbath. Norman Macleod of the Barony was a leader in this sphere of thought. He addressed Glasgow Presbytery for almost four hours on the subject of Sabbath observance and he declined to read from his pulpit that Presbytery's letter regarding Sunday trains; for his intelligent stand in this, he got abusive letters by the hundred and brother ministers shunned him in the street.[6] Nevertheless, it is significant that he was not deposed; twenty years before this, he would have been. Principal Story was another leading minister to join the ranks of those Churchmen who were pleading for a more open attitude to Sabbath pastimes and to such men belongs great credit;[7] theirs was a difficult position to adopt, but we must believe it was the right one. The old Judaistic strictness of the Sabbath was not for the lasting good of the cause of Christ.

Hitherto, we have concentrated on the parish minister's ability to control his own parishioners in regard to how they could spend their Sundays; in referring to the stand of Norman Macleod, however, and in earlier references to the expansion of the Scottish railways, we touched on one of the national issues raised as a result of the strict

6 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd edition: pp. 360-362.

7 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 339.

Sabbath tradition in Scotland. It was agitation led by such ministers as W. C. Burns [8] and Murray McCheyne [9] that persuaded the railway company to suspend for the twenty year period from 1846 to 1865 the running of all Sunday trains between Edinburgh and Glasgow. [10] Incidentally, it is worth noting that before their withdrawal, these Sunday trains were well patronised; we have in fact figures for one Sunday in 1842 showing that somewhere around 900 people travelled on them. There were, however, many thousands thronging the stations in protest and they joined in impressive services of worship in the station forecourts. Popular opinion was sufficiently strong to back up the ministers' agitation and the trains were withdrawn.

Similar campaigning, even to the Houses of Parliament, kept the public parks, gardens, art galleries and museums firmly closed to the public on Sundays; the point was not that such occupations as travelling by train or walking in pleasant surroundings were inherently sinful; the fear honestly was that they would provide the people with alternative occupations for the Sunday and that the Churches would be forsaken. [11] Those agitating for the retention of such restrictions wished the Church to have an absolute monopoly of all that could happen on a Sunday, fearing that they would lose their hold over the people if that monopoly were lost. Of course the fear was justified; many people were attending Church simply because there was no alternative open to them; [12]

8 ISLAY BURNS: 'Memoir of the Rev. W. C. Burns': 4th ed.: p. 235.

9 ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': pp. 150-151.

10 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, pp. 5 and 213.

11 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed.: Vol. 1, p. 23. THOMAS SMITH: 'Memoirs of James Begg': Volume 2, pp. 222 and 325.

12 Eunice Murray writes, 'Church going was too often indulged in, not as an act of devotion, but merely because there was no counter-attraction'. (EUNICE MURRAY: 'The Church of Cardross and its ministers': p. 139.)

but again, for the reasons we cited above, we must say that the advent of competition for men's time on Sundays was not something to be regretted; the power that the ministers thus lost was not a power which it was desirable that they should keep. Principal Story was surely right when, speaking at a Church Congress in Aberdeen in 1901, he delivered a paper on Sunday observance in the course of which he said, 'Why leave those who do not go to Church no alternative resource of moral or spiritual benefit? I believe their religious life would not be hurt, and their health of body and mind would be promoted, if, on the Sunday afternoons, they found the parks and public gardens, the art galleries and libraries, freely open to them for their mental improvement and rational recreation'. [13]

When one reads the biographies of certain of the really powerful ministers that Scotland produced in the 18th and early 19th centuries, one is struck by the number of occasions in which these men were allowed an almost police-like power within their parishes, and this not only on a Sunday. Understandably the 18th century saw more examples of this than the century here under review - James Robertson, minister of Lochbroom in the 1740's, for example, was 'reputed for checking with his fists his offending parishioners', [14] while Mr. Pope, cousin of the poet and minister of Reay in Caithness 'had a very feeling way of getting the people to Church: he clubbed them in and they dreaded his arm and his baton' [15] - but the 19th century had its stalwarts in this field too. For instance, the Rev. Peter Maclean who died in 1868 was known as the 'Lion of the Lews'; [16] 'at nightfall, he would button his coat and wander through the streets to see that everything was in order. Men in the public houses were afraid of him and tried

13 THE MISSES STORY: 'Memoir of Robert Herbert Story': p. 339.

14 DONALD SAGE: 'Memorabilia Domestica': 2nd edition: p. 7.

15 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 2.

16 Ibid. p. 155.

to be home in good time. The sheriff said he was more to him than all the policemen, and he felt he could leave for holiday with an easy mind if Maclean were at home. [17] The Rev. Duncan Mathieson, whose grim views on the Sabbath we noted earlier, [18] was most firmly of the opinion that dancing should not be permitted on any day of the week, and he had the utmost belief in his constabulary powers to prohibit it. In Gairloch, in the 1840's, a dance was secretly arranged. Mathieson, however, got news of it and he made for the Drill Hall, the scene of the evil, armed with a stick. He threw open the door 'like an angel of judgment' and 'in a moment there was a stampede to the far end of the Hall and out, even though the organisers were not of his Church. The following Sunday he dealt with the dancers' sins, naming the families and itemising on them'. [19] There was not a public dance held in Gairloch for many years thereafter.

Here was quite terrifying power vested in or claimed by a minister of the Church. Well used, it was power that could no doubt be for the good of a community but one is forced to the conclusion that such power, however valuable, should belong not to the Church or the Church's representatives but to some civil government body. It is one thing for a minister to be respected; it is quite a different matter for a minister to have the power forcibly to prohibit, although it may be his inclination, or even (in his view) his duty, to remonstrate concerning their doings, men and women from doing what they enjoy and what is within the bounds of the laws of the country. In the lowlands and in the developing centres of population, few parish ministers retained or wished to retain this prohibitive kind of power far into the 19th century, although a few like the elder Story in Rosneath could, by their sheer personality and from the sincere respect they had earned, achieve results not dissimilar to those of Maclean and Mathieson: 'Story was in

17 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 164.

