

ESTABLISHMENT AND DISSENT IN THE DUNFERMLINE AREA 1733-1883

by

GORDON F. C. JENKINS

Doctor of Philosophy  
University of Edinburgh

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has been written solely by

*Gordon F. C. Jenkins.*

Gordon F.C. Jenkins

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the social, political and ecclesiastical life of Dunfermline during the period 1733-1883.

The Secession and Relief movements, under the leadership of Ralph Erskine and Thomas Gillespie, shaped the ecclesiastical life of 18th century Dunfermline. By 1833 the town was dominated by Dissenting congregations, the traditional, home-based handloom weaving industry and a newly-elected radical Town Council, who between them had greatly diminished the power of the National Church and landed-class privilege. However, Dissent's stranglehold was subsequently weakened by the decline of the traditional industry and by 1855 the Established Church, despite its losses at the Disruption, was on the way to recovery, the weavers had become ordinary "factory workies" and the Town Council was dominated by the newly-formed middle class of the power loom factory revolution.

In the process of change the United Presbyterian Church was formed in 1847 in recognition of the need for mergers and rationalization in ecclesiastical as well as business life. The early Free Church in Dunfermline had different characteristics from MacLaren's Aberdeen model but by 1883, when middle-class entrepreneurs dominated the town's life, it had found its natural environment. By then the Establishment had rediscovered its broad-based appeal to those who had found its sister denominations too taken up with finance.

Following a chronological survey of the political, social and ecclesiastical history of Dunfermline between 1733 and 1883, a critical appraisal is made of five recurring themes which include three minor motifs - the role of Chapel and Quoad Sacra congregations in the development of the National Church, how the use of premises reflected changes in the Church's attitudes on social, political and theological matters and the influence of social and economic changes in the emergence of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches. Two major motifs are also investigated - the democratisation of the Churches and the distinctive role which the United Presbyterian Church played in Dunfermline life.

## DEDICATION

To my wife, Linda, and my children, Marion and Michael, with  
grateful thanks for their patience.



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## INTRODUCTION

During the preparation of a booklet on the history of the North Parish Church, Dunfermline, it became clear that its early history between 1840 and 1849 was integrally bound up with the political and religious controversies of the time. While the Establishment hoped to endow the Church, the Voluntaries were totally opposed to such a scheme. Meetings for and against the Church being built were held and such was the ferocity of feeling that on several occasions special constables and the Sheriff had to be called in. A Church Extension charge was opened in 1840 but three years later the congregation was divided over the Disruption. The Free Church party, which consisted mainly of working folk, retained the building until a House of Lords decision in 1849 restored it to the Establishment. By 1855 the congregation had attained the status of a fully endowed post-Disruption charge through Robertson's imaginative Quoad Sacra scheme.

Further study, however, made it clear that the Free Church in Dunfermline was quite different from the main 'model' which MacLaren found in Aberdeen, partly because the National Church in Dunfermline had been ravaged by three previous secessions, those of Erskine, Gillespie and the Chapel movement. A comparison, therefore, between Aberdeen and Dunfermline could only indicate trends in Scottish Church History without giving a parallel model of Establishment and Free Church interaction.

What became clear was the need to look at the history of the Secession, Relief, United Secession and ultimately United Presbyterian Churches, for Dunfermline as much as any town was dominated by this third force in Scottish ecclesiastical history. A consuming interest in this led eventually to the writing of this thesis. Questions were raised which seemed to demand answers. What distinctive features were found in the secessions of Erskine and Gillespie? Why did the Abbey Church in 1774 resist so strongly the attempt to set up a Chapel in connection with the Establishment? How far was the working of the Poor Law by the National Church made untenable by the success of Dissent? Did popular election solve the

problem of electing ministers? Why was the Voluntary Conflict of greater significance in Dunfermline than the Ten Year Conflict? What happens when religious Dissent creates its own form of establishment and that establishment itself collapses? Where does Voluntaryism turn then? Who supported the working class movements in the 1830's and how did these movements affect Church life? What were the particular contributions to Church life of the three main Presbyterian denominations? Did the Free Church in Dunfermline resemble that which MacLaren found in Aberdeen? Why can Dunfermline rather than Stirling claim to be the cradle of Dissent? These and other issues will be considered in the thesis.

Some limitations were enforced by the paucity of certain records, especially of the early years of the Free Abbey. Other important documents proved difficult to find, though many of them eventually turned up in unexpected places.

A wider time span than is usual in a thesis was required in order to trace the rise and fall of various denominations over the critical years of Scottish Presbyterianism. 1733, of course, marks the meeting of the Four Brethren at Gairney Bridge, while 1883 was simply a convenient date one hundred and fifty years on. 1900 might equally well have been chosen but this would have required a fuller look at the great United Free Union than the thesis could allow.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The parish of Dunfermline

Dunfermline, from its high elevation to the north-west of the ancient Queensferry crossing, looks down across the valley of the Forth. The town is dominated by its ancient Abbey whose nave dates back to the 12th century. Adjoining it and to the east is the modern Abbey, built in 1818, whose tower is dominated by the massive words "King Robert the Bruce". Dating from the time of Malcolm Canmore and Queen Margaret, the Church housed, before the Reformation, a colony of Benedictine monks. The ruined Fraternity is still extant while the adjacent Royal Palace recalls the fact that Dunfermline was once the home of Scottish kings.

In 1730 the parish was one of the most populous in Fife and, although it had a collegiate ministry, its extensiveness made it unworkable. Irregular in shape, ten miles long by five miles broad, it included many hamlets as well as the town of Dunfermline and stretched from Crossgates in the east to Limekilns in the west.(1) It was bordered in the east by the parishes of Inverkeithing, Beath and Dalgety and in the west by Torryburn and Carnock while the parishes of Cleish and Saline lay to the north. To the south was the Firth of Forth.

Though Edinburgh could be seen across the Forth, access to the Lothians was difficult. Rail travel was not possible until the late 19th century, while by road the short Queensferry route was not opened until the middle of the 20th. In 1730 travellers had the choice of an infrequent ferry or the long road round by Stirling. Robert Flockhart, a Dunfermline man who worked for an agency in Paisley in the early 19th century, typified the problems of travelling. He had to walk to Charlestown, take a rowing boat to Grangemouth, then the slow "swifts" of the Forth and Clyde Canal to Glasgow before completing his long journey by canal to Paisley.

Dunfermline was thus cut off from much of the country until



the middle of the 19th century when it was linked by rail to Perth and Stirling. Because of its isolation there developed a close-knit, inbred community which contributed to its distinctive pattern of social, political and religious life.

From five historical and economic studies - the old Statistical Account(2), Fernie's in 1815(3), Mercer's in 1828(4) and Chalmers' in 1844 and 1859(5) - a fair description of the life of the parish can be compiled. All five record the dominant role played by damask linen, though other aspects such as the wealth of mineral deposits are mentioned.(6) Fernie points out that coal could be purchased as cheaply as anywhere in Scotland(7), while a large acreage was given over to mixed farming. Chalmers notes a number of industries in 1837 not related to weaving, including three iron foundries, five breweries, two tobacco manufacturers, two tanneries and three rope works.(8) However the numbers employed outside the linen trade were small and in effect Dunfermline was virtually a one industry town. Nevertheless supplies of coal and the presence of a farming community made the area self-sufficient despite its distance from the main trade routes.

Politically Dunfermline was part of the Stirling Burghs in which Stirling, Queensferry, Inverkeithing, Dunfermline and Culross shared in the election of a Member of Parliament. On the local level it was controlled by a Town Council consisting of a "sett" of twenty-two who, before the passing of the Reform Bill, were self-perpetuating and often corrupt. It is therefore not surprising that the town ran into great financial debt in the 1820's.

During the 18th and 19th centuries two issues dominated Dunfermline life. The first was the growth of the linen industry; the second was the rise of ecclesiastical Dissent. The interaction of these will be the main consideration of this thesis. It will be sufficient to note here the general trends which took place in weaving and religion.

In 1718 or 1719 a Dunfermline man, James Blake, is said to have smuggled out of Edinburgh the secret of damask weaving.(9) He



did not make his new-found knowledge public but he and some friends retained the monopoly and it was not until much later that large quantities of finer cloth were manufactured.(10) A further boost to the trade came with the introduction of the fly shuttle in 1778 which cut down the number of people required to produce a web.(11) During the early years of the 19th century further technical advances were made while the introduction of the Jacquard machine in 1825 gave Dunfermline a distinct edge over its competitors.(12) This invention had a dramatic effect on the number of looms which the town could support(13), and held back the need for factories or the introduction of the power loom in order to compete with the cotton towns of the west.(14)

Even when the threat of the factory and the power loom began to be felt and their goods had become uncompetitive the traditional weavers strongly resisted change. They recognised that something more than a change in the method of production was at stake and in this they were proved right. By 1883 ten large factories sprawled across the town and the old community had died in the process.

Over the same period a parallel upheaval took place in religion. After the Reformation the Presbyterians and Episcopalians struggled for ascendancy, so much so that the collegiate charge sometimes had an incumbent from each order. The last Episcopalian minister, James Graeme, was deposed from the Abbey by the Synod in 1701 for his Arminian views and for neglect of his ministerial duties. However he was reappointed by the Commission of Assembly.(15)

In 1733 Dunfermline was served by only the Abbey Church but by 1883 there were at least ten Establishment, United Presbyterian or Free congregations as well as many smaller groups and sects. The reason for this proliferation of places of worship will be considered later. In fact most of the changes which took place in religious life in Scotland during the 18th and 19th centuries are reflected in Dunfermline.

Ralph Erskine, minister of the Abbey in 1830, became a

prominent Seceder and his departure from the Church of Scotland was a significant factor in the growth of Dissent. A few years later Thomas Gillespie moved into Dunfermline after being deposed from his charge in Carnock. He helped to found the Relief Church in 1761 but at his death part of his congregation successfully petitioned the General Assembly to have their church recognised as a Chapel within the Establishment. This move was opposed by the Abbey ministers and members of Dunfermline Presbytery. The draining away of manpower from the National Church continued during the Disruption years when three Free congregations were formed. However, it was not only the Establishment which suffered loss during the Ten Year Conflict. The strong Secession community also ran into trouble. For years they had outnumbered the Establishment and had the support of the handloom weavers but with the decline of the traditional industry both Secession and Relief congregations suffered financially and also experienced a significant fall in membership. Appendices II and III illustrate the strength of the main congregations at various times throughout the 19th century.(16) They provide a backcloth against which the various Chapters of the thesis are set.

Linen manufacture and religious Dissent thus dominated Dunfermline's life during the period under study. Two comments sum up how these factors became synonymous with the life of the town:

"The name of Dunfermline has become peculiarly associated with this manufacture(linen). For a period the identification of the town with its product was of the order of Detroit and its motor industry, Lyons and lace-making or Dresden and china-ware. In the first half of the 19th century it was reported, as evidence that Egypt's rulers were becoming more sophisticated in their manners, that Mehemit Ali, 'instead of sitting at dinner squatted on carpets or ottomans, now dines from a mahogany table covered with a handsome Dunfermline table cloth'".(17)

"After much hesitation and searchings of heart he (Erskine) acceded to the Associate Presbytery on 17th February 1737.....From this date Dunfermline is to be looked on as a stronghold of the Secession. We find accordingly from the Old Statistical Account that towards the end of the century out of a population in the parish of 9,550 the Burghers alone numbered 4,200."(18)

The weaving community and the remarkable strength of

religious Dissent will be seen to be inseparably related as this study proceeds, with the decline in the handloom industry proving a major watershed in the town's religious and social history.

## CHAPTER TWO

The growth of Dissent and its effect on the care of the poor within the parish.

During the 18th century the parish church of Dunfermline experienced three breakaway movements, each of which reduced the power and influence of the ecclesiastical Establishment. These were the secession of Ralph Erskine, the deposition of Thomas Gillespie and the formation of a new Chapel congregation by those who were opposed to the Abbey ministers in 1774. Each creamed off a different section of society with the result that by the end of the century the Abbey congregation was totally unrepresentative of life within the community. The next three chapters will look in turn at these divisions and seek to pinpoint their short and long term significance.

The most important of the three was undoubtedly that of Ralph Erskine for it set the pattern of Dissent for the next hundred years. Later chapters will deal with Erskine himself and the reasons for his unwillingness to leave the Abbey. One point, however, requires to be stressed. The Secession was on a grand scale and affected the whole community. Those who supported him came from every level of society and from every corner of the parish and beyond. They included the weaving merchant as well as the humble servant.(1) The whole life of the Abbey church was seriously affected. The care of the poor, for example, for which the Establishment had a legal obligation, was put in jeopardy. For the next hundred years the competing interests of Dissent and Establishment proved contentious as the swing to Dissent left the coffers of the Abbey empty. Before dealing with this subject in detail some more general remarks will be made.

Three main reasons can be suggested for the growth of Dissent. The first was the failure of the Establishment to adjust to the needs of a changing parish. As early as 1713 an unsuccessful attempt was made to provide a third minister for the collegiate charge.(2) Peter Chalmers also notes that the two Abbey ministers in



1730 were foiled in their attempt to have two new congregations erected at the extremities of the parish.(3) The weaving trade had led to an increase in the population of both town and parish making it increasingly difficult for ministers to cope with the growing numbers. Moreover the Abbey itself was not big enough to cope with those who could attend. The growth of house and cottage meetings throughout the area may have placed an increasing burden on parish ministers who wished to give support to these religious stirrings. The failure of the Establishment to respond to the need left the field open for Dissent to become deeply rooted and congregations at Crossgates and Limekilns were set up before 1804.

The second influence was that of Marrow theology in Fife and particularly in the Presbytery of Dunfermline. The reprinting of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* in 1718 was undertaken by James Hogg of Carnock whose parish bordered that of Dunfermline. The following year a fierce debate took place at the General Assembly in which Dunfermline presbyters took an active part. The opponents of the Marrow claimed that its teachings were antinomian and that it implied, because of the emphasis it placed on the unconditionality of grace, the possibility of a universal offer of salvation. The Marrow men were considered guilty of departing from the Confession on the matter of the Atonement.

The Assembly of 1720 declared the Marrow theology to be unscriptural and commanded ministers not to teach its doctrine. In the protest against the Assembly's findings, five of the twelve ministers who appeared were from the Synod of Fife. Later the same Synod pressed charges against those ministers who supported the Marrow and enjoined all ministers within their bounds to observe the Assembly's Acts, warning that any who failed to do so would face "censure according to the demerit of the offence."(4)

The conflict between the two sides is also seen in an instruction which forbade Presbytery to allow any young man to enter trials without reference to the Synod.(5) It further criticised the Presbytery for failing to ask members in privy censure whether they had obeyed the Assembly's instructions on the Marrow issue.(6)

Criticism stretched to related matters such as the holding of and discipline at Communion.(7) The Synod appeared to be of the opinion that Communion seasons in Fife were becoming conventicles of like-minded men and that there was a failure to observe proper procedures, such as demanding testimonials before allowing strangers to partake of the Sacrament.(8) Clearly the large number attending the Communion seasons of Erskine and other Marrow men was frowned upon.

Fraser records that the Synod also required its members to renew their subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith in terms of the Assembly's Act of 1720, thus forcing them indirectly to condemn the Marrow.(9) Some members of the Presbytery readily signed but James Wardlaw, James Bathgate and Ralph Erskine did not.(10) Erskine eventually signed a year later but not in terms of the Synod's wording(11).

A further example of the strength of feeling against the Marrow men in Fife is brought out by James Lachman in his thesis on the Marrow controversy in which he draws attention to the call of John Hepburn of Torryburn to New Greyfriars in Edinburgh.(12) It would appear that eight of the fifteen ministers in Edinburgh refused to approve the call and when asked to state their reasons they declared that in their opinion such a move would be prejudicial to the Church in Fife.(13) They were clearly of the opinion that Hepburn's removal would swing the balance of the Presbytery of Dunfermline in favour of the Marrow men and it was only after investigation by a Commission that the Assembly agreed that the charge of Torryburn should be filled, but with the advice and under the direction of the Synod of Fife.(14) In other words, if Hepburn were allowed to go to Edinburgh it would be on condition that whoever came to Torryburn would not espouse the Marrow cause.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to investigate whether the popularity of Marrow theology arose from the various Praying Societies which were in Fife at the time but it is known that such societies were present and were encouraged by Ebenezer Erskine in Portmoak.(15) Nor is it the purpose of the thesis to attempt to establish any direct connection between Praying Societies and

Corresponding Societies which proved such fruitful soil for the Secession Church. However, these Corresponding Societies were of the utmost importance in the development of Ralph Erskine's work in Dunfermline. After 1740 his new congregation was in touch with many of them who wished to be affiliated to his cause and the interest which his congregation aroused is seen in the wide geographical spread of districts who sent in names for the eldership. These included Aberdour, Dalgety Bay, Inverkeithing, Masterton, Rescobie, Beath, Clackmannan, Saline and Culross.(16) These factors taken together suggest that there was a substantial interplay between the Marrow, Praying Societies and Corresponding Societies in the setting up of the Secession Church. Moreover Erskine's works, particularly his poetry, are full of the free grace of such theology.(17) Erskine's popularity was due in part to the sharp contrast between his presentation of the Atonement and the more rigid traditional form.

In an area dominated by the handloom industry it is clear that the Church which won the support of the weavers would attain a position of strength and this is a third reason for the success of Dissent. Later chapters will deal in depth with the extent to which the various trades supported either Establishment or Dissent. Suffice it to say that, at least until 1832, weavers generally attended Dissenting congregations. Few, for example, held important offices in the Abbey and when an election of deacons took place in 1763 only one of the eight was connected with the weaving trade.(18) From Gillespie's deposition in 1752 until 1775 there were no appointments to a small depleted Session. In 1775 of six who accepted the office of elder only one was definitely connected with the weaving trade.(19) There were no further appointments to the Session until the end of the century apart from a couple of elders who came in from other parishes.

The Abbey Session, which had over twenty elders in 1737, did not reach double figures again until the 19th century. Its normal working strength seldom rose above six and in 1800 it was functioning with only two. Thus the Abbey, which before Erskine's departure had been in the forefront of those who had democratically chosen their elders, finished the century with a small unrepresentative Session.



Matters were somewhat different in the Secession Church where elders and deacons were regularly appointed. The Associate Session had twenty-two members in 1749 and twenty-three in 1780. Among the deacons elected in 1776 there was a colliery overseer, a mason, a labourer, a tenant farmer, a schoolmaster and five weavers.(20) The appointment of deacons in 1786 indicates the same pattern: a residenter, a flax merchant, two tenant farmers and four weavers.(21) Of those who accepted the eldership in 1802 there was a flax dresser, four who were connected with the land, a watchmaker, a manufacturer and four weavers.(22) Of those who did not accept two were farmers, one a bleacher and six were weavers.(23)

It can therefore be said that, at least on superficial investigation, there was more scope for weavers to become elders or deacons in the Secession Church and a number accepted these roles. The Abbey, on the other hand, was clerically dominated though this, it must be said, was not always from choice but from necessity. The strength of the Associate congregation in terms of its eldership was usually three times greater - at some times ten to twelve times greater - than the Abbey. When there is added the Antiburgher, Relief and other Secession charges within the parish, the dominance of Dissent in both eldership and diaconate is clearly evident.

One of the results of the weavers' attending Dissenting congregations was a severe loss of revenue to the Establishment. Known in their most prosperous days as the aristocrats of labour, weavers were the main group to receive the franchise under the changes introduced by the 1832 Reform Bill. The Bill, which gave the vote to those in the Burghs with a household rental of over £10, enfranchised approximately 438 people in Dunfermline. The following table shows which trades benefited:

Weavers	133
Merchants	76
Gentlemen	39
Grocers	17
Wrights	15
Bakers	15
Masons	10
Shoemakers	10
Vintners	6
Writers	6



The above list covers 327 of those on the Roll. The remaining 111 were spread over 56 other occupations.(24) Roughly 200 were therefore involved in the weaving industry. As they belonged mainly to Dissenting congregations this had a considerable bearing on the door collections for the poor at the Abbey.

Financial problems began when Erskine left, with collections at the Communion season dropping dramatically. Before 1739 the poor in Dunfermline received generous distributions at Communion times and the great crowds which attended Erskine's preaching were not always there just to hear the proclamation of mighty Gospel truth but also to share in the generous financial handouts which followed. Moreover under his ministry the whole parish was divided into districts with overseers whose duty was to report monthly on their dealings with the poor in their quarter.(25) It was a well organised and efficient system and the takings at the Communions helped to provide adequate provision for all who had a rightful claim. Before Erskine left the weekly offerings were around £6 scots, which was high compared to other parish churches at the time. But the Abbey found itself in quite another predicament after his departure as the table below shows.(26)

Offerings at the Communion Seasons

	<u>Abbey</u>	<u>Associate Congregation</u>
1735	269	
1736	279	
1745	80	
1748	70	
1750		240
1751	65	207
1752		199

These figures suggest that many who had formerly given to the Abbey now gave to the Associate congregation. The loss of revenue was substantial and even by 1751 the Abbey offerings had only recovered to a quarter of what they had been sixteen years previously. In making a comparison of the two sets of figures it should be remembered that in 1747 the Associate congregation had lost a number of its members due to the Burgher breach. The drop in givings between 1750 and 1752 corresponds to the time of Erskine's illness. Reviewing

the figures from another standpoint it can be shown that the rise in the Abbey offerings between 1735 and 1740 was over 2% per annum so that by 1751 they could have been expected to have risen to around £358 whereas they had fallen to £65. The effect on the poor can also be gauged when a breakdown is made of how the Communion offerings of 1735 were distributed:(27)

Total Communion givings	269
To poor in parish	60
To monthly and weekly poor	21
To strangers upon recommendation	38
To wrights for putting up tents	10
To officers for keeping poor	9

This still left a sizable sum to be held against the weekly and monthly payments to the poor throughout the rest of the year. The presence of paid officials shows how well the system was organised. However with Erskine's departure the poor were no longer recipients of such generous bounty from the Establishment.

As early as November 1740 the Session called on the Town Council and Heritors to review the plight of the poor. By Christmas the needy were suffering not only from the drop in offerings at the Communion season but from smaller weekly door collections. By 1742 these had dropped to £2 from an average of £6 in 1736. In December 1736 a poor gentleman was given £1.10s and in January 1737 12/- was given to a James Neiven.(28) However in December 1740 a stranger was given 6d.(29) There may have been many reasons for the large difference in amounts given but it can readily be assumed that the Parish Church was already experiencing serious financial problems.

In March 1741 there is a clear indication of the paucity of funds within the Session:(30)

"Session appoints John Cameron	3d
to Anne Beveridge	2d
to John Inch	6d
etc	

The story of the Abbey until early in the 19th century is one of financial difficulties in providing for the poor. This was not merely due to the Secession taking away many in the parish but also to

the growth in population and increased demands for assistance. The growth of Secession and Relief causes merely exaggerated problems which would have arisen anyway, if not so dramatically.

Writers such as Mechie have pointed out the problems which faced parishes in meeting the needs of the poor.(31) Three avenues were open. Some parishes were non-assessed, some had a voluntary assessment and others a legal assessment. Those who resorted to a legal assessment were usually in manufacturing areas with a large number of parishioners. Even where the population was smaller problems could arise if there were a Dissenting congregation in the neighbourhood, as this often syphoned off money from the Establishment coffers as has been noted above.

Dunfermline was an extensive and scattered parish with a reasonably large population. The presence of lime and coal works and the thriving handloom industry also meant that there was a continual influx of strangers. Moreover the parish had been rent asunder by Dissent. If any parish might have been expected to feel the need to resort to a legal assessment it was Dunfermline, yet by 1838 a voluntary assessment was still being operated. In fact Dunfermline was the last Burgh in Scotland to adopt a legal assessment(32) and was the only parish with a population of over 10,000 still to be functioning in 1838 under a voluntary system.(33)

Dunfermline provides a fascinating example of the confusion which a strong Dissenting community could create in making arrangements for the relief of the poor. The various attempts to solve a very complicated dilemma can be seen in the table below:

a)	before 1799	Non-assessed
b)	1799-1807	Voluntary assessment
c)	1807-1808	Legal assessment
d)	1808-1815	Voluntary assessment
e)	1815-1839	Voluntary association
f)	1839	Legal assessment

These changes in themselves indicate the difficulties experienced in finding a system of poor relief which could satisfy both camps. When the different periods are examined separately various clashes of interest



become clear.

a) Before 1799 - Non-assessed.

Before 1799 the Establishment attempted to maintain its traditional role as guardian of the poor. In asserting its rights it clashed with the Town Council, Dissenters and Heritors.

The Town Council dispute arose in 1757 over the issue of who was to accept responsibility for the care of a foundling child.(34) The Session argued that the child was not really a foundling as it had been left at a house and that the Town Council had failed in its responsibility to discover and apprehend the culprit. They therefore argued that the burden of maintaining the child should fall on the town and not on the funds of the parish church. A reference was made to the unfairness of expecting the Establishment to pay for the child's keep "in the divided state of the parish."(35) The intensity of the argument was no doubt heightened by the fact that many of the Council did not attend the Abbey. Thus as early as 1757 problems were arising because of the large number of Dissenters. In the end the Session were prepared to act with the Magistrates in "getting collections made at the places of worship."(36) They complained, however, that the demands being made upon their funds had become too great.(37)

The Abbey also clashed with the Dissenting congregations in seeking to maintain their legal right to collect fees for weddings and baptisms. The Dissenters tried to have their position upheld by law. A *Minute of the Associate Session* notes:

"This day a collection was gathered at the Church for defraying the expenses of a plea engaged in with the Kirk Session of the Establishment Church and their beadles for half a crown to be paid for each marriage into their box and wages to the beadles for each baptism and marriage in this congregation."(38)

The collection came to £75.(39)

The Session also clashed with the Heritors over a plan to set up a poor-house in 1782.(40) They rejected the plan and expressed

their hope that all the Dissenting congregations would provide for their own poor. They also made the point that although no Seceders received from the Abbey funds, two of the Dissenting congregations made no collections for their poor.(41)

b) 1799-1807 - Voluntary Assessment

The pressure on the Abbey increased as the population grew. Fernie notes that between 1792 and 1812 the poor on the roll increased threefold while nearly six times as much money was required.(42) He also notes that during this period manufacturing, industry and wealth had increased though the value of money had diminished. The average sum paid in 1792 was £2 and by 1812 it had risen to £4 per annum per person.(43) This would appear to be quite high if it is compared with what Mechie considered average for the time. He notes that Stevenson MacGill reported that:

"..in the year 1815 the net average paid to the first-class poor in Glasgow who required the least regular aid was £1.17s. per annum: the net average of the highest class who received pensions was £2.16s."(44)

During this period the Abbey was facing increasing difficulties. In 1792 the Session informed the Heritors that their funds were inadequate to provide even a scanty existence for the poor on the roll. Two reasons were suggested: the great increase in the number of poor and the insufficiency of funds gathered at the church door.(45)

On 13th October. 1797, the minister and Kirk Session were requested by the Heritors to provide them with a faithful account of the state of the Poor Fund from the time Mr John Fernie had taken charge.(46) John Fernie was the son of the previous minister. The Heritors were obviously worried about the handling of the Fund and wanted to know how the money had been spent and why the capital had been touched.(47) The statement was to be signed by the ministers and the Kirk Session. A satisfactory solution was not immediately found and on the 24th October one of the ministers, Mr McLean, suggested a meeting of the Heritors and Session.(48) The Heritors

also authorised five pounds to be taken from the funds to meet immediate need. As several of the Heritors did not belong to the Establishment this added to the Session's embarrassment.

The argument about the use of funds stretched into 1798, by which time the plight of the poor had become serious. Questions about misapplication were now raised.(49) On 6th April, 1798, Messrs McLean and Fernie stated that the money held by the Kirk Treasurer was almost exhausted and would not pay the poor at the next distribution.(50) They were allowed to take four pounds to meet this contingency. Later the Session was also given permission to sell some properties and exchange other funds into cash to be used as frugally as possible for the relief of the poor.(51)

By the latter part of 1799 things had become worse. It is interesting to note, however, that the Associate congregation was embarking at this time on the building of a large new church. Money was not scarce in Dunfermline but it was at a premium in the Abbey. The Session then reported that funds were exhausted and called on the Heritors to make immediate provision(52), which they did. The Heritors for their part indicated that they were about to seek the counsel of a Mr Rolland.(53)

A memorial was drawn up in which the Heritors asked for elucidation on a number of issues.(54) They wanted to know what steps would have to be taken to bring in a legal assessment and what rules would apply for assessing proportions between differing interests such as proprietors, inhabitants and tenants.(55) They asked how the poor of Dissenting congregations would be regarded, if they would be distinguished from the parochial poor and if the Heritors could demand that collections for the poor be taken at Dissenting Meeting Houses.

In his reply Mr Rolland judged that every person, irrespective of religious affiliations, would be subject to assessment. He held that the poor of any congregation, who were resident in the parish, would be entitled to a share of the assessment. His opinion was that sums collected at the door of Dissenting Meeting Houses did not fall under the Establishment's administration and he quoted the



case of Hill against Thomson, June 19th, 1737.(56) The principle established in that case was that the expressed or implied will of the donor in any voluntary contribution governed how the money could be used. He felt that such a judgement stood in this case. If the Heritors sought to demand such collections he believed that this could be countered by the Dissenters simply withholding them or not taking any collections at their Meeting House at all. On the other hand the Dissenters for their part had to recognise that those of the Establishment could follow a similar course by stopping their collections. This would lead to an increased assessment on all, Dissenter and Establishment alike.(57)

A period of discussion followed in which opinion differed on whether to appoint a voluntary or legal assessment. In December 1799 a voluntary assessment of 7/6 for each £100 Scots of valued rent was levied.(58) This figure rose to 15/- in 1802(59) and to 25/- in 1808.(60)

A series of smaller incidents gives an indication of the type of problem which the Kirk Session faced in its administration of the Poor Fund. One of the Abbey ministers was reminded by the Heritors that all expenses connected with Communion were to be paid out of the expenses allowed to the first minister for this purpose.(61) Apparently Mr McLean had spent about £12 from the Poor Fund on setting up seats and cleaning cloths. He was ordered to pay this money back, the case of Hamilton against the minister of Cambuslang being quoted to prove the Heritors' point:

"The Lords found that the erecting of a tent for communion, preaching and the payment of a salary to the Session Clerk were no misapplication of the poor money, but it was a misapplication to purchase tables and benches, to pay constables for attending to keep the peace of the communion, or rent a field to preach in and damage done to a neighbour's dykes and dues to the Presbytery Clerk."(62)

In 1802 the Heritors were having to provide £2.10s. per week to supplement what was gathered at the Church door. During the same year the Session records the case of Catherine Anderson, a blind woman. She was not legally entitled to support since she had not

lived in the parish for three years. The Session wrote to the minister of Auchterderran to state that the Heritors and the Session would not take Catherine on their lists until she had become a legal parishioner and requested Auchterderran to send such support as they saw proper until three years had elapsed from her leaving that parish.(63)

In 1804 there was the case of Nelly Grieve and her child who had travelled to Perth. The mother had begged through the streets of Perth with little success and had subsequently died. The Perth Session required Dunfermline to keep the child at the Session's expense.(64) Eventually the child was brought from Perth and a proper person was found to bring him up.

A further example of the difficulties suffered by the poor in Dunfermline around this time is Elspeth Mackay, an eighty-year old from Beath. Since she had only been in Dunfermline for two years and was now unable to beg, her case was handed back to Beath for consideration.(65)

These incidents show the problems which Dunfermline was facing and how the ordinary working of the Poor Law was sadly lacking in humanity. The Abbey was in an unenviable position since the door collections were seriously affected by the large number of Dissenters, yet the Parish Church remained the legal guardians of the poor. They had to observe the strict letter of the law and this led to a number of uncharitable decisions and hardship for those applying for help.

#### c) 1807-1808 - Legal Assessment

Between 1805 and 1815 the Kirk Session again found themselves without adequate funds and finally prepared for a legal assessment.(66) The voluntary assessment which had been introduced in 1799 had not proved successful as many had failed to make contributions. This crisis proved so great that a legal assessment was introduced in 1807 but was dropped soon after in 1808.

The positions taken by the Establishment and Dissenting



bodies in Dunfermline make interesting comparison with what prevailed at national level. Generally the Establishment supported the status quo by which they were the legal guardians of the poor. Dissenters looked after their own poor but this did not normally prove a major problem. It was not until after 1843 that the Established Church's control over the poor finally proved unworkable. However in many places the Church's role had been eroded prior to this, especially in larger towns. Dunfermline was a reasonably prosperous town, though most of that wealth belonged to Dissenters who had strong support even among the Heritors. When the Kirk Session pressed for a legal assessment it attempted to force Dissenters to make more adequate provision for the poor in terms of both finance and management. However it did this more from financial necessity than principle.

d) 1808-1815 - Voluntary Assessment

The Dissenters in Dunfermline in the early part of the 19th century saw some advantages in a legal assessment since it removed their obligation to look after the poor of their own congregations. This is seen in two events which followed the reintroduction of a voluntary assessment in 1808. The Abbey, for its part, removed from its lists those who did not attend the Establishment(67), while the Associate congregation had to have a public collection to assist their poor.(68) Dissenters were under fire on two sides. Under the voluntary assessment they had to assume responsibility for their own poor while under a legal assessment additional pressure was put on those with property to make regular payments. In both cases Dissenters who had wealth were forced to assume a fuller responsibility for the poor than was general in Scotland.

e) 1815-1839 - The Voluntary Association

The Abbey again sought to introduce a legal assessment in 1814 but the Heritors acted to prevent this by providing an alternative scheme. They set up a committee to inquire into the best means of providing help for the poor without encouraging the idleness which often arose from injudicious giving of relief.(69)

At a later date Peter Chalmers of the Abbey noted how the Association operated. It was managed, he reported, by a committee of Heritors, ministers and members of all religious denominations. Funds were raised by subscription from Heritors and householders and from annual collections at a service held specifically for the purpose, which involved all denominations. However Chalmers noted that the Kirk Session of the Abbey had not entered into the Association but retained its collections and property, distributing the proceeds among as many of the poor of the Establishment as funds would allow.(70)

The Association had been set up in 1815 when a Committee had been chosen whose overall aim was to bring about a fair system, whether the poor belonged to Dissent or Establishment(71), without having to go as far as introducing a legal assessment. It went further than a voluntary assessment since the various parties would have to put themselves under an obligation to honour their commitment. In arriving at their conclusions, the Committee set up to devise the rules of such an association gave their reasons for their proposed policy. They stated their opposition to a legal assessment and their strong support for a voluntary system conducted on the basis of investigation and personal enquiry.(72) Under the new system no money could be given out until a claimant had undergone personal investigation by a visitor whose task it was to find out whether real need existed. It was hoped that it would keep down the number of the poor by giving timely and judicious help to those who, if left unsupported in an emergency, would eventually become the chronic poor.(73)

The system which the Committee intended to introduce bore a striking resemblance to what had been operated during Erskine's ministry in the Abbey. At that time the parish had been divided into districts over which individuals were appointed as overseers whose task was to make a monthly report on their dealings with and distributions to the poor.(74) In its report the Committee noted that the Secession movement had so divided the parish that the collections of the Seceders now amounted to double that of the Establishment.(75)

The Committee also indicated the unfairness of the system

which was then in operation. It had found that some of the poor were receiving help from as many as four funds and this had led to great differences in what individuals received. Some were given as little as 8/-. while one individual was receiving the enormous sum of £14.6s.(76)

As has been noted above, the Abbey Kirk Session felt unable to enter fully into the plan. Though it supported any move to avoid a legal assessment it stated that the only people whom it would allow to share in the management of the poor of the Establishment were the Heritors.(77) Nevertheless the Session was not wholly opposed to the scheme. The Association came into being while the Abbey continued to look after its own poor. The system worked reasonably well for three decades and it was only with the disintegration of the handloom industry that it became unworkable.

#### f) Legal Assessment

Under the Voluntary system the average weekly payment in 1815-1818 had been 1/3 but this dropped in 1838 to 1/-.(78) Despite the fact that the numbers in the parish had risen over the same period by more than 4,000 those benefitting from poor relief had increased only slightly.(79)

With the introduction of a legal assessment there was an immediate increase in the provision for the poor. Whereas the voluntary assessment had raised £900 in 1838(80), the legal assessment brought in £3,015 in 1841. James Hunt, one of the Heritors and a major manufacturer, stated to the Poor Law Commissioners that the legal assessment had proved of great advantage to the town.(81) Arrangements for a legal assessment involved a Board of Managers who were chosen by ratepayers and were responsible for admitting persons onto the Roll.(82)

By now the attitudes of Dissent and Establishment to the poor had fallen into line with the national pattern. Chalmers for the Establishment was of the opinion that the Voluntary system was preferable and regretted its passing.(83) He believed that the



Voluntary system had failed because of the gradual failure of Dissenting congregations and the Chapel of Ease to meet requirements. The collections of these congregations had been steadily falling off and it was this failure along with:

"...the continued refusal of a few Heritors, farmers and others to contribute at all, and of others to increase their contributions, in order to meet the wants of an increasing population, which caused the abandonment of the Association and the adoption of the legal assessment in 1839."(84)

The attitude of the Dissenters is perhaps best illustrated by their reaction to the provision of a poorhouse. A noted Dissenter, Mr Beveridge, observed that the result of its opening had been to reduce the number of claimants on the Poor Roll(85) and that some of the poor, who resided in other parishes but had been receiving relief from Dunfermline, had preferred to give up their allowance rather than be admitted to the poorhouse. Beveridge wanted the poor to be dealt with by legal yet humane means. It may, however, be argued that the poorhouse presented an aspect of compulsion and pressure which voluntary charity never had.

From the time of the introduction of a legal assessment new difficulties arose for those who sought to manage the fund. The breakdown of the handloom industry threw many out of work and they subsequently applied for relief. The manufacturers were incensed at the attitudes of some of those who applied since they believed that work would be available if a more sensible approach were taken to the changing patterns of trade. The operatives by deciding to stick rigidly to a fixed Table of Prices which guaranteed them a basic price for their looms(86) had, in the eyes of some manufacturers, made the Dunfermline trade totally uncompetitive.

Throughout the town there arose a resentment among those who had to pay high rates in order to support the poor. The following table illustrates the problem:(87)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Rate in £</u>	<u>Paupers on Roll</u>	<u>Paupers in Poorhouse</u>
1846-47	2234	1/2	385	92
1849-50	6316	3/-	453	141
1855-56	4993	3/-	464	167

1865-66	4146	1/5	501	120
1875-76	4459	1/1	434	106
1885-86	4144	11d	320	110
1892-93	3921	10d	270	63

In a pamphlet written in 1848 a ratepayer set out his case against the alarming rise in the poor rate levied on householders.(88) He laid the blame on the outdated Table of Prices, introduced over a quarter of a century before, for the troubles which now hit the Dunfermline linen industry and likened the Table to a social gangrene.(89) The poor rate was about to rise from 2/6 in the £ to 3/6 in order to meet the increasing demands of a town in a great trade recession. If such trends continued, he argued, there was a danger that:

"...we shall be eaten out of house and hold by a horde of paupers, and become ourselves a community of mendicants."(90)

However by now the clash of interests was no longer between the Established Church and the Dissenting community. The Church as such was no longer vitally involved in the way it had been for the past three centuries. Now the disputes were between manufacturers, who were usually ratepayers, and workers. The introduction of a legal assessment had produced the very problem of which the Establishment had warned. According to the ratepayer, the right of an individual to receive aid was being used to hold back necessary progress in the weaving trade.(91) The old handloom weavers, who had refused to accept power loom or factory methods of production, used the legal assessment to strengthen their hand. Under the old Voluntary system manufacturers and Heritors would have withheld contributions and forced operatives to accept work or starve.

From the poor rates indicated in the table above, it will be noted that the poorhouse was most used between 1849 and 1856, when the poor rate levied was also at its highest. This corresponds to the time when the Establishment launched its recovery as the Dissenting churches felt the financial draught which the recession of the weaving trade, the breakdown of the handloom industry and adherence to the restrictive Table had brought.



At the outbreak of the Voluntary Conflict one of the Dissenting ministers, Mr John Law, claimed that there was no need to provide additional Church accommodation for the poor, since there were few paupers and the Dissenting congregations could look after them. He claimed that in St Margarets, his own congregation, only four out of sixteen seats set apart for the poor were taken.(92) However, as the decline in the handloom industry came, even the Dissenting congregations felt the demand upon their funds.

#### Conclusion.

Dunfermline provides, for students of the Scottish Poor Law, an interesting example of a town in which Dissent dominated. It might have been expected that a legal assessment would have been required at an early date. What is clear is that the Establishment sought to maintain their own poor and meet the general requirements within the parish, while Dissenting congregations were left to make their own arrangements. At first this did not pose too great a problem for the Seceders since the relatively affluent weavers and small manufacturers who belonged to their ranks enabled Dissenting congregations to meet their own needs.

It was, therefore, the Establishment which was most severely tested and which first sought to have a legal assessment introduced because of the paucity of its funds, especially before and during the Napoleonic wars. The pressure put on the Heritors by the Establishment ministers to make a compulsory assessment arose, however, from necessity rather than principle. The Abbey ministers in fact hoped that the threat of a more rigid legal system would force the Heritors into a more active voluntary commitment. When a legal assessment was eventually introduced in 1807 it continued for only a year since neither party really wanted it, both preferring the less rigid voluntary system. On the Establishment side there was the desire of the Kirk Session to maintain their rights, along with the Heritors, as guardians of the poor. As most of the householders and small landowners belonged to the Dissenting community, they also preferred a voluntary system although it meant that they had to look after their own poor. This only proved burdensome when the weaving

community was badly affected by trade recession or when famine conditions arose due to bad harvests.

Any attempt to understand the complicated system of Poor Relief which operated in Dunfermline must never underestimate the way in which the weavers helped to provide for their own financial needs through Friendly Societies and other Trade Incorporations. Susan May indicates from Fernie's study of Dunfermline how money for Poor Relief was distributed in 1812:(93)

Amount of money distributed as Poor Relief in 1812

	£	s	d
Kirk Session	442	12	6
Town Council	9	0	0
Guildry	220	0	0
Weavers' Incorporation	58	8	0
Other Incorporations	43	19	6
Dissenting Congregations	193	8	1
Mortifications, etc.	375	14	2
Friendly Societies (largest was Ancient Society of Weavers)	599	5	8

Thus for weavers, who mainly belonged to the Dissenting congregations, financial help was available in times of need. This, along with their natural propensity for thrift, prevented many short term financial crises when trade was depressed and reduced the need for a legal assessment earlier than 1839.

The Voluntary Association was basically an attempt by the Heritors, in conjunction with the Dissenting community, to prevent the introduction of a legal system. The Establishment welcomed the Association half-heartedly since it relieved pressure upon them but continued to assert their rights as guardians of their own poor, although tensions still existed.(94)

Gradually, however, spokesmen for the Establishment praised the success of the Voluntary Association. The type of personal approach involved in investigating claims for poor relief had the desired effect. It reduced demand. The thinking of those in the Establishment was crystallized by Mercer who felt that the reduction of

demand was the goal of all charitable effort. He brought forward arguments from the *Church of Scotland General Assembly Reports* to support his case for a voluntary assessment, pointing out that in assessed parishes the amount paid out averaged 2/3 while in unassessed parishes it was only 8d. Moreover in assessed parishes one in every thirty-two family units received a payment while in unassessed parishes the ratio was one in thirty-five.(95) From this Mercer argued:

"It is only by the unanimous and continued encouragement given to this voluntary scheme of provision - which cherishes and preserves its character of charity - that this parish can be preserved from those frightening and accumulating evils, which seem to be inseparable from a legal assessment."(96)

He contended that a legal provision invariably tended to increase the number of poor, arguing that since the setting up of the Voluntary Association the number of poor and the money given to them had gradually diminished.(97) Both Establishment and Dissenting camps had by now fallen into line with the opinion of Thomas Chalmers that charity must not weaken the incentives to frugality or encourage dissipation and idleness. They hoped to encourage self-reliance within the extended family, thus leaving the Church free to deal with only occasional cases of severe hardship. Mercer and Chalmers failed to recognise the extent of the problem, for Chalmers could write in 1844, when the Voluntary Association had ceased and a legal assessment was in operation, that the voluntary system had been effective.(98) He put forward as proofs for his argument that the number who claimed relief had risen only slightly between 1815 and 1838 and that the average weekly payments to the poor had fallen.(99) Chalmers likewise failed to appreciate the actual conditions under which children worked in factories in the 1830's. These were clearly described by the 1833 Factory Act, yet, writing some years later, he could still complacently maintain that children employed in the flax mills were:

"as healthy as their contemporaries in the domestic occupations of sewing, tambouring and weaving."(100)

The inevitable legal system was introduced in 1839,



Dunfermline being the last of nineteen parishes with more than 10,000 inhabitants to maintain the old method.(101) Change was necessitated by the breakdown of the traditional handloom trade which brought widespread poverty. Even the weavers' "kists" had been emptied and they had to accept the necessity of legally-provided financial help, which even in 1838 they had been reluctant to do. Chalmers stated that, "It became impossible to provide for the necessary wants of the poor on the voluntary system - hence recourse to an assessment became imperative."(102)

It would be wrong to think that Dunfermline had operated a generous scheme of Poor Relief under the terms of the Voluntary Association. What must be recognised is the relative prosperity of the community during the late 1820's and early 1830's along with the "canny" nature of the weavers which persuaded them to put something away "for a rainy day." However the collapse of the traditional trade proved to be a thunderstorm which washed away all the dykes of defence against a trade slump. During 1837 and 1838 good-hearted citizens provided a temporary means of support but by 1839 the storm had proved too great for the needs of the weavers to be met by voluntary aid. The hands of those who had previously provided were themselves empty.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The effect of Gillespie's deposition on civil and ecclesiastical affairs in Dunfermline

If the secession of Ralph Erskine removed from the Establishment many of those who provided the finance which was needed if the Abbey were to meet its legal requirements to provide for the poor, the deposition of Thomas Gillespie removed many influential townspeople who served on the Council.

Though Erskine's departure had depleted the Abbey, there is evidence that the Town Council still remained Establishment in its composition. It is true that only five elders remained to serve the vast parish when Erskine left and that it received a further set back with the death of Mr Wardlaw, Erskine's colleague, in 1842. Even so the Abbey made a reasonable recovery under the new team which consisted of a former army chaplain, the Rev James Thomson, and a man of much quieter temperament, the Rev Thomas Fernie, who complemented each other and despite their different natures worked in close partnership for over forty years.(1)

In 1745 the Abbey Session increased its membership by seven, an indication that it had not lost all support. Moreover some of these men were young and held influential positions. Erskine's main following had come from the weaving community, the tenant farmers and those of the rural hamlets. However traditional Establishment support remained strong and they were not wrestled away en masse from their old allegiance to the parish church. Meetings of the weavers and other trade groups continued in the Abbey precincts. Moreover the Associate congregation, which was still in its infancy, was dealt a serious blow in 1747 by the Burgher breach.

The Abbey had an opportunity to regain ground when Erskine died. A long vacancy seemed inevitable for even before his death a division had occurred over the appointment of a colleague.(2) For the next eight years the congregation had no minister and only occasional

preachers.(3) The fact that it survived perhaps indicates the strength of the Praying Societies and the lay support which the Secession movement enjoyed. Yet the Abbey failed to take full advantage of this opportunity because of an internal dispute which had arisen in the Session over the deposition of Thomas Gillespie from Carnock. Much has been written about ministerial and congregational opposition to lay patronage and riding committees, less about individual lay reaction. What happened in Dunfermline within the Abbey Session indicates the strength of lay opposition to tendencies within the National Church.

Gillespie, along with other ministers of the Presbytery, refused to take part in the induction of Mr Richardson at Inverkeithing. At first the two Abbey ministers took opposite positions on the Assembly's ruling that Richardson should be admitted by a quorum of at least five ministers.(4) On the date set only three arrived to carry out the Assembly's command and the leading figure in pursuing the settlement, the Rev James Thomson of the Abbey, reported to the Assembly that Presbytery had been unable to proceed.(5) Mr Fernie had been less anxious to admit Richardson and when the settlement eventually took place he was not forced to preach though it was his turn to do so.(6) On the day of his induction a joint letter was read from him and the minister of Torryburn in which they stated that they had grounds for thinking that their taking part would increase the flame of discontent among their people. Though they feared that to be personally involved would mar their usefulness they nevertheless respected the position taken by others in the Presbytery.(7)

The different attitudes of Thomson and Fernie to Richardson's admission indicate the tensions which existed within the collegiate charge of the Abbey over the patronage issue, especially in cases of disputed settlements. Thomson represented the Moderates within the Church who wanted to make the will of the Establishment felt and to crush any opposition which arose. Fernie represented those who believed that if the Establishment took a conciliatory line the heat would be taken out of the situation and the Seceders would destroy themselves. He believed that crisis meetings merely drew unwanted attention to Dissent.



The judgement on Gillespie appears harsh but he may have been made a scapegoat to warn the troublesome county of Fife and especially the Presbytery of Dunfermline to stop its ecclesiastical waywardness. The Presbytery had already been the home of a number of Marrowmen, Ralph Erskine and his strong Secession movement and now the conscientious Gillespie. There were also rumours about the irregularity of Gillespie's ordination and his attitude to the Confession.(8) Moreover Gillespie was minister of Carnock where earlier in the century James Hogg, reprinter of the Marrow, had ministered. The Assembly therefore may have felt that it was time to employ a heavy hand and discourage the taste for Dissent. Its actions were to reverberate in a way which it did not foresee. The opposition cause was strengthened with the eventual creation some years later of the Relief Church.(9) The whole matter, however, flared up in the Abbey Session in 1753 when certain elders were summoned to appear before the Session for non-attendance.(10) They included John McCraith and John Hogg, who had continued in the Abbey after Erskine's departure, and Andrew Dickie, David Turnbull, Robert Black and Colin Angus, who had been appointed in 1745. On the day of the meeting Angus took his seat in the Session, thereby avoiding censure, but the other five appeared to face the charges made against them.

Even before the matter of the elders' non-attendance at the Abbey was raised, Fernie indicated another concern. As he had not been present at the meeting at which it had been decided to send out the summons he now registered his disapproval of the Session's action.(11) He felt such procedures would do no good but only encourage further division. Though his objection was noted, Thomson pressed on with the matter, determined not to try and smooth over the trouble. He was perplexed by the spirit of division that was now prevalent in Dunfermline for three new congregations had been set up in the parish since 1740. Besides Erskine's Associate congregation and the Antiburgher Church in Cairneyhill, Gillespie had set up a Meeting House in the town. This new congregation had attracted not only members from Carnock and dissatisfied members from the vacant Associate charge but also the five Abbey elders. Fernie hoped that a more conciliatory attitude to the rebellious elders would avoid confrontation and their complete loss to the Abbey which was now working with a skeleton



Session of only three or four.

At the meeting the elders were charged with deserting their duties from the time of the 1752 Assembly.(12) They asked for an extract Minute and the following month handed in their reply in which they claimed that they did not want to say anything against the Church of Scotland or any of its ministers.(13) However, as they had been called by the court to account for their conduct, they felt that it would be wrong not to reply as silence might be understood as acknowledging an offence. They believed that decisions taken at the 1752 Assembly against Gillespie and other members of the Presbytery were both offensive and unwarranted. They contended that those ministers had been deposed or suspended for opposing what they had seen as contrary to God's Word and suggested that the action of the Assembly smacked of "popish infallibility". Moreover they held that Gillespie was accepted everywhere as an honest and sincere man who acted according to conscience. For Mr Thomson the elders showed scant regard. Incensed at the major role he had played in Richardson's induction, they claimed that since then he had shown them little courtesy whereas they felt that by taking a dutiful stand they merited praise.(14)

In June, when the elders were again summoned, they were warned of the dire consequences of separating themselves from the Church of Scotland.(15) All five were eventually suspended from office until they were prepared to admit their faults. Subsequently they handed in another letter in which they complained against patronage and anything which led to the alienation of minister from people. They saw these matters as marring the success of the Gospel and striking at the foundations for which their forefathers had so earnestly contended. They also accused Thomson of sending supply to Carnock although such had never been requested by the Carnock people.(16)

A major bone of contention had arisen over the Magistrates' association with Gillespie. It would appear that the Town Council had attended a meeting held by Gillespie towards the end of May 1752 and that from that time Thomson had refused to pray in the parish church for the Town Council.(17) This had infuriated the elders who

considered Thomson's neglect of duty to be irreconcilable with Paul's teaching in Timothy and pressed him to explain his negligence in this matter.

This breach between the Town Council and the Abbey Church became a major factor in increasing the strength of Dissent in Dunfermline. The Council was composed of the leading figures in the community and was representative of the various trades.(18) While Erskine's accession to the Associate Synod gained much popular support it was Gillespie's deposition which removed from the Abbey the votes of the trades. Thomson's belligerent attitude antagonised a section of the community which had not gone over to Erskine. While many individual craftsmen, especially those in the weaving trade, supported the Secession, the crafts as Guilds still held to their traditional loyalty to the Established Church in which they had trade seats and other rights. Moreover some of the elders who had been ordained in 1745 were members of the Council, indicating that the Establishment at that time still retained a strong influential support. It was this which led Fernie to advocate a policy of non-confrontation. The period after Erskine's death provided a further opportunity for a change of spiritual loyalties. The in-fighting over his successor convinced some that patronage, for all its faults, had much to recommend it. However instead of the Abbey taking advantage of the troubles in the Associate congregation it lost further ground to Gillespie and the advocates of Non-Intrusion.

In 1754 a major turning point in the Establishment's fortunes came when the weavers abandoned the Abbey for their normal business meetings. Writing in 1901, Daniel Thomson points out:

"The year 1754 marks the last meeting of the weavers in the Abbey Church. The other trades, so far as we can learn, shared in the same fate, and were compelled to look round and seek shelter elsewhere. The weavers had always been constant supporters of the church, and we are at a loss to account for this sudden parting. No doubt the rise of the secession and 'lifting of their lines' by many of the members had something to do with the change."(19)

It may be suggested that the reason for the departure of the trades was the attitude of the first minister of the Abbey who

antagonised the Council and drove many of his own members into Gillespie's fold. Thomson had previously been an army chaplain and it may have been the intention of those who appointed him that he should crush the rising forces of Dissent. His bellicose manner had the opposite effect and Gillespie's congregation became a refuge for those who opposed the prevailing tendencies in the National Church but were not prepared for such a violent breach with the Establishment as moving into the Secession. They still hoped to return to the National Church whether through Gillespie's readmission or through the creation of a second Establishment charge.

#### Gillespie's Congregation.

Gillespie's congregation came from three different sections of the community. The first consisted of those who had been members of his congregation at Carnock and included weavers and cottagers as well as those in the farming community.

The second group was made up of those who were disillusioned after Erskine's death with the in-fighting which took place among various sections of the large congregation as they sought to call a minister. Some, seeing that the Secession had its own problems, joined Gillespie's congregation, a number of them hoping that the congregation would be received back into the Establishment.

The third group included the suspended elders and others from the Abbey who were angered by Thomson's involvement in the Inverkeithing induction. Whether all five elders joined Gillespie's congregation is uncertain but at least two of them brought their children for baptism.(20) James Bulloch writes:

"Gillespie was not wealthy nor connected with the great. His meeting house was mean, his congregation a few farmers, cottagers and servants with a sprinkling of pious and respectable families from Dunfermline."(21)

This would seem to be somewhat exaggerated. It is more likely that during the 1750s his congregation was the most influential in Dunfermline. The Abbey was struggling with its depleted Session



while Erskine's congregation had no minister for eight years. Meanwhile the great patronage debate centred on Gillespie and a number of Town Councillors supported his cause. In the Baptismal Roll for 1754 David Beatson of Mucklebeath, a farmer; Robert Wellwood, an advocate; John Mackie, convenor of trades; James Wilson, town clerk, as well as weavers, farmers, tenant farmers and other tradesmen are recorded as being present at Baptisms.(22) By the 1760's numerous baillies are mentioned in the Baptismal Roll: Baillie John Wilson, Baillie David Turnbull, Baillie Patrick Black, Baillie Wilson, younger. This connection with the Town Council became a crucial and dominant factor in the decision making of the 1770's when Gillespie died. Bulloch quotes Struthers as saying:

"His congregation voluntarily fixed his stipend at £600 scots allowing him also £60 scots for a house and otherwise consulting his comfort, and carrying out religious ordinances. At his summer sacraments the people would collect from £110 to £120 scots. At that time these were large sums. The very fountains of Christian benevolence required only to be struck, to flow copiously for his support.... In other words, he received about £65 sterling each year from a comparatively poor congregation."(23)

This view of the poverty of the congregation perhaps requires to be challenged, as there is no doubt that, especially before 1761, Gillespie had a substantial and influential support.

#### Gillespie's death.

Some have claimed that before Gillespie died he expressed a wish that his congregation should return to the Church of Scotland.(24) Certainly a time of congregational turbulence followed in which one group sought admittance to the Church of Scotland while another preferred to retain its links with the Relief Presbytery. That both sides were eventually able to form separate congregations indicates the support which Gillespie had enjoyed. Those who sought to retain the connection with the Relief took legal advice against those whom they called the "pretended majority" who wished to petition the General Assembly to recognise the congregation as a Chapel of Ease.(25) Sinclair in his *Statistical Account* and Burleigh in his *Church History* give differing interpretations of what happened. Burleigh claims:



"On his death in 1774 the majority of the congregation petitioned the Presbytery of Dunfermline to be admitted as a congregation to the Church of Scotland."(26)

Sinclair states:

"Upon the death of Mr Gillespie his congregation split into two parties: the party more numerous were for continuing with the Relief, the other, though fewer in number, but to whom the greatest share in the property belonged, applied by petition to the Presbytery for having their house converted into a Chapel of Ease."(27)

Sinclair is probably correct and his opinion is borne out by certain facts given by the Chapel petitioners in their statement to the General Assembly of 1774. They drew attention to the fact that when the building had been procured in 1752 the donors had agreed that on the death of their pastor a vote would be taken by the donors as to its future use. It was apparently agreed that if a majority were in favour of one course the minority would have the opportunity of accepting half the sum allowed to them as their claim upon the place of worship.(28) The reason for such conditions being laid down probably arose from the disputes which surrounded Erskine's congregation at the time of his death. Disputes over the ownership of buildings were already becoming a major cause of division within the ranks of Dissent.

The rights of the donors were argued by those who petitioned for a Chapel:

"... It is alleged that a great majority of the congregation who used to attend the meeting house are against the petition. Were it necessary, the appellants could produce to the Venerable Assembly the subscriptions of numbers of their hearers, declaring their concurrence. But it is deviating from the real merits of the question to inquire into the sentiments of the people: we are not here considering a call. The donors only are in the field."(29)

It was probably this aspect of the case which led the Relief party to drop legal proceedings.

Among the advocates for a Chapel were members who had been with Gillespie from the time when he had set up his congregation in Dunfermline, including David Turnbull, the suspended Abbey elder. In

supporting Gillespie they clearly hoped that all ties with the Establishment would not be severed. They supported the Establishment but were opposed to the Abbey ministers, mainly because of Mr Thomson's attitude. As late as 1770 there was an attempt at the General Assembly to have Gillespie restored to the Establishment fold.(30)

Among those who favoured the Relief were some of the old Carnock families who may have resented the Town Council group who had come in from the Abbey in 1753. Though it cannot be substantiated from the evidence available, the main support for the Relief may have come from those who joined after 1761 when the decisive break with the Establishment had been made. It would seem that the Relief side was greater numerically but included fewer of the original donors who claimed legal rights over the property.

When the final break came the Relief section was strong enough to build a new Meeting House and as early as April 1778 £149 of the total cost of £232 was already paid.(31) The first congregation after Gillespie's death included a number of small manufacturers as well as people from Carnock and Cairneyhill. Even as late as 1838 a Parliamentary Church Commission noted that 41 families from the Carnock parish still attended the Relief Church.(32) A further indication that the congregation was numerous and had some wealthy benefactors is that the stipend in October 1777 was fixed at £65.(33)

Those who petitioned for the Chapel did not have such support. Their petition in 1777 could only muster 83 signatures of heads of families(34) which by 1779 had risen to 118.(35) When the constitution was finally agreed in 1779 the bond of stipend was set at £50. It would thus appear that the Relief section retained the popular support and generosity which had marked the life of the congregation during Gillespie's ministry.

At Assembly and at Presbytery the failure to consult the people was the main complaint of those who were opposed to the Chapel.(36) The Presbytery permitted Andrew Bowie, who was a strong advocate for retaining the building for the Relief, to speak at their

court. In stating his case he noted the grievance caused by patronage but argued that the actions of the "pretended majority" were seventy-seven times worse.(37) One of the ministers of Dunfermline Presbytery argued at the 1775 Assembly that the donors had acted as the most arbitrary patrons:

"They consult, vote and determine, without taking the sentiments of their own people, not in the question merely of who should be their minister but on the important question whether he should be from the Presbytery of Relief or from the Established Church.(38)

Perhaps the most important issue to emerge at Gillespie's death was that of the ownership of Church property. If the Established Church were becoming aware of the need to free herself from unsympathetic lay patrons, the Dissenting cause was beginning to recognise the danger of wealthy patrons overruling the will of the majority, especially where these patrons had ownership rights in the building.

Power struggles in the Council.

In the next chapter the reasons why the Establishment opposed the setting up of a Chapel of Ease will be investigated. Meanwhile it is necessary to see in what ways the Town Council and Burgh politics became enmeshed in three ecclesiastical matters: the deliberations over granting a constitution to the Chapel, the choice of Burgh elder to the General Assembly and the election of a minister to the Abbey in 1793.

Granting a constitution to the Chapel.

Those who petitioned for a Chapel included a number of Councillors who used their political influence to the full. In a speech made at the General Assembly opposing the granting of permission for the erection of a Chapel, Mr Liston of Aberdour said of them that they were men versed in the art of Burgh politics.(39) It should also be noted that in the long series of pleadings made before the Church courts an interesting change occurred between 1777 and 1779. The latter petition had the backing of the Magistrates, Town Council and



Guildry. By then David Turnbull was Provost and he and his supporters put the full weight of the Council behind the Chapel cause.(40)

However the decision of the Town Council to support the petition was challenged by John Horn, an Abbey elder, who argued that the Council Loft was seldom half full and complained that some Council members did not belong to the Establishment and therefore had no right to bring such a petition before the Church courts. There was, in Horn's view, adequate seating accommodation in the Abbey for all who wished to attend. He believed that another five hundred could be accommodated so that there was no need for a second place of worship.(41) His statement, however, merely confirms that the Abbey had been deserted by many of the trades who had once given the Establishment such loyal support.

Turnbull held that the opposition was minimal and the allegations generally false.(42) Horn retorted that far from being small (six persons on the Council had signed the protest) they were equal in number to those who were pro-Establishment on the Council.(43)

Burgh Elder.

Another source of conflict between the Abbey and the Council centred on the appointment of an elder to represent the Burgh at the General Assembly. Here again the predominance of non-Abbey Council members proved an embarrassment. Between 1752 and 1774 at least two, if not four, of the Provosts and a number of Baillies belonged to Gillespie's congregation.(44)

Normally the choice of Burgh elder would be a formality with the Burgh's commissioner being ratified by the Session, but because of the strong anti-Abbey lobby in the Council such appointments in Dunfermline were often contentious affairs.

As early as 1753 there was a dispute over the commission of Colin Angus, a member of the Abbey Session. The *Session Minutes* record the course of their deliberations:

"James Wilson, Town Clerk of Dunfermline, compearing before the Session gave in a Commission from the Magistrates and

Town Council to Mr Colin Angus, Merchant in Limekilns to represent the said Burgh in the ensuing General Assembly, and craved that the Session would attest it".....

"The Session considering that the said Mr Colin Angus commonly attends public worship in the Parish Church one part of the Lord's Day, yet he acts so far irregularly as to go for another part of the day to the Meeting House where Mr Gillespie, deposed by the late General Assembly, preaches, admonish him to behave more regularly, for the future, hoping that he will do so."(45)

It is clear that Angus, though retaining his links with the Abbey, had leanings towards the ministry of Gillespie. He was, in fact, one of the six elders summoned to appear before the Session. At that time he took his seat in the Session and avoided the suspension meted out to his fellow elders. However his name disappears from the *Session Minutes* and it may be assumed that he either died or moved to Gillespie's Meeting House. Certainly the surname Angus appears in the Chapel congregation after Gillespie's death.

The Town Council in the above instance was no doubt anxious to be represented at the important 1752 Assembly by an elder who would do all he could to have the sentence of deposition revoked.

Hostilities again arose over the choice of a commissioner in 1776 when the Chapel storm was at its height. On this occasion David Turnbull presented a petition to the Abbey Session in favour of a young advocate, Alan Maconochie. The commission was challenged by some of the Session on the grounds that certain procedural irregularities had taken place.(46) The Higher Courts eventually sustained his commission but it is not without significance that when the Chapel petitioners won their case they owed much to the help they received from Maconochie who was later to become Lord Meadowbank.

Two commissions came before the Presbytery in 1783. Both indicate how the Chapel party were active in finding representatives who would put forward their point of view at the Assembly. The first concerned Baillie William Hutton who had had a chequered career and, though still an Abbey elder, was practising his eldership within the newly formed Chapel. Though the Abbey Session had tried to suspend

him from the eldership, the Presbytery would not give a decision until the Synod had indicated its intention.(47) While the Abbey was raising the matter at the Synod, the Burgh gave a commission in his favour, arguing that he was still an Abbey elder as the Presbytery had not received the Session's act of suspension on him. The Synod eventually decided in favour of his remaining an elder in the Abbey Session.(48)

The second case involved the appointment of Mr Eckford, an Abbey elder, as representative for the Inverkeithing Burgh(49), which perhaps illustrates how hard it was for an Abbey elder to gain a commission from his own Council. It was opposed by the Rev Mr Thomson of Carnock, a strong supporter of the Chapel movement who had supported the appointment of Mr McLean to the Dunfermline Chapel.

These disputed commissions indicate how the Chapel party used the appointment of Burgh representatives to voice their opposition to the main Establishment party in Dunfermline by making good use of their political advantage. The Chapel congregation therefore acted as a ginger group who wanted a second Establishment charge where popular election would be practised. However they were treated as second class citizens who were not allowed a Session of their own, nor could their minister represent them on Church Courts. By using their rights as Councillors those who belonged to the Chapel had the opportunity to make their influence felt. Thus the choice of Burgh elder became a matter of more than academic interest. Through it the Chapel party hoped to gain representation in the General Assembly.

Election of Chapel minister to first charge of the Abbey.

Another indication of how powerful the Council's role became in Church matters is seen in the events which followed Mr Thomson's death in 1791.

The appointment of the minister of the first charge belonged to the Council, Heritors and elders. A committee consisting of Mr Wilson, Dean of Guild, Robert Hutton, Town Treasurer, and David Wilson, Councillor, set before the Presbytery the name of Allan McLean, the minister of the Chapel.(50) His nomination was opposed by Mr



Eckford, an Abbey elder, who has been mentioned above in connection with the Burgh of Inverkeithing. In a long statement he claimed that the Council had acted in a most arbitrary way in choosing Mr McLean. He stated that shortly after Mr Thomson's death the Provost called a meeting of the Council at very short notice. Despite the fact that much interest had been shown in the vacancy and that many suitable candidates had still to be heard, it was put to the meeting to decide whether to proceed to fill the charge. The vote being even, the Provost gave his casting vote to proceed. Of the twenty-one present, eleven then gave their vote for Mr McLean and the Provost wrote by the next post to Sir Archibald Campbell for a presentation. Mr Eckford contended that the Heritors, elders and heads of families had never been consulted. He pointed out that, of the eleven who had voted for Mr McLean, ten belonged to the various Secessions, classing the Chapel among them. Three belonged to the Burghers, one to the Relief, one to the Abbey and six to the Chapel:

"So that the Provost, six councillors and four deacons, all but one belonging to the different secessions, elected it may be said the Chapel minister....to be the first minister of the Parish of Dunfermline."(51)

Eckford contrasted the free choice which the Chapel congregation enjoyed with the forced settlement now made on the Abbey.(52) Two points are worth noting: the Abbey congregation classed the Chapel among the sectaries and not as fellow workers in the cause of the National Church and it is unlikely that any other Council in Scotland had so many Dissenting voices that it was able to choose the minister of the Establishment against the wishes of the Kirk Session.

Eckford raised again the thorny issue of the role of the Chapels within the Establishment and their position in regard to the law of the land. His attitude was derogatory.(53) He also questioned the validity of the voting when the presentation was made. Of the fifty-nine Heritors twenty-two were for McLean, of the Councillors twelve were for him, though only ten signed the call, and of the Session none concurred.(54) However his appeal to the General Assembly to reverse the decision was turned down.

A wider view.

Why did the Chapel congregation become such a powerful body in Dunfermline's complicated ecclesiastical development and why was it so strongly linked with the Town Council? In reaching a conclusion to these questions it should not be forgotten how successful the Secession movement had been in the area. Such success indicated what was possible and minimised any hesitancy to challenge the fixed order.

Nevertheless there were many who did not move out with the Secessionists, recognising that in other parts of Scotland the Establishment remained strong and that the General Assembly continued to play a leading role in ecclesiastical and political life. Many were afraid of becoming too remote from the traditional centres of power. Gillespie's spirit of independence coupled with his desire to remain within the National Church was attractive to those who were not prepared to join the Secession yet wanted to effect change within the Establishment. Men such as David Turnbull saw in Gillespie the spearhead of a counter offensive which they could launch against the National Church without leaving her pale. They were determined not to bend to the authoritarian postures of men like the Rev James Thomson. However the determination of the National Church to pursue its policy of patronage closed the door to the possibility of a peaceful and dignified return. Even so, attempts to have Gillespie restored continued as late as the General Assembly of 1770.

When Gillespie died the strong-minded congregation divided into two independent groups and this division was reflected in both Council and Church. In the Council the Relief party submitted to the stronger Chapel party, while in the Church the Chapel contingent brushed aside all opposition and used its political strength and cunning to set up a Chapel in connection with the Establishment. They had, over a period of thirty years, developed into a powerful caucus within the Council and used this political muscle to bring about their ecclesiastical goals.

By having the Chapel recognised the Managers had made considerable progress. They dispensed with patronage in its

traditional form and introduced what appeared to be a system of democratic and popular election into the Church. This was no mean achievement and indicates the determination of those who attained it. Yet, having disposed of lay patronage, they introduced new forms of patronage far removed from popular election. At the time of Gillespie's death they exercised their rights as donors and in the case of Mr McLean they used political power as a tool of patronage. Above all they acted independently, as a law unto themselves. The same independency of action was reflected in the political events of 1774. At that time the Abbey minister became involved in a court case over certain accusations which he had made about some of his congregation. During a sermon he had accused some of his hearers of accepting bribes and changing their political allegiance.

Thomson had warmly endorsed the candidature of Col. Campbell while those who were in favour of the Chapel gave their support to a Mr Masterton.(55) In the years that followed, the Chapel party developed into an independent group in both Church and Council. Success bred success. Yet between the years 1790 and 1825 the Town Council was among the worst run in the country. In the 1819 report of the Select Committee on Royal Burghs the Commissioners reached the conclusion that Dunfermline was run on principles of pure self-election.(56) The manner in which Magistrates and Councillors were appointed enabled the same person to hold different offices in succession so that various members had held office for ten, eleven, fourteen, eighteen, twenty, twenty-six and thirty years.(57) A system of continual re-election allowed the whole power and control of the Council to become centred on one leading party so that it was only when there were resignations because of scandal or financial trouble that there could be any shift in the balance of power.

The common practice of the group in control was to protect its interests by filling vacancies with its own supporters, which led the Commissioners to report that in their opinion those who were appointed were not the best qualified or the most likely to promote the good of the Burgh.(58)

During the period under discussion the paucity of records



and the fact that so many prominent people had the same name make it difficult to ascertain with any accuracy the church-going habits of the Councillors.

What can be suggested is that the Chapel party exercised in the 1770's an independence which continued as a major factor in the ecclesiastical and political field. They started a movement, which was continued in the Council for almost fifty years, in which a self-perpetuating group dominated Council affairs and acted at times independently of Secession and Establishment. Whether that party remained true to the Chapel congregation is another matter. The tendency was for families to become the centres of power and for nepotism to be widely practised and it is quite likely that family loyalty rather than church loyalty was the key note of their togetherness. There are, however, several indications that at least some Chapel members were still active in 1830 when the old regime was eventually broken and a more democratic system of election to the Council introduced. The last Provost to be associated with the old Tory regime was George Meldrum, a member of the Chapel congregation. The next Provost but one, Henry Russell, was a member of the same congregation though his attitudes were much more liberal than those associated with the old Tories. It would thus appear that the Independent group represented a Tory interest which one might have expected to find in the Abbey Church. However the Abbey had been so mercilessly crushed between 1740 and 1780 that it was an Independent party outside the Abbey Church which represented the Tory interest on the Council. Between 1790 and 1830 it is difficult to find the name of an Abbey elder on the list of Councillors yet the Council was predominantly Tory.

## CHAPTER FOUR

The Chapel controversy expanded and developed.

The concept of Chapels of Ease will now be considered from three different standpoints. The first will note what happened at the time of Gillespie's death; the second will look at the practical issues which arose after the Dunfermline Chapel was granted a constitution by the General Assembly of 1779; the third will consider the controversy from the standpoint of those in the Establishment who considered the granting of constitutions to Chapels to be ill-conceived and allowed to develop without adequate Assembly legislation.