18 See p. 211.

19 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 107-109.

the habit, if he saw a light in the village tavern on his return late at night from his perambulations in the parish, of going in and dismissing the company. Whenever he entered, there was a universal scuttle at the back door and the window for the privilege of being the first out of sight'. [20] In the very remote Highlands and Islands, powerful ministers who were so minded were able to retain some kind of constabulary powers rather longer, but here too, long ere the 20th century dawned, their ranks had emptied never to be refilled.

(c) The Minister's authority within his own Church

Moving on now to the third section of our review of ministerial power in Scotland during the 19th century, and considering the minister's authority within his own Church and congregation, we again undoubtedly see a decline in his absolute power. As the century advanced, he ceased to be the lone executive and became more and more the organising chairman of various bodies of active and involved lay representatives. In fact we are now face to face with the second of our main findings, namely that by the end of the 19th century, the Church in Scotland was much more truly a partnership of minister and layman than it had ever been before.

2. THE ROLE OF THE LAYMAN

We must look, then, in some detail at the growth of lay power in Scotland's Church and at the effects this had on the parish minister so far as his work and position were concerned. Once again, however, it may well be that, whatever the losses the parish minister suffered in respect of his personal authority and control, it was for the overall good of the Church that this large new force of lay workers should have emerged.

At the outset of the 19th century, there was little that the layman could do within the established framework of the Church. As we have already remarked, church halls

20 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 72.

and their modern abundance of mid-week activity did not exist to afford lay people the opportunity of involvement and participation in the Church's work;[21] working hours, even for youngsters, were long and a six day working week was normal, with the result that there was little scope or incentive for the Church to diversify its activities to include projects which might have required lay leadership. So far as the ordinary folk were concerned, the Church consisted of lengthy diets of worship each Sunday and periodic visits from the minister, mainly to check on progress being made by the young people in the catechism. Kirk Sessions were small in number; their old judicial powers were fast fading, and their later responsibilities for district supervision and for oversight of Sunday Schools and day schools were yet to be. In Presbytery, the rule of strict parity between ordained and lay representatives still operated in theory, but in practice, many Presbyteries were composed largely of ministers with few sessions troubling, or even being encouraged, to send one of their number to the meetings.

This whole situation was to change during the course of the 19th century, with the move for the change coming from three different directions. The Church itself instituted changes in its pattern of work which inevitably led to greater lay involvement; the national movement towards democracy in government had its effect on many institutions, the Church included; and the growing body of well educated laymen in the Churches began themselves to assume positions of leadership, being in some cases in advance of their ministers in the changes they advocated.

(a) <u>The Church opens the door to the layman</u>

We look first, then, at those changes which the Church introduced into its life which allowed the laymen a greater say in the day to day affairs of the Church. As we have seen, the most important early change was the introduction of Sunday Schools on something approaching a national scale. Having

21 See pp. 35, 64, and 148-149.

overcome their suspicion of them, the ministers for a time superintended the Sunday Schools themselves, but very quickly handed over first the teaching and then the organising of these schools to energetic laymen, often members of the Kirk Session. [22] The Sunday Schools were so popular, the numbers attending were so many, and the work of superintending them was so time-consuming, that the ministers could not, except in the smallest parishes, retain full personal oversight of them. The lay leader, then, was established in many congregations and was entrusted with the great responsibility of teaching the faith to the future Church.

Less dramatic, but nevertheless very important, was the move back to having elders active within the Presbyteries. Thomas Guthrie, for example, did much in the 1830's to encourage this in the Presbytery of Arbroath, [23] and there were others of a like mind who were determined that the Church should not be so minister-centred as it had been. Important, too, in any consideration of the growth of lay power in Scotland's Church, is the work of Thomas Chalmers in his two Glasgow charges. Chalmers had, as we saw, an ambitious scheme of poor relief which was not in any way dependent on legal assessments being made. It was operated on the voluntary system and he had a large team of dedicated laymen who eventually took the administration of the poor funds entirely out of his hands. [24] In addition, Chalmers had a large band of teachers, district visitors, and social workers assisting a considerably enlarged session in the day to day working of the Church, [25] and all this, in the 1820's, was quite remarkable when we think of how little the laymen had been used in Scot-

22 See p. 146.

23 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd edition: Volume 1, pp. 173-174.
Guthrie records that he took his elder to Presbytery 'to the horror of the Moderate, and the terror of some of my timid Evangelical brethren'.

24 See pp. 158-159.

25 ADAM PHILIP: 'Thomas Chalmers, Apostle of Union': pp. 42-44.

land hitherto.[26]

As the 19th century progressed, many were to follow Chalmers' lead in harnessing the power of the enthusiastic and capable members of the congregation; Norman Macleod, who in his first charge had found only four elders,[27] quickly set about establishing a group of lay visitors, and we know that in the Barony his belief in the full co-operation of the laymen with the minister reached full practical reality.[28] Thomas Guthrie, too, was determined that the lay people should be actively involved in the Church's work: he said in fact that he would have liked to see every individual whose name stood on the Communion Roll included in his congregational staff of assistants.[29] James Robertson of Newington,[30] Archibald Scott of St. George's,[31] and Dr. MacGregor of St. Cuthbert's[32] are just three of the other leading clergymen who were at great pains to overcome the former reluctance to make full use of the ordinary members of the Church. Said Dr. Scott, 'I have set before myself the aim of getting every member of the congregation to do something on behalf of our work'.[33]

26 The Rev. Dr. John Wilson, minister of Bellshill Relief Church from 1833 to 1884, scarcely seemed to allow his session much say in Church affairs. All through his ministry he was his own session clerk and it was his custom to write the minute in advance of each meeting. (W. R. THOMSON: 'The First Relief Church in the West': p. 79.)