Events at Gillespie's death.

What Gillespie wanted his congregation to do at the time of his death has been touched upon in the previous chapter. Some claimed that he advised his people to seek readmission to the National Church, while others held that he wished them to continue in the Relief tradition.(1)

After the General Assembly of 1752, Gillespie obeyed the instructions of the Assembly to the letter and never again preached in Carnock Church. Though setting up his congregation in Dunfermline in the winter of 1752, he made no attempt to form a Session until after the 1753 Assembly. This may well have indicated his hope that the judgement of 1752 would be reversed and he would be readmitted to the Establishment. Though this did not happen some members of the National Church continued to press for his return until as late as 1770.

Certainly in 1774 a small but influential group, favourable to the Establishment but opposed to the Abbey, fought with great determination and legal expertise to have a Chapel set up in Dunfermline. The chief opposition to this came from the two Abbey ministers who had suspended David Turnbull from the Abbey Session in 1753. By now Turnbull was one of the most influential laymen in the

town and had a controlling interest in the Council. At the time of Gillespie's death he led the campaign to have the congregation raised into a Chapel of Ease in connection with the Establishment. Both the Abbey ministers and the Presbytery supported the Relief party in the divided congregation and allowed a former member to spell out why the Meeting House should be retained by the Relief.(2) The Abbey ministers and the Presbytery sought to discredit the Chapel petitioners by implying that they were acting as the most arbitrary patrons who were not in the least interested in the will of the majority.(3) When the Relief party dropped legal proceedings the issue was whether Presbytery and Assembly would recognise the claims of the Chapel petitioners.

The Abbey Session argued that their building was large enough to meet the needs of all who wished to worship within the Establishment.(4) It could be argued however that even though many of the seats which belonged to the Town Council, Guildry and Trades were not usually occupied, it is doubtful whether the Abbey was large enough for the extensive parish. If it was, it was solely because of the numbers attending Dissenting meetings. Yet it was this very fact which was advanced by the Abbey Session as a reason for not building a Chapel. At the 1779 Assembly the Abbey ministers stated that a new Relief house had been set up and that this reduced the need for more accommodation in Dunfermline.(5) Thus the Establishment viewed the spread of Dissent as a reason for not increasing their charges, a policy of retreat rather than attack. The Assembly, on the other hand, saw the danger of the Dunfermline petitioners being wholly lost to the Established Church if the request for a Chapel were not granted. This is probably why, over the five year period in which the case was debated, the Assembly did not discourage the petitioners despite the opposition of Synod and Presbytery. For example, the 1776 Assembly instructed the Presbytery to try to accommodate the wishes of the petitioners to prevent them joining any of the sectaries.(6) Thus the Assembly clearly saw a danger which, because of the personal feud in Dunfermline, was not considered important by the Abbey ministers and Session. It may also be suggested that Dissent had become more acceptable in Dunfermline than in the thinking of the Establishment as a whole.



As to Gillespie's own preference, much can be said on either side. It is not the concern of this paper to make a judgement on the matter, though a postscript has been added at the end of the chapter. The more immediate concern is to consider how the Chapel concept was viewed by the two Abbey ministers and other parties in Dunfermline.

Dunfermline provides, as has been previously noted, an excellent example of the failure of the Establishment in the 18th century to meet the changing circumstances into which many of the old Reformation parishes had been thrown. Yet despite the presence of Burgher, Antiburgher and Relief congregations the Abbey remained aloof and opposed the setting up of a Chapel which could have strengthened the Establishment cause. Moreover by 1774 the Abbey was struggling to support its own poor and had lost a number of elders, while those in Gillespie's Meeting House had gained ascendancy in the Council. Attempts were made to increase the number of Abbey elders and perhaps to entice members of Gillespie's congregation to return to the Establishment.(7) Yet by opposing the creation of a Chapel the Abbey Session was prepared to push those who were in sympathy with the Establishment, but who had still reservations about returning to the Abbey, into the ranks of Dissent. The personal feud between James Thomson and David Turnbull had arisen from a personality clash of long standing. Yet this was not Thomson's only concern. He saw the Chapel question as part of a broader issue which had repercussions far beyond Dunfermline.

Practical issues arising from the erection of Chapels.

Even when the Dunfermline Chapel was granted a constitution by the Assembly, matters were not finally resolved. This was not surprising since the whole concept of how Chapels fitted into a National Church had emerged from expediency and not from carefully drafted Assembly legislation. Since no comprehensive Act had been formulated, disputes such as that in Dunfermline became test cases by which practice and procedure evolved. In the Dunfermline case the Parish Church stood firm by its legal right to have total oversight of the parish. However throughout the five year period the Chapel petitioners hoped that they could bargain for a stronger say, for

example in the matter of who could choose elders. During the period of debate the Chapel in fact gained little other than the constitutional right to belong to the Establishment. However it then tested the water in a number of issues. It would appear that the wording of the constitution granted in 1779 was not precise enough and this led to growing tensions between the two Dunfermline congregations. One such bone of contention arose in 1781 when Mr Monteath, the Chapel minister, failed to reply to an invitation from Mr Thomson to fix the fourth Sunday in June for the dispensing of the Sacrament.(8) Thomson was later informed that the Chapel congregation intended to celebrate the Sacrament on the 20th May. On hearing this, the Abbey ministers wrote again stating that they would raise the matter at the General Assembly.(9) However, because of a legal technicality, their petition was not received.(10) The Session subsequently appealed to Presbytery and among their complaints listed the facts that people from outside the parish were attending the Chapel and the Chapel minister had gone beyond his powers in giving certificates, administering the Sacraments and taking weddings.(11) They also complained that baptism had been administered to some who lived outside the parish without lines having been received from their parish minister and that some who belonged to the sectaries had been baptised without certificates having been handed to them as the legally constituted Session.(12) The Session further complained that elders from neighbouring congregations had helped to serve at Communion and that new members had been received without their permission.(13)

Some articles of the constitution were too vague, others insufficiently defined. Was the Chapel minister free to dispense the Sacrament when and as often as he wished? Were the Abbey elders expected to play an active part in the life of the Chapel congregation? Though the fifth Article indicated that the Chapel congregation was subject to the jurisdiction of the Church of Scotland, the particular relationship between the parish Session, the Chapel minister and the Chapel Managers had not been sufficiently defined. These issues led the General Assembly of 1782 to tighten the wording of the Articles. They made it clear that the Chapel congregation was subject to the Kirk Session of the Abbey and a specific reference was made to the way in which Communion seasons were to be observed:

"... it is hereby provided that the minister of the Chapel of Ease shall regularly intimate to the Session Clerk of Dunfermline the time of his administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper three weeks before it; that the Session Clerk shall, within the space of eight days thereafter, transmit to him a list of parishioners who are under scandal; and that the minister of the Chapel shall be at liberty to give tokens, for the admission to the Lord's Supper, to such of his congregation as he judges worthy of being received to that ordinance, excepting only the persons contained in that list..."(14)

Both sides claimed a moral victory. The Kirk Session claimed that the holding of the Sacrament could not be agreed without their knowledge. On the other hand it was left to the Chapel congregation to fix possible dates. Discipline was in the hands of the Session though no mention was made of which elders would assist at the celebration of the Sacrament. The task of examining candidates and giving out tokens was left exclusively to the Chapel minister.(14) With regard to the Sacrament of Baptism, the Session Clerk of the Abbey was from time to time to prepare a list of members who were under discipline and give it to the Chapel minister who was then free to baptise the children of any member whose name was not on the list.(15)

Between 1790 and 1820 the two congregations co-existed with the Abbey congregation playing the dominant role. The Chapel became simply a place of worship without any ecclesiastical teeth. However the same issues which had earlier caused contention re-emerged in 1820 when the matter of "Quoad Sacra" congregations came under discussion at the General Assembly. This may have re-opened old wounds. In 1822 the Chapel minister wrote to the Abbey Session making three complaints. The first was that no elders were ever chosen from the Chapel congregation. The second was that the constitution did not allow elders to help the Chapel ministers in matters of discipline. They only assisted at Communion. The third grievance involved the failure of the Session to let the Chapel congregation know when meetings of the Court were to be held.(16)

Relationships were clearly strained. The Chapel was growing in strength yet the minister felt that he was being snubbed by





the parent body who were content to treat him and his congregation as second class citizens. The Session considered the first complaint, that no one from the Chapel congregation had ever been proposed for the eldership, impertinent, interfering and unconstitutional.(17) The Managers of the Chapel had noted that in some other parishes elders were chosen from the Chapel congregation. These men became elders within the parent Session but they would have particular knowledge of and interest in the Chapel. The rivalry which had resulted from the early hostility and close proximity of the two congregations made such a working relationship impossible in Dunfermline. The Abbey Session held, moreover, that the Chapel congregation had no constitutional rights in choosing elders, the Session being free to appoint whom it wished without interference from anyone. The request of the Managers and minister of the Chapel was declared illegal and unconstitutional.(18)

With regard to the second complaint, that no Abbey elders helped in the exercise of discipline, it seems that elders from as far away as Edinburgh came over to assist but the Managers wanted help from the parent Session. In response, the Abbey elders drew attention to the wording of the General Assembly Acts of 1779 and 1782 where the power of admitting to and excluding from the sealing ordinances was lodged in the Chapel minister alone.(19)

The third complaint was that, since the Chapel had no elders, it was impossible for the Chapel congregation to know when Session meetings were to be held. The Managers claimed that this was embarrassing to people who wished to confess any wrong since they had to enquire publicly where and when a Session meeting would be held. The Abbey Session replied that ordaining elders from the Chapel would make no difference since such information could only be given from the Precentor's desk of the Parish Church.(20)

From its inception the Chapel congregation existed as a separate unit with little cooperation from the Abbey. Moreover it had certain practices which were different from other congregations within the National Church. It was never the practice of the Presbytery to declare the charge vacant when a minister died or moved to another

sphere of service. Moreover, the administration during a vacancy was left to certain Managers whose terms of office went back to Gillespie's time. At each vacancy a meeting was held to discuss whether the Chapel should continue as a place of worship. The original deed setting up the congregation provided for the possibility of the building being sold or used for some other purpose. These points tend to favour the view that the Chapel congregation had a will of its own and acted in a most arbitrary way even though it was recognised as a congregation within the Establishment.

The Chapel controversy viewed on a National level.

The Chapel movement posed difficulties for the Establishment on a national level, forming part of the more general problem of how to provide adequate Church accommodation for the growing population. The Secession Church also found difficulty with its extension work.

Dunfermline provides a useful illustration of how Dissent and Establishment tackled this thorny problem. The Secession Church had increased in number but had done so by an uncharted course, having no national strategy. Rather, a group of laymen would apply for a minister and the matter would be considered by the Presbytery. Sometimes, as in the case of Dunfermline, a major Secession congregation would raise objections to a new congregation being set up if it meant the possible loss of a number of its influential members. This would be all the more so if those members were making substantial financial contributions. At Limekilns, for example, the congregation of Queen Anne Street opposed the petition but the Presbytery ruled in favour of a church being built.(21)

Limekilns also indicates the failure of the Establishment to provide a network of Chapels to meet the needs where population had grown. When the Chapel controversy was raging Mr Thomson had suggested that a church might conveniently be sited in Limekilns.(22) His logic is clear: a Chapel in Limekilns would have spread the Establishment network. Sad to say, the National Church had no overall plan for extending its influence and the creation of Chapels was left

to wealthy donors who set them up on a very personal basis. It was a totally unsatisfactory way of making adequate provision for the people of Scotland. The Established Church had no strategy while Dissent went where money and support beckoned and thus the poorer and often more needy areas were unclaimed by either camp.

The Limekilns incident reflects a growing tendency for Church life in Dunfermline to be dictated by congregational interests. So keen was competition within the Establishment and Dissent that individual congregations became independent units striving for their own personal survival. Rivals within their own camp were feared and frowned upon and this became increasingly intense as congregations set themselves up side by side within the centre of the town.

However, Thomson was concerned not only about where a Chapel should be sited but also over the larger problem of the validity of Chapels within the framework of the National Church. In July 1775, when the Rev Mr Spence of Dunfermline Presbytery argued that other Presbyteries had accepted Chapels and that their existence was quite consistent with Church order, Thomson retorted:

"How can it be consistent with Church order, for it sets up a Church within an Establishment and altar against altar. If it were on the Toleration Footing it might be called altar beside altar but here it would be altar against altar."(23)

He was probably right, for the growth of Chapels was allowed to develop without any real planning and their existence created tensions and internal wranglings. Ill-conceived, the scheme created two types of church and two types of minister. Though it helped to ease the problem of Church accommodation, it created disparity.

Thomson assumed that Chapels had been set up where the Parish Church was not big enough to accommodate the people. Such a situation, he claimed, did not exist in Dunfermline. Moreover he wanted the Assembly to make changes to prevent such illegal proceedings, arguing that Presbyteries were ill-advised in making material alterations to the Church's constitution without first taking



the advice of the whole Church.(24) In this he was no doubt correct and the Assembly did act, somewhat belatedly, in 1798.

Another leading opponent of the setting up of a Chapel in Dunfermline was the Rev Thomas Hardy of Ballingry, who was later to become Moderator of the Assembly. In 1782 he produced a pamphlet in which he set out the thinking of both Moderate and Popular parties in the dispute.(25) His pamphlet was intended to be conciliatory, setting out a method of settlement which he hoped would avoid the dangers of either a single patron or popular election. His intention was to placate both wings of the Church by introducing a middle way which was based on the delegation of power. For example, in the Royal Burghs he suggested that the right of nomination should be vested in five persons: the patron, a delegate from the Heritors, a delegate from the elders and two delegates from the Town Council.(26)

Hardy saw the Chapel movement to be in direct opposition to his new proposals. In granting the Dunfermline Chapel a constitution he believed that the Assembly had created a precedent which made inevitable either the ruin of the existing constitution or a fundamental change in the way ministers were appointed.(27) He argued that the Assembly had acted unwisely in creating churches which had a different form of patronage from that set out in the Queen Anne Act and believed that the Assembly of 1779 had established a precedent which left the Church no alternative than either the ruin of the constitution or the need to enact a new form of election procedure. He also felt that Chapels had been set up in some areas simply because parishioners disliked the parish minister.(28) Recalling the five year opposition of the Moderate party in the Dunfermline case, he stated that their purpose was simply to keep the Church true to her own law. Chapels would allow some ministers to place themselves outside the Church's jurisdiction so that the Church could not exact duty and submission from them.(29) He believed that Chapels would be the ruination of Presbyterianism and challenged those who had triumphed at the 1779 Assembly to reconsider their decision.(30)

Thus both Hardy and Thomson believed that the Chapel movement endangered the very constitution of the Church. Thomson

was, of course, personally involved in the Dunfermline case and his opposition to the Chapel was more intense than his dislike of the Secession and Relief. Those two bodies had raised "altars beside altars" whereas the Chapels raised "altars against altars". The Secession and Relief had to be tolerated. They had chosen to leave the National Church and in one sense nothing could be done about it, for they had removed themselves from the Establishment's jurisdiction and benefits. It was different with the Chapels. They had remained within the Establishment and were therefore subject to its jurisdiction. Yet Thomson and Hardy both saw the danger of their becoming mavericks. Moreover, Presbyteries were acting unilaterally and the Assembly had failed to make a proper legislation. Thomson believed it was the duty of the Supreme Court to put an end to those illegal proceedings.

Hardy had hoped that his plan would resolve the problem by bringing in a modified system of patronage based on delegated rights to Heritors and elders. He believed what had happened in Dunfermline was misguided and had allowed popular election to come in by the back door. Though this was gradually recognised by the Church as a whole, Chapels meanwhile continued to be set up by Presbyteries and it was only in disputed cases that their constitutions were rigorously reviewed by the General Assembly.(31)

By the 1790's the number of Chapels was increasing at an alarming rate, which may have reflected the spirit of independency and congregationalism which the campaigns of the Haldanes and Grenville Ewing had encouraged. The "Church within a Church" which Thomson had feared assumed dangerous proportions and Assembly legislation was required. Yet the Supreme Court found itself in a dilemma. While it was anxious to prevent the further spread of Chapels, alternatives also posed problems. If the Chapels were recognised as Parish Churches with full parish rights then the Church would be challenging the civil authority. It would have created the very clash which later led to the Disruption. Yet the Church had to face the thorny issue of the legal status of Chapels within the Establishment. It was clear to some that the erection of Chapels could no longer remain in the hands of the Presbyteries.

In the debates at Assembly and through various publications, the views of the Moderate and Popular parties were clearly enunciated. Professor Finlayson expressed the fears of the Moderates that the creation of Chapels was an encroachment upon civil rights, especially in regard to the power that was lodged with the Commissioners for the Plantation of Kirks.(32) He argued that Chapels had created new dependants on the Church who were unknown to the law of the land and yet to whom certain legal privileges had been ecclesiastically conveyed. He wanted it to be decided, as a first step towards untangling the situation, that no Chapel should be created without the express assent and approbation of the Assembly(33)

A similar view was taken by William Moodie who saw Chapels as unwelcome expedients and a divisive element within the Church. His particular concern was the introduction of popular election and he wanted Chapels, where expediency demanded them, at least to be uniform in their constitution. In order for this to happen the General Assembly would have to create legislation. Moodie noted that, because Presbyteries had been allowed to act unilaterally, hardly two Chapels were established on the same plan.(34) He further claimed that if those anomalous institutions were allowed to expand without proper oversight the constitution of the Church would gradually be undermined.(35)

The Popular party, for their part, wanted the right to erect Chapels to remain in the hands of the Presbyteries, since they best knew the particular needs of their own area. It was nevertheless generally agreed that the particular constitution of any new Chapel should be subject to review by the Superior Court.

Typical of their arguments was that the growth of Chapels should not be checked by depriving Presbyteries of the power to erect them. They saw no immediate prospect of new Parish Churches being erected and assumed that in the foreseeable future the average of fifty square miles per parish would remain. In their opinion it was preferable to encourage the growth of Chapels rather than allow further advantage to the Dissenters. As for the General Assembly, they considered that it was the worst Court for judging matters in the first



instance though, in their opinion, it remained the best court of review.(36)

However the Moderate party won the debate and the Church passed an Act in 1798 which left the decision on whether a Chapel would be set up with the Assembly rather than the Presbytery.(37) The new Act curtailed the spread of Chapels but avoided the more contentious issues of their legality within a National Establishment. The success of the Act from the point of view of the Moderates is seen in the small number of Chapels built between the passing of the Act and 1834.

Did the Church act unwisely in the 1770's, particularly in granting constitutional status to the Dunfermline Chapel? It would appear that its main objective was to stop the spread of the sectaries and to rein discontented members of the Relief Church. In doing so it allowed popular election and, in some places, independency and congregationalism to take root. The new Chapel congregations had initially proved beneficial in meeting the growing religious need which had resulted from too large parishes. The Church may have thought that the Government would solve the problem by erecting the Chapels into new Parish Churches. When this did not happen it became clear that a delicate constitutional crisis had arisen. It was like a man who kept a private store of money but, when he wanted to spend it, found to his horror that much of it was not legal tender. The Church had created counterfeit money. It did not want to speak too openly of it but sought to check the flow of such false coinage.

Postscript: What was Gillespie's opinion of Chapels of Ease?

The question is often raised as to what advice Gillespie gave his congregation at the time of his death. It is not within the scope of this thesis to try to give any conclusive answer. However, as Gillespie's influence in Dunfermline was formative in the life of Dissent, a simple setting out of the case is necessary.

Struthers held that Gillespie remained true to the Relief cause and the attempt to show him in favour of the Chapel scheme was

misrepresentation on the part of his brother Robert, who was land factor for Erskine of Carnock. Quoting from the Rev John Smith, who was Gillespie's successor in Dunfermline, Struthers says:

"...for reasons best known, he (Robert Gillespie) was now the avowed enemy of that religious society which his deceased brother had the honour of founding."(38)

and argues that Robert was seeking to carry out the wishes of Erskine of Carnock.(39)

What is certain is that at the time of Gillespie's death the Relief Church as a body was in a constitutional crisis. Two inductions had been as divisive as the Burgher breach within the Secession, though in a smaller and less dramatic way. The first involved Robert Pirie, who had earlier been deposed from the Secession Church over his views on the nature of Christ.(40) When the Relief Church at Blairlogie wanted him as their pastor, Gillespie was so annoyed that he threatened to leave the Presbytery if the call were sustained. The Presbytery was deeply divided, with Gillespie, Cruden, Bell and Scott on one side.(41) It eventually agreed to allow a call, though it excluded Pirie as a possible candidate. Gillespie was appointed Interim Moderator but a clash of views ensued. The congregation decided to call Pirie despite the advice of Gillespie and Presbytery. Feelings ran high, Mr Simpson of Bellshill taking the opposite view to Gillespie and denouncing the role played by Presbytery as contrary to the very principles upon which the Relief was founded.(42)

The second incident which led to division was the appointment of James Cowan to Colinsburgh. Some of the Presbytery felt that his views on the Communion issue were too narrow and when he was inducted only Gillespie, Cruden and Scott attended.(43)

These two cases at Blairlogie and Colinsburgh indicate tensions within the Relief body. Both Pirie and Cowan were admitted but without the support of all the ministers who made up the Relief. Gillespie considered Pirie too liberal in his views while others thought Cowan's thinking was too narrow on the Communion issue. The outcome was that the Relief Church was divided into two Presbyteries but these

did not follow geographical lines, Dunfermline and Colinsburgh being included in the Western Presbytery along with Glasgow. It is clear that the two new Presbyteries, each containing no more than four congregations, were made up of those of like mind.(44) The division, however, prevented a more serious breach than had happened in 1747 in the Secession Church.

How Gillespie acted in these two cases may give some indication as to his thinking at the time. He deeply resented Pirie's admission and was attacked by Simpson of Bellshill for the attitude he had adopted. Simpson is quoted as saying:

"We are not to forget the protection of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we might keep Mr Gillespie at our head."

and:

"Parties have been menaced with the supercilious air of a pontiff at Rome, as though all the members were ciphers save one."(45)

Small also gives a detailed statement made by Gillespie a year before his death, which again seems to suggest that he was disillusioned by what was happening:

"They bring into societies, sacred, religious or civil, persons of such principles and character as should be kept out by general rules, and by the rules and constitution of the society in particular, and they keep out and shut the door against persons who are to be received and admitted by every rule which can be of weight in the case, or at least whom to exclude is unjust and wrong."(46)

Small comments:

"Though he had named Mr Pirie on the one hand, and Mr Cowan on the other, he could scarcely have made his meaning clearer, and such being his opinion of the party headed by Messrs Baine and Simpson among his former coadjutors, no wonder he wished his people to seek into other fellowship after his death."(47)

Dr Struthers cannot admit the possible soundness of this conclusion. It is therefore necessary to make some further observations based on what had happened in Dunfermline. It is often



said that we are known by the company we keep and Cruden and Cowan were close friends of Gillespie. Struthers is careful to avoid recognising this threefold friendship. However Small contends that Cowan presented a motion in 1773 in which he desired to know the Synod's mind regarding the admission to the Lord's Table of "those who are unsound in the essentials of the Christian Faith." The Synod unanimously agreed that their principles did not allow this and Small argues that Cowan intended it as a direct attack on Pirie.(48) A majority of the newly formed Synod, however, was in favour of holding Communion with "visible saints" whether they were Episcopalians or Independents but Cowan and the majority of his congregation were unhappy with the decision.(49) Troubles followed within the congregation, which led to the Synod's sending representatives to visit them but thirteen elders and four Managers signed a paper forbidding them entrance to the Church.(50)

It has to be admitted that it would appear inconsistent with what is known of Gillespie's views on Communion if he had supported Cowan. However by that time he was an ill man and, as has been noted above, perplexed by the Relief's attitude to Pirie. Yet a number of facts suggest that Cowan had at least the sympathy of the Dunfermline congregation in 1773, if not of Gillespie himself. They also suggest that Struthers was wrong in trying to discount the threefold friendship of Gillespie, Cruden and Cowan.

Firstly, Cowan was present at Gillespie's Communion at the very time when the Synod's committee had been appointed to meet at Colinsburgh.(51) This would seem to establish a link between him and at least part of Gillespie's congregation. It is unlikely that, if Gillespie were ill and unable to take the Sacrament, he would have agreed to Cowan's coming if he had been wholly opposed to his narrower view of the Communion issue. Small states that Cowan actually assisted Gillespie at the Communion.(52)

Secondly, the *Synod Minutes* record that the committee which had been formed to meet Cowan also wanted Gillespie and Cruden to be present. This may indicate that Gillespie and Cruden were of the same mind in the matter.(53) While admitting the unlikelihood of Gillespie's

views on open Communion having changed, it must be remembered that a deep antagonism had grown up between Gillespie and Baine. Small notes that Struthers was of the opinion that the Rev James Baine was "in many respects the most remarkable person of all the early fathers of the Relief Church." Struthers also believed that his influence went far beyond that of Gillespie and ultimately cast the Dunfermline minister into the background.(54) The division in the Relief Church which has been noted above was considered by Struthers to be in part due to Baine's antagonism to Cowan's appointment to Colinsburgh.(55) Small held that Gillespie continued to be Cowan's friend to the end.(56)

Thirdly, it should not be forgotten that Cowan officiated at Gillespie's funeral, which suggests a singular bond of friendship between the two men. Even if this is denied, it is clear that many of Gillespie's congregation were sympathetic to Cowan.(57) The Minutes of the Abbey Kirk Session indicate that Provost Turnbull, the leading protagonist for a Chapel, sought Cowan's help during the five year struggle for the right to set up a Chapel:

"...since their application for Communion with the Church (Turnbull) had one or two of his children baptised by Mr Cowan of Colinsburgh."(58)

When attention is turned to the third member, Mr Cruden, it would seem that he also took a strongly conservative position on the subject of open Communion. When the Synod announced that Relief principles allowed it to hold occasional Communion with Episcopalians and Independents, he withdrew from the Church, becoming minister of Crown Court in London in the early part of 1774.(59) Later that year Cruden's former congregation in Glasgow, the original Relief Church in the city, applied to the Presbytery of Glasgow to have their place of worship recognised as a Chapel of Ease but on condition that members were allowed to retain the right to choose their own minister. Another section of the congregation sought permission to build a new church in connection with the Relief Presbytery.

From the above some conclusions may tentatively be reached. Gillespie may have felt that the Relief Church was in danger of falling

into what others have subsequently described as "a rickle o' stanes without any cement". It had perhaps become too accommodating for a man who had stood firmly by what he believed, even when it meant deposition from the Establishment. Between 1770 and 1774 the Relief underwent a harrowing time similar to what had occurred in the Secession at the time of the Burgher breach. The division into two Presbyteries was based on personalities and it would appear that Cruden, Cowan and Gillespie formed a powerful triumvirate. There was also a movement within the Relief towards the Church of Scotland, where some saw in the Chapels the possibility of setting up congregations who, though part of the National Church, would not be under the yoke of patronage. It is perhaps not without significance that in 1770, when Gillespie was involved in the Pirie affair at Blairlogie, there was a renewed effort at the General Assembly to have his deposition lifted. Whether this was encouraged by Gillespie or proposed by someone such as Erskine of Carnock is difficult to say. The fact that the Western Presbytery lost three of its members in 1773-74 indicates that the Relief Church was undergoing a period of internal conflict. When Gillespie died his congregation was split in two and when Cruden left for London his congregation was similarly divided. In 1775 Cowan was declared to be no longer a member of the Relief and for twenty years he stood alone.(60)

The evidence would seem to favour the statement made by Dr John Erskine in the preface to Gillespie's *Treatise on Temptation*(61) and also the statement which went forth in the publications of the time, that Gillespie when he died favoured the development of the Chapel system. Here, it seemed, there was scope for the Popular party to combat from within the effects of the heavy hand of patronage in the National Church.



## CHAPTER FIVE

The issue of popular election within Secession and Establishment Churches.

### Introduction.

The previous three chapters have dealt with breakaway movements from the Establishment during the 18th century. One theme has kept recurring, the matter of choice of a minister. Would popular election solve the vexed problem of patronage? It has been noted that in the Secession, Relief and Chapel movements attempts were made to introduce new forms of election, yet in all three cases problems arose. Erskine's congregation had an eight year vacancy, at Blairlogie the Relief congregation had to resist the will of the Presbytery, while in Dunfermline Mr McLean was thrust into the first charge of Dunfermline Abbey by those who supported the Chapel cause. In the early part of the 19th century popular election became a crucial factor in the development not only of Dissent but also of the Quoad Sacra congregations within the Establishment. Some questions arise. What did the different groups mean by popular election? In ridding itself of lay patronage did the Church find that other forms of patronage were equally objectionable? The finding of a satisfactory system of choosing a minister would remain for years to come a thorny problem with no easy answer.

#### a. Popular election within the Secession Church.

By 1820 the Seceders had become a powerful body though their success did not come from a carefully structured extension policy. They were not a National Church but a confederation of Independent congregations working through Synods and Presbyteries. In many cases the setting up of a new congregation was stoutly resisted by the parent body from which the new membership was to come, the loss of some members being considered more from a financial standpoint than as necessary and welcome church extension.

Nevertheless as the Secession Church grew problems arose. Perhaps the most controversial was over the choice of minister. It was a problem which affected the whole Church as well as the local Dunfermline situation.

When the four Seceding fathers hoisted the flag of the Associate Presbytery it might have been supposed that the Church formed by them would be free from the shackles of patronage which had caused them to abandon the Establishment. It might also have been imagined that their congregations would have enjoyed the free choice of a minister. Yet such concepts as "popular election " had not yet been adequately defined. It was a young Church whose leading lights were men of high principle and strong personality, though often lacking the spirit of moderation without which Church Courts are often set on collision courses. It had taken courage to stand against centuries of tradition, the Government, the landed classes and the fixed order of things. This tended, however, to make the Seceding fathers difficult men to deal with and quite often inflexible in their opinions. This is not to condemn them but simply to recognise that it was because they were such strong characters that they made such an impact on Scottish ecclesiastical life.

Though the Secession Church had rid itself of the civil patron it soon found that new types of patronage were introduced which often led to deeper division and bitterness than it had left behind. The story of discord makes sad reading and the fact that the Secession Church weathered the storm is due in part to the disarray which existed within the Establishment.

Ebenezer Erskine's congregation in Stirling suffered from a long six year vacancy when its pastor and then his nephew died. The congregation was large and was divided over whom to call. Midway through the long vacancy a majority of the Session was anxious to proceed to a call. The Presbytery, however, instructed that each elder should go through his district accompanied by an elder who took the opposite view "to pulse the congregation". The reports indicated that 633 were for calling a Mr Robert Campbell, 411 wanted a new leet and 62 had other proposals to make. Though 959 signatures were presented

to Synod and the call sustained, Presbytery held back from proceeding after receiving a paper, signed by 864 members, refusing to submit to Mr Campbell's ministry.(1) A "Stirling Covenant" now emerged proposing that the congregation should have two ministers and that each of the contending parties should choose one. Both ministers were to be admitted on the same day, the calls were to be signed simultaneously and if either call proved abortive the other was to lie over until both positions could be filled at the same time. The dispute continued, however, in a most acrimonious way and though Mr Campbell was eventually settled six years after the death of the previous minister it was twenty-two years before the charge became a collegiate one. In the intervening period offers from those who had supported Mr Campbell were made to the other faction to enable them to set up their own place of worship, but even this help was turned down. The reason given for their refusal was that it required them to turn their backs on their former contendings and acquiesce in an act of intrusion.(2)

One of the direct results of the Secession was the need for more ministers and also a greater movement among them. In the Establishment the system of patronage had generally meant that once a minister was called to a charge he was reluctant to leave the service of his benefactor. Within the Secession as many as seven calls could be given to one man so that the Church was in a constant state of ferment. Men in charges were likely to move more often than those within the Establishment which meant a constant source of new vacancies and a greater possibility of division and contention.

It was not only at Stirling but throughout the whole country that difficulties arose. Dunfermline was no exception and its difficulties matched the notoriety of the Stirling case. However, before highlighting the main dispute which led to the formation of St Margaret's it is necessary to consider what was standard vacancy procedure within the Secession.

A difficulty immediately arises, for the practice was by no means clear or uniform. There was scarcely a particle of statute, constitutional or legislative law uniformly practised by Presbyteries.



When a charge fell vacant a congregation applied to Presbytery for supply or for permission to proceed to a call. When the former option was pursued Presbytery would send probationers to take a service, thus giving the congregation an opportunity to hear them and providing the student with some welcome financial help. The Presbytery also arranged the time when a probationer was to be heard. For example, in Limekilns contention arose over the fact that a Mr James Whyte had been sent to conduct evening worship though the congregation did not normally have an evening service. Some of the congregation argued that this had been done because some members of Presbytery did not want Mr Whyte to go to Limekilns.(3)

The power of Presbytery extended not only to sustaining or rejecting a call but also to insisting that other candidates be heard, as well as determining what the stipend would be. When Limekilns tried to call a minister in 1822 the Presbytery insisted that the condition of any call being allowed would be that the stipend should rise from £130 to £150.(4)

Any member could put forward a name when a call was being moderated and the final vote was a matter for the whole congregation. Yet the Kirk Session safeguarded itself by retaining the right to say when a moderation was to take place. This was straightforward when the Session was agreed so that they brought forward their choice at the most appropriate moment. However when a Session was divided the matter was much more complex and could lead to such situations as have been described in the Stirling case.

While a moderation was applied for by the Session, the day of the call was set by Presbytery and this could also lead to contention. By allowing an early date Presbytery could avoid competing calls, but if it were unhappy it could set a later date thus allowing the possibility of a competing claim from another congregation. The matter would then fall under the Synod's jurisdiction. The roles played by Session and Presbytery were fundamental and could be likened to those of a Government in power who can, within limits, set the time of a General Election. They choose the date best suited to enhance their cause. The same tactics were used by Sessions and Presbyteries to

thwart any popular movement within a congregation to choose a candidate who did not have their support.

The protracted vacancy at Queen Anne Street (Erskine's Burgher Associate congregation) lasted from 1820 to 1825 and aroused as heated a debate as any of the later, celebrated Establishment cases. It is illustrative of the way in which trouble could arise in a Secession congregation over the calling of a minister.(5)

The dispute centred on the person of a young probationer, Mr James Whyte, who had been brought up in the Anti-Burgher tradition but who, after the Union in 1820, was available for a call to any charge within the United Church. The writer of *The Spirit of the Union* contends that, though the Queen Anne Street congregation joined the Union, the two collegiate ministers had been opposed to it. This is not surprising when it is remembered how acrimonious the Burgher breach had been in Dunfermline.(6) The writer alleges that the Presbytery was dominated by Burgher members who used their strength to prevent Mr Whyte's appointment to either Limekilns or Queen Anne Street.

An attempt was made to provide the services of Mr Whyte to assist in the charge. However it was only after the older minister's death that a determined bid was made to bring him permanently to Dunfermline. A number of the Session were opposed to such a move and they brought forward Mr John Brown from Biggar as an alternative candidate. Whyte was elected, however, by a vote of 418 to 208, but by the time the call came before the Synod there were six competing calls. The largest came from Dunfermline with 864 signatures, while Limekilns was second with 444. Both were passed over in favour of Perth with 385 signatures, but when the date of ordination arrived Mr Whyte neither appeared nor gave in an excuse for absence.(7) The congregation of Perth Wilson Street consented to have the call laid aside.

When Mr James McFarlane, the second of the two collegiate ministers, died in 1823, a second attempt was made by Queen Anne Street to call Mr Whyte. Two competing calls came before the Synod but this time they decided in favour of Dunfermline. Mr Whyte now felt

that he could not go to Dunfermline because of the treatment he and his supporters had received earlier at the hands of Dunfermline Presbytery. Until matters were settled he was not prepared to accept any charge within the Secession Church. A committee was set up to try to reconcile the different parties. Presbytery, after giving answers to complaints made about them, thought that the matter had been resolved and the issue was dropped. However Mr Whyte was not satisfied and on reading over the Minutes of Agreement he pronounced that the whole proceedings were "a compound of villainy and Jesuitism", following this with a letter to the Presbytery intimating that he had abandoned a Church in which he had seen "a lamentable dereliction of principle and honour." (8) Attempts were made, particularly by the Original Seceder congregation in Perth, to keep him in Scotland, but he left for New York.

Small's comments on Whyte indicate some areas which will be considered later in the chapter:

"Looking back over his brilliant but unhappy course as a preacher we are met by the question: Whence came his exceptional popularity? His sermons, of which a volume was afterwards published, included one on Death riding forth on a Pale Horse, which told with great effect, we have heard, in his preacher days. His delivery is said to have been marked by solemnity suited to such a subject; but besides this he threw much more of the emotional into his discourses than was common in Secession pulpits at that time, hard doctrinal preaching being in the ascendant. It is regretted that his connection ended as it did, but his own words partly explain it. 'There is,' he wrote, 'perhaps no bosom which feels more intensely and keenly than mine, and, though many of its feelings may seem childish and feverish to others, they deeply depress and unhinge my mind.' As his anonymous biographer remarks in the memoir prefixed to the discourses published in America in 1839, he was a person of too much sensibility for the scenes in which he moved." (9)

Mr Whyte's outstanding ability may be guessed at when the claims of his main challenger, Mr Brown of Biggar are recognised. (10)

The Secession Church had its difficulties and was in some sense ill-prepared to compete with the better oiled mechanism of the Established Church. Nor was it so well organised and structured as the later Free Church which developed its legislation much more along the



lines of a National Establishment.(11) The Secession Church was a more independent body and more congregational, when first constituted, than the Free Church. Ralph Erskine had observed at an early stage the twin dangers of independency and extremism and had written of his fears to a merchant in Glasgow in 1733:

"I see indeed, we stand just now in a dangerous post, and yet a middle place between the kirk and the people, and so lording it over their conscience, by intruding ministers upon them without their consent; and the people, many of whom would, at the roots, drive us to independency, as if we should do something more than enter a protest or dissent when overcome and outvoted, or separate. However, I doubt not but, upon due information, they will see it is our duty to shun all extremes and fight lawfully, as long as we can with a safe conscience."(12)

By the 1820's some of Erskine's fears had been realised. The Secession Church had run into many troubles, especially during vacancies when competing parties espoused different candidates. Congregations did not have the benefit of a civil patron to determine who should be their minister. Nor, on the other hand, had a system of popular election been satisfactorily worked out. One thing was clear: a member simply as a member did not have equal voting strength. Other factors, such as whether he was an elder or Manager, whether he had taken expensive or cheap seating or whether he was a trustee for the building weighed heavily in determining how significant his vote would be.

It has been noted elsewhere that the Secession Church was run more on the lines of competing small businesses than as a nationalised industry subsidised by the State.(13) In this the Church reflected the life of its most dominant and influential members. As the early Seceders were not too concerned about Church law, a system of government emerged only as situations arose. This left many loopholes and many difficult matters unresolved. Small, for example, notes that the usual method for proceeding at a moderation was for the Interim Moderator appointed by Presbytery to ask the Session if they had a leet to put forward, thus giving them primacy of place. He contends that this had been the method adopted by the Church of Scotland as early as 1638: "The Session to nominate with the consent of the

people."(14)

According to Principal Rule this meant that the Session did not put the election into the hands of the multitude in such a way as either to abrogate their own responsibility or remove their guidance from the congregation. This was the system used widely within the Secession but there was liberty to add to the Session's list at the General Meeting of the congregation, when a member could put forward a candidate in addition to those recommended by Session, who, if chosen, would indeed be the people's choice but not perhaps the Session's. Thus the conditions set out by Principal Rule could be broken. Throughout the life of the Secession Church such simple deviations from the norm brought disputes, some of which led to contested settlements which lasted from five to eight years. Moreover the failure to have a more watertight system was aggravated by the presence of so many businessmen who knew the art of striking a good bargain and having their own way. They did not like to be thwarted and often introduced doubtful business practices into Church affairs. Thus Church legislation which had not been set out in a solid framework of law created many situations which were open to misinterpretation and abuse.

This is perhaps most clearly seen in the rising power of Managers and Committees of Management. From 1799 the Managers in Queen Anne Street were given the responsibility of allocating seats and gathering seat rents. Managers, though not ordained, thus assumed responsibility for the temporal affairs of the congregation.(15)

When the dispute over Mr Whyte reached a peak in 1821 a clash arose between the Session and the Managers, some of whom were concerned that the Session was not acting quickly enough to procure Mr Whyte's services. A General Meeting of the congregation was called but some days before it took place thirty of the Managers held their own meeting. They discussed whether they would recommend that a moderation should be sought immediately. Three country Managers who did not normally attend such meetings turned up. It is the opinion of the writer of the pamphlet *The Spirit of the Union* that they had already been won over to the opinion of the remaining collegiate minister Mr James McFarlane that a call should not be presented. There

was lengthy discussion at the meeting after which the Managers decided to ask the congregation to petition the Presbytery for a moderation. However when the Session met later in the evening they insisted that the purpose of the meeting was simply to decide whether to ask Presbytery for preachers every Sunday or only on alternate weeks. The congregation resented this attempt to limit discussion to this one point. Financial considerations were then set before the congregation who were told in no uncertain terms that if they went to Presbytery the Session would challenge their action.(16)

The writer of *The Spirit of the Union*, who was clearly in favour of the Managers in the Queen Anne Street case, held that the Session had acted in a most unusual way in seeking to limit what could be discussed. Normally when a meeting of the congregation was called it was simply to discuss business of importance and it was open to any member to raise other issues. In this case it was the clear intention of the Session to prevent the Managers from raising an issue not on the set agenda for the evening.(17) The situation could be likened to a meeting of Directors adopting tactical procedures to limit the power of shareholders to raise some point but the paradox in the Church case was that the Managers were usually those who held the assets while the Session had control only of the legislative process. The Managers were therefore in the position of shareholders even though they often had rights over the property. This was clearly a situation which had to be resolved if the spiritual supremacy of the Session were to be safeguarded against any blackmailing tactic which the Trustees or Managers might feel inclined to adopt.

The writer saw in the procedures adopted by the Session an attempt to act as "sole" patrons and thereby stifle the legitimate views of the membership. He recalled how the Moderator of the Session, Mr McFarlane, had boasted at Presbytery that the congregation of Queen Anne Street was "omnipotent" and caustically suggested that the minister had really meant that the Session was omnipotent.(18)

When the clash between Session and Managers remained unresolved at the meeting, the Session agreed to try to assess accurately the feelings of the congregation. The elders were not



instructed, as in the Stirling case, to go out two by two to see what the members were thinking. In Stirling this had proved a recipe for further strife since those representing different views were sent out together. A different method was adopted in Dunfermline, one which was apparently used in large congregations. The congregation was divided into large districts each consisting of between one hundred and two hundred members, and district meetings were held at which specific questions could be raised about the true state of the congregation's affairs. In Queen Anne Street great confusion had arisen about the congregation's financial position and at these meetings questions could be more readily put and answered than at a General Meeting where large numbers often stifled constructive debate.

A member of Session was expected to attend each of these meetings where, after the nature of the business had been stated, views were expressed. As they were held on successive nights, a copy of the resolution taken at one was sometimes submitted for approval at another. The next meeting could adopt any resolution it wished and also add others. In the Dunfermline case, some members of the congregation, who were also members of the Committee of Management, were invited to attend in order to set out the true facts concerning the congregation's finances. It would appear, however, that this invitation to the Managers had not been instigated by the Session and Presbytery was later to consider such procedures most irregular.(19) The meetings concluded that the congregation was in fact solvent and in a more flourishing condition than at any point in the previous twenty years. It was therefore resolved to petition the Session to hold another General Meeting of the congregation to consider whether the time was now ripe to proceed to call a minister.

Certain points can be made about the above procedures and the decisions taken. The Managers clearly felt that the Session had earlier misled the congregation with regard to the financial situation. On the other hand it must be remembered that by the time the district meetings were held Mr Husband had died and more money was probably available. Both sides used the prevailing financial figures to serve their own ends.

The presence of the Managers at the district meetings was a clear deviation from all former practice and indicates the determination of the congregation to steal a march on the members of Session who were resisting their demands, thus introducing some of the business practice which will be noted as integral to the early Secession Church. In other words, when one was thwarted there were ways and means of getting one's own back. The Session had used the business device of pleading insolvency in order to prevent workers and shareholders asking for more. The Managers attended the district meetings to put the facts straight.

When a further meeting of the whole congregation was called over 900 were in favour of proceeding to call. However Mr McFarlane produced a counter motion signed by over 300. The Session, to avoid further embarrassment, asked Presbytery for advice, which also served to slow down the process of setting a date for the moderation.(20)

Had the Session become virtual patrons? They certainly held a trump card in choosing when a moderation should take place. In Dunfermline the Presbytery backed the Session because it judged the Managers to have exceeded their powers. It did order a congregational meeting to be held eight days before the next Presbytery. However as Presbytery did not meet at fixed times Mr McFarlane moved that the next meeting of the Court should be three months hence. Though this was turned down it was agreed not to meet for two months.(21) The writer of the pamphlet was angered by such manoeuvring and demanded to know whether such a procedure was consistent with the principles upon which men had withdrawn from the Establishment. He was particularly incensed by the fact that the Session used precedents from the practice of the freeholders of Fife and from Parliament to prevent certain matters being raised at the General Meeting. There the discussion of a motion was never allowed unless previous notice had been given.(22)

The Session was admittedly a powerful body but it would appear that no set practice and procedure had been laid down by the Church regarding small constitutional issues. The justification of the Session's action was not found in the constitutional procedures of the

Church but in secular legislation. This was a matter upon which the writer let his imagination range wide in order to show the unsuitability of such arguments in a Secession Church. He called Ralph Erskine to witness the proceedings.(23)

The writer claimed that both Session and Presbytery were acting as patrons and he felt that the Presbytery in particular had taken over the role which the early Seceders had seen as the congregation's. Presbytery indeed became more crucial as the disputes grew in number. Its power to determine when a moderation could take place was a handy tool when it felt unhappy about a situation. When a moderation was eventually granted in the Queen Anne Street case a seven week period was set before it could take place. The writer claimed that this was to allow enthusiasm for Mr Whyte to cool and for other candidates to be heard. It was in fact during this period that Mr Brown of Biggar was introduced as a rival candidate.

Other obstacles were put in the congregation's way. When voting did take place a very limited time was provided for the appending of signatures to the call. Whereas Limekilns were given sixty days in a call which they made about the same time, Dunfermline were only granted three. Moreover restrictions were made as to where the call could be signed. In Dunfermline the signing of the call was confined to the Session House while at Limekilns signatures were allowed at Pattiesmuir, Charlestown and Limekilns. In drawing his comparison the writer observes:

"Dunfermline congregation extends to a considerable distance, numbers belonging to it living six miles from the town. Limekilns congregation is confined within a small boundary, the far greater part living within one mile of the Meeting House, and very few, if any, living at a distance of two miles."(24)

The action of the Presbytery in dealing with the calls was also considered unjust. In Dunfermline a call was signed by 846 in a charge with 1600 seats while another in Limekilns was signed by 343 in a charge with 700 seats. Though the members who supported the calls were proportionately the same, the Presbytery had acted in quite different ways. Limekilns was sustained without a dissenting voice



whereas Dunfermline was only sustained with great difficulty. Eight declined to vote, one voted against and seventeen voted for the call to be sustained.(25) The writer traced this to the Presbytery's favouring Burgher rather than Antiburgher students(26) and accused them of Machiavellian practices. He decried Presbyters who were against patronage as established by law but had no objections to exercising it in their own persons. In doing so they oppressed and injured congregations by making null and void the very rights upon which their Church professed to be founded.(27)

One of the most telling arguments put forward by the writer was that Mr Whyte had proved to be a very "popular preacher". His style was more emotional and personal than the doctrinal preaching which characterised the denomination. He was therefore seen as a great threat to other members whose congregations were situated nearby. A similar situation occurred in Stirling in 1762.(28)

An important reason for such competition within the Secession was that the congregations were often built in close proximity not only to the Establishment but also to others within their own denomination. In Dunfermline by 1799 there was the Parish Church, a Chapel of Ease connected to the Establishment, a Burgher congregation, an Antiburgher congregation and the Relief congregation, all within a quarter of a mile of one another. The old traditional parish system had not only meant that a minister was paid through teinds but also that the congregation was sited at a considerable distance from its nearest neighbour. This prevented the competition and local rivalry which the Secession and Relief movements introduced into Scottish Church life. When the Chapel congregation was eventually granted a constitution in 1779 one of the chief objections raised by the parish minister was that people from outwith the parish boundaries were attending the services. For Mr Thomson, a typical Establishment figure, traditional lines of demarcation had to be observed and this was perhaps symbolic of the desire for a fixed order. Dissenting congregations, on the other hand, had sprung up at random so that the Secession Church as a body was disorganised and its life competitive. Financial concerns such as balancing the books became a new phenomenon of Church life so that it did not matter where people came from as

long as they paid their way.

The need to be financially successful introduced business management and congregations became "gathered" rather than "parochial". When a vacancy occurred neighbouring ministers watched events keenly as the new incumbent could prove a real challenge to their own security. A modern parallel would be that of a gathered congregation in a rural town taking a keen interest in the appointment to a nearby village of a minister who might appeal to some who were formerly prepared to travel a considerable distance to sit under a ministry of their choice. Such competitiveness was greater in Seceding times when the call of an outstanding preacher could affect all the neighbouring congregations.

In his pamphlet the writer noted that Mr Whyte's popularity proved a serious disadvantage as he was considered to pose a real threat to other ministers in the Presbytery. The fact that he held off the challenge of Mr Brown, who was later to become a leading light in the denomination, indicates his outstanding appeal. Yet it was this very popularity which, according to the writer, made Mr Whyte so unacceptable to the Presbytery.(29)

Mr Whyte's lack of popularity with his fellow ministers was also evident at Synod. When competing calls came up it was usual for the Presbytery in which the call had been given to vote for the congregation within its bounds. Mr Whyte had received quite the opposite treatment:

"... all ordinary usages were laid aside, and instead of following the common practice, each seemed eager to get Mr Whyte sent away from themselves. In proof of this, we shall only mention one fact, from a number that might be brought forward. Stirling Presbytery furnished twenty votes; yet only one Minister belonging to that body was observed to vote that Mr Whyte should be sent to the congregation in Stirling".(30)

A leader-writer in the *Scotsman* also contended

"... it does not appear that Mr Whyte is charged with heresy, or immorality, or anything wrong in practice or doctrine, unless the Synod hold with Paley, that to be a popular preacher argues a capital defect in a man's character".(31)

The writer went on to argue that it was the task of the Church Courts to moderate at calls, to exclude unqualified persons or to settle disputed cases. He felt, however, that the Courts had gone beyond their remit and were often acting from personal caprice. He also held that it was wrong of any Court to use its privileges either openly or covertly to divest a congregation of the right of electing their own minister. In doing this, ministers exercised the worst type of patronage, which in the writer's view was an intriguing and aggrandising spirit.(32)

Presbyteries often sent other preachers into a vacancy situation in order to divide opinion within a congregation. In a footnote the writer indicated what Mr Cowie in a "Letter to Seceders", published in 1799, envisaged such scheming could lead to:

"The way that scheming spirit operates, so far as respects settlements, is by sending favourite preachers to good places where the livings are best, and keeping them there; and on the other hand, by keeping off from these places other preachers of superior talents for fear they could cut out the favourites. The same is done by employing persons as tools in congregations in an underhand way; by puffing away in recommendations, without any reason, or without any personal knowledge, by letters; by pushing forward or keeping back moderations; and by promoting needless transportations. Again there are often parties in Church Courts; and by introducing a friend, we strengthen our party, when any cause comes from us to these courts. Yea, some men will scheme when they have little impelling on them but a mere lust for power, a thing so flattering to pride, for which some of the clergy have been famed in every age. Often an able and honest preacher has little chance ..... perhaps he is not submissive and pliant enough; no wonder then that he is not taken by the hand".(33)

However a much deeper issue was rising to the surface. Was the Secession Church to be Presbyterian in policy, with Session and Presbytery subject to the higher Court, the Synod, or was it to become a congregational Church? In Queen Anne Street a veritable trial of strength between the Session and Managers had arisen. The Whyte affair raised the question of whether the Managers were to become the voice of congregationalism or whether they were under the spiritual oversight of the Session in all matters. If they had certain powers as Managers, how far did these powers extend?



b. Popular election within the Establishment.

While the Secession had problems with vacancies, even after removing the supposed curse of lay patronage, the Establishment was likewise experiencing the difficulties which the concept of popular election had brought. This was first found in the Chapel congregations, then in the Quoad Sacra parishes formed after 1834, and finally in the new Church Extension charges such as the one founded in Dunfermline in 1840. The St Andrews Quoad Sacra Church belonged to two types, having originally been a Chapel of Ease, then with the passing of the 1834 Act becoming a Quoad Sacra parish within the Establishment. In both St Andrews and the North the problem of devising a satisfactory system of popular election became evident.

When disputes took place in 1843-45 over who should have possession of the St Andrews buildings a lawsuit was entered into. One of the interesting facts to emerge was the way in which the Chapel congregation had acted during vacancies before the passing of the Chapel Act. It would appear that it had maintained a distinct, independent role and that the Presbytery did not even declare the charge vacant when a minister died or moved to another charge. The whole administration during the vacancy was in the hands of the Managers and it was left to a congregational meeting to decide whether the Chapel would even continue as a place of worship or not.(34) It was not, however, until 1838 that a vacancy occurred and it soon became evident that the procedure for an election was by no means clear. Though they were not shackled by the patronage of the Queen Anne Act, a different form of patronage ensued, based on financial interests. There followed a time of congregational turbulence and dispute with rival sections in conflict over the mode of election and ultimately the choice of candidate. Resignations and disputes became the order of the day and the whole was reminiscent of what happened in the United Secession charge of Queen Anne Street. At a meeting of the congregation on 11th July 1838 the question of who was eligible to vote was discussed. When no clear guidance was found among the old records it was suggested that only communicants should be allowed to vote.(35) However it was later decided that all males over twenty-one and all females over eighteen who were sitters in the church should have a

vote, but on the condition that they had paid their seat rents until the following August.(36)

The reason for this very feminist resolution may have been the new role women were assuming in the weaving community which had previously been dominated by men. The need for seat rents to be paid was simply to alleviate the congregation's financial difficulties rather than an attempt to limit who could vote.

Other disagreements had arisen at the earlier meeting. A committee had been set up to bring forward not more than five and not less than three candidates from which the congregation could make its choice. The committee wanted only these candidates to be considered. At the congregational meeting, however, the name of Mr McEwan was proposed by various members for inclusion in the list that the committee would eventually bring forward. The committee resisted this interference and offered their resignation, which they were eventually persuaded to withdraw. They did accept a motion which asked them to take McEwan's name into consideration and to present their list at the next meeting.(37)

When the list was presented McEwan's name was not on it, although the committee claimed to have given him full consideration. It was moved by a Mr Swan that two names be added to the list, but a Mr Kilgour objected that this would break faith with the committee and the other candidates. The voting was 51 for Swan and 13 for Kilgour with 12 abstaining. The committee resigned and the two names were added to the list, the Managers taking over from the committee.(38) Kilgour resigned as Clerk and Treasurer and refused to act as a Manager under the existing remit. The Managers, however, were not prepared to accept his resignation.(39)

When a final vote was taken some months later McEwan with 145 votes came ahead of Mr Thomson with 133.(40) The popular candidate had won the day against the will of the most influential members of the congregation. However a letter was sent to McEwan by the Managers the very next day to inform him of the true state of affairs:

"...which are that out of the sitters entitled to vote 145 voted for Mr McEwan and 133 for Mr Thomson, leaving Mr McEwan a majority of 12 and that none of the Managers, none of the Session and none of those who are under the pecuniary obligation for the Church voted in the majority - that by a calculation made it has been ascertained that of the sum of £540 subscribed for the rebuilding of the Church in the year 1833 not above £60 was submitted by those voting in the majority, a considerable portion, however, of the remaining £480 having been subscribed by those who did not vote, and that of the seat rents for the half year ending 30th July last, and amounting to £80 - the payments of those voting in the majority amounted to £24. 3s. 8d. That the present debt for which the Managers stand bound amounts to £1,320, and they expect to be relieved of the obligation for that sum."(41)

A month later a letter was read to the Managers from individuals who had made loans to the Church. Twelve of the signatories were Managers. They requested the immediate repayment of the loans.(42) While an attempt was being made by some of the congregation to meet the debt Mr McEwan wrote to accept the call. The Managers then wrote to Presbytery informing them of the facts. They pointed out that three weeks had passed without the congregation paying back the debt and they threatened to take legal action to enforce repayment, if necessary selling both manse and church. They claimed that if Mr McEwan came the congregation would be hopelessly divided.(43)

The Presbytery, for its part, sought assurance that the congregation would be able to provide financially for the new minister and some of the congregation formed a committee to raise the bond of stipend.(44)

McEwan had meanwhile received a call to Milton of Balgownie which had been sustained by the Kirkcaldy Presbytery. However those who wished him to come to Dunfermline still campaigned and demonstrations were held.(45) The Managers wrote to him and he replied that he still considered the Dunfermline situation to be under the control of Presbytery and would make official communication only with them. However on 7th December the Presbytery wrote to St Andrew's Chapel intimating McEwan's withdrawal and requesting them to proceed immediately, "prayerfully and harmoniously" to elect a



minister.(46)

Further problems continued to plague the vacancy procedures. New arrangements were begun in an attempt to fix on one individual and give an unanimous call(47) and the Managers recommended that they should hear any candidate before he was invited to preach for the charge.(48) Once a candidate had preached, the congregation was to meet in the course of the following week to decide whether or not to call him. In December an approach was made to Mr Smeaton of Leith.(49) Following this there is a gap in the Minutes and when they resume it is a Mr Sutherland who was the choice of the congregation.(50) The proceedings concerning his election appear to have been rushed, but only five voted against it. The matter was, however, raised at Presbytery by a weaver who claimed that Sutherland's election was illegal inasmuch as no specific instruction had been given of an intention to call.(51) The Presbytery eventually upheld the election but expressed the opinion that a proper intimation should have been made.(52) However, under the difficult circumstances of the settlement, the Presbytery resolved to proceed as quickly as possible.(53)

When attention is shifted to the other Chapel congregation, the Extension Church built in 1840, there is further evidence that in congregations in which lay patronage had been cast off financial considerations determined who was to be minister. Contributions towards the building of the Church had been raised by subscription and a Preacher's Committee of seven of these subscribers was appointed to bring forward a suitable candidate.(54) It was understood that, when a congregation was formed and a Session elected, the choice of the next minister would be in the hands of the membership.(55)

Lawrie in his *Disruption Memorials* noted that the North Church was a product of Non-Intrusion principles among the members of Dunfermline Abbey and that three-quarters of the cost of its erection came from the same source of Christian liberality and principle.(56) All correspondence was to be made through a Secretary to prevent any individual member promoting a particular minister.(57)

The list of subscribers included elders and Managers from both the Abbey and the St Andrew's Quoad Sacra as well as ministers and other supporters of the Establishment. Whatever the final voting, the decision would be accepted by the majority.(58) There was clearly a fear that a situation similar to that at St Andrew's Quoad Sacra might arise.

A list of candidates was finally reduced to two, a Mr Noble and a Mr Marshall. Though it is not recorded in the Minutes it would appear that a difference in opinion now occurred as to how many votes each subscriber should have. Lawrie in his *Disruption Memorials* argued that each should have only one vote, irrespective of the size of his contribution.(59) However, he was outvoted and it was agreed that those subscribers who had contributed more than £20 should have a correspondingly higher number of votes.(60) The list below indicates how the various subscribers voted:

<u>No vote:</u>	W Hunter	G Walls	M Anderson
	J Stronach	J Murie	A Hutton
	R Kelly	W Brown	T Roxburgh
	J Drysdale		

Mr Hunter had left before the vote and the others had subscribed less than one pound.

<u>Votes for Mr. Marshall:</u>	T Alexander(15)	Rev P Chalmers(13)	
	R Beveridge(10)	M McDonald(4)	R Douglas(4)
	R Drysdale(3)	I Clapperton(3)	W Chalmers(2)
	D Anderson	D Lawrie	W Gilston
	G Cooper	W Peebles	I Peebles
	M Williamson	P Smart	W Slater
	A Walker	P McNaughton	

<u>Votes for Mr Noble:</u>	J Kerr(15)	R Bonnar(4)	A Duncan(3)
	M Dewar(3)	W Beveridge(3)	J Ronaldson(3)
	W Warren(3)	R Auld(3)	J Marshall(3)
	M Bonnar(3)	Rev W Forfar(2)	R Campbell(2)
	A Hunt	A Wardlaw	H Russell
	W Finlayson	A Inglis	W Wardlaw
	R Lochtie	C Cooper	Colin Cooper
	M Hamilton	D Drysdale	M Henhouse
	G Fotheringham		

Total of votes: 65 for Mr Marshall and 60 for Mr Noble.

It may be noted that there were in all 125 votes cast by subscribers. However, 53 votes were held by only five persons and of these Marshall was given 38. Thus the choice of minister was

determined largely by three men, the Rev Peter Chalmers, Mr Thomas Alexander and Mr Robert Beveridge. If the result had been decided on a one man one vote basis Mr Noble would have won by 25 votes to 19.

The above accounts of St Andrews and the North indicate that finding a satisfactory solution to electing a minister once lay patronage was removed proved exceptionally difficult. In Dunfermline each case helped to develop the method by which the next was tackled. When subscription lists were sent out in early 1843 to gather money for the building of a new Church for the Free Abbey it was made clear that subscriptions would not give an automatic right to vote in the election of a minister. That right belonged to Church members whether they had given a subscription or not.(61)

In the case of the North Quoad Sacra Church it was agreed that after two years, if a congregation and Session had been formed, the choice of the next minister was to pass to male communicants over the age of 21.(62) A vacancy committee of nine, including one person from the Session and one from the Trustees, was formed and given the task of producing a list of three to five candidates from which the congregation, after hearing them preach, could make their choice.(63)

This method of forming a vacancy committee with at least one representative from Session and Trustees was a major step forward. In the light of the troubles experienced in the United Secession and in the Quoad Sacra congregations new procedures were necessary. In the North both Session and Managers were to have a say without either body dominating the democratic rights of ordinary individuals.

The system, however, was never used in Dunfermline as the Disruption intervened. When the North Church was later re-established in 1855 as a Quoad Sacra charge within the National Establishment, thinking had again changed and how vacancies were to be filled was written into the constitution. The congregation was annually to choose a list of five members, who were neither Trustees nor elders, to form a vacancy committee. This "Congregational Electional Committee" was to combine with the Trustees and Session in seeking out a list of not more than five candidates from which a minister was to be



chosen.(64)

This differed from the type of committee which had been proposed prior to the Disruption in that the Session and Trustees had a major say in choosing the nominees. It was therefore the pre-Disruption mode which most closely resembled the method used within the Church of Scotland until the recent changes introduced in 1984.(65)

The differences between the two procedures in the North Church are interesting. In the first the congregation was given the greater say as only two of the vacancy committee had necessarily to come from Session and Trustees. It was by far the most congregational vacancy system yet tried within the National Church and deprived both lay patron and eldership of their traditional roles. In Mr Robertson's post-Disruption scheme the Session was joined by the Trustees in exerting the major role, but they were brought together within the committee rather than left to compete as had happened in the Secession. Nevertheless the annual choice of five members from the congregation was a new feature and had the advantage that the committee was known before a vacancy occurred, thus avoiding unseemly squabbling when a minister left.

#### Conclusion.

When attention is turned to the Free Church the freedom to call a minister is not as clear as might have been expected. In a later chapter it will be noted that impeding of ministerial moves by the Central Committee of the Church was quite common, especially in early years(66). The right to call was also determined by the same Committee, depending on a Church's ability to contribute adequately to the Sustentation Fund. In many ways Free Church congregations were the least free of the three main Presbyterian denominations in their right to call their choice of minister. Election, when it was allowed, was usually in the hands of the Session and a number of others who made up a Committee to forward a candidate or candidates for the congregation's approval. As the Free Church Sessions grew stronger they often acted in quite arbitrary ways as in the Free Abbey in 1869 when trouble broke out over a disputed settlement. A powerful group tried to

trample over the rights of the congregation and a minority of the Session by bringing forth a candidate who had not yet been agreed by the congregation as a suitable person to vote upon. The case was taken up by Presbytery and reported in the press:

"....it appears that an innovation of the practice of the Church in the election of a minister has taken place, and that mandates and voting papers have been issued....when the congregation has not agreed as to the name which should be inserted in the call."(67)

The congregation were forced to start again in their search for a minister. Thus even within the Free Church forms of patronage which denied the congregation full involvement in the election of a minister were still being devised. The Free Abbey case perhaps indicates the determination of a middle-class eldership to have their choice without fully consulting the people in much the same way as business managers and small merchants determined the direction of their companies without considering the workforce.

In reviewing popular election it must be asked how far the Moderate party in the Church made use of the problems which had arisen in the Secession Church, such as at Erskine's death in 1751, at Stirling in 1761 or in Queen Anne Street in 1820, to indicate their opposition to change in their own practice. The loss of lay patronage did not solve the Church's problems or make congregations the final arbiters uninfluenced by other powerful groups within the Presbyterian system, such as Sessions, Managers or Presbyteries.

An underlying cause.

Behind the disagreements between the Kirk Session and membership of Queen Anne Street one feels that there must have been an underlying cause which went beyond the personality of the candidate who had so deeply divided the congregation.

The following hypothesis is suggested. Queen Anne Street and the Relief congregation shared the main support of the traditional trade. The weaving industry had developed along the lines of an extended family in which merchants, master weavers and journeymen worked as closely as possible. Some difficulties arose in 1807 and a Table of Prices was set up to regulate the wages paid for different grades of work and to prevent merchants from undercutting one another. Any attempt to break the system was viewed with suspicion as were any developments which tended to give one section an advantage over the others. New ideas were certainly incorporated but the weavers preferred them to be brought in gradually so that the stability of the trade would not be upset. It may be suggested, for example, that when Gillespie's congregation divided in 1774 a leading factor was the wider use of the damask loom.(1)

In 1822 a nine months strike over the Table of Prices arose from a major clash within the industry. It is probable that a number of merchants tried to enlarge their businesses, thus posing a direct challenge to the individual weaver in his home or on his farm.(2) Other merchants had set up spinning factories which produced cheaper yarn but brought closer the day of the weaving factory which was anathema to the traditional craftsman. These new developments were firmly resisted and the split in Queen Anne Street reflected the clash of interests. A small but powerful group in the Session who represented the merchant class resented the determination of ordinary weavers to resist any change in the Table of Prices. The operatives, by supporting Mr Whyte the popular candidate in opposition to this group, may have seen the ecclesiastical arena as a useful place in which to make their opposition public.



But is there any evidence that such a situation existed? The first clue is found in the suggestion by Small, in his book on the United Presbyterian Church, that the writer of the pamphlet, *The Spirit of the Union* was Captain Keeler, the people's champion.(3) It is interesting to note that Keeler's connection with the weaving trade went back to the turn of the century. In 1803 the writer of *The Weavers' Craft* records that Lieut. Keeler of the Royal Navy was reported as being willing to lend the Weavers' Incorporation money to meet their debts, while in 1804 he was admitted as an honorary member.(4) He was clearly a man of some means to whom the weavers turned when they saw their craft being challenged by the new innovations.

The second clue to a possible connection between the two opposing parties is found in certain comments made in the pamphlet mentioned above. It is reported that when the Session brought forward names in opposition to Mr Whyte they were accused of having included names of persons taken indiscriminately at a neighbouring spinning factory.(5) The writer of the pamphlet complained about the treatment which the congregation had received at Presbytery and noted how the people's representatives were dismissed as "homespun operatives".(6) This suggests that those who supported Mr Whyte came from the traditional trade while the opposition included those who had interests in a neighbouring factory.

Keeler's growing influence on the life of the Queen Anne Street congregation can be readily traced in the Minutes. Earlier in the century he had turned down an invitation to become an elder but in October 1822 he wrote a letter to the Session asking them to call a meeting to discuss "the impropriety of discontinuing the collegiate charge and other matters."(7) He clearly felt the need to challenge the delaying tactics which were being used to keep Mr Whyte out of Dunfermline.

By then Keeler was a leading member of the congregation in its fight against the Session. He proposed that members should hold back their seat rents and instead pay Mr Whyte who had been kept waiting in the wings while the two parties squabbled over his call.(8)

He also suggested that offering bowls be provided at the steps of the Church on Sundays to gather money for the legal expenses involved in taking Counsel.(9) Mr McFarlane, the remaining minister, refused permission for a meeting of the congregation to be held on Church premises and it had to be moved to the Relief Church. By this time the clear opposition to Keeler included John Ewing, Joseph Gowans, James Kirkland and Andrew Houston, elders of the congregation, some of whom were to become elders in St Margarets Church.

In 1824 another stage in the conflict was reached when Keeler was made an elder(10), though only after a long and bitter power struggle within the Session. The process to have him elected had begun a year earlier when the congregation, no doubt with Keeler's support, had demanded an increase in the eldership to meet the needs of a congregation of over 2,000.(11) Mr McFarlane having died, the Session had been unprepared to appoint elders while the congregation was without a minister and in such an agitated state. The situation became so bitter that Presbytery was asked to intervene and supervise the appointment of new office bearers.(12) The Session also raised the matter of Keeler's conduct during services. It had apparently become his custom to leave the Church during the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism and others had begun to follow him.(13) The reasons for this are not clear but it may have had something to do with the fact that the Synod had ruled that those who had voting rights in an election were those who had availed themselves of the Sacraments. The popular party, under Keeler, had earlier demanded voting rights for a much larger section of the congregation including all those over sixteen who attended Church.(14)

When Keeler's nomination as an elder was eventually agreed, Mr Houston the Session Clerk protested and asked that someone else be appointed clerk pro. tem. as he did not wish to be present at Keeler's ordination.(15) Although the matter was again raised at Presbytery, the appointment was made. By November 1824 Keeler's growing dominance is seen in his appointment as congregational Treasurer.(16) Moreover those who opposed him within the Session were now clearly in the minority and in November 1825 he was thanked for his great attention to the business of both Session and congregation.(17)

There is further evidence that those who left to form St Margarets included many of the richer families and those who did not intend to allow the traditional trade to stagnate. One elder in St Margarets was Mr Henry Reid, whose two sons were to open an extensive power loom factory in 1849. Their venture was greatly helped by money left to them by Mr Joseph Gowans, another of the original St Margarets elders.(18) The outstanding success of the new congregation also suggests that it did draw away many of the wealthier merchants who were antagonistic to the narrower view of the trade held by many of the traditional weavers. Men like Reid and Gowans represented those who were forward looking and did not want the industry to be strangled by unnecessary strikes and constant disputes over wages.

The facts recorded in the *Church Commission Report* published in 1839 show that after only fourteen years St Margarets rivalled Queen Anne Street as the chief Secession congregation in Dunfermline. Figures collated from the report show that the congregations were running neck and neck:

	<u>Let Seats</u>	<u>Unlet Seats</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Stipend</u>
Queen Anne Street	1202	433	6/3 to 4/-	£200
St Margarets	905	46	8/- to 4/-	£175

It was noted that in St Margarets all the highest priced seats were taken. A further indication of the comparative wealth of that congregation is that although the church was much smaller than Queen Anne Street they could still collect about the same amount in seat rents, which suggests that the number of more expensive seats was proportionately higher:(19)

	<u>1831</u>	<u>1832</u>	<u>1833</u>	<u>1834</u>	<u>1835</u>
Queen Anne Street	306	313	315	321	308
St Margarets	260	260	280	280	281

The Queen Anne Street Baptismal Record also suggests that the congregation was heavily depleted and many of the younger families had moved into the new church. For example, in 1824 the number of baptisms recorded was 105 but by 1827 this had dropped to 42.(20)

When the issue is regarded from another angle a different type of conflict becomes evident. The dispute eventually centred on



who had the right to vote in a United Secession Church. Both parties sought the advice of Counsel, the Session from James Moncrieff and the congregation from Lord Jeffrey.(21)

In their memorial, the ministers and elders of the Associate congregation claimed that the Session was the only body which could legally attend to such congregational matters as permitting meetings, fixing seat rents, calling for a moderation or judging who had the right to vote at the election of a minister. They maintained that, though from 1797 when a new Church had been built a Committee had fixed the price of seat lets, this was merely a delegated privilege and not a right.(22) The other party held that, according to the original deed of the constitution, deacons had been granted a share in the civil administration of the congregation.(23)

The Session memorialists also held that only members in full communion with the Secession Church had the right to vote when a minister was being called(24), while the other side claimed that in the original deed donors and their successors and those who were ordinary hearers and of good character were also entitled to vote.(25) This party complained that when Mr Hay of Kinross had moderated at the call of Mr Whyte, he had confined voting rights to those in the congregation who were in Communion with the Church and thereby excluded donors and ordinary hearers.(26)

The crux of the matter seems to have been whether a congregation within the Secession Church could have its own terms of management determined by an original constitution if that constitution differed from the general practice and law of the Associate Synod. The Session raised the matter at Synod where the opinion was given that voting rights were confined to those in full Communion who had a right to both sealing ordinances.(27) On this judgement of Synod the Session rested its case.

By demanding the terms of the original constitution, or at least their understanding of it, the people's party had raised the important question of whether Queen Anne Street was to be Presbyterian or Independent in Church policy.

During the 1820's the rights of individual congregations had become a major source of dispute among Seceders. The Session of Queen Anne Street petitioned the Presbytery to clarify whether the congregation was under the ultimate spiritual jurisdiction of the Session or whether a Committee of Management could choose their Preses, call meetings, grant a moderation and determine who had the right to vote.(28) The popular party revealed that some of them were prepared for a greater measure of congregationalism.(29) Those who represented the popular party were mainly ordinary weavers who had been engaged in the nine months' strike over a lowering of the prices paid for their work. It would appear that the larger employers had banded together and, needing to produce more competitive cloth in face of keen competition from the west, refused to listen to the operatives' plea that the Table of Prices should be maintained at their present rates. Slightly larger units of production were required and the possibility of factory production along the lines of the spinning mills posed a threat to the traditional trade. This change favoured the merchants and some of the master weavers at the expense of the home or farm based operatives. The fight was taken into the Church where the same operatives felt aggrieved at the action of certain members of Session and sought to redress the balance. Backed by Keeler, the popular party was opposed to the Session, Presbytery, Synod and in fact anyone who dared to stand in its way. These radical weavers were not prepared to submit passively to the dictates of any higher authority who sought to tamper with what they considered to be their rights.

The weavers also felt that they should be allowed to vote at the election of a minister. They challenged the Session's claim that only those who were admitted to the sealing ordinances could vote, holding firmly that the original constitution gave voting rights to donors and ordinary hearers. This raised the issue of whether the Secession Church was to be considered as a business firm in which financial involvement gave a shareholder the right to participate in the decision making of the company. Did being a donor, or paying a seat rent, or attending worship confer certain rights? Moncrieff held that if a congregation were under the subordination of the Associate Synod then only those whom the Synod had defined as members could claim the right to vote, despite the wording of the original

constitution. Therefore unless a donor or ordinary hearer were also a member he could claim no special privilege, otherwise the law of patronage would be introduced, in so far as persons not of the congregation would be instrumental in naming a minister.(30) Jeffrey for his part was not so sure that the Associate Synod could simply ignore the original constitution's use of "donors" and "ordinary hearers" and indicated that these might have a "civil right" and that this would have to be tested in the Court of Session.(31)

Thus Queen Anne Street, one of the original Secession congregations, provides an interesting about turn in the history of patronage. In 1742 the congregation had left the Church of Scotland on the principle that no civil authority had the right to interfere with a congregation's choice of minister. Now, eighty years later, while the issue of patronage was still rending the National Church, some of the Queen Anne Street members were seriously considering appealing to the civil courts to interfere in the spiritual findings of the Associate Synod. It was to be some time before the difficult relationships between Managers and Session were resolved within either the United Secession or United Presbyterian Church.

One final hypothesis may be drawn from the Queen Anne Street case. The arguments might have had certain political undertones. Though Keeler was the champion of the ordinary weaver, he was also buyer and treasurer for the bakers(32), who were the least politically radical of the trades, and Robert Drysdale, who supported Keeler, was the land factor for Mr Downie, the sitting Member of Parliament.(33) Moreover at a time when the Tories were in office Provost Blackwood was a member of the Queen Anne Street Church. On the other side, Andrew Reid, brother of Henry, had been kept out of the Council because he had opposed a number of their actions.(34) These facts tend to suggest that there was a conservative element which opposed the party who were eventually to form St Margarets, which was to become the leading Voluntary congregation enjoying the support of the middle-class Whigs in the late 1820's and 1830's. While Queen Anne Street clearly supported Voluntary principles during the Controversy, in the 1820's it may have enjoyed the support of a more conservative element who were not sure how far they wanted to support the full



blooded Voluntaryism of the Whigs. For example, it was from Queen Anne Street that some individuals left in 1839 to join the "Auld Licht" congregation when it became a Quoad Sacra congregation within the Establishment. Therefore during the Queen Anne Street struggles it may be suggested that some of the more conservative element within the Session joined with the popular party to withstand the advance of the Whigs, Conservatives and Radicals combining to challenge the new Whig businessmen.

The departure of Mr White for America in 1825 did not solve Queen Anne Street's problems. That year's ballot between candidates William Nicol and James Forsyth ended in a vote of 285 to 283 and there were allegations of ballot-rigging.(35) The next attempt produced a rupture when the popular candidate, Mr John Ritchie, was chosen over Mr Robert Brown, the minority's candidate. The minority then chose to leave, taking Brown as their minister, while Ritchie preferred Potterrow in Edinburgh.(36) Finally in 1827 Queen Anne Street called the Rev Alexander Fisher. He declined the appointment but the Synod, after two days of debate, insisted that he accept. Twenty-six ministers dissented from the decision and this helped to bring the system of enforced settlements within the United Secession to an end.(37)

## CHAPTER SIX

The decline of the handloom industry 1836-1851: its social, political and ecclesiastical implications.

Between 1836 and 1851 Dunfermline experienced a social revolution. A series of economic crises brought about the collapse of the traditional community-based industry which for over a century had been made up of prosperous handloom weavers whose Dissenting congregations dominated the ecclesiastical scene. In the early 1830s the weavers were frustrated in one area only, that of politics. For the previous sixty years the Council had been run by a self-electing group of Tories and Independents. With the passing of the 1832 Reform Bill and the 1833 Burgh Reform legislation the weavers anticipated their complete triumph. Certainly the old Tories were voted off the Council in favour of men of more liberal political persuasion. Yet by 1851 the handloom industry had collapsed and the Dissenting congregations had all suffered major setbacks. This chapter will investigate why.

### The Decline 1836-1851

The decisive event in the history of the handloom industry was the disbanding of the Weavers' Incorporation in 1836. Though it had never functioned as a working-class trade union movement, its demise was none-the-less a marked psychological blow.(1) By 1851 two large power loom factories which straddled the town had knocked the heart out of the traditional industry. The whole community was affected for until 1836 there had been over fifty small merchants working in the town(2) controlling some five hundred weaving sheds and innumerable home-based weavers. By 1880, though a hundred times more linen was being produced, there were only ten or eleven factories and a similar number of factory owners.

The years between 1836 and 1851 witnessed the main struggle which was bitterly contested by the traditional workmen and, though handloom factories and handloom weavers continued after the latter date, the old industry had already been dealt a death blow.

Where opposition continued it was more a token gesture than defiant resistance.(3)

At first industrialisation benefited traditional crafts and the Dunfermline handloom weavers were no exception. Techniques were improved and innovations introduced by local craftsmen. Above all the coming of the Jacquard machine in the mid-20's revolutionised weaving by lowering production costs for the finest damask.(4) Urbanisation increased demand for manufactured goods so that the weavers were for some time the beneficiaries of the new age. Peter Chalmers notes that the number of looms had grown steadily from 1,800 in 1822 to a record high of 3,517 in 1836.(5) During that period the trade continued in its traditional form with the manufacturers, who were really small merchants, giving out commissions to master weavers or journeymen.(6) In 1838 only 374 looms were owned by warehousemen or manufacturers while 2,754 were owned by weavers who worked alone or alongside their men.(7) The hallmark of the trade was therefore the small ratio of employees to employers and the absence of any factory system.(8)

The first main period of industrial strife occurred around 1837 when high unemployment set in. The cause was a dispute over the Table of Prices which was set up in the early decades of the century and ultimately became a form of contract between manufacturers and weavers in which a minimum price was fixed for beaming different types of cloth.(9) This had given the weavers a collective bargaining power though it seldom made their wages artificially high. Its chief virtue from the weavers' point of view was that it prevented a merchant from acting unilaterally. This proved of great value in good trading years by preventing manufacturers from undercutting rivals, though in times of depression it made Dunfermline uncompetitive.

From 1837 to 1848 the pattern of disputes had a familiar ring. One or more of the manufacturers tried to reduce wages in order to make their cloth competitive especially against the cheap imported German products. The operatives would then seek an assurance from other manufacturers that they would uphold the Table, thus effectively "blacking" the offending firm. At first the manufacturers co-operated with the workforce in holding to the Table despite the attempts of one



or two firms to lower wages.(10) Gradually as firms went bankrupt more manufacturers saw the need for a new realism if the trade were to compete in world markets.

An important factor in bringing this about was the role the new factory manufacturers had in forcing the hand of those merchants who gave out commissions. These new factory owners did not have the same personal concern for their workforce.(11) In 1844 at a time of stagnation in the trade the firm of Robert Robertson offered work at reduced wages to help the unemployment situation. However the journeymen weavers argued with the "outwork" merchants that if Mr. Robertson's scheme were accepted the whole workforce would suffer a permanent reduction amounting to one quarter of their wages.(12) By now even the traditional merchants were less prepared to meet the weavers' demands. The violent reaction of the operatives in 1842 when looting and arson took place had soured the social climate and manufacturers of all sorts combined against the weavers' growing tendency to engage in industrial disputes.

As time went by it became clear that a power loom revolution was inevitable if Dunfermline were to recover its former trading strength. An important factor in creating the climate for change was a pamphlet by a "Rate-payer" who in 1848 set out arguments to show that the Table of Prices was a "social gangrene".(13) He advocated free trade and held that Dunfermline could no longer adopt a "head in the sand" attitude to progress. The pamphlet widened the debate which for almost a decade had involved principally manufacturers and operatives. Like the ratepayer many others were no longer prepared to allow slumps in the trade to push up the annual Poor Rate which was required to meet the increasing poverty in the community. The rate had already risen to 2/6 in the pound with the prospect of rising to 3/6 and it was argued that if the weavers continued to practice economic folly, the ratepayers would be "eaten out of house and hold by a horde of paupers and become themselves a community of mendicants."(14) It was recognised that the Table had served Dunfermline well in the past but competition from Northern Ireland and towns such as Barnsley required a basic change of attitude. The writer claimed that Dunfermline would become like Spitalfields where silk workers had

adhered to a Table of Prices and allowed Macclesfield to win the markets.(15)

Other unhappy results had followed the weavers' determination to keep to the Table, such as the selling up of a number of well-known firms and, more seriously, bankruptcies. Only a few family firms survived in what amounted to the almost total disintegration of the old handloom community.(16)

The ratepayer's arguments were those of an economist who knew that no businessman would be prepared to pump capital into the Dunfermline trade while weavers continued to seek wages higher than those in surrounding districts.(17) The weavers, however, contended that their wage demands were not excessive and no higher than in other places. The truth or otherwise of their claim is difficult to ascertain.(18) It would appear that even as late as 1843 the local weavers earned more than those in neighbouring districts but they were nevertheless earning less than their counterparts in the 1770's. Certainly their living standards had dropped dramatically and some were at starvation point. Above all it was the repeated cycles of trade depression which brought the community into severe economic crisis. The opinion of the ratepayer was echoed by the manufacturers, for in July 1848 a meeting of the Dunfermline linen firms "broke up resolving to have no Table of Prices in future."(19)

The weavers' reluctance to accept lower wages and their determination to strike was, however, not the only reason for the slow change to factory and then power loom production. Both required capital investment and in 1840 there were few industrial barons in Dunfermline. The old system had been highly competitive with as many as fifty small merchants competing for supremacy. They could be compared to a number of small, street corner shopkeepers, each vying with his neighbour in the days before the supermarket. Turnover was relatively small compared to the cotton barons of the West of Scotland.

Handloom production had in its early days required little capital, in sharp contrast to the outlay now required to set up a modern power loom factory. The traditional trade was based on a

system of credit which stretched from the manufacturer through to the customer and if the credit chain was broken at any point it had disastrous effects upon the whole of the industry. For example, a web often lost its value in the course of production because of trade recession so that its market value scarcely covered the purchase price of the yarn. Manufacturers had, however, to pay weavers their share while the completed webs hung in the weaving sheds. Unscrupulous manufacturers often worked the system to benefit themselves, giving out yarn at a high price and repurchasing the web when trade was depressed so that the journeyman had worked for a mere pittance.

Setting up a power loom factory was strewn with difficulties and few were prepared to take the risk, especially when the workforce was so opposed to its introduction. Three of the early manufacturers illustrate this point.

The first to open a factory were the Reid brothers in Pilmuir Street in 1849. They belonged to an old established firm who had survived the fiery trial of the 1840's even though their warehouse had been pillaged during the 1842 riots. Money came into their hands when a relative died and this enabled them to start on a sound financial footing without the risk of having to borrow too heavily from the bankers.(20) A major argument of the old weavers was that power loom production could never match the intricacy of individual hand work(21) but the Reids, with their financial backing, were able to install modern equipment and thereby reduce the risk of failure while producing work of passing quality.(22)

The firm of Erskine Beveridge illustrates the need for the entrepreneurial spirit and the breaking of traditional moulds. Having seen the rich pickings which could be made by operating a wholesale system, Beveridge made himself unpopular with the other manufacturers in the 1830's by dealing directly with the customer.(23) This was, of course, anathema to the traditional trade which had been based on the middle man or small merchant. By steadily building up his empire Beveridge, like the Reids, was able to move confidently into the power loom trade in 1851, having assured himself of the financial viability of the venture.



The firm of James and Thomas Alexander was among the largest of the handloom factories and, as such, met with the antagonism of the operatives.(24) However the two brothers showed a characteristic canniness in entering power loom production and it was not until 1865 that they built their prestigious Canmore works. Around this period a number of other factories were also being set up, while the original ones were being extended. By now the success of power loom production was secure and the industrial barons had taken over.

The process had been a painful one for all concerned, for it involved a change in the nature of Dunfermline society. In the early days the trade had been operated on a type of extended family system with its own distinctive community identity. Relationships within the industry were generally good and based on small family enterprises. Competition was keen but fair and journeymen throughout the trade tended to have uniform wages. All these factors had led to a sense of personal participation in the making and selling of goods and a degree of job satisfaction. The coming of the power loom and factory production bore these ancient landmarks away. Individuals formed part of an impersonal workforce while factory managers became white-collar workers who simply dictated terms and conditions of employment. Similarly the new age produced a different type of factory magnate, men whose lifestyle was foreign to the old Dunfermline trade. Few of the old vanguard survived the cut and thrust world of modern industrial society. The new men were not dependent on the chain of credit which had involved winning the support of the whole workforce if success were to be achieved. The modern industry was dictated by profit margins, which required keeping down wages and producing competitive goods. While in former days the weaver saw himself as a capital asset whose skills formed part of the industry, he was now merely a cog in the industrial machine. He had become a dispensable "workie" and not the possessor of a skill which he could trade.

### Social Implications

The decline of the traditional industry turned the weavers' social life upside down. For a century they had been the aristocrats

of labour, enjoying higher wages and a greater amount of leisure than most other workmen. Prior to 1837 they were perhaps the most comfortable and independent class of handloom workers anywhere in the country. Looms could be purchased without the need for too great a capital outlay and belonged almost exclusively to operatives. The ambition of every young man was to own a loom of his own and then, by careful saving, purchase further looms which he would let out to others, taking from them one quarter of the price of each completed web. However years of poor trade brought the need for factory production and since these new manufacturers kept the best class of work for themselves the traditional, home-based weavers suffered accordingly.

When the first major depression in trade set in around 1837, soup kitchens and public works were introduced to ease the weavers' lot. As yet the main factory developments had not started and the public spirited merchants of the traditional trade tried manfully to ease the lot of their employees. Nevertheless most weavers sought to retain their self-esteem rather than apply for the financial help which government was prepared to provide. They dug deep into their own kists in the hope that the depression would quickly pass.(25)

However, as recessions became more frequent, the weavers' plight worsened so that Neale could write of the situation in the early forties:

"...three main features of the trade, virtually perfect competition among the towns manufacturers, the fluctuating export market, with its cycles of recession and recovery, and the increasingly unfavourable labour market, all helped to create a decidedly unfavourable economic climate for the weavers..."(26)

These factors all affected the weavers' social status for he was no longer master of his situation and felt overwhelmed by a new and hostile environment. The change in his lot was evident in his life style. In 1842 weavers and miners were walking side by side in the General Strike organised by Thomas Morrison and the constitutional Chartists. Yet a decade earlier the miner had been the lowest of the low while the weaver prided himself on his independence, his books, his garden and his political involvement. By 1848 their wages were roughly

on a par though a minister of the time could still speak of the real difference between the cottages of the weaver and the hovels in which the miners lived.(27) However by then the difference was presumably attributable to the weavers' former lifestyle rather than their present circumstances.(28)

Further evidence of the decline in the weavers' standing is seen in a comparison of the Voters' Rolls for 1832 and 1852. By the latter date the number of weavers entitled to vote had dropped sharply while a growing number of shopkeepers had received the franchise.(29) A side effect of this was the unfortunate practice of giving out exchange slips instead of cash. The new factory manufacturers worked hand in glove with shopkeepers to fleece the hapless weaver who, if he complained, was liable to lose his job.(30) Shopkeepers pocketed large profits at the weavers' expense and became the arbiters of their fate as credit became universal and debts mounted daily. The number of pawnbrokers also increased dramatically.(31)

Manufacturers who owned factories also learned how to play the economic market. They gave out yarn when prices were high and took in the finished webs when trade was depressed. By storing the finished articles they were eventually able to pocket sizable profits. Another feature of the factories was the conditions under which men were expected to work. An old weaver, Daniel Thomson, recalled his early days in the Glen factory belonging to John Darling in which the concept of the brutalised weaver of Barbara Gaskin is clearly evident:(32)

"John Darling built a small handloom factory in the bottom of the Glen to the west of St Margaret's cave in or around 1840. I was one of his youngest hands there for a fortnight in 1848 just after the close of our family's Lothian harvest expedition. It was a wild place at the time. The hands were paid partly in money but mainly in 'Tammy lines', notes from the manufacturers warranting Alexander Norval grocer in Bruce Street to give the bearer the marked value in goods. One of these I secured at the end of the first week value five shillings and our needs were for the time supplied."

"There were forty eight looms in the place and when trade was good forty eight hands. Among them were some of the loosest and laziest and worst description of weavers. These on Saturdays played the most extravagant pranks, generally stopped all work and sometimes had a stand up fight in the



passageways."(33)

The result was that many weavers turned to drink in an effort to drown their sorrows. In 1844 Chalmers described the downward trend in the weaver's social standing:

"...There is a discontent among a certain proportion of the weaving class....accompanied by a keen interference in civil and ecclesiastical politics, and an anxious attempt to find remedies for their wants in removal of real and imagined public evils, rather than in the amendment of their own habits as individuals and members of society."(34)

Disenchantment swept through the whole weaving community, for in the space of a few brief years their world had been turned upside down. A decade earlier they had been in the forefront of political and social upheaval, welcoming the Reform Bill and looking forward eagerly to more democratic local government. They rejoiced at the prospect of the old fixed order being swept away and the introduction of a free trade economy. Yet they failed to see that their own community-based industry had become isolationist and in many ways as inflexible as all other establishments. While in general supporting a free trade policy, they failed to recognise that their own collective wage agreements would prove unworkable in the competitive world which was opening up. A comparison might be drawn between the present mining communities where work and social patterns are so integrated that the loss of a pit is paramount to the loss of a whole way of life. The weavers' reluctance to take factory work was a statement about their philosophy of life since their disenchantment arose from refusal to contemplate the possibility that the infra-structure of their community could ever be destroyed.

How far it can be argued that weavers believed that hard work would always be rewarded is debatable. Certainly almost every weaver in the early part of the century aspired to own his own loom. Trade was conducted in the belief that a hard working man could improve his lot. When this is placed alongside the weavers' deep commitment to the Secession Church, it may be suggested that the Protestant work ethic was the driving force behind their efforts. The collapse of trade and their own experience of poverty posed moral and

spiritual dilemmas, for it questioned their understanding of self and of religion.

The disillusionment which individual weavers experienced was reflected in the Secession Church itself. During the worst of the economic slump it was left to the Non-Intrusionists and then the Free Church to hold centre stage. The Secession and Relief congregations shook from the thunderbolts which had left them almost bankrupt and dispelled for the moment their self-confidence. The umbilical cord which had tied them to the weaving community was broken. The weavers, at least the ordinary factory workers, would, if they remained church-goers, seek a home in more working-class congregations.

### Political Implications

#### a)Background

In 1830 the Dunfermline Council was dominated by an Independent group which had ruled for many years by a system of nepotism and self-election. Their actions were challenged by two Royal Commissions who came to the conclusion that the Council was totally unrepresentative of the people they governed.(35) A change came with the appointment of a Whig Provost, John Kerr, in September 1831(36) and the passing of the 1832 Reform Bill swept away many of the old abuses. A new form of election was introduced with the Burgh Reform Act which meant that over a three year period all Councillors came up for re-election.(37)

A new list of Councillors in 1833 represented a wide spectrum of political opinion, social interest and ecclesiastical affiliation. As well as a number of manufacturers there were some of the new "capitalists" who had been to the fore in founding the Gas Company, a fair representation of the different trades and a couple of lawyers.(38) The annual one third turnover of Council members was to prove significant since it meant that the various conflicts in the town were reflected in the next round of elections. In 1842, because of resignations and deaths, ten new members were introduced. Such constant change brought a volatile atmosphere into the Council

proceedings.

After the 1834 elections it became clear that trouble was brewing when a number of Councillors resigned.(39) They represented the more conservative wing, a majority of them coming from the Established Church.(40) The reasons for their departure are not clear but it would appear that certain individuals had been appointed who were unacceptable to them, among whom was Thomas Morrison, the recognised leader of the Radical party and a member of the Political Union.(41) Morrison soon made his presence felt by introducing a number of Radical motions.(42) The balance of power had swung to the Whigs and Radicals at the expense of the old Tories.

A further move towards reform was made in 1836 with the setting up of a Reform Association whose aims included the abolition of the Corn Laws, shorter Parliaments, vote by ballot, extension of the franchise and freedom not to support the religion of another. The majority of its leaders were manufacturers, Dissenters and members of the Council. At this time the weaving trade was still strong and the approaching crisis was not yet evident. Middle-class and working-class Voluntaries were united in their opposition to the Establishment both politically and ecclesiastically.

By the time of the general strike of 1842, in sympathy with the aims of the Clackmannan Chartists, the Council was predominantly Whig-Radical. When Thomas Morrison was put in jail angry crowds gathered outside the building to demand his immediate release. Morrison, however, called on them to put down any weapons they were carrying and to picket peacefully. However not all the strikers were such strong advocates of the rule of law and before long looting and arson had taken place(43). At their September meeting claims were brought against the Council by shopkeepers and manufacturers for the failure of the Magistrates to control the riots.(44) Dragoons had eventually been brought in from Edinburgh to quell the disturbance.

The resignation of Provost James Morris in October 1842 was significant as it revealed middle-class reaction to the more Radical leanings of some of the Council. He had in fact dithered for a



year before resigning and was concerned at the speed with which the Radicals had moved to appoint a replacement for Baillie Walls in September. The Radicals, led by Morrison, realising that there would be a change in the composition of the Council in November, wanted their choice elected immediately.(45)

The 1842 elections brought in ten new Councillors, the majority of whom were reactionaries committed to containing reforming zeal and combatting violence. Three lawyers were appointed, making it clear that the electorate, if it wanted change, desired it to come through constitutional means rather than physical force. By 1843 one newspaper reckoned that the strength of the various parties was Tories 12, Whigs 2 and Radicals 8.(46) Earlier the Whigs and Radicals had been in the ascendancy but the riots had clearly weakened their cause.(47)

By 1851 the Council was decidedly Liberal and reflected the aspirations of the new middle class. A local press article sums up the views of the two main Parliamentary candidates. Sir James Anderson was a supporter of universal suffrage, an extreme Voluntary, a supporter of secular education and an advocate of Bright and Cobden's economic theory. Mr John Miller, on the other hand, advocated an intelligent extension of the franchise, was a member of the Established Church and wanted to retain the religious element in a truly national system of education. The *Dunfermline Journal* commented that the main difference between the two was that one was restrained by something like constitutional principles while the other was ready to drift in any direction and to any extremity.(48) Sir James won handsomely and from then on Dunfermline was a Liberal stronghold until the emergence of the Labour Party in the 20th century.

Having rid itself of the old Tory nepotism which had existed before the Reform Bill, the Council expressed the liberal aspirations of a manufacturing community. The period in which the Tory reactionaries held office corresponded to the years of the most active physical force Chartism and they were elected to bring the town back under the rule of law. Once the threat passed the Council gradually reflected the thinking of middle-class liberals.

## b) Burgh Elder

The composition of the Council from 1834 onwards determined its ecclesiastical policy. The elections had strengthened the party who supported the Voluntaries and this in turn affected the choice of an elder to represent the Burgh at the General Assembly. In 1835 an attempt was made to delay the decision for three months, which would have effectively prevented a choice being made for that year.(49) This was challenged, however, since no reason had been given for not making an appointment and it was argued that the Council was duty bound to support the National Church.(50) Seven Councillors thereafter met in April and chose an elder despite the earlier decision of the whole group.(51) Those who belonged to Dissenting congregations were clearly in the majority and were against the appointment for two reasons. The first was their antagonism to the National Church and the second their concern that the Non-Intrusionists would become their rivals for middle-class support in ecclesiastical matters.(52)

By 1836 the Council was even more hostile to the National Church and decided not to send an elder to the Assembly, arguing that it was not mandatory to do so and that, as Town Councils represented only the civic interests of a community, to send an elder would give a false supremacy to the National Church and offend many of their constituents.(53) The matter of a Burgh elder was not raised again until 1844.(54) Then, though the Council was still dominated by Dissenters of all shades, there was a successful move to send an elder to the Assembly despite opposition from James Inglis who wanted the 1836 policy continued.(55) Had not the Disruption strengthened Dissent, he argued, so that only one member was now a member of the National Church?(56) He accused the Establishment of producing in its own membership sloth, hypocrisy and pride and in other Churches degradation, discontent and contempt.(57) He believed a National Church to be opposed to the best interests of the working class.(58)

In 1845 there was a similar division of opinion but eventually an elder was chosen. The following year the inconsistency of the Council was challenged and it was asked: "If the Kirk is right, why have you left it, if wrong why do you support it?"(59) It may be

asked why the Council acted as it did after the Disruption when only one member belonged to the National Church and it would have seemed logical to oppose anything which promoted State religion. Yet in 1844, after a period of eight years in which the Council had consistently refused to send an elder to the Assembly, it changed its mind and made representation. A number of reasons can be put forward for this strange reversal. First, the Councils of 1836 and 1844 were different in their political composition. In 1836 the majority in power were Whig-Radicals who were pressing for a whole range of reforms. Dissent had the upper hand in ecclesiastical matters, though Mr Chalmers of the Abbey was waging war on behalf of a revitalised Establishment.(60) In deciding not to send an elder the general mood of the Council and perhaps of the greater part of the community was reflected.

However by 1844 many changes had taken place, including the breakdown of law and order with the military being brought in to quell uprisings among the working class. In the ecclesiastical realm the Disruption had further depleted the National Church. The voters, concerned about the actions of physical force Chartists, had brought in a number of reactionary Councillors to maintain the rule of law and to introduce only reforms which had the firm backing of the middle class.

Typical of such were the members of the Council who belonged to the Free Church, especially those who were members of the Free Abbey.(61) They saw it as their duty to act as a "shadow establishment", holding back working-class attempts to disrupt society. By sending an elder to the Assembly they asserted their authority over the Radicals and revolutionaries in both town and Council. In doing this they acted as the upholders of middle-class virtues and of the supremacy of constitutional change over revolution. They were Thomas Chalmers' "unwilling Voluntaries" who had left the National Establishment under protest. By sending an elder to the Assembly they showed their strength to the United Secessionists who were their main rivals in the ecclesiastical realm. Therefore in the years immediately after the Disruption the Free Churchmen, who were mainly the old Non-Intrusionists, remained closer to the Establishment than to the United Secession, their old Voluntary rivals and upholders of traditional Dissent. The battle in the Council was a middle-class struggle between



the reactionary Free Church and a United Secession Church still reeling from the heavy losses it had sustained from the decline in the handloom industry. Later, as the United Presbyterian Church, it would compete with the Free Church for the new middle class who emerged as a result of the power loom revolution and the growth of ancillary industries.

Many leading members of the Free Abbey were reactionaries who a decade before had been the Whig supporters of either the Secession congregations or the Non-Intrusionists within the Establishment. Many of them had seen the Chartist threat as something which required to be brushed aside and this forced them back to the right politically. Their main middle-class political opponents were those of the United Secession Church and those who adhered to smaller congregations. These were less reactionary than the Free Church and tried to contain Radicalism so as not to lose traditional support. However by 1851 the social and economic unrest had greatly subsided and more middle-class liberal policies were being pursued. The clash was now between a rejuvenated United Presbyterian group and the Free Church who were less politically reactionary than a few years previously. These two bodies now contested the middle ground in Dunfermline's affairs yet it is not insignificant that the Council did not choose its first Free Church Provost until 1877.(62)

As a postscript to this section it is interesting to note that the matter of the Burgh elder lay forgotten for nearly forty years until Councillor Nicol reintroduced it in 1878. At that time only four of the twenty-two Councillors belonged to the National Church.(63) What had begun in Gillespie's congregation had remained the status quo for over one hundred and thirty years, if the Chapel congregation is reckoned among the sectaries.(64) The Abbey had therefore little say in the political life of Dunfermline, while the Chapel party, United Presbyterians and Free Church had almost complete control.

#### c) Church and State debate.

A second matter which created heated political debate was the attempt in 1839 by the Establishment to build a church and school

in the north west corner of the town. The same battle lines were drawn as in the Burgh elder debate, the Non-Intrusionists and Voluntaries taking different corners. The Radical Thomas Morrison, though he wanted an extension of educational facilities wherever possible, made it clear that he was against grants which brought benefits to one section of the community to the exclusion of another.(65) The Council, though unsympathetic to any form of endowment, were disturbed by the vehemence of the more aggressive Chartists. Such militancy was due in part to the fact that they saw education as a major plank of their political platform even though no Chartist school had been set up in Dunfermline. The Church, by claiming to be in the forefront in providing education for the working class, was silencing Reform propoganda.(66)

d) Voting Patterns.

A comparison of the Voting Rolls of 1832 and 1852 can be used as a guide to the changes within the town, indicating the political affiliations of the voters during the period under review. It will be remembered that Sir James Anderson supported a more radical liberalism than his opponent. The table shows main trade groups only:

<u>Trade</u>	<u>1832</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>DIVISION OF VOTE IN 1852</u>		
			<u>Sir John Anderson</u>	<u>Mr Miller</u>	<u>Did not vote</u>
Weavers	133	92	82	5	5
Manufacturers	76	43	27	12	4
Grocers	17	33	25	7	1
Wrights	15	9	6	3	0
Shoemakers	10	7	4	2	1
Masons	10	4	3	0	1
Carters	4	7	6	0	1
Fleshers	3	6	1	4	1
Drapers		7	4	3	0
Tailors		9	4	2	3
Ministers	1	6	2	2	2
Brokers		5	1	1	3
Dyers		3	3	0	0

From the table it may be noted that the number of weavers and manufacturers dropped significantly between the two dates, from 210 to 140.(67) In the thirties the trade had enjoyed a broad economic prosperity and this is reflected in the number of weavers who had the

£10 rental which gave them the vote. The coming of the power loom meant that many of the weavers lost their property and the attendant right to vote, which meant a loss of status.

### Ecclesiastical Implications

The various changes which took place in the ecclesiastical life of Dunfermline can be studied against the broad backcloth of the decline of the handloom industry with its political and social implications. As has been indicated, the community base from the middle of the 18th century was made up of the handloom weavers backed by the Dissenting Church. In this Dunfermline differed from most parts of the country where the National Establishment of Church and State reflected the old order of privilege and power of the landed class.

A change took place with the passing of the Chapel Act in 1834, which led to a resurgence of interest in the National Church. For the first time since Erskine's secession, the Abbey took the lead and combined with its Chapel partner in common purpose against the Voluntaries. The Secession and Relief congregations likewise joined ranks to meet the challenge of the Non-Intrusionists. Dunfermline churches laid aside their natural spirit of congregationalism and joined forces in the Voluntary and Establishment camps.

The Voluntaries for their part tried to repel the advances of the Establishment in a town which was a veritable stronghold of Dissent. When a meeting was arranged in 1834 to promote the Chapel cause and oppose patronage it was followed shortly afterwards by a gathering of Dissenters to denounce the principles of Establishment.(68) These meetings were the forerunners of deeper conflict, the real opening shots being fired when friends of Dunfermline Abbey decided to petition Parliament for further endowment of the National Church.(69) Following a private meeting in March 1835, a petition was sent round the town to gather signatures in support of their proposals.(70) This angered the Voluntaries who contended that every trick had been used to procure signatures even though only a thousand were collected.(71) At a public meeting held



subsequently by the Voluntaries, a counter motion was raised which was signed by 3,000 men aged 14 and upwards.(72) These figures correspond to the three to one advantage which the Voluntary Churches held over the Establishment at the time.

The Rev Peter Chalmers of the Abbey had attended the Voluntary meeting and later issued a pamphlet to which the Rev John Law of St Margarets United Secession Church replied.(73) The Abbey Minister contended that the Establishment meeting had been held in private in order to avoid unseemly behaviour such as had occurred at earlier gatherings. He believed that these disturbances had been caused by an unruly element who were prepared to make trouble wherever they could and not by those who belonged to Dissenting or Established Churches. Chalmers had perhaps foreseen that a few years later it would be militant Chartists and not the leaders of the Secession who would lead the opposition to the National Church.

In his pamphlet he rejected the Dissenters' claim that the Church extension movement was politically motivated and an exclusively Tory measure. He also repudiated Law's claim that the setting up of new churches arose from a hope that they would be filled with clergymen who would preach and pray for Toryism.(74) He claimed that all shades of the political spectrum were represented on the Assembly's Committees on Endowments and Church Accommodation but this did not satisfy Law, who however retracted some of his more radical statements, recognising that Church as well as State politics were involved.(75) His wrath against Chalmers and Toryism, however, remained unabated:

"But does he (Chalmers) know what Toryism means? Is he not aware it is in the principles of Toryism that the people should not be consulted in the affairs of Government; that the few should live on the many, with a special view to the advantage of certain privileged classes? And was not the proposal to tax the whole country, for the support of the clergymen of one sect, in exact accordance with this principle?"(76)

Law held that State aid was detrimental to the Church since it was not in the people's best spiritual interests to have ministers who were independent of their flocks. He believed that such a relationship bred indolence and carelessness.(77) However his main

ire was reserved for an attack on the whole Church Extension programme which he claimed had been devised to destroy the Dissenters, while another Secession minister, Mr Young of Queen Anne Street United Secession Church, claimed that it was a trick to provide accommodation for the rich while claiming to be a measure to help the poor.(78) Chalmers defended the movement which was taking place as one whose aim was to destroy the evil of patronage and to make the Church's witness more efficient through a broad programme of extension.(79) He quoted his namesake Thomas Chalmers as saying that their sole aim was the diffusion of sound principles and religious habits among the people.(80)

Law's approach makes sense when the political situation in Dunfermline in the mid-30's is recalled. He was conscious that, in a town of radical weavers whose traditional political leanings were Whig, the Church extension movement had been well received. Moreover, a growing number of prominent citizens had associated themselves with the Abbey in response to the faithful ministry of Peter Chalmers. The Abbey had therefore regained its respect as a religious Establishment, reversing the trends of the previous century when it had struggled to survive. The Chapel congregation also had a number of members from new business enterprises such as the Gas Company.(81) Moreover, some wealthy benefactors had found a niche within the Establishment.(82)

The National Church was experiencing an upward turn in its affairs which may have arisen from a general fear that the Reform Bill of 1832 would mark the beginning of a more revolutionary political situation. In 1831 a Political Union had been set up, whose aim was to stir up the masses into greater activism. In 1836 a Reform Association, whose main support came from members of the Secession Church, was formed. Its aims were the abolition of the Corn Laws, shorter Parliaments, vote by ballot, the extension of the franchise and that no-one ought to be compelled to support the religion of another.

Faced with the challenge of the Non-Intrusionists, Law used political arguments to prevent his own supporters from being won over to their cause. He slammed the Church Extension movement as a Tory measure and as such totally inappropriate to a Whig stronghold like

Dunfermline. By associating the Non-Intrusionist movement with Toryism he hoped to discredit it among Dunfermline's weaving community, especially as the Tory corruption during the early decades of the century had not yet been forgotten. Law also wanted to identify the Voluntary Churches with the spirit of Reform and was concerned that the Non-Intrusion party in the Establishment should not be seen in the same way. Thus he painted the Tories as those who did not consult the people and were only interested in the richer classes.

Law's arguments typify the aggressive Voluntaryism which Brown has noted in his book on Thomas Chalmers.(83) Encouraged by the triumphs of the liberal political reforms of the late 1820's and 1830's, this movement was an extension of those principles into the world of religion. It attempted to revitalise the Church through a Free Trade dynamism(84), but its success was threatened by the challenge of an Establishment rekindled by a new evangelical spirit and pressing for Parliamentary grants to extend its cause. This evangelical awakening could not be ignored even in a stronghold like Dunfermline where the Establishment was making significant advance. The new movement was a direct threat to middle-class Voluntaryism.

The main cause of conflict after these early skirmishes was the proposal in 1839 to build an Extension Church in the north-west corner of the town. It was the intention of the Establishment to fund the new congregation by Government endowment and to set up a school along similar lines, which angered the Voluntaries, Town Council and Chartists. Thomas Chalmers addressed a Presbytery meeting at which the scheme was proposed. By now the main opposition to the Establishment was from the Chartists led by their leader Thomas Morrison, a leading member of the Town Council. At the time the *Fifeshire Journal* reported a rumour that Morrison had received a sum of money from the Voluntary Church leaders for his efforts to discredit the Establishment.(85) Whether or not the claim was true, he certainly proved a thorn in the side of the Establishment both politically and ecclesiastically.

A meeting planned by the National Church party in January 1839 had to be abandoned when protestors broke down the doors of St



Andrews Chapel and hurled a fifteen pound missile inside.(86) Since the Sheriff was unable to disperse the mob and restore peace the main speakers, who had come from Glasgow and Dundee, had to return home. The meeting took place at a later date but only after protection was promised and 120 constables sworn in.(87) Non-transferable tickets were issued to prevent the unruly gaining admission(88) and when the meeting was eventually held, although a noisy crowd gathered outside, there was relative calm within. At one point, however, the Sheriff urged the speakers to be brief as a magistrate had been wounded outside.(89) Robert Buchanan, one of the platform speakers, confessed that in all his travels he had never experienced such ferocious opposition to the Church Extension Scheme.(90) The conservative *Fifeshire Journal* informed its readers that Dunfermline had once more disgraced itself in the eyes of Scotland and put the blame on the Voluntaries and Radicals.(91)

The proposals made at the meeting indicated why the Voluntaries were opposed to the new evangelicals. George Lewis from Dundee had introduced a scheme to provide education for the people of Scotland along the lines set out at the Reformation.(92) Such a school in Dunfermline, provided by Government funds, was a carrot which Lewis hoped the unemployed weavers would grasp. He recalled a meeting in Glasgow where a weaver had cried out at the close of the evening:

"Be sure ye dinna forget the schules, for if we have the schules the kirk will fill a' the faster."(93)

Though speaking in jocular tones, Lewis was well aware that education had become a real vote winner. The weavers in their distress still sought to provide a modicum of education for their families, in the hope that some of them would secure the few jobs which were available outside the traditional trade.

With the decline of the handloom industry the Voluntary cause suffered two major setbacks. The first, as has been noted above, came from a renewed and enthusiastic Non-Intrusion party, many of whom were not wholly dependent on the vagaries of the traditional industry. The second was the financial crisis which hit their

congregations in the late 1830's. This affected the life of their churches, which for a century had been dependent on weavers' patronage. For the first time financial worries became a major factor in the life of Dissent.

For over a century their congregations had sufficient funds to meet the needs of the poor on their rolls. St Margaret's United Secession congregation had seats set apart which were seldom used.(94) In 1839, however, the St Margarets Session had to provide what help they could for their own poor and as funds were exhausted they used what remained in the Poor Fund to pay the seat rents of some of the needy. Their method provided a skilful means of balancing the books of their General Fund. Ostensibly they were helping the poor by paying for their church seating but at the same time transferring the money helped the needy General Account. It might, however, be suggested that the hungry weavers would have preferred bread to a church pew.

The records of Queen Anne Street United Secession contain constant references to the poor. The minister himself provided money towards their needs in 1836(95), while in 1837 money from the rent of property was used for the same purpose.(96)

The collection on the first Sunday of the year in 1840 was given to relieve the plight of the poor.(97) Members' families received 5/- when a death occurred and a committee was set up to see if this could be raised to £1.(98) It is therefore not surprising that in 1839 the Dunfermline Burgh finally yielded to the need for a legal assessment or that members of Dissenting congregations were in the forefront of the movement to have it introduced.

The General Funds were also badly affected, especially where buildings were not paid for. *St Margaret's United Secession Managers' Minutes* reveal a constant preoccupation with debt.(99) Leaflets explaining why ordinary offerings required to be increased were sent out in 1846 and members were warned that, if they did not increase their offerings or take out seat rents, disciplinary action would have to be taken.(100) Such a state of affairs contrasted with 1831 when

the numbers attending were so great that the doorkeepers were instructed to make sure that only seat holders occupied pews. Those who offended by regularly taking seats belonging to others were to be turned out.(101) Long before 1846 the trend had been reversed and great efforts were being made to rent out seats.

The situation in Queen Anne Street was similar. In 1841 the Preses indicated that funds were low and instigated a plan to liquidate £300 of debt.(102) In 1844 it was reported that the Treasurer had only £11 in hand and the Session's account stood at a mere 12/8.(103) A letter was sent to ask members to increase their offerings.(104)

The Relief congregation suffered similar hardship. The Sunday afternoon offerings had been specially designated for fabric but this had to be changed in 1838 so that the General Fund could make ends meet.(105) By 1839 the number of seats taken had fallen drastically and the Treasurer was out of pocket.(106) Every six months debts were mentioned while money designated for one purpose was often used for another.(107)

The Dissenting Church, crippled by lack of finance, therefore faced the encroachments of a revitalised Establishment. The roles had been reversed from the beginning of the century when the Burgher congregation had erected a new building at a time when the Establishment had scarcely a penny to pay its poor and it was the down turn in the weaving trade which caused this reversal of fortune.

It had been the hope of Thomas Chalmers that the National Church would press forward aggressively in its mission despite the opposition of the middle-class Voluntary-Whig alliance. He wanted it to be the working man's Church which would join battle with the laissez-faire doctrine of the New Elite in the name of the Commonwealth ideal(108). If this were to be the task of the National Church throughout the country it faced a somewhat easier assignment in Dunfermline. The collapse of the weaving trade had brought many comparatively wealthy weavers into sudden poverty and for them the new evangelical Establishment with its cheaper seat rents had an undoubted



appeal. Its success is clearly seen in the North Church extension congregation which opened in 1840 and from the outset attracted good numbers, many of them drawn from Dissenting congregations.

A major factor was seat rents, as the Dissenting congregations depended on such income to pay their ministers. Two congregations in particular had stipends well above the average. Queen Anne Street paid their minister £200 while St Margarets gave £175. To raise such stipends the congregation had quite expensive seating. In their reports to the Church Commission in 1839 Queen Anne Street United Secession Church stated that their seat rents ranged from 6/3 to 4/-, St Margarets United Secession's from 8/- to 4/- and the Relief's from 7/- to 5/-. The Abbey seats ranged from 3/- to 1/-. (109) Peter Chalmers of the Abbey stated that the numbers at the Abbey had risen by between 300 and 400 over the previous five years and that they mainly belonged to the working class. According to him many of them had given their reason for coming to the Abbey as inability to pay the rents demanded by the Dissenting Churches (110). When the North Church opened in 1840, though it did have a number of more expensive sittings, the majority of seats fell in the lower price brackets (111).

40	Free sittings
104	2/-
155	3/-
242	4/-
158	5/-
78	7/-
22	8/-

Thus 550 seats at or below 4/- were as cheap as anything in the Dissenting Churches.

The Dissenters ran into another problem which they never wholly solved. How were they to react to weavers in their ranks who took a militant approach to unemployment and to law and order? Such concern was reflected in the *Minutes of Queen Anne Street Church*. In 1839 the Session discussed whether the building should be used for meetings which were not specifically religious (112) and informed the Trustees that many members were deeply upset that the Church was being used for political meetings. (113) As these meetings were often

attended by extremists who put forward radical and sometimes revolutionary solutions to the town's problems, the Session was afraid that the Church might be tarnished by such political associations. Indeed some leading laymen were so disturbed that they left Queen Anne Street and later found their way into the Free Church.(114)

The Dissenting Churches were thus faced with a dilemma. If they did not support Chartism they were in danger of losing their traditional support while if they did they were accused by their more spiritual members of becoming too involved in the political machine.

The ball was now in the Establishment's court as the Voluntaries suffered financial embarrassment, moral pressures and the loss of much of their traditional support. However the Establishment failed to respond positively to the demands of the Non-Intrusionists, thus hastening the emergence of the Free Church.

Searching for a new identity.

It is difficult to ascertain the mood of Dunfermline in the early 1840's as it searched for a new identity after a century of relative prosperity. It was like a ship suddenly lashed by fierce waves after a long journey of comparative calm. The sailors had not been sufficiently alert to the rising storm and no one seemed sure where to turn. This was true politically, socially and ecclesiastically. The old order was suddenly fragmented and no part was left unaffected. In the political realm the Whigs lost their traditional role as the main opposition to the Tories. Radical and reform groups actively canvassed support. The working class was disillusioned with the middle-class reformers while those who belonged to the Chartists were themselves divided between constitutional and physical force approaches. The Tories, who had seemed doomed to oblivion during the early 30's, re-emerged as the upholders of law and order, especially when riots and arson became commonplace. Out of the political fragmentation a new party of laissez-faire middle-class liberals emerged in the early 50's.

In the social realm ordinary weavers and master weavers

alike suffered the curse of periods of stagnation in trade with the resulting unemployment. Some manufacturers survived the period of uncertainty but others suffered bankruptcy. A number decided that enough was enough, cut their losses and moved out of the trade, taking what capital they had amassed with them.(115) Others, recognising the impending crisis, used their skills as entrepreneurs to create new jobs. Weavers on the whole suffered, grocers and drapers prospered, while those who crossed from one trade to another required time to establish new businesses. Later, with the coming of the power loom, new jobs were created in the ancillary industries. Initially, however, there was the need to rationalise, regroup and stand firm until the worst of the depression passed.

The same fragmentation was true within the Church. Individuals changed allegiance midstream when they saw how things were going, many traditional weavers who had known relative prosperity and had been blessed with a modicum of education changing their loyalties to whatever congregation held out most hope for them. This partially explains the great number of congregations which were set up and the constant movement of people from one congregation to another.

The period was one of instability when every institution came under close scrutiny. The period of Reform questioned the old order, forcing individuals and institutions to examine their former rules. Everywhere change was the order of the day. An Episcopal Chapel set up in 1842 was supported by many of the most respectable families who were angry at the decisions arrived at by the Non-Intrusionists.(116) The breakdown in law and order and the weavers' narrow views on changes within the industry helped the Episcopal cause. As no congregation in Dunfermline was strongly in favour of the mainstream Moderatism of the National Church, it was left to the "Episcopals" to create a Chapel which supported the Establishment principle. Its significance went far beyond the numbers who attended.(117)

An Independent congregation was set up at about the same time. Its main patron, Erskine Beveridge, had abandoned the Establishment because he felt that its ministers were becoming too



politically involved with their members.(118) He believed that individuals should be able to pursue their daily business without political harassment from Church leaders. Opposed to any type of religious Establishment, he set up an Independent, working-class congregation supported by the Voluntary principle but not tarred with the brush of Establishment. He emerged as the town's leading "liberal" and was supported in the mid 40's by those who wanted sensible reform. His reasoned approach to industrial change pointed the way by which the Secession Churches were to find their destiny after the trauma caused by the decline in the old handloom industry. Since he was not a member of the Secession Church when the handloom collapse took place, he was free to act independently without the need to appease disillusioned weavers. His secure financial base made him debtor to no man, unlike the leadership of the Dissenting congregations who were caught in a clash of loyalties between their old traditional support and the new entrepreneurs who alone could provide sufficient financial backing for any future success. It was not until the 1850's that the Dissenting Church could put on middle-class airs and appeal for a new, broader-based support than it had previously known.

When the North Parish extension charge is added to the Episcopal and Independent congregations, the wide spectrum of ecclesiastical and political opinion in the town prior to the Disruption is evident. They each reflected a different approach to the working class and the threat of militant Chartism. The Church Extension congregation tried to woo the working class by providing cheap seats and countered Chartist educational policies by setting up a school. The Independent Chapel provided work through Beveridge's handloom factories and was a congregation in which democratic principles and liberal attitudes were encouraged. It had neither the problem of the Secessionists of seeking to hold together the old weaving community nor the patronage problem of the Establishment. The Episcopal Church distanced itself from any connection with the forces of reaction which were trying to overthrow the new order. It was set up to counterbalance the swing in the National Church in Dunfermline towards a policy of Non-Intrusion. Those who supported it felt that the new movements in the National Church were in danger of defying the law of the land and encouraging a general spirit of anarchy.

How the ministers of the Establishment decided at the Disruption will be dealt with in the next chapter. However the reaction of the Rev John Brown, the Abbey minister who remained true to the National Church, throws light on the complexity of the issues as they evolved in Dunfermline. Though he was in no way sympathetic to the handloom weavers he had much in common with them. Both stood for the status quo; Brown for the National Church, the weaving operatives for the traditional system which they had always known. Both had reason to fear the business entrepreneurs of the new industrial age. For Brown they represented those who were prepared to abandon the National Zion; for the handloom weavers they epitomised those who were prepared to break the long established method of negotiation through the Table of Prices.

Both Brown and the handloom weavers wanted to retain their established orders and in their attitudes and writings they often used very similar arguments. In attacking the Non-Intrusionists for the way in which they sat lightly to the law of the land, Brown said:

"Can you expect that the legislature will deliberately sacrifice its authority at the shrine of your theories (however intrinsically good and true), and surrender what you ask, because you talk of resisting even to resignation? Such weakness would change the ruled into rulers. It would unlock the Pandora's box in the State which you have broken in the Church, and with the additional evil of forcing the cave of Aeolus, and scattering, with the might of a hundred whirlwinds, the contagion of disorders, sedition and anarchy."(119)

The handloom weavers had similar fears. What would happen if they yielded in the matter of the negotiation rights which the Table of Prices had established? Would it open a Pandora's box within the weaving industry? Thus they tried to outlaw the renegades by "blackening" refractory firms just as Brown attempted to "black" the Quoad Sacra ministers by excluding them from attending the General Assembly. In their respective spheres Brown and the handloom weavers were the defenders of conservatism and a policy of no change.

For the handloom weaver the Table was a last link with a world that was crumbling around him, the world of the working-class

aristocrat who could choose his hours of working and enjoy periods of leisure. In the future he would become the employee of the new industrial barons.

Though Brown and the handloom weavers at first appear strange bedfellows, they faced a common enemy in the new middle-class business entrepreneurs who would change the face of Victorian Britain. If Brown were alert to the danger which the Non-Intrusionists heralded for the Establishment and the old order, these same men also threatened the world of the handloom weaver. They presented a challenge to patronage on the one hand and to traditional weaving methods on the other.

It is difficult to find an appropriate metaphor to describe Dunfermline in the early 1840's. Perhaps the best is that of a nervous Stock Exchange in which the market is constantly fluctuating. One bad result can lead to a plunge in the market and cause great uncertainty. During the 1840's and 50's the town suffered from regular liquidations, bankruptcies, the formation of new companies and mergers. Whereas in modern society such business fluctuations have little effect on the Church, in early Victorian Britain industrial change had immense repercussions on the ecclesiastical scene as Church membership was an integral part of life. Social, political and ecclesiastical life were so deeply intertwined that changes in one automatically affected the others.

The flotation of the Free Church on the market had deep repercussions for the Establishment and for the older Dissenting congregations. It attracted businessmen from older bodies into its pale and thereby devalued the others, but it was never as simple as that in Dunfermline. The fragmentation of business life as different groups either held to the old or sought to introduce new methods of production produced a most uncertain climate. Some individuals who tried to set up new enterprises came to grief as their businesses went into liquidation, while others were content to wait until the financial climate was more certain before introducing the power loom. It was also a time of political unrest as the older constitutional approach to the town's affairs was challenged by more radical and aggressive



measures. Again individuals were unsure of which way to turn, though the highly volatile situation in 1842 which led to riots and civil disturbance swung the political balance more to the right. Gradually the pendulum came back to a liberalism which was more characteristic of the town's politics.

These social and political changes were reflected in the unease within the Church as new congregations sprang up like mushrooms, each with its own particular ecclesiastical style. At one extreme was the Episcopal Chapel with its High Church liturgy and respect for the forces of law and order. At the other were the small Swedenborgian groups, some Rowites, a few Unitarians and a Scotch Baptist Church run by a plurality of lay pastors. In the centre were the main denominations but even within them there was great divergence of opinion and social standing. Moreover there was constant movement from one congregation to another as the social and political scene changed. Men played the market, hoping to find themselves in a successful church which reflected their own personal convictions on the nature of life in general. As social and political events changed almost from year to year, so did their ecclesiastical allegiance.

In the 1840's it was the Non-Intrusionists and the Free Church which offered most for the avant garde while in the 1850's the Establishment was best fitted to meet the needs of a new working class. As markets picked up and economic conditions improved a new middle class or higher wage earning group emerged. It was now the United Presbyterians who provided them with the best means of expressing their ecclesiastical activism. Likewise the Free Church became more fashionable, less conservative and more forward looking. The Establishment dragged its feet but this did not prove wholly unacceptable to the working class who saw in each new change a worsening of their position. These former weavers had once been the cream of Dunfermline society, dominating the town's economic affairs. Now they were mere cogs in the new industrial machine.

Conclusion.

For fifteen years, between 1836 and 1851, the traditional

handloom weavers of Dunfermline offered stout resistance to change within their industry. The challenge came from two sources: the small handloom factory and latterly the power loom.

Parallels can be drawn between industrial and Church life, between the golden calf of patronage and the golden calf of the Table of Prices. It may be argued that the latter was more important than the former and that the Ten Year Conflict was merely one aspect of the town's fifteen year resistance to the change from handloom to power loom. The Free Church was brought into being without too much difficulty as Dunfermline had never been a stronghold of the National Church, but the overthrow of the handloom industry was accomplished only after a prolonged struggle because the traditionally based industry was deep-rooted and embraced the Dissenting Church. The entrepreneurs who helped to set up the Free Church had an easier task in toppling the National Church than in breaking the home-based handloom industry.

All established orders were subject to reform in the first half of the 19th century and the handloom industry was no exception. The weavers, who during the 20's and 30's had made substantial contributions to the cause of reform, had not fully realised that their own traditionally based industry would itself come under fire. Though they opposed patronage as an attempt to suppress the natural rights of the individual, they resented any challenge to their own monopoly of the weaving trade. They argued for universal suffrage, greater political democracy and the repeal of the Corn Laws yet resisted with all their collective strength the introduction of free trade within their own industry.

Wall, in his book on Andrew Carnegie, argued that skilled artisans such as the handloom weavers wanted no sweeping economic revolution(120). The fairly prosperous weavers of 1836 welcomed political change which would lead to greater democracy but did not want their economic world disturbed. Their hopes centred on the conservation of the old order and their support for Chartism was for what it would protect rather than for what it might destroy. In this they displayed a certain naivete, failing to see that the economic

problems of 1837 would not blow over as they had done in the past, but rather heralded industrial revolution on a national scale which could not be resisted locally.

The political and ecclesiastical situation may be considered against a statement made by Lord Cockburn at the time of the passing of the Reform Bill. In his journal he described the mood of the country:

"What a fortnight the last has been! ...But for the restraint of the Whigs, who everywhere put themselves at the head of the people, revolution would unquestionably have broken out."(121)

In 1832 the Whigs in Dunfermline formed the majority group in the Town Council but their association with the handloom industry was to make them the butt of attack by the Radicals when it became clear that changes in the weaving trade were inevitable. The radicalism of the Chartists in Dunfermline between 1842 and 1845 forced the middle class into more reactionary behaviour in order to become the guardians of law and order. This may explain why Town Council members who belonged to the Free Church, despite abandoning the National Church in 1843, supported the sending of an elder to the General Assembly in 1844. They acted as a "shadow establishment" who sought to defend the town from the worst excesses of radical Chartism.

The old Whigs who had been associated with the Dissenting Church found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. Some moved out into the Free Church but many of the middle class remained within the United Secession Church. Before venturing into more progressive aspects of the industrial age, and in particular the power loom revolution, they sought to take each stage step by step. If they moved too quickly they would antagonise those who had been their former allies yet they did not want to associate themselves with radical Chartism. Politically they became the new laissez-faire liberals who were to dominate Dunfermline's political life for almost half a century.

The reasons given by MacLaren for the formation of the Free Church in Aberdeen can be transposed to Dunfermline with the exception



that the Establishment was not composed of the landed class and merchant families. The Dunfermline establishment, which was to be pulled apart by the Free Church and others, was the community-based handloom weaving industry which had been supported by the old Secession Church. Thus the emergence of the Free Church is to be understood as forming one of a series of events which led to the breaking down of the old system and the subsequent opening up of the town's trade to a free market economy. The change involved a shift from a farm and home-based community of self-employed weavers to industrial factories in which weavers formed the new proletariat. If in Aberdeen it was the landed class who experienced a challenge to their old prosperity, in Dunfermline it was the tightly knit handloom weaving community. Their social standing was eroded and their proud independence swept away. If in Aberdeen it was mainly the Free Church which expressed in the ecclesiastical realm the change which was taking place socially and politically, the situation in Dunfermline was much more complex. The movement was not only from the Establishment to the Free Church but from Secession congregations to Free Church or smaller denominations. The formation of the United Presbyterian Church can be seen in Dunfermline as a major attempt by the two oldest Dissenting traditions, the Secession and the Relief, to rationalise their losses.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### The Disruption and its Aftermath.

### Principles, Personalities and Tradition.

It has already been noted that during the Ten Year Conflict the main ecclesiastical interest in Dunfermline centred on the Voluntary issue while the Non-intrusion debate only came into its own after 1840. Moreover, as there were only a collegiate Parish Church and three Chapels, the interest in how the various ministers would act was minimal compared to larger towns such as Aberdeen.(1) Nevertheless, in the decisions which were arrived at there are indications of how principle, personality and tradition were emotionally intertwined and caused several reversals of what had seemed to be firm earlier commitments. Throughout Scotland ministers had to take into consideration many factors including popular reaction, the history and tradition of the parish church and the strength of Dissent already present in the area. There were also personal matters to be considered such as length of service within the National Church and the ability to find a living if the worst came to the worst. The choice before most clerics at the Disruption was not simply that of making a positive or negative response to the main issue of lay patronage. A man had to consider his family, weigh the claims of tradition and history against the bold, uncompromising decision to leave the National Church and form a new Free Church.

In McCosh's *The Wheat and the Chaff* there is an interesting breakdown of how the different groups in the Church reacted.(2) He divided the list into three sections. In the first he placed those who supported the Free Church, while those who remained within the Establishment were divided into two groups. The second of these was composed of those who during the years preceding the Disruption gave their support to the Non-Intrusion measures but who eventually remained within the Establishment. McCosh's thumb-nail sketches throw light on why those ministers did not go as far as their seceding brothers with whom they had so often voted at Presbytery and Assembly.(3) It can be

assumed that among the other two groups, those who supported the Free Church and those who remained loyal to the Establishment, there would also have been much internal conflict. Some did decide at an early date how they would act and followed persistently the main Popular or Moderate line, but there were few who did not waver at some point, retract some previously held conviction or make a complete about-turn during those stormy, soul-searching years.

The decisions arrived at by the five Dunfermline ministers are especially interesting in that the Parish Church had a collegiate ministry while the other three ministers were Chapel incumbents, each from a different tradition within the Chapel movement. The role of such Chapel ministers was extremely important as Rankin points out in his *Handbook of the Church of Scotland*.(4) He states that of the total number of ministers at the Disruption 752 of the 1203 remained firm to the Establishment. However of the 451 who did secede 162 were Chapel ministers and 289 parish ministers. From Rankin's figures some rough comparisons can be drawn. In 1834 the number of Chapels was about 62 and the number of parishes 970 while by 1843 the Chapels had increased to 233 without there being any appreciable growth in the number of parishes. Thus in a period of ten years the proportion of Chapels had risen from one in sixteen to one in five. The long held fears of the Moderates which had been voiced as early as 1779 and acted upon in 1798 had now become a reality of alarming proportions.

In Chapter Four it was noted that as early as 1774 Thomson of the Abbey saw the Chapel churches, with their system of popular election, as a greater threat to the Establishment than the Secession or Relief churches(5), while Hardy of Ballingry argued:

"It is the general opinion of the friends with whom I am proud to act in public worship, that the Assembly of 1779 took the decisive step, which left the Church no alternative but either the ruin of the constitution or a new arrangement in the mode of settlement."(6)

It had been the Assembly of 1779 which had granted the first official constitution to a Chapel church in Scotland.

By 1843 there were four times as many Chapel ministers as



there were in 1834 and, since most of the newcomers adhered to the Popular party, it is not difficult to understand why the Moderates wished to declare the Chapel Act of 1834 ultra vires. These Chapel ministers by their sheer numerical strength became a decisive factor in the events leading up to the Disruption. Norman MacLeod spoke of the "fever of secession" which he encountered in Edinburgh on the day of the Disruption and this was undoubtedly a by-product of the popular feeling which the Non-Intrusionists, one third of whom were Chapel ministers, had aroused. In this sense the inevitability of the Disruption was as much the result of the Chapel Act as of the Veto Act(7), yet it was the Chapel Act which had monthly added to the Church those who would be instrumental in bringing about its downfall. Between 1834 and 1843 about 160 ministers, almost one a month, were added to the roll of the National Church. Without their presence and the popular support which they had gathered to themselves, especially in the large conurbations of population, the zeal, enthusiasm and fever for Disruption would have been far less.

Most of the Chapel ministers had come into the Church between 1830 and 1840 when the Popular party dominated proceedings in Church Courts and accounted for the greater proportion of those ordained to the ministry. During those ten years 298 settlements out of 387 had been in favour of those who were to support the Free Church at the Disruption. McCosh points out that a change occurred between 1840 and 1843 when the actions of the Civil Courts began to challenge various Acts of Assembly passed during the previous decade.(8) He notes that during this period only 39 seceding ministers entered the Church and of those the majority were admitted to Church Extension charges. During the same period there entered the Church 45 men who at the Disruption remained within the Establishment. This change can partly be accounted for by the slowing down of the Church building programme which had been initiated earlier by Chalmers. It also indicated a growing concern among licentiates and probationers that their livelihood could be at risk within a divided Church. The challenge to civil authority had been severely tested by the Strathbogie case and already some ministers had reassessed their position as they saw the Church sailing into very troubled waters.

The three Dunfermline Chapel ministers provide an interesting cross-section of the various factors which influenced clerics throughout the country.

The Rev Charles Marshall of the North Parish Quoad Sacra congregation had become a minister in the Establishment in 1841 when he took over the newly formed extension charge. Despite the stormy beginnings of the congregation he guided them successfully through the first two years and by 1843 the numbers had grown encouragingly. This was adequate proof that Church Extension should be pursued with vigour. Not only had the congregation drawn in many of the poorer weavers and miners but it challenged the almost impregnable position of the Secession movement in the area. Marshall, however, represented those within the Establishment who were set on a collision course with the Moderate party and his attitude tended to polarize the differences within the Church. He was one of the Church's "new bloods" with comparatively short service within the Establishment and therefore was not bound by its tradition. Such men tended to stress the importance of personal salvation in contrast to those who were more concerned for the corporate unity of the Church. Generally men of piety, fiery in evangelical zeal, they did not have a high doctrine of the Visible Church. They were thus detested by the Moderates and may also have provided the spur which produced the Middle party who, though anti-patronage in sentiment, hesitated to support the increasingly disruptive tendencies of the crusading movement within the Popular party. Marshall, however, was couthy in manner and style of preaching and was a popular figure in the community.

To the Moderates men like Marshall were anathema. Nor did they endear themselves to the Dissenters who saw them as constituting a major challenge for the country's evangelical support. Supported in Dunfermline by the relatively prosperous weavers, the Secession Church had flourished and functioned with business-like efficiency despite the various splits within its ranks. However by 1838 it had lost headway in the area and there is evidence that some of its former spiritual zeal had abated. Non-Intrusionists like Marshall were to steal the preaching mantles of the early Seceders and such was their challenge that the United Secession Presbytery decided to call all congregations

within its bounds to put their own spiritual houses in order.(9)

Evidence of the high-flying style of the "new bloods" is noted critically in a paper of the time. The Rev Mr Burns, who had been a guest preacher at the Abbey, was decried for being unsystematic in his presentation of truth and for the uncontrolled manner in which the sermon was delivered.(10) Marshall's style was far more homely than that of many preachers of his time as is evident from his written works, many of which were in a pleasant, conversational style. Moreover, Marshall was a firm supporter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. In a book he expressed this belief through the words of the main character:

"Na, na, we'll keep our Confession o' Faith, till master builders wi' mair wit and wisdom, and learning and unction show us something more consistent wi' Scripture. We'll no' part wi' our auld claes until we ken whaur to get new."(11)

He was also a most vigorous supporter of Non-Intrusion and it is not surprising that verbal warfare took place between him and Brown, the most Moderate of the five Dunfermline clerics. Brown had become disenchanted with the Evangelical party from the time of the Stewarton case and turned his ire on the Chapel ministers. He had tried to prevent the building of the North Parish in 1839-40 as he believed Chapel ministers were not legal members of the Establishment. He suggested that the Abbey should rather be divided and the collegiate charge split in two and, though both Presbytery and his Abbey colleagues were opposed to this, he took his case to the General Assembly.(12) In doing so he no doubt hoped to bring to their attention the question of the legality of Chapel ministers in the Courts of the Church. In 1843 it was the turn of the Chapel ministers to represent the Presbytery at the General Assembly but Presbytery decided that their place should be taken by others because of the prevailing situation within the Church.(13) By then Marshall and Brown were constantly firing broadsides at each other, especially during the early months of 1843. Newspaper cuttings reveal their vitriolic exchanges(14) which focus attention on two aspects of the Disruption. Brown believed that the Church ought to bow to the rule of law which the Veto and Chapel Acts had infringed, while Marshall saw the issue in



spiritual rather than constitutional terms. Neither man tried to avoid a collision course. Their attitude simply polarized their differences and no love was lost between them. Brown was bent on removing the anarchists, Marshall on separating spiritual wheat from chaff.

Of all involved at the Disruption, those who had apparently least to lose were Chapel ministers like Marshall whose congregations felt that they had legal right of possession of their buildings. Marshall's congregation was in fact able to retain the Meeting House and remained in it until a House of Lords' decision in 1849 was made against them.

The Rev Andrew Sutherland of St Andrews Quoad Sacra congregation represents another aspect of the Chapel issue. Some Chapels were long established compared to those which had been built as part of the extension drive. The Dunfermline Chapel, later St Andrews Quoad Sacra, had been the first to gain constitutional status in 1779.(15) Sutherland, like Marshall, supported the Non-Intrusion cause, though unlike his colleague he did not have the full support of his people. His congregation was divided and though the majority was behind him a small, influential group remained unpersuaded. The ownership of the building was disputed and Sutherland had no guarantee that if he sided with the Free Church he could retain it, even with the support of the majority. Uncertain as he was of what the future would hold, it is not surprising that Sutherland hoped for a "kindly providence" to resolve the issue without the unpleasantness which he felt a Disruption would inevitably bring.(16) For him change would mean hardship and interference with a settled ministry. Yet as he had adhered to the Convocation resolutions and given every indication that he would cast in his lot with the Seceders, he could only wait and hope that Government action would resolve the growing crisis. Here again he differed from Marshall who saw no final solution in any act of Government since he believed that the matter was basically spiritual. While Marshall wished for separation from those with whom he had no spiritual affinity, Sutherland was less divisive, hoping that the matter could be resolved in a way which would prevent the Church being split. He was prepared to accept a wider theological spectrum within the Church than those such as Marshall were prepared to tolerate.

Sutherland's position also indicated another aspect of choice which Norman MacLeod pinpointed. It was not easy for those who had supported the aims of the Convocation to reverse their decision without appearing turncoats or at least over-concerned about their personal future. Having once committed themselves to a certain course of action, many felt that to change their decision would leave them open to the charge of stifling their conscience for the sake of a comfortable living.

The position of Mr Dalziel, the third Chapel minister, was again somewhat different, showing the multiplicity of factors which were involved in making a choice. He had become a minister within the National Church when his "Auld Licht" congregation had united with the Church of Scotland a few years before. It was generally thought that he would favour the Seceders and until early in 1843 he gave every indication of doing so. At that time, however, he seemed to have changed his mind, though the journalists were not sure why.(17) By then, of course, the Abbey Seceders were planning to join with the greater part of his own congregation to form the new Free Abbey. The problem for Dalziel was that Chalmers of the Abbey seemed likely to secede which meant that one of the two men would be left without a congregation and Dalziel knew that he would be the unlucky one. If he sided with the Free Church he would be left without congregation or living, so his best hope of retaining a living would be within the Establishment. It is certain that for some Chapel ministers the prospect of finding an endowed parish within a depleted Establishment offered an attractive alternative to the throes of Disruption. Dalziel in fact was later offered a charge in Thurso by a patron whose sympathies had been Non-Intrusionist.(18) By the time McCosh had drawn up his table of statistics in 1844 about 18 of the 62 Chapel ministers who had remained within the Establishment had received calls to endowed parishes. They included Alexander Davidson from the Chapel of Northesk who was called to North Leith, one of the richest benefices in the Establishment.(19) Others who at the same period had indicated a leaning towards Non-Intrusion benefited by staying in the National Church, receiving calls to Kilsyth, Brechin, Forfar and Dumbarton. Thus for some Chapel ministers the effect of the Disruption was to give them a higher status and a more secure post than they had previously

enjoyed. Some of them, faced with the loss of a place within the Church Courts and unsure whether the Free Church would be able to guarantee them a livelihood, gave their support to the "Forty" led by Matthew Leishman.

From the decisions of the three Chapel ministers in Dunfermline three reactions can be seen. Marshall wanted to polarize the Moderate and Popular parties; Sutherland supported the evangelical aims of the Non-Intrusionists but feared the constitutional upheaval; Dalziel used the crisis to strengthen his position within a depleted Establishment.

When attention is turned to the two parish ministers of the collegiate charge the complicated nature of decision making in Disruption times is even more evident.

Chalmers had always been a supporter of the Chapel movement even when in the early 20's it was unpopular among the Moderates within the National Church. He had supported a move in 1822 by the Dunfermline Chapel to put forward names from among its members to serve within the Abbey Session. Those elders, it was hoped, would primarily serve the Chapel. His action was not endorsed by the senior minister, nor indeed by the Kirk Session, who clearly held to the thinking of the time that Chapels were to be treated as second class institutions.(20)

By the time the Chapel Act was passed in 1834 the Church's attitude towards Chapels had softened, though the Moderates still had their reservations. In Dunfermline the Abbey and the Chapel worked in close harmony, for the first time since the Chapel had broken away in 1775, in the common cause of opposing the advance of the Voluntaries.

Chalmers had also been the driving force behind the erection of the North Church extension charge as part of the scheme to bring religious ordinances to the whole Scottish people. The Voluntaries were strongly opposed to the building and it would appear that, in Dunfermline at least, their argument that there was sufficient Church accommodation for the Church-going people of the town was



valid.(21) They were clearly of the opinion that the new evangelicals with their programme of Church extension were threatening their very existence. In Dunfermline the Extension Movement with its cheaper accommodation had begun to challenge the dominance of the Seceders.

When the Disruption broke, Chalmers moved through a remarkable process of indecision before remaining within the Establishment. He was perhaps one of only two ministers who actually joined the Free Church and then rescinded that decision.(22) The reason for his change of mind is complex. He had consistently acted in support of the Non-Intrusion cause throughout the debates at Presbytery and Assembly. His actions were always carefully reasoned and considered and he had always been against proceeding too hastily. In 1836 he was reluctant to concur with a move in his own Session to petition the General Assembly against lay patronage, making it plain that he thought that time should be given for the changes made at the previous Assembly to percolate into the mainstream of Church life before any further action were taken.(23)

He had succeeded, from about 1837, in restoring the lost fortunes of the Establishment in the stronghold of Dissent, forcing the Seceders into a measure of retreat, though in this he was greatly helped by the decline in the weaving industry which had provided the financial backing for the Secession. However it is not clear whether Chalmers had fully resolved in his own mind the consequences of a Disruption. Like many others he believed that the Government would pass a Bill which would solve the problem and make Non-Intrusion the ruling principle in the Church. Sutherland, it has already been noted, looked for a kindly providence to step in. Chalmers was perhaps more hopeful of a human intervention and may have felt that by pushing the cause of Non-Intrusion he would force the Government to recognise the need for change. It is therefore possible that he had hardly dared to contemplate the consequences of a Bill not being forthcoming.

When it was clear that no help would be provided by a Government Bill he felt obliged to cast in his lot with the Free Church. Yet when the Disruption day came he hesitated before eventually signing the Deed of Demission and Act of Separation.(24)

Subsequent events which are detailed in an Appendix to this Chapter suggest that he then underwent a crisis of conscience. After receiving a citation from the Free Presbytery, Chalmers preached open the Free Abbey Church, yet four days later he rescinded his decision and returned to the Establishment. Nor did he return cap in hand. His attempt to take his place at the June Sacrament suggests that he failed to understand how deeply the feelings of those who had remained firm to the Establishment had been lacerated by his earlier decision. The Session Clerk, Mr Taylor, one of the elders who had remained in the Establishment, had to advise Chalmers that the people would leave the Table if he sought to assist at the June Communion.(25) This too hasty attempt to take up his former position indicates Chalmers' failure to appreciate the trauma which the Abbey congregation had suffered at his hands. Later events show that he was a well-loved and respected pastor and did regain the former allegiance of his people. His own crisis of conscience had made him temporarily insensitive to the bruised feelings of his people and the hurt and confusion he had caused in both camps. He was like a man wakened from a dream in which he had acted with unusual indecision and been totally oblivious to the feelings of others.