27 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 1st edition: Volume 1, p. 126.

28 Ibid. 2nd edition: p. 230.

29 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 184.

30 Anon. 'James Robertson of Newington': p. 120.

31 THE HON. LORD SANDS: 'Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, Edinburgh, and his Times': p. 42.

32 THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR: 'Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor': p. 187.

33 THE HON. LORD SANDS: 'Dr. Archibald Scott of St. George's, Edinburgh, and his Times': p. 42.

In the final quarter of the last century, of course, the flood-gates were opened wide; adults and children alike had more leisure time away from their work; Church Halls were appearing in large numbers, and the Churches were alive to the need to provide healthy and wholesome activities for their people throughout the week. So there came and flourished the Young Men's Guild, The Boys' Brigade, the Christian Endeavour, the Woman's Guild, and a whole host of congregational groups where anything from singing to sewing, from cooking to public speaking, could be enjoyed. Quite obviously, no minister could hope to control personally all such activities, and therefore the laymen, better educated than their forefathers and with more experience in public life, took part in large numbers and made secure this most encouraging development in the Church's life. [34]

(b) <u>The move towards democracy on a national scale</u>.

Nationally speaking, of course, the 19th century saw great strides being taken towards the setting up in Britain of a true democracy with the Reform Act of 1832 pointing the way. Within the Church, this popular surge towards democracy was to make its mark more and more as the century wore on, with the first great victory being seen in the ending of the system of Patronage. With this change, the power of the ordinary lay member of the Church increased overnight; he had now a direct say in the choice of the man to be his minister. While this, as we say, inevitably increased the power of the lay members of the Church, it need not, in itself, have led to any weakening of the minister's authority once appointed. Perhaps subconsciously, a minister may have felt that he owed it to the people to consult with them more readily than he might have done had he been inducted through the power of the Patron; it would be quite wrong, however, to put any emphasis on this thought. As a by-product of the

34 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, p. 258.

abolition of Patronage, it could be argued that there were two developments which, on occasion, prevented a situation arising where a minister might have gained a dominant hold over his parishioners. During the 19th century, there were several factors which, on the whole, led to the average length of each ministry being reduced. Easier travel arrangements and better communications throughout Scotland meant that ministers' eyes could more easily fall on attractive pastures new; in addition, a minister no longer needed to await the smile of a patron before considering a move. The average ministry, then, came to be of shorter duration than in former days, and very naturally a minister cannot gain the iron grip of his people's lives in a few years to the same extent as could his clerical forefathers who very often stretched their entire ministry over one or two parishes.

Not unimportant in this context, either, was the fact that in the days of strict Patronage, it was a common practice for the Patron, where possible, to fill a vacant charge by appointing to it a son or nephew of the previous incumbent. For example, for more than a hundred years, the parish of Strath in Skye was served by grandfather, father, and son of the Mackinnon family.[35] In Morven,[36] Norman Macleod's grandfather and uncle held the parish Church for 107 years from 1775 to 1882. In St. Quivox, Ayrshire, father and son McQuhae ministered over the hundred year period to 1858,[37] while we have remarked several times that the two Storys served Rosneath with distinction from 1815 to 1898. There were undoubted advantages in such a system of family succession if the men in question were of the quality of the Macleods and the Storys; there was a continuity which could be most desirable and beneficial; a very close personal relationship could be established and the manse family could

35 SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE: 'Scottish Reminiscences': p. 53.

36 J. H. S. BURLEIGH: 'A Church History of Scotland': p. 380.

37 REV. THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON: 'The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris': p. 48.

be truly at the centre of everyone's affections. The drawbacks are obvious; a parish could become set in its ways so that it would take a miracle to change anything; if the 'royal' family were unpopular or inefficient, then for this vast period of time the parish Church could be dead in all but name. Most important, however, was the fact that in a ministerial succession of this kind, the ministers' hold over their people even to the point of dictatorship could be complete. The ministers' likes would become their people's likes; the ministers' prejudices would become their people's prejudices. This kind of succession, then, was much less likely to operate when the Patron lost his power and when the democratic vote of the congregation decided who next would occupy the pulpit. There was, then, less likelihood of any minister or succession of ministers building up this utter control over the people, and on the whole this was probably a healthy development and for the good of independent thought.

The national movement towards greater democracy was seen elsewhere in the Church also. Very naturally the Free Church was run on more democratic principles than had been the Established Church; the question of Patronage had, after all, been the key issue in the pre-Disruption struggles. Then again, the ministers who 'came out' to join the new Free Church owed a very great deal to their people who came out with them; these laymen were their source of stipend and of housing, and a too domineering attitude towards them would not have been wise nor would it have shown due gratitude for their sacrifices. It is true that in the north there were very strict Free Church ministers who did exercise very tight control over their people, but in the main there was a much greater show of democracy within the Free Church than there had been in the national Church. The United Presbyterian Churches, too, were governed on democratic lines; they insisted that their elders should take part equally with their ministers in the Synod, and indeed went further in that congregations with more than 400 members were allowed to send two elders to that court. In addition, their managers were not elected for life but for a fixed period of time, thus preventing any hereditary or immoveable clique

taking over the government of their churches.[38]

Throughout Scotland, however, the growing love of democracy affected the Church most of all in the way that men and women began to question what in the Church earlier generations had been happy to take on trust. Traditions, doctrines, the Scriptures and the very existence of God were openly challenged by men and women who, in previous generations, would never have dared to utter a word of criticism against either the Church or its ministers. They were now educated to a sufficient level to be able to read for themselves the writings of the modern thinkers and philosophers who were asking searching questions of the traditional Christian beliefs. As we saw, Principal Rainy cited the writings of Edward Caird, of Thomas Hill Green of Oxford, and of Tyndall;[39] Hegelianism too was stirring new currents of thought among the Scottish people, and all the time there were those within the organised Church - Robertson Smith and McLeod Campbell for instance - who were challenging orthodoxy. With a growing materialism creeping in, probably from the continent and from England, it is little wonder that the Church took on a more democratic look, that people moved away from the Church in rather greater numbers, and that the parish ministers no longer had it all their own way when it came to telling their people what they should do and what they ought to believe. Yet again, however, we should not regret any of these developments; the Church must ever be able to face criticism and its doctrines must be able to come through the most searching examination. Likewise, the parish minister, as the local representative of the Church, must ever be ready to give adequate answer to any who challenge him and he is not putting the Church in a truly stronger position if, by force of any kind, he can make his people accept what they do not understand or believe.

38 J. R. FLEMING: 'The Church in Scotland': Volume 1, p. 84, and Volume 2, p. 208.

39 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 1, p. 407.
See also earlier references on p. 41 of thesis.

(c) Laymen to the fore.

When we move on to consider the third of our sub-sections dealing with the increasing power of the laity in Scotland during the 19th century, we find that there were in fact several situations where devout laymen were in advance of their ministers in the changes they advocated and in the measure of power and authority which they felt that laymen should have. Early in the 19th century there were still some examples of the earlier 'praying societies'; [40] these consisted of groups of fervent laymen who met together for prayer and for study and who were dissatisfied with the cold and rather barren state of the organised Church. It was one attempt to counter the Moderates' reign in Scotland, and the fact is that these 'praying societies' could possess very real powers in a community, and there are cases where would-be members of the Church had to be approved by these groups. More commonly associated with the century under review, however, were 'The Men'; we have seen them at work; we have seen that no one could take Communion without their approval; they handled the meetings on the Friday of Communion week - the Question Day - and they successfully banned from their communities anything of a too secular nature in the way of music or dancing. [41] The activities of 'The Men' and the 'praying societies', however, were largely restricted to the north and to the remoter country areas, but in a period when the lay people of the Church were largely kept in a position of inactive silence, their achievements are truly remarkable. The members of these lay groups were most definitely ahead of the organised Church in their insistence that the laity had a right to be consulted in Church affairs; indeed, they claimed power over even the ministers which was far removed from the accepted pattern.

On something like a nationwide scale, a powerful lay movement was experienced in the Churches in the

40 ROBERT MACKENZIE: 'John Brown of Haddington': Paperback Edition (1964): pp. 55-56.

41 See pp. 46-47.

Revivals of 1859-1860. As we saw, the real leaders of this series of revivals, and the main preachers at the revival meetings, were laymen. [42] This in itself is surprising enough; it is even more surprising when we see the background of certain of these lay evangelists. Some were undoubtedly gentlemen of wealth and prestige, well educated and able to speak fluently to all classes. Brownlow North, Reginald Radcliffe and Hay Macdowall Grant, for example, were prominent among the preachers and would belong in this category. Others, however, were drawn from the working classes and one or two had a criminal background. Robert Annan, for instance, was a runaway soldier, and Robert Cunningham was a prize-fighting butcher. [43] The undeniable fact is, however, that their preaching brought results and lasting results; we saw, for example, that the United Presbyterian Church reported favourably of the effect this series of revivals had on congregational prayer meetings throughout the denomination. [44] These lay evangelists, then, and those who supported them, were ahead of their time inasmuch as the laity, even in 1860, were not yet being afforded a dominant place within the organised Church.

The most striking example that there is, however, of a lead being taken by the laymen of Scotland to effect a radical change in official Church policy, is seen when we consider the growth of the Temperance Movement. We have seen that the Moderate Carlyle of Inveresk and the Evangelical Webster of the Tolbooth had few leanings towards Temperance; [45] we have noted that there were those clergymen who entered and won drinking competitions, [46] and we learned that after the rigours of a long Communion week-end, the officiating clergy liked to relax with a convivial glass. [47] From all this, we

42 See pp. 87 and 90.

43 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, p. 112.

44 See p. 91.

45 See pp. 5 and 13-14.

46 See p. 12.

47 See pp. 48-49.

could deduce, and deduce rightly, that early in the 19th century, the Church in Scotland was very far from supporting any doctrine of total abstinence. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, 'Hard drinking was a habit in the most respectable circles and drunkenness was scarcely regarded as a sin'. [48] In any kind of social get-together, a glass of whisky was then what a cup of tea is to-day, and the Church and her ministers did not seek for many a long day to revise popular opinion in this matter. Indeed, there was, in many instances, a very close and definite link between the Church and alcohol. It was a decided advantage to have an inn near the church so that refreshment between the morning and afternoon services could easily be obtained. In the parish of Uig in Lewis in the 1820's, there was one person who was officially allowed to sell whisky outside the Church after each service; [49] in the Secession Church of Cockburnspath which was opened in 1793, the beadle was licensed to sell ale in his house. According to one observer, this practice was most beneficial to the services of worship - 'They sang'd like Turks aifter it'. [50]

The Church, too, supported in its own practice, the popular custom that a drink must accompany every event of any importance. Presbyterial dinners had liquor supplied through an elaborate system of fines; when a minister got a new manse, he was fined in a bottle of wine; when he married, had a child, or had a sermon published, he was similarly fined, as indeed he was if, on attaining a certain age, he was still unmarried or still without children. [51] Even religious ceremonies were thought to be more fittingly observed if all involved, including the ministers, partook of alcoholic refreshment. The elder Story's predecessor in Rosneath was

48 J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, pp. 76-77.

49 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 80.