Chalmers, however, was warmly welcomed by the Dunfermline Presbytery who saw his return as good publicity for the beleaguered Establishment. He had not only been a respected minister of the Abbey for 26 years but had also served as Presbytery Clerk. His resignation from this post prior to the Disruption indicated the way in which he intended to turn. The Presbytery therefore welcomed back the "deserter" as a brand plucked from the fire.

Why Chalmers reversed his commitment to the Free Church is a matter of speculation. In the steamy days of the Disruption controversy, emotion often reigned over reason. Many men of good will felt obliged to act in a manner consistent with earlier decisions even though the circumstances and arguments may have changed. For Chalmers the loss of the ancient Abbey with its well-loved and treasured tradition may have proved too much. The building dominated the town and there was no escape from its commanding presence. For one who had been first minister the idea of watching another take that role must

have hurt deeply, for it had been during his ministry that the Abbey had recovered some of its standing and dignity in the town's ecclesiastical affairs. He had watched the new Abbey being built and during the excavations a skeleton was found which was supposed to be that of Robert the Bruce. Steeped as he was in love of the "auld grey toun", he retained an enduring memory of the opening of the new Abbey and the great procession on that day. It was his Church and he had become intertwined in its history. In the days following the Disruption the sight of the old and new Abbeys locked together as one edifice must have haunted and depressed him. The tug of the past pulled against the challenge of the new until eventually it became too great and he returned to his first love, convinced that the twin towers of history and tradition would stand the test of time.(26)

If a less favourable view is taken of Chalmers, it might be claimed that he did not want to give up a good living and the manse which the Abbey had won in 1818 after a long legal process. He would also have been in a less favourable position to complete his massive work on the history of Dunfermline. It is even a matter of conjecture whether he would have reversed his earlier decision had the Abbey not been a collegiate charge. Brown, the second minister, had decided to remain in the Establishment and would have assumed the position of first minister of the Abbey. Such a thought was abhorrent to Chalmers who had been involved in many heated arguments with Brown prior to the Disruption. For most Establishment ministers the loss of their living was a costly enough sacrifice but for Chalmers there would have been the additional irony of seeing a man who had latterly been his adversary assume his position.

While the Free Kirkers rejoiced in their undoubted success in the Dunfermline area, Chalmers' spirit sank in deep depression. Perhaps the challenge of the large letters of the name of King Robert the Bruce, carved around the Abbey tower, may have persuaded him to attempt once more to restore to the ancient church the glories which it had known prior to Erskine's departure.

Rankin in his book notes the feelings of Norman MacLeod on the day of the Disruption in Edinburgh. He recalls how MacLeod saw



many of the Seceders sitting in Church with smiles on their faces, apparently unaffected by the nature of such a great revolution, and contrasted them with the older and more sober Seceders like Welsh, who had spoken with calm dignity, and Brown of Glasgow, who sat with tears in his eyes. The younger firebrands were chattering and laughing.(27)

In Dunfermline a similar contrast might be drawn between Marshall on the one hand and Chalmers on the other. Chalmers felt bound to the Establishment in a way in which Marshall did not. An umbilical cord still held Chalmers to the Church which had reared and sustained him, while Marshall was prepared to cast off all ties without perhaps fully appreciating what he left behind.

However Chalmers took his tears and heaviness further than most. He repented of what he had done and returned to the Auld Kirk. In doing so he overcame what MacLeod called the "fever of secession", the nervous desire to fly to the Free Church which for some stood for all that was high and lofty in principle. MacLeod reports how one man said to him:

"I must go. I am a lover of the Establishment, but last Autumn I signed the Convocation resolutions. All my people will leave me. I will never take a church left vacant by my seceding brethren. If I do not, I am a beggar. If I stay I lose all character. I must go."(28)

Chalmers managed to throw off the fever. In the shadow of the great Abbey he reconsidered his decision, which could not have been easy for it meant becoming anathema to those who had left to form the Free Church. His colleague Mr Brown accused him of being like Lot's wife.(29) He had already lost favour with those in the Establishment whom he had left and he was open, whatever he did, to the criticism of being wavering and inconsistent at a time when decisive action was called for. Having opened the Free Abbey he then decided to desert the new ship, leaving her without a captain. The cheers which had greeted him for his heroic act of separation turned to jeers as he returned to the Establishment. He was misunderstood and his actions were labelled those of a turncoat and traitor. An article in the *Scotsman*, taken from the *Fife Herald*, described him as:

"The last and worst rat, Mr Chalmers has returned to the bosom of the Kirk - to the Erastian Establishment."(30)

The article noted how Chalmers had written to Mr Clason, the Free Church Secretary, intimating his adherence and how he had also intimated in the Free Church that those wishing to become communicants should meet at the manse. It may be significant that he was still living in the manse. Accommodation must have posed a considerable problem for him.

Few men at the time would support him for he had antagonised both sides by his inconsistent actions. It might, however, be thought that few men ever showed such courage, for the way back was hard. Yet his genuine strength of character and Christian conviction enabled him to win back the deep affection in which he had always been universally held. His success in turning the struggling fortunes of the Abbey is a clear evidence that many other congregations might well have accepted the waverer. Chalmers' story reveals that people did understand the battle of personal conscience which raged within the minds of many old Establishment figures. In the final analysis it is not easy to determine the precise causes for Chalmers' change of heart and mixed motives cannot be ruled out. Principle was challenged by the threat of personal loss and the weight of tradition. The old ways may have ultimately been preferred to a voyage of faith which involved setting sail in a boat which had still to be proved seaworthy. However, in a hand-written jotter of *Disruption Memorials* collated by David Lawrie during those eventful years in Dunfermline, a few clues can be found to what precisely happened.

It would appear that shortly before the Disruption Chalmers had written to Lawrie. The letter has not been preserved but in his reply Lawrie commented:

"Be assured that it will be our earnest solicitude to make you comfortable."(31)

The letter was sent to Lawrie between 9th May when Chalmers had replied to the invitation to become pastor of the Free Church and 29th May when he finally indicated that he had given his adherence to the

Free Church. At some time between those two dates a letter had been received by Lawrie which, it may be assumed, had mentioned the matter of stipend or at least accommodation. Even in the earlier letter of 9th May when Chalmers had accepted the post of pastor he had cautiously added:

"Should no favourable alteration of circumstances still occur to prevent my leaving the Establishment I shall certainly be most happy to continue Pastor to such of the hearers of the Abbey Church congregation or other parishioners as may adhere to me."(32)

There is, it could be argued, a slight reservation, a looking for a way of escape which he had earlier hoped the Government would provide. Yet he was becoming increasingly trapped.

In Lawrie's comment that Chalmers could be assured that everything would be done to make him comfortable there is more than a hint that Chalmers may have hesitated over the loss of the manse which had been purchased as recently as 1818 and of which he would have taken possession in 1836 on the death of the senior minister. Another important factor was that although Brown was married he had no children while Chalmers had six children under the age of twenty, none of whom was married at the time.(33)

Chalmers' wavering and eventual return reveal a man who had known deep agony of spirit while he searched for further enlightenment and a way out of the situation in which he found himself. Questions must also be asked about the nature of the illness which prevented him from opening the Free Abbey on Sunday, 4th June, after a handbill had been circulated throughout the town announcing that he would do so. He had also agreed to baptise a child and perhaps the requirement to perform this Sacrament was the turning point. Those ministers within the Church of Scotland who had felt attracted to the Free Church for many months had preached as prospective Free Church ministers before the Disruption but for a man like Chalmers, known for his "pastoral deportment rather than for his pulpit gifts", it may have been the Sacraments which forced him into his greatest theological dilemma. It is perhaps not without significance that Chalmers, on the Sunday when he officiated and opened the Free Abbey, announced that the Sacrament



would be dispensed two weeks later but within that time he had returned to the Establishment fold.

In the previous chapter a detailed analysis has been given of how economic and social matters intertwined with ecclesiastical affairs during the period of the Disruption. In a letter sent out on 3rd May 1843 by the supporters of the Free Church a call was made for subscriptions to a new church. The letter recognised that because of the continued depression of trade and lack of employment many of those who wished to contribute might be unable to do so in a lump sum. It was therefore suggested that they could pay weekly or monthly, as they might prefer, over a period of four years. It was also made clear that any subscriber who could not continue to meet his dues through ill health, want of employment or any other cause would be at liberty to discontinue payment. There was clearly a concern that the state of trade in Dunfermline would be a major obstacle to the well-being of the new church. Chalmers might have feared that the financial arrangements would not be sufficient to meet the needs of his family or that suitable accommodation could not be provided.

Brown mentions in his *Parting Statement* that Chalmers had claimed that the reason for his decision to return to the Establishment was Lord Aberdeen's Bill. Brown, for his part, could not accept such an explanation:

"I understand Mr Chalmers has been pretending that Lord Aberdeen's Bill had satisfied his mind. What are the facts? Why that the Bill was laid on the table of the House of Lords before he opened the Free Abbey Church; that no progress whatever was made with that Bill between the Sabbath evening when he gave his hearers to understand, 'that he had overcome the world', and the Friday morning when he signified his determination to return into the bosom of that Establishment which he had renounced as anti-Christian; and further, that, years before, he had signed a declaration to the effect, that his conscience would not suffer him to act under Lord Aberdeen's Bill."(34)

Was Chalmers grasping at any straw to prevent him from leaving the Establishment which he loved and subjecting his wife and children to real sacrifice? It would appear that he procrastinated because he had always hoped for a solution and Lord Aberdeen's Bill at least provided

a way of escape.

Brown remained with the Establishment after the Disruption. He was accused of inconsistency as he had earlier supported the ideas of the Non-Intrusionists and had moved several anti-patronage overtures at Presbytery. However, in his *Parting Statement*, written in 1844, he argued that he had followed a consistent course, claiming that in replying to a scurrilous attack on him by "Scotus" in 1843 he had written:

"I was not at all in the confidence of the Non-Intrusion party. They knew that they might depend on my voting against patronage, because I said so; but the rest of their ruinous policy, they were aware, I abjured and denounced."(35)

He moreover claimed that, although he had signed the "Solemn Engagement", he had done so foolishly, having only heard it read over once. Nor was he aware that those who signed it were bound to all its details.(36)

His opposition to the dominant party was largely determined by the way in which the Assembly had acted after the judgement of the House of Lords in the Auchterarder case. From that time his differences with the Non-Intrusionists were, he claimed, obvious to all. He was one of three ministers who signed Dr Cook's protest in 1841, announcing their intention to appeal to the Government if the dominant party proceeded with the deposition of Messrs Robertson and Grant.

Brown's *Statement* also indicated that he felt obliged to clear his name of the charge of inconsistency. Ministers in Disruption times were particularly sensitive to such accusations. Some, it seems, felt required to abide by their first decision despite second thoughts rather than have the charge of inconsistency levelled against them.(37) Brown felt the need to stress his own consistency of action. Though some felt that the signing of such documents as the "Solemn Engagement" bound them to certain courses of action, Brown did not. He recalled letters he had written to the *Witness* and to the *Edinburgh Evening Post* to show the consistency of his opposition to the Non-Intrusion cause and recalled a letter written to Candlish in 1841,

fifteen months before the Convocation, to show the absurdity of any allegation that he had been too deeply implicated in the proceedings of the Non-Intrusion party to leave it with honour. There is perhaps a hint in Brown's statement that attacks were launched by those who supported Non-Intrusion on those who seemed to waver in their support prior to the Disruption. This is borne out in Lawrie's *Disruption Memorials* in which correspondence is recorded between Lawrie and Brown. Lawrie had refused to dine with Brown around January 1842, giving as his main reason Brown's change of heart:

"A saddening blight has since then (an earlier meeting) come over the sentiments, with which you regarded the rights of the Christian People of our Church. 'It appertaineth to the people and to every congregation to elect their own minister.'"(38)

Lawrie claimed that Brown's recent action in attempting to thrust a presentee into the pulpit of Aberdour without recognising the "rights of the Christian People" had been inconsistent with his earlier stance. Apparently only one other member of Presbytery had voted with Brown.(39) In reply Brown argued that it was not only Christians who had rights: patrons, ministers and Heritors, the Courts of Law, the Crown Lords and Commons and the General Assembly had them too:

"Apply Christ's golden rule of honesty doing to others as you would that they should do to you and if you can after that defend the Tyrannical conduct of the General Assembly you have performed a moral miracle. The Christian People have rights but I for one, will never vindicate them on the condition of inflicting wrong on others."(40)

Brown then turned the question on Lawrie by asking a rhetorical question:

"What was your doctrine about the Annuity Tax in Edinburgh? Obey the Law so long as it is law. If it is bad do what you can to get it altered, apply this to the House of Lords in the Auchterarder case and then see how your precepts correspond with your practice."(41)

He claimed that he now disagreed with the Non-Intrusionists, not in matters of principle but of policy. He felt that they had acted in the Auchterarder affair like madmen. Brown also held that in the earlier St Andrews vacancy he had supported those who wanted Mr McEwan, the



popular choice, to be elected. He thus claimed:

"I am really the friend of the people when their rights do not involve the wrongs of others."(42)

Two other factors, however, contributed to his determination to stay within the Establishment. The first was his concern for Church Unity. Having ministered in a stronghold of the Secession and been involved in the clash over Voluntaryism, Brown was against any further moves to divide the Church. Like Chalmers, he saw the Free Church as providing yet another division which would increase the tensions within the body and decrease its general effectiveness. When Brown did leave the Abbey he moved to the Scottish Church in Liverpool and became deeply involved in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance. He also wrote a poem in 1848 regretting the splits which existed within Christ's Church on earth.(43)

The other factor falls into the category of the personal element which, it is clear, played an important role in most decisions taken at the time. Brown hoped to take over as first minister of the Abbey. Such a prospect clearly delighted him and must have looked possible when Chalmers agreed to accept a call to be minister of the Free Abbey. He was incensed by Chalmers' return to the Establishment and scathing in his comments on the constant changes of mind of his senior minister. Brown claimed that, although Chalmers had accepted a call at the beginning of May, when the Disruption broke he hesitated, doubted and deliberated long and carefully.

Brown's anger was further inflamed when Presbytery, and eventually the Abbey congregation, accepted Chalmers back. If some had accused him of inconsistency, he had his own view of the inconsistency of others. His main wrath was reserved for the Government and the patrons of congregations who, in his opinion, had acted after the Disruption in most inconsistent ways. He argued that before the Disruption they revered patronage and set it up as the "golden calf" for the sake of which they permitted the Church of Scotland to be rent in two.(44) Yet when several hundred vacancies occurred the patrons and their Government advisers, lay and clerical, did not fill them with their own men without consideration of the congregations' choice.

Brown claimed that they did the opposite. At the Disruption the Non-Intrusionists had been ejected because not one item was to be conceded to popular influence but after that traumatic event the right of nomination had been systematically and obsequiously handed over to the congregations. According to Brown this proved that patronage, however great its merits, was not suited to Seceding times. He concluded:

"the policy that is not based on principle cannot be good. What then are we to think of the policy which diametrically thwarts principle?"(45)

Brown was clearly goaded by personal pique that Chalmers should be allowed back to usurp the position which he felt ought to be his. It is none the less true that Government and patrons acted after the Disruption in a way which, if followed earlier, might have prevented the split from taking place.

Brown was by far the most traditional Establishment figure, rebelling against the movements for greater democracy if such movements went beyond what the existing law of the land would allow. He clearly believed that if the Church were to flout the law there could be no hope of holding back general anarchy. His acquaintance with Church life in Dunfermline convinced him that Secession simply led to more Secession and Dissent fostered further Dissent. Thus he strongly resisted attempts to break up the Church into even smaller segments.

#### Postscript

After Chalmers' return to the Establishment, the Free Abbey had difficulty in finding a minister. It was not until 11th June 1845, exactly two years later, that the position was filled. Correspondence during that period indicates the congregation's difficulties, the power of Presbyteries and the hopes of aspiring candidates. The fact that the congregation survived those two years indicates the lay strength behind the Free Church movement in Dunfermline. It should not be forgotten that the other two Free Churches in the town were basically the old Quoad Sacra congregations whose ministers had led them out of the Establishment.

Those seeking to appoint a minister decided that they needed a mature man who was, above all, a good preacher. Chalmers was known as a hard-working pastor but not an outstanding preacher and it was clearly thought that an experienced preacher would draw the crowds.(46)

Their first attempt was to secure the services of the Rev Patrick Fairbairn from Salton. In a letter to him they described the troubled state of the Establishment, especially in Dunfermline Abbey, where Brown never attended a service when Chalmers was preaching. Brown had also informed Mr Lawrie, the Free Abbey secretary, that a number of the Abbey members were waiting to see who was chosen before going over to the Free Church.(47)

When the Presbytery of Haddington did not release Mr Fairbairn the Free Abbey congregation thought of taking the case to the General Assembly but, on the advice of friends, dropped their appeal.(48) This was in September 1843 and another attempt was made in March 1844 when they brought a call signed by 322 members and 170 adherents and Fairbairn himself accepted it. However in April the Presbytery and then the Synod refused to sanction his translation.(49)

The attention of the congregation now turned to a Mr Philip from Cruden, one of the ministers appointed by the Free Church to preach throughout Scotland to raise support for the new Church.(50) The Dunfermline congregation tried for over a year to secure his translation, during which period a correspondence was entered into which throws an interesting side-light on the working of the Free Church during those eventful years. In September 1844 Mr Philip asked for a street roll to be made up so that he could visit the congregation systematically whenever he arrived. He also demanded that a real effort be made to increase the number of worshippers:

"It is of the greatest consequence for the prosperity of our cause that we should have a full congregation. I know that it is not the end of the ministry but it is an important means to the end. I have been so accustomed to fill churches all my life that I would feel it bitterly to see empty pews while so many remain in the Residuary."(51)



Like Fairbairn, Philip was clearly a popular preacher. He stressed in the same letter the need for the conversion of souls, which would indicate that he had the fervour of the "post-Disruption revivalists" in the National Church. A writer towards the end of the century recalls how his grandmother described Mr Philip's preaching:

"I thocht he was to be o'er the pu'pit! He roared sae loud and ca'd his han's aboot while he made his cloak flee around him like ships sails."(52)

In October 1844 Mr Philip was refused permission to move by the Presbytery, yet he was sure that he would eventually be released to go to Dunfermline. His fine spiritual qualities and his acceptance of the Lord's Hand in all this are evident from a letter addressed to Mr Lawrie:

"I could not have been more certain of anything a few days ago than that I would have been in Dunfermline this night. All our steps are ordered of the Lord and they are all well and wisely ordered."(53)

In December he indicated his hopes for the Dunfermline congregation while he remained in Cruden. Among these he included systematic teaching at the Sabbath schools embracing a course of progressive instruction. Teachers were to meet quarterly and reports of the progress of the pupils were to be given while prayer was to have an especially important place:

"The conversion of the young is the grand point to be aimed at."(54)

In April 1845 Philip commented on the Free Abbey's givings to the Sustentation Fund. He noted that they had given £151 and pressed that they should strive to increase what was already a good figure:

"You have done well. You must now do better. Aspire to excel. 'Press on' must be your perpetual motto - weigh £151 in the scales of Jesus' love - and what is their value?"(55)

He also indicated that he would be happy to admit any first communicants if they attended a class taught by any of the elders and were certified by them as qualified.(56) In a later letter he referred to his concern that there should not be any empty pews:

"I do trust earnestly by the blessings of the Lord that the empty seats will be filled. I have never yet preached with one unoccupied sitting. A Church not full would soon break me down. We must be up and doing."(57)

He also indicated his grave concern that the number of communicants was small.(58) Eventually he was released by the Synod of Aberdeen and introduced to the Dunfermline congregation two years to the day after Chalmers had preached it open.

The above account indicates how at least one Free Church congregation had difficulty in exercising its right freely to call the minister whom it had chosen. The Presbytery and Synod acted as a kind of Patron over both ministers and congregations. Patrick Brewster's observation that he would be more free outside the Free Church than within comes readily to mind.(59)

These early skirmishes in the Free Abbey over the call of a minister indicate a tendency within the new Church to operate a system of ministerial direction. Fairbairn had to stay in East Lothian because the weakness of the Free Church in that area required a strong character and powerful preacher. Even Philip had difficulty in obtaining permission to leave Cruden for much the same reasons. Presbyteries were not prepared to release key men. Meanwhile the most prestigious Dunfermline charge had to wait two years to secure their choice.

At this early stage it is clear that in order to compete with the Establishment nationally, the central organisation of the Free Church was prepared ruthlessly to impede ministers' freedom of movement, subjecting their individual preferences to national policy. This element of centralized control was a new feature in Scottish Presbyterianism. Ministers were paradoxically less free to move than they had been in the National Church which they had just left. The Free Church might have rid themselves of lay patrons but it had found new patrons, the Central Committee in Church Headquarters in Edinburgh, who were gradually taking it upon themselves to direct and organise the whole life of the Church. This would suggest that in the early years the Free Church sought to follow vigorously Chalmers' idea of setting

up a territorial ministry which would supply all parts of the country. National policy was to have precedence over a minister's personal inclination.

Philip perhaps indicates a changing mood, as does the Free Abbey congregation in Dunfermline. Both were concerned for the strength and prosperity of their own cause. Conversion and competition were uppermost in Philip's thinking. The Free Abbey made it clear that they wanted a man who would draw the crowds and compete with the Abbey, which was already recouping some of its losses. The leaders of the new congregation were representatives of a "gathered church" ideal, the church of the entrepreneur where congregational success was as important as business prosperity. They were less concerned for the Free Church movement as a whole.

By 1845 Thomas Chalmers had recognised that his hope of establishing a truly territorial ministry within the Free Church was fading. Meanwhile Peter Chalmers of Dunfermline Abbey had enjoyed a two year period in which he began to rebuild the Establishment's flagging fortunes within the town. It was this "other Chalmers" who had the greater opportunity to build a representative congregation on the old parochial system. Soon he would be involved in the exciting task of setting up two new Quoad Sacra congregations within Dunfermline. Such congregations and such a National policy as was advocated by Robertson perhaps correspond most to Thomas Chalmers' hope of establishing a godly commonwealth through a truly representative territorial ministry. Paradoxically it was the Dunfermline Chalmers who, by his decision to leave the Free Church, was given the opportunity to pursue such a scheme.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: APPENDIX

### Chronology of the actions of Chalmers and Brown at the Disruption

Sunday 30th April

Chalmers stated that he had difficulty in making up his mind as to which course he should follow.(62)

Sunday 7th May

As the Government had failed to act he decided to cast in his lot with the Free Church and relinquish the benefits of the Establishment.(63)

Monday 8th May

A call was given to him by the Free Church adherents to be their pastor.(64)

#### THE DISRUPTION

Sunday 28th May

Chalmers did not officiate in the Abbey Church. The service in the afternoon, which he ought to have supplied, did not take place.(65)

Monday 29th May

He wrote to Mr Lawrie stating that he had forwarded his adherence to the Free Church Secretary.(66)

Friday 2nd June

A handbill was circulated through the town announcing that the Rev Peter Chalmers would open the Free Abbey.(67)

Sunday 4th June

Because of illness, Mr Chalmers was unable to open the Free Abbey as advertised. Mr Sutherland of Free St Andrews officiated and baptised a child whom Chalmers had agreed to baptise.(68)

Saturday 10th June

Chalmers received a citation from the Established Church Presbytery Clerk telling him that if he adhered to the Free Church he would no longer be considered of the Establishment.(69)

Sunday 11th June

Chalmers opened the Free Abbey, preaching on the text, "Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." He intimated that he would administer the Sacrament two weeks later.(70)

Friday 16th June

He renounced all connection with the Free Church.(71)

Sunday 18th June

Brown claimed that Chalmers sat in Bridge of Allan Parish Church where he heard a discourse on the text, "Remember Lot's wife."(72)

Wednesday 22nd June

Chalmers was received back into the Established Church Presbytery.

Sunday 25th June

Chalmers sought to assist Brown at the Lord's Table but was told by the Abbey Session Clerk that "the Communicants would rise and leave the Table if he officiated." The Free Abbey had their first Sacrament.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Developments in Church life between 1843 and 1883 with particular reference to finance and the relationship between ministers and office bearers

The fortunes of the handloom industry had reached a peak by 1836 and their lowest point by 1851 when the largest of the power loom factories was erected. By 1883 a string of eleven factories stretched across the town but change came slowly and it was not until the mid-60's that the linen industry began to experience its former prosperity. Though power loom operatives formed the major part of the work force the real beneficiaries were the new middle class which arose to meet the needs of an expanding community. Trades increased in number and variety with the attendant opportunity for small family firms to commence business

The growth of the town's wealth is indicated by the increasing numbers who received the franchise in 1868. By then Dunfermline had outstripped Stirling, the other main town within the Parliamentary Constituency and had become a major world supplier of linen. Whereas before the franchise changes Dunfermline could amass only 484 voters to Stirling's 658, afterwards the roles were reversed with Dunfermline having 2,073 to Stirling's 1,746.(1) It is against such a background that the changes within the main Churches can be studied. This chapter will look at the response of the various Churches to financial crisis and the different types of relationship which emerged between ministers and their office-bearers. The table below indicates the relative strength of the Churches at different times during the second half of the 19th Century.(2)

	<u>1838</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1875</u>	<u>1900</u>
Establishment	1605	958	2542	2974
Free		1433	1152	1403
United Presbyterians	2432	2222	2341	2305

The most remarkable feature was the recovery of the Establishment after the traumatic years of the Disruption and its poor

record against Dissent from the time of Erskine. In attempting to make any comparison with what happened in Aberdeen(3) or other parts of the country, the social and economic climate against which the Disruption in Dunfermline took place should not be forgotten. From 1837 to 1848 the town had experienced a severe economic depression with only intermittent periods of respite. Hardly a home or business was left unscathed as the centuries-old handloom trade finally disintegrated before the forces of industrialisation, while cholera epidemics further added to the hardship of the townsfolk. Moreover, the social climate was soured as the former peace-loving weavers were often replaced by a new breed of hardened factory workers. Another factor which came into play was the growing number of Irish labourers who were happy to take work in the factories or the railway developments. These incomers were most unwelcome and when some of them took work thinning turnips this provoked a hostile response and they and other Irish workers were rounded up and driven down to Queensferry.(4) Thus the economic and social climate of the immediate Post-Disruption years was uncondusive to the type of Free Church which MacLaren found in Aberdeen where new businesses were being set up and new housing areas developed. The housing boom in Dunfermline did not begin until much later.

#### The Established Church.

For over a century the National Church, as represented primarily by the Abbey, had known little success. During the 1830's, under the forward looking ministry of Peter Chalmers, some progress had been made and a number of businessmen had returned to the Establishment fold. Among them were those who had become directors or shareholders in the newly formed Gas Company and had a more realistic attitude to how a modern linen industry should function. Thirty of them formed a committee to choose an assistant minister in 1834, though it later emerged that most of them were Non-Intrusionists who became the founder members of the new Free Abbey in 1843.(5)

The granting of Quoad Sacra status to St Andrews Chapel in 1835 and the building of the Golfdrum Church Extension charge in 1840 had also contributed substantially to the restoration of the



Establishment's fortunes, though in 1838 it was still outnumbered three to two by the United Secession and Relief bodies. However, the Disruption rocked it back on its heels for the fourth time in a century and in 1844 there were only two elders serving the parish while the Free Church had taken over the North building and left the St Andrews congregation with a mere handful of members. Yet by 1855 the Auld Kirk was flourishing again with the Abbey and two post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregations making substantial progress.

A major factor in its recovery was undoubtedly its conservative traditionalism, especially after the first dust of Disruption had settled. For two decades the town had known nothing but upheaval and it needed time for the many scattered pieces to reform into a meaningful whole. Pessimism, unemployment and poverty proved less damaging in the long term to the Establishment than to its two sister denominations whose success depended on voluntary giving. The National Church, with its long though chequered heritage, presented the possibility of a stability which the new bloods of the Free Church or the temporarily despondent membership of the United Secession could not provide in the mid 1840's. Unlike Aberdeen it was not until the mid 1860's that Dunfermline provided the industrial base on which a small merchant class can flourish.

Between 1849 and 1855 the Establishment's flag began to wave more proudly again. Two factors contributed to this, the presence of Victorian philanthropists and the post-Disruption Quoad Sacra Endowment Scheme. Under Peter Chalmers' influence two congregations were set up(6) which enabled men like Andrew Kilgour and James Kerr to put St Andrews Parish and the North Parish on a firm financial footing. Such backing was of crucial importance in revitalising the Establishment and, unlike the entrepreneurs who had helped to set up the Secession and Free Churches, the benefactors of the Establishment had no financial stake in the congregations. They simply believed that it would be for the country's good that the Establishment should recover lost ground and so were pleased to give generously towards that end. At the same time they expected to generate response in others and encourage the self-help attitude which had marked the National Church's thinking with regard to charity in the

past. Mr Kilgour, for example, did not want to encourage indolence and in his will left a substantial sum of money to the St Andrews congregation on condition that they raised a corresponding sum.(7)

The ministers of Dunfermline Presbytery were also convinced that the recovery of the National Church depended on the Assembly's taking positive attitudes to endowing Quoad Sacra congregations as these would provide preaching stations side by side with the newly formed Free congregations.(8) They saw these former Chapels, which either lay vacant or were illegally possessed by the Free Church party, as the means of extending the Establishment cause without too great an expense. Many of them were free of debt though this was not the case with St Andrews in Dunfermline. Nevertheless the Free Church, burdened by finance and its Sustentation Fund, quickly felt the competitive edge of the cheaper accommodation which these newly endowed Parish Churches provided. This was perhaps most evident in the Free North, who were forced to abandon their building in 1849 after a decision by the House of Lords restored the property to the Establishment. The building of a new church proved a major problem for the displaced congregation and at one point funds ran out.(9) Their minister, Mr Marshall, had to undertake preaching trips to raise money for his struggling flock and became ill in the process.(10) Meanwhile the Establishment took possession of the vacant building and provided a lay missionary to initiate a new work. In such difficult times a building free of debt was of immense help.(11)

It was ironic that these Quoad Sacra congregations which existed prior to the Disruption had been the brain child of Thomas Chalmers in his desire for an effective parish system throughout Scotland. The Chapel ministers who occupied them generally sided with the Free Church but now these very buildings proved a major challenge to the new denomination for from them the Establishment launched a substantial counter-offensive. They therefore enjoyed the benefits of Victorian philanthropy at a time when the other two Churches were struggling to make ends meet. Kerr and Kilgour epitomised the crusading spirit of a rejuvenated Establishment by taking on the garb of knights in armour, determined to redress the mischief which had been done to their lands. While the Free Church deacons knocked at

doors to gather "siller" for their struggling Sustentation Fund, Kerr and Kilgour were helping to endow congregations which would further embarrass the new cause.

In Dunfermline the Establishment was also fortunate in the ministers who served after the Disruption. Mr Charles Rogers came as a lay missionary to the North in 1849 with a stipend of only £70. Even this proved such an embarrassment to the congregation that the Home Mission Committee agreed to give £50 and the Presbytery agreed to pay half the remainder if no other means could be found.(12) Yet six years later the charge, under Rogers and then Alexander Mitchell, had achieved full status with an endowment of £120. Rogers' early ministry indicates how the National Church was prepared to reach out to the deprived areas. Of his time in Dunfermline he wrote:

"In quitting the fabric, the Free Church congregation left nearly empty pews, about forty persons only worshipped in a building which contained 800 sittings, but I was able to report by the close of six months that the Communion Roll contained 80 names and the congregation had increased to about 300. My duties, which were chiefly missionary, were somewhat arduous; I proceeded from home to home and had some startling and unpleasant experiences. The majority of my parishioners were handloom weavers; they were keen politicians and I had some difficulty in introducing religious conversation. Sixty families admitted that they did not belong to any religious denomination, a few infidels whom I encountered could not sustain their views by the feeblest arguments. With the workers in the colliery the weavers could hold no intercourse; they could not join them at the district prayer meetings or acknowledge them as neighbours".(13)

After Mr Rogers left, the task of raising the North Church to full status fell to the Rev Alexander Mitchell.(14) A hard-working parish minister and a man of great determination, he only accepted the charge on condition that he would be ordained to it first. So determined was he that things would go well that within four years the congregation had gained full status.(15)

In Rogers, Mitchell and Kerr, the crusading spirit of the post-Disruption Establishment is most clearly seen. Rogers' hard work, Mitchell's determination and Kerr's generosity were powerful in rejuvenating the National Church. Behind much of their endeavour was



the desire to rebuild the National Zion, for they saw their cause as that of Church and Country. They, therefore, appealed to a broad area of society which included both the highest and lowest in the land, both rich and poor and a wide spectrum of theological opinion. The Establishment steered clear, as far as possible, of contentious issues. There were few vacancies and as ministers remained for a long time in their charges they not only developed congregational ties but became well known in the community. Dr Chalmers was in the Abbey for 53 years, Dr Mitchell in the North for 50 years, while Mr Rose served in St Andrews for 45. This triumvirate did much to restore the Establishment's dignity after the setbacks it had known for almost a century. They avoided political intrigue and were rather known for their service on parochial boards and educational establishments.(16)

These parish ministers not only attended to the needs of their own congregations but also served the growing parish of Dunfermline. The Establishment, with its endowment scheme, was less concerned about seat rents or door collections and thus appealed to the poorer members of society. Of Dr Mitchell's ministry it is recorded that he admitted 1,654 new communicants, officiated at 1,023 marriages and conducted 1,580 baptisms.(17) Although this spanned fifty years it indicates the number of people he met and the homes he visited. A later minister of the parish wrote of those who led the Establishment's recovery:

"Much has been said and written of the courage and devotion of those who 'went out' at the Disruption - and they richly deserve our respect as men who made great sacrifices for conscience sake, literally, in many cases going out 'not knowing whither' they went; but there are heroes and saints on the other side too among those who remained 'in' faithful to the Establishment believing that its faults could best be remedied from within."(18)

#### The United Presbyterian Church.

The success of the Establishment can best be measured against the troubles which the other two Churches faced. Those who were to form the United Presbyterian Church had experienced success when the handloom industry was at its peak. Before the 1847 Union

there were five congregations, Queen Anne Street, St Margarets, Chalmers Street, Maygate and the Relief. Each of them began to experience problems around 1837-1840 when their Minutes frequently record financial difficulties. It is significant that this corresponds to the period when the handloom industry began to break up and the heart went out of the traditional weaving community. The congregations which had been the particular homes of the weavers were dealt a hammer blow and for the next twenty-five years finance dominated the life of Dissent.

Typical of such was the Relief or Gillespie congregation. Of the three main United Presbyterian charges only this congregation had no major manufacturers in the linen trade but it retained many of its old, traditional, handloom weaving families whose roots went back to the days of Thomas Gillespie. To them were added a variety of other trades and merchants such as those who worked in the collieries or the railways. The congregation would also seem to have had a close connection with the Co-operative Society. This is not surprising since the old weaving community had had a collective base and there had been at least two unsuccessful earlier attempts to start a Co-operative. When their numbers began to decline the congregation put their problem down to an aging minister whose popularity and preaching power was on the wane.(19) At the heart of the matter, however, was the lack of any Pension Fund so that the old minister clung to his right of tenure. The usual method of phasing out a ministry was to appoint a colleague and reduce the senior minister's stipend. Troubles arose when Managers were ungrateful for past services or the senior minister took an unreasonable line.(20)

In 1838 it was the Rev Neil McMichael of the Relief who felt the Managers' ire when he was offered only £65 for the half year with the promise that he would be given an extra £10 if the situation improved.(21) When he demanded a meeting to discuss the matter the Managers made it clear that they believed the congregation's present troubles were a direct result of his being away so often from Dunfermline.(22) They were clearly demanding their pound of flesh. The following year, however, when the income from seat rents had again dropped, the general slackness in trade was suggested as a contributory factor(23), and the Managers were delighted when their minister was

appointed Synod Professor, considering that it reflected great credit upon them.(24) In other words, they were prepared to bask in Mr McMichael's success though they had earlier blamed him for their lack of funds. In some ways Dissent, with its system of Managers, had begun to resemble a modern football team with its directors and manager. When things went badly the "directors" were prepared to sack the "manager" or at least reduce his salary, but when things went well they were quick to stress the wisdom of their choice. Financial worries therefore embittered relationships in a way which was then unknown in the endowed parishes of the Establishment.

In 1844 the Relief Managers, noting that their seat rents were higher than elsewhere, informed the congregation that the only way to reduce them was by an increase in door collections.(25) The best method of financing their religion had become a bone of contention among Voluntaries. Mr McMichael's stipend had again to be reduced in 1858 and he was told that it would remain the same until collections improved.(26) The nature of Voluntaryism makes such issues understandable, especially when the economic situation was bad. The Relief congregation, with its interest in the Co-operative movement, clearly worked on a system of "dividends" when trade was good.

It might be argued that of all the United Presbyterian congregations Queen Anne Street weathered the years of poor trade most successfully. It had among its members a number of the larger manufacturers, including Mr Andrew Boag and later Mr William Reid. Its members were slower than those of St Margarets to change to factory production, however, and a number of smaller manufacturers weathered the storm and held on through the worst of the depression years. Though they never became large industrialists they did preserve the congregation's tie with the old handloom weaving trade. While it is impossible to make any accurate comparisons because of the different systems of accounting, some data can be produced to indicate the financial trends of the three main congregations:

	<u>1861</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1879</u>	<u>1875</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>1883</u>
Relief	239	246	277	345	398	471
Queen Anne Street	396	437	378	555	560	593
St Margarets				456	404	403



These figures refer basically to givings from seat rents and normal door collections and do not include money gathered to liquidate debt on buildings.

Queen Anne Street, the oldest of the Dissenting congregations and the largest numerically, steered clear of much of the bitterness which arose between Managers and minister because the Managers themselves took greater responsibility for financial problems and did not always blame the minister. Nevertheless their problems were great and in 1839 over three hundred members failed to pay their seat rents.(27) However in their minister, James Young, they had a steadying influence, an astute business man and a wise counsellor. In 1841 he was prepared to accept a lower stipend if the congregation provided a colleague.(28) The financial stringency of the time made the scheme impossible, however, and in the light of the growing problems which the congregation was about to face this proved a blessing in disguise. A healthier relationship between minister and Managers was also evident in the provision made in 1870 for his widow(29), which was in marked contrast to the treatment meted out to the family of Mr Fergus of the Relief in 1837.(30)

The congregation was never free from financial problems but it tackled them so as to avoid the kind of difficulties which arose elsewhere, the Managers preferring direct giving to seat letting. Nevertheless in July 1844 a letter was drawn up indicating the need for givings to be increased(31), and though attempts were made to continue a missionary fund it was eventually found necessary to remove the missionary boxes and put all givings into the General Fund.(32) Despite the financial stringency the congregation managed, with the help of outsiders, to erect a monument in 1849 to mark the ministry of Ralph Erskine.(33) This no doubt attracted attention to the congregation and revived denominational interest at a time when the other two Churches were gaining publicity through the founding of new buildings and congregations. Even so their financial affairs were very precarious as the figures for 1843 and 1853 indicate:

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
1843	405	392
1853	417	412

In 1857 more difficulties arose when set-backs were experienced within the power loom industry. As in the Establishment, some members were prepared to give a lead by providing money if others gave proportional donations.(34) Although a proposal was made in 1870 to increase seat rents it was still argued that door collections should be encouraged.(35) In 1879 it was pointed out, however, that the Managers believed that door collections rather than seat rents were more in keeping with the principles of the United Presbyterian

Church.(36) It may be suggested that by adhering to this principle Queen Anne Street avoided some of the bad feeling which arose where seat rents became a real bone of contention and this was the reason why the older Dissenting congregation regained its supremacy over its chief rival St Margarets. Seat rents involved a degree of class differentiation and an element of compulsion which door collections avoided.

St Margarets United Presbyterian Church had a chequered history. Set up in 1825, it was the most politically Radical of the United Secession congregations and the most business-like in its administration. It produced the first of the new manufacturers in the Reid brothers. Their long association with the trade and with St Margarets continued after the old handloom trade had passed. Like the other main manufacturer, Erskine Beveridge, they were tough in their economic bargaining but their financial success strengthened the congregation. Its minister, John Law, was the champion of the Voluntaries and helped to fill the Church and it was agreed in 1831 to put names on each seat so that those who habitually used them without paying could be turned out.(37) However, as with other United Secession congregations, the 40's brought severe financial troubles as the debt which hung over the building mounted. Mr Law's generosity was evident in his willingness to give £60 if the congregation contributed £420(38) and in a business-like manner the Managers devised a plan to reduce the debt by £100 annually.(39)

Two factors account for the decline of St Margarets after 1850. One was the loss of Mr Law, though his departure resulted from a dispute involving minister, Managers and congregation over the financial arrangements for the appointment of a colleague.(40) The stipend fixed for the new minister in 1851 was the same as that for 1827 but without travelling expenses.(41) The congregation was now going through hard times and it had to make up a list of new Trustees since only seven of the original sixteen were still alive and of them only two still belonged to the congregation.(42) The debt on the building had accumulated to £1,420 and some of the creditors wanted to be relieved of their obligations. It may be suggested that the old Whig party in the congregation had been replaced by new Liberals, many

of whom represented the interests of the larger factory owners. The middle-class goals of these individuals had sapped some of the Radical fire of the original congregation.

Seat rents, the manner favoured by the Managers for collecting money, led to much disharmony and a partial decline in the congregation's fortunes. From the very outset St Margarets had placed great emphasis on this method and a Scheme was devised whereby donors could purchase the right to seats in different parts of the Church. Some seats were offered at £5, some at £3 and some at a guinea and those who wished could apply before a certain date to make sure of a let. Those prepared to make the highest bids received first choice; later those who were prepared to pay between £5 and £3 could choose; later those who paid over a guinea; then those paying under a guinea. Times were set for bids and equal bids were settled by lot. There was also the following note:

"The sub committee recommend that if any person or persons may wish to become donors, or if they should wish to add to their donation, that it will be necessary that he or she should do so before the hour at which the Committee meet to apportion the seats, because at that hour the book will be closed to prevent the indecent mode of individuals bidding."(43)

Thus St Margarets was launched on a system which would not have been out of place in the selling of shares in a publicly owned company and they did well out of it since there was a keen demand for seats.

From the start the congregation provided a stipend of £200 with an additional £20 for travelling expenses.(44) Part of the stipend was given as a premium to insure the minister's life. Thus even as early as 1827 the congregation was modelled on a company which took care of its personnel(45), but the minister was subject to the Management committee.

In 1858 a general report stated that it was a rule of the Church that each member should, if able, pay for one seat rent. The Church Officer was instructed to call on those who failed to do so.(46) The situation was much the same in 1859 and the Managers decided that



they should use every means to rectify it.(47) It was agreed that since the task of collecting seat rents had become so time-consuming a sub-convenor should be paid.(48) However, with the upturn in the financial climate the situation improved and by the 1870's the debt had been liquidated. Seat rents, however, continued to prove contentious.

Basic differences thus existed between Queen Anne Street and St Margarets in how the Church was financed. From the outset St Margarets had been established on firm business principles. The building belonged to "donors" who each had responsibilities and rights. After their experience in the Queen Anne Street vacancy the constitution of the congregation had clauses to prevent such a situation recurring:

"....it is in the power of the congregation or any member of it being a donor if from any cause the congregation may see fit to bring the property to sale, that every donor may be paid a sum in proportion to his right in the property."(49)

The other two United Secession congregations were smaller and the Maygate congregation united with the Relief congregation in 1848. Chalmers Street struggled after the death of its major benefactor, Mr Andrew Robertson, one of the first handloom factory owners. The small congregation was further depleted during the 1840's at the time of the Morisonian controversy and various methods were tried to raise funds. In 1848, after the use of collection boxes had proved unsuccessful, it was decided that members should contribute quarterly. Ladies were appointed to visit the homes of members and uplift subscriptions in a manner not dissimilar to that of the Diaconate of the Free Church.(50)

Until 1875 the United Presbyterian Church in Dunfermline coped better financially than the Free Church, partly because it had a longer tradition and, like the Establishment, was able to survive the trauma of Disruption. The young Free Church congregations, though they faced similar financial difficulties to the older Voluntary congregations, differed from them in that they had never known affluent times. The tradition and numerical strength of the older Dissenting bodies helped them to weather the storm of the decline in the handloom

industry and a loss of membership to the Free Church. Its business-like approach made the union of the Relief congregation with the Maygate United Secession Church seem a natural merger to avoid liquidation. This spirit of rationalization and accommodation was inherent within United Presbyterian thinking. The Free Church, on the other hand, survived because it had the will to do so, being born in the furnace of affliction and self-sacrifice and therefore committed to success.

#### The Free Church.

Like the Establishment and United Presbyterian congregations, each individual unit of the Free Church in Dunfermline represented a unique aspect of the denomination's life. St Andrews Free was perhaps most typical in that it broke away from a Parish Church leaving behind only a handful of members in the Residuary Establishment. In the process it lost its building and set about building a new Church. Its membership included teachers and small merchants as well as weavers who, though not always committed to Free Church principles, loyally supported their Seceding minister. The North Parish, which had been the dream child of the Non-Intrusionists in their attempt to wrest back the initiative from the Voluntaries prior to the Disruption, lost nearly all its membership to the Free North who, unlike St Andrews Free, were able to retain their building until a ruling of the House of Lords in 1849 ended their tenure. Made up mainly of working-class folk from the immediate neighbourhood, it was never a typical Free Church for it lacked business entrepreneurs. Its couthy but conservative minister encouraged the parish ideal and allocated districts to elders and deacons from the very beginning.(51) Some who had been Trustees of the Extension Charge joined the Free Church but chose to support the more prestigious Free Abbey, the only congregation to bear the hallmarks of MacLaren's Aberdeen Free Church model.(52) Others who had supported the Extension cause, such as James Kerr, returned to the Establishment. Only the working class remained, many of whom were miners.

Within the two working-class congregations were some who supported the new movement because they resented the Establishment's

off-hand way of dealing with their properties. However, when the Free Church became increasingly dominated by finance, many of them returned to the two Quoad Sacra congregations which were set up in the buildings where they had formerly worshipped.

The following table indicates the size of each of the three Free congregations during the 19th century:

	<u>1851</u>	<u>'53-54</u>	<u>'57-58</u>	<u>'59-60</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1900</u>
Free Abbey	500	440	437	465	449	522	558
Free North	533	350	280	195	203	333	444
Free St Andrews	400	304	330	330	276	297	401

The worst period for the Free Church was therefore between 1851 and 1861 when the town continued to face financial hardship and enthusiasm for the principles of Disruption had paled. This represents the period when the two post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregations were gathering momentum and attracting the working classes. Whereas the table shows that the Free North was experiencing a dramatic fall in numbers between 1851 and 1854, the North Parish was gaining about eighty new communicants annually.(53) The main pick-up point for the Free Church came in the mid-60's with growth becoming significant again after 1875. It is therefore not surprising that it was not until 1877 that there was a Free Church Provost and that within the next thirty years each of the Free congregations provided a Provost. By then the Free Church had a number of major manufacturers and, perhaps more significantly, many of the new professional class such as architects and lawyers.

By the third quarter of the century the conditions which MacLaren saw as ideal for Free Church progress existed. There was a steady rise in population, a growth in the housing stock, the rise of a number of family firms and Church connection became a status symbol. During this period the Establishment's roll rose by 455, mainly due to the success of the Abbey, the Free Church rose by 251, while the United Presbyterians fell by 38. This represented a rise in the Free Church of 20% against a rise of 18% in the Establishment.

In the 1850's and 60's the United Presbyterians held the



advantage over the Free Church. A number of factors had contributed to this. The early Free Church exhausted itself in raising buildings at a time when money was in short supply. The effect of this is perhaps best illustrated by the poor health suffered by the first three ministers. Mr Marshall's long and arduous preaching trips to raise funds for his struggling congregation seriously affected his health.(54) Mr Philip of the Free Abbey ministered for only four years before giving up the charge on health grounds and moving to a less demanding charge in Edinburgh where he died in 1860.(55) Mr Sutherland of Free St Andrews tried to leave Dunfermline in 1845 but his congregation resisted his translation to Kirkwall.(56) However, in 1855 he eventually moved to Gibraltar on health grounds.(57) The difficult circumstances in which the Free Church took root in Dunfermline obviously imposed a great strain on ministers as well as congregations. Even the Free Abbey had to plead with the Sustentation Committee in 1849 for the right to call a new minister.(58) Part of their difficulty was that a number of their influential members had left for other parts of the country. The reasons for this were two-fold. The depressed state of the weaving trade required men to find new markets elsewhere, while the cholera epidemics were not conducive to middle-class people setting up business in the town. The Free Church had to wait until the power loom factories were built before it began to enjoy its greatest prosperity. Meanwhile the United Presbyterians retained the support of the High Street shopkeepers, the small manufacturers and the spirit merchants who had become rich at the expense of the down-trodden weaving community.(59)

In financial matters the central management of the Free Church constituted its main difference from the United Presbyterians who tended to exist more as individual units. Certainly the Sustentation Fund helped to avoid many of the unpleasant clashes between ministers and Boards of Management which plagued its sister denomination. Finance remained the great problem but it was less personalised and ministers were not made the butt of the Managers' wrath when things were going badly.

The main contention arose between the Deacons' Courts and the Central Fund and this led to the office of deacon becoming one

which many members were reluctant to accept. While in the United Presbyterian tradition the minister was like a football manager whose success was only as good as the latest result, the deacons of the Free Church were like salesmen in a large pension trust company who were required to find new investors so that profits might be kept up and dividends increased. When congregations felt aggrieved that higher "premiums" were demanded of them because of the failure of others, the Sustentation Committee became the target of their wrath. Thus many working-class congregations, of which the Free North was one, had difficulty finding deacons and collectors for no-one wanted to take on such an unpopular task. Above all the post of Free Church Treasurer was a difficult one to fill. Resignations were frequent and at times Deacons' Courts could not amass a quorum.(60) The following figures indicate the problem facing the congregations in appointing office bearers:

	<u>Elders</u>		<u>Deacons</u>		<u>Collectors</u>	
	<u>1853-4</u>	<u>1857-8</u>	<u>1853-4</u>	<u>1857-8</u>	<u>1853-4</u>	<u>1857-8</u>
Free Abbey	14	16	8	15	10	11
Free North	10	4	1		5	3
Free St Andrews	7	5	6	13	5	13

These statistics indicate the financial problems of the Free North in particular. The deacons and collectors found it embarrassing to demand subscriptions from the poorer members of the congregation, so there was a marked reluctance to accept these offices.

Figures for givings to the Sustentation Fund in 1863 throw further light on the financial problems of the Free North:(61)

	<u>Gave</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Per Member</u>
Free Abbey	151	449	6/10
Free North	46	203	4/3
Free St Andrews	131	276	9/6

Correspondence in the local Press showed how sensitive the subject had become. A deacon demanded to know why a congregation was asked to contribute beyond its own requirements. In a reply he was accused of being an Independent or Congregationalist rather than a Presbyterian. The Free Church, it was claimed, was not a number of isolated units but:

"Everyone acquainted with the constitution of the Free Church of Scotland is aware that the several ministerial charges, of which it consists forms ONE congregation, under the central administration of government."(62)

The subject of the deacons' role was also discussed in later correspondence, one writer claiming that it was because they were failing in their duties that Church Headquarters had to send out unpleasant letters. A minister welcomed this letter because he felt that the failure of the deacons was where the trouble lay:

"As far as I know the feelings of my brethren in the Presbytery, I can assure him that it would be like life from the dead, that they had the whole question of the Sustentation Fund discussed among deacons in the friendly spirit which 'A deacon' brings it."(63)

The strong phrase, "life from the dead", indicates the centrality of the issue and the clear view of the minister that deacons needed to work harder. Such discussions bear out the motto which the Free Church had been given elsewhere, "Justification, Sanctification and Sustentation."

A year later the newspapers again published a number of letters and articles which throw additional light on the vexed question of the Fund within Dunfermline. A Mr Shearer claimed that in most congregations the Fund was supported by only a few members and this would have been the situation in the Free Abbey if their Deacons' Court had not taken action to ensure that more contributed. He received a reply from a reader who signed himself "U.P." and accused the Free Abbey of acting as a commission of Income Tax in judging the means and substance of members and using home visits to cajole or coerce. Such practices, he maintained, were quite foreign to the spirit of Voluntaryism and a hindrance to any useful dialogue on Church Union:

"I would imagine that any person with a grain of spirit would resist such a visit as an impertinence; and I am sure that in the U.P. Church anything of that sort would be spurned as a violation of the first principle of Voluntaryism."(64)

However it has been noted earlier that the methods and pressures employed by some of the United Presbyterian congregations were just as demanding.



The denomination which felt the financial strain earliest in Dunfermline was the Free Church. It has been noted that one if not two of their congregations originally had had a large working-class membership, many of whom had abandoned it when constant demands for money became an irritation and embarrassment. When Mr Brown came to the Free North in 1865 the situation was depressed and some time later a bazaar was held to raise funds in order to clear off long term debt. The Establishment congregation of St Andrews Quoad Sacra had held a fund raising afternoon in order to raise the money needed to match the donation of Mr Kilgour. However the events in the Free North proved contentious within the Free Church Presbytery and indicate the type of division both in doctrine and Church management which was rending the Church of the Disruption. A letter to a national newspaper, said to be by Mr Lundie of Torryburn, had stated that offering goods at bazaars was a dishonest way of raising money.(65) In one reply a writer complained that the letter had been deeply insulting to the minister and members of the Free North. Mr Lundie, however, received support from a Darlington correspondent:

"If Mr Lundie is the only churchman who had the courage of his convictions in his crusade against this modern phase of Mediaeval Indulgence, all the more power to him."(66)

A few years later the issue flared up again and arguments against the practice of ladies' sales of work, raffles and the keeping of licensed refreshment stalls were again brought forward by the more conservative members of the Free Church. Those with more liberal attitudes saw these efforts as helping needy members of society.

Mr Lundie pressed his case that the Free Church should speak out against such fund raising efforts but failed to persuade Presbytery to overture the Assembly. His concern was the increasing number of such sales, raffles and even licensed refreshment stalls that the bazaars had brought. He could, of course, understand the reasoning of Deacons Courts who encouraged such efforts:

"....with such unbounded desires .... it is not to be wondered at that ministers and deacons courts jump so readily to the bazaar as a means of making money, and employ any expedient as a means of swelling its proceedings."(67)

It is clear that since so few of the Churches within the Free Presbytery of Dunfermline were self supporting such bazaars held out the hope of their survival so that Lundie did not win much support. He claimed that Professor Caird at a fund making effort in Crieff, had said that their aim was:

".... to make money, honestly if they could, but at all events to make money." (68)

Lundie took his case to the Synod and there a broader motion was accepted which recommended that in its efforts to raise money the Church should abstain from all appearance of evil. (69)

These matters seem to indicate that until about 1875 the Free Church was in retreat and many of its earlier principles had to be forgotten if it were to maintain any witness whatever and not disintegrate through financial default. The situation eased when the economic climate improved as the small businessman and the professional class began to find work in Dunfermline. The Free Abbey was able to build a magnificent new edifice in 1884 which epitomised its new-found confidence.

By now bazaars had come to stay and the Quoad Sacra congregations of the Establishment who had Boards of Managers found in them a useful source of money for capital projects such as building halls. These came at a later date and gradually became the hub of Church life. The growth of Woman's Guilds no doubt provided the woman-power to make these events run smoothly. By this time the United Presbyterians had put their financial house in order and tended to use subscription lists as the best means of guaranteeing the success of a project before it began. Here again was found the business-like approach of the old Seceders compared to the door collectors of the early Free Church. The Free Church had been strangled from the beginning between Chalmers' "power of the littles" and an overbearing Central Management Committee. Bazaars seemed a good way of escaping the tediousness of collecting and the demands of the Central Fund. They also involved members in social activity and drew Church members together. It may be asked, however, if they led the Church away from her former distinctive witness and brought her rather into bondage to

worldly pressures.

In another chapter it will be shown that the Churches modified their lifestyle to accommodate the prevailing philosophical thinking of the time. It may even be suggested that the way in which funds were raised was dictated by expediency and not spiritual principle. Part of the problem was the sheer competitiveness of the Dunfermline situation where some sixteen congregations competed within a very small town centre. Since the poorest would go to the wall, every method found justification if it would make a congregation successful.

When the stipends of the various congregations at the turn of the century are noted it is the Free Abbey which paid its minister most. The two Abbey ministers had relatively high stipends but the North Parish, the most working-class congregation of the main Presbyterian Churches, struggled with a figure far below the others. Even this was only achieved through the generosity of the incumbent who helped to raise the endowment figure from £150 to £175. The two smaller Free congregations both received the minimum stipend and this demonstrated the fairness of the Central Finance Fund. As for the United Presbyterian congregations, there was a wide spread between them from Queen Anne with £350 to Chalmers Street with only £216.

There can be little doubt that finance dominated the thinking of the Voluntary Churches during the second half of the 19th century. Congregations tended to depend on the givings of a few and this was particularly true of the Free Church in Dunfermline which had never had a large number of affluent members. A breakdown of the Free Abbey figures is quite revealing. One member gave £36; 36 members gave roughly £1; 168 members gave roughly 6/8; so that of 479 members, 278 gave little or nothing at all.(70)

The United Presbyterian Church tended to be firmer with members who did not pay their way and were prepared to send out paid officials to deal with offenders. It is true that Mr Brydie of St Andrews Free Church was also sent on such a mission though his purpose was not so crudely defined. His departure from the congregation



shortly afterwards may have been because of the unpleasantness which such visits engendered.(71)

While the two Voluntary denominations were struggling with finance and later when it became a matter of competing financially for status among themselves, the Established Church enjoyed a period of retrenchment when new members could simply worship or maintain a Church connection without feeling that it was their pockets and not their souls which the Church was interested in. The crusading spirit of the Establishment was in marked contrast to the early attempts of the United Presbyterian Church to rebuild on its former foundation a more elegant edifice. It also contrasted with the Free Church which had to defend what it had inherited against the background of a poor economic climate. Only when the town's wealth increased did the Free Church become a potent force in the ecclesiastical scene.

## CHAPTER NINE

### The Character of Dissent

How far did the ethos of the Secession Church and that of Dissent as a whole mirror the life of the weaving community? The Carnegie family were typical of many in Fife during the 18th and 19th centuries and a brief family history will indicate how characteristics generic to the weaving community were likewise found in the life of both political and ecclesiastical Dissent.

Andrew Carnegie, the famous philanthropist, was the first of four generations to seek his fortune outside the handloom industry. The story of his forefathers, James, Andrew and William, reveals different aspects of weaving life.

James: radical weaver.

James Carnegie, Andrew's great-grandfather, was a radical weaver who typified the spirit of artisans who refused to accept the status quo. Brought up in Pattiesmuir, a small village three miles south of Dunfermline, he took part in the Meal Riots in the 1770's and was imprisoned for seditious activity.(1) Towards the end of the 18th century weavers figured largely in political movements such as the Friends of the People who planned in 1794 to divide the lands of Pittencreeff among ordinary folk.(2) Though James had been imprisoned and other Dunfermline weavers were later sentenced for sedition at Perth in 1798, radicalism among the weaving fraternity was generally peaceful and law abiding. For example, the Incorporation of Weavers petitioned Parliament in 1795 to restore peace in the realm.(3) Indeed the use of constitutional means to bring about reform marked the spirit of protest. More militant action sometimes broke out but generally the intelligent and enquiring weavers kept within the law. In the early 40's, at the time of the Chartist unrest, a clash did take place between those who favoured moral persuasion and those who wanted a more aggressive approach. Both sides advocated their cause at the hustings but even when the weavers took matters into their own hands

in 1842 there was still a degree of restraint to their lawbreaking activities. Nor is it surprising that a young political firebrand such as Thomas Morrison, Andrew Carnegie's uncle, should succeed in later life to the position of a respected baillie. His famous comment, "Keep within the limits of the law and you will always be able to find a bridge by which to reach your purpose", is a fair summary of the spirit of Dunfermline Radicalism.(4) It was that of the idealist rather than the anarchist, the reformer rather than the destructive revolutionary. This was due in part to the influence of religion on the weaving community. James Carnegie, like most weavers of his time, had joined the Secession Church and had contributed to the building of a manse for Ralph Erskine.(5) Most weavers recognised that the very nature of their cottage industry gave them economic muscle without the necessity of overthrowing the landed class. They had the means of self-determination, especially before the advent of the industrial revolution, and this gave them a superiority over their fellow workers. Of course, there were times when greater militancy broke out, as at the Meal Riots, the 1842 general strike and the pillaging of some factories in 1844, but reformation rather than revolution motivated their political activities.

Andrew: itinerant trader and raconteur.

One of James' sons, Andrew, took up his father's loom. At the time the trade was free from mercantile restrictions and weavers took their finished webs to Stirling, Perth, Edinburgh and beyond.(6) These trips put them in touch with the social, religious and political ideas of the time. Andrew represents the early itinerant trader who in peddling his wares became a raconteur and well-kent figure on the Scottish trade routes. Yet he is not a totally representative figure since most weavers never journeyed much further than the nearest hamlet to their own. This led to a close, in-bred community which resembled the small mining villages of the 20th century. Nevertheless, people like Andrew brought back to these small communities news of what was happening in other parts of the country so that, despite their isolation, weavers were well informed on current affairs. Such packmen thus provided an important community service in keeping their fellows abreast of the times. Later, when newspapers



were introduced, groups of weavers would lay down tools and meet at some pre-arranged spot to hear the day's events. Andrew also took Dunfermline news with him on his travels and this would include Church matters for there was a general interest in the rise of Dissent throughout the country. Communion gatherings also provided talking shops where views were exchanged.

Because they could arrange their working hours, weavers, by hard work and careful management, found time for other pursuits such as reading, gardening and bee-keeping. This tended to make them cultured artisans whose interests were diverse. Discussions were often held on religious and political topics in one of the narrow cottages which made up the local community and Andrew is said to have led the Pattiesmuir "College" where weavers and farmers gathered for informal seminars.(7) These meetings were hotbeds of support for the Secession cause and formed perhaps the secular complement to the cottage prayer meeting.

Andrew was typical of the hard-working, self-made, convivial personalities who made up the cause of Dissent. These laymen found scope for their gifts within the Secession cause which had a more democratic base than the Established Church.

However, despite all his wanderings, Andrew, like a migrating bird, found his way back to Pattiesmuir.(8) The weavers did not like to leave their home base where their roots had gone deep. So too the Secession Church retained a closeness to the structure of the Establishment despite its departure from her. It had Presbyteries and Synods, elders and Kirk Sessions, and an affinity for the Covenants and the Westminster Confession. It sought to realign the National Establishment rather than overthrow it.

William: ambitious cork, financial failure.

Andrew's sixth son, William, was of a more serious disposition than his father, his main interests being reading and walking. Above all he sought to increase his weaving skill and was, according to Wall, one of the first of the Carnegies to move into the

town of Dunfermline. Like other ambitious young weavers he recognised the need for close proximity to the small manufacturers who marketed the finished goods.(9) Ambition, the will to succeed and the spirit of the entrepreneur were integral to the handloom trade.

After coming to Dunfermline in the 1830's, he became the owner of three additional looms which he let out to journeymen, thus following the natural course of any young weaver who eventually hoped to set up as a small merchant in his own right. As many as fifty such merchants or wholesalers could co-exist when trade was good. Though there were a number of well established houses there were no large firms dominating the industry, so the possibility of a rags to riches story was more than a mere dream. A skilled weaver with good business acumen could rise from the lowest ranks to become a "cork" or small merchant trader. The financial rewards available were therefore divided among a small caucus of merchant traders, a larger core of master weavers and then the main body of journeymen. Few looms, however, were found within anything resembling a factory. Journeymen often worked in small business premises or worksheds or at the home of the master weaver, which brought a closeness between worker and employer and often meant that the journeyman had almost a direct interest in the sale of his product. He was not simply a cog in a machine.

Business opportunities, however, were severely reduced when the handloom trade went into decline. Men like William could not believe that their industry could collapse and plodded on hoping that the dark clouds of depression and unemployment would pass and the sun would shine on their labours as before. They hated the introduction of the handloom factories and set themselves against those manufacturers who sought to introduce more modern systems of production.

Eventually, like many others, William had to succumb. Andrew was later to write of him, "My father did not recognise the impending revolution, and was struggling under the old system."(10)

Carnegie was not alone in his disenchantment. The

Dunfermline weaver had managed to retain his independence for a longer period than the cotton workers of the west and to stave off the worst effects of industrialisation which made men pawns of the factory barons. The situation was further complicated by the fact that for over a decade a period of stalemate had existed. On the manufacturers' side there was a lack of capital to set up a power loom system which would eventually make the individual handloom craftsmen obsolete. On the other hand the handloom weavers used the "old grandfather table"(11) to prevent any manufacturer from acting unilaterally and this led to constant industrial disputes and the weakening of the trade's bargaining power against foreign competition.

William in his younger days had been a member of the Secession Church and through it expressed his disapproval of the National Church and its system of selective religious endowment. As trade slackened, however, he began to question the concept of the stern God of the Covenant and looked for a more reasonable deity(12), eventually leaving the Seceders and becoming a member of the Swedenborgian Church. During those years of depression and disillusionment it was his wife who maintained the family life. Her careful management and the sale of vegetables from the garden held the home together and Andrew was to say of her:

"I do not know to what lengths of privation my mother would not have gone that she might see her two boys wearing white collars, and trimly dressed."(13)

Likewise women were to play an increasing role in political and ecclesiastical Dissent and gradually the male-dominated society of the traditional trade was infiltrated by a new breed of women who experienced, albeit through the rigours of factory life, liberation and financial independence.

Andrew: entrepreneur in the New World.

In America young Andrew Carnegie opened up new fields of opportunity for the Carnegie family. The very industrialisation which killed his father's cottage industry became the tool he used to carve the family fortune. Of course not all families who suffered from the



decline in their industry re-emerged as successes in other fields but many did and used their skills as entrepreneurs to find success in the ancillary industries which the power loom revolution brought. Others lost heart and became disillusioned while many had to accept the drudgery and imprisonment of the factory floor. The collapse of the traditional industry was the death of a community and culture. A golden age had gone.

Thus in the Carnegie family many of the distinctive traits of the old cottage industry were found. There was the radicalism of mainly law abiding citizens, the ambition and will to succeed, the willingness to travel and find new markets, paralleled by a desire to keep as close as possible to their traditional roots. Lay individuals found the means of expressing their own self-image both in politics and Church affairs. In young Andrew Carnegie is found the ability to turn disappointment and failure into success, although for other families the death of their trade meant disenchantment with life in general.

#### Parallel events.

In tracing the history of the Carnegie family the continual quest for self-improvement has been noticed as each generation sought to build upon the achievements of its predecessors. There was a restless drive for independence, self-sufficiency and financial security and the same features are found within the Secession Church.

From the time when Erskine left the Abbey the weaving community was inseparably linked with the Seceding cause. Their relatively high wages and economic independence enabled them to support, and in some instances initiate, Dissent.

Parallel events and developments can be traced in such matters as the printing of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* in 1718 by James Hogg, minister of Carnock, and the introduction of damask weaving by James Blake at about the same time.(14) Though Blake shared his secret with only a few others, the foundation of the great table linen industry was laid. The effect of *The Marrow* was likewise to quicken

evangelical piety so that for the next hundred years the handloom weavers were the backbone of the Secession Church.

There seems to be no immediate connection between the setting up of the Associate Presbytery at nearby Gairney Bridge in 1733 and the fact that a year earlier Dunfermline weavers had won a battle to have their own bleachfield. Yet in their respective spheres both had challenged the recognised authority: the Seceders challenged the National Church and the weavers the landed class.

The following table sets out how weaving and ecclesiastical life followed parallel courses with the events of one interacting with the other:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Weaving</u>	<u>Ecclesiastical events</u>
1750's	Yarn Market 1753 Dye House bought by David Turnbull 1752	Gillespie deposed by Assembly and set up new congregation 1752
1779	Fly shuttle introduced by John Wilson	Chapel congregation granted constitution by Assembly
1820-27	Nine months strike 1822 Introduction of Jacquard machine 1825	Long dispute in Queen Anne Street United Secession led to formation of St Margarets United Secession 1820-25
1834-40	Three handloom factories opened	Voluntary Controversy. New Church Extension charge opened 1840
1841-45	Main period of strikes over Table of Wages	Episcopal Church 1842 Independent Church 1842 Three Free Churches 1843
1849-51	First two power loom factories opened	First post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregation endowed - St Andrews 1851

From the above table it can be seen that each new development in the trade, such as the fly shuttle, the Jacquard machine, the handloom factories and ultimately the power loom factories, was accompanied by some major ecclesiastical change. This is not surprising when one remembers that the weavers were the backbone of the whole Dissenting movement.

The weaving community was made up of three distinct groups, the merchants who were really small retail traders, the master weavers who usually owned a few other looms which they let out to apprentices and the journeymen. Because the trade was not dominated by large industrial barons or concentrated in factories it had a completely different ethos to the cotton trade in the west. The system was cottage-based and resembled an extended family. It had a small employer-employee ratio which meant that even journeymen often knew their masters as friends and fellow worshippers.

Another factor which bound the trade together was the system of finance on which the industry was run. This depended on a chain of credit which stretched from the merchant right down to the customer. Any break in the chain could lead to bankruptcy so those who managed the industry tried to maintain a good working relationship with their workforce.

Two different sets of circumstances could upset the smooth working of the trade apart from the cyclical rise and fall in demand. The first was when one individual or group of merchants gained an advantage over the others through some new device. The second was when operatives banded together to try to prevent merchants from lowering wages. An instance of the first was John Wilson who invented the fly shuttle in 1779. That same year he was one of the leading figures in the formation of the Chapel congregation, a breakaway from the Relief Church. Those who remained in the Relief included, on the other hand, some of the oldest handloom craftsmen in the community.(15)

An instance of the second took place in 1822. The employers as a whole resisted the operatives, battle was enjoined and for nine months the whole trade was affected by a strike. There is no doubt that something of this struggle is reflected in the emergence of the new congregation of St Margarets from the oldest Secession congregation, Queen Anne Street.(16)

Every change in the trade was seen at first as a threat to traditional practice and to journeymen in particular. With each



development the divide grew wider until the power loom finally crushed the old system. The United Secession and Relief congregations suffered badly, while out of their misfortune the new Free Church emerged. By then a revolution had swept through both industrial and church life. In the earlier years financial benefits had been shared among a large number of individuals with remarkably small differentials between the top and the middle and even the journeymen enjoyed a standard of living superior to most working-class folk. The trade was comparable to a number of small corner shops competing on roughly equal terms, no individual attempting to break away from the rest to set up larger units.

Thus the old handloom industry had enabled large numbers to enjoy financial success and these were the founder members of the Secession Church. With the coming of the power loom the large industrial baron emerged and, like the modern multiple store, swallowed up the small units. In Dunfermline the process was long drawn out and many smaller manufacturers suffered bankruptcy. The distribution of wealth was gradually confined to a smaller group. Of course most of the country experienced this aspect of industrialisation but perhaps Dunfermline as a community suffered as much as any because of the town's former prosperity. In the process a property-owning, high wage earning regime was destroyed and the United Secession and Relief congregations, which had previously prospered on the weavers' wealth, had to turn to new patrons if they hoped to survive. The weavers' loss of status meant that they were no longer recognised as a valuable asset. Of course many of the older families retained their Church connection and joined with the new entrepreneurs to restore their congregations' lost fortunes. The list of Managers in the Relief congregation in 1850 gives a clear indication of this.(17)

#### Constitutional Radicals.

During the 18th century ecclesiastical Dissent held an undoubted attraction for the weaving community. The early Seceding fathers were seen as both courageous and romantic figures whose exploits captured the imagination of those who sought to cast off the yoke of old class privilege. Men like James Carnegie rallied to such

a cause while the list of those who contributed to Erskine's new Meeting House in 1740 indicates the support which the Secession received throughout the community, especially among the common people.(18)

Ecclesiastical life showed the same constitutional radicalism which has been noted in the weaving community. The Secession in Dunfermline was a reasoned act by those who believed in their cause. Erskine's moderate stance is evident from the support he gave to Mr Mair's declaration where he stated that he shunned all divisive principle and practice and sought only after peace.(19) Even when he was deposed by the General Assembly he clung tenaciously to the right to be treated as a parish minister, arguing that God alone could sever the tie which sealed pastor and congregation.(20) The Assembly eventually forced the Presbytery of Dunfermline to take more radical action to exclude him from the Abbey pulpit. Even though a new Meeting House had been erected and paid for, Erskine still wanted it to be known that this was no willing abandonment of the National Church in order to take up another charge. Like Luther it might be said of him that he was left with no other choice.