50 A. R. MACEWEN: 'Life and Letters of John Cairns': p. 31.

51 STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development: 1780-1870:' p. 88.

Dr. Drummond; in his day, if the weather was cold at the time of the catechising, the elders 'would gently propose retiring to Jean's, the local public house'; likewise, at christenings, marriages and funerals, Jean received her full quota of ecclesiastical customers. Funerals in fact provided throughout Scotland the greatest opportunity for drinking to excess: 'respect for the dead was shown by the intoxication of the living', [52] and there are cases recorded where funerals were postponed because the whisky had not arrived. [53]

It was something of a rarity, therefore, to find any minister who practised or advocated total abstinence until as late as 1830. Thomas Guthrie, for example, states that while he was a student in the 1820's, there was not, so far as he knew, one abstaining minister in the whole Church. [54] Guthrie himself was a total abstainer, perhaps the first great clerical figure to join this cause. Roderick Macleod of Snizort, the 'bishop' of Skye, was another who would not take alcohol, [55] and later in the century Donald John Martin, [56] John Cairns, [57] and J. P. Struthers [58] were three of the leaders of the Total Abstinence movement that was rapidly gaining ground.

The real impetus was given to the Temperance movement, however, not by ministers at all, but by laymen, and in particular by John Dunlop, a Greenock lawyer and elder, who founded the Temperance Movement in Britain. He got little initial support from the clergy; few ministers would make

52 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story': pp. 49-50.

53 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 94.

54 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 263.

55 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Life of the Rev. Donald John Martin': p. 17.

56 Ibid. p. 95.

57 A. R. MACEWEN: 'Life and Letters of John Cairns': p. 585.

58 A. L. STRUTHERS: 'Life and Letters of John Paterson Struthers': pp. 148, 159, etc.

pulpit intimation of the first lecture to be held in 1829, and it was with great difficulty that he obtained a church in which the lecture could be delivered.[59] Dunlop and his supporters worked resolutely on, however, and by the end of 1830, 100 societies had been formed in Scotland. In the first instance, these societies did not advocate total abstinence, but merely abstinence from wine and spirits; the move to total abstinence as a policy, however, followed quickly. Dunlop himself had a very poor opinion of the social concern of ministers: he said he was 50 years of age before he heard a sermon on national intemperance; with the lead firmly given, however, the ministers responded in large numbers. The Free Church established a Temperance Committee in 1847 with the Church of Scotland forming a similar committee the following year, and by 1859, 800 ministers were pledged to support the aims of the Society.[60]

The 19th century, then, saw a great growth of lay power within the Church; in every way we must admit that this was for the great good of the Church. If individual ministers lost something of their overall authority, they gained what was much more valuable, the support of a large team of men and women who could share their work-load and who could diversify still further the activities of the Church. In recognising the desirability of bringing the laity to share actively in the Church's day to day affairs, the Church was stepping out of a dying past and into an exciting future; the Church and its ministers were taking the most positive step open to them to make themselves ready for the mounting challenges the Church would have to face in the 20th century.

3. THE MINISTER AND PUBLIC WORSHIP

The third great area of change which we see when looking broadly at the minister and his work during the course of the

59 STEWART MECHIE: 'The Church and Scottish Social Development: 1780-1870': p. 87.

60 Ibid. pp. 90-93.
J. R. FLEMING: 'A History of the Church in Scotland': Volume 1, pp. 76-81.

19th century, centres on the services of public worship - on the minister's conduct of, and preparation for, them, and on the congregation's attitude towards them. Now, far from being an entirely separate stream of development, the majority of the most important changes in this sphere stemmed from the other two areas of change which we have already noted, namely the gradual loss of overall authority on the part of the parish minister, and the awakening of lay power within the Church. We have noted that as the 19th century opened, the congregations were often artificially large in that a good number of those attending were there, not from an honest desire to worship God, but from the sheer lack of any alternative occupation on a Sunday.[61] This situation was changed dramatically by the end of the 19th century, and as a result the congregations were generally smaller; far from being a drawback, however, this was in many ways a great blessing as far as the real welfare of the Church was concerned. In particular, there were two main benefits. First, the ministers found themselves faced with congregations which, while fewer in number, were much more likely to be made up of sincere and interested worshippers; they were attending because they felt a real need to attend. This, as we shall see, meant that the atmosphere in many churches was transformed out of all recognition, and what had at times been a bored and even somewhat rowdy crowd was replaced by an attentive group of men and women eager to hear and understand the Gospel. Second, the ministers were shaken out of the mood of complacency into which some had undoubtedly slipped. Hitherto, the people had come to church without any great effort having to be expended with the result that, as we saw in Moderate strongholds, too many ministers were apt to be careless in their preparation and entirely set in a rut.[62] With the Church's hold over the people and over the Sabbath breaking, however, much more thought had to be put into the content and preparation of public worship. In addition, of course, the occupants of the pews were becoming better

61 See the comment of Eunice Murray on p. 214, footnote 12.

62 See pp. 9-11.

educated so that a combination of half-digested new ideas and unquestioned old ones was no longer able to satisfy them.

(a) The truly worshipping congregation.

We look, then, at these two developments in turn, and first we look at the fact that the congregations came more and more to be made up of genuine worshippers. It is all too easy to have in our minds an idyllic picture of worship in a Scots Church in those far off days when everyone attended Church and when the minister could prolong a service until it exceeded three hours and know that next Sunday the worshippers would all be found in their places once more. It is too easy to assume that reverence, superstition and fear made these crowds into docile and attentive congregations; it was all too rarely so. The people might attend because they thought they ought to or because they would have been even more bored staying at home, but this did not mean that they assumed a reverence and an interest which they did not honestly possess, and in many churches there was regularly something of a struggle between the minister and the congregation. We get a hint of the kind of situations that could develop in this passage taken from the biography of the elder Story in Rosneath: 'The Sunday services not seldom extended over more than three hours. Long as it was, he expected all to remain to the close, and anyone attempting to escape in the middle, as in the summer strangers would do, was sure to bring down on himself a reproof sharp and decisive. He kept in fact a tight rein of discipline over his congregation; any smiles, whispers, or apparent inattention were promptly checked, and all sleepers were wakened up by a loud rap on the pulpit'. [63]

To take up just one point in the above narrative, it would appear that Rosneath Kirk contained on occasion those who found it impossible to remain awake throughout the entire service; in this it was by no means unique, and there are many examples from all corners of the land of worshippers who openly

63 ROBERT HERBERT STORY: 'Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story': p. 137.

and regularly slept away parts of the service. When John Caird was inducted to Newton-on-Ayr in 1845, he found that none of his predecessors had been able to stop certain members of the congregation from 'resorting to somniferous oblivion the moment the preacher gave out the text'. Caird was a gifted preacher and he effected a considerable improvement, but to the end of his ministry in that Church, there remained one individual who staunchly upheld the old custom. [64] A. K. H. Boyd had similar problems with his St. Andrews congregation: 'some human beings will not merely sleep but loudly evince that they are sleeping'. [65] The more concerned ministers, of course, were alive to this type of situation, and they were not at a loss for remedies. Dr. Kidd of Gilcomston Chapel in Aberdeen, for example, kept a pocket Bible handily placed, so that he could throw it at any sleeping worshipper, accompanying it always with the comment, 'If he will not hear the Word of God, he will feel it'. [66] The Rev. Alexander Campbell of Irvine Secession Church operated through the sleeper's neighbour who, in a command from the pulpit was ordered to 'waken the sleeper'. Thereafter he would considerably recap his sermon for the benefit of the one who had missed part of it, and this in itself must have encouraged the wakeful to keep a wary eye open for drowsy colleagues so that they might be stirred to signs of life before the whole congregation was made thus to suffer for the indiscretions of the few. [67]

If, however, some ministers had trouble with those who would not keep awake, there were also occasional uneasy moments with those who were all too wide awake. The 19th century could boast nothing quite to equal the ongoings of the previous hundred years when, for example, in Keith, in 1723, some worshippers were fined in court for laughing and

64 CHARLES L. WARR: 'Principal Caird': p. 77.

65 A. K. H. BOYD: 'The Recreations of a Country Parson': First Series, p. 14.

66 DONALD SAGE: 'Memorabilia Domestica': 2nd ed. p. 231.

67 ARTHUR GUTHRIE: 'Robertson of Irvine': third edition: pp. 45-46.

throwing clods and stones in Church, and for cutting and giving each other apples.[68] There was, however, in Free St. John's, Edinburgh, during the ministry of Thomas Guthrie, a cattle-drover who, sitting right in front of the pulpit, passed the time by ostentatiously taking pinches of snuff.[69] In Paisley Abbey, Cameron Lees who was there from 1859 to 1877 had the following experience to endure in his 11.30 a.m. service: 'There were stoves in the outer passage and when I was preaching I have seen people come in and take a turn round the stoves and listen for a while and just walk out again. I have seen a man come to the stove right in front of the pulpit, take out his pipe, fill it, light it, see if it drew, and then walk out'.[70] Even more daring were the old wives who lined the pulpit stairs in Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh, during the ministry of Dr. Erskine who died in 1803. Time and again they cleverly removed his pocket handkerchief as he passed through their midst with the result that his wife had eventually to stitch one in place to the annoyance and embarrassment of her who gave it the accustomed deft tug the following Sunday.[71]

There will always be those who attend Church without being in earnest about the worship; there will always be those who, for one reason or another, will drowse through the occasional service; there will always be those who fidget and tend to disrupt the service so far as those sitting near them are concerned. Elizabeth Haldane tells the delightful tale of a Church precentor, a man who was always supposed to be the very model of alertness and decorum, who was so concerned that he should at all times be awake that he regularly placed a piece of holly under his chin.[72] As we say, there will always

68 EUNICE MURRAY: 'The Church of Cardross and its ministers': p. 85.

69 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': Volume 2, p. 199.

70 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'The Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 128.

71 DAVID K. GUTHRIE and CHARLES J. GUTHRIE: 'Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie and Memoir': 3rd ed. Vol. 1, pp. 201-202.

72 ELIZABETH S. HALDANE: 'The Scotland of our Fathers': p. 135.

be problems with inattentive or sleepy worshippers, office-bearers among them, but with the availability of other pastimes during the hours of worship, this difficulty was considerably eased, and the ministers could sense a different spirit in the smaller congregations, a spirit that inspired their preaching and which helped those who were devout to take much more of value from the services.

(b) The content and presentation of Sunday worship.