His concern for the Establishment continued and he deeply resented the disdainful attitude of other Seceders to those who, though sympathetic to their cause, chose nevertheless to remain within the pale of the National Church. In his adherence to Mr Mair's declaration he had stated:

"...I intend and understand no withdrawing from ministerial communion with any of the godly ministers of this national church that are groaning under or wrestling against the defections of the times, even though they have not the same light with us in every particular contained in the aforesaid testimony."(21)

Even after his ultimate exclusion from the Establishment his concern for the unity of God's cause never abated and he felt deeply any rending of Christ's body. When the Burgher breach took place he regretted this further sundering. In fact he considered the breach as partly a judgement of God on those who had previously treated their departure from the National Church so lightly.(22) Now

their own house was rent in twain.

The second great figure of ecclesiastical controversy, Thomas Gillespie, also won sizable support for his cause, his treatment at the hands of the General Assembly increasing his popular appeal.(23) He stood for the ordinary parish minister, defending individual rights against the great machine of Establishment. Erskine's earlier success had convinced him that the Establishment was not invincible.

In the political and social realm Thomas Morrison, uncle of Andrew Carnegie, advocated moral persuasion rather than physical force in the pursuit of any objective. In this he reflected the prevailing attitude of the handloom weavers who, as skilled artisans some of whom were property owners, did not want sweeping economic revolution. There were, of course, attempts to take matters into their own hands but this was the exception rather than the rule.(24) Their reaction can be understood when their sudden loss of social standing, their fear of unemployment and their anxiety over what the future would hold, are remembered. Some desired more militant action, believing that revolutionary democracy and enlightenment would not be achieved by public education and moral right alone. However the vast majority of the Dunfermline workforce remained law abiding.

Erskine, Gillespie and Morrison typify ecclesiastical and political Dissent in Dunfermline. Erskine was a reluctant rebel who first gained the support of the majority of his Session, his congregation and even the community before making a final break with the Abbey. Gillespie was an enforced Dissenter who had the door shut in his face by an Establishment prepared to make him a scapegoat for the wider ecclesiastical divisions which were spreading like a cancer through the National Church. Morrison, despite his fiery tongue and reforming zeal, was at heart a constitutionalist and it is not surprising that he later became a respected Baillie in the town. These constitutional radicals of Dunfermline were not bent on destroying the old order but on replacing it with something better. Erskine's new Meeting House challenged the authority of the Abbey and won over large numbers, while Gillespie sought to show a better way forward than through high-handed patronage. Morrison endeavoured to



bring about reform from within a legally constituted Council.

The radical spirit was therefore not merely destructive; it was creative and sought to establish its goals by lawful expansion.(25) Moreover it had a competitive edge to it, arising as it did out of a lower-middle-class ethos rather than working-class frustration. The radicalism of Dunfermline's early Dissenters was fostered by a high wage-earning community which could cock a snook at landed-class privilege. The later rebels of the Reform Association likewise did not want to remove themselves too far from the safety of their middle-class base. Whereas in most of the country industrialisation involved the overthrow of the landed class by the new business entrepreneurs who used the working class as their stepping stones to success, in Dunfermline one group of lower middle class was overthrown by another. The handloom weavers were replaced by the High Street shopkeepers and business entrepreneurs of the ancillary trades which arose from the power loom revolution.

It was noted in connection with Andrew Carnegie senior that he was typical of those whose business took them away from Fife but whose roots remained firmly in the kingdom. The same desire not to remove traditional bearings was true of Secession, Relief, Chapel and Free Church movements. The early Secessionists, as has been noted in reference to Erskine, hoped for a return to the National Church freed from its error. It was therefore a reforming movement which did not seek primarily to introduce new ideas but rather to restore the Church to her former obedience. Burton saw this attitude as belonging to the very essence of Scottish Dissent:

"In Scotland every body of men who dissented from the Establishment professed to throw it off as departing from the good old way, and so be themselves the representatives of the Establishment pursuing the good old ways it had deserted."(26)

Dissenters in Scotland have thus, according to Burton, claimed the privilege of standing before the world as the sole representatives of the True Church. The Secession therefore formed Presbyteries and Synods, held to the Covenants and the Confession and sought to strengthen the office of elder and deacon. Doctrinally it

differed little from the National Church, its main divergence coming in the areas of patronage and the civil magistrate. Later, when the Free Church was formed, Chalmers could speak of leaving a vitiated Establishment and of being unwilling Voluntaries.

The National Church, the Free Church and the United Presbyterians had the basis for an ultimate return to the one fold, for their divisions were mainly in the peripheral areas of order or doctrine. At the heart of each was the central place of an ordained ministry, an eldership and the Presbyterian form of Church government. All three branches found the real revolutionaries within their own ranks much more difficult to assimilate. These were the avant garde in worship, doctrine or liturgy. Likewise the middle-class Dunfermline radicals found themselves combining to squeeze out the threat of working-class Chartism and thereby keep the mainstream life of the Church solidly middle-class.

Lay participation and the democratic spirit.

It has already been noted that the traditional handloom industry was based on a kind of cottage-based extended family rather than dominated by a few large firms with a large employee-employer ratio. Master weavers such as William Carnegie worked hand in glove with the merchant traders from whom they received their commissions. Moreover, since their workshops were often within or adjacent to their homes, their journeymen had a close association with the family. In many cases an annual family meal was provided where employee and employer met together in social fellowship.(27) Later the Niffler societies provided talking places as well as a co-operative which benefited the whole weaving community.(28)

This close interaction of all who were involved in the trade meant that most weavers felt that they had a say in the marketing of their goods, unlike the modern factory employee who puts in a single bolt on a car assembly line. Thus operatives could take pride in their achievements and feel that it was their own industry.

The Secession Church provided an ecclesiastical pattern

closer to the weavers' industrial and economic experience. Congregations were composed of like-minded individuals who had the success of their church at heart. Often whole communities, such as that at Pattiesmuir, supported the Secession cause and created a spirit of corporate identity which the National Church seldom achieved. The Abbey, despite being the Parish Church, was seldom representative of the community. The Dissenting congregations, on the other hand, developed a gathered church pattern where support was not based simply on theological ideology but also upon a common industrial interest and their more democratic structures attracted the laity. Of course in its beginning the Secession Church had its ministerial giants who carved its history, though they were backed by the support they received from the Praying and Corresponding Societies. Eventually the laity became the backbone of the Church as groups gathered in different areas and applied to the Associate Presbyteries for ministerial supply. Before such was provided Presbytery had to be assured that there would be adequate financial support. Individuals like Andrew Carnegie senior typified the lay enthusiasm which the Secession Church encountered in Fife. Weaving communities, aware of their economic independence, found in the new Church an ecclesiastical counterpart to their exuberant industrial dynamism.

Nowhere was the difference between the National Church and the Secession more marked than in the numbers who served in the eldership and diaconate. It has been noted elsewhere that Erskine had encouraged such active lay participation even before he seceded. In 1714 eight deacons were raised to the eldership and another ten men were also ordained.(29) In 1720 five new elders were appointed(30), thirteen more in 1733(31) and three more the following year.(32) These numbers were far greater than was usual in the National Church where in many cases the office of elder had almost ceased to exist.

Nor was the choice of elders left to the minister alone but was rather entrusted to other members of the Session who were asked to sound out the congregation about the various candidates.(33) In 1719 the elders were asked by the minister to recommend others for the office and a leet was made up of those whom the Session regarded as fit candidates.(34) In 1733 a similar list was drawn up and the elders



were asked to enquire of the parishioners if those on the list met with their approval.(35) In April 1733 some members of Session reported their findings:

"...that the aforesaid leet nominated for being elders, were the choice of the generality of all heads of families in the quarters to which they belonged; and that besides the fore-said leet, some others were nominated by the people whom the Session were well pleased to add to the former leet."(36)

The procedure then required that all the candidates be examined by the Session after which notice was made of their intended ordination against which any member of the congregation could state his objection.

Thus, even before he seceded, Erskine had employed a much more democratic system of electing elders than prevailed elsewhere within the Church and which enabled ordinary weavers to have a real say in the running of the congregation. Elders were often the chosen representatives of a district rather than appointed to a district by the Session. This meant that when the Secession came the elders and deacons who went out often carried the support of a whole community with them since they represented grass-root opinion. In other words, the Secession movement in Dunfermline benefited from well-organised party propaganda in the same way as a modern political party needs the machine to function effectively at local level. The elder in the early Associate Session in Dunfermline was like a Member of Parliament or local Councillor who represented his constituents, in sharp contrast both to the way in which the Establishment was intruding ministers upon an unwilling people and to the restricted concept of the eldership which prevailed nationally. Thus Erskine's departure left the National Church in Dunfermline bereft of many rank and file members while creating in opposition a people's Church.

Even so it should be noted that Erskine did not simply fill the Church with office bearers who were automatically prepared to secede when he threw in his lot with the Associate Presbytery. Fraser notes how Erskine took time to win the backing of the elders for his cause.(37) By delaying the decisive break until the last moment he managed to capture the majority of the Session who at an earlier date had been undecided which way to turn.

Erskine introduced the same method of choosing elders into the new Associate congregation. In 1742 a recommendation was made that societies should forward names of possible office bearers(38) and by September lists of names had been received. The widespread geographical extent of the societies within the Dunfermline congregation indicates the popularity of the movement.

Weavers like the Carnegies found in the Secession Church the opportunity to assume responsibility. Moreover their strength of character and restless zeal made the congregations of Dissent less clerically dominated than the Establishment where power tended to be top heavy. Ministers and Heritors dominated the congregational affairs of the National Church and a small caucus of ministers and laymen, many of them lawyers, dominated the Assembly. While the Establishment resembled a State-controlled industry, the Secession was more like a confederation of small businesses in which members held shares, the minister was chairman and elders and Managers the controlling directors. Therefore in the Dissenting camp more people had a genuine interest in the success of the individual unit, which naturally suited the radical weavers who wanted a share in the success of their congregation and not merely to belong to a vast, impersonal organisation.

Something of the outgoing, adventurous spirit of the wandering weaver philosopher such as Andrew Carnegie is also found, since the growth of Dissent was brought about by the drive and enthusiasm of an informed laity who petitioned Presbytery for new churches where finance was available to set them up. Thus, while the Establishment dithered and became more and more enmeshed in legal and constitutional wrangles over patronage and Chapels of Ease, the Secession was constantly breaking new ground.(39) Like the weaver, those of a Dissenting persuasion looked for new outlets and were prepared to set up trade where need arose and favourable financial conditions prevailed. These new units involved a number of leading lay figures who were prepared to back the venture by investing capital in the building and, through seat letting, involved the membership as shareholders. As a lay movement it carried popular support.

Of course there was another side to the democratic spirit and the prominent role played by the laity. It would appear that, while the system worked well when the economic climate was good and a pastor was popular, difficulties arose when trade slumped or the charge was vacant.

Vacancies in particular led to "boardroom" wrangles among the "directors" who each had his own idea of who would prove a successful future "chairman". Without a leader the elders vied among themselves for power. One outstanding example of this was the eight year vacancy which occurred after Erskine's death. Another was the long dispute in Queen Anne Street where the new element was the growing power of the Managers and their spiritual and temporal relationship to the elders.(40)

From an early date the United Secession showed the traits of the later United Presbyterian Church which was accused of seeking to set up congregations only where the right financial conditions were present for success. The early Secession Church, unlike the Free Church, had no national scheme. Church headquarters did not plan for congregations to be set up. The first move had to come from the laity who demanded pulpit supply in a certain area, so many areas were untouched by the Secession. This had, of course, been Chalmers' argument when he attacked the Voluntary system as inadequate to meet the spiritual needs of the whole country. For him a territorial ministry which made provision for the length and breadth of the land, the rich and the poor, a ministry in every parish, alone met the requirements for an adequate provision of religious ordinances. Both the United Secession and the later United Presbyterians founded churches in the richer areas and provided Mission Halls in the poorer. This first and second class religious provision foreshadowed the Victorian paternalism which was to become a principal ingredient of middle-class Christianity.

In contrast to Dissent it has already been noted that the National Church was served in Dunfermline by only a handful of elders for most of the 18th century when the Rev James Thomson ruled the Abbey with a rod of iron. The Rev Peter Chalmers tried in 1823 to



bring to the eldership a new sense of their parochial responsibilities as well as the exercise of discipline from within the Session. He was not very successful at first but he did manage gradually to create a more effective eldership who were prepared to give reports on their district visitation.(41) By 1836 when the congregation decided to appoint an assistant to Mr McLean, who was ill, the laity had assumed a role which had not been known since Erskine's time. Mr Chalmers indicated three possible methods of choosing the new assistant. He could make the appointment himself, give the entire matter over to members of the congregation or a committee of thirty could bring forward a name but he himself would have the final choice. This last suggestion caused great offence and Mr Chalmers had eventually to concede the whole right of choice to the committee of thirty chosen by the congregation. The whole matter, especially the way in which it was handled, caused dissension in the congregation and gave the Voluntaries the opportunity to point to Mr Chalmers as an example of a clerical tyrant.(42)

After the Disruption attempts were made to introduce more democratic practices into the Establishment so that when elders were appointed in the Abbey in 1845 sealed lists were used, although only 25 members availed themselves of the opportunity to vote.(43) When it was moved in 1848 that more elders were needed if the parish were to be properly supervised, the method of electing elders was again raised. Though Mr Kerr, one of the elders, wanted the democratic method of election by sealed lists to be continued, others including the second minister Mr French were less convinced. Matters were delayed and it was not until 1851 that the Kirk Session ruled:

"Though the Kirk Session have the right according to the law of the Church to make selection, yet considering that it would give more satisfaction to the congregation were they to have their choice, unanimously agreed that the election be on the same lines as in 1845."(44)

Mr French was absent when this decision was taken and he made it clear at the following meeting that had he been present he would have entered his dissent(45) This gives an indication of the tensions which existed within the broad camp of the Establishment after the Disruption when traditionalists crossed swords with a new,

more forward-looking element within the National Church. Even after their decision in 1851 the matter of choosing elders was abandoned for two years before some were eventually chosen by the use of sealed lists.

In the Free Church one of the most adventurous lay movements was encouraged by the Rev James Brown, the second incumbent of the Free North. Before his arrival the Free North had struggled to survive but Brown laid great stress on the role of the Session and his actions bore fruit. The method of appointing elders and deacons was by sealed lists given out to every member. In 1873 it was proposed that each elder should visit a portion of his district each month to talk with adherents and members on the subject of personal religion. Monthly meetings were held to listen to reports from elders on their progress and in order that they might encourage one another.(46) These changes made it clear that the elders' work was more than rule, or even representation, but spiritual in the sense of evangelical in outreach. This was followed by monthly prayer meetings for office bearers and a plan to visit the whole congregation to help establish family worship.(47)

The Free North in its approach in the early 1870's recalled the work of Erskine, especially before his departure from the Establishment, and that of Chalmers in the Abbey in the 1820's.

Rationalisation and accommodation.

William Carnegie was typical of any young weaver who sought success within the trade. Such men supported the Secession, as did many of the tenant farmers. Both groups had enjoyed the financial prosperity which the high tide of the handloom trade had brought.

Much of their financial success was ploughed back into their Church life and created a competitive spirit between congregations in Secession and Relief camps. The Establishment congregations were naturally drawn into this vortex though the parochial system meant that they did not clash with their neighbours in the National Church. Crossing territorial bounds was frowned upon

and the setting up of a Chapel near to the Parish Church was not encouraged.(48) It was quite different within Dissent where it was necessary to have a successful image and to market your wares like any small firm competing with another. This was done through good management of districts by representative elders and by having a popular minister who could draw the crowds. The decline in the weaving industry therefore proved disastrous for the Dissenting congregations who lost many of their former sponsors as well as the givings of those who were now unemployed. The fears of the Voluntaries about State endowment were clearly justified. For almost a century weaving success and ecclesiastical Dissent had been bound together and when the cord that bound them broke the Secession Church as well as the handloom industry almost collapsed. Some of the smaller Voluntary congregations were faced with the possibility of bankruptcy and liquidation.

In their financial plight both the United Secession and later the United Presbyterians rationalised the situation. Thus two such individualistic and opposing bodies as the Burghers and Anti-Burghers joined forces in 1820, while the Relief and United Secession did likewise in 1847 to form the United Presbyterian Church. Financial considerations demanded that they become a more cohesive force if they were to counter the vigorous growth of the Free Church and the renewed life of the Establishment after the Disruption.

It is of local interest that the Union of 1820 was not as well received in Dunfermline as in the rest of the country. This may be accounted for by the fact that the weaving trade in the east was not at that point under such great pressure as the cotton trade in the west. On the other hand, in 1847 Dunfermline was passing through the most acute depression and the need to rationalise losses was at a height. It is not therefore surprising that the first union at congregational level within the new United Presbyterian body was between the Maygate United Secession Church and the original congregation of Gillespie.

Thus the first move towards union of the divided Churches came from those Churches which first split away. Whereas in its



earlier days the Secession's strong financial base enabled it to expand, even if only by division (the Burgher breach, the Auld and New Lights), in later years a tighter financial climate taught it the benefits of union. Therefore the unions of 1820, 1847 and 1900 can be seen as necessary expedients brought about by wise financial stewardship. Of course other factors, such as doctrine, formed part of the equation but adjustment of doctrinal differences was the price which had to be paid if the Church were to survive as a successful business unit. By 1900 a veritable dog fight had arisen as over fifteen congregations struggled to survive on a square mile at the town's centre. Both United Presbyterians and Free Church recognised the need to maximize efficiency in order to remain viable. The later part of the 19th century witnessed an increasingly competitive spirit in the search for new members within a changing society. Halls adjacent to the church were built to give scope for new activities for old and young alike. The Free Abbey built a Mission Hall in Rumblingwell(49) while St Margarets United Presbyterian Church did likewise in Albany Street.(50) These new stations were direct challenges to the existing Parish Churches but in the latter case it does not seem to have proved very effective. Few people attended and the congregation was left to carry the burden of heavy expense. The same challenge and counter-challenge can be seen in the setting up of a scheme for looking after children in Africa.(51)

The Union of 1900 can therefore be seen as a rationalization of a situation, as when small businessmen recognise the cut and thrust of competition and combine to reduce overheads and maximize the effectiveness of the workforce.

It has also been noted how young Andrew Carnegie used the means of his father's downfall, modernisation and industrialisation, to carve out his future. So it was with the United Presbyterians. Re-adjustment and change were the order of the day. If Andrew could say that his father failed to see the impending revolution, such could not be said of the United Presbyterian fathers. Certainly they were unprepared for the early setbacks which the decline in the handloom industry brought but they soon learned to adjust in order to survive. They were helped to some extent by the depressed state of the trade in

the 40's and 50's which affected all the denominations, giving them the opportunity to regroup and discover roles more appropriate to the new industrial age.

Postscript.

The Church of Scotland in the 20th century prides itself on its broad-based theological spectrum and its capacity to embrace different forms of ministry. Perhaps as significant is the rich diversity of parochial life so that even neighbouring parishes can have the most striking differences which spring from their historical, theological, social and cultural backgrounds. To these of course must be added the personal influence of ministers who have shaped the particular ethos of any congregation. The variety of life and witness is due in part to the National Church's absorbing back into its mainstream life the various Dissenting movements which had earlier torn it asunder. This has made the Church of Scotland more diverse and complex in its parochial witness than its counterpart in England which has kept non-conformity at a distance. In Scotland the return of each Dissenting movement brought its own distinctive contribution. This diversity of parochial life is now beginning to disappear, however, because of Union and Readjustment which is erasing individual congregational characteristics and also because the ethos of modern Church life is less competitive and more ecumenical.

Yet vestiges of the past remain and particular traditions of Dissent can still be traced. Whereas Aberdeen experienced a massive Free Church movement, Dunfermline was influenced to a much larger extent by the Secession and United Presbyterian denominations. Since these movements were among the most democratic and congregational it is not surprising that even to this day Dunfermline remains one of the least ecumenically minded towns in Scotland despite the efforts of Feed the Minds, Christian Aid and strong Ministers' Fraternals in the 1950's to 70's. Congregations have fought resolutely to maintain their independence and shy clear of joint Church ventures.

Congregations with a Free Church background fared badly in competition for middle-class support with those of a United

Presbyterian background. The longer history and greater will to survive of the United Presbyterians, at least in Dunfermline, led them to outlast their rivals.

Almost a hundred and fifty years after the Disruption the relative strengths of former Free, Established and United Presbyterian congregations bear this out. Of the four United Presbyterian charges the smallest, Chalmers Street, united with Queen Anne Street to form Erskine Church in 1942. Later the Erskine congregation united with St Andrews, the original Chapel congregation of 1779. Gillespie Church and St Margarets have stood firm and continue the strong lay tradition associated with United Presbyterian life, St Margarets moving from the centre of the town into a Church Extension area. The Free Church tradition has suffered most, with only one congregation, St Pauls, itself a union of the original Free Abbey and Free North, remaining. The Establishment parishes of the Abbey and the North were added to by the formation of St Leonards prior to the 1900 Union but, as has been noted above, St Andrews joined with Erskine to form St Andrews-Erskine in 1972. Thus residual elements of the three great traditions remain and it is partly due to this that the town remains fiercely competitive and congregational in its ecclesiastical life.

Had there never been a Secession, a Relief movement, a Chapel tradition and a Free Church Disruption, there is no doubt that Scottish Church life would be immeasurably poorer. They have added individualism and diversity, giving the Church of Scotland member a wide choice of congregational lifestyles. They have also meant that different areas of the country have their own traditions of Church life in the same way as industries such as Paisley thread, Dunfermline linen, Darvel lace or the fish trade of the north-east coast once produced their own individual characters and worthies. The computer revolution and the age of the micro-chip have depersonalized industry so that many of the traditional crafts have disappeared but here and there vestiges of former glory still throw up reminders of an age long gone. So also in Church life, despite the tendency of modern times to stereotype everything, the different ethos of congregations within Dunfermline still witness to the days when the contrast was marked and each congregation reflected a different aspect of the life of the



community.

For the student of Church History the real interest of the Scottish scene is not simply to be found in the great national movements such as the Secession, the Disruption and the Union of 1929 but in the two thousand and more parish histories which make up that story. The shelves of New College library give evidence through the short individual histories of local congregations of the many directions which Church life took and the contribution which the local fisherman, handloom weaver or linen manufacturer made in creating what we call the Church of Scotland. What remains unexplored is the influence of the shop assistant, the factory worker or the wright in the shipyard. In a later chapter the Church will be seen at least attempting to vary its life in response to new social patterns but were these simply the patterns of the middle class and not working-class folk? How far did the dockland parishes and the inner city congregations of the 1930's reflect the real aspirations of the majority of their parishioners? At the General Assembly of 1986 commentators noted that individual speakers were not only bringing to the rostrum their own experience and lifestyle but seemed to convey the hopes and aspirations, the successes and failures, of their parishioners. If they did this then they truly reflected the lifestyle of the old Secession congregations where handloom weavers had the opportunity to determine how their congregations were run and brought into Church life aspects of their industrial, social and economic theory. They helped to reform the Church and perhaps no body within the National Church tradition has ever been closer to representing the grass root opinion of the people. The later United Presbyterian Church merely served the working class in a middle-class, paternalistic manner.

## CHAPTER TEN

The leading personalities and their Church connection.

In the previous chapter the fortunes of Dissent were viewed from the standpoint of the weaving community which for over a century had dominated the life of the parish. With the rise of the power loom industry a revival took place in the fortunes of the Establishment when many weavers moved into the National Church, thereby reversing their traditional ecclesiastical loyalty.

In this chapter the fortunes of the Establishment are viewed from another angle. Where did the town's leading personalities worship? These can be ranged into three groups: the ministers, the Provosts and the industrialists. It could be expected that, because of its numerical supremacy, the leading lights would come from within the ranks of Dissent.

Ministers.

In contrast to the Dissenting congregations who could boast of such evangelical ministries as those of Ralph Erskine, Thomas Gillespie and the new bloods of the Free Church, the Abbey had a succession of Moderates of whom James Thomson was a striking example. His ministry stretched from 1743 to 1790 and was noted for the innumerable disputes in which he was involved, in both ecclesiastical and civil courts. If the Establishment were at odds with Dunfermline society between 1733 and 1834 much of the blame must be placed at the feet of James Thomson.

Having served as an army chaplain for fourteen years, he was brought to Dunfermline to quell the regiment of Dissenters and restore the fortunes of the Auld Kirk. He succeeded in neither and in the attempt clashed with all and sundry. He antagonised the Non-Intrusionists in the Abbey over his part in the Gillespie affair, harangued the Town Council for supporting the renegade and then deposed a number of his own elders for giving support to the

Independent congregation. His many scuffles with the Council over the management of the poor simply aggravated their differences while his vigorous opposition to the setting up of a Chapel led to ten years of disputes at Assembly, Synod and Presbytery. These legal wrangles did the Establishment cause no good and simply confirmed Thomson in his notoriety. He was the type of person whom journalists would have welcomed as good copy.(1)

Thomson was out of touch with the prevailing mood among the weaving community who were moving towards greater democracy in both Church and political affairs. He belonged to the old Moderate school and reacted fiercely against any move to disturb the existing order in Church or State. Every issue in which he was involved became emotionally intensified. In his opinion Gillespie should have bowed to the Assembly's will, the elders should have resisted any attempt by the Council to act in defiance of the Establishment, the Chapel petitioners should have returned to the Abbey and not acted as undisciplined Independents who resisted the will of the legally installed incumbent of the Abbey Church.

It was perhaps unfortunate that in a hotbed of Dissent, where more democratic principles were making headway, the Dunfermline Establishment had such an extreme Moderate at its head. His high-handedness not only failed to quell the mutiny but rather intensified it.

The negative aspect of his ministry is perhaps best illustrated by his failure to build up the eldership. From the time of Erskine's induction in 1711 until the beginning of the 19th century, scarcely an elder ordained in the Abbey finished his service there. Apart from the severe loss when Erskine left, another four departed with Gillespie, while others dropped out at the time of the Chapel dispute. By the turn of the century, even with the new collegiate team of Allan MacLean and John Fernie, the situation had not changed and only two elders served the vast parish. Lay life had been drained out of the National Church by a long ministry which had little positive to offer. Dunfermline had proved too avant garde for a died-in-the-wool Moderate. Unfortunately his successors, though not so notorious,



continued the same dull trend. Disputes over a manse(2), the publishing of a book on Dunfermline(3), constant attempts to strengthen the Poor Fund and even allegations of mismanagement(4) kept the incumbents busy but did little to win back those who had been lost to Dissent. The two Fernies, Thomas and John, both served in their time as Presbytery Clerk and in various other ways the Establishment ministers kept the machinery of the National Church oiled but failed to create any real spiritual impetus.

A few years later the Abbey was served by another Moderate, John Todd Brown, who like Thomson created uproar at Presbytery and Assembly, especially in his attempt to have the Abbey building divided and two separate charges created.(5) Brown advocated his scheme in preference to the Church Extension plan which the Presbytery had undertaken at the north-west corner of the town. As with Thomson, Brown's somewhat eccentric ideas caused unnecessary diversion from the main task of the ministry if the Establishment were to regain lost ground.

Both Brown and Thomson took a strong stand against the Non-Intrusionists' attempts to change the law of the Church if it clashed with the law of the land. Thomson had no time for the Chapel intruders and Brown ultimately clashed with the Non-Intrusionists when it became clear that the Auchterarder decision made their actions unlawful.(6) Like Thomson he saw in the Chapel ministers a threat to the constitution of the Church.

It might be asked whether there were similar distractions from the main task of ministry among the Dissenters. Certainly two ministers of Chalmers Street United Secession Church were disciplined for waywardness in the 1830's.(7) But the problems for the Dissenting congregations mainly arose at vacancies when a great amount of in-fighting took place and at least one congregation was told to study harmony.(8) Another occasion which proved of considerable embarrassment to Dissent was the long dispute over the call of Mr Whyte to Queen Anne Street which led ultimately to the setting up of St Margarets.(9) A decade later there was an unseemly fracas between the managers and the senior minister of the Relief Church over certain

financial arrangements which led to the younger minister's leaving.(10) Yet it can be said almost categorically that the actions of Thomson and Brown, who were both recognised as leading figures in the community, caused greater embarrassment than anything which happened in Dissent. The number of Dissenting congregations was greater and therefore when something did go wrong in one congregation it was cancelled out by what was happening in another. Virtually the whole of the Establishment's effort concentrated on the Abbey, even though the Chapel congregation remained a powerful factor in the Church life of the town. Its ministers, however, had no place in the Church Courts and so the collegiate ministers of the Abbey determined the National Church's fortunes in the cradle of Dissent. Unlike Dissent, the National Church had a less active lay membership so everything depended on the influence of the ministers.

The Establishment required a man who would bring about reconciliation, restore pride in the National Church and make the Abbey a force to be reckoned with. In Peter Chalmers it found such a man. He came as second minister in 1817 having served in Glasgow under Thomas Chalmers and from the very beginning he was more in tune with the prevailing mood in Dunfermline than any of his predecessors since Erskine. A hard working pastor, an academic, a staunch upholder of the best in the Auld Kirk, an advocate of the principle of self-help, he brought to Dunfermline a reawakened interest in the place of the laity and the spiritual education of children.(11) It is true that in the matter of the Disruption he showed much indecision(12), but at all other times he pursued his course with firm determination. He was typical of those who remained in the Establishment and helped it to recover its spiritual impetus. Later an Establishment minister noted that it was not only the Free Church clerics who paid a price by going out: many Establishment ministers had shown heroism by staying in when friends and congregation had chosen otherwise.(13)

Above all, Chalmers restored a more dignified image to the Abbey and won back many of the businessmen in the town, especially those who were outside the weaving trade or those who within the trade wanted a more modern approach to commercial enterprise. He was far more conciliatory to the Chapel cause than any of his predecessors,

supporting a petition from the Chapel congregation in 1822 which sought to have elders appointed from within their ranks.(14) However the senior minister and Session opposed the plan. He was helped in his attempts to revitalise the Abbey by the Heritors' belated decision to build a modern Abbey rather than try to repair the old building.(15) The discovery of the bones of Bruce also caused national interest to be focused on Dunfermline and the Abbey in particular.

In the Voluntary conflict he displayed sharp debating skill and gave his whole-hearted support to the plans for the Church Extension at Golfdrum. After the Disruption itself he rallied Establishment support for the new post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregations at St Andrews and the North Parish.(16) In his task of rebuilding the National Church he was given substantial support from Alexander Mitchell who served in the North Parish from 1851 to 1901 and the Rev James Rose who served in St Andrews from 1858 for almost fifty years. These three staunch Establishment ministers were all engaged in the work of the Auld Kirk between 1858 and 1870 and gave stability to a town in which the most extensive change had just taken place in both religious and social life. In the great uncertainty which occurred between the breakdown of the handloom industry and the rise of the power loom factories, the Establishment ministers found ample parish work among the unemployed masses. Chalmers was noted for his assiduous visiting while Mitchell admitted 1,654 communicants, officiated at 1,023 marriages and conducted 1,580 baptisms during his fifty years in the North.(17)

Such devoted pastoral work helped to reduce the advantage which the Free Church had won at the Disruption, as did the unemployment of the 1840's and 1850's. Moreover in the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church there was a regular change among the ministers. Delay in filling the Free Abbey until 1845 hindered its advance and the new incumbent left in 1849. The Free North minister, Mr Marshall, suffered ill-health which repeatedly laid him aside while Mr Sutherland of St Andrews Free left for Gibraltar in 1855. In the United Presbyterian Church Mr Walker had a difficult ministry in Chalmers Street while Mr Law left St Margarets in 1851 after a disagreement over the appointment of a colleague.(18)



On the other hand the United Presbyterians, recovering like the Establishment from the effects of the Disruption and also from the "New View" controversy over the Atonement question, found two ministers of similar stature to Chalmers in the Abbey. The Rev James Young, who ministered in Queen Anne Street for thirty-eight years until his death in 1869, was a popular figure, an effective pastor whose interest in the young was a key note of his ministry. He had shown himself capable of self sacrifice when in 1841 he declared that he would work alone rather than overtax the congregation by making a new appointment to what had been a collegiate charge for over seventy years.(19) He was known as a public spirited man, a Christian patriot, an advocate of the heroic and was in the forefront of every movement in the town which had for its object social or moral improvement.(20) Different in his political persuasion from Chalmers, he nevertheless had the same Victorian philanthropy. Good, hard working men, they restored the fortunes of their denominations while winning public acclaim from all parties.

The Rev Neil McMichael of Gillespie United Presbyterian Church was at first minister of the Relief body but became pastor of a new congregation in 1847 when the Maygate congregation joined with the Relief. He also typified the hardworking minister and academic. He was Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the United Presbyterian Church and was instrumental in setting up an Aged Ministers' Scheme within the denomination. Like Chalmers and Mitchell he was created Doctor of Divinity by his University. More contentious than the other two, McMichael was a keen advocate of self-help and self-improvement schemes and like Chalmers stressed the need for working men to join Savings Banks and take out Life Assurance.(21) He was more outspoken against the Government than the other two, especially on all matters concerning the futility of war. The main feature of the ministries of Chalmers, Young and McMichael was their conviction that man needed to be elevated from his moral degradation by self-improvement and that it was the task of ministers to become involved in the social concerns of their people and not confine themselves simply to pulpit oratory.

So far little mention has been made of preaching, though among the Moderates and the Victorian self-help preachers there were

many excellent communicators of the Scriptures. On the whole, however, there is no evidence of any outstanding preacher within these two groups. Their preaching was Calvinistic, biblical, well structured but on the dull side. The outstanding preacher in Dunfermline was undoubtedly Erskine, whose oratory had brought large crowds to the Dunfermline Communion season and helped to swell the coffers of the Abbey Church. Some quotations from Brown's *Gospel Truth* indicate the thrust of his ministry and contrast with the prevailing doctrinal teaching of his day which Erskine believed smacked of legalism.(22) They indicate the fresh approach which the Marrow men brought to the rather sterile preaching which dominated the Scottish pulpit. Preachers had attempted to clothe the Gospel message in language which prevented any charge of preaching a universal atonement. Erskine's free invitation appealed to the weaving community who saw the old class structures being eroded and more democratic institutions being set up. The Dissenters' preaching likewise challenged the fixed notions of election as they were generally understood:

"The offer is universal to all that hear the gospel. Let Arminians maintain at their peril their universal redemption: but we must at our peril the universal offer."(23)

This gave to every weaver the same free choice in his religious life as he was discovering in the economic field of the handloom industry. Erskine's gospel offer brought a flexibility which the older theological system denied:

"This glorious gospel is much clouded over in our day (1720) with legal terms and conditions and qualifications."(24)

"The question then here is not, 'Are you elect or not?' But the question is, 'Are you a sinner that needs a Saviour?'"(25)

It was this openness and free offer of salvation which came as a breath of fresh air into the closed systems of so much carefully worded doctrinal preaching. The great crowds who attended Erskine's Communion seasons clearly felt the Spirit speaking to them with a new voice, a voice more tender and compassionate than before. In defending the difference between a legalist and an evangelical Christian, Erskine made the following observation:

"They differ in their complaints. The legalist will complain

more for want of holiness than for want of Christ; seeing he hath taken up with self-righteousness, it is his all, it is his happiness, it is his husband, it is his God. But the language of the Evangelical Christian, who is dead to the law is O for more of Christ, for the day of His power. O to be wrapped up in the covenant of grace, to get an omnipotent power, determining me to comply with the gospel offer."(26)

Erskine was, of course, concerned that his hearers should be able to give a reason for the hope that was in them but his appeal was time and time again to the heart. A romantic by nature, his love for the violin endeared him to the whole community, coinciding as it did with their aspirations and life style.(27)

Before considering who were his natural successors in the preaching art it is important to note that Erskine was a Churchman whose breadth of vision made him a powerful figure within the whole community. Two matters should be particularly noticed. During his incumbency he introduced far reaching changes into the eldership, involving more democratic election and spiritual supervision in every district. He thus recognised the need for a working eldership long before the matter assumed major importance under Thomas Chalmers' Glasgow experiments. When he left the Abbey, Erskine took with him an eldership who were representative of the districts they served and therefore commanded widespread support. His departure drained the Establishment of those who, until the coming of the power loom, were to form the community based industry. Dissent became the accepted norm.

The second matter which had a considerable bearing on the future of Dissent was that Erskine carried into the new Church the experience and support which he had amassed over thirty years. His determination not to be rushed into seceding, although he had witnessed the signatures of the Four Brethren at Gairney Bridge in 1733, gave his people time to adjust to the idea of Secession and thereby channel emotional zeal into reasoned argument. Though finally seceding in 1737, for the next five years he continued to occupy the Abbey pulpit until he was ultimately ejected by State and Church authorities. These varied factors, his advocacy of representative lay elders, his slow but reasoned approach to Secession, his brilliant preaching gifts and the massive support which he eventually carried into the Associate



congregation, all tended to make Dunfermline rather than Stirling the "Mecca" of the Secession.

No-one perhaps attained to Erskine's preaching heights though Thomas Gillespie was a popular figure while other ministers in Queen Anne Street Church, such as James McFarlane, had undoubted preaching gifts. Perhaps the nearest to Erskine was Mr James Whyte, the young preacher whom Queen Anne Church rejected.(28) His style broke free from the heavy text proof type of sermon which was prevalent at the time and put far more emphasis on an appeal to the emotions by using graphic and colourful illustrations.(29)

Two situations indicate the reaction of ordinary citizens to more excessive mannerisms and styles of preaching. When the Rev Mr Burns from Dundee preached in the Abbey in 1839 the local papers were horrified by his conduct. They condemned him for appealing so largely to the emotions and failing to build up his sermon in a logical and constructive manner.(30) Yet Burns won a fair hearing from the congregation and in fact a series of revival meetings was arranged following his visit.(31) Another whose more eccentric and individual style was new to Dunfermline was the first minister of the Free Abbey, the Rev Alexander Philip. An older member of the community described his preaching thus:

"I thocht he was to be o'er the pu'pit! He roared sae loud and ca'd his han's about while he made his cloak flee around him like ships' sails."(32)

Others described it as fervent and eloquent. It may be suggested that the preaching style of Burns and Philip was more in keeping with the energy and drive of the Chartist orators than with the tradition of the Scottish Church.

Other ministers in the Free Church had their particular traits. Charles Marshall was couthy but conservative, James McKenzie launched an attack on the Roman Catholics, while James Brown stirred the dying Free North back into fire.

The type of preaching which met with the greatest

condemnation, from the press at least, was that used by those who advocated the "New View" of Morrison in the United Secession Church. When revival meetings were held, their attempts to win converts from other branches of the Christian Church were condemned. It was seen as the cultivation of a sect rather than an attempt to bring about religious revival for the good of the whole Christian community.(33) The Rev Robert Cuthbertson resigned from Chalmers Street over the issue but remained a member of the Synod for a time at least. His successor was chosen because he was believed to favour the "New View". However, once the Rev Robert Walker had settled into his charge he became more conservative and a number of his members moved off to form an Evangelical Union Church.(34)

It is difficult to know into which category Thomas Gillespie falls. In some ways he was the natural successor to Erskine, coming into the town the year the older Seceder died. Like Erskine he was also a romantic figure who became the butt of authority. Ministering at the same time as James Thomson, he championed the Popular cause. He became politically involved when the Town Council supported his stand and his congregation became the Adullam's cave for refugees from the Moderatism of the Establishment. It is difficult to ascertain how far Gillespie became an ecclesiastical politician but there can be no doubt that he was surrounded by a number of tough and able supporters who used the congregation to their advantage both in 1752 and in 1774.(35) Another view suggests that he was a man who saw small issues clearly but failed to act consistently over the years.(36) Some felt that he dallied too long over a possible return to the Establishment and that this brought the uncertainty which eventually led to the division of his congregation at the time of his death.

Gillespie was not the only minister who got caught up in Church politics. Law of St Margarets and Chalmers of the Abbey fought a pamphlet war during the Voluntary Controversy, while Marshall of the North Parish was caught up in the Non-Intrusion controversy. He took his congregation out with him into the Free Church and remained the most sympathetic of all the town ministers to the needs of the working class. However the Free Church was to become too middle-class for the

majority of his congregation who eventually returned to the Establishment and plunged the Free North into deep financial crisis. Marshall's health was affected and a colleague was brought in to help restore the congregation's fortunes. It is not insignificant that when Marshall was forced into partial retirement he became a member of Dr Begg's congregation in Liberton. Marshall had the down to earth concern for the working class and the same strong conservatism which marked his mentor.

In conclusion it may be argued that, apart from the triumvirate of Chalmers, Mitchell and Rose, the Establishment had a less impressive record than Dissent. Of course the Seceders had far greater numbers and this tended to give a broader and more colourful cross section of ministry. Moreover, because the Abbey was the only Establishment charge for such a long period, it was imperative that its collegiate ministries functioned efficiently and harmoniously. This was sadly not always the case and the situation was made worse by the fact that the Abbey ministers were always in the public eye. The length of Thomson's ministry was perhaps the critical factor at a time when recovery was essential if the damaging effects of Erskine's departure were to be minimised. The importance of individual ministers to the Establishment was increased since in Dissent even a poor ministry could be compensated for by the presence of a strong and active laity. For example, when Peter Chalmers tried to encourage the Abbey eldership in 1823 to visit their districts there was at first a very poor response.(37)

However the Seceders suffered worse at vacancies when the strength of the eldership proved a drawback as different groups sought to gain the upper hand in the choice of a new incumbent. Queen Anne Street, the original congregation of Erskine, had perhaps the worst record of any congregation in this field.(38) The Seceders were not long in learning that the concept of popular election did not automatically mean harmony in the choice of minister.

Provosts.

Since social, political and ecclesiastical matters were so



closely interwoven in Dunfermline, it can be assumed that the congregations which particular Provosts attended indicate the dominant Church party of the time.

Certain preliminary comments can be made. Throughout the period under review the Establishment is not well represented. In the early 18th century most of the Provosts belonged to the National Church, were members of the landed class and held office almost by hereditary right. One of the last Provosts of this type was a young lawyer, Alexander Wedderburn, who at the early age of twenty-one was made an elder in the congregation which his father attended in Edinburgh. At about the same time he was chosen as Burgh elder for Inverkeithing and also became Provost of Dunfermline.(39) This Inverkeithing-Dunfermline connection may indicate that he had the support of those on the Town Council who approved of the stand which Thomas Gillespie had taken at the General Assembly.(40)

Wedderburn was one of the last Provosts who had no connection with the weaving trade and held office, if not by hereditary right, at least by skilful handling of the legal process. With the rise of Dissent and the growing success of the weaving trade, the National Church, as represented by those in the Abbey, lost its power so that the Council became increasingly divorced from any Establishment influence. A couple of Provosts between 1754 and 1832 may have belonged to the Abbey but did not hold the office of elder.

The first Free Church provost, James Walls, was not appointed until 1877. He was a member of the Free Abbey, the most influential Free Church congregation in the town. His appointment coincided with the period when the Free Church was emerging as a powerful force as the town's economy took an upward turn following the transition period between the failure of the handloom industry and the rise of the new power loom factories. Those years were not conducive to Free Church success.

The Provosts of the period under review may be assigned to groups in order to give a clearer picture of the prevailing political and ecclesiastical climate of their time:

- a) The Relief Provosts. (1754-1793)
- b) The Corrupt Tories. (1793-1830)
- c) The Reforming Provosts. (1830-1832)
- d) The Middle Men. (1842-1861)
- e) The Later Victorians. (1861-1903)

Before looking at these groupings a list of all the Provosts with their ecclesiastical affiliation, where known, is set out below:

Lord Charles Hay of Blansh	1739-1752	
Sir Peter Halkett of Pitfirrane	1752-1755	
Alex. Wedderburn, Advocate	1755-1758	
Maj. Francis Halkett, Pitfirrane	1758-1760	
David Turnbull, Merchant	1760-1765	Relief: Chapel
David Wilson Jnr., Stationer	1765-1774	Relief: Chapel
John Kirk, Merchant	1774-1778	
David Turnbull, Merchant	1778-1783	Chapel
John Wilson, Stationer	1783-1787	Chapel
Adam Low of Fordell	1787-1789	
John Wilson, Merchant	1789-1792	Chapel
James Moodie, Merchant	1792-1807	
John Wilson of Transy	1807-1808	
Major David Wilson	1808-1822	
John Scotland of East Luscar	1822-1824	
James Blackwood of Colton	1824-1830	Queen Anne St. U.S.
George Meldrum, Baker	1830-1831	Chapel
John Kerr, Manufacturer	1831-1832	Abbey: Non-Intrusion
Henry Russell, Merchant	1832-1836	St Andrews Quoad Sacra: Free Abbey
George Birrell, Manufacturer	1836-1838	Queen Anne St. U.S.:Auld Licht: Free Abbey
James Morris, Manufacturer	1838-1842	St Margarets U.S.
Erskine Beveridge, Manufacturer	1842-1843	Abbey: Congregational
H Kidd, Banker, interim provost	1843	
James Ronaldson, Banker	1843-1849	Abbey: Episcopal
William Kinnis, Manufacturer	1849-1853	Abbey
Erskine Beveridge, Manufacturer	1853-1854	Abbey: Congregational
Robert Robertson, Manufacturer	1854-1861	Baptist
John Whitelaw, Ironfounder	1861-1868	North Chapel St.U.P. (Relief)
Henry Reid, Manufacturer	1868-1871	St Margarets U.P.
Kenneth Mathieson, Contractor	1871-1877	Baptist
James Walls	1877-1883	Free Abbey
Robert Donald, Manufacturer	1883-1890	St Andrews Free
David Alexander, Manufacturer	1890-1891	
James Walls	1891-1894	Free Abbey
Robert Walker	1894-1897	Canmore Street Congregational
Andrew Scobie, Architect	1897-1903	North United Free
James MacBeth, Lawyer	1903-1909	Abbey United Free
Robert Husband	1909-1915	Evangelical Union

a) The Relief Provosts.

If Andrew Wedderburn represented those in the Establishment who supported Gillespie, two later Provosts, David Turnbull (1760-65, 1778-83) and John Wilson (1789-92), continued in like manner. Both were members of Gillespie's Relief congregation, Turnbull having been at one time an elder in the Abbey.(41) Both were involved in the weaving trade, Turnbull owning a dye work while Wilson invented a fly shuttle device which reduced the numbers required to work each loom. After Gillespie's death both used their political influence to have their Meeting House accepted as a Chapel of Ease in connection with the Establishment.(42) They were therefore representative of those who were involved in Burgh politics and were opposed to the dominant ecclesiastical party in the National Church. Though it had been primarily the Secession which had creamed off Abbey support, many saw that movement as being too far removed from the centre of Scottish political and legal life. Men like Turnbull and Wilson wanted a half-way house in which they could still exercise some political power from within the Establishment. They had hoped that Chapels would be allowed to appoint their own elders but this suggestion was turned down by the Assembly.

Major political differences between Wilson and the Rev James Thomson, the first minister of the Abbey, also existed. In the elections of 1774 Wilson was agent for Colonel Masterton while Thomson supported the other candidate.(43) It was also at this period that Thomson made his outburst from the pulpit calling a certain member of his congregation a liar and political turncoat.(44)

Turnbull and Wilson represented the powerful group who stood midway between the Secession and the Establishment but whose basic loyalty was to the National Church since it offered them greater political and social advantage. The list of Managers in the Chapel show that they represented a powerful caucus within the community who were dissatisfied with the Abbey but wanted to retain their connection with the Establishment.

The following made up those who guaranteed the first Chapel



minister a stipend of £50 yearly. A strong Town Council connection is evident.(45)

David Turnbull	Provost
William Morrice	Brieryhill
Mrs Janet Wilson	Widow of the deceased Thomas Anderson, brewer in Dunfermline
Mrs Sarah Wilson	Daughter of deceased Baillie
Adam Morrison	Merchant
Baillie John Wilson	Manufacturer
Baillie Andrew Angus	Merchant
Baillie Robert Ireland	Merchant
John Stenhouse	Baker and Brewer
George Meldrum	Baker
John Turnbull	Watchmaker
David Black	Merchant

b) The Corrupt Tories.

Between 1792 and 1830 the Provosts were generally supporters of the Tory cause and they held celebrations for Pitt in 1815, though the meeting was poorly attended.(46) The period saw the rise of the Friends of the People Movement and also reactions to the effect of the French Revolution. The provosts and Council often led the opposition to any popular uprising. Major David Wilson, Provost from 1808 to 1822, was known as "Bell Davie" because of his constant instructions to ring the bell on the occasion of any British victory.(47) However two Royal Commissions found the Council during those years to be dominated by a group of corrupt, self-electing Councillors(48) who ran civic affairs as a family business from which they reaped the profits.

Where these Provosts and Councillors attended Church is difficult to ascertain. The records of the Chapel congregation no longer exist but the name of Wilson was commonly associated with that congregation(49) and the last of the old Tory provosts, George Meldrum, also belonged there.(50) The Chapel was run as an independent body with its own set of rules and the same type of independence was shown

by the Council who had their own methods of filling vacancies.(51) They were bound by family connection rather than congregational loyalty and their power was finally brought to an end by the Reform activity of the 1830's.

c) The Reform Provosts.

The Provosts during the years of Reform and of the Ten Year Conflict indicate the spirit of competition which existed between the Non-Intrusionists and the Voluntaries. They also indicate how the town reacted to the worst excesses of Chartist activity.

John Kerr was the first of the Reform Provosts who held office after the corruption of the old Tory Council had come to light.(52) He was one of three brothers who made a large fortune when the Jacquard machine was introduced into the trade. John was the most liberally minded politically and after the Disruption probably gave his support to the Free Church.(53) His brother James, on the other hand, was a leading light in the Establishment and used much of the family money to help in the endowment of the post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregations. Kerr resigned after a short period because of the heavy demands made on him to attend Reform meetings. His successor, Henry Russell, was also a manufacturer whose ecclesiastical allegiance was Non-Intrusionist and later Free Church. However during his time in office the Voluntary Controversy came to a head and members of the Secession congregations began to have a far greater involvement in politics. It has been noted elsewhere that a number of Councillors resigned during 1834-5 and that they were replaced by those of more Radical political persuasion. The Non-Intrusionists were replaced by those who belonged to movements such as the Reform Association and whose ecclesiastical leanings were Voluntary. By now the Council had become firmly anti-Establishment in its ecclesiastical leanings.

Provosts George Birrell and James Morris represent the new Reform thinking and reflect changing attitudes to the growing threat of militant Chartism. Birrell was a manufacturer who supported middle-class reform and showed a real sympathy for his employees during the worst period of the 1838 recession by helping to set up soup kitchens

and roadworks for the unemployed. Yet he was also aware of the danger of over-zealous Chartist activity rocking the stability of society. He probably did not support some of the Managers in Queen Anne Street when they permitted the use of the Church for purely "political" meetings (54), and later moved to the "Auld Lights" who had rejoined the National Church in 1839. At the Disruption he became a member of the Free Abbey. His successor in office, James Morris, was also a manufacturer, a member of St Margarets United Secession Church and a keen Voluntary. On the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837 he refused to attend a dinner because Mr Chalmers of the Abbey had been asked to say grace. However, like Birrell, he was concerned about the excesses of the Radicals and after a series of squabbles in the Council resigned as Chief Magistrate and went to Madeira for a rest cure(55).

From the reactions of Kerr, Russell, Birrell and Morris it is clear that Dunfermline wanted reform without undermining political stability and was hesitant to support Radical solutions. Non-Intrusionists and Voluntaries were both unwilling to allow the wilder excesses of Chartism to take over so that reform was based on establishing liberal middle-class values rather than working-class objectives. One matter, however, deeply divided the middle classes and that was the appointment of an elder to represent the Burgh at the General Assembly and for eight years (1836-44) no representative was sent, indicating the clear advantage which the Voluntaries held prior to the Disruption.

#### d) The Middle Men.

The Chartist riots between 1842 and 1845 led to the appointment of a new breed of Provost. Erskine Beveridge, Henry Kidd and James Ronaldson cover the period of Dunfermline's greatest social unrest. They bridge the gap between the high peak of Dissent in the late 1830's and the new interest in a rejuvenated Establishment after the traumas of Disruption. These Provosts, though exercising the office at a time when the Council was dominated by Free Church men, were not representative of that Church but belonged rather to smaller ecclesiastical groups(56).



Erskine Beveridge became Provost when Morris resigned and when the Council was still dominated by Radicals who did not, however, have a person of sufficient standing to take on the role of Chief Magistrate. To the weavers Beveridge proved something of an enigma. On the one hand he was an ardent supporter of the Voluntary principle in religion and decidedly liberal in his politics. Moreover he had been involved in a fracas with the ministers of the Establishment over the rights of ministers to interfere in the politics of their parishioners(57). Like Patrick Brewster at Paisley, he resented the attitude of those in the Establishment who held that to have reforming principles associated you with the mob and the rabble. Beveridge was later to set up an Independent congregation where State and Church would be totally separate, so his Non-Intrusionism did not lead him into the Free Church. He clearly felt that if the Church did not want the State to interfere in its internal affairs then it should steer clear of political posturing. Such sentiments endeared him to the Dunfermline Radicals. On the other hand he revolutionised traditional weaving practices by cutting out the middle man and selling work directly to the customer(58). This made him unpopular with the "corks" or middle men but as many of them had in turn aroused the ire of the ordinary weavers by their attempts to break the "Table of Prices", Beveridge was seen at first as the Radicals' champion. He therefore had managed to antagonise the two main "targets" of the traditional weavers' wrath, the National Church and the new entrepreneurs who wanted to break with long established business procedures. Paradoxically it was the revolution which he himself began which was ultimately to prove the hammer blow which crushed the traditional trade. For a time, however, he was seen, at least politically, as their saviour.

Major changes took place in the Council after the riots of 1842 with reactionaries assuming power in an attempt to combat the worst excesses of civil disturbance. The Councillors were generally members of the Free Church but there were also members of the United Secession and the smaller denominations on the Council. Neither of the dominant groups, the United Presbyterians or the Frees, wanted to yield to the other. A compromise was reached by choosing Ronaldson, an Episcopalian and a banker, to take the role of Chief Magistrate(59).

As a banker he held a strategic role when industry was desperate for capital to set up new business and when the merchants of the traditional trade were seeking to stave off financial bankruptcy. Having abandoned the Establishment he proved a useful middle man between the rising power of the Free Church and the United Secession. His membership of the small Episcopal group, his banking skill and his being outside the weaving industry all proved decided advantages.

The other two middle men, William Kinnis and Robert Robertson, respectively belonged to the Establishment and the Baptist Church. Kinnis was the only Establishment representative between 1836 and 1920 to hold the Provost's office. The Establishment did not have a great number of major manufacturers; these belonged mainly to the Free Church and the United Presbyterians. However it was not until the 1860's that the sparring between these two groups ultimately stopped and one or the other had the advantage. In the meantime an Establishment figure filled the breach.

Robert Robertson was a Baptist like a later Provost, Kenneth Mathieson. They indicate the leading role which Baptists took in Dunfermline politics in the first three quarters of the 19th century.

e) The later Victorians.

Three provosts represent the later Victorian age, Henry Reid, John Whitelaw and James Walls. Reid is a fine example of those in the United Presbyterian Church who remained within the weaving industry and adjusted slowly but determinedly to the change from handloom to power loom. He was a member of a family whose links with the trade were strong. His father was a founder member of St Margarets when it broke away from Queen Anne Street in 1825 while his Uncle Andrew had tried to break the power of the old corrupt Council(60). In setting up St Margarets men like Reid used sound business principles, this Church being the first to recognise the decided advantage of installing gas light as early as 1828.(61) Provost Henry, like other manufacturers, suffered during the handloom decline when ordinary members resented attempts to break old established patterns. The Reids' shop was one of those vandalised in

1842 which led to a swing in the balance of power in the Council against the ordinary weavers and political activists. Reid, along with his brother, was the first to set up a successful power loom factory line which was eventually to toll the knell of handloom weaving. The Reids had weathered the storm which left many of the traditional merchants bankrupt.

John Whitelaw was a member of Gillespie United Presbyterian Church, an iron foundry manager and one of the few Provosts not to belong to the weaving trade. He typifies those who helped the town throw off its "one industry" image and develop new means of industrial success. The Gillespie congregation, which had previously been the Relief Church, is perhaps the best illustration of the way United Presbyterians found patrons outside the weaving trade. Not only did it rationalize by uniting with the Maygate Secession Church but it also found support among a variety of groups within the town, especially in the railways, foundries and coal-mines. Despite its early patronage by the handloom weavers it became one of the congregations least dependent on the weaving trade.

James Walls was the first Provost from the Free Church, his appointment in 1877 indicating the change in that denomination's fortunes after its rather uncertain start. By 1875 the town was bustling with life as the power loom factories brought increasing wealth and growth in the population. New ancillary industries and the opportunity to set up small businesses provided ideal conditions for the growth of the Free Church. Of the next five Provosts three or perhaps four were Free Church men and each of the three congregations had at least one representative. One was an architect and another a lawyer, indicating a new movement within the Council away from the stranglehold which the factory owners had held on it for nearly fifty years.

#### Conclusion.

The Dunfermline Council was dominated by small groups and the leading figures in these give a good indication of which ecclesiastical party was strongest at the time. Typical of such



groups were the Chapel party in the mid 18th century and the Relief group at its close. The 1860's, when the power loom factories had taken over completely from the handloom, saw the Council dominated by United Presbyterians but towards the close of the century it was the Free Church which came into its own and provided most of the Provosts. The main period of internal tension within the Council came immediately after the Disruption years when the whole community was in a state of flux and the United Presbyterians battled with the new Free Church entrepreneurs for supremacy. A compromise solution had often to be reached by appointing a Provost from another denomination. The same was true in regard to the choice of the Member of Parliament when Mr. James Smith, a Unitarian, was chosen in 1847 to represent a town which was a stronghold of Presbyterianism. He was a compromise candidate who had the support of the radical weavers but was opposed by the reactionary Free Church. His opposition to war was a rallying point for the liberal United Presbyterians.

#### Industrialists.

During the period under review there was a massive shift from a handloom industry with its sizable caucus of small retail merchants to the age of the industrial baron. In the process a new lower middle class emerged as a direct result of the economic boom of the power loom revolution.

In Chapter Nine various parallel developments in weaving and Church life were noted. Each new phase brought more money into the industry and gave some manufacturers the opportunity to break away from the others and pick up a larger slice of the market. It also enabled them to create congregations which became the ecclesiastical symbols of their industrial success. Typical of such were the Chapel congregation in the 1770's, the St Margarets United Secession congregation in the 1820's and the Independent congregation in 1842. None of them, however, was revolutionary enough to change the traditional nature of the trade or destroy its "extended family" aspect. The introduction of handloom factories and the coming of the power loom was a more serious challenge since they struck at the credit based system of finance upon which the industry depended.

Traditionally the small wholesale merchants who regulated the trade commissioned others to do "outwork" for them(62), which meant that master weavers and even journeymen were often free to arrange their working hours to suit themselves. This gave the workforce a certain independence which they greatly treasured. The power loom, however, robbed them of such freedom as industrial barons dictated factory hours.

The early handloom weaving merchants and master weavers provided the life blood of the early Dissenting movements in Dunfermline. Many of them were elders or deacons, Trustees or Managers. For reasons set out elsewhere a whole generation of lay folk from the weaving trade had been lost to the Establishment.(63) However, in the early 1820's the Abbey experienced a resurgence under the ministry of Peter Chalmers and the industrialists began to return to its fold. By the mid 1830's it had a number of leading businessmen at its helm, some of whom were engaged in the handloom trade. Three of them, William Kinnis, John Dewar and Thomas Alexander, were among the first to bring the handloom factories into the town. The fact that they did not belong to the United Secession Church made their task less difficult. Those in Dissent who wanted to modernise the trade found the process of change extremely traumatic. The Dissenting cause, with the strong support of the handloom trade, had represented the traditional status quo and like any other power base it resisted any change which it feared would not be to its advantage. Those who sought to upset the traditional pattern of trade were regarded as prodigals and even traitors who were prepared to abandon the family circle in order to create a system of production which was anathema to ordinary workers.

The situation was complicated by the rise of Chartism since industrialists of both camps, whether from the Reform Association favoured by the Voluntaries or from the Non-Intrusionists, joined forces to withstand any attempt to rock the stability of a property-owning, middle-class society. Entrepreneurs found common cause in thwarting working-class attempts to halt progress, but even here the situation was not straightforward since the Chartist movement was itself divided between those who advocated militant action and those

who wanted a more constitutional approach. Many Dunfermline Chartists had been lower-middle-class artisans who had known days of industrial prosperity and wanted to maintain their old independence. For them Chartism provided a banner behind which they could rally in an attempt to protect their traditional industry from unwanted innovation, not a Radical movement which would open new doors for the working class. These Chartists were generally law abiding citizens brought up in the Dissenting congregations and they found John Collin's call to withdraw their savings and purchase arms both offensive and unacceptable.(64) There was also a new generation suffering from unemployment, who were prepared to take more militant action and found common cause with the downtrodden mine-workers, while the new industrialists joined in common purpose to thwart the law breakers.(65) In this the Non-Intrusionists who had moved into the Free Church, the factory owners of the Establishment and the entrepreneurs of the old Secession congregations were united. However, as has been indicated in Chapter Six, the struggle was long and the first power loom factory was not operative until as late as 1849.

It has been noted that the early handloom weaving factories were introduced mainly by those who belonged to the Non-Intrusionists and were detested by the home-based workers who were generally Voluntaries. At the Disruption some of these factory owners remained in the Establishment but most joined the Free Church. William Kinnis was an example of those who remained and was to become known as the "Kinnis Sweep" presumably because of his willingness to sweep away old systems and introduce new ones. The Establishment was dependent on a number of Victorian philanthropists whose efforts to endow the new Quoad Sacra congregations were a major factor in the denomination's recovery after the trauma of the Disruption. James Kerr and Andrew Kilgour were outstanding examples of such and did for the National Church what Andrew Carnegie was later able to do for the town as a whole. These men did within the Establishment what Thomas Chalmers perhaps failed to do within the Free Church, restoring the concept of charity and making working-class folk the beneficiaries of their generosity.

The first of the power loom factories was opened by the



brothers Andrew and Henry Reid of St Margarets United Presbyterian Church who were the exception rather than the rule within the old Dissenting congregations. Most of their colleagues who sought to change from handloom to factory production and then to power loom manufacturing went bankrupt in the process or gave up the business altogether.(66) Yet the Reids' success was understandable since they had the skill of an old established house behind them. Perhaps more significantly, they benefited from an inflow of capital on the death of a relative which meant that they could set up a factory production line producing cloth comparable to that of the handloom weaver. They survived a difficult time in the early 1840's when their shop was vandalised by former colleagues and fellow Church members who resisted their attempts to set up new methods of production. It is not surprising that it was St Margarets, the most businesslike and forward looking of the old Secession congregations, which provided their spiritual home. When the Church had been opened in 1825 the Managers, who included members of the Reid family, soon introduced gas light, despite the opposition of the weaving community to such a new capitalist development as the Gas Company. The Reids joined with businessmen from other fields such as railways and mines to help create the broader financial base and more middle-class ethos of the United Presbyterian Church.

The second factory was opened by Erskine Beveridge who had left the Establishment to set up his own Congregational or Independent Church in 1842. Formerly a member of the Abbey, Beveridge had left after a disagreement with the Rev Thomas Doig of Torryburn who had preached at a Communion season in the Abbey. Part of Doig's message had called on Church members not to become involved in political activism and Radical ideology(67), and Beveridge had taken the remark as a personal attack since he was known to favour Radical reforms and had supported the ideals of the Chartists on a number of political issues.

Though Beveridge supported the Radicals' aspirations, he did not necessarily see eye to eye with them on how their goals should be achieved. With his sharper business sense he wanted to achieve reform without destroying himself or society in the process. The Chartists

imagined that the productive power of the handloom was already in excess of market wants and therefore tried to hold back progress, believing that the old system could meet demand. Beveridge, with a keener vision, saw that the building of railways, the acceleration of ocean travel and the influence of free trade would create new markets and that many new factories with advanced systems of production would be needed to cope with the increase.

It has already been noted that Beveridge was rather an enigma to the ordinary weavers(68) and later events were to prove that as a middle-class industrialist he was prepared, despite his liberal politics, to organise a grim and oppressive system of factory production.(69)

The firm of Thomas and James Alexander is representative of Free church interest in the power loom movement. Thomas was a supporter of the new, working-class congregation at Golfdrum in 1839 which he saw as providing an alternative for the working classes who had previously supported the old Voluntary congregations. However many of the Non-Intrusionists moved into the Free Church and became a reactionary force who attempted to quell the rising tides of militant Chartism. In the Town Council they formed a "shadow establishment" upholding the rule of law.

The Alexanders were detested by the workers, especially when they offered work at below the going rate for ordinary operatives. They were not the only house to do this but as they belonged to the Non-Intrusionists and then the Free Church it is not surprising that when the Chartists' pent up anger exploded they vented it on the Alexanders' property.

Though Thomas Alexander had been a Trustee for the new North Parish Quoad Sacra congregation in 1840, it has been noted above that he later joined the Free Church. However he did not become a member of the Free North, which was a working-class congregation, but rather moved into the Free Abbey, the one Dunfermline Disruption Church closely similar to MacLaren's Aberdeen model. It was the home of the middle-class entrepreneur. At a later date, when power loom

production had become established, the Alexanders moved into the larger form of production.

These three different approaches to power loom production indicate some of the ways in which the transition from handloom to power loom was effected and why different congregations responded as they did. The Reid brothers weathered the opposition from within the old Secession congregations of their fathers. By remaining firm they saw the tides of opposition swept away by greater economic realism. Erskine Beveridge abandoned the Establishment for reasons not dissimilar to those of Patrick Brewster in Paisley, believing that the genuine need for reform could not be attributed simply to mindless workers who were bent on destruction. He accommodated the Chartists and helped to direct the future of Dunfermline liberalism. Nevertheless he achieved his goals by sound, middle-class economic theory rather than working-class revolution. In forming his own congregation he may also have realised that the Free Church would not be as independent as its founder members hoped. The Alexanders represented the early thinking of one section of the Free Church in Dunfermline which reacted to the Chartist threat by taking the place of a powerless Establishment in pressing for law and order to be upheld.

#### Postscript.

The absence of Establishment figures among leading ministers, Provosts and industrialists highlights the strength of Dissent in the Dunfermline area. Because the whole community had such strong religious ties, economic and ecclesiastical life was interwoven in such a way that successful congregations inevitably had prosperous businessmen on their Sessions and Boards.

Those who shaped the course of industrial and ecclesiastical development came from the ranks of Dissent and the influence of a Ralph Erskine or a Thomas Gillespie was as decisive in Church matters as that of Erskine Beveridge or Henry and Andrew Reid in the power loom industry. Erskine and Beveridge in particular trod a careful, statesman-like path before launching their particular brand of ecclesiastical or industrial revolution. They captured the mood and



needs of the time in positive and creative ways. Both men had a vision and commitment to their separate tasks and made sure that they had the backing of those who would carry out their plans at factory floor or parish level before making their decisive break. Those who tried to withstand progress included Church Moderates such as Thomson and Brown and, in the industrial world, the traditional handloom weavers. Nevertheless they deserve sympathy for many of their worst fears were realised. Thomson and Brown were right in their prophetic warnings that Chapels and Chapel ministers would become mavericks who would lead the National Church into the throes of Disruption. Likewise the fears of ordinary operatives that their middle-class allies in the Reform Association would eventually become their industrial overlords proved true. These traditionalists realised what would be lost as well as what would be gained and epitomised the fears of any establishment that change will be less rosy than its advocates claim.

After the Disruption and the inevitable arrival of the power loom, Dissent was championed by the United Presbyterians and the Free Church and was less radical since it reflected middle-class rather than working-class values. Its leading figures began to mirror the old self-help attitudes of the pre-Disruption Establishment when voluntary assessments were preferred to legal assessments in meeting the needs of the poor. Such Churchmen had believed that a legal assessment would encourage sloth and idleness. All three denominations were to foster, in different ways, the spirit of Victorian philanthropy and paternalism through men like Andrew Kilgour in the Establishment, John Whitelaw and Robert Beveridge in the United Presbyterians and the Alexander brothers in the Free Church.

There was a steady move away from the philosophy of the early Secession Church in which the wealth producers, the weaving operatives, had a leading role in how the Church was organised. Men like Andrew Carnegie, grandfather of the more illustrious Carnegie, who worked their own looms and helped to manage and finance the old Dissenting movement, eventually lost their prominence when the handloom trade collapsed. The next generation of wealth producers were the factory floor operatives who became mere cogs in the industrial

machine. The same pattern emerged in the Church even though the United Secession tried at first to accommodate its life to embrace the more social aspects of Chartist ideology. The new United Presbyterian body had more middle-class values and the ordinary member who was a factory operative was soon organised as much in the Church as in the factory by those who were his social superiors. The ethos of the new Church was later epitomised by the setting up of Mission Stations to evangelize the working class and the building of halls where its middle-class membership could enjoy social activities.

In 1883 most businessmen were still prominent Churchmen as is evident from the Church connections of the Provosts and leading industrialists. The day had not yet arrived when their membership would become purely nominal. Most congregations were in good heart financially, though fierce competition for survival was beginning to take place. Merger and rationalization were not far off, especially between the two main middle-class denominations who saw the need to reduce running costs by more business-like management. The working classes attended Church, especially in the Establishment which had experienced a marked rise in membership, but few of them were found on Sessions and Boards.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

The effects of the Voluntary Conflict and Chartism on the Church's attitude to education, scholastic Calvinism, the working man, community lifestyles, women and music.

### Introduction.

As has been noted in Chapter Six, between 1836 and 1851 in Dunfermline was a time of great change in which many former landmarks were removed and industrial, social and ecclesiastical life had to find new bearings. Industry changed course; social and community life took on new forms. Church members abandoned old ties and moved into new congregations at a time when the lifestyle of all the Churches was undergoing change.

The collapse of the handloom industry was the catalyst which affected every other area, leaving hardly a home or church unscathed. Weavers saw the move to handloom factory and power loom production in terms of incarceration and looked to Chartism as a means of withstanding change and retaining the lifestyle they had always known. On the other hand the miners, who had begun to realise that their work gave them some industrial muscle, hoped to mobilise Chartism to bring about a new Utopia for the working class. The contrasting attitudes of those who advocated physical force and those who believed in the power of moral persuasion, along with the different hopes which various groups entertained, led to a fragmentation of purpose and, in the end, powerlessness.

The situation was compounded by the financial debt which hung over the Town's affairs as a result of corrupt administration prior to 1830. Living standards fell as the handloom industry collapsed, though weavers' cottages were noted as being clean and respectable.<sup>(1)</sup> Lack of proper drainage systems made streets and paths into terrible quagmires while inadequate water supplies also contributed to several outbreaks of cholera. An article in the *Dunfermline Journal* in 1854 noted that the town, which had a population



of over 15,000, did not have a single public urinal or water closet and that less than a tenth of the homes contained an inside toilet.(2)

In a short span of years Dunfermline was turned upside down from a relatively peace-loving community of cultured artisans to one which knew rioting, plundering of property and full scale unemployment. In the cauldron of change the Church was inevitably involved since ecclesiastical, social and political life still belonged together. This chapter will note what these changes were and how they affected the whole life of the community and the Church in particular.

The Voluntary Conflict and Chartist activity.

Before 1830 worship in Establishment and in Dissenting congregations was not markedly different and centred on Sunday services with little evidence of mid-week activity. Doctrine was Calvinistic and even the radical weavers who questioned every new political theory were "solemn as night owls when religion was the topic."(3) Neither Establishment nor Dissenting ministers overtly preached politics nor did their members expect it of them. There was little Church involvement in the new social developments which had arisen in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars though changes had been made in the care of the poor with the setting up of a Voluntary Association which operated through a form of means test.(4) The relationship between the Churches was friendly despite the various breakaway movements which had strewn Dunfermline's troubled ecclesiastical past. There was, for example, a United Prayer Meeting for ministers of all denominations and members of the clergy lectured at the Scientific Society. Competition between the different congregations was limited and where it did exist was usually due to some change within the weaving industry rather than a major doctrinal issue. Most often these clashes were between congregations within the same camp as in the Burgher-AntiBurgher breach, the Auld and New Lights dispute of 1798 or the breakaway movement in Queen Anne Street United Secession Church which concluded with the formation of the new St Margarets Church in 1825. Nevertheless around 1830 congregations were following their separate and distinctive courses in reasonable harmony.

Two factors were to change all this: the Voluntary Controversy and the Chartist awakening. The Voluntary Conflict aroused different reactions within Establishment and Dissent. In the National Church there was a growth of lay involvement with the core of the congregation's life comprising a sizable group of businessmen, a number of whom were directors or shareholders in the Gas Company, the town's first major capitalist venture. In 1836 an elder, Mr Clapperton, wanted the Session to petition the General Assembly against the manner in which lay patronage was practised.(5) At that time there was a marked change in the congregation from the end of the previous century when the Abbey had functioned with only two elders and the most vociferous was a decided Moderate. Thirty years later, under the ministry of Peter Chalmers, the elders numbered over twenty and James Clapperton was a supporter of the popular Non-Intrusionist party. The Voluntary Controversy gave these men an even greater say in how the Abbey was to be run and in determining policy within the National Church. Thomas Chalmers' Extension movement caught their imagination and plans were laid for the building of a new church for the working class in the depressed north-west corner of the town. Like the creation of the Gas Company it gave Dunfermline businessmen the opportunity of setting up a new asset outwith the weaving industry which traditionally had been tied to the Dissenting Church.

In the Voluntary congregations where lay participation had always been stronger, the main change involved a hardening of political opinion. Prior to the outbreak of the Voluntary Controversy it had been mainly the small Baptist and Independent congregations which had been involved in political as well as religious protest. A petition against slavery was presented to Parliament by the Baptist congregation in 1830 while those who made up the Political Union in 1831 were led by a Baptist lay pastor. The more radical of the two Fife newspapers, the *Fife Herald*, while welcoming certain liberal changes, still warned the founders of the Political Union against mocking traditional religious forms.(6) A couple of years later a Voluntary Church Association was set up and the *Fifeshire Journal*, the more conservative newspaper, noted that their speeches and those of members of the Political Union were by no means dissimilar. The newspaper article concluded that what Seceders would formerly have denounced as godless

blasphemy was now openly applauded.(7) The United Missionary Prayer Meeting for all the clergy was disbanded(8) and a short time later the Town Council refused the use of the Town Hall to the Abbey Sunday School. This was seen by some as taking Voluntaryism too far.(9)

A Reform Association was set up in 1836 composed mainly of Voluntary Churchmen whose aims were basically those of the early Chartists. In 1837 the dinner to mark the occasion of Queen Victoria's accession was marred by the absence of the Rev John Law and Provost Morris, both of St Margarets United Secession Church, because the Rev Peter Chalmers of the Abbey had insisted on his legal right to say the grace.(10) Large meetings for and against patronage, Church endowment and Church extension have been fully noted elsewhere.(11) Frenzy and excitement raged across a whole range of issues which resulted in the Churches coming out of their Sunday mothballs and into the political arena. Mr Chalmers and the Non-Intrusionists were branded as servants of the Tory party while leading Dissenters were dedicated to Whig and even Radical reforms. Church members were challenged to take sides not merely on matters of doctrine and Church government but on political issues. Dissenting ministers did their best to bring their ecclesiastical muscle into the political arena in order to discredit the National Church party and brand them as Tories.(12) The outcome was that the Church as a whole was forced to place her feet very firmly on the ground.

If the Voluntary Conflict enlarged traditional Church interests by involving members in the political process, Chartism quickened and intensified this trend. In the early 1830's the political divisions between Voluntaries and Establishment fell generally along party lines, with the Whigs and Radicals strong advocates of the Voluntary cause, although the involvement of Chartism at the time of the decline of the traditional handloom industry complicated the issue. The Chartist cause, as has already been noted, was a complex one and became deeply divided between a small but vociferous band advocating physical force and the main body of mostly law abiding operatives. The latter, however, were sometimes so frustrated in their search for employment that they allowed their enthusiasm to spill over into support for more violent action. The progress of Chartism in



Dunfermline can be understood only when such tensions are appreciated. For example, in 1838 large crowds greeted such a national figure as John Collins(13) and his ideas were listened to enthusiastically; yet a short time later his call to the workers to take out their savings and buy arms was rejected and numbers attending his rallies were greatly reduced.(14) Part of the reason for this was a slight upturn in trade, which indicates that Dunfermline Chartism basically arose from the frustration of unemployment rather than deeper political and philosophical motives. The aims of the Birmingham Convention were repudiated by Thomas Morrison and many other Dunfermline Radical leaders, though this led to his being jeered by the smaller group of physical force advocates.(15) Nevertheless tensions continued and a bad cycle of trade encouraged speakers on political platforms to press for more active support for the Charter.

A growing gulf developed between a number of middle-class leaders and more radical elements on the Council. In 1841 Provost Morris was unhappy at having to chair a meeting at which Fergus O'Connor put forward his famous land scheme proposals. Morris resigned a year later when the town experienced riots, some shops being broken into and others set on fire. His successor Erskine Beveridge, who was himself a liberal reformer, took a more positive attitude towards the Chartists and when the Sheriff-Substitute forbade the beating of the Town Drum to announce a political rally Beveridge told the drummer to continue.(16)

The riots noted above followed a general strike in Dunfermline and suggest that Morrison and the constitutionalists were losing control of the movement, help having to be called in from Edinburgh to control the rioters. The worst crimes were committed in 1845 when the property of the Alexander brothers was attacked and three people were sentenced at the High Court for their actions, one of them to seven years transportation.(17)

These two events, the Voluntary Controversy and the Chartist rising, deeply affected the life of the community. Before considering the effect of Chartism on the lifestyle of the Churches it will be useful to indicate where Chartists worshipped, if indeed they

did so. Certainly they were to be found in the smaller denominations such as the Swedenborgians, Unitarians and Scottish Baptists who were organised by a plurality of lay pastors. These congregations were perhaps closest in thought to working men's aspirations and to Radicals like Thomas Morrison who had rejected the severer doctrines of Calvinism. They tried to engender a family atmosphere incorporating the sharing and community aspects of the New Testament. At Milton Green Mill, where Brewster and O'Connor had debated, there were also frequent meetings for dancing to fiddle music as well as gospel meetings, and the tendency was for these to be rolled into one. This was perhaps the nearest Dunfermline came to having a distinctly Chartist Church.(18) Ultra-radicals were unlikely to be Church members at all. At an early Church rally for further endowment in 1834, the Rev Peter Chalmers noted the presence of some agitators who did not belong to any branch of the Christian Church.(19) Among them would be those who wanted much more radical solutions to the problems of the time.

It is not without significance that no political rallies were held in any of the Establishment Churches whereas Queen Anne Street had a string of meetings, perhaps climaxing with the appearance of the Rev Patrick Brewster who addressed 1,500 working men in 1839. The *Fifeshire Journal* called the meeting a "sheer radical ebullition"(20) and even the members of Queen Anne Street perhaps felt that he had gone too far for a month later the Session reported to the Managers that many members were dissatisfied that the Church was being used for meetings of a purely political nature.

Secession congregations like Queen Anne Street and St Margarets were faced with real problems and were often on the horns of a dilemma. Many of their long standing members were weavers who were, at least temporarily, disillusioned by the change in their fortunes. Such men needed support and the Secession Church tried to provide it. However when the Chartist rallies, which usually took place in halls or in unused spinning factories, began to advocate more extreme action, such as buying weapons, the Kirk Sessions of the Dissenting congregations were less sure how far they could continue to give support.

Since 1832 the Dissenting Church had been in the vanguard of Reform and even of Chartism, yet by late 1839 they were slowly distancing themselves from the views of even such moderates as Thomas Morrison. As the economic climate worsened and political rallies became more extreme the Dissenting Church leaders were faced with a difficult choice. If they supported the wilder schemes of the Radicals they were in danger of losing the support of the lower middle class who saw the necessity of upholding law and order. On the other hand, they did not want to lose working-class support on which the financial strength of their congregations had previously depended. Therefore they attempted to find a compromise by changing their traditional image to conform to the prevailing mood of the times. As will be noted later, they modified their traditional attitude to the Communion season so that workers would not lose two working days.(21) They held tea and gospel rallies to rival their political counterparts in Chartism who were attracting a large, working-class support. The radical nature of the change is seen in the holding of a gathering in St Margarets United Secession Church in praise of Christmas Day.(22)

Such changes met with a hostile response from many of the journalists who supported not only the Establishment but also the established tradition of Dissent which had been the status quo in Dunfermline for over a century.(23) They criticised the Young Men's Voluntary Association who held meetings to which young ladies were particularly invited.(24) It was claimed that Seceders throughout the country were encouraging "Voluntary Love Feasts" and that they now intended to hold Voluntary Balls. In mocking these innovations the journalists asked sarcastically whether tea drinking and dancing were the ways in which the Dissenters hoped to expand the missionary work of the Church.(25) Another area in which journalists saw a change in the Dissenting Church was at burials where the Seceders had begun to imitate the Episcopal Church by wearing hats and reading the service. The press saw this as representing a change from the former meek and lowly attitudes of the old Dissenters. It was reckoned that such behaviour would formerly have been frowned upon but now the great desire was to be seen of men and called "Rabbi".(26)

It was not only the Dissenting Church which was changing



its attitude to Chartism and becoming more middle-class in its aspirations. After the worst of the riots in 1842, both Town Council and Churches took firmer action. The Non-Intrusionists who had moved into the Free Church were strongest in their condemnation of trouble makers but all the Churches found common cause in attempts to elevate the thinking of the working class and meetings were held by the clergy of the various denominations in a united attempt to improve knowledge in a whole range of subjects. By 1844 these had replaced revival meetings as the Church's attempt to deal with working-class apathy and the disillusionment of the unemployed. Conscious of the danger that the riots of 1842 and 1844 had been, the Church was concerned that the fabric of society should not be undermined. Lectures included such topics as the geological controversy, the influence of Christianity on the temporal condition of mankind and the evil of war.(27)

By 1851 the change was more marked still and even the Dissenting Church had abandoned its minimal support of Chartism. This change in attitude had begun around 1839 and was typified by an account of a minister being asked by one of his members to pray for the aims of Chartism from the pulpit. When he refused the member declared that he would be worshipping elsewhere.(28) From then more radical Chartists tended to abandon the Church or become members of smaller groups which met in the town. In 1846 an advertisement in the press stated that anyone who wished to join the Chartist Co-operative Land Society could be enrolled at the Church of the New Jerusalem.(29) Some Chartists did remain within the Dissenting Church and continued to press their views. In the early 50's a clash arose between a Chartist elder and his minister which led to a fracas in the Gillespie United Presbyterian Church. The elder had stated at an Anti-State meeting that ministers should practise what they supported on public platforms and that:

"..this meeting are of the opinion that any minister holding such (Voluntary) opinions, and refraining from giving practical evidence of his sincerity, acts in a manner wholly unworthy of his vocation."(30)

Those who supported Chartism simply from frustration abandoned the cause once they found work while others moved into the working-class

congregations of the Establishment.

A decade later the final comment of the Church on Chartism may be seen in the appearance at a Church meeting of a former jailed Chartist who had become a convert to Christianity.(31) The Church now had no need to give way to working-class movements as it encouraged more middle-class support and Chartism was seen as an attempt to destroy the type of society which the Church wished to perpetuate. In its new middle-class strength the Church could now declare its message with confidence but it had been more deeply affected by Chartism than it perhaps cared to recognise. How this happened is best understood by looking at a number of matters such as education, scholastic Calvinism, soirees, music and the place of women within society and the Church.

#### Education.

Education proved a particularly thorny issue since it formed a major plank of Chartist philosophy. One of the early factory owners, Mr Andrew Robertson, recognised the need to provide a school for the children of workmen whom he hoped to attract into factory production, education providing the sop which would overcome their resistance to new forms of production. The need for schooling became crucial as poverty-stricken weavers recognised the need for their children to be educated since they could no longer assist at the "pirns" or begin an apprenticeship within the trade. An attempt by the Dissenters to set up a school failed but in 1839 a major development in the Establishment was initiated when a church and school complex was proposed for the north-west corner of the town. Conscious of the demand for education within the area, the Establishment reclaimed its traditional role as guardian of the young. Their plan was attacked as being unfair by both Dissenters and Chartists as it called on the Government to endow one section of society at the expense of another.(32) While the school was being built the Dissenters formed an Education and Missionary Society from which money was to be made available for the education of poor children and missionary outreach was to begin among those who claimed no religious connection. Though the founders of the Society insisted that they were not trying to compete with the Establishment, the facts would seem to suggest

otherwise.(33)

Education had by now assumed paramount importance since weavers' children could no longer be sure of following in their fathers' footsteps so that a Church neglected this area of social life at its peril. Moreover a marked change had occurred in the lifestyle of the weavers. Formerly they had been among the most cultured of artisans, many of them being able to read, and a library had been set up in the town as early as 1789.(34) But times had changed and there was now little opportunity for leisure when work was available, while times of unemployment left the weavers disillusioned and in no mood for cultural pursuits. An article in the *Fifeshire Journal* in 1852 claimed that Dunfermline had become the least literary town in Fife.(35) Thus the change from the old handloom tradition to the power loom struck at the very nature of Dunfermline society.

At the Church and School rally held in 1839 the Rev George Lewis from Perth stated that education, and religious education in particular, could not be left to chance. He argued that if the Establishment abandoned their commitment to the education of the young this would open the door to Roman Catholics as well as secularists to teach what they pleased.(36)

After the Disruption the Free Church followed an aggressive plan to have a school attached to each of their congregations, though this presented enormous practical and financial difficulties and in Dunfermline only the Free Abbey Church managed it. The Free Church in Dunfermline put great stress on the conversion and education of the young and believed that society would be safeguarded from the excesses of Chartism only through proper religious education. The Rev Alexander Philip who came to the Free Abbey in 1845 stressed the need for the congregation to be vigilant in teaching and shepherding the young.(37)

In conclusion it may be argued that the National Church sought to tighten its stranglehold and be seen as the Church which was most concerned for the working class. The Dissenters advocated a non-denominational policy in which all would benefit from Government grants, though they had not perhaps realised the threat which



secularism and Roman Catholicism would pose if such an overall scheme were introduced. The Free Church reacted more forcibly, seeking to proselytize through education and combat social disorder by spiritual reformation.

Of all the educational reformers, however, Thomas Morrison senior stands out as an exponent not only of Chartist thinking but also of advanced educational theory. An article which he wrote on the subject, *Heddehashun and Handication*, was noted by Cobbett as the very best communication he had ever received for his Register.(38) Morrison was against learning by rote and in favour of learning through experiential means. He wanted the Commissioners who were to report on the Irish question to live in Ireland for six months before making their report. Morrison hated the Scottish education system which taught children to be subservient to their masters. He never saw his youngest son in such a rage as when he first came across the following:

"What though I be poor and mean,  
I'll engage the RICH to love me,  
While I'm modest, neat and clean  
And submit when they reprove me."(39)

He also detested the normal school curriculum and the way children were subjected to the process of "heddehashun:"

"In childhood 'we place the bliss in action'; how painful, then must be the long and rigorous confinement, during the school-hours. A great part of the mental exercise is that of memory only; or, if intellect and imagination are at all excited, they are so by subjects the most abstruse, repulsive, and painful."(40)

Morrison's views were, of course, quite different from those of the average man who saw in education the hope for his children's future. He was also out of step with the Church, who saw in their systems of education the means of encouraging children to conform to their own way of thinking.

Scholastic Calvinism.

If Morrison questioned the whole philosophy of education he

also challenged the tenets of scholastic Calvinism. He resented children being taught the Shorter Catechism at school since he believed it inculcated social servility and condoned class differences.(41) He preferred children to use their intellects and imaginations rather than their memories and considered such tenets as "effectual calling" to be absurdities, advocating a simple pragmatism in moral and social issues.(42)

As with education, Morrison's views on the Shorter Catechism and the Westminster Confession of Faith opened up debate. His daughter Margaret married William Carnegie, another Dunfermline Chartist, who left the United Secession Church after a dispute over the doctrine of infant damnation and sought what he called "a more noble God" within the Swedenborgian Church.(43)

In the early 1840's the teaching of the Westminster Confession on the subject of the Atonement was raised in Chalmers Street United Secession Church. The Rev James Morison from Kilmarnock had preached there and later a division occurred as it was felt by some that the "new view" limited the work of the Holy Spirit and the sovereignty of God.(44) Meanwhile the National Church was less inclined to abandon traditional doctrine and it was from within the Dissenting congregations and the Chartists that attacks on the Westminster Confession and the federal system of Calvinistic theology were launched. However the Churches as a whole remained conservative in doctrine and understanding. In an attempt to hold back the dreaded disease cholera the citizens were warned of the dangers of drink and encouraged to attend the local prayer meetings. Tar barrels were put in the streets to prevent the disease spreading. Although Dunfermline abounded in churches, in terms of housing and sanitation the community had progressed little since the time of the Secession.

In the late 1860's to 1870's, though some members of the United Presbyterian Church were advocating more liberal views on the Confession and Scripture, Mr Brydie of the Free Church and also the Editor of the Dunfermline Press were not so sure of such change. Brydie saw the danger of demythologizing the Scriptures by resolving Scripture truth into metaphor.(45) This was partly in response to Mr

Mitchell, a Unitarian, whose anti-Calvinistic views on hell and the devil were being widely promulgated.(46) A year later the Editor of the *Dunfermline Press* wrote:

"Have not the doctrines of fore-ordination and election a place in the Confession of Faith? Do they not form the very basis on which the whole Calvinistic system is erected, and is not Calvinism the acknowledged creed of the U.P. Church?"(47)

However, as will be noted later, the leadership of the United Presbyterian Church in Dunfermline was liberally disposed to change.

The working man.

Another of Thomas Morrison's great themes was the worth of the working man. He despised those who downgraded them and blamed Calvin's teaching for encouraging class distinction. At services in which he took part Morrison had read parts of Cobbett's *Register* as alternatives to Scripture passages.(48) Such independence of spirit was typical within a town in which Voluntaryism had taken such early root and deviation from the norm had become a common occurrence. Morrison was typical of those within the town who wanted to overthrow Calvinism and clericalism and introduce new patterns of worship closer to those of the New Testament.(49)

One of the great attractions of Chartism was its mass appeal which enabled the working class to feel a common strength in their quest for social improvement. This forced the United Secession Church in particular to review its whole lifestyle. For example in 1833 at the centenary of the Secession, journalists from the conservative *Fifeshire Journal* criticised Dissenters for their "popish festival" and for denouncing the Establishment, repudiating the Confession and renouncing the Covenants.(50) Though such comments were made by opponents of the Voluntaries there is none-the-less some truth in them. One example of the loosening of standards is the attitude of the Secession to Communion observance. In 1840 changes were made to the traditional practice. There was to be only one service at 8 pm on Friday and Monday's activities were restricted to a brief discourse in the morning. This saved two working days and was a



palliative to the working people who belonged to Dissent. The *Fifeshire Journal* wanted to know if the Establishment would follow suit and asked pertinently if such changes would have been approved by the early Seceders.(51)

Above all it was the community spirit of Chartism which posed the greatest threat to the whole Church and to Dissenters in particular. Meetings held by Collins, Attwood, O'Connor and Brewster drew large crowds to street corners and public halls and were often followed by soirees. In May 1838 a meeting addressed by Collins and Attwood was followed by such an evening(52) while in December women from the Political Union "danced into the sma' hours of the morning".(53)

Two different forms of response can be noted in Church life at the time. The first was the introduction of Church soirees which, though mooted in Queen Anne Street in 1836, did not become a regular feature until 1838. St Margarets United Secession Church held an evening at which the congregation was treated to an excellent tea by the ladies of the church.(54) Some weeks later the Relief congregation followed suit.(55) It is of course impossible to state categorically that these soirees were the ecclesiastical counterparts of the political rally but there can be little doubt that Dissenting congregations made a decisive response to the growing challenge of working-class Chartism. They felt it necessary to adopt an active and sensitive role towards the working class and the unemployed and not abandon the new poor to the political agitators. Rallies and after-rallies provided relief for a depressed community which for the first time had suffered the indignity of having to set up soup kitchens for the unemployed.

The same kind of practical realism arose over changes to Handsel Monday which was traditionally celebrated rather than New Year's Day. In many parts of the country where industrialisation was more advanced New Year's Day had already ousted the traditional holiday since it suited the manufacturers better. In 1838 the *Fife Herald* noted a change in the way old Handsel Monday was celebrated.(56) Music and dancing had taken over from cock fighting, pigeon shooting and general debauchery. Whether such a change was due to Radical-Whig

influence, the Chartist love of song or a trend in the community towards working-class rather than middle-class values is debatable. The Dissenting congregations, concerned at the effect these happy if frivolous pursuits would have on their members, responded the following year by holding Prayer Meetings on New Year's Day while on Handsel Monday all the congregations held morning, afternoon and evening services in an attempt to counter the social revolution.(57) Thus the Churches reacted in different ways to the new threat, tea meetings being one response and Handsel Monday services another. Both had the same aim, to prevent members from drifting to other working-class movements and adopting new social lifestyles.

The other major response affected both Establishment and Dissent. The Abbey introduced a midweek revivalist speaker whose rousing style contrasted with the more staid approach to worship commonly associated with Calvinism. Crowds gathered to hear the Rev Mr Burns and waited behind to speak to him(58), singing in the passageways of the church while they waited. The Dissenters followed suit and their revival meetings continued nightly for some months.(59) When these meetings were at their height housewives were accused by journalists of leaving their domestic chores to attend them. If in Kirkcaldy it was claimed that Chartism had brought the Church into the market place it certainly quickened the midweek pulse of local congregations in Dunfermline. Prayer again became central to Church life. Mr Law of St Margarets announced a weekly meeting for prayer for those associated with Dissent while Mr Brown of the Abbey hired a hall for a similar purpose for Establishment followers.(60)

In these ways Chartism may be said to have stimulated Church activity and loosened the Church's traditional conservatism. Revivalist zeal in the traditional churches was perhaps their response to the messianic spirit of politico-religious Chartism. It is not without significance that a small group of working folk who met for worship in Dunfermline called their meeting place the Church of the New Jerusalem.(61)

Thus the late 1830's and early 1840's proved a time of questioning, readjustment and restless activity in which the Church

attempted, perhaps more than at any other period, to adjust to working-class aspirations and values.

#### Women.

The Church's attitude to women was affected by the breakdown of the handloom trade with women becoming, in many homes, the new bread-winners. Prior to the factory and power loom revolution women were content to attend to the menial tasks associated with weaving. Some younger girls had worked in the rather unpleasant conditions found in the spinning mills but the majority remained at home helping to augment the family income by keeping pigs or poultry and tending the garden. They possessed little or no political, social or ecclesiastical muscle. However when the traditional trade collapsed and Chartism was at its height women assumed a greater militancy in the same way as miners' wives did in the strike of 1984. When two hundred of them handed in a charter to Collins in 1838 this was noted as the first major political protest by the women of Dunfermline.(62) Later the women of the Political Union held dances to augment their funds. These examples indicate the new role which women were assuming partly because the male-dominated handloom trade was crumbling. A similar trend may be observed in Church matters. Reference has already been made to their presence at revival meetings and their new roles at soirees, whether political or ecclesiastical. They were also to the fore in providing soup for the unemployed. At Mr Gibson's induction to the Maygate United Secession congregation the local press noted that tea was served by charming young ladies(63), while at St Andrews Quoad Sacra Church votes were given to women at eighteen but to men only at twenty-one.(64) Some years later in 1847 the women of St Andrews Free Church arranged for a sale of goods to raise money to buy gates for the new building.(65) Women also acted as district collectors in Chalmers Street United Secession congregation in 1848(66) but of course there was never any talk of their assuming the role of elders.

Why had women come so much to the fore? The depression caused by the collapse of the handloom trade meant that they had to take charge of the family finances. Andrew Carnegie's mother was the mainstay of the family while her husband was out of work.(67)



Chalmers notes that there were no fewer than 140 drinking places in the town(68) while Henderson notes the abundance of pawn shops.(69) Careful management of what funds remained was of paramount importance as was the careful handling of money earned when the trade occasionally picked up. Significantly it was women who were among the main contributors to the local Savings Bank.(70) These "canny savers" were of course wooed by the Dissenting congregations who were facing serious financial difficulties. They were also prepared to enter the new factories whereas the men remained disillusioned and defiant.

#### Music.

Andrew Carnegie wrote in later life of the blessing which his father had given him by instilling in him a love of minstrelsy. Chartism also helped to shape Church attitudes to music. Even within the staid Establishment a Mrs MacMillan rendered a number of solos at a concert of sacred music in the Abbey, though the press did note that many people still drew back from such methods of worshipping God.(71) In the secular field music was an important part of a Chartist rally and a Harmonist Society was set up in 1838 and gave monthly concerts. Music also played a part in the revivalist rallies held by Mr Burns in the Abbey Church. In 1841 a Mr Fraser lectured on organ, seraphim and accordion music and blamed Knox and the Reformers for the dullness of Scottish worship.(72) In the same year the Harmonists introduced sacred music into their programme but it was left to the Episcopal Church to introduce organ music and encourage a praise liturgy. At the opening of their temporary Church in 1840 the preacher lectured on the need to follow a planned celebration of the Christian Year.(73) Christmas was celebrated with hymns which included "Hark the Herald Angels Sing". The Baptist Church also tried to introduce instrumental music and a seraphim was used at Mr Thomson's induction in 1846 though this did not meet with universal approval.(74)

#### Postscript.

The Church had responded, however unknowingly, to the quickening pulse that Chartism had engendered in community life. Changes had taken place in most of the Church's more conservative

areas such as music and education and in the new roles which women were assuming. When the Chartist threat had died down the Church retreated and became less involved in the life of society though a new factor was to emerge in the influence which middle-class thinking would have in the life of congregations.

Throughout the years of change Dunfermline had shown the same tendency, which has been noted in earlier chapters, to hold back from extremism. Both Gillespie and Erskine in the ecclesiastical field had been reluctant to start new movements and both wanted their congregations to continue within the narrow confines of Presbyterianism. Chapel congregations, though they wanted a degree of self-determination in choosing their ministers, did not want to act as congregationalists. The same reluctance to deviate too far from traditional norms is seen in a number of issues which arose at the height of Chartism.

Thomas Morrison, senior, had great difficulty in persuading the ordinary, working-class operatives to join the Political Union which he set up in 1831. The Union advocated change through the legal process and was moderate in its ambition to bring about radical objectives. For example, any member who broke the existing laws of the country was, according to its original charter, to be expelled from the society. Many men, though sympathetic to the aims of the Union, were not prepared to support it personally while those who did join were not themselves over enthusiastic about the concept of consolidated unions.

This chapter has also noted the divide which emerged between two groups of Chartists. On the whole ultra-radicalism was unpopular and even the events of 1842, which required dragoons to be brought in from Edinburgh, resulted from a basic frustration rather than revolutionary political activism. The town, for example, had paid no heed to John Collins' call to arms and it is not surprising that two of the leading Radicals, Thomas Morrison and James Inglis, were members of the Town Council, Morrison at a later period becoming a respected Baillie.

The same moderatism and basic conservatism is found in

Church life. Changes were minimal, though it must be conceded that for a brief period revivalism did appear to exclude rationalism in a burst of emotional fervour. This "ultra-evangelicalism" was the ecclesiastical counterpart to ultra-radicalism in the political field; yet even here the enthusiasm can scarcely be compared to the scenes in Kirkcaldy and Dundee where violin and cello music accompanied the evangelists and the politico-messianic hopes of Chartism were matched by an equally exuberant evangelistic fervour.

The newspapers of the time were unhappy about the reactions of some of the women of the town who abandoned their traditional place in the home to go to religious meetings. This must be seen against the basic policy of both Fife newspapers to support the status quo in religion as in family life. Even the more radical *Fife Herald* had, in 1833, warned the Political Union of the danger of treating traditional religious forms too lightly.(75) The press disapproved, however, of the extravagant mannerisms of the evangelists and their abandoning of logic in order to make a immediate appeal to their hearers.

It was more extreme deviation from the norm which caused most concern, especially the emphasis which James Morison gave to the work of the Holy Spirit. The main ecclesiastical parties and the local press objected to what they saw as the narrow sectarianism of Morison. While the Secession and Disruption had been accepted as logical events, given the difference in opinion on the State and Patronage question, Morison's ideas were seen as purely schismatic. Journalists in particular were scathing about the way in which those who followed Morison used the word "conversion" to describe the coming into their fold of those from another Christian body.(76) Whereas revivalism was seen as a legitimate method of reaching the unchurched, even if the methods used were unpalatable to some journalists, the type of revivalist meeting run by the followers of Morison was seen as "poaching" and frowned upon. It was clear also that the main benefactors, apart from those who shared Morison's views, were the Baptists and other smaller groups, since Morison's "new view" tended to lead to a different understanding of the Sacrament.

The main denominations were wary of excessive emphasis on



the work of the Holy Spirit. Such expressions of the faith were viewed with suspicion since they tended to challenge the close-knit world of scholastic Calvinism and questioned the sovereignty of God in the work of conversion by placing greater emphasis on "decisionism". Many of those who held to the "new view" rejected their former understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism and private individuals began to administer the Sacraments.(77) Thus Morison's views affected the traditional core of Scottish Presbyterianism in a way which neither Secession nor Disruption had done.

There was therefore a parallel between what was happening in Church life and in the industrial life of the community where the handloom trade was under pressure from new forces. The new entrepreneurs had joined ranks to bring the industry into the modern world of handloom factory and power loom production and to snuff out what was seen by them as antiquated and uncompetitive systems. Likewise there was a closing of ranks among the main denominations but in their case it was to preserve the traditions of the past. Even the Disruption was seen as an attempt to bring the Church back to its roots rather than align its thinking with that of the modern age. Certainly, as MacLaren has pointed out, there was an aspect within the Free Church movement which attracted the middle-class business entrepreneurs who wanted to oust the landed-class aristocracy from their ecclesiastical as well as their economic thrones. Nevertheless the Free Church remained traditional in doctrine and sought to recover a lost inheritance rather than create a new world. Thus all three denominations reacted against men like Morison whose "high flying" views disturbed the theological bedrock of Presbyterianism. The types of change which have been considered earlier in the chapter were more immediate responses to the Chartist threat than fundamental changes in the thinking of the Church. Later in the century modifications to traditional liturgical and doctrinal forms would become acceptable, especially in the more liberal United Presbyterian Church. In the 1840's, however, the tendency was to preserve the status quo rather than accommodate the thinking of the age. The changes noted in this Chapter were as yet merely cosmetic, though the views of Morison were to have a far deeper significance than was perhaps recognised. The real changes in lifestyle were yet to come.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

Religious trends during the second half of the 19th century.

### Introduction.

In the previous chapter the effect of Chartism on the Church was considered and it was noted that congregations had responded by providing more midweek activity. When the Chartist threat faded social evenings were less frequent and tended to be associated with Sunday Schools, Choirs or Annual Business Meetings, events which belonged to congregational life per se and were not direct responses to outside pressures. Now a more subtle influence arose in the form of middle-class values associated with the philosophical, scientific and social revolution of the second half of the 19th century. Whereas the Chartist threat had quickened the pulse of congregational life to match the popularity of midweek Radical activity, the new Victorian philosophy forced the Church to reconsider her traditional theological and liturgical thinking.

This Chapter, because of the time span involved in the thesis as a whole, can only scratch the surface of the changes and seek to indicate the major developments. The main sources are the local Dunfermline newspapers, though primary sources such as Session records have also been used. There has been no attempt to make a detailed study of the occupations of the eldership such as MacLaren has done in his more compact study of the Disruption and post-Disruption years in Aberdeen.

At the end of the first half of the 19th century the three main Presbyterian bodies in Dunfermline were all struggling to overcome the effects of economic hardship produced by the decline of the handloom industry. The Abbey, under Peter Chalmers, was making progress, with laymen like James Kerr providing a crusading spirit. In 1845 elders were chosen by leet while in 1848 the teaching of the young and the possible creation of a diaconate were discussed by the Session.(1) The Abbey had also helped the St Andrews Chapel of Ease

to recover some of the ground lost at the Disruption while in 1849 Presbytery and the Home Mission Committee in Edinburgh gave financial help to the congregation of the North Chapel of Ease who had been able to return to the building following a House of Lords ruling on the occupation of premises by Free Church congregations.

While there was a crusading spirit about the Establishment, the Free Church was under severe financial pressure and was seeking to defend what it still held. The Free North, having been ejected from their building, struggled to find means of erecting a new Church. St Andrews Free was perhaps the most healthy as they had completed their building and had had the same minister since 1839. This gave a stability that even the most prestigious of the Free Churches, the Free Abbey, did not enjoy. In 1849 their minister had departed to Edinburgh and they had also lost a number of leading laymen. The Central Committee in Edinburgh was reluctant to allow them to call a minister unless they promised to give far more to the Sustentation Fund.(2) The fact that Dunfermline had three Free Churches within a stone's throw of one another was no doubt looked upon unfavourably in view of the plan to reach the whole country.

The United Secession Church had also suffered severe loss and had attempted to rationalize its position through merger with the Relief. Moreover in 1847 James Inglis, a Baptist, had made a stinging attack on the inconsistencies of the United Secession Presbytery and the growing power of the clergy. He saw as double standards the opposition to Sunday trains and the failure of the Church to speak out against their own members who sold drink on Sundays.(3) He believed the denomination had slipped away from its former democratic principles and advocated a system of greater lay participation in "mutual exhortation" meetings.

Between the Disruption and the mid 1860's the Establishment remained the most working-class of the three main denominations and also the most conservative in lifestyle and doctrine. The Free Church, which had been quite reactionary at first, acting as a shadow Establishment and in one congregation at least catering mainly for the working class, later competed with the more democratic United



Presbyterian Church for middle-class support. However, in the immediate post-Disruption years the United Secessionists sought new roles having lost many of the weavers who had formerly been the backbone of their churches. Though representing the most liberal attitudes in political and social theory within the main denominations, they were still less radical than the smaller sects which had sprung up in the town. Their ministers were nevertheless found on the same political platform and gave support to the Radical anti-Government movements of the time. Dissenters such as the Rev Neil McMichael became active in the Peace Society which petitioned Parliament against the increase of the naval force.(4) At a meeting on 5th February, 1846, McMichael and others opposed the idea of resisting military enrolment by taking up arms. Mr Walker of Chalmers Street supported resistance since he felt that compulsory military service was opposed to Christianity, justice, morality and the freedom of the working class. The meeting finally agreed to petition the House of Commons not to sanction such coercion.(5) The leadership of the Free Church did not appear at these meetings, which suggests that they took a more conservative stance. However, even in the United Secession camp a change was becoming evident and meetings for the extension of the franchise or in support of peace movements were, by the mid 40's, held more often in Independent or Baptist premises than in United Secession Churches.(6)

When the Chartist threat receded the Church as a whole had less need to accommodate itself to working-class agitation. On the contrary it could now look back on these Radical uprisings as a challenge to Christianity itself since many of the activists had been dismissive of the place of law and order. Throughout Dunfermline a new type of Dissent was emerging which involved a shift towards less radical schemes. Leading Churchmen who were prepared to support moves for Household Suffrage had become less sure of the wisdom of Universal Suffrage(7) and Dissenting clergy stayed away from an anti-Corn Law Repeal meeting, indicating by their absence their support for the type of change wanted by the middle class.

A spirit of paternalism developed in all three Presbyterian Churches, self-help and moral elevation becoming constant themes from

both platform and pulpit. Professor McMichael lectured the workers in the foundry of one of his Managers on the need to use Savings Banks and take out Life Assurance.(8) There was also a growing interest in revivalism and mission to the working class. By 1865 the Free Abbey had recognised the urgent need to set up a territorial Mission Hall in order to reach the more destitute parts of the town.(9) Only the Establishment, which had traditionally accepted its obligation to meet the parochial needs of the working class, remained unperturbed by the changes in society. When revivalism swept the town in the early 1860's some of the Dissenting clergymen, along with those of the smaller sects, met to discuss the best way to dispel spiritual apathy and to evangelize the neighbourhood. Only the Establishment ministers stayed away, perhaps because they felt that such a scheme was an intrusion into their parochial oversight.(10) On another occasion when two Dissenting clergymen preached in the open air they attracted large crowds but journalists scathingly commented that few of them were what Dr Chalmers would have called the "unexcavated heathen."(11)

The need for revival arose because of the financial plight and smaller membership of many Voluntary congregations. The same tendency has been noted earlier in 1838 when the Dissenting congregations lost members because of the decline in trade. They then gave up the political stances which they had adopted during the Voluntary Conflict and sought to put their own houses in order, urged by Presbytery and the Queen Anne Street Session to greater holiness and more effective evangelical zeal.(12) When the financial situation improved in 1865 the zeal for revival abated and interest within the Churches focused on Church unity and Disestablishment.

#### Church Unity and Disestablishment.

In the matter of Church unity the ministers of the United Presbyterian Church led the way while the Establishment was reluctant to become involved. A proposal to hold a public holiday to celebrate the bicentenary of the Reformation in 1860 was approved by the Voluntaries but Mr Chalmers of the Abbey indicated that he would hold separate celebrations for his flock. Such an attitude was deeply regretted by Professor McMichael, who believed it had destroyed the

unity which had been the main aim of the proposals. Although the Voluntary Churchmen were agreed in their aims, the laity were less sure of the value of a united act of worship and it was finally agreed that each congregation would be free to have its own celebrations in the afternoon and a joint service would be held in the evening.(13) Fifteen years earlier Mr Marshall of the Free Church had stated his belief that the chief hindrance to Union was the bringing of political differences into theological matters. He no doubt had in mind the determination of Free Church ministers to support the principle of Establishment which was anathema to United Presbyterians.(14) In this he was to be proved right as events were to show.

By 1865 there was a good working spirit among the ministers of the town with Mr Young of the United Presbyterians speaking at a Baptist Church Social while Mr Mackenzie of the Free Abbey preached at the 35th anniversary of Mr Young in Queen Anne Street United Presbyterian Church. A speaker from the Independent Church also spoke at a soiree in the Free North. These various exchanges doubtless expressed the Churches' desire to appear united in face of the growing threat of secularism but they also reveal their middle-class aims. Since the town was now relatively prosperous and each of the congregations was financially viable there was less of a competitive spirit than in immediate post-Disruption times or at the beginning of the 20th century. Even ministers of the Establishment began to consider the possibility of co-operation and at the first annual soiree of the North Church in 1868 Mr Rose of the neighbouring St Andrews parish spoke on Christian unity.(15)

In the Free Church, however, there was still definite resistance to Union with the United Presbyterians partly because there were in the Presbytery a number of older, influential ministers like Mr Gilston of Carnock and Mr Marshall of the Free North. Marshall was a friend of Dr Begg, the leading antagonist to Union. Moreover some members of the Presbytery still claimed that the Free Church was the true Church of Scotland and its main task should be to raise money for Church Extension within its own denomination.(16) Such conservative thinking clearly hindered discussions on Union but gradually the Church changed its thinking on its central role and the principle of



Disestablishment brought it into closer harmony with its sister Dissenting body. In 1880 Mr Shiach of the Free Abbey moved that the Free Presbytery of Dunfermline were of the opinion that the time had come when, on religious, ecclesiastical and political grounds, the tie between Church and State should be broken. An editorial in the *Dunfermline Journal* endorsed Mr Shiach's opinion:

"The younger men of the Free Church have little relish for the abstract debate about the Claim of Rights etc. They see that the condition of modern society demands union on the part of evangelical Christians, and they are not far wrong in supposing that the dis-establishment of the Church is a direct means to that end."(17)

The argument for a united witness had become a telling factor and, in an area of strong antagonism to the Tory Government, the removal of privilege from the National Church was another.

It will be useful to look in turn at Mr Shiach's three main arguments for Disestablishment and a more positive attitude to Church Union, the religious, the ecclesiastical and the political.

The religious ethos of the Free Church was undergoing change. Although in areas such as Sabbath Observance it remained unmoved, in others major changes were evident. Mr Shiach spoke in favour of instrumental music in 1880 though he was not prepared to be the first to introduce it into a local Free Church congregation. By 1882 it had been introduced in the other two main denominations as well as among the smaller sects and of course the Episcopal Church(18), and the Free Church Presbytery petitioned the Assembly that year on the matter of instrumental music as a help to the Psalmody. The gap between the Free Church and the United Presbyterians in the area of music was narrowing.

Another issue which raised controversy in both the United Presbyterian and Free Churches was the relation of office bearers to the Westminster Confession of Faith. There had been a discussion as early as 1870 among United Presbyterians on whether ministers should be required to sign the Westminster Confession at their ordination. A proposal that the practice of ordinands having to sign the Confession

of Faith in the form of a formula should be discontinued was defeated by one vote.(19) In 1882 the Free Church Presbytery discussed whether deacons should be required to sign the Confession on taking office, arguing that the diaconate was not involved in spiritual rule but only in temporal matters and therefore that the requirement to sign the Confession was superfluous as well as proving a stumbling block for young men. Mr Shiach was anxious that no such obstacle should be put in their way and saw the diaconate as a pathway which could lead eventually to their full spiritual work within a Kirk Session. It was therefore proposed that instead of signing the Confession deacons should be asked:

"Do you sincerely own and receive as in accordance with Holy Scripture, the system of evangelical doctrines taught in this Church and set forth in the Shorter Catechism?"(20)

The softening of Free Church attitudes in the areas of music and the Confession indicates a change in the thinking of the denomination at the very time when the Robertson Smith case was causing such heated debate in the Church Courts. There was wide support for Smith in the Dunfermline area both in the press(21) and among Free Church office bearers.(22) The United Presbyterians also had liberal minded office bearers as is seen in their attitude to the Westminster Confession. Such support for these liberal attitudes in the cradle of Dissent is surprising but indicates the middle-class Victorianism which now dominated the Dunfermline Churches.

The main ecclesiastical issue was the role of the Free Church in its continuing claim to be the true Church of Scotland. While it maintained this position its relationship with the United Presbyterians on the Disestablishment issue proved contentious. It should be remembered, however, that the Free Church in Dunfermline was never as powerful a body as it was in some parts of Scotland but was outnumbered by the United Presbyterians and, from around 1855, by the Establishment also. Nor was the immediate post-Disruption economic climate conducive to Free Church growth. The national policy of Sustentation Fund and Church Extension made heavy demands upon the resources of quite small congregations, forcing many members back into the Church of Scotland once the fires of Disruption had been dampened.

When additional sums were requested of congregations in 1878 this was met with increased hostility. Only one Free Church in the Dunfermline Presbytery was self-supporting and renewed demands pushed this possibility further away for the others. The presence of strong United Presbyterian congregations made the task of the Free Churches more difficult. The intervention of Central Administration was another factor which was becoming more evident within the Free Church government. This had local repercussions when the old charge of Carnock fell vacant and a neighbouring minister, Mr Lundie of Torryburn, argued that financial considerations should be taken into account in assessing whether Carnock should be allowed to call a minister. His argument was that if the Church was going to expand as a denomination it was foolish to keep alive the number of small charges which were found in the vicinity of Dunfermline.(23) The concept of enforced Union and Readjustment had begun to raise its head within the most centrally organised of the three main denominations. Mr Shiach of the Free Abbey argued that an old Disruption charge like Carnock should not be allowed to die out and moved that the matter should be taken up by the Assembly. The Clerk of the Presbytery had been asked by the Secretary of the appropriate committee in Edinburgh whether the various parties had taken into account the nearness of a United Presbyterian Church in nearby Cairneyhill. He replied that he knew of no provision in any schedule which required Free Churches to take into account the presence in the vicinity of a United Presbyterian congregation.(24) Clashes were obviously emerging between the Sustentation Committee and local interests, while the desire for major Union was keener in Church Headquarters than in the local congregations.

In such a competitive situation it was no doubt felt that the removal of privilege from the Establishment would put all the Churches on an equal footing financially. This would be of decided advantage to the small Free Church congregations in the Dunfermline area who had resorted to bazaars to clear debt.

Mr Shiach noted that political considerations also strengthened the case for Disestablishment. In 1878 Mr Nicol, one of only four Establishment members on a Council of twenty-two, reopened



the issue of the sending of a representative to the General Assembly. The Council had been so dominated by Dissenters that no interest had been shown in electing an Establishment representative to an Establishment Court and a period of over thirty years had elapsed since an elder had been appointed. As the law now allowed even a minority to make representation there was little the Dissenters could do to prevent Mr Nicol from having his way.(25) Nevertheless they made political capital out of his motion and in a letter to a local newspaper the law which allowed such injustice was condemned as an example of the spirit of Toryism.(26) Baillie MacBeth, a Free Churchman, had tried to adopt a more conciliatory approach at the Council meeting and the same letter condemned him as a man who failed to carry his Dissenting principles into his Council activities.(27) He had argued that change was best accomplished by moral persuasion and argument rather than more destructive methods.(28) There is perhaps the hint of a clash in the Council between the Free Church and United Presbyterian members, heightened by the appointment of the first Free Church Provost the previous year.

Mr Nicol's attempt to have an elder sent to the Assembly and to restore the Kirking of the Council in the Abbey Church was anathema to the Dissenters, who had no wish to return to what they saw as Tory traditionalism. The vast majority of those in power in Dunfermline supported the Liberal Party and the principle of Disestablishment. For almost fifty years no Conservative candidate had been put forward and any election for the Stirling Burghs was contested by Liberals holding marginally different opinions.

By 1880 the two main Dissenting bodies clearly believed that the time for change had come. Such agreement spurred the Establishment into reaction and many of the arguments used in the Ten Year Conflict once more came to the fore. In 1882 Mr Rose of St Andrews Parish restated the need for the Establishment of Religion if the poorer classes were to be reached.(29) Even those within the United Presbyterian Church had begun to question their Church's concern for the richer rather than the poorer parts of the country. In a letter to the *Dunfermline Press* in 1879 such reservations had been voiced by "Veritas" who had pointed to Glasgow as an example of this

policy.(30) In 1883 a leading article in the *Press* took issue with an "enlightened" U.P. who had been heard to say that nothing would make him increase his givings for the benefit of poverty stricken congregations. The writer wanted to know whether it had now become the policy of the United Presbyterian Church that every congregation must stand on its own feet without financial help from any other source.(31) The most strident voice in the Establishment was that of Jacob Primmer of neighbouring Townhill who warned Scotland of the dangers of Voluntaryism by declaring his conviction that hundreds of ministers were groaning under the heavy yoke of having to please the people in order that they might not be starved to death.(32) By 1884 Mr Simpson, the Treasurer of St Andrews Church, was also countering the demand for Disestablishment by showing the success of the National Church in Dunfermline:

"The cry for Disestablishment was not being responded to, and the fact that their Church was fully let, and had burst its bounds, was the best commentary he could produce on the proposal to Disendow and Disestablish the National Church."(33)

Each of these cases recalls similar arguments used at the time of the Voluntary Controversy.(33)

In the Free Church there were also echoes of the pre-Disruption manoeuvres of the Establishment Presbyteries, where Moderates tried to keep out Chapel ministers, when in the 1870's they attempted to "arrange" representation to the General Assembly, those against Church Union trying to keep out those in favour and vice versa. The minister of Saline proposed an elder from Edinburgh as lay representative because of his anti-Union views.(34) A year later Mr Brydie of Free St Andrews moved that the "obnoxious" system of choosing the Presbytery representatives by rotation should be ended.(35) He no doubt hoped that the strongest party in Presbytery, to which he himself belonged, would be able to elect representatives of their own persuasion. The Disestablishment issue, however, had drawn the two Dissenting bodies together in a united attempt to usurp the privileged position held by the Establishment. While in the early 1870's the Free Church had many who favoured a State Connection, a decade later a change had occurred. Though many reasons may be

suggested for this there can be little doubt that the financial stringency noted in an earlier chapter was a major contributory factor.

The social context of the changes.

The foregoing account of Church life during the second half of the 19th century indicates two distinct phases. The first stage, prior to 1865, saw the demise of Chartism and an attempt by the Church to evangelize the unchurched masses. Major industrial changes were taking place such as the erection of new power loom factories. A number of public works was also accomplished, including the Stirling Railway and a major Water project. The effect of the first was to make Dunfermline more accessible to other parts of the country and the second helped to alleviate the terrible sanitary conditions which prevailed within the town and which had no doubt contributed to the cholera epidemics which ravaged Dunfermline during the 1840's. It might be considered an indictment of a town so steeped in ecclesiastical history that the conditions in which its citizens lived were among the worst in the country.

During the 1860's a small but important group of industrial barons emerged who were business giants compared to the small manufacturers who had run the handloom industry. This created greater inequality between them and the factory workers than had been the pattern in former times. An article in the *Fife Herald* claimed that "the weavers were unable to compel, by fair means or foul, these few overgrown employees to slacken their grip and let a little of the refreshing prosperity trickle down through their fingers."(36) An article a few years later indicated how the weavers had suffered most in the industrial change which had taken place:

"The fact is that the Dunfermline weaver was about twenty years ago, so dosed from press, platform and pulpit, with the doctrines of political economics - the see-saw reactionary workings of supply and demand and, above all, dosed with the heinousness of strikes - the heinousness of even moral combinations for a rise in wages, that they have got it fixed into their noddles that there would be something criminal in meeting in a body, and asking their employers for an advance."(37)



The article also pointed out that, whereas foundry workers' wages had risen in the year from 26/- to 28/-, the damask weaver had only known a rise from 7/6 to 10/-. Such wages for weavers were lamentably low compared with what they had been earning as handloom workers even forty years before. The *Fife Herald*, in which the two articles appeared, was perhaps the more radical of the two main Fife newspapers and the position may be somewhat overstated for small strikes had certainly taken place in the 1850's. However the major point requires to be noted. There was a fear among the weaving community which went back to the bitterness of their experience when the traditional handloom trade had collapsed. They were frightened to press for higher wages in case that might lead to a chain of events which would end in a new depression. This left them in the hands of the new industrialists who, though leading Churchmen, were quite prepared to exploit the servile spirit in their workforce.

The rivalry which has been previously noted was necessary if the Free Church were to survive after the heavy losses it had known to the Establishment. The massive shift from the Free Church around the mid 1850's was due to a number of factors, including the setting up of new Establishment Quoad Sacra congregations which did not have a Sustentation Fund. It may also be suggested that since the main industrialists belonged to the Dissenting congregations many may have felt happier in the Establishment, whose office bearers did not have the same business control over them. The majority of those who changed their allegiance would appear to have been weavers and miners. Of the first hundred baptisms in the North Church after 1855, 33 were of miners' children and 33 of weavers' children.(38)

The effectiveness of the revivals is difficult to ascertain, though meetings held for over a month by the Free Abbey minister and visiting speakers might have had some bearing on that Church's major recovery. Preaching at these meetings was of the "hell-fire" school and aroused mixed reactions, causing some young women to faint while some youths had fits of the giggles.(39) Open air meetings attracted mainly Church members and it is clear that the Church was struggling against a background of economic depression.

Revivalist preaching can be seen as one of a number of methods used by the Church to overcome working-class apathy. Mr McMichael's appearance at a foundry soiree was perhaps another attempt to show ordinary workers that the Church had a concern for them. However his speech struck a paternalistic note as he encouraged them to use the Savings Bank and take out Life Assurance. He reflected much of the thinking of the time, that man needed moral elevation if he were to become a good citizen. When the Dunfermline Co-operative began in 1861 it had a similar goal, namely "to promote and encourage habits of thrift, industry and thoughtfulness in the general community". As its founding directors were mainly Churchmen from Dissenting or Independent congregations a parallel train of thought can be noted. The presence at a revival meeting of Thomas Cooper, a former Chartist who had been in jail but had been converted to Christianity, was likewise an attempt to influence the downtrodden, disillusioned and depressed masses. The Free Abbey felt it necessary to build a Mission Hall to reach the inhabitants of the most destitute parts of the town but as it would be less than a mile from the Church it might be asked whether it was only necessary to avoid inviting the poorer class into their own Meeting House. This would perhaps be too critical of the office bearers who also stated that they needed a new Meeting House themselves.(40) Even in the Abbey Church there remained a confidence that the message of Christianity would achieve the moral change which society needed. A visiting preacher at the Abbey Annual Social had for his theme, "The necessity and means of salvation."

Around 1865 a change in emphasis took place. The factories were now bringing back wealth and Church membership was increasing so there was not the same need to evangelize or to become too involved in attempting to convert the poorer classes. Financial stability had returned to most congregations and the Churches could enjoy a period of relative calm after the troubled times through which they had passed. This was the period of inter-Church meetings. At a Baptist soiree in 1866 it was noted that nearly all the town ministers were on the platform and such moves encouraged discussions on Church co-operation. Despite its success, however, the Church was aware that it was drawing upon middle-class support and was at fault in not trying to reach the masses. There was a growing belief that the divisions within

Presbyterianism were a hindrance to outreach and that more inter-Church meetings would help. In 1867 the Rev Alexander Leith from Wigtown spoke on the Scriptural Union of Evangelical Churches in Canmore Congregational Church, the Free Abbey and Gillespie United Presbyterian Church. The fact that he did not speak in any of the Establishment Churches is significant.

However the general principle was clear; in face of the apathy and secularism of the age the Churches needed to make a united appeal to the unchurched. This was the period when talks began between the Free Church and United Presbyterians. The difficulties they faced have already been outlined but the fact that they were united in opposition to Toryism and the Established Church helped them to come together. For a time, however, their attention was diverted by their own internal problems which made them more inward looking. Whereas in 1865 the denominations were on the whole pursuing similar lines, especially in theological and liturgical matters, a great change was about to take place. The United Presbyterian Church changed its attitude to the Westminster Confession and the Free Church discussed whether deacons needed to subscribe to the Church's main doctrinal standard. Financial worries in the Free Church led to concern over Union and Readjustment and the introduction of a plethora of bazaars to keep congregations viable. Disputes over instrumental music broke out in both Churches, which now became concerned about their own internal housekeeping and neglectful of those outwith their pale. In 1869 the Town Missionary, one John Montgomery appointed in 1860, noted that there were nearly 2,500 adults in Dunfermline not connected to any Church. Some of them, he claimed, stayed away because they lacked proper clothes.

The Church was becoming more fashionable, as the next section of this chapter will show. It had become neglectful of the poor, unconcerned for the unchurched and, because of its own internal arguments, almost unaware of the main social issues in the town itself. Mr Robbie, minister of the Independent Chapel, was of the opinion that the whole Church had become too inward looking(41) and this seems to be borne out by the Church's concern for its own internal housekeeping.



There was certainly a growing suspicion that, although Church leadership was still predominantly Liberal and had little place for Toryism, there was a growing gulf emerging between the office bearers and the rank and file members. At the election contest between John Ramsey and Campbell Bannerman many of the office bearers supported Ramsey, the less radical of the candidates, while the ordinary members supported Bannerman. A polling booth joke of the time was:

"Ramseyite clerk: You see Sheriff, we've a' the ministers wi' us.

Polling Sheriff: Yes; but I rather doubt the other side have all the congregations."(42)

A leading Free Churchman, lawyer John Ross, was the main agent for Ramsey. The increasingly middle-class spirit of United Presbyterianism nationally was also noticeable in their willingness to build new churches only in the richer areas where there was little possibility of financial problems. The Establishment remained firm in face of the growing demand for Disestablishment and used many of the arguments of the Voluntary Conflict to support its case.

#### The Religious Revolution.

In his recent book on Scottish religious life in the Victorian era Cheyne has drawn attention to the revolution which took place in almost every avenue of Church life.(43) Certainly in Dunfermline by the fourth quarter of the 19th century the three main denominations were much closer in their life style and their response to the critical scientific spirit of the age. This was true of preaching, social life and ecclesiastical and liturgical matters. The liberal attitudes found in the political realm were carried over into the Church. The long tradition of the United Secession and then the United Presbyterian Churches had created a democratic element in Church government and influential laymen, impressed by the new modernism, affected the whole Church. Journalists of the time were full of praise for an Establishment minister who had shown tact in parochial matters and freedom from narrow mindedness.(44) The Rev Mr Dunbar of Gillespie Church was in turn praised in a local newspaper for his

broad-mindedness and for being prepared to take a decisive stand on political and educational matters. The fact that he had abandoned the old style of "hell-fire" preaching for a rational, common sense approach also won the writer's approval.(45) Whether this was a general view or only that of journalists is difficult to determine and whether there was a growing tendency, especially within United Presbyterian congregations, for ministers to please their hearers must remain a matter of conjecture. What can be noted is a growing tendency for ministers to become public figures, involved in philanthropic ventures and in the cultural pursuits and social activities of their middle-class congregations.

Without much further study it would be impossible to ascertain how the preaching of the time changed from earlier days and whether the effect of Biblical Criticism made preachers more moralistic and less doctrinal. However, towards the end of the century, similarity of sermon material is noted by Daniel Thomson who heard a series of preachers from different denominations filling the pulpit of the Independent Chapel when their minister was on holiday. His comment was that it was difficult to distinguish between them and the old differences between Calvinists and Arminians, Establishment and Free, Baptists and Burghers had almost gone, replaced by a common presentation of truth which called on the hearers to strive for the best in moral and spiritual matters. Thomson was not against such preaching as long as the preachers followed the example they gave.(46)

Of course there were exceptions where the Church stood its ground despite current thinking. One such issue was the opening of the Baths on a Sunday. At first the Council voted against such a move but only by a single vote.(47) Mr Shiach of the Free Abbey indicated his dissatisfaction with this turn of events and called upon the Free Church to observe a firmer sabbatarianism.(48) His words would appear to have had a marked effect on the Council who two years later threw out the proposal by fifteen votes to three(49), the Free Church party having grown by then. The Council, however, was attacked for the stance it had taken. Those who carried the day were designated the "dirt and divinity brigade" and were accused of not acting in the best interests of the whole community. A writer to the *Dunfermline Journal*

asked the working people of Dunfermline if they did not live in a Burgh in which conservatism was taboo. He was shocked by the traditionalist attitudes of the Council on the Sabbath issue and accused those in power of simply prattling on about liberal ideas without putting such ideas into practice.(50) He clearly felt that the Council was not as radical as the citizens.

Despite Mr Shiach's strong stand in this matter, changes were taking place even within the Free Church and the liberalising process was moving ahead. When the congregation opened their commodious new building in 1884 Professor Bruce chose to speak on Church Psalmody with illustrations from the Free Church Psalter and Hymnbook. He was quite clearly prepared to act as a promoter of the new approach to worship, wishing the praise to receive its true place within Presbyterianism. He attacked long sermons and the lack of singing within the Church as the cause of empty pews and advocated a well-proportioned service with bright and popular music as part of the answer. In his opinion services should last no longer than an hour and a quarter and, while in favour of instrumental praise, he favoured congregational singing rather than choir pieces.(51) This was in marked contrast to what the Free Abbey minister, Mr Shiach, had advocated only twelve years before. He had stressed the place of the sermon and called the Church to return to the Book of Discipline and improve the standard of praise.(52)

However even the Free Church had to adjust to change and make concessions to the new thinking of the time. Since many of the smaller congregations were now faced with attracting new membership or dying, cherished practices had to go. Other means of holding the membership apart from a good preacher had to be found. More vibrant and joyful praise was one method and the provision of halls for social and cultural activities was another. It has already been noted that the Church had begun to turn inwards because of the internal battles which were raging over doctrinal and liturgical change. Churches faced with new challenges had to become bigger and better. One means of doing this was by providing more attractive churches(53) and another by building a suite of halls. Often the expense of these projects led to debt but no congregation could afford to be left behind.



Some halls were built to extend the Church's work, especially to the outlying areas of the town.(54) Additional premises and halls adjacent to the church were to provide rooms for the many new interests and groups which grew up as an extension of Church life. One of the areas where halls were needed was for work with the young. Clearly the Church was losing its hold over young people and new types of meeting were required. Around 1875 both the Free Church and the United Presbyterians were discussing the advantages and disadvantages of Children's Churches, no doubt in a further attempt to hold on to the young. There was, however, a fear that these might compete with ordinary worship and this was not thought to be a good thing.(55)

Typical of those who made use of the new premises were choirs, which in many congregations proved thorns in the flesh of the ruling Kirk Sessions. Influenced no doubt by the popularity of the annual excursions of factory workers at their bosses' expense, choirs sought financial support from the Kirk Session or Board of Managers for their annual outings, which became popular features of congregational life. Sometimes, however, high spirits caused problems and Gillespie congregation seem to have fared particularly badly in this direction. An early bone of contention concerned who had the right to choose a precentor. Some held that it belonged only to members, others to seat holders as well. Later, when there was resistance to the introduction of an organ, the Psalmody Committee resigned.(56) Then the precentor wanted a position nearer the choir and though this was eventually agreed certain restrictions were imposed.(57) The Session on another occasion received a letter from the choir seeking support for a soiree which they intended to hold in St Margarets Hall and stating that they intended to close the evening with a dance.(58) The Session declared that such an evening would not be in keeping with the character of a Church meeting and they could only give financial support for a soiree. If a dance were held then it must not be in connection with the congregation.(59) The following year continuing trouble with the choir is noted in the *Managers' Minutes* when £2 was granted for their annual outing with the proviso that the money would not be given again if it were reported that drink had been freely distributed.(60) In 1882 the choir pressed to have their own special range rather than allocated pews.(61) As office

bearers were presumably often members of the choir such issues must have led to conflicts of interest and ill feeling.

Such internal wranglings were a threat to the peace and harmony of the Church and no doubt distracted the membership from the task of evangelism. Soirees and bazaars certainly proved an effective means of drawing members closer together but were making the Church more middle-class and moving the centre of congregational life away from Sunday worship. Whereas in the early days of the soiree the custom had been for individuals to bring food with them as their admission "ticket", charges were now made and the "soiree poke" often developed into a more fashionable tea. In one case the term "conversazione" was used rather than the more common "soiree" and it was noted how the ladies of the congregation liked to show off their best silver on these occasions.(62) In such circumstances the more poorly dressed would no doubt feel unwanted.

The community was undergoing a process of change in which social activities were becoming the focal point of Church life. Instances of such activities are many and each points to the Church becoming part of an acceptable social pattern within Victorian Scotland. Such pursuits as visiting the grounds of prominent people for conducted tours were popular. The North Parish Choir visited the home of Lord Abercrombie(63) while Queen Anne Street Choir had a day's outing to the grounds of the Earl of Marr and Kellie.(64) Without doubt such an occasion would demand a certain style of dress which ordinary working folk would either not have or be put to great expense to purchase. More energetic pursuits involved games such as rounders on the lawn followed by an afternoon dance. Many of these occasions would not be complete without the annual photograph, another costly item. Rougher games such as football were enjoyed by the North Parish Sabbath School. The Church was seeking to keep up with the times and appear modern and forward looking but the contrast with the old Fast Day was remarkable. Members of the old Seceding congregation of Queen Anne Street danced away the afternoon(65) while the Establishment kept to the old tradition, even though numbers at the services were small. Another indication of the new embourgeoisement of Church life was the silver presentation made to long serving choir members at a sit down

tea at Mitchell's Railway Restaurant.(66) By 1895 St Andrews Church was holding a dance within Church premises.(67)

The liberalising process also involved new roles for women especially within the United Presbyterian Church, where, through choirs, Dorcas societies and charitable projects they helped to dictate the social strategy of the Church. In the Free Church, however, they tended to have a lesser role and continued to be used mainly as canvassers for congregations who were struggling financially. In an article in the *Dunfermline Journal* in 1883 the collapse of the Sustentation Fund was noted with the subsequent need to increase funds and the writer assumed that this would mean that the women of the congregation "would be whipped into greater effort."(68) An interesting reference is made by Thomson to a meeting of the mixed Guilds of the United Presbyterian Church a decade later. All the congregations of this denomination within the town had met to discuss the winter programme and there was a clash between those who wanted it to contain discussions on secular subjects and books and those who did not. No agreement was reached and the meeting was adjourned. A draper in the town commented on the small proportion of young men present compared with the young women.(69) The days when women would greatly outnumber men in the Church had obviously begun. Moreover the women were involved in taking decisions and discussing with men topics of spiritual interest. The Guild in the National Church was, on the other hand, exclusively for women.

Most of the comments already made have suggested that it was in the United Presbyterian Church that the main changes were taking place. Earlier chapters have noted how the process of distancing themselves from the early Seceders had begun as early as the Voluntary Controversy and was evident at the centenary celebrations of the Secession in 1833.(70) Politics had begun to play an important role within the Dissenting Church and Liberal and United Presbyterian ideals were later to become almost interchangeable. In 1879 "Veritas" wrote to the *Dunfermline Journal* suggesting that the United Presbyterian Church had become a large Liberal or Radical committee. The change from the stricter doctrines of the early Seceders to a more middle-class brand of Christian lifestyle was epitomised for some in



the statue of Ralph Erskine erected in 1849. He had been made to look, in the eyes of some at least, like a "young dandy" rather than the godly Seceder.(71) The denomination also distanced itself from the past when it was first to cut down the length of the Communion season and then abandon the Fast Day altogether.(72) This is understandable since most of its leading office bearers were businessmen who resented this intrusion into work time, though it was some time before the annual holiday ceased altogether. In 1883 while Establishment and Free congregations continued to keep the Fast, with increasingly meagre congregations, the choir of Gillespie were on a trip to Castle Campbell and that of St Margarets to Kellie.(73)

The United Presbyterian Church became more middle-class and competitive, though it retained a missionary zeal. Queen Anne Street was among the first congregations to provide for an African child by proxy with money raised through its various agencies.(74) Meanwhile the other two denominations were becoming more middle-class and liberal in their separate ways. The Establishment remained, at Kirk Session level at least, the most working-class. A scathing letter was sent to the *Dunfermline Press* in 1875 attacking the Sessions of the Establishment for being composed of the very off-scourings of the people.(75) Certainly their office bearers did not appear to clash so often with their ministers as did those of the other two denominations which might suggest that they had fewer business and management skills.(76)

Even within Sessions, powerful groups began to try to work independently of the people. In 1875 the Free Abbey had a powerful group of elders who clearly felt that they could take the initiative and choose a minister without consulting the people.(77) This was a far cry from the aims of the Disruption and represents an attempt by a small group to act as patrons. Two years later the first Free Church Provost was elected and this also suggests that the Free Church was regaining ground in the town. The conditions for its growth were now right since there was growth in housing and a number of small businesses being set up. Moreover it had begun to attract the professional class, such as lawyers and architects, who were in turn to take control of Town Council affairs. In this there was a shift away

from the manufacturers as king-pins in the affairs of Dunfermline. This move also heralded the emergence of a new type of middle class into whose hands, rather than those of the businessmen of the United Presbyterian Church, the trusteeship of the Carnegie Trust and other philanthropic ventures would fall. These groups were often self-electing, middle-class and reminiscent of the Councils of the early 1800's which were investigated by Royal Commissions.(78) Simpson, quoting J.B. Mackie in *Andrew Carnegie: His Dunfermline Ties and Benefactions*, notes how Mackie commended "the honesty, fidelity and, in the main, the success" of the Trustees, but also complained of the private nature of the Trust's proceedings with not even the elected representatives reporting to their constituents.(79)

At an earlier point the comments of the Rev Mr Robbie were noted. He felt that the Church was becoming too inward looking and certainly later events suggest that it was looking after its own interests and enjoying the life it had created for itself. Members were more concerned with what they would get out of the Church than with its missionary endeavours. Certainly they took an interest in children of distant lands but how far were they interested in those on their own doorstep? While jaunts were being made to the homes of the landed class, the Fife miners were involved in a long, hard struggle for a wage increase. A wedge had begun to form between the working class and those who enjoyed Church membership. In 1884 an article in the *Dunfermline Journal* reported the strong words of Dr Story of Roseneath Church of Scotland who, speaking at the opening of a Church Hall, criticised the "cookie, tea and orange consumption" within the Churches. He particularly objected to their consumption within the actual sanctuary but was not enthusiastic about tea meetings even in halls, which he thought should be used for outreach to the young.(80) Mr McLean of Alloa was another who felt that the Church must rid itself of the "tomfooleries of soirees" and raised the matter at the Dunfermline United Presbyterian Presbytery. He stated that Presbyteries met for teas and congregations for soirees instead of getting on with the real missionary work of the Church and wanted the Presbytery to visit congregations and help them discover their true mission. He recognised that some would oppose such interference but felt that it was in line with the democratic influences of the age on which the United

Presbyterian Church prided itself.(81)

In 1883 all three denominations had already been influenced by the liberalising spirit of the age and there appeared to be little complaint from within the main body of their hearers, which is not surprising in a town which had never had much time for Establishment. The old Dissenting and crusading spirit had also disappeared in the middle-class economic boom which the linen industry had brought. The Church conformed to the new age and criticism tended to arise from outsiders. In 1869 a letter in the Dunfermline Press challenged the local ministers to take up cudgels against the anti-Calvinistic teaching of a Unitarian who had set himself up in the town. The letter asked, "...are all the clergy in Dunfermline asleep?"(80) It is more likely that they had learned the wisdom of holding their tongues while they and their congregations considered their traditional positions in the light of the new thinking which was already emerging. They were quietly absorbing the new philosophy, marking the social upheaval and considering how best to adjust their lifestyle. In fact they were learning middle-class diplomacy.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Conclusion: A critical appraisal arising from a chronological survey of the social, political and ecclesiastical changes in Dunfermline during the 18th and 19th centuries, with particular reference to the democratisation of the Churches and the distinctive role of the United Presbyterian Church in Dunfermline.

This study of Establishment and Dissent in one town ranges over a period of one hundred and fifty years. The focus is on the way the life of the Churches in Dunfermline developed in response to the various social, political and religious trends in Scottish history which impinged upon it.

Ecclesiastical Dissent flourished in Dunfermline because it commanded the support of the laity who controlled the community purse strings. Four breakaway movements, Secession, Relief, Chapels and Free Church, drained manpower from the Establishment and removed those who would have provided financial backing. Only when the traditional home-based handloom industry collapsed in the late 1830's and Dissent was forced to re-define its role in a society which had lost its former wealth did the National Church manage, for a short period, to redress the balance. Later in the century, though the Establishment regained numerical competitiveness, it still remained less powerful than its sister denominations in terms of social and political influence.

The foregoing chronological account of the town's history reveals certain underlying principles in the period under research. While each Chapter is, in a sense, a self-contained unit, there are trends which keep reappearing and form the basis for a deeper understanding of the interchange between social, political and ecclesiastical life. Three minor motifs can be recognised. The first is the significant role which the Chapel movement and the Quoad Sacra congregations played in the development of the National Church: the second is how the changing pattern of Church activity reveals the reaction of the Churches to social, political and theological change: and the third is the clear parallel which emerges between the

development of the United Prebyterian and Free Churches through rationalisation in the former and the effects of disruption in the latter. There are also two major motifs, one relating to Church growth in general - the process towards democracy within the Churches - and the other having particular reference to Dunfermline - the influence of the United Presbyterian Church.

A) The role of the Chapel movement and Quoad Sacra congregations in the development of the National Church.

In the third quarter of the 18th century, the failure of the National Church to create additional places of worship for the growing population led to the erection of independent Chapels within the Establishment. This study reveals the significant role which the Dunfermline Chapel, the first to be granted an official constitution by the General Assembly in 1779, played in the development of the movement.<sup>(1)</sup> A type of congregation was thus recognised within the National Church which differed fundamentally from parish churches regulated by the Queen Anne Act of 1712. The congregation was allowed to choose its own minister, subject only to the proviso that he should be a person recognised by the Presbytery as belonging to the National Church. However these ministers had no seats in Church Courts, nor did the congregation have its own elders.

Two factors influenced the decision of the Assembly to grant official recognition to Chapels. The first was the success of Dissent and a fear that failure to recognise Chapel petitioners would drive them into the arms of the Seceders. The second was the need to tighten the regulations governing the operation of Chapels and to define their relationship to the parish church as the parent body. However these temporary solutions to the problem of the growth of Dissent and the need for Church Extension within the Establishment were ill-conceived and introduced into the National Church a coinage which, at the Disruption, would prove to be illegal tender.

Chapels provided a half-way house between the Secession and the Establishment and enabled many of the merchant class, especially those involved in Burgh politics, to remain within the Establishment

while disagreeing with Heritors and with the thinking of the Moderates within the National Church. Of particular interest were the numerous divisions in the Relief Church when vacancies occurred, as happened in Gillespie's original congregation at the time of his death, when some members sought re-admittance to the Establishment by having their building recognised as a Chapel.(2) The tensions were so great around 1770-74 that a crisis of similar proportions to the Antiburgher Breach in the Secession threatened the very life of the Relief.(3)

From 1779 the Chapel movement was viewed with deep suspicion by many of the ministers of the National Church who saw in it "altars being set up against altars", whereas Dissenters were seen as simply "altars beside altars." Certainly in Dunfermline the Chapel was more despised by the Abbey ministers than were Secession or Relief congregations. Ministers such as John Hardy of Ballingry and James Thomson of Dunfermline warned the Church of possible dangers and repercussions. Hardy argued that under the Queen Anne Act legislation either Chapels, with their independency, Managers and popular election, or the National Church as then constituted would have to go.(4) In his opinion they could not co-exist and the events of Stewarton in 1843 would seem to have proved him right.

The spread of Chapels, especially through the period of the Haldanes, increased fears of the growth of Independency and moves were made to tighten control of the National Church. The Assembly of 1798 did this by passing an Act which allowed Chapels to be erected only with its express permission, removing the power formerly held by Presbyteries to set up Chapels where they saw a need. This Act indicates the continuing tensions which existed between the Moderate party which dominated the Assembly and the Popular party whose power lay more at Presbytery level. The latter felt that Presbyteries were best fitted to know what was needed in their own areas, though they would have been happy to leave the constitutional details of any new Chapel under the review of the Superior Court. The Popular party therefore held that the the General Assembly was the worst Court for judging matters in the first instance but the best Court of review. The effect of the Act was to curtail the growth of Chapels while leaving the more contentious issue of their legality within a National



Church unresolved. It might be argued that this was a head-in-the-sand attitude which was bound, sooner or later, to meet the full weight of the legal process if the Church retained its National status as established by law.

Chapels came back into fashion when the Chapel Act was passed in 1834, when their ministers were allowed for the first time to sit in Church Courts and the congregations to appoint their own elders. Three types of Chapel Churches, or Quoad Sacra congregations as they were now named, came into being. Already existing Chapels were given Quoad Sacra constitutions; then there were those which grew out of the Thomas Chalmers Church Extension Scheme and yet others, former Auld Licht Burgher Churches, which came into the National Church in 1839. Most of them had their own individual constitutions. The extraordinary rules which were arrived at in the Dunfermline Quoad Sacra congregation concerning those who had the right to vote in the vacancy which occurred in 1838 have been noted elsewhere.(5)

Prior to the 1843 Assembly, Chapel ministers were in many cases refused the right to attend the Court. Dunfermline Presbytery did not allow any of its three Chapel ministers to be commissioners, though each had a claim by rota. After the departure of those who were to form the Free Church, the 1843 Assembly removed the Chapel and Veto Acts from the Statute Books, while retaining possession of the Chapel buildings. A House of Lords' decision in 1848 in favour of the National Church put this matter beyond dispute and the Free Church had to find finance to provide alternative properties while the Establishment effectively used these buildings in their campaign to regain the initiative over Dissent. When the Government passed the post-Disruption Quoad Sacra Act it provided a legal framework for setting up new congregations. The Church, for its part, required that any new congregation first fulfilled the obligation to provide stipend endowment in accordance with the Act. Thus the irony for Thomas Chalmers and those of the Free Church was that the very buildings which they, as Non-Intrusionists, had set up before the Disruption as a means of aggressive Church Extension became the launching pad from which the Establishment now countered the advance of Dissent. These new post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregations provided cheaper

accommodation than the Free Church, burdened as it now was by its extensive financial commitments, so that many of the working class moved back into the Establishment. Membership figures in Dunfermline show a dramatic decline in Free Church strength when the two post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregations were opened.