Congregations and ministers alike greatly benefited also as a result of the changes that were gradually introduced into public worship to deal with the second factor we mentioned, namely that with more attentive and better educated worshippers to lead, the ministers had to pay much more heed than formerly to the content and presentation of their message. Early in the century, as we saw, a sermon tended to be judged on length, fluency, and the absence of all notes; [73] order, relevance to the text, and even intelligibility were not qualities rated so highly. We saw that Charles Warr described many a 19th century sermon as 'an interminable meander over the whole field of orthodoxy', [74] adding that in many cases it was presented in a flamboyant and incomprehensible way. The great Principal Caird was a fine preacher; if, on occasion, he over-estimated the intellectual abilities of his hearers, the bulk of his congregation did not see any ground for complaint - 'Was he no' graun' the day?', remarked one elderly worshipper to another as they left his Errol Kirk. 'Ay, but did ye' understaun' him?' was the response. 'Understaun' him?' echoed the first speaker; 'I wadna presoom'. [75]

In a way, this was all very well when congregations were easily gathered and when the worshippers were still in a simple, trusting, and relatively uneducated state,

73 See pp. 100-105 and 111-113.

74 See p. 113.

75 CHARLES L. WARR: 'Principal Caird': p. 135.

although it could never have been for the true good of the Church or for the furtherance of the Christian Gospel to have ministers regularly preaching in terms that their average listeners could not understand. It would quite clearly, however, not do at all when men and women had to be won to the Church, when activities and pastimes which they could understand were competing for their leisure Sunday hours, and when their own private studies suggested to them that the Church and its preachers were perhaps trying to make them accept theories and doctrines which had not been sufficiently carefully worked out. It was a happy day, then, when content became more important than length or the style of presentation, and when the worshippers demanded that the sermons preached should be in such terms that they could follow them.

In the same way, other changes were introduced into public worship which were very definitely for the best and which arose from the intelligent thinking attitude of both ministers and people. As we saw, definite moves were made to interest and instruct the children.[76] In the last quarter of the 19th century, the musical content of the average service was both increased and improved; after stormy debates, both hymns and organs were introduced;[77] choirs too, even a few with professional singers, made their appearance, and the service of public worship began more and more to be shaped with the public in mind.[78] Hitherto, the congregation had very little part in the service. Only two or at most three psalms were 'droned' at any one service; the precentors fre-

76 See pp. 138-144.

77 There are many tales of bitter resistance to organs; perhaps the strangest centres on a Roxburghshire Parish Church; there was a proposal to instal in that Church a heating stove to make the Church warmer in winter. The plan was stoutly resisted, and for a time delayed, because it was pointed out that the stove had a pipe like an organ. (SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE: Scottish Reminiscences: p. 95.)

78 J. R. FLEMING: 'The Church in Scotland': Volume 1, pp. 116-123.

quently had a very limited range of tunes in their repertoire (Norman Macleod quotes one who knew not more than four [79]), and even the Lord's Prayer was not repeated in public worship until the second half of the century; [80] there is the immortal tale of Dr. Lamont, Moderator of the General Assembly, being taken up a close in Edinburgh by Dr. Inglis, minister of Greyfriars, so that he could be taught this prayer for use in a service to be attended by George IV. [81]

The services, then, took on a much more orderly look and there was much more scope given for congregational participation. If the ministers were saved time and effort each week by having shorter addresses to prepare and by being allowed the use of notes, they were given the added burden of having to ensure that all that they said and all that was included in the services could stand up to critical examination.

4. THE MINISTERS THEMSELVES

All this leads us on to the final point of comparison in our survey of the minister's life and work during the 19th century; we look briefly at the ministers themselves. We have seen that their power was lessened; we have seen that they had to work harder to win a large audience Sunday by Sunday; we have seen that they ended the 19th century with a great band of lay workers at their disposal; we have seen that Church life was much more varied in its scope at the end of the century than it was at the beginning.

What, however, can we say simply about the men themselves? We can certainly say that the dedicated amongst them were no less busy in 1900 than their counterparts had been a

79 NORMAN MACLEOD: 'Reminiscences of a Highland Parish': pp. 214-215.

80 Strange though it may seem to us, 'it was not till 1856 that the General Assembly ordered the clergy to read the Holy Scriptures during divine service, a practice which up till then was almost universally neglected'. (CHARLES L. WARR: 'Principal Caird': p. 97.)

81 NORMAN MACLEAN: 'Life of James Cameron Lees': p. 192.

hundred years earlier; their preaching, their routine visitation, their sick visitation, their community responsibilities, still provided more than ample occupation for all the working hours of a week. We can, I think, say also, that on the whole, Scotland's ministers were every bit as dedicated and conscientious in 1900 as had been their predecessors, and we can say that by and large the ministers of Scotland ought to be given great credit for leading a busy, work-dominated life. The invalid Murray McCheyne said that he wanted 'a short life in the saddle rather than a long life by the fire'; [82] Robert Burns' wife records that her husband was constantly busy but that he would not be happy otherwise; [83] W. C. Burns frequently expressed the hope that his mother would be right and that he would be 'a knife worn out by cutting and not by rusting'. [84] Such remarks are typical of the wholehearted ministers of Scotland throughout the whole of the last century; Scotland was not cursed with many lazy ministers who regarded their sacred calling as being a part-time appointment.

We can say further that, as the 19th century advanced, so the educational standards of the candidates for the ministry advanced also. Even with the sudden demand for additional ministers when the Free Church was established in 1843, the Scottish Churches did not lower their standards for those seeking to be clergymen. The former shortcomings in ministerial training were gradually removed; pluralities involving a university chair and a parochial charge ceased; the ineffective part-time studies leading to ordination were discontinued; practical training was increased although even by 1900 there were still weaknesses; and the waiting time between a minister being licensed and being ordained to a charge was, in most cases, drastically cut.

Perhaps the greatest change in the ministers themselves, however, was seen in the way in which, during the

82 ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': p. 56.

83 R. F. BURNS: 'Life and Times of Robert Burns of Paisley': p. 60.

84 ALEXANDER SMELLIE: 'Robert Murray McCheyne': pp. 122-123.

19th century, they willingly shed that unnecessarily austere touch which they too often possessed in the early years; they were more concerned to win the friendship of men and women by a show of genuine love for them, by a demonstration of active sympathy, by a greater understanding of their life and their difficulties and temptations. They sought to win the sinner back and not simply to make him feel wretched and outcast; they had a social message which was sincere and credible; they were beginning successfully to cut across class barriers and establish integrated congregations. If there was a growing tendency for ministers to become congregational rather than parochial in their outlook, it was understandable, particularly in the very large towns and in those areas where three or four different denominations served the one community; for all that, however, the ministers led their churches to a position where, by the end of the 19th century, they were, generally, much more outward looking than had ever been the case before. Foreign Missions, for so long distrusted, were embraced as essential by all the main denominations, and this did much to counter any selfish spirit that might have arisen when the congregational spirit became strong.[85] The ministers, too, became much

85 To see just how hostile many ministers were to the idea of Foreign Missions at the beginning of the 19th century, we can quote from the biography of Henry Duncan of Ruthwell: 'In 1796 and in succeeding General Assemblies, some faithful brethren in the country districts had taken great pains to have overtures transmitted to the General Assembly supporting missions to the heathen as a most important part of the Church's duty. This proposal appears to have been regarded by the majority of the Assembly as not only preposterous in a high degree but so utterly fantastic in its nature as almost to imply that the parties from whom it emanated ought to be visited by the censure of the Church; the idea was, indeed, boldly expressed by one of the leaders of the Assembly and, as if the Church approved the sentiment, this very clergyman was next year placed in the Moderator's chair'. (J. C. DUNCAN: 'Memoir of the Rev. Henry Duncan': pp. 36-37.)

more outward-looking in respect of their brother denominations in Scotland. The 19th century had opened with the strife between Moderates and Evangelicals; it continued through the bitterness of the Disruption; in the 70's, there were the struggles over the proposed union of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church; but by 1900, the clouds of inter-denominational controversy and enmity had begun to lift. As we saw, ministers of the Established and the Free Churches had co-operated and shared the same platform during the Moody and Sankey Revivals; [86] Alexander Somerville, Moderator of the Free Church in 1886, was given a standing ovation in the Church of Scotland General Assembly of 1889 when he addressed that court on the Jews; [87] pulpit exchanges were taken for granted where, earlier in the century, the participating congregations and sessions had been sworn enemies; and in 1900, the first great step towards total re-unification of the Church in Scotland was taken with the union of the Free Church and the U. P. Church.

There could be those who would imagine that in the foregoing pages we have painted an altogether too rosy picture of the average Scottish minister of the 19th century. Horatius Bonar says in his preface to the life of John Milne of Perth, 'It is not a eulogy that I wish to write, but a record'; [88] for all that, many of the religious biographies of the last century, Bonar's included, do have this failing that they are less critical than we would to-day wish a true biography to be. Many of these biographies - and we have drawn liberally from them - were written very soon after the subject's death and from the pen of a close friend and admirer; it could be argued, then, that the glowing pictures they present are rather larger than real life. Furthermore, if we look, we can produce examples of glaring inefficiency on the part of certain

86 See pp. 90-91.

87 A. N. SOMERVILLE: 'Precious Seed': p. 41 of the Biographical Sketch.

88 HORATIUS BONAR: 'Life of the Rev. John Milne': Preface.

Scottish clergymen in the century under review. We saw some disturbing cases among the Moderates;[89] others, from all denominations and throughout the whole of the 19th century, could be produced. Reading through the copies of the Glasgow Herald for the second half of 1873, for example, we will find a minister involved in a divorce case, two ministers under investigation for alleged unlawful dealing over a will, yet another clergyman accused of falsehood and perjury, and an English vicar charged with drunkenness and immorality.[90] Yet again, we can speak to those still alive who remember some of the great ministerial figures of the end of the 19th century; there are former manse servants who can tell stories of uncertain temper, for example, which never found their way into any book of memoirs. We can extract from various sources references to clergymen who had their strange ways; there was Lachlan Mackenzie, for example, who was minister of Lochcarron from 1782 to 1819, and who preached one hot summer day wearing three vests, two coats, an overcoat, and a cloak.[91] Norman Macleod's mother tells of a clergyman, minister of Knapdale, who, when he preached, 'wore a white cotton night-cap'.[92] William Dunn, minister in Cardross from 1838 to 1881, was never known to preach without his stiff grey kid gloves.[93] So we could go on and by concentrating on the unsavoury and the odd a very different picture could have been painted. It would not, however, have been fairly representative of the Churchmen of the 19th century who, with very few exceptions, were men of ability and dedication. The biographies may gloss over some of

89 See p. 18.

90 For these cases, see various copies of the Glasgow Herald for the second half of 1873. For example, the following issues are relevant: 8th July, 11th July, 4th August, 21st August, and 12th November.

91 NORMAN C. MACFARLANE: 'Apostles of the North': p. 78.

92 DONALD MACLEOD: 'Memoir of Norman Macleod': 2nd edition: p. 10.

93 EUNICE MURRAY: 'The Church of Cardross and its ministers': p. 160.

their heroes' weaker points; the Churches had then, as they have now, those ministers who were not entirely wholehearted in the carrying out of their duties, but it is our honest conviction that, in the sphere of religion, the people of Scotland were, in the vast majority of cases, well served.

Principal Rainy tells of a girl he met while on holiday; she was, he said, 'oppressed with the Scottish respect for all who mount pulpits'. [94] We would say just two things in conclusion. During the course of the 19th century, this respect, where it truly mattered, was not noticeably weakened even although in this period the superficial hold of the Church was weakened; after the long and careful study we have made, we are firmly convinced that throughout the 19th century, this respect was, in the main, completely justified, and was the true foundation of the real respect with which our 20th century Church is still regarded by the Scottish people.

94 PATRICK CARNEGIE SIMPSON: 'The Life of Principal Rainy': Popular Edition: Volume 2, p. 101.

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