There was another aspect of the Chapels and Quoad Sacra congregations which influenced not merely the progress but the very ethos of the Establishment. Unlike the Quoad Omnia parishes, these congregations distinguished between their spiritual and secular management in a way similar to that of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches. Thus the decision in 1779 to recognise the place of Chapels within a National Establishment became crucial to an understanding of the role of Church and State in Scotland. While the independency of these Chapels met the full force of the legal process, as in the Stewarton case, the insights of Chapel management were not lost to the National Church after the Disruption. The movement, which had not been dependent on the good will of Heritors in financial matters or lay patrons in the election of ministers, did not die with the annulling of the Chapel Act by the 1843 Assembly. These distinctive features continued when the new post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregations were set up by Robertson. The Chapels had therefore produced a leavening influence from within the National Church and helped to introduce forms of financial management and popular election which were at odds with the traditional parish constitutions. The effect was to provide an effective bridge-head between the old Quoad Omnia parishes and the more democratic and congregational methods of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches in the process towards an acceptable form of Church Union.

B) How the changing pattern of Church activity, in particular the building of halls, revealed the reaction of the Churches to social, political and theological thinking.

During the period covered in the chronological account, a marked change took place within the Churches in their attitude to the Scriptures and their own doctrinal standards, while the relationship between them and the community was also changing. Associated with

this was a loss of confidence in the priority of preaching. This led to a search for alternative methods of quickening congregational life as can be seen in the widening range of activities introduced during the last quarter of the 19th century. Financial strains began to occur within congregations as they competed with one another for the smaller numbers who showed interest in religion. Bazaars and fund-raising activities were introduced to bolster bank balances and halls were built adjacent to churches to provide social activities for every age and taste.

The use or non-use of premises thus provides an interesting insight into how the Churches saw their role in society. Certainly the need to provide halls was partly governed by the policies of the previous century when pews had replaced the traditional open plan arrangement of individual seats. This had reduced the buildings' functional use while providing maximum returns from seat letting. However, when preaching became less popular, the Church was left without the flexible facilities which might have halted the decline in attendances. She felt herself increasingly divorced from the community and sought to put this right by providing a host of new activities within newly-erected halls. This need to re-establish links with the ordinary life of the parish was in marked contrast to the early part of the 18th century when religious life gave ample evidence of the close links which existed between Church and community. How this was lost is partially indicated by the chronological study of Dunfermline.

Early 18th century life in Dunfermline centred on the Communion season, when large crowds - at times over 6,000 people - gathered to share in Erskine's sacramental celebrations, a high spot in the town's meagre social calendar. Moreover, under Erskine's ministry, the Abbey Church was active in its parochial duties and elders were normally representative of the districts which they served. They organised the Poor Fund meticulously and constant checks were made that real need was being met. The Session was also active in disciplinary matters, some of which went beyond sexual promiscuity. In 1736 they warned against the abuses of "penny weddings" and indicated that ministers would only marry those who brought a line of approval from the district elder and gave assurances that the numbers attending



the wedding would be limited. The Church had a good relationship with the various Guilds who had seats in the Abbey and met there for business.

A number of factors disturbed this harmony and severed the ties which had existed between Church and community. The departure of Erskine, many of the elders and a large number of his congregation from the Abbey removed the core of the home-based handloom weaving industry from the Establishment into the Secession Church. Eventually this led to a widening gulf between Church and community, for although the weavers were political radicals they kept, as on the whole did the Secession Church, religion and politics in separate compartments. Active in their political theorising and campaigning, they were conservative and passive in matters of Christian doctrine. Moreover in 1754 a significant move took place in the relationship between the handloom industry and the Established Church when the Crafts abandoned the Abbey as their meeting place in favour of the Town Hall. This move was associated with Thomas Gillespie's deposition and the support he received from the Town Council and can be seen as a pivotal movement in the secularisation of the work-place, in Dunfermline at least. It has been noted elsewhere that the Relief Church and the Chapel movement continued to be more involved in Burgh politics and Town Council affairs than the Secession Church.(6) These movements were smaller than either the Establishment or the Secesion so politics and mainstream Church activity in Dunfermline became increasingly divorced. Another factor in the severance of the ties between Church and community was the move which took place throughout Scotland to discourage the old-style conventicle gathering at Communion seasons in order to prevent these solemn occasions becoming mere excuses for social festivity. The outcome of these changes was to relegate most Church activity to Sundays.

It was not until the Haldanes' influence towards the end of the 18th century that there was a quickening of interest in activities other than Sunday worship. A meeting of young men was set up at the turn of the century for prayer and scriptural recitations. The setting up of a Scientific Society and United Prayer Meetings involved Church leadership and inter-denominational support. During the 1820's

relations between the Established Church and Dissent were far less strained than in the previous century but the good will which had been engendered was dispelled by the Voluntary Controversy. The United Prayer Meeting stopped, the radical Town Council forbade the use of the Town Hall by the Established Church Sunday School and prevented Burgh elders being sent to the General Assembly which they as Councillors despised. Meetings supporting Church Endowments and Patronage were countered by others advocating the Voluntary Principle. The Churches now found themselves involved in secular politics yet deeply divided as the Voluntary and Non-Intrusionist groups, who on doctrinal matters were closely aligned, pursued different political and ecclesiastical goals.

Chartism quickened the pulse of town life with political meetings, associated dances and social activity and the emerging role of women. Revivalist rallies and Church soirees can be seen as the religious counterparts of political and temperance campaigns. Meetings for political purposes on Church premises had support from Dissenting congregations until the late 1830's when the Chartists became less concerned for law and order and Sessions took a more conservative line.

The fact that week-night activities died down once Chartism had receded suggests that the Church's response had been of a cosmetic nature, an attempt to provide a more acceptable alternative to the political rally. Annual soirees continued but they were purely social events on the Church calendar. One influence which did remain, however, was the growing role which women assumed within Church life. Certainly it consisted of tea-pouring at soirees and collecting for Church projects but it did indicate an early emancipation and the beginnings of charitable efforts in which women would soon play such a formative and formidable role.

With the decline of the home-based handloom industry and during the period of economic depression which followed, new attitudes to church-going became evident. Chalmers, in 1844, noted how operatives had become more interested in politics than religion as a cure for their social ills, while in 1849 the North Church missionary observed that many of the poorer class were claiming that lack of

suitable clothing was keeping them from Church.(7) In a town in which religious belief had formed such a prominent part of community life, irreligion became a powerful phenomenon. The Church was now considered by the working class as the province of the better-off and socially successful. A couple of decades later a similar type of thinking was evident among the middle class when elders who became bankrupt were expected to resign their office, though in Dunfermline there was a notable exception to this general principle.(8) It may be suggested that the success of Dissent in the 18th century had made Church membership a concomitant of social and business success so that when the traditional handloom weaving industry crashed non-attendance at Church clearly symbolised social and economic failure. Prior to the crash weavers had tried to take the dearest seats they could afford as a sign of their claim to superior social status. Afterwards, taking cheaper or even free seats would have been an admission of failure and a sign of further social subjection and many of them preferred to stay away.

As the century progressed the working class became increasingly open in their opposition to the Church. Whereas in 1834 the Rev Peter Chalmers, the Abbey minister, noted with some surprise that a meeting in favour of Church Extension was disrupted by a few individuals who had no religious affiliation, by the 1860's ministers and evangelists were being openly mocked. Religion, or at least some forms of over-zealous religion including open-air evangelism, became a laughing stock among those for whom the spiritual was irrelevant within their human experience. Passive indifference was being replaced by a more aggressive secularism.

The Churches attempted to respond to this new challenge by attracting the working masses through bazaars and the building of church halls in which a wider range of activities could be offered than within the sanctuary. However this can be seen not so much as an attempt to find a real meeting place with the deprived working class who were experiencing real social deprivation as an enticement to the lower middle classes who were becoming apathetic to Sunday worship and as a means of improving flagging church finances. Within the Churches themselves there were doubts about the legitimacy of holding lotteries



and the ethics of selling second-hand clothing. In defence of the bazaar held in the Free North in 1876 it was argued that the goods offered were lower in price than anything in town(9) but such practices were seen by others as a return to Medieval Indulgences by which nominal Church members or those outside the Church could claim to have supported the cause of religion.(10) One minister, a United Presbyterian, thought that the tea meetings before or after Presbyteries, when ministers gathered socially, had become the real heart of Presbytery life. He would have preferred to see more awareness of the need to ginger up the life of congregations through an adequate supervisory programme carried out by the Court.(11) Others noted how church halls were being built to facilitate the secularisation of the Church. Certainly the tendency was for the secular and sacred to become associated with two adjacent buildings. Part of the problem, the presence of pews in the sanctuary, has already been noted.

Falling attendances, financial crisis and a loss of conviction in its long-held beliefs further combined to make the Church open to change. Yet in the process it became increasingly the arm of middle-class culture and there was a tendency to follow social patterns rather than give a lead. It has been noted, for example, that the Church reacted to Chartism by providing alternative social events rather than addressing itself to the political problem. In the social field it was affected by the "embourgeoisement" of Victorian society. Soirees, which had at first provided a meeting place where the ordinary operative could feel at home as an alternative to the Chartist political rally, became events at which the middle class competed with one another in displaying their best silver. The working class, if they attended, were made to feel the difference between their lifestyle and that of the organisers of Church life so that middle-class paternalism became a marked feature of the life of the Churches.

By the last quarter of the century money became a necessity of life if congregations were to survive. Middle-class competitiveness and the success of Dissent had left the town over-churched. No longer were seat rents and door collections sufficient to finance the growing demands for new church halls and the upkeep of fabric. Quoad Sacra parish congregations had also to finance building projects and favoured

a trend, which was also present in the Free Church, to raise money by the holding of bazaars. Certainly cheaper goods on the bazaar stalls attracted interest among those who were not members or even attenders of the Church but it is doubtful whether they made much spiritual impact. For the middle class these events provided the opportunity to exercise charity while helping to supplement the Church coffers. The building of church halls for social activities had a similar effect, for it was felt that under the umbrella of the hall roof the social interests of the parishioners could be met. Though bazaars and social meetings provided pleasant entertainment, it might be argued that they were a substitute for the Church's lost confidence in the power of preaching and the divine content of the message committed to it.

Moreover, the introduction of halls tended to restrict rather than extend the Church's wider influence, limiting its impact to within its own premises. During the middle part of the 19th century the whole of Scotland had been seen as the "hall" wherein the Church was to witness and members were expected to apply Christian values at their work place and in social and family life. The Church's later retreat within its own walls began a process in which membership of the kingdom of God became identified with belonging to the Church "club" and being involved in activities in the halls. Buying goods at the bazaar became a substitute for free-will giving and the congregational soiree an alternative to Sunday worship. Increasingly the Church became preoccupied with providing an ever fuller programme of social events to satisfy the demands of its own membership. This led to a widening gulf between the Church and the world outside while paradoxically hastening the secularisation of the Church itself.

In his interesting study of the social history of religion in Scotland, Brown has pointed out that those who first tried to adapt biblical interpretation to the science of Darwin were not the scientists or rationalists but Presbyterian ministers from the Dissenting camp.(12) He thus argues that the doubt within the churches between 1890 and 1910 was introduced by the Church itself and this fermented the wider public debate.(13) A similar "own goal" may be seen in the building of halls, the proliferation of activities and the grouping of individuals according to age and gender. Having lost

confidence in its mission to go into all the world, the Church tried to bring the world within its premises by offering what would later be seen as second rate entertainment. It allowed itself to be carried away by modern thinking before it had formed an adequate "apologia." By simply capitulating to the world it was heaping up trouble for itself, causing confusion among its members about the distinctiveness of its task. It was uncertain of its old beliefs and even of the Bible itself and its reaction to change was determined by the need for financial support which made it dependent on middle-class society. Even here it was on the defensive rather than on the attack. Moreover, these new activities were seen as crutches to help individuals proceed to the ultimate goal of church membership but the result was to push members into attitudes of self-indulgence in matters of religion. The question which arose increasingly was not that of the evangelist, "What must I do to be saved?", or that of the radical social reformer, "How can religion help the depressed masses to a better standard of living?", but rather "What can religion and church membership provide in terms of social interest and activity?" The even more fundamental problem was that the Church itself, while using social activities as a means of bringing individuals to membership, became confused as to what was the supreme goal and purpose of its existence. It increasingly lost the simplicity that is in Christ and became burdened with the attempt to please and provide for the voracious social requirements of a middle- and upper-working-class membership.

Thus, like an army in retreat, the Church was concerned for its own survival and the defence of its institutional life rather than pressing evangelically or radically forward. It was content to cater for a relatively comfortable group who wanted a socially acceptable form of religious life which had neither the cutting edge of an evangelical gospel which called for the "individualism of conversion"(14) or the cutting edge of a radical gospel which would address itself to the problems of real social deprivation.

By 1883 the changes noted above, which would sweep through the Church in the 1890's, were already evident. Outings by United Presbyterian groups had replaced religious observance on the Fast Day. Choirs were demanding the right to hold dances on church premises, the



Church as a whole was described by some as a large "orange and cookie" refreshment room and Aunt Sally stalls were popular features at bazaars. Drink was openly consumed on choir outings, even when their expenses were met by the Session.(15) Although Sessions warned against such drinking and were reluctant to authorise dances on Church premises, a decade later some capitulated to popular demand in a number of issues. It would appear that the seeds of the secularisation of the Church had already been sown by 1883.

C) The influence of social and economic change in the emergence of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches.

1. Establishment "de facto" and "de jure."

The title of the thesis, "Establishment and Dissent in the Dunfermline area 1733 - 1883" will prove confusing if it is assumed that the "de jure" Establishment had a controlling interest in the town's affairs throughout the period. In fact by 1751 the Secession of Ralph Erskine and the deposition of Thomas Gillespie had removed power from the Establishment to such an extent that it had to remain on the periphery of ecclesiastical life for almost one hundred and fifty years, apart from a brief period of revival during the height of the Voluntary Controversy. The National Church lost its hold over the members of the community-based industry, had its financial coffers drained by the Dissenters and saw the old merchant families join Gillespie's Relief congregation and later form the Chapel congregation. The "de facto" Establishment was therefore one of Dissent. Before 1837 it was made up of those who belonged to the home-based handloom weaving industry and the Secession Church, while after 1851 it was formed of the middle-class entrepreneurs of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches. These two groupings, though both dominated by Dissenters, were quite different in their social and economic ethos. The period between 1837 and 1851 witnessed the former lower-middle-class leadership of the handloom industry being sharply divided and redefined by the coming of factory production. It is important to trace how this change came about.

The rapidly growing textile industry of the Dunfermline of

the 18th century did not fit into what Smout has called "the Scotland of the Moderates". Its growing wealth was spread comparatively widely, creating in particular a prosperous artisan class, the handloom weavers. This industry and those dependent on it were dominated neither by the landed gentry nor the old merchant oligarchies of the traditional Burghs, nor did they belong to the National Church. The various groups within the handloom trade, the journeymen, master weavers and small merchants, were bound together by an industrial system which required mutual co-operation. Its predominantly cottage-based nature demanded trust between the different factions, with journeymen often working in their employers' homes and receiving an annual invitation to a family meal. The trade's solidarity was founded on inter-dependence and the need of all sections to protect their interests against the threat of factory invasion. Their success is evident from the fact that there were few looms under factory roofs in 1837 despite the fact that the home-based handloom weaving industry in the West of Scotland had crumbled almost two decades earlier.

Though the trade demanded mutual co-operation and independence, as a "de facto" Establishment of Dissent it had its own ruling élite made up of the eldership of the Secession congregations along with small merchants, master weavers and tenant farmers involved in the community-based industry. Like a "de jure" Establishment they organised society to suit themselves, though they did pay some heed to the lot of the ordinary handloom weavers. Their organising skill was evident in two developments in 1815 when the ravages of the Napoleonic War were still being felt. They agreed with the Heritors to set up a Voluntary Association for the relief of the poor in order to avoid a compulsory legal assessment which would not have been in their best interests. They took control of a number of funds and mortifications as well as door collections of Dissenting congregations and at the same time introduced a rigorous means test and system of inspection to regulate the giving of charity. Meanwhile the Abbey Church was left to attend to its own poor. Thus both "de facto" and "de jure" Establishments favoured a voluntary system of poor relief through which they could exercise a degree of social control.

In the economic field a Table of Prices, known as the

"Grandfather Table", was re-introduced to provide minimum rates for certain classes of weaving work. Though representatives of the ordinary weavers were involved in these agreements, it would be wrong to assume that they exercised some type of trade union power. The device was rather a skilful mechanism of the ruling body to control the industry by preventing entrepreneurs from instituting a price-cutting war and forcing some of the small caucus of older merchants out of business. This ruling group therefore combined with the workforce to prevent the setting up of larger units of production along factory lines. It was clearly in the interests of both the ruling élite and the ordinary handloom weavers to blacklist any high-flying entrepreneur who wanted to break with the old system and these community controls proved succesful until the handloom trade collapsed and there was a regrouping of the middle class as factory production became inevitable. At the same time the Voluntary system of Poor Relief proved wholly inadequate to deal with the poverty and unemployment which was now widespread and a legal assessment was finally introduced in 1839. Earlier attempts to alleviate need had provided the philanthropic middle class in both Non-Intrusion and Voluntary camps with opportunity to subscribe to various schemes of poor relief. Even here the schemes indicated the allegiance of the two bodies. Those in the Non-Intrusion camp provided outdoor labour around the Abbey precincts while those of a Voluntary persuasion provided similar work where the weavers lived. Both were concerned to uphold their own Establishments, the Non-Intrusionists the National Church and the Voluntaries the old handloom industry and the Secession Church.

The struggle was long and hard and the town suffered periods of dreadful unemployment aggravated by cholera epidemics. Moreover the change to the power loom was not a simple one for the quality of cloth produced was at first inferior and there was a lack of men who either possessed sufficient capital or were prepared to take the risk of financial failure. A number of bankruptcies also signalled caution. However by the mid-1850's the change was complete and Dunfermline had a new "de facto" Establishment of Dissent. It had even more control of the town's economic, political and ecclesiastical life than before.



Before 1832 the handloom weavers and therefore the Secession Church were not well represented on the Town Council which had been dominated from 1751 by individuals from both the Relief and Chapel congregations. Many of the Town Council had supported Gillespie's stand in 1751 in a way similar to that which Drummond and Bulloch noted in Jedburgh, another Relief stronghold.(16) Thus in both these towns a powerful group, many of whom were members of the Town Council, sought a half-way house between the Establishment and the Secession. They wanted to retain at least a tenuous connection with the "de jure" Establishment rather than commit themselves wholly to a Secession Church which they felt was in danger of divorcing itself from the real source of political power. The vacancy which took place in Erskine's congregation after his death in 1751 lasted eight years and part of the delay was no doubt due to Gillespie's coming to the town in the same year, after his deposition from Carnock. Some of the leading laymen who had followed Erskine had by this time realised the consequences for their future civic aspirations if they remained within the Secession. Gillespie's Independent Chapel, the Relief cause and ultimately the Chapel movement offered them greater opportunity of retaining political influence. A number of elders who had left the Abbey in 1753 to join Gillespie's congregation were instrumental in creating the Chapel congregation in connection with the National Church in 1779 and forming a dynasty which was described by investigators into Royal Burghs as totally corrupt and controlled by families using nepotism to keep themselves in power. These "corrupt Tories"(17), as they were known, did not belong to the Abbey Church, though some held posts as Managers in the Chapel congregation where the Establishment's middle class had clung during the time of the Rev James Thomson's reign in the Auld Kirk.

#### ii. Middle-class entrepreneurs.

After the factory revolution had taken place, the new ruling élite were still Dissenters but they now belonged to the Free and United Presbyterian Churches and between them controlled the Council, ran the large factory units which were producing the town's new wealth and in their roles as elders, deacons and Managers controlled the life of the Church. They did not have the reforming zeal of the older

Seceders and in their business life they were set apart from the factory operatives in a way that the handloom weaver had never been from the small merchant or master weaver. The nearest social event to the invitation to the family meal at the master weavers' home was now the annual day trip to some coastal resort. The master saw this as a generous act of philanthropy but it differed quite markedly from the more homely meal of a past era which had served a similar purpose. Moreover the personnel had changed. Whereas the old industry had been male-dominated, the new was one in which factory girls were happy to accept lower wages since work itself provided for them a source of emancipation.

There was also a marked difference in the spread of wealth. In the pre-factory days financial benefits had been distributed across a wide section of Dunfermline society. The later industrial revolution meant that the new "de facto" Establishment of Dissent practised the more pyramidal form of social control of a "de jure" Establishment. In such the working class formed a broad base wholly removed from the small apex of power. In the pre-factory days the "de facto" Establishment of Dissent could be likened to a circle in which a caucus of lower-middle-class merchants homed around the centre while master weavers and journeymen formed a circumference not too far removed from the centre of power with some real hope of upward social mobility. However the introduction of factories and the power loom changed all that for the weaver lost more than a job. He lost a way of life in which he had been able to enjoy the luxury of adjusting his work to suit his social and leisure needs. Therefore within a decade a whole body of the artisan class who had enjoyed certain freedoms within their work patterns were reduced to factory operatives and were expected to work regular hours six days a week. Their old cottage-based industry, though not by any means perfect, had provided them with a certain quality of life, pride in their work and time to enjoy leisure pursuits. Moreover for the hard-working weaver who was prepared to exercise thrift there were real opportunities to better his lot and in some cases to rise up the social ladder by becoming a master weaver or even a small merchant.

The change which took place echoed a much wider Scottish



experience in which a large undefined body of what could loosely be termed the "middle class" began to be divided and redefined sharply with the coming of factory production. The master weavers and small merchants of the traditional textile trade were replaced by the entrepreneurs of the new industrial age. These small merchants or middle men - there could be up to sixty at a time operating within Dunfermline at the height of the trade - meant that the wealth of the industry was broadly distributed and even ordinary artisans benefited. However the need for mutual co-operation within the home-based handloom industry, which gave it both strength and cohesion, made the change to factory production complex and prolonged. Moreover the new entrepreneurs came both from the Non-Intrusionists within a revitalised Establishment and from Voluntaries within a declining United Secession Church.

The Non-Intrusionists in the National Church had led the way in such capital projects as the formation of the Gas Company. They came even more into their own when the traditional industry collapsed under a series of severe economic slumps from around 1837. Because they were less tied to the old "de facto" Establishment of Dissent and its traditional system of production they were among the first to break the stranglehold of the weaving pacts which had previously held the industry together. In the ecclesiastical realm the same men instigated the Church Extension movement in the town in 1839 and later became the leaders of the Free Church. Their task was relatively simple for the Moderate party in Dunfermline was small and insignificant, such had been the overwhelming victory of Dissent in the previous century, and it was further weakened by the small Episcopal congregation which had been set up in 1840.

However the new entrepreneurs in the contemporary United Secession Church had a much more difficult task, for the "de facto" Establishment was one of which they were an integral part. Bound by generations of weaving tradition, they found it much more difficult to break free from its outmoded practices. They dominated the Town Council from the time of the Reform Bill and in the mid-30's combined with the town's radicals to keep the Non-Intrusionists from civic power. Nevertheless, since they formed the core of small merchants who



controlled the traditional trade, they were as a body reluctant to relinquish their controlling interest. Attempts to blacklist merchants who sought to break the accepted patterns of trade production were at first common and in this the small caucus of merchants had the backing of the ordinary handloom weavers. However economic decline and a new financial realism led entrepreneurs to distance themselves from the home-based operatives who stubbornly resisted any talk of factories or power looms. The process of change was a long and painful one, spanning the years from 1837 to 1851, by which time the two largest power loom factories were operating. On the political front these new entrepreneurs, some of whom belonged to the United Secession Church, had at first aligned themselves with the moral persuasionist movement among the Chartists. However when Chartism took more aggressive forms attitudes changed. At first in 1843 it was the Free Church representatives on the Council who acted as a "shadow Establishment" in restraining civil unrest, but eventually those who would become members of the United Presbyterian Church saw their role as upholders of law and order.

In the social and economic realms they had to break their former bonds with the small merchant class, who did not have the capital to set up new industry, and also with the ordinary handloom weavers who were experiencing unemployment and poverty. Their ecclesiastical commitment also underwent change and as leading lights in the United Secession Church they recognised the need for a new, more streamlined United Presbyterian Church, more in keeping with the new mood of the age. Rationalisation had therefore won the day in both the industrial and the ecclesiastical realm. But there had been a price to pay. Many of the older weavers were left disillusioned and subject to the control of credit and pawn merchants. In their church life they felt that their poverty and lack of suitable clothing made them unfit for the worship of God and many became more involved in politics than religion. Moreover the new United Presbyterian body was quite a different animal from the old Secession Church in Dunfermline. It had been the Church of the weaving community in which master and employee often sat together in the same Session. The United Presbyterian body, though it did contain some of the new power loom personnel, was no longer the weavers' church but was dominated by shopkeepers, who had

grown rich during the weavers' misfortune, and the new bosses of the ancillary industries which had risen in the wake of the power loom revolution, as well as the white- and blue-collared workers of the mines and railways. The ordinary cottage weavers were eased out by superior working- and middle-class families. They had lost not only their livelihood but even their place in the congregations of their fathers.

A basic difference between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church thus emerged in Dunfermline. The "new shoots" of the Free Church had a relatively simple task in ousting Moderates of the Establishment and their overwhelming success in Dunfermline would have been all the greater had not the Rev Peter Chalmers of the Abbey reneged on his commitment to the Free Church.

The comparative body of middle-class entrepreneurs within Dissent emerged through a much more complex process in which "Rationalisation" rather than "Disruption" created the new United Presbyterian Church. The first indication that the old "de facto" Establishment of Secession Church and handloom weavers was under pressure had come as early as 1820 with the long vacancy in Queen Anne Street. The more conservative elements in the Session refused to accept the popular choice, Mr James Whyte, who was a charismatic figure and unpopular with fellow ministers in the United Secession who saw him as a rival. One of the candidates who was invited by the Session to oppose Mr Whyte in 1822 was the Rev Dr John Brown of Biggar who was later to play such a prominent role in the United Presbyterian Church. However at this earlier date Dr Brown was still more of a traditionalist. In 1818 he had preached a Synod Sermon which was later published under the title, *"On the State of Scotland in reference to the Means of Religious Instruction."* In 1836 at a Church Extension Rally the celebrated Dr Welsh quoted Brown as having said on that earlier occasion that it was the duty of the State to plant churches in necessitous districts.(18) In the early years of the 1820's the ideals of the old Seceders were still to the fore and the concept of Voluntaryism had not yet become a national issue within Dissent. However the events in Queen Anne Street in 1822 suggest that changes were emerging and that the Session still wanted to maintain old



Seceding principles. When St Margarets congregation was formed in 1825 as a breakaway from Queen Anne Street, its office bearers adopted a much more radical and business-like approach to Church government, more in line with the developing liberal spirit of the age. Its second minister, Mr James Law who came in 1828, became Dunfermline's leading Voluntary. He encouraged Church and State separation, the concept of a gathered congregation and the general principle of free trade and open competition in both industrial and ecclesiastical matters.

The concept of "free trade" within the handloom weaving industry was, of course, unpopular with the ordinary weavers who, though they in general favoured "laissez-faire" principles, felt the need of protectionism to safeguard their particular trade. Even as early as 1822 the long strike which took place indicated that ordinary weavers were becoming concerned about possible changes as they had noted the growth of factory production in the west. However their worst fears were forgotten, for a time at least, with the introduction of the Jacquard machine which widened the range of damask weaving. Meanwhile the main body of the Secession, including the Queen Anne Street congregation, had adopted Voluntaryism. However the handloom weavers, though they supported political and ecclesiastical Voluntaryism, remained sceptical of "free trade" within their own industry which was now struggling to retain its former status.

In his biography of Andrew Carnegie, Wall makes a similar point when he notes that the weavers became Chartists in order to preserve their own status quo:

"The skilled artisan of the town, however, and the handloom weaver in particular, wanted no sweeping economic revolution. Their hopes centred upon the conservation of an old order, and they accepted the promise of the Charter not for what it might destroy but rather for what it might protect."(19)

Eventually the inevitable happened and a new industry arose out of the ashes of the old. There was little that tied the two together for they were worlds apart. Some old merchant families in Dissent did manage to accrue sufficient capital to achieve a major position in the new industrial base: outstanding among them was the



Reid family whose connection with the trade was a long one. This family had played a prominent part in the setting up of St Margarets United Secession Church, which suggests that they recognised the need for new methods in ecclesiastical as well as in business life as early as the 1820's. When the handloom weaving industry was being slowly strangled the Reid family was organising new methods of production and aroused the wrath of their old allies the handloom weavers who tried to burn down their premises. At first they did not have sufficient capital to launch out into the precarious business of setting up power looms. However they received a substantial amount from the will of a Mr Gowans who had also been a leading light in the early St Margarets Church. They then became important figures in the United Presbyterian denomination which by the 1850's was a completely different body from the old Secession movement. Though this will be more fully examined when the nature of the denomination is discussed in the final section of the conclusion, this can be said. Many of the old handloom weavers with their radical zeal had abandoned religion, many suffering from poverty and lack of clothing. They had been replaced on the industrial scene by girls who did not necessarily have much to do with the new United Presbyterian Church. As for the master weavers and small merchants, the core of the old craft, many of them had suffered bankruptcy and some, like the Carnegies, had emigrated. A revolution had taken place without the necessity of a Disruption. The more business-like heads had reorganised the government and rationalised and rarified the ethos of the old Secession body into one more in keeping with the age, making it a rival of its middle-class counterpart, the Free Church.

The consequences for the working classes were the same in both camps. Those who had moved into the Free Church returned to the residuary Establishment after the enthusiasm of the first decade had passed and money became the dominant feature of Free Church life. Those in the United Secession Church also found a home within the less class-conscious congregations of the Establishment as well as in the Congregational and Independent movements. Others joined the smaller sects, such as Swedenborgians and Unitarians, while some abandoned their Church connection entirely. Disruption and Rationalisation had achieved similar goals, the creation of two middle-class Churches whose

leading members formed a sizable part of the new "de facto" Establishment of Dissent within Victorian Dunfermline.

MacLaren, writing of the Free Church, says:

"...what the seceders had claimed as the 'Church of the People' might now be more accurately described as the Church of the middle class."(20)

In Dunfermline the old Dissenters, many of whom had been working-class handloom operatives, had seen their Church taken over by the new "bourgeoisie" of the industrial revolution.

D) The democratisation of the Churches.

How far did the fact that, for the one hundred and fifty years covered by this thesis, Dunfermline had a "de facto" Establishment of Dissent quicken the progress towards democracy within the Church? Since the early Seceders had rejected lay patronage it might have been expected that the dissenting Churches in the town would have led the way towards more democratic procedures. But did this happen? The way in which ministers and other office bearers were chosen, in both Establishment and Dissent, will be considered. If it becomes evident, as is possible from what has already been noted, that it was the middle class who controlled congregational life, what roles did respective office bearers, such as elders, deacons and Managers play?

i. Methods of electing ministers and office bearers.

This study reveals that it would be very misleading to assume that until the removal of lay patronage only Dissent operated a system of popular election. Though the Quoad Omnia parishes of the Establishment were regulated under the Queen Anne Act legislation, the Chapels and later the Quoad Sacra congregations enjoyed a much wider system of congregational choice in electing a minister. Dissent did not hold a monopoly of democratic ideals nor was the path from lay patronage to a meaningful system of popular election a simple one in either camp.



When the Secession took place the problem of how appointments to vacant charges should be made was not fully worked out. A vacancy of eight years followed Ralph Erskine's death and the Presbytery instructed the congregation "to study harmony" if a settlement were to be reached. Reasons for the delay may be suggested. Was the choice to be left to elders without reference to those who had contributed to the buildings and stipend? Did groups from different villages where the old Corresponding Societies had formerly met compete with one another and each try to keep out the candidate of a rival group? Did the very strength of the laity make ministers reluctant to take up the charge, fearing that their leadership would be undermined? The reluctance of the minister who did finally come suggests that the latter was the main reason for the delay in filling the charge.(21)

Over the next hundred years two distinct elements emerged in arriving at a satisfactory solution. The first was the recognition of the crucial role a vacancy committee would play in finding suitable candidates. But how was such a committee to be chosen? Was it to be formed from the Session alone, or from the Managers, from a combination of both or from the body of the congregation itself? What became evident was that if the committee were unrepresentative, made up of a minority group who held the title deeds or controlled the congregational purse strings, it would make little difference to the eventual outcome whether the whole congregation were involved in the final vote. Yet some form of committee was necessary if a free-for-all were to be avoided.

Various attempts to resolve this dilemma have been touched on in the main body of the thesis. The problem was to prevent any strong ruling group from dominating or manipulating proceedings by finding a committee which would represent as wide a constituency within the congregation as possible. The method which most resembled the one ultimately used within the National Church until 1984 was that devised for the pre-Disruption North Parish Quoad Sacra congregation. In it a vacancy committee of nine, including one from the Session and one from the Trustees, was given the task of producing a list of no more than five. This method had the advantage of reducing the power of Session and Trustees and, in the light of what happened in Queen



Anne Street United Secession congregation in the 1820's and St Andrews Quoad Sacra congregation in the 1830's, this was undoubtedly a step forward. In the former an impasse had been reached when the Session and Managers clashed over a candidate and the question of property rights was raised with both parties taking advice of Counsel(22). In the latter the Managers of St Andrews intimated that they would refuse to pay the stipend if the choice of the popular party were pressed and that they would force the congregation into liquidation by withdrawing financial support(23). The system noted above, which was proposed for the North Parish Quoad Sacra of 1839, was never used since the Disruption intervened(24). In the new post-Disruption Quoad Sacra church of 1855 a different form of election was devised in which the Session and Trustees combined with a group of five ordinary members of the congregation who were elected annually to serve as the "Congregational Election Committee"(25).

During the 18th century the most blatant forced settlement in the town occurred in 1791 when the Chapel minister, the Rev Allan McLean was appointed first minister of the Abbey. The Town Council, along with the Heritors and elders, had the right of presenting a candidate for the Abbey charge to the Crown for its sanction. The Council was dominated by members who had broken away from the Abbey yet retained their association with the Establishment through the maverick Chapel congregation which they had been instrumental in setting up. This powerful caucus forced Mr McLean upon an unwilling congregation by brushing aside the claims of Heritors and elders in the matter. Of those on the Council who had voted for Mr McLean's appointment, three belonged to the Burghers, one to the Relief, one to the Abbey and six to the Chapel:

"So that the Provost, six councillors and four deacons, all but one belonging to the different secessions, elected it may be said the Chapel minister.....to be the first minister of the Parish of Dunfermline."(26)

Of course there was a political twist since the Chapel members, who were strong Tories, had the ear of Sir Archibald Campbell, the Member of Parliament involved in the presentation.

It may be suggested that the original form of election used within the Church of Scotland as early as 1638, "The Session to nominate with the consent of the people", had its particular wisdom. The Session did not put the election into the hands of the multitude in such a way as either to abrogate their own responsibility or remove their guidance from the congregation.(27) This was in fact the system used widely within the early Secession Church but there was liberty to add to the Session's list at the General Meeting of the congregation, when a member could put forward a candidate in addition to those recommended by the Session, who if chosen would indeed be the people's choice but perhaps not the Session's. The wisdom of a limited committee consisting of only the eldership was that the minister chosen, who would act as teaching elder and chairman of Session, would be their candidate. Many of the later problems in the Church would arise when a congregational committee brought forward a candidate who then became chairman of a Session which from the very start had basic differences with him. A more representative committee did not necessarily mean a more harmonious congregation once a candidate was settled.

The second stage in the progress towards a democratic choice of minister was the need for minorities, no matter how powerful, to accept the will of the majority. Yet, as has been indicated, even where there was a majority vote, those who held the purse strings often refused to accept the popular choice and threatened to withdraw financial support. This problem was found in both the National and Dissenting Churches and highlighted the growing domination of entrepreneurs over the old ruling élite and the working classes. While the issue proved more contentious in Dissent, it became a highly emotive factor in the National Church during the period of the Ten Year Conflict when many of the leading figures in the Establishment were the businessmen who would later become the driving force behind the formation of the Free Church. In both camps the root of the matter was the role of the self-employed who, having attained industrial and financial muscle, tried to dictate the terms upon which they would support the Church. Many of them had been enfranchised by the Reform Bill and were the entrepreneurs of the industrial revolution. Having experienced success in industrial life they now challenged the



authority of the religious Establishment, whether "de jure" or "de facto". It has already been noted how they imposed their authority on the life of the Church as Managers in the United Secesion Church or as Trustees in the new 1834 Quoad Sacra congregations. The result was that in both "de jure" and "de facto" Establishments the substitute for landed-class privilege was not democracy but middle-class power exercised through financial clout, just as in the political realm the Reform Bill had shifted power to the middle rather than the artisan class. These new middle-class entrepreneurs were the "aggressive Voluntaries" of the older Secesion congregations who challenged the more conservative ranks of Dissent or the "aggressive Non-Intrusionists" who sought to break the stranglehold of the old ruling élite of Heritors and lay patrons.

Perhaps the outstanding example of the ecclesiastical engineering of the new entrepreneurs was in the appointment, in 1840, of the first minister of the post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregation in the north-west of the town. Here it was a matter of "he who pays the piper calls the tune. Voting rights were reserved for those who had contributed to stipend or property and not on the basis of "one man one vote." Certainly the constitution proposed an alternative method once the congregation was established and a Session formed but in the first instance five individuals had fifty three of the one hundred and twenty five votes cast and if voting had been based on "one man one vote" the final decision would have been reversed.(28) The choice of the minister was therefore determined by ability to pay. Moreover it was made by those who three years later would be the leading lights of the Free Church.

The most intriguing development in vacancy procedure took place in 1838 in St Andrews Quoad Sacra congregation, which until 1834 had been the Chapel Church. According to the Minutes, women were given the right to vote at the age of eighteen and men at twenty-one. This was initiated at a meeting of the congregation when the proposal of a Committee that only communicants should be allowed to vote was defeated:

"Mr William Swan and Mr Grigor moved that instead of adopting the recommendation of the Committee the meeting



resolve that all males over the age of 21 at present sitters in the church and all females of eighteen shall be entitled to vote on the condition only of the seat rents being paid against the first of August next."(29)

The reason for such a feminist resolution is impossible to ascertain. One possible explanation is that the industrialists within the Establishment found women sympathetic to their cause and prepared to work in small factories whereas the traditional home-based weavers refused such employment. Those girls who accepted factory conditions thus had an income, unlike many of the men who were unemployed, and were therefore more likely to be able to pay seat rents. So women became tools of the industrialists among the Non-Intrusionists who were seeking to overthrow both the Moderates within the National Church and the old "de facto" Establishment of home-based weavers and Secession churches.

The changing role of women at this time within Dunfermline marks the end of the old male-dominated industry in which women and girls acted as unpaid labour. The emancipation which work brought is evident in other areas such as the growing number of women opening accounts in the Savings Bank, their active role at political rallies and their abandoning of their homes on week nights in 1839 to attend revivalist meetings within many of the town churches. The demise of the traditional trade meant that women such as Andrew Carnegie's mother kept the family going while their husbands "moped over" their disappearing craft.(30)

Another approach to understanding popular authority in the Churches is to review the choosing of office bearers other than the minister. According to Barr, it was the intent of the First Book of Discipline that elders and deacons should be elected annually so that they would not become self-perpetuating cliques but true representatives of the congregation.(31) The form of election which most approximated to it was that exercised under Ralph Erskine in Dunfermline Abbey prior to the Secession, where the collegiate ministers, instead of themselves choosing elders and deacons, enlisted the help of the other members of Session and even canvassed the opinion of the congregation. When districts required elders the

Session was instructed to bring forward suitable candidates and to enquire in the different quarters whether these individuals were "the people's choice." Names suggested by heads of families were also added to the Session's list.

A similar method was introduced in the early Secession Church with names being sent from the various Corresponding Societies. Once a network of congregations spanned the country these Societies became obsolete and the choice of elders devolved once more upon the districts.

In Dunfermline the number of elders within Dissent always outnumbered those within the Establishment, though at times even the Secession Movement failed to be representative of the whole congregation and various Minutes record renewed efforts to widen the choice. In 1815 the Associate Congregation, Queen Anne Street, regrouped its membership into nine districts, each of which was invited to submit names of possible elders. Almost thirty were forwarded, to which the Session added four. At a subsequent meeting all but one of these nominees were accepted unanimously. As an Archibald Beaumont had no-one voting for or against him his name dropped out. Eventually eleven of those proposed became elders.

The picture in the Establishment after Erskine's departure was quite different. The choice of elders reverted to the ministers, though opportunity remained for the congregation to object to any ordination. Sessions were small and unrepresentative of the whole community. Less than half a dozen of those who were ordained in the Abbey during the 18th century served in it for the rest of their lives, a large number joining the Secession and smaller groups going to the Relief and Chapel movements. At times the only representatives in the Session, apart from the two collegiate ministers, were the Clerk who kept the various Rolls and a treasurer of the Poor Fund. Kirk Sessions were active in their judicial capacity in matters of morality but the idea of a district elder exercising a pastoral oversight was hardly considered and would have been totally impractical since at the end of the century there were often only two ruling elders .



In the 19th century the Rev Peter Chalmers appointed to the Session representatives of the rising middle classes but even these remained resistant to many of his more forward-looking proposals. His attempt in 1822 to have elders appointed from the Chapel to serve on the parent body met with strong opposition and his proposal that elders take pastoral oversight of districts was heavily defeated, although some elders did eventually choose to serve in this way.

By the 1830's, however, the Abbey Session was much more representative of the whole community and by 1835 most elders supported the aims of the Popular Party in any national debate. The lay members of Session were by now even more strongly opposed to patronage than their ministers, who advised caution to give time for the Chapel and Veto Acts of 1834 to percolate into the mainstream of Church life. A number of elders formed part of a committee to choose an assistant for Mr Chalmers, while others were active as Trustees in setting up a new Extension charge in the north-west of the town.

By now a clear change was emerging in the pattern of the eldership from that of the middle of the 18th century. At that time Dissent enjoyed a broad-based representation from most levels of society, especially the weaving community and tenant farmers, while the Establishment Session was small and composed of a few heritors, farmers and a schoolmaster. By the time of the Voluntary Conflict both camps reflected the interests of the middle classes and were widely representative of the industrial community. It should not be forgotten, however, that throughout the period the Chapel congregation, though it did not have elders, was controlled by a small caucus of Managers, many of whom were merchants and Town Councillors. This group represented the middle class within the Establishment, especially during the latter part of the 18th century when the Abbey Session had almost ceased to function, and they were the forerunners of the Managers and elders of the Quoad Sacra congregations in which so much of the middle-class life of the National Church had its power base during the Ten Year Conflict. Hardy's warning in 1779 about rogue independency proved valid for these maverick congregations provided many of the personnel who hastened the downfall of the old ruling élite of the Moderate party within the National Church.



The Disruption stirred up real interest in all three denominations over the role of the laity and the Abbey adopted a form of sealed lists in which the names of possible elders were handed in by heads of families. This system, though used in the Abbey in 1845, was not altogether popular with the Session and difficulties occurred in increasing the number of elders in 1848. The matter was left for a few years and the Session finally agreed that, though they traditionally had the right to appoint, they would give satisfaction to the congregation by allowing the use of sealed lists. Mr French, the second minister, was not present at the meeting and later registered his dissent. His reaction and the long struggle within the Abbey indicate the presence of a small Moderate party who were unhappy about the growing influence of a middle class and their pursuit of more democratic principles. In the event only twenty seven people handed in lists. Certainly it was within the National Church that opposition remained to a wider choice in the election of elders. St Andrews post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregation, founded in 1851, had a sealed list system at first but this was abandoned in 1858 for the older form of self-perpetuating Sessions. They had recognised that the sealed list system gave too much power to those outside the Session to make appointments which might not be acceptable to the ruling body. In the later United Presbyterian Church the Session decided how many elders it required, called a meeting at which names were put forward and, if seconded, were added to a leet. If the number on the leet was in excess of the number required a vote was taken by a show of hands or by voting papers. The Free Church used a similar method.

In 1875 a letter from a Free Churchman indicated that he felt that the elders of the Establishment were chosen to be "yes men" and as such compared unfavourably with their more independent counterparts in the Free Church:

"The Sessions of the Established Church were composed of the very off-scourings of the populace; the members of these Sessions were to be seen kneeling in the presence of the minister who was party to their election."(32)

A certain paradox emerged. While the National Church had the least democratic system of election it had a greater number of

lower-middle-class and working-class elders. This was because the two Quoad Sacra congregations were in working-class areas and had a higher proportion of working-class members than had the United Presbyterian and Free Churches. The more middle-class members of the Establishment tended to gravitate to the more prestigious Abbey as the 19th century wore on. A long serving schoolmaster, elder and Clerk to the North Parish, Mr McChlery, moved to the Abbey where he was more among his peer group than in the poorer congregation of weavers and miners. The other two Churches continued, on the surface at least, to practise democratic principles, though less rigorously than in the previous century. Yet, despite the fact that they used quite an open and democratic system of election, their choice of elders became more narrowly middle-class and therefore less representative of the community than those of the Quoad Sacra congregations of the Establishment in particular. This was due to the fact that they had become "gathered congregations" of those who were prepared to pay for the privilege of belonging rather than parish churches, which represented wide cross sections of society within a specific community.

#### ii. The roles of Deacons, Managers and Elders.

After 1847, in the Quoad Omnia parishes of the Establishment, elders supervised all aspects of the congregation's life, though the buildings still remained under the control of Heritors. The Poor Fund continued to be under the Session's jurisdiction but changes in Government Poor Law legislation made their role far less important than formerly. In the United Presbyterian Church, elders had oversight of spiritual matters but temporal affairs were in the hands of Managers who were not normally ordained. In the Free Church, finance was organised by deacons who, along with the elders, formed a Deacons' Court. Like elders, they were ordained and had to subscribe to the Westminster Confession. Deacons were sometimes found in the Establishment before 1843 but the office had fallen into desuetude and in the Quoad Sacra congregations, both pre- and post-Disruption, financial affairs were in the hands of Managers or Trustees in a similar way to the Managers of United Presbyterianism.

The real innovation within Dissent was the emergence of Deacons



and Managers who took over the role of the Heritors of the National Church. Their presence was a recognition that the Church must be placed on a sound financial footing and indicated the shift that was taking place in ecclesiastical management from the landed-class heritors to the businessmen of the industrial revolution. The Free and United Presbyterian Churches were the vehicles which gave the entrepreneurs of the middle class the type of Church in which their political liberalism, financial expertise and social activism would have greatest opportunity for expression.

Of particular interest was the role of deacon. Prior to the Disruption Thomas Chalmers had found the practice of deacons being absorbed into the Session objectionable since he felt that the diaconate was a separate office. In the United Secession Church there had been a separate office of deacon and a discussion in St Margarets United Secession in 1845 indicates how thinking on church management was developing. It was stated that the role of the elder was superintendance, that each elder should keep a roll book and visit each member if possible twice a year. It was hoped to find deacons to assist elders especially in "necessitous" districts and that these deacons should be chosen by people residing in that area. If possible the deacon should also stay in the area appointed to him. The task of the deacon was to assist the elder in "friendly oversight" of those within the neighbourhood. Ordination was to be in the usual manner but without laying on of hands(33). Such a system was clearly influenced by the Disruption and the re-emergence of deacons within the Free Church. However the office did not find general favour in the United Presbyterian Church because it was felt that those who controlled finance should not be ordained for life but be subject to the regular review of the congregation. Where deacons did remain with the United Presbyterian Church they were entrusted with the management of secular affairs and the administration of the poor fund. Provision was also made to appoint deacons for a term of years, in the same manner as Managers.

The office of deacon in the Free Church gave laymen financial control, though in smaller struggling congregations like the Free North the Sustentation Fund often reduced them to a small army of door-to-



door canvassers. The office did not, therefore, match the more prestigious counterpart of Manager within United Presbyterianism.

Problems in the appointment of deacons arose in two areas. In the Free North, the weakest of the Dunfermline Free congregations, there was difficulty in finding individuals to assume the office. Meetings of the Court often had to be abandoned for lack of a quorum and the resignation of treasurers was frequent. As in other walks of life where finance is a problem, so in the Free North; nobody wanted to take responsibility. The early heroism of their founding fathers was soon forgotten as the need for money assumed crisis proportions.

At a later date the Free Abbey faced a different problem, that of finding young men who would be prepared to accept the rigorous demands of a confessional statement at a time when the authority of the Confession and even the Bible itself was under fire.

Elders were, of course, members of the Deacons Court and it was here that they could exercise great sway over their minister. In 1873, the Diaconate of St Andrews Free wanted their minister, while he was visiting, to give a gentle but timely reminder to those who were defaulting financially. Though he carried out the Court's wishes it is not insignificant that he left the charge soon after. Had his words engendered a certain bitterness that made true pastoral relationships impossible? Moreover, because elders were ordained for life they had a continuing say in financial matters, unlike the arrangement in the United Presbyterian Church where limits were set to the tenure of both deacons and Managers which allowed the congregation some say in who was regulating their financial affairs and the power to remove those who they felt were acting incompetently or unwisely. Nor was the wish expressed by Thomas Chalmers for the diaconate to be a separate office and not merely part of the Session wholly achieved. While it was true that the Deacons' Court was a separate unit distinct from the Session, elders were automatically members of it and as such had a controlling say in both financial and spiritual affairs, the deacons dealing with practical, temporal matters. Thus Free Church elders were able to exercise an all-embracing superintendance. In the United Presbyterian Church, on the other hand, the distinctive office of Manager was quite

separate from the Session which in measure limited the powers of both eldership and Board of Management.

The view of Patrick Brewster of Paisley that he would be freer outside than within the Free Church must surely have found an echo among the ordinary members of the Dunfermline Free Churches during the middle part of the 19th century. Constantly hounded to meet their subscriptions, they hardly belonged to the Church of the "free will" offering. The continual resignations of Treasurers in the Free North Church give a hint of the tensions which existed in the denomination(34). The steady drift back into the Quoad Sacra working-class congregations in the 1850's is therefore not surprising.

The role of the Managers was of fundamental importance in Dissenting congregations though the pattern was by no means uniform. In fact the most obvious need for them arose in Chapels which, though part of the Establishment, were run without their own Sessions. Managers controlled the Dunfermline Chapel and at each vacancy a congregational meeting was held to decide whether the congregation should continue. The Relief Church had Managers from the first, partly because a building had to be found for Gillespie but also because the deposed minister was reluctant to appoint elders until it was clear that there was no hope of reinstatement. In Secession congregations, like Queen Anne Street, congregational funds were in the hands of the Session. In 1793, however, certain functions such as the letting of seats, managing of the civil money, and arrangements for financing a new building were passed to a Committee of Management. This Committee grew in numbers and influence so that Managers became powerful figures rivalling elders in importance. Matters continued smoothly for over twenty years until the vacancy in the 1820's raised contentious issues. The Session withdrew the right of the Committee to let seats and the Committee refused to acknowledge their decision. The intensity of the debate was indicated by the fact that both sides took Counsel. Lord Cockburn's opinion was that the Session had exclusive direct management of the funds but he saw no reason why the congregation, for the better enforcement of their rights, should not appoint a committee, although that committee would have no right to intervene with the direct management of the Session. Lord Jeffrey



also recognised the superiority of Session and said that, though some attempt might be made by the Committee of Management to argue that they had possessary rights, he was not convinced that this would be upheld by law. One fundamental question undergirded the arguments. Was the Secession Church to be run by the congregation through a Committee of Management or was it to be organised along Presbyterian lines with ultimate control residing with the Session?

Such disputes indicated that the role of Managers would have to be clarified if the Dissenting congregations were to be spared civil war between Sessions and Boards of Management. The Church's solid Presbyterian base enabled the matter to be settled amicably and the emergence of United Presbyterianism gave opportunity for the constitution of the Church to be redefined as Relief and United Secession office bearers and Courts investigated the minutiae of Union negotiations.

The new arrangements gave Managers greater recognition and definite roles but it also made them clearly subordinate to the eldership. In Gillespie United Presbyterian Congregation, for example, Managers were not elected for life. Thirteen formed a Board and four had to drop out annually by rotation, the retiring members not being eligible for re-election until the following year. The Managers as a body had no power to contract debt in the security of the property without special authorisation from the congregation. Moreover, they were forbidden to spend more than a certain sum of money annually or alter seat rents without the same authority. While they had the right to call special meetings of the congregation for secular purposes, the Kirk Session retained the constitutional right to watch over all aspects of congregational life and to intervene where they thought necessary. Not all the United Presbyterian charges moved at the speed of Gillespie and it was thirty years before Queen Anne Street decided to remove life membership from Managers and Trustees. However, the general drift was clear and helped to retain the Dissenting bodies within the main stream of Presbyterianism and away from Independency.

Managers, however, continued to play an important role and the new definition of their rights helped in some way to magnify their



office. Many saw themselves as managing directors who, during the period of their incumbency, had the right to comment on the success or failure of their "spiritual director", the minister. They felt more able to do this as unordained laymen who did not feel the need to submit to the minister as teaching elder and Moderator of the Session. Drummond and Bulloch have drawn attention to the fact that it was it was the United Presbyterians who:

"....invented the practice that while the minister celebrated communion and served the elders with the elements he should himself be served by one of them. They described the minister as a teaching elder and the other members of session as ruling elders and there was a strong inclination to have the elders participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of ministers."(35)

The office of Manager assumed a much more prestigious role than that of deacon within the Free Church. As an office it was recognised to have some social standing and was a testimony to an individual's organising ability which he had often gained in the industrial world. As a Manager within United Presbyterianism he functioned as a sort of unpaid director.

The new Quoad Sacra congregations in the Establishment had Trustees or Managers who controlled finance and they also had a form of popular election. Thus from as early as 1843 a pattern of Church government had existed in the National Church which resembled that of its two sister denominations. This made reunion in 1929 much easier than would have been the case if only old parish congregations under Kirk Sessions had existed within the National Church.

The composition of the Kirk Sessions in all three denominations became increasingly middle-class during the 19th century with the Free Church elder perhaps being able to exercise the greatest influence because of his involvement in both spiritual and temporal administration. The Kirk Sessions of the Establishment were generally less inclined to challenge their minister's authority, unlike those in the United Presbyterian Church who treated him more as a "primus inter pares". From the Disruption the elders of the old Quoad Omnia parishes had, moreover, least opportunity to exercise their authority.

Since finance remained in the hands of Heritors and discipline was no longer such a powerful tool of ecclesiastical and social control as in the previous century, the elders of the parish church were less powerful than either Free Church elders or United Presbyterian Managers. The Abbey elders did not exercise the same social, industrial or ecclesiastical rule over their membership as those in the other two denominations, but still retained superior social status and subsequent respectability.

The deacons of the Free Church had often most unpleasant tasks to fulfil, especially in poorer congregations such as the Free North where finance was a constant embarrassment and the Deacons' Court often failed to raise a "quorum" to carry out business. On the other hand, in the more middle-class congregations they acted as stewardship convenors whose task was to raise money as the means of promoting the effectiveness of the Free Church on a national level. The attempt in the Free Abbey to remove the need for deacons to subscribe to the Confession suggests a movement towards a Diaconate more in line with the Management of the United Presbyterian Church. It would have enabled those who did not want to have spiritual responsibility to take office within the Church and thus use their business and entrepreneurial skills in another field. The most prestigious office was certainly that of Manager since it enabled the successful businessmen of the industrial revolution to have a finger in the middle-class ecclesiastical pie. It was expected that they would be men of prudence and sound judgement who would bring the same cutting edge to Church life as they applied in the business world. In the 1850's and 60's the minister of Gillespie United Presbyterian Church was reminded that he could expect no increase in his stipend until the church accounts showed a marked improvement.(36)

At no time were democratic principles in evidence as they were in Erskine's Abbey congregation in the early 18th century, when the elders were truly representative of the districts they served and chosen from among the people. It can only be conjectured what type of Church life would have emerged in Scotland if the Popular parties had chosen to remain within the Establishment rather than form Secession and Free Church movements but it is likely that the result would have



been little different from what resulted in the union of the three branches of Presbyterianism in 1929. Scottish Dissent always believed that it was breaking away in order to uphold the conservative view of Scottish Presbyterianism. The early Seceders argued that they would return to a National Church cleansed from error, while the Free Church movement was launched on the premise that they were "unwilling Voluntaries." Such conservatism kept the Secession and Free Church movements from Independency while Church government was maintained by a traditional understanding of Presbyterian order.

#### iii. Finance and bureaucracy.

Two other factors played important roles in the way the middle classes gradually assumed control of Church life. The first was finance and the second a powerful centralised bureaucracy, especially in the Free Church.

The major change in Church life between 1733 and 1883 was the increasing role which money played. In the 18th century the Establishment was financially embarrassed by the loss of most of its door collections to the Seceders. It also had to make constant demands on Heritors for additional sums to meet the demands of the poor. On the other hand, financial support from the weavers made the Secession movement highly successful, as witnessed by the relatively high stipends, number of congregations and collegiate ministries. The poor state of the Abbey Church was a further embarrassment to the National Church and gave the Dissenters a superiority which heightened their image as the prosperous ruling group within the town. However the advent of Dissent introduced the need for a regular cash flow if congregations were to survive, especially if the number of churches grew and competition increased. The close links of the handloom weaving community with the Secession Church prior to 1837 meant that finance was seldom a problem. In that period the independent and thrifty nature of the weaver made him reluctant to receive charity even in bad economic times, so that cheap accommodation in church was seldom taken. Paying one's seat rent was a sign of social standing and of belonging to a prosperous, well-managed peer group. It distinguished the weaver as a superior artisan and gave him a place in



the social pecking order alongside tenant farmers.

With the decline and ultimate collapse of the handloom weaving industry, shortage of funds changed the ethos of Dunfermline's "de facto" Establishment. In the old Secession congregations the core of small merchants, used to managing their business lives, took great interest in managing Church affairs. Ministers who were failing to produce a financially stable congregation were challenged to greater effort and sums were deducted from their stipends until the situation improved. Such tendencies increased in the United Presbyterian Church until the town recovered its former wealth.

Maclaren quotes an Aberdeen bookseller, later minister of Dunfermline North Church, as saying that in the Free Church money was everything.(37) However true that may be, it was not only in the Free Church that money became the main organising tool of congregational life. All the Dissenting movements, and eventually the National Church, realised the importance of financial stability.

When the old traditional industry was at its height the stipends of the Dissenting congregations were remarkably high, indicating strong support for the various branches of Seceders within the town. For example, in 1836 the stipends of Dissenting ministers ranged from £100 in the small, newly-erected Maygate United Secession charge to £200 in Queen Anne Street. St Margarets paid £175 and Limekilns and the Relief £150. The Establishment congregation of St Andrews Quoad Sacra had a figure of £120 while the Original Burgher congregation, which would join the National Church in 1839, paid £110. Dissenting congregations therefore paid their ministers well and generally better than the National Church. Stipends remained relatively static during the middle part of the century when the weaving trade was changing from handloom to power loom and some within the United Presbyterian Church were even reduced until financial improvements were made.

By 1900 the minister of the North Parish was the poorest paid in the town, despite his own personal efforts to increase congregational endowment. His stipend of £175 fell far short of three

of the four United Presbyterian ministers, each of whom had over £300, the Queen Anne Street minister receiving £350. This, however, lagged behind the first minister of the Abbey who received £433 and even further behind the Free Abbey incumbent who had the princely sum of £490. At the other end of the scale, Chalmers Street United Presbyterian Church paid its minister £216, while the two smaller Free Churches had the minimum stipend of £247.

These figures indicate the same social pattern as was evident in the town by 1883, when the lawyers and professional classes who held a controlling interest in the Town Council belonged to the Free Abbey or one of the United Presbyterian charges. It was important to them as the "de facto" Establishment that their ministers should not be less well paid than those of the largest Establishment charge, the Abbey, which by the latter part of the 19th century had by far the largest congregation. The Free Abbey's financial superiority over the Abbey was a mark of the congregation's superior status which was also reflected in the fact that the Town Council had its first Free Church Provost in 1877. Other Provosts from the same denomination followed. Moreover, at the turn of the century the Carnegie Trust was well served by members of the Free Church which had by now adopted the mantle of Establishment. On the other hand, when one looks at the Established Church contrasting situations occur. Parish Quoad Omnia churches, such as the Abbey, offered a relatively high stipend, while ministers of Quoad Sacra congregations were dependent to a far greater extent on the goodwill and financial generosity of their members, as in the United Presbyterian tradition. The difference between the highest and lowest stipend in the Establishment was £260, in the Free Church £243 and in the United Presbyterian Church £144. However the lowest stipend in the Establishment was £41 less than the United Presbyterian minimum and £65 below the Free Church minimum. There is little doubt that the centralised system of Church finance which had maintained a minimum stipend in the Free Church helped weaker congregations to provide a reasonable sum.

When attention is turned to seat rents, the organising control of the middle class over the working class becomes even more evident. In 1836 the figures reveal that, while the Abbey had a



considerable number of free seats and others priced at 1/- to 3/-. St Margarets typified Dissenting prices and charged from 4/- to 8/- with all the higher priced seats being taken. Some of the Dissenting congregations had seats at 10/-. In the Original Burgher congregation, however, it was mainly the cheaper seats which were let, suggesting that it was within the Establishment that the working class found more acceptable accommodation.

The relatively high prices at St Andrews Quoad Sacra Church, 4/- to 8/-, confirm the view that it was within this maverick congregation that much of the Establishment's middle class had found a home from which they would launch their attack on the Voluntaries. On the other hand, the working-class congregation set up through Thomas Chalmers' Extension scheme had prices more in keeping with the means of the poor. Since most Dissenting congregations' seating started at 4/-, the forty free seats and 260 at 3/- or below provided an inducement to membership. Only within the Roman Catholic, Holy Apostolic and Scotch Baptist Churches were all seats free.

These figures are in line with what Brown has found for the whole of Scotland.(38) As in the report of the Royal Commission into Religious Instruction, carried out in 1835, the standard feature of seat-letting was that lower-priced seats had a low occupancy rate compared to higher-priced ones, indicating the strong economic aspirations of those who attended Dissenting Churches. Moreover, the narrow range of seat prices reflected the high degree of social uniformity within the traditional handloom trade.

On the other hand, a slight divergence from Brown's findings occur within the Establishment where Dunfermline Abbey let only a small number of seats, which were the cheapest within the town. The failure to hold the small merchants and master weavers in the 18th century had made the National Church the Church of the lower classes. The top price of 3/- may be compared with the parish church of St Andrews in the north neuk of Fife where 30% of the seat rents were between 15/- and 42/-. Hugh Miller's observations that:

"The working men of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood were in a large part either non-religious, or included within the



was not true of Dunfermline prior to 1837. Chalmers noted in the report that between 300 and 400 individuals had recently joined the Abbey, giving as their reason that they could not pay the high seat rents in their former Dissenting congregations.(40)

In Dunfermline, class differences were not marked until 1837 when the home-based industry declined and wage differentials between "bosses" and "working people" increased. A new type of working class emerged as well as a new middle-class bourgeoisie. The social transformation also affected the membership of the Dissenting Churches who became increasingly middle-class rather than congregations of the community as they had been formerly. As Brown has pointed out, Dissenting culture in the cities was designed to demarcate between "rough" and "respectable" so when the handloom industry declined the "formerly respectable" who became the "new rough" felt that they had no place within Church life. Their long-held belief that financial prosperity was a concomitant of godly belief had been shattered and they were left penniless and spiritually disillusioned. Since they could not attribute their sudden misfortune to any failure to work hard they had to accept either the injustice of God or His non-existence.

The conflicts which arose in the Free and United Presbyterian Churches before the town recovered its former wealth have been set out in the main body of the thesis. Constant wranglings took place between the Deacons' Court and the Sustentation Committee in the Free Church and between the Minister and the Managers in United Presbyterianism. In the U.P. Church, ministers were often paid according to results which led to ill feeling. Both Dissenting groups tended to make financial contributions a test of membership. Finance became such an important factor in some United Presbyterian congregations that the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer were paid:

"Mr Lawson moved that as the sub treasurer required to devote a good deal of his time collecting seat rents, it was expedient that he should be given some pecuniary remuneration. Cordially agreed."(41)

A spirit of rationalisation dominated the thinking of the

United Presbyterian Church and when two small congregations existed near each other one was expected to dissolve or both to unite. One of the earliest unions within the new denomination was that of the Dunfermline Relief and Maygate United Secession congregations in 1848. A marriage of convenience, it epitomised the spirit of rationalisation which was to become a feature of the denomination.

Finance and bureaucracy combined to determine whether congregations were allowed to survive. In the Free Church in particular, financial viability became a key feature in all vacancy procedures. Through its Presbyteries, and above all the General Assembly's "Sustentation Committee", the centralised bureaucracy of the Free Church sought to control local congregational life. In 1849 the Free Abbey was warned by the Edinburgh Committee that unless they could give assurances that contributions to the Fund would improve the Committee would not sanction the calling of another minister. Free Church Presbyteries were anxious at first to maintain a parochial interest even where finance was proving difficult. When the denomination began to suffer financial setbacks there was a move at Church Headquarters to disband a smaller congregation if there were a large church nearby. This, it was argued, would set free money for extension work and thus continue the concept of a national church. The attempt by a Committee in Edinburgh, in 1882, to close Carnock Free Church hinged on whether a United Presbyterian Church in nearby Cairneyhill had been considered as an alternative place of worship. The Presbytery Clerk of Dunfermline replied that he knew of no provision in any schedule which required Free Churches to take into account the presence in the vicinity of a United Presbyterian congregation. Desire for union was keener at Church Headquarters than in local Presbyteries who wanted to uphold the rights of the smaller, struggling units. Central Committees, on the other hand, on the strength of a possible union of the two denominations, were prepared to promote local re-adjustment with the aim of cutting financial losses.

The Free Church developed as a centralised bureaucracy in which Presbytery, especially in its early days, controlled the movement of ministers. The Sustentation Committee increasingly determined



whether congregations would survive by placing heavy financial burdens on those who failed to meet their targets to the Centralised Fund. The policy was "pay up or go" or at least "do without a minister." Drummond and Bulloch point out that the Free Church had become even more centralised than the National Church during Robertson's reign in the 18th century.(42) The Popular party of the Disruption had become the party of management in much the same way as Principal Robertson had reversed the nature of Prebyterianism. The Sustentation Committee had become the "riding committee" of the Free Church.

E) The distinctive role of the United Presbyterian Church in Dunfermline.

The particular interest which Dunfermline provides for Church historians is the strength of Dissent during the 150 years covered by this thesis. From the time of Erskine's accession to the Associate Presbytery, through the Union of 1820 into United Presbyterianism Dunfermline was a stronghold of Dissent, yet there was continuous change within the Dissent, especially when the home-based handloom weaving industry collapsed bringing hardship to individuals and a financial crisis within the United Secession and Relief Churches. What happened in Dunfermline mirrors what MacLaren found in the Disruption years in Aberdeen when old social and religious orders were displaced by a new body of entrepreneurs who wanted ecclesiastical power as well as economic success and social control. The difference between the towns was that in Aberdeen the Establishment was made up of the old oligarchic merchant families and the Moderates of the National Church while in Dunfermline the "de facto" Establishment was composed of the core of small merchants, the ordinary handloom weavers and the United Secession Church. In Dunfermline the changeover period was slightly longer than the Ten Year Conflict, spanning the years from 1837 when a major slump in the trade was followed by periods of deep recession until around 1851, by which time the first two power loom factories had been successfully introduced.

The concept of handloom factories had been introduced as early as 1834, mainly by those outside the United Secession Church, and was bitterly opposed by the ordinary handloom weavers. These early



factories were small and run by such men as David Dewar, a Baptist, Thomas Alexander and William Kinnis, members of the Establishment, and Erskine Beveridge, who left the Abbey in 1836 and would in 1841 be instrumental in the setting up of an Independent congregation. The one major United Secession figure who attempted to break free from the restrictions of older modes of production was Alexander Robertson, who was something of a maverick within his own denomination. When Mr Barlas, minister of Chalmers Street United Secession Church, was reprimanded for over-indulging in drink Robertson forced him to leave by threatening to withhold from the congregation his substantial financial contribution.(43) Robertson, as a member of the "de facto" Establishment, met with considerable difficulties in his attempt to set up a handloom factory and introduce lower wages as a means of producing more competitively-priced goods. He found little support among his fellow United Secessionists who as small merchants continued to uphold the trade's "status quo."

As difficulties within the traditional industry increased, merchants from Dissenting congregations found it difficult to follow the lead of entrepreneurs among the Non-Intrusionists, Baptists and Independents. As part of the "de facto" Establishment they had resisted change but eventually had to recognise the reality of the revolution which was taking place within an industry which they had controlled for over a century. Some of the older merchants cut their losses and retired, some emigrated, some used their entrepreneurial skills to change to another line of business, some suffered bankruptcy in their attempts to set up small factories without the support of the ordinary weavers who blacklisted their premises even if it meant going without work. A new type of workman emerged who did not have the traditional weaving skills and produced inferior cloth which simply strengthened the arguments of those who wanted to retain the former production methods. Some merchants, such as the Reids who have been noted earlier as an old weaving family who, though part of the "de facto" Establishment, were prepared to make changes, waited for the opportune time to move into power loom production.

Whereas in the traditional trade most master weavers owned their own looms so that capital resources of the industry were broadly

spread, power loom production involved one individual sinking large capital investment into a new venture and money was not available at a time of economic depression. They had also to face the risk of failure and produce a cloth of comparable quality to the damask for which home-based operatives had been renowned. By 1849, however, the Reid family had accrued sufficient capital from money left to them by relatives to make the important transition. Their Pilmuir factory was set up and two years later Erskine Beveridge opened his St Leonards works. The Reids in particular, belonging to a long weaving tradition, brought with them the expertise to make the venture successful. Smoking chimneys dominated the Dunfermline skyline and heralded the end of the old cottage industry as a commercial concern.

Parallel to the long process of change within the industrial scene a similar change was occurring within the other twin tower of Dunfermline's "de facto" Establishment during the 18th and early 19th centuries, the Secession Church. In an earlier section of this conclusion changes which were taking place within the old Seceding tradition have been noted. The Union of 1820 can be seen as one of ecclesiastical rationalisation and economic wisdom while the Voluntary issue paralleled the "laissez faire" economic policies of the Reform group among the liberals in the Town Council in the mid-30's. The change to Voluntaryism was gradual and the formation of St Margarets congregation as a breakaway from Queen Anne Street in the 1820's was an early move towards a more business-like, forward-looking Church. However, by the 1830's when Voluntaryism within the Secession movement had become widespread, Queen Anne Street and other Secession congregations had joined St Margarets in their fight with the Non-Intrusionists who were campaigning for wider parochial support from the Government to enable the National Church to reach out to areas of Scotland which they felt were grossly underchurched.

Within the Secession congregations other changes were emerging which differentiated the new movement from its older forms. In 1833 journalists hostile to Dissenting movements mocked the present day Seceders who they claimed had denounced the idea of Establishment, repudiated the Confession and abjured the Covenant. Though overstated, their observations contained seeds of truth. By 1837 congregations



were considering whether to have simultaneous communion rather than the single table and by 1839 soirées had been introduced as well as services on Christmas Day and Handsel Monday. The forward-looking Management within the Secession Churches had by then recognised the need to cut their cloth to suit the customer and to keep up with the attitudes of a reforming age. The soirées can be seen as attempts to accommodate within their congregations Chartists who had become accustomed to political rallies, while services on holidays were an attempt to stem the tide of secularisation. In the late 1830's Church buildings were sometimes used for political rallies but as Chartism became more aggressive the more conservative Session of Queen Anne Street Church told their Managers that meetings of a purely political nature should not be held on their premises.

At this point Dissenting congregations were caught in a dilemma. While they wanted to retain social control and uphold law and order they did not want to antagonise ordinary weavers who felt that their Church leaders ought to support them in their economic and political grievances. Divisions increasingly emerged between the town's middle-class reformers and the more active Chartists. However until 1843 it was left to the Non-Intrusionist and Free Church members of the Town Council, who had been elected in the wake of the serious riots of 1842, to resist the more aggressive Chartists' demands for reform. By this period some of the larger handloom factories had been set up despite the stout resistance of traditional weavers. The old weaving families who had belonged to the Secession congregations were being usurped by the new entrepreneurs who were not tied by the traditional bonds of handloom weaving and the Secession Church. Meanwhile the Dissenting congregations had run into debt and a falling membership. However, like any other Establishment, they had an inherent will to survive and changes were being made which would fundamentally alter the very ethos of the Church. The leadership was changing hands with grocers and other shopkeepers taking over from many of the traditional weaving personnel. The old guard of the small merchant class were being displaced by a new regime, the rising bourgeoisie of the industrial revolution.

A letter from James Inglis, a radical, a Baptist and a man



of sound common sense, indicates the state of flux within the United Secession Church prior to the Union of 1847. He thought it inconsistent of the Presbytery to condemn Sunday trains but say nothing about the Sunday drink trade in which many of its membership were actively involved. He claimed that in one town congregation at least twenty members were engaged in the selling of liquor. What becomes clear from Inglis' letter is that the Secession Church was less strict than in the past and, in its severe financial crisis, courted whoever would provide money for its upkeep. Small shopkeepers such as grocers, who controlled the destiny of many hapless weavers, and manufactureres, who co-operated with shopkeepers in a "tammy line" system of payment(44), had become the leaders of the denomination.

Inglis also attacked the Presbytery for condemning the new sects which had been set up in the town. The Presbytery were no doubt alarmed at the loss of many of their traditional supporters, the ordinary handloom operatives and master weavers. Such individuals felt that their Church had failed to support them in the industrial crisis and were opposed to the new leaders within the United Secession movement. Inglis, himself a Baptist, was involved in setting up a body of Christians who would meet for "mutual co-operation" without the need for clerical supervision. His comments give a picture of the changing nature of Dissent which differed fundamentally from the old Secession Church and was no longer dependent on the old guard of the home-based handloom weaving industry for its survival. Later the emerging United Presbyterian Church would clearly be the Church of the "nouveau riche" and not that of the old industry.

Before turning to a fuller examination of the nature of United Presbyterianism it will be useful to look at the numbers who attended the different denominations during the 19th century. Numbers provide a important guide to the relative strengths of the various bodies but cannot indicate the more important issue of the social and ecclesiastical control which they exercised.

Statistics of membership and church attendance convey a rather confused, and at times apparently contradictory, picture but indicate the great volatility within the Church, especially during the

period of the handloom decline. Figures compiled in 1834 indicate that on a particular Sunday in April 5,807 of the parish population of around 18,000 attended church, 1,494 (25%) attending the Establishment, 4,197 (73%) Dissenting congregations and 122 (2%) the Baptist Church. The Religious Census carried out in 1836 suggests that 40.5% belonged to the Establishment, 56.6% to all the other denominations, with 2.9% unknown. By 1844, according to the *New Statistical Account*, of a population of 19,778, Dunfermline had some 4,000 (25%) in the Church of Scotland, 2,500 (15%) in the Free Church, some 8,700 (54%) in other Dissenting bodies and 1,000 (6%) in eight smaller sects. In the 1851 Census, when the town had some 21,189 citizens, the number of members attending the United Presbyterian Church was 3,112 (49%), the Free Church 1,438 (24%), the Establishment 958 (15%) and six other groups, which included Baptists, Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and Independents, 735 (12%).

The table below indicates the relative percentage strengths of the various denominations between 1834 and 1851:(45)

	<u>1834</u>	<u>1836</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1851</u>
Establishment	25	40	25	15
Free Church			15	24
Dissent (United Presbyterian, former Secession and Relief)	73	57	54	49
Others	2	3	6	12

The following points should be noted in any attempt to interpret these figures. The first and last sets represent actual attendance at public worship and suggest that Dissenting members were more regular church-goers. The middle two sets are projected estimates of church membership and may represent figures favourable to the Establishment. The Establishment figure of 40% in 1836 appears high, though it is true that the Abbey and St Andrews Quoad Sacra congregations were experiencing something of a resurgence following the passing of the Chapel Act and the pamphlet war of the Voluntary Controversy. 1851 was a low point with the two post-Disruption Quoad Sacra congregations still in their infancy. The spectacular rise in the Establishment's fortunes towards the end of the century must be



understood in the context of working-class opposition to the organising zeal of a restless bourgeoisie found mainly in the other two denominations, in which ability to pay one's way was a crucial factor in Church membership.

It is also interesting to compare the Dunfermline figures with those for Glasgow, Edinburgh and Scotland in 1836 and 1851:(46)

	<u>1835/36</u>			<u>1851</u>			
	<u>Edin</u>	<u>Glas</u>	<u>Dunf</u>	<u>Edin</u>	<u>Glas</u>	<u>Dunf</u>	<u>Scot</u>
Establishment	44	41	40	16	20	15	32
Free Church				33	22	24	32
U.S. & Relief or U.P.	30	27	57	27	23	49	19
Others	26	32	3	24	35	12	17

The main difference from other parts of Scotland is the small proportion who belonged to congregations outside mainstream Presbyterianism in 1836. The number of Baptists, Independents and Roman Catholics was insignificant at that time, the United Secession and Relief movements having provided ample choice for those who rejected the National Church, making Independency unnecessary. However, with the decline in the home-based handloom industry and the growing middle-class tendency of United Presbyterianism, Independent and Congregational bodies found support among those who were attracted by Arminianism and such causes as temperance.

By the end of the century the comparative percentages of the three main denominations within Dunfermline show a marked change from 1851:

	<u>1851</u>	<u>1875</u>	<u>1900</u>
Establishment	17	42	44
Free Church	27	19	21
United Presbyterians	56	39	35

The numbers attending or at least professing adherence to the Establishment did not mean that it had regained a position of social control but rather that it demanded less of its members in terms of spiritual or financial commitment. However it continued to provide a degree of social respectability. The three Dunfermline



congregations catered for a broad spectrum of society. While the Abbey regained some social standing as the 19th century progressed, the Quoad Sacra North Parish congregation served a working-class community. Moreover ministers in all three churches stayed for considerable lengths of time, which gave a certain stability to congregational life as well as making them well-known figures in the town. They were involved in matters of real social importance to their parishioners such as Parochial Boards for Poor Relief and for Education. Nevertheless the Establishment was poorly represented on the Town Council, a trend which had begun in 1779 and had not been reversed. In the mid-1870's only four of the twenty-two members of the Council were members of the Establishment Churches. Social and political power still lay in the hands of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches.

The Free Church figures indicate a very strong support in 1851 but again this must be seen in the context of actual attendance, which was high among their denomination. Shortly after this, the emergence of the two Quoad Sacra congregations in the Establishment enticed many back to the National Church, especially where Free Church Deacons had been pressurising members with financial demands. The slight upturn towards the end of the century corresponds to a period when the factories were booming, small industry on the increase and the climate therefore conducive to a Church in which the work ethic and social status were of paramount importance.

The number of Free Church Provosts towards the end of the century indicates the growing social status which the denomination had gained within the community. Individuals shared power with the United Presbyterians and some Independents on the Town Council and were involved in much social philanthropy, providing a New Year's breakfast at one of the Free Churches as well as being members of Committees of Management on social issues. By the turn of the century their leading members were among the first to carry out the philanthropic aims of the Dunfermline Carnegie Trust.

As in other parts of the country, there were differences between the different Free Church congregations. Two groups can be distinguished: those whose fundamental concern was for social control

and those whose concern was for submission to the Scriptures and the Westminster Confession. At the time of the Disruption such differences were not clearly marked but were nevertheless present.

The Free Abbey Church was from the first concerned about status and exerting its social superiority over the Residuary Establishment. Its early leadership wanted to procure an outstanding preacher who would prove a worthy rival to the Rev Peter Chalmers who, though not renowned as a preacher, held sway over many in the town because of his long and faithful pastoral ministry. When they failed to bring the Rev Patrick Fairbairn, their second choice proved to be more of an evangelist than a social organiser and he left in 1849. Because of the town's poor economic situation many of the leading lights within the Free Abbey also left for other parts of the country at about the same period. The next minister was strongly anti-Catholic and an organiser both at Presbytery and congregational level and the Free Abbey rediscovered its original drive to be first in status among the town's churches. The third minister, Mr Badenoch, worked with the legal and professional classes within his eldership to raise its status higher. The creation of a superior building in a most original architectural style highlighted the Free Abbey's supremacy. By 1882 the elders were prepared to modify the subscription which deacons were required to make to the Westminster Confession to make it easier to attract young men to that Court. When the new building was opened in 1884 the guest speaker, Professor Bruce, spoke on Church Psalmody with illustrations from a selection of music from the Free Church Psalter and Hymnal. He praised short sermons and decried slovenly singing, claiming that a well-proportioned sermon which was bright and impressive would mean popularity. The Church had clearly set its sights on social and cultural acceptability and spiritual superiority.

The Free North, on the other hand, was from the first more evangelical and its working-class congregation had little opportunity to gain social recognition. Their minister, the Rev Charles Marshall, was prepared to secede even if some legal process could have been found to satisfy the requirements of the Non-Intrusionists. His congregation continued to be the most evangelical of the Free Church congregations though it struggled financially. When Mr Marshall took



ill and a second minister was appointed to the charge, the older minister worshipped in James Begg's congregation at Liberton and thus clearly associated himself with "Begg and his Highland Host." His successor, Mr Brown, continued to exercise a ministry in which the organising principles included a spiritually orientated Kirk Session and personal evangelism by elders in their districts.

As the century proceeded social status proved the dominating factor in the life of all the town's Free congregations. Moreover the widespread support of manufacturing industry and the professional classes is evident in that of the first four Free Church Provosts one was a flour mill owner, one a power loom manufacturer, another an architect and the fourth a lawyer.

The United Presbyterian Church enjoyed strong support at its inception though it had lost many former members of Secession and Relief. The 1834 figures are a fair reflection of how the older Dissenting congregations had dominated the Dunfermline ecclesiastical scene for a century, though the Establishment attendances are perhaps low in terms of the actual number who would have claimed membership at the time. The decline towards the end of the century is accounted for by the resurgence of the Establishment, the movement towards smaller, more activist groups and the competitive presence of the Free Church.

Changes reflecting a distancing from the narrower lifestyle and doctrines of the older Seceders have already been noted within the United Secession Church prior to its Union with the Relief in 1847. These formed part of a wider upheaval involving social, ecclesiastical and political change and the need for compromise solutions.

Immediately after the Disruption Free Church members vied with United Secessionists on the Town Council to gain control. Between 1843 and 1861 a compromise solution was often arrived at by appointing a Provost from outwith the two major groupings. These "middle men" came from the Episcopal, Independent, Baptist and National Church congregations. On the wider political front, the Stirling Burghs to which Dunfermline belonged chose a Unitarian to represent them in 1847. This apparently incongruous choice for a constituency which was a



Dissenting stronghold may be explained on two grounds. First there was the continuing clash between Free Church and United Secession members of Council, neither of whom wanted a representative from the other side, so as in the choice of Provosts a compromise was reached. Moreover, before 1846 the Free Church group acted as a sort of "shadow 'de jure' Establishment" in opposition to the old "de facto" Establishment of the traditional home-based handloom trade and the Secession Church, taking on the role of Thomas Chalmers' "unwilling Voluntaries." Thus the Free Church party, in opposition to the Voluntaries, wanted to send a Burgh representative to the General Assembly. A second possible reason for the choice of a Unitarian was that the leading entrepreneur, Erskine Beveridge, was a political radical and an Independent in Church matters. He had left the Abbey in 1837 to form an Independent congregation, denouncing ministers of the Establishment for pontificating from the pulpit on political and economic matters. Other members of the Council belonged to a group who were party to the setting up of a Congregational Church committed to the principles of Morison and therefore rejecting the stricter Calvinism of the major denominations. However by 1851 both the Free Church and the United Presbyterians were committed to "Voluntaryism" and their combined strength helped to elect a man of more traditional religious persuasion to the office of M.P.

If changes were taking place in the Free Church they had also occurred in the United Presbyterian Church which sought to present a more modern image than that of the old Secessionist tradition. When a statue of Ralph Erskine was erected in 1849 it roused the ire of older Dissenters because it made him look like some "young dandy" rather than the godly Seceder.

Recognising the need for change and accommodation in order to survive, the United Presbyterian Church sought to keep abreast of the times. In its older form as the United Secession Church it had found common cause with the leadership of the Free Church and the National Church in the mid-40's in addressing itself to the problem of working-class apathy on the one hand and working-class agitation on the other. The former meant lecturing on topics indirectly associated with religion, such as the value of personal hygiene, Savings Banks and

self-improvement as well as the evils of war and liquor; the latter meant containing the more extreme views of the Chartists. However the conservatism of the Churches is seen in their attitude to the cholera epidemic of 1849 which was declared by Church leaders to be the result of infidelity, requiring a spirit of humility before God. Such a cause brought the two main protagonists of the Voluntary Controversy, Mr Chalmers of the Abbey and Mr Law of St Margarets, into common agreement and onto the same platform. By the 1860's the Church was beginning to recognise that its social control would have to extend beyond its doors if it were to make an impact on the "rougher" working class who did not attend worship. It became common for leading laymen to invite their ministers to speak at their factories on topics such as the need for the working class to make use of Savings Banks.

In Dunfermline, as in much of the country, the formation of the United Presbyterian Church was accompanied by the loss of much of the spiritual zeal of the old Seceders. The controlling principle was the need to rationalise and create an organisation capable of competing with the aggressive spiritual dynamism of the early Free Church. Moreover the collapse of the home-based handloom weaving industry whose personnel had formed the heart of the old United Secession Church meant that the new body was set up at a time of severe economic depression which had caused financial crisis in all the Dunfermline congregations. In order to survive the United Presbyterian Church recognised the need to capture the new bourgeoisie of the power loom revolution and its ancillary trades. It had therefore to abandon much of the narrower conservative vision of the older Seceders and the "individualism of conversion", which Muirhead has noted as typical of Scottish Presbyterianism between 1780 and 1850(47), in favour of conformity to a middle-class ethos in which finance would play a major role.

As the century advanced a desire to conform to the spirit of the times progressively ousted the narrower biblical standpoint of its Seceding forefathers. Ministers became increasingly involved in philanthropic work and Mr Dunbar of Gillespie Church was prepared to take an active role on the Burgh School Board, an area which had previously been left to the Free and Established Churches. Moreover



ministers of the denomination abandoned sermons of "hell-fire mediocrity" in favour of a more popular rational and common-sense approach.(48) As a body the movement was less sectarian in Dunfermline than the Free Church, in which strong anti-Catholic and sabbatarian elements remained. Elders and Managers carried over their employer-employee relationships at shop floor or office level into a rigid system of seat letting in which failure to pay could lead to loss of membership, so that the working class tended to stay away rather than face such embarrassment. Moreover the financial policy of most congregations, when some capital project was envisaged, was to provide a subscription list so that promises could be openly stated. This type of covenanted giving was another factor in forcing ordinary folk to seek homes in less demanding Establishment congregations. The more middle-class ethos was also promoted by leading businessmen appearing on the platform at Church gatherings and by ministers attending work places owned by their leading laymen. Such interchange promoted the idea that the way in which the new bourgeoisie were organising society had the blessing of the Church.

The fact that two different denominations were formed in 1843 and 1847, both of which had displaced former Establishments, the "de jure" in the case of the Free Church and the "de facto" in the case of the United Presbyterians, suggests that the presence of factors other than spiritual was involved. The weight of the thesis has suggested that social and political influences were a vital part of the equation. However even within the ecclesiastical field two different principles of Church organisation and control are evident. The first was the search for truth through conformity to Scripture and a form of Presbyterianism agreeable to the Word of God. The second was the attempt by the middle classes to exercise forms of ecclesiastical control as a tool for fashioning society into a certain moral, social and spiritual framework. This latter aspect played a seminal role in the creation of both Free and United Presbyterian Churches. Maclaren has pointed out how the new shoots of the Free Church wanted "comparability in all things" with the Establishment:

"Led by 1843 by members of a dissident, newly wealthy middle class these men speedily made their mark on the new Church which in itself became a measure of their own status within



The principle of organising the Church according to a revealed Scriptural pattern played a decisive role in the creation of the Free Church. As the century advanced, however, those who maintained this narrower concept led the Church into greater internal conflict than occurred within United Presbyterianism. By the latter part of the 19th century those who adopted a more liberal attitude to Scripture and were in sympathy with the progressive mood of the time had gained the ascendancy over the more conservative group who were reduced to a predominantly Highland minority.

From its inception, the United Presbyterian Church was open to factors other than ecclesiastical and religious in developing its lifestyle. It was more ready to conform to the progressive thinking of Victorian Scotland in matters theological, social and liturgical. In Dunfermline, the high peaks of Dissent had been associated with the pre-1847 days when Gillespie and Erskine had led the Secession and Relief cause. After 1847 the denomination struggled to maintain its previous high profile and was ready to acquiesce in change in order to retain its former status. It was therefore less aggressive and narrow in outlook than the Free Church and, if not trendy, was at least fashionable. Eventually it found common cause with the more liberal party in the Free Church, which led to the union of 1900.

Though the mainstream of the United Secession movement had rejected the ideas of James Morison of Kilmarnock on the Atonement issue, it had stirred up a great deal of unrest. In Dunfermline the Rev Robert Cuthbertson of Chalmers Street United Secession Church gave up the ministry because of his sympathy with Morison and the congregation called the Rev Robert Walker from Comrie who, like Cuthbertson, held to the "new view." Independents and Baptists within the town gained from the division in Chalmers Street and an Evangelical Union congregation was eventually formed in 1851. While Morison's views did gain support it would undoubtedly have been much greater had it not been accompanied by fervent revivalist propaganda and the claim that only those who adhered to such thinking were truly "converted."(50) Such uncontrolled enthusiasm and narrow sectarianism in the ecclesiastical

field was viewed with as much suspicion as physical Chartism in the social and political realms. Both extremes were rejected by middle-class entrepreneurs who wanted to retain control of both Church and business life. Although some of them sympathised with Morison in his rejection of a stern Calvinism and supported such aspects of Chartism as franchise reform, they recognised that to embrace such ideas at that time could let loose forces which they would have been unable to control.

There was a marked difference between the attitude of leading churchmen to a Unitarian who preached in the open air in 1869 and their attitude to the Hallelujah Army who arrived the town in 1884. Editorials and letters to the local newspapers complained of a lack of response from churchmen to the Unitarian's insistence that there was no such person as the Devil and no such place as Hell. His universalism was also decried in an editorial which asked whether all the Dunfermline clergy were asleep. Later events were to show that the ministers of the United Presbyterian Church in particular had at least a modicum of sympathy with his Arminian views. On the other hand the Town Council, which was composed mainly of Dissenting laymen, were incensed at the teaching of the Hallelujah Army in 1884 when female evangelists taught of the need to attack "the fortress of the Devil" and emphasised the doctrine of Hell.(51) The views of the Unitarian were much more in harmony with changing attitudes in the United Presbyterian Church than were those of the vociferous Army preachers.

As the century advanced Morison's views came increasingly to the fore so that by 1879 the denomination had changed the way in which ministers were free to understand various sections of the Westminster Confession. Whereas in the 1840's the middle-class membership of the United Secession Church were hesitant to embrace openly ideas with which they inwardly agreed, they recognised thirty years later that the time was ripe for change which would be accomplished with little or no ecclesiastical or political upheaval. The key note of the new Church had become diplomacy and the need to respond to fashion whether it was social, political, liturgical or theological. However the seeds of such a movement had been there from its inception in 1847.



During the Voluntary Controversy in 1837 the setting up of a Young Men's Voluntary Association to which young ladies were particularly invited was decried in the local press with the sarcastic remark:

"By drinking tea and dancing in Scotland will the Missionary cause be carried forward."(52)

In the same year trends to present a more fashionable image had also been spotted by the press, who claimed that United Secession ministers were now reading from prayer books at burials and wearing shovel hats like their Episcopal brothers.(53)

Many leading men in the Church had openly sympathised with Cuthbertson and during the 1850's and 60's shared the same platform and mission campaigns as Congregational ministers who held to Morison's view. Indeed the denomination was the first of the "big three" to abandon the Fast Day in favour of more fashionable pursuits, such as outings on the holiday to Castle Campbell and other beauty spots.

There were a number of areas in which Ralph Erskine and United Presbyterians would have agreed and others in which they would have been wholly opposed. In the opening sections of the thesis it was noted that Erskine was a reluctant Seceder though he had been present as a witness at Gairney Bridge in 1733. He considered it unwise, however, to accede to the Associate Presbytery until he had gained the support of his eldership and the community at large. In this he demonstrated the same practical diplomacy and awareness of the community as the United Presbyterians showed to their financial benefactors and to cultural changes within society.

Nor was Erskine's theological understanding far removed from that of the denomination in 1879. His position as a Marrow man had brought him into conflict with the Moderates of his time over his understanding of the universality of the Gospel offer:

"The offer is universal to all that hear the gospel. Let Arminians maintain at their peril their universal redemption: but we must at our peril the universal offer."(54)



Such a view was not wholly different from that of Morison, though Erskine would have disagreed fundamentally with his concept of unlimited atonement.

Yet for Erskine the controlling principle which guided the Church was conformity to the truth of Scripture, whereas the United Presbyterian Church became increasingly concerned to conform to the rational and critical thinking of the time. By 1883 the United Presbyterian Church was spearheading a movement towards the Liberal Protestantism of the late 19th and the 20th century. The movement which had been instrumental in weakening the power of the Moderates of the 18th century had created in its wake a new Church as committed as were those Moderates to conformity with the prevailing social climate. Eager to retain the support of its liberal middle class, it had departed from its former spiritual principles but had not committed itself to a radical attack on the real social issues of the time. Chameleon-like, the United Presbyterian Church in Dunfermline changed its colour to comply with the thinking of those who provided its financial support.

## APPENDIX I

A glance at three modern books in the light of this thesis

Three excellent studies have been published in recent years on subjects relevant to this thesis. The first is Murray's *The Scottish Hand Loom Weavers*(1), the second MacLaren's *Religion and Social Class*(2) and the third Smout's *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950*.(3) Each raises questions which can be looked at in the light of the present study.

Murray - *The Scottish Hand Loom Weavers*.

In pages 165-167, Murray seeks an explanation for the decline in church-going among weavers of all age groups and especially the young. He suggests that, from as early as 1815, children were no longer being trained in the habit of church-going. In the main he blames the fall in real wages for the original defection of the parents, some of whom were reluctant to go to Church because they did not have suitable clothes. Many weavers refused to accept free seats in Church as this would have amounted to an admission of pauperism. Murray also finds significant the increasing degree of illiteracy among younger weavers which meant that they could not read the Bible.

Of Dunfermline weavers it can be said that they enjoyed a longer period of prosperity and independence than those in the west but by around 1837 Murray's description of the weavers' poor situation also applied to them. The Secession congregations, the spiritual handmaids of the handloom industry, then began to lose numbers at an alarming rate until the mid 1850's.(4) On the other hand, prior to the Disruption, the Establishment with its cheaper seating enjoyed real growth.(5)

By 1849 the weekly wage of a weaver who could find work was between 6/- and 8/- and he had dropped in the league table of earnings below miners and labourers(6), seat rents amounting to about a sixtieth of his annual earnings. Charles Rogers, the North Parish missionary in 1849, discovered in the parish religious apathy and a keener interest in discussing politics than spiritual matters.(7) He also found that people were staying away from the Church because they had no suitable clothes. By the late 1870's the social life of the Church emphasised the need to be well-dressed in order to fit in.(8)

Perhaps the most significant reason for the decline in church-going in Dunfermline was the dramatic disintegration of the traditional industry. Weavers were left bewildered, angry and disillusioned, the experience being as traumatic as the ravages of war. Godly old Seceders asked questions about the providence of God and felt abandoned. Their children grew up a more hardened breed, many of whom left the Church altogether or joined a sect where they found a more "noble" idea of God.(9) It is difficult to ascertain the extent of the decline in Church attendance but it was certainly dramatic. In 1847 Mr Walker of Chalmers Street indicated that he would have to leave unless numbers improved, while the Maygate United Secession and the Relief congregation discussed Union to avoid the possibility of both having to close. Moreover there was a reversal of allegiance. The traditional



handloom weavers had often been office bearers in the Dissenting Churches but now, if they took office at all, it was more likely to be in the Establishment. A number of weavers were invited to become elders in the Abbey in 1853.(10)

The move into political debate indicated the working man's hope of redressing society by his own efforts and not leaving it to providence. Perhaps his religion had not let the weaver down but it was associated with the period of his social collapse, so the baby was thrown out with the bath water. Many weavers now saw their business masters running the United Presbyterian Church and associated that kind of religion with paternalism. Some were still too steeped in tradition to abandon the Church altogether and found a home in the less spiritually and financially demanding Establishment congregations.

The decline in church-going was paralleled by a rise in various forms of entertainment, such as Saturday evening concerts, which satisfied the weavers' need for communal activity.

#### MacLaren - *Religion and Social Class.*

MacLaren depicts a model of Free Church life which was dependent on middle-class entrepreneurs who saw in the success of their congregations a measure of their own ability:

"The desire to destroy the residuary Establishment led to the creation of a Free Church which in all ways was to be superior to the Church from which they had seceded."(11)

However MacLaren found that this new Church often lost its distinctiveness and became simply another Establishment rather than continuing to be a dynamic force in Scottish Church life.

Such a model is inappropriate for Dunfermline until the mid 1870's for at the time of the Disruption the town did not have a sufficient number of businessmen to effect the type of change which Aberdeen experienced.

The Free Church in Dunfermline struggled to survive for the first fifteen years and even in the 1880's only one congregation in the Presbytery was self-supporting.(12) Thus it could never challenge the Establishment in an aggressive way but was more concerned to keep itself alive. It was rather the Establishment, under men like Peter Chalmers and Alexander Mitchell, who launched a crusading counter-attack on a Free Church in Dunfermline which had been weak from the first. The Dissenters had failed to take the initiative which a massive majority had given them in 1843. It is true that though numerically strong they were not financially so, a great number of their members being unemployed weavers. Nevertheless the Free Church started with an advantage which it progressively threw away. Marshall was so busy raising funds for the Free North that his congregation suffered neglect from which it took forty years to recover.

The most prestigious of the three Free congregations, the Free Abbey, suffered at the hands of the early central organisation which tried to direct ministerial movements. It took exactly two years



to the day to call its first minister, hardly an auspicious start.(13) Such hesitancy and disorganisation in areas where it was not financially strong was crippling to the young Church. In 1843 the Central Committee was not in a position to make wise decisions about where help should be given and Dunfermline was without doubt an area in which it gave up its advantage at a crucial stage. Unlike Aberdeen, the difference between the Establishment and the Free Church was not that of staid respectability competing with energetic business entrepreneurs. Both Churches struggled and it was the Establishment which showed the more adventurous and pioneering spirit. The keynote was money and in 1851 the new minister of the North Chapel of Ease knew that. He pressed home his advantage, knowing that the congregations in Dunfermline which spoke least about money would grow quickest.(14)

The casualties, as in Aberdeen, were the working class of the Free Church who were forced to leave because of its inquisitorial financial organisation. The Free Church in Dunfermline had to live with constant financial embarrassment. Unlike Aberdeen, it also had to compete with the long tradition and better-oiled mechanisms of the United Presbyterian Church which took away much of the middle-class support on which it so heavily depended. The first Free Church model in Dunfermline was rather a spineless one which was unsure of what stance to take. Not until the 1870's did it have the self-confidence which MacLaren found.

After 1870, especially in the Free Abbey, a new and more streamlined model emerged. Business life had prospered and men like William Reid, a linen manufacturer, provided money in the 1890's to build a Mission Hall which had first been mooted in 1865. The new Free Abbey of the 1870's depended on the rise of a professional class who found in its impressive building, erected in 1884, a reflection of their own self-importance. Church life for them was associated with the best in culture and society and with raising man from his condition of need. The Mission in Rumblingwell epitomised this caring yet paternalistic attitude.

*Smout - A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950.*

Smout claims that by 1950 the Church of Scotland had failed to find solutions to the questions posed by the death of hell, the rise of class and the spread of other entertainment.(14) Dunfermline in the 19th century shows why these questions arose and it can be shown that the United Presbyterian Church was largely responsible.

The road to the "death of hell" can be traced back to the 1840's in the teaching of John Morison whose sectarian approach had been so disliked by the journalists in Fife.(15) His rejection of a limited atonement went beyond the universal offer of Ralph Erskine and the Marrow men and, like them, he was accused of being antinomian. Morison was seen as representing an ultra-radical spirituality in a town which preferred a more reasoned approach to change and was dismissive of emotional excess in religion. It has been noted how angry one writer was at the failure of the town's clergy to answer the "rantings" of a Unitarian. He asked if the clergy were all asleep but it has been suggested that they were rather developing middle-class diplomacy or what Smout calls "the spirit of toleration", engendered by



a new sense of humility as former certainties of the faith were challenged.(16) Clergy in the Dissenting congregations of the United Presbyterian Church in particular were acclimatizing themselves to the spirit of the age.

Dunfermline's own Thomas Morrison senior had written against scholastic Calvinism and effectual calling while his son-in-law, William Carnegie, had left the United Secession over the preaching of such doctrines as infant damnation. Well ahead of their time, Morrison, a Baptist, and Carnegie, a Swedenborgian, rejected doctrines which it would take the Church as a whole almost another fifty years to begin to find unreasonable and unacceptable.

Of course men like Brydie of Free St Andrews Church viewed the tendency of some to demythologize the Bible as the first step to a Bible without power. Asking how far the Bible can be believed led to asking what we can truly know about God and, in the 20th century, to the quest for the "historical Jesus."

Paradoxically, alongside the new openness and spirit of tolerance to outsiders, there developed an intolerance to those who held to the old ways. Church and Council both reacted fiercely to the arrival of the Hallelujah Army with its music and street evangelism and its devotion to the old doctrines of hell and the need for conversion.(17) Such views were unacceptable in the 1880's to elders who had already moved away from the Confession's teaching on the atonement. The Churches did not want the Army parading in the streets, especially at times when services were being held, and this was understandable. However the Council, which still reflected the religious thinking of the time since most of its members belonged to Dissenting congregations, was happy to let drunkards and others fight it out with the Army without using the police to quell what became serious disturbances. They clearly hoped that each nuisance would clear the other from the streets. Dunfermline at this time received a very bad press for its failure to act decisively. The Church wanted to be seen to be in line with the advanced thinking of the age and the Army's doctrines were being dismissed as outdated. Concepts such as "hell" had to go if the Church were to speak to the respectable middle class with their "enlightened" concepts of liberty and love. However, as Smout points out, the Church was tearing out the very heart of its message. He adds:

"Christianity since the beginning had centred on the life after death. If the Church was vague about it, men reached their own conclusions: if there was a God, He was good: if He was good, He would send you to heaven or at least give you a second chance if you had made a mistake; if He would give you a second chance, it could not matter tremendously if you were a bit of an agnostic here and now, or didn't go too regularly to church."(18)

The seeds of Universalism had been sown, especially in the United Presbyterian Church and the smaller sects.

Smout also feels that class differences proved problematic for a Church which coped better with the middle classes than with the working class. As early as 1754, it has been noted, the weavers and



other crafts abandoned the Abbey where they had traditionally held their business meetings. This severing of the community from the Church came fast behind the disappearance of the old Communion traditions where countless numbers met in hostelries as well as for worship. The Church's severe attitude to penny weddings also distanced it from the festivities of working people but for most of the lower orders a Church connection was important if their names were to be put on a Poor Relief list.

The Secession congregations were much more lay-orientated than the Establishment. Many weavers did their share in running these congregations but, as they were the aristocrats of labour, it is perhaps necessary to look at them as exceptions to the rule. The master weavers and small merchants did find within the Church an extension to their business life but, as has been noted, when new developments arose in the industry, splits emerged between the entrepreneurs and the ordinary workforce, the two most notable being in Queen Anne Street Church in 1820 and St Andrews Quoad Sacra Church in 1837.

However, it was not until after the decline in the traditional industry that real class consciousness began to emerge in Dunfermline. The men and women who entered the factories knew a loss of independence and felt more like jailed convicts than valued members of a production team. The extended family, cottage-based system had been replaced by a grim, repressive system of factory production where noise and factory managers dominated the lives of the operatives. Singing at the work place was a thing of the past, as was the spare moment to light up a pipe and chat with a neighbour. The sad tale of one woman who died while rushing to work so as not to lose a morning's wages was told in the local paper and readers were urged not to follow her example(19), but the hard pressed worker needed to every penny to provide the bare essentials of life.

Any attempt to see the Church as a purely middle-class phenomenon must, however, take account of the fact that many working class families did attend Church, as is evident from the number of weavers and miners who attended the North Parish in the 1860's. Moreover, when a working man joined the Church he tended to conform to its lifestyle which meant, in most cases, observing a certain moral standard. He would avoid many of the entertainments which proved expensive to others, such as gambling and excessive drinking, which left more money in his pocket which he could use to raise his standard of living. Great expectations were held for children to get a better job than their parents and working-class values were replaced by middle-class ones. There was nothing wrong in this but it sometimes led Church members into a course of self-improvement which made them forgetful of others.

This was a particular problem for the United Presbyterian Church which encouraged business improvement and a better style of living. This "upwardly mobile" spirit had marked the life of the young handloom weaver who sought to own his own loom as the first step up the social ladder; now it marked the life of the United Presbyterian Church as its ministers and elders became involved in the cultural aspects of the town's life. Typical of such was William Inglis of Queen Anne Street who was involved in the Town Council and the School



Board and helped to promote Saturday evening concerts, Literary Society lectures, missionary enterprises and other charitable and philanthropic efforts. An article about him in the *Dunfermline Journal* clearly set him up as an example to others.(20) The Rev William George, minister of Chalmers Street United Presbyterian Church, the smallest of the four U.P. congregations, was one of the first Trustees of the Dunfermline Carnegie Trust. The danger in this self-improvement was that it could lead to smug self-satisfaction rather than a greater love for one's fellow man. An example of this encouragement gradually to increase one's social position is a exhortation by Provost Donald:

"Do not be afraid of beginning life in a house of one room and kitchen. Mr Bright in condemning family life in small houses forgot the proverb 'Creep before ye gang.'"(21)

Smout suggests that one reason for the decline in membership was the loss of the secular element in Church life. This has been partly dealt with above where it was noted that the Church lost working-class life from its midst and weavers' meetings began to be held in the Town Hall. Smout perhaps fails to take note of how far the "embourgeoisement" of Church life, noted in Chapter Twelve, had progressed.(22) The Church did seek to build halls where outsiders could come in and youth organisations could meet, but many ordinary, working-class folk were put off by the need to be well dressed for the occasion. Even in recent years carpet bowls were played in jackets and ties rather than open-necked shirts because the Church was seen as a decent, respectable place where one dressed well and behaved well. It certainly tried to keep itself in the forefront of people's lives and soirees, choir outings and bazaars brought groups together, but, as McLean of Alloa observed, tea meetings would not revive the life of the Church.(23) It may be argued that it tried too hard to accommodate the new age and filled its halls with meetings every night, but it was following the life of the times rather than offering leading and direction. Smout is correct in saying that the Church had lost its way.

In a letter to the *Dunfermline Journal* it was once said of the United Presbyterian Church, that it was just like a large Liberal or Radical committee(24); now the whole Church was in danger of becoming just like a large Social Club. Moreover, the thrift and self-improvement ethic of the early and mid Victorian age was becoming outdated. Smout notes:

"And if the welfare state would provide at least something for old age and illness, was there the same need for unremitting thrift? The doctrines made most sense where they helped the artisan to climb from journeyman to small master, as was still possible in mid Victorian times, and where there was particular need for a self-help ethic to avoid the pit of pauperism."(25)

The United Presbyterian Church, in particular, had allowed its middle-class membership to determine its lifestyle at the expense of the radical zeal of its forefathers. The true "Church of the people", in Dunfermline at least, had been the early Secession congregations, where the handloom weavers could pursue the spiritual self-improvement which was the ecclesiastical counterpart of their sociological progress.

APPENDIX II

Looms in the town

<u>Date</u>	<u>Looms in the parish</u>	<u>Looms out of the parish</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Value £</u>
1749	about 400		400	
1788			900	
1792	about 820	about 380	1200	
1813	about 930	about 70	1000	95,000
1818	about 1500	about 150	1650	120,000
1822			1800	
1831	about 2670	about 450	3120	
July				
1836	about 2794	about 723	3517	351,700
Aug.				
1836	about 2983	about 717	3700	370,000

APPENDIX II

Dunfermline congregations between 1830 and 1860

		<u>1830</u>		
ESTABLISHMENT			DISSENT	
Abbey (collegiate charge)			Queen Anne Street United Secession	
St Andrews Chapel			St Margarets United Secession	
<u>1 parish, 1 chapel; 3 ministers</u>			The Relief (Gillespie)	
			Chalmers Street United Secession	
			The Original Seceders	
			<u>5 charges; 5 ministers</u>	
		<u>1835</u>		
ESTABLISHMENT			DISSENT	
Abbey (collegiate charge)			Queen Anne Street United Secession	
St Andrews Quoad Sacra			St Margarets United Secession	
<u>1 parish, 1 quoad sacra parish;</u>			The Relief (Gillespie)	
<u>3 ministers</u>			Chalmers Street United Secession	
			The Original Seceders	
			Maygate United Secession	
			<u>6 charges; 6 ministers</u>	
		<u>1842</u>		
ESTABLISHMENT			DISSENT	
Abbey (collegiate charge)			Queen Anne Street United Secession	
St Andrews Quoad Sacra			St Margarets United Secession	
North Quoad Sacra			The Relief (Gillespie)	
Canmore Street Quoad Sacra			Chalmers Street United Secession	
(formerly Original Seceders)			Maygate United Secession	
<u>1 parish, 3 quoad sacra parishes;</u>			<u>5 charges; 5 ministers</u>	
<u>5 ministers</u>				



## ESTABLISHMENT

## DISSENT

Abbey (collegiate charge)  
 St Andrews Quoad Sacra  
 North Quoad Sacra  
1 parish, 2 quoad sacra parishes:  
4 ministers

North Chapel Street U.P.  
 (combining Relief and Maygate)  
 Queen Anne Street U.P.  
 St Margarets U.P.  
 Chalmers Street U.P.  
 The Free Abbey  
 The Free North  
 Free St Andrews  
7 charges: 7 ministers

The following table shows the comparative strengths of the two camps at various times. An additional set of information is included for 1844 when matters remained uncertain because of the various lawsuits:

	1830	1835	1842	1844	1855
<u>Ministers</u>					
Establishment	3	3	5	2	4
Dissent	5	6	5	7	7
<u>Congregations</u>					
Establishment	2	2	4	1	3
Dissent	5	6	5	8	7

## APPENDIX III

Comparison of membership and stipend

	<u>1838</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1875</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>Stipend (1900)</u>
<u>Establishment</u>					
Abbey	1100	748	1403	1779	(£435 & manse (£360
North		60	400	420	£175
St Andrews	<u>495</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>739</u>	<u>775</u>	£283 & manse
Total	<u>1605</u>	<u>958</u>	<u>2542</u>	<u>2974</u>	
<u>Free</u>					
Free North		533	333	444	£247 & manse
Free St Andrews		400	297	401	£247 & manse
Free Abbey		<u>500</u>	<u>522</u>	<u>558</u>	£490 & manse
Total		<u>1433</u>	<u>1152</u>	<u>1403</u>	
<u>United Secession</u>					
Gillespie	392	430	555	567	£310 & manse
Queen Anne St.	1041	882	932	922	£350 & manse
Chalmers St.	189	660	654	600	£216 & manse
St Margarets	<u>800</u>	<u>660</u>	<u>654</u>	<u>600</u>	£303 & manse
Total	<u>2432</u>	<u>2222</u>	<u>2341</u>	<u>2305</u>	



## APPENDIX IV

### List of Congregations and their Ministers

#### Establishment Congregations

##### A.1 THE ABBEY

Until 1742 the Abbey was the only congregation in the town and its parochial responsibilities were extensive. In 1742 it included within its parochial boundaries Crossgates to the east and Limekilns to the west.

##### A.2 CHAPEL OF EASE (ST ANDREWS-ERSKINE)

1779 Chapel of Ease  
1835 St Andrews Quoad Sacra  
1843 Lost its official status by Assembly legislation  
1851 St Andrews Quoad Sacra  
1929 St Andrews Church of Scotland  
1974 St Andrews-Erskine Church of Scotland

This congregation began as a Chapel of Ease in connection with the Establishment after Thomas Gillespie's death. One part of his congregation sought official recognition by the General Assembly while another section continued in the Relief tradition. Official status was given to the Chapel in 1779. In 1835 the congregation was given a parish of its own under the regulations of the 1834 Chapel Act. It struggled after the Disruption when it lost most of its membership to the Free Church but became an endowed Quoad Sacra congregation in 1851.

##### A.3 NORTH PARISH QUOAD SACRA (NORTH PARISH)

1840 North Parish Quoad Sacra  
1843 Lost its official status by Assembly legislation  
1855 North Parish Quoad Sacra  
1929 North Parish Church of Scotland

The North Parish began as a Quoad Sacra congregation formed during the great Church Extension drive by Thomas Chalmers. It lost most of its members to the Free Church who continued to occupy the building until the general ruling given by the House of Lords in 1849 concerning Church property. However it re-emerged as a Quoad Sacra congregation in 1855.

#### Dissenting Congregations

##### B.1 ASSOCIATE CONGREGATION (ST ANDREWS-ERSKINE)

1742 Associate Congregation meeting in Queen Anne Street  
1747 General Associate Congregation (Burgher)  
1820 Queen Anne Street United Secession Church  
1847 Queen Anne Street United Presbyterian Church  
1900 Queen Anne Street United Free Church  
1929 Queen Anne Street Church of Scotland  
1942 Erskine Church of Scotland  
1974 St Andrews-Erskine Church of Scotland

Ralph Erskine formed the Associate Congregation when he was ejected from the National Church in 1842.<sup>2</sup> In 1942 the Queen Anne Street and Chalmers Street Church of Scotland charges united to form Erskine Church of Scotland. In 1974 the Erskine

congregation united with St Andrews congregation to form St Andrews-Erskine. The history of Chalmers Street and St Andrews are noted under B.2 and A.2 respectively.

**B.2 CHALMERS STREET ANTIBURGHHER (ST ANDREWS-ERSKINE)**

1789 Chalmers Street Antiburgher congregation  
1820 Chalmers Street United Secession Church  
1847 Chalmers Street United Presbyterian Church  
1900 Chalmers Street United Free Church  
1929 Chalmers Street Church of Scotland  
1942 Erskine Church of Scotland

Chalmers Street Antiburgher congregation was founded in 1788 when three members of the Cairneyhill Antiburgher Church petitioned Presbytery craving to be allowed to form a separate congregation in Dunfermline. In 1942 the Chalmers Street congregation united with Queen Anne Street to form the Erskine congregation. (See B.1)

**B.3 GILLESPIE'S CONGREGATION (GILLESPIE)**

1752 Gillespie's congregation  
1761 The Relief congregation  
1847 Gillespie United Presbyterian Church  
1900 Gillespie United Free Church  
1929 Gillespie Church of Scotland

This congregation was founded by Gillespie after his deposition from Carnock over the Inverkeithing settlement. In 1761 the Relief denomination was set up. In 1847 the Chapel Street United Presbyterian congregation was formed by a union of the old Relief Church and the Maygate United Secession Church. (See B.5)

**B.4 ST MARGARETS UNITED SECESSION (ST MARGARETS)**

1825 St Margarets United Secession Church  
1847 St Margarets United Presbyterian Church  
1900 St Margarets United Free Church  
1929 St Margarets Church of Scotland

St Margarets congregation was a breakaway from Queen Anne Street United Secession Church over a call to Mr Whyte, a probationer.

**B.5 MAYGATE UNITED SECESSION (GILLESPIE)**

1832 Maygate United Secession  
1847 Gillespie United Presbyterian Church (See B.3)

The Maygate congregation was formed after a disagreement in Chalmers Street United Secession Church when the majority of that congregation refused to submit themselves to the ministry of the then incumbent.

Free Church Congregations

**C.1 THE FREE ABBEY (ST PAULS)**

1843 The Free Abbey  
1900 The United Free Abbey  
1929 St Columbas Church of Scotland  
1958 St Pauls Church of Scotland

The Free Abbey was made up of three distinct groups. The first were dissatisfied members of the Abbey Church, the second



members of Canmore Auld Licht congregation which had become part of the National Church in 1839 and the third malcontents from the United Secession congregations. In 1958 it united with St Johns to become St Pauls Church of Scotland.

C.2 FREE ST ANDREWS (by transportation ST NINIANS)

1843 Free St Andrews  
 1900 St Andrews United Free Church  
 1929 St Andrews South Church of Scotland  
 1957 After transportation, St Ninians Church of Scotland  
 St Andrews Free was a breakaway from St Andrews Church of Scotland. which until 1835 had been a Chapel of Ease in connection with the Establishment and whose history went back to 1779 when the Chapel received an official constitution from the General Assembly.

C.3 THE FREE NORTH (ST PAULS)

1843 The Free North  
 1900 The United Free North  
 1929 St Johns Church of Scotland  
 1958 St Pauls Church of Scotland  
 The original Free North was formed from the extension congregation set up in the town in 1840 and known as the North Parish. In 1958 the congregation united with St Columbas to form St Pauls.

Ministers (during period of thesis)

A.1 ABBEY

Ralph Erskine 1711-1740  
 James Wardlaw 1718-1742  
 James Thomson 1743-1790  
 Thomas Fernie 1744-1788  
 John Fernie 1789-1816  
 Allan McLean 1791-1836  
 Peter Chalmers 1817-1870  
 John Todd Brown 1837-1844

A.3 NORTH QUOAD SACRA

Charles Marshall 1841-1843  
 Charles Rogers 1849-1850  
 Alex. Mitchell 1851-1902

B.1 ASSOCIATE CONGREGATION

Ralph Erskine 1740-1752  
 John Smith 1760-1780  
 James Husband 1776-1821  
 James McFarlane 1785-1823  
 Alexander Fisher 1827-1829  
 James Young 1831-1869  
 Robert French 1870-1872  
 Robert Alexander 1873

A.2 CHAPEL OF EASE

John Monteath 1780-1781  
 Allan McLean 1782-1791  
 James Robertson 1792-1798  
 David Saville 1799-1799  
 Christopher Grieg 1800-1807  
 Peter Brotherston 1808-1809  
 John MacWhir 1810-1813  
 David Murray 1813-1816  
 George Bell Brand 1817-1838  
 Andrew Sutherland 1839-1843  
 John Middleton 1847-1849  
 David Nicol 1849-1855  
 John Pennell 1855-1857  
 James Millar Rose 1858-1903

B.3 GILLESPIE'S CONGREGATION

Thomas Gillespie 1752-1774  
 John Smith 1777-1790  
 Henry Fergus 1790-1837  
 Charles Waldie 1830-1834  
 Neil McMichael 1835-1874  
 John Dunbar 1875-1884

B.4 ST MARGARETS U. SECESSION

Robert Brown 1826-1828  
 John Law 1828-1850  
 David Russell 1851-1891



B.2. CHALMERS STREET ANTIBURGER  
 David Black 1789-1824  
 George Barlas 1820-1832  
 Robert Cuthbertson 1833-1834  
 Robert Walker 1844-1858  
 Alexander Jarvie 1859-1877  
 William George 1877

C.1 FREE ABBEY  
 Alexander Philip 1845-1849  
 John McKenzie 1849-1869  
 J. Shiach 1870

B.5 MAYGATE U. SECESSION  
 George Barlas 1832-1837  
 Thomas Smith 1838-1839  
 James Gibson 1841-1847

C.2 FREE ST ANDREWS  
 Alexander Sutherland 1843-1855  
 A. Bryden 1856-1875  
 D. Imrie 1876

C.3 FREE NORTH  
 Charles Marshall 1843-1882  
 James Brown 1866

## APPENDIX V

### List of Abbreviations

E	Ecclesiastical	W	Weaving Trade
T	Town Council	P	Population
G	General Information	L	Literature

### Reference Books

H. E. Henderson, The Annals of Dunfermline, (Glasgow: 1879)  
 T. D. Thomson, The Weavers' Craft, (Paisley: 1903)  
 M. A. Mercer, The History of Dunfermline, (Dunfermline: 1828)  
 Ch.1. P. Chalmers, A Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline, Vol. I, (Edinburgh: 1844)  
 Ch.2. P. Chalmers, A Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline, Vol. II, (Edinburgh: 1844)  
 W.S.A. Webster, Statistical Account of Scotland.  
 F.J. *Fifeshire Journal*.  
 C.M. *Council Minutes*.  
 F.H. *Fife Herald*.  
 D.P. *Dunfermline Press*.  
 D.J. *Dunfermline Journal*.

### A Chronological Summary

1711 E Ralph Erskine ordained as minister of second charge of Dunfermline Abbey. (H.388)  
 1713 E A proposal was made to have a third minister for the Abbey Church as the population in the parish numbered over 5,000. The attempt was unsuccessful. (H.392)  
 1716 E Erskine became minister of the first charge. (H.397)  
 E Dispute over patronage of second charge.  
 1718 E Hogg of Carnock republished the "Marrow of Modern Divinity" which had been written in 1645.  
 W Damask weaving was introduced into the parish by James Blake. (H.400)  
 1724 T A new system for making up the composition of the Town Council was introduced. This was to become a major source of discontent in the early part of the 19th Century. (H.412-413)  
 1729 T No Commissioner to the General Assembly. (H.420)

- 1730 E Erskine and Wardlaw applied unsuccessfully for additional assistance in working the parish. (H.421)
- 1732 W Following a dispute with Alexander Miller a bleachfield was provided for the linen workers of Dunfermline. (H.425-26)
- 1733 E Ralph Erskine was a witness of the proceedings at Gairney Bridge but did not join the Associate Presbytery until 1737.
- 1736 W David Mackie had several looms working and was a typical small business man of the weaving industry. (M.164)
- 1737 E Ralph Erskine formally connected himself with the Associate Presbytery. (H.431)
- 1740 E The foundation of Erskine's meeting house was laid. (H.435)
- 1741 E Whitfield preached from Erskine's pulpit. His meeting with the Associate Synod ended rather unpleasantly. (H.439)
- 1742 E Erskine ejected from Establishment having been deposed by General Assembly in 1740. (H.440)
- E The Rev James Thomson became minister of the first charge after Wardlaw's death. (H.441)
- E Only five elders or deacons remained to serve in Abbey after Erskine's departure.
- 1743 E Seven new elders ordained at Abbey.
- 1747 E Antiburgher breach. A small company left Erskine's congregation to set up a meeting place in Cairneyhill. (H.453)
- 1749 W The British Linen Company appointed an agent to set up as many looms as possible in Dunfermline. Henderson records that there were 400 looms in town at this period. The number of looms had grown to 1200 by 1792. (H.454)
- 1752 W David Turnbull bought the dye house. (H.459)
- E Gillespie deposed by General Assembly and moved in the winter into Dunfermline where he used the barn which Erskine had himself used before the new meeting house was built. (H.459)
- E Ralph Erskine died. The vacancy which followed in Queen Anne Street lasted eight years. (H.462)
- 1753 W A yarn market was established. (H.463-64)
- 1754 E Five Abbey elders were deposed including David Turnbull. He and some of the others became members of Gillespie's congregation.
- W The weavers and other trades met in their business capacity in the Abbey for the last time. (W.C.)
- 1755 P Parish 8552. (WSA Vol. XX app. G.)
- 1756 W The weavers had by now begun to meet in the Town House.
- 1757 G There was a great scarcity of meal. (W.C.232)
- 1758 W Henderson records that the sales of linen were generally done in Edinburgh, Perth and Kirkcaldy. (H.473)
- 1759 W Bleachfield agents were set up in Dunfermline. Goods were sent to distant bleachfields for processing. According to Henderson, John Mackie was agent for Glorat, William Stobie for Maryburgh and John Wilson for Keir bleachfield. (H.473)
- 1760 W Manufacturers had penetrated to London where their wares were sold at good prices. (H.475)
- E Queen Anne Street was filled after a period of eight years by the Rev John Smith from Jedburgh. (H.475)



- 1761 W Andrew Bowie established a yarn boiling plant. (W.C.234)
- 1770 G New bridge constructed by George Chalmers. (H.490)
- 1774 E The parish minister James Thomson was involved in a civil court case with certain of his parishioners. The case was also discussed at Presbytery and General Assembly and lasted for over two years. (H.502-03)
- E Death of Thomas Gillespie. (H.498)
- T John Kirk, a merchant, was elected Provost. The election was apparently conducted amid much squabbling and the result was challenged as being illegal. (H.500)
- 1774 E A five year dispute was begun at General Assembly to have Chapel status given to part of Gillespie's congregation who wished to adhere to the Establishment. (H.499)
- 1775 E The other half of Gillespie's congregation completed the building of a Relief meeting house. (H.502)
- W John Mackie, a manufacturer of carpets, died. At one time he had many looms which had given employment to about thirty people.
- 1776 W Mr Stark set up a beetling work and other appliances for bleaching at Brucefield. (W.C.240)
- 1778 W John Wilson produced the fly shuttle and with it a new era in weaving. (H.505) Associated with him in this connection was the name of John Gilmour.
- T David Turnbull elected Provost. (H.506)
- W According to old manuscript notes, Henderson records that there were only 18 damask looms operating in Dunfermline in 1778. Mr Stark had begun to produce table linen and had three of these looms in operation. (H.505-06)
- 1779 E The General Assembly allowed a Chapel in connection with the Establishment to be set up in Dunfermline. This was the first chapel to receive an official constitution within the National Church.
- E An independent congregation was formed in connection with a movement started in Glasgow by David Dale. Known as the Tabernacle it met in Woodhead Street. (H.507)
- 1780 E A Baptist Church was set up in Bridge Street. Its numbers did not exceed 50. (H.507)
- E A Cameronian Church was opened for worship. (H.509)
- 1782 G A number of bad famines were experienced between 1782-1785. (W.C.259)
- 1786 P Parish 8960. (W.C.226)
- 1788 G Seven breweries were operative in Dunfermline. (H.519)
- 1789 E Chalmers Street Church was built to house a congregation who had decided that the long trek to Cairneyhill to worship in the Antiburgher Church there was too far. The Church was to be known as the Antiburgher Kirk. (H.521)
- W According to Henderson, an old manuscript note records that Alexander Bonnar had a workshop in which weavers learned their apprenticeship. Many of them later became eminent table linen manufacturers. (H.522)
- 1790 E The Rev James Smith ceased his connection with the Relief Church and on moving to Dundee became a minister of the Establishment. (H.523)
- E The Rev. James Thomson who had ministered for 47 years in Dunfermline died at the age of 92. (H.523-24)
- 1791 P Parish 9450. (H.526)



- 1792 W The flax mill at Brucefield gave employment to many workers. (H.528) Second in Scotland to obtain a patent for spinning by steam machinery.
- 1793 G Henderson records from a manuscript note that there was great political activity and sometimes violence in the town over the matter of Reform. He also notes that "recruiting parties of soldiers were seldom absent from the town". (H.530)
- 1794 G Friends of the People, a secret political society, formed. (H.531)
- 1796 G Parliamentary election riots. (H.534)  
G Weavers not allowed use of Town House especially for meeting in unlawful combinations, the weavers being 'Friends of the People' men. (H.534)
- 1798 E The building of a new church for Queen Anne Street congregation was commenced. (H.537)
- 1799 G Weavers made some contribution towards the poor since there was a great scarcity of food in the town.  
E The Rev Rowland Hill, Mr Greville Ewing and Mr James Haldane visited the town and held open air services which were well attended. (H.540)  
E The original Burgher congregation was formed by a small group who left Queen Anne Street. They were known as "auld lights". (H.541)
- 1800 E Queen Anne Street church completed. (H.542)  
E A small English congregation was set up. (H.543)  
E A Young Men's Religious Society was formed for prayers, praise, Scripture and recitations. These men, according to Henderson, had been deeply influenced by Haldane, Ewing and Hill. (H.544)  
E The "auld licht" Church was opened for worship. (H.545)
- 1801 E Crossgates Seceder congregation was formed in connection with the Burgher Synod. (H.548)  
E "At the beginning of the century there were no less than ten churches and meeting places in the town, viz. "'The Auld Kirk', 'The Secession Kirk', 'the Chapel Kirk', 'the Relief Kirk', 'the Cameronian Kirk', 'The Tabernacle', 'The Independents', 'The Antiburgher Kirk', 'The Auld Licht Kirk' and the 'Baptist Kirk' served by eleven ministers. The congregations in the town amounted to about 4550". (H.547)  
G According to Henderson there were 26 manufacturers, 800 weavers, 88 wrights, 51 shoemakers, 41 masons, 20 bakers, 47 tailors and 9 fleshers. (H.547)  
P Census: Town 5484 Parish 9980. (H.548)  
G A public kitchen was established in the Fleshmarket to help the hungry; the Town Council contributed £10 to the funds. (H.548)
- 1802 G Henderson notes, "This year begins with no abatement of the dreadful dearth." (H.549)  
E A new Independent congregation was formed from active members of other independent groups. They met for worship in the Tabernacle in Woodhead Street. The congregation closed in 1807 when most of them joined the Baptists. (H.550)



- W Lieutenant Alexander Keeler of the Royal Navy was reported to be willing to lend the Weavers Incorporation money to meet their debts. (W.C.295)
- 1803 W Alexander Keeler was admitted as an honorary members of the Weavers Incorporation. (W.C.296)
- W Mr Bonnar discovered the art of loom mounting. (Ch.1.p.357)
- 1804 G A brick work was established in Woodhead Street by William Chalmers. (H.552)
- G The Dunfermline Volunteers were very active and called on the inhabitants to enrol in the Corps as a "French invasion was imminent". (H.554)
- E First minister appointed to Crossgates. (H.554)
- W John Philp improved on Bonnar's loom mounting patent. (H.555)
- 1805 E A Scottish Baptist congregation was formed from those who had previously attended the Independent meeting in Bridge Street. (H.555)
- 1806 W David Bonnar sold to the Weavers Incorporation the improvements he had devised for the damask loom, which consisted mainly of a method of producing coloured sprigs. (W.C.305)
- 1807 T A legal assessment was raised for the poor during much of 1807-8. (H.559)
- 1808 L Tradesmen's Library formed. (W.C.308)
- T The Burgh debt stood at £10,450. It had been £3,000 in 1788 and £5,000 in 1798. (W.C.312)
- 1810 W According to Henderson the various trades petitioned the Town Council to allow them to raise their entry fees as money had become so devalued. (H.568)
- 1811 P Town 6,492, Parish 11,649. (H.570)
- G Major David Wilson, the Provost, and William Beveridge, a writer, were appointed agents of the Dunfermline branch of the Bank of Scotland. (H.575)
- G Opening of Venturefair and Elgin coal railroads. (H.578)
- 1813 L "The Good Old Ways Defended" was published by William Smith, in which he defended the principles of the Old Licht Church. (H.584)
- E The number on the Poor Roll was 136 and the sum distributed to them was £519. (Ferne, p.46)
- 1814 W The Brucefield flax mill employed 179 workers in 1814. (H.585)
- W A flax spinning mill opened in Queen Anne Street by McIntosh and Inglis but closed after a short period. The machinery was driven by hand. (H.586)
- 1815 G A small iron foundry was opened by Mr Campbell at Maygate. A year later it was moved to Clayacres. (H.586,590)
- E A Methodist Church was opened in the Maygate but it was sold in 1823. (H.587)
- L Another dialogue between the Old and New Lights was published. (H.588)
- 1817 G A meeting of Dunfermline Radicals held on the Antiburgher Brae attracted a crowd of around 800. (H.591)
- E The Rev Peter Chalmers was appointed minister of the second charge of Dunfermline Abbey. (H.591)
- G Adam Low of Fordell, a former Provost, died. In the latter years of his life he had been a bone setter. (H.592)



- 1818 G While progress was being made in preparing for the laying of the foundations of the New Abbey the remains of Robert the Bruce were found. (H.594)
- 1819 W There were 1,507 looms in the Parish of Dunfermline. (H.599)
- T The Burgh debt now stood at £20,401. (H.600)
- 1820 E The Union of Burghers and Antiburghers took place after a separation of 73 years. The new Church was called the United Secession.
- 1821 W Hector Sutherland tried to introduce the cotton trade into Dunfermline but it came to nothing. (W.C.354)
- P Town 8,041, Parish 13,690. (H.608)
- E The New Abbey was opened for worship in September. (H.610)
- W The weavers' "Table of Prices" was reduced. They organised a strike which lasted for ten months causing great problems for the weaving community. (H.613)
- 1825 W The "Jacquard machine" was introduced by Alexander Robertson and the Kerr brothers. (H.619)
- E St Margarets congregation was formed as a breakaway movement from Queen Anne Street. (H.619)
- G A Mechanics' Institute was established after a meeting in the Relief Church where the Reverends Messrs Chalmers, Fergus and Brand addressed the meeting. (H.619)
- 1826 G David Paton introduced a planetarium and lunarium machine into the town. (H.622)
- G A Scientific Club was formed by John Miller and among those who attended were Ebenezer Henderson, Sinclair Thomson and James Smith. (H.622)
- W The weaving trade was very depressed at this period. (H.623)
- 1827 G According to Henderson, the soap works of David Lawrie were producing 216,282 lbs of soap annually while one of the three tobacco manufacturers produced 60,000 lbs of tobacco over the same period. (H.624)
- W There were 2,795 looms in the parish. The debt of the Burgh had risen to £26,000. (H.624)
- 1828 G Dunfermline Gas Board set up. (H.626)
- E The Dunfermline Missionary prayer meetings were begun in the Chapel of Ease and were conducted by ministers of both Establishment and Secession. (H.625)
- 1830 W The Jacquard machines had begun to make an appreciable impact on the weaving industry. Before 1830 only about a dozen had been in use but by the end of the year over a hundred were operative. (H.628)
- 1831 L The Tradesmen's Library united with the Mechanics' Library. (W.C.309)
- G A great Reform meeting was held in Queen Anne Street with Provost Meldrum in the chair. (H.630)
- 1832 G A Reform procession was held on 8th May. (H.632)
- G The cholera reached Dunfermline and had claimed 158 victims before September. (H.633)
- G The reformer and Chartist leader, Cobbett, visited Dunfermline. (H.633)
- 1833 L A political monthly called the "Precursor" edited by Thomas Morrison, senior, was published but only ran to three editions. (H.634)



- E The Dunfermline Voluntary Church Association was instituted. (H.634)
- 1834 T The Town Council petitioned both Houses of Parliament for the abolition of lay patronage.
- E The Chapel Act was passed at the General Assembly and one of the first congregations to make use of its provisions was the St Andrews Chapel in Dunfermline.
- W Messrs Dewar set up a small factory in Woodhead Street. The weavers hoped that a kindly providence would push it down into the Glen. (W.C.337)
- G The Dunfermline Scientific Association was instituted with David Lawrie as preses. (H.637)
- L Thomas Morrison, senior, published his pamphlet, "Heddekushan and Handication" which opposed the system of rote learning in education and in particular of learning the Shorter Catechism parrot fashion.
- 1835 G The Western District of the Fife Reform Association was instituted with Sir J.D. Erskine of Torry as Chairman and James Hunt of Pittencrieff as his deputy. (H.638)
- E A new building was erected for St Andrews Chapel.
- T The Radical majority on the Town Council refused the use of the Town House to the Established Presbytery unless payments were made. They also considered whether they would allow its use to a Sabbath School taught by a minister of the Establishment. Even the Fife Journal thought that this was taking the Voluntary Controversy too far. (F.J.)
- E At least two major meetings held on Church premises were broken up because of the rowdiness of the crowds. The meetings were in one case anti-patronage in the other anti-Establishment.
- L Peter Chalmers published his "Strictures on some recent sayings and doings of the Dunfermline Voluntaries." John Law published his reply.
- G The debt of the Burgh, which amounted to £13,421, was mortgaged. (Chalmers H. of D. Vol. I, pp. 397-398)
- 1836 W There were seven spinning mills in full operation in the parish, at Harriebrae, Millport, top of Bruce Street, Knabbie Street, Clayacres, Milton Green and Midmill. According to Henderson, these mills gave work to 160 men and 160 women. (H.641)
- W Henderson records that it was estimated by several manufacturers that the table linen and other goods woven in Dunfermline and exported to America were valued at £153,000 and for home consumption £198,700. (H.641)
- T The Town Council, which was strongly anti-Establishment in its composition, noted that many of their constituents did not belong to the Church of Scotland. A debate took place as to whether the choice of the Council to send an elder to represent the Burgh at General Assembly was optional.
- E On the death of the Rev Allan McLean the Rev Peter Chalmers took over the first charge of Dunfermline Abbey. (H.641)
- E The Relief Church in Dunfermline gave their strong support to their fellow congregation in Campbeltown.
- 1837 E A number of letters passed between Erskine Beveridge, a leading manufacturer, Mr Doig, the minister of Torryburn, and Mr Chalmers, the minister of Dunfermline Abbey, on a matter raised in a sermon at the Abbey.



- W The Weavers' Incorporation broke up and their monies were divided. (W.C. 368)
- E The Rev Todd Brown was ordained minister of the second charge of Dunfermline. (H.641)
- W A great number of weavers were paid off at the end of the year, many hundreds going idle. (H. 642).
- 1838 W Committee of Weavers Published Statistics:
- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Looms belonging to single men in the Burgh | 475                  |
| married men                                | 2098                 |
| married women                              | 156                  |
| manufacturers                              | <u>218</u>           |
|  | <u>2947</u> (H.643). |
- W In January the Weavers and Colliers were in a state of revolt.
- G The Reformer John Collins expounded his "People's Charter" at the Pends.
- 1838 W A start was made to the building of the Baldrige works by Mr R. Robertson for the manufacturing of table linen by steam power. The works proved unsuccessful and the building was later used as barracks in 1855. (H.644)
- T The Town Council petitioned both Houses of Parliament against the granting of any additional endowments to the Established Church.
- T The Town Council regretted that there was a need to bring in a Legal Assessment. (H.645)
- E There were stormy scenes over the settlement of a minister at St Andrew's Quoad Sacra Church.
- E A proposal was made to build an Episcopal Chapel. The reason given for this was the unconstitutional and tyrannical proceedings of the General Assembly in the Auchterarder Case.
- 1839 G A Legal Assessment for the support of the Poor was introduced. It was stated that the reason for this was the failure of many heritors, farmers and others to contribute voluntarily. (H.645)
- E The Original Burgher Church in Canmore Street was erected into a Quoad Sacra in connection with the Established Church. (H.645)
- T There was trouble at a meeting held in February when the opening of a new Church and school in Golfdrum was proposed by the Establishment.
- T The Town Council in March declared their opposition to the Kirk Session of Dunfermline Abbey being given a Treasury Grant to open a school in Golfdrum.
- E In April the meeting of the Dunfermline Presbytery was broken up when Thomas Morrison challenged the Rev Thomas Chalmers, who was visiting speaker, on the matter of Ecclesiastical Endowments.
- G The gas supply to the home of Mr Thomas Morrison was cut off by the Gas Company. Mr Sanderson, the manager of the company, reported that he had stopped the gas supply because Morrison had refused to pay an account which he claimed did not correctly indicate the quantity of gas consumed.
- E The Rev William Burns preached in Dunfermline Abbey on a new plan for the revival of the life of the Church.



- E The Fife Journal reported that the dissenters were considering a scheme for the revival of religion. (F.J.)
- E The Journal reported that housewives were neglecting the fireside, night after night, to listen to those who called themselves revivalists. (F.J.)
- 1840 W Darlings Glen factory was opened. (W.C.337).
- E Golfdrum Church was opened in November with seating for 800. (H.646)
- E The Monthly Advertiser reported that the Psalmody of the new English Chapel was to be enhanced by a "fine voiced organ" and further observed that the Chapel would provide the town with the best of sacred music since the Abbey Church had not had a choir for years.
- 1841 P Census: Town and Parish 20,239; Town 13,323. (H.647)
- E The Scottish Baptists split into two congregations. (H.647)
- 1842 G McLean School was opened. (H.650)
- G The last meeting of the Scientific Association was held.
- E The Congregational Church in Canmore Street was opened for worship in January (H.648)
- E There was much discussion in the newspapers and at Presbytery on the matter of the echo in the New Abbey Church.
- G An attempt was made to bring about a general strike in August. The working class was determined to paralyse the Government of the day (W.C.334).
- E Trinity Episcopal Church was opened for worship in October (H.649).
- G The papers noted that the general depression of trade in Dunfermline was greater than in any other town in Scotland with the possible exception of Paisley.
- 1843 W The Jacquard machine, which had been first introduced in 1825 at a cost of £12 to £15, could now be purchased at between £2 and £3. (H.651).
- E At the April meeting of Presbytery it was decided to break with the normal rotation for commissioners to the General Assembly. This was to prevent three Chapel ministers, whose turn it was by rotation, from attending the crucial Assembly debate on Patronage.
- G A Poor House was completed. (H.651).
- G There were twelve pawnbrokers in Dunfermline. (H.651).
- E The Disruption took place at the General Assembly. Of the five ministers in Dunfermline, two gave allegiance to the New Free Church, the Rev Charles Marshall of the North Church and the Rev Andrew Sutherland of St Andrews. The Rev William Dalziel of the Original Seceders, whose congregation had recently returned to the Church of Scotland, retained his allegiance to the Establishment. However, as his congregation joined with the Abbey Seceders to form the Free Abbey, he was left without a congregation. He eventually moved to Thurso. The Rev John Todd Brown gave his support to the Establishment but was later incensed by Dunfermline Presbytery receiving back into their fold the Rev Peter Chalmers, who had originally given his backing to the Free Church. Mr Brown subsequently left the Abbey for Liverpool in 1844.



The Rev Peter Chalmers resigned his Clerkship of the Presbytery of Dunfermline before the events of the General Assembly. He gave his allegiance to the Free Church Presbytery by attending its first meeting, though he declined to lead prayer when asked. Before the second meeting of the Free Church Presbytery he had sought readmittance to the Established Presbytery.

- 1844 T Only one member of the Town Council belonged to the Establishment. (C.M.)
- E Mormons active in the town. (F.H.)
- W The weaving trade was in a state of depression. (H.652)
- E The Free Abbey was opened for worship with a seating capacity of nearly 800. (H.652)
- E An Ecclesiastical census was made up by Peter Chalmers of the Abbey. He gave his main findings as follows:  
Members of all ages belonging to the
- |                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Established Church      | 4,000       |
| Free Church             | 2,500       |
| United Secession Church | 8,000       |
| Relief Church           | 700         |
| Baptist Church          | 300         |
| Episcopal Church        | 163         |
| Roman Catholic Church   | 436 (H.652) |
- L The first volume of Peter Chalmers' Statistical and Historical Account of Dunfermline was published.
- 1845 W This was a bad year for the weaving trade with riots like those of 1842 being the order of the day. (W.C.335)  
New power loom factory opened with room for 200 power looms, providing employment for women. Unsuccessful.
- G Riots in the town over fixing of weavers' wages. The Alexander brothers' property attacked.  
A new prison opened. (H.654)
- 1846 G The long lingering curse of the Corn Laws was removed. (W.C.336)
- T The Town Council stated that they felt that it was unjust for a religious Establishment to be supported by the State. (C.M.)
- E The Roman Catholic congregation numbered 397. (H.656)
- 1847 T A new voting system for election to the Town Council was introduced. (C.M.)
- E The Free Abbey school was opened. (H.656)
- G The development of a railway between Dunfermline and Stirling was begun. (H.656)
- E Free St Andrews Church opened for worship. (H.657)  
Ladies of Free St Andrews held sale of work to help provide handsome gates and railings.
- 1848 E The offerings at most of the town churches were at their lowest for many years.
- G Soup kitchens set up to help unemployed.  
Special constables sworn in to deal with troubles.
- 1849 T The Town Council sent a long protest to the Government claiming that its actions had led to class distinction. One of the complaints made by the Council was that Government upheld a vast system of religious despotism. (C.M.)
- E A statue of Ralph Erskine was erected in front of Queen Anne Street Church. (H.659)



- G McLean Hospital was opened on a site east of the Poor House. The money came from a trust fund left by the Rev Allan McLean. (H.660)
- G Henderson quoted from the Dunfermline Advertiser of 12th October on the ravages caused by cholera:  
 "The ravages of this disease here during the week were fearful, about eight or ten being reported dead every morning. The medical men are nobly doing their duty, and standing between the living and the dying. The prayer meetings in Queen Anne Street are well attended." (H.660)
- E The Free North congregation were forced by law to leave the building in Golfdrum Street.
- W The Reid brothers opened the Pilmuir power loom works, the first of the major factories to be set up in Dunfermline.
- E The new Gillespie Church was opened for worship. (H.660)
- 1850 E The new Free North Church was opened in Bruce Street. Later in the year its roof was partially stripped of slates and the turret blown down. (H.663)
- E Mr Law of St Margarets, who had led the Dissenters during the Voluntary Conflict, left for Innerleithen. (H.664)
- 1851 E The Roman Catholic Church leased the Masons' Hall for worship.
- W The Elgin bleachfield for boiling linen yarn opened. It was managed by Mr Walker and by 1877 was employing about 50 people. (H.666)
- St Leonards steam power factory was opened by Erskine Beveridge and employed around 1,200 worker.
- P Census: Town and Parish 21,2344; Town 13,861. (H.664)
- W A number of Dunfermline firms were represented at the Great Exhibition in London: Hunt & Son, George Birrell, Dewar & Son, Erskine Beveridge, William Kinnis, Peter Bonnar. (H.665)
- E St Andrews Chapel raised to a Quoad Sacra Parish.
- W Erskine Beveridge opened St Leonards works, second of power loom factories in the town.
- 1852 G The town suffered from another cholera epidemic. (H.667)
- 1853 G The Brucefield Estate was purchased by Erskine Beveridge from Mr Struthers. (H.668)
- T Erskine Beveridge was elected Provost. (H.669)
- 1854 G Foundation stone of new School of Arts was laid in March. (H.669)
- E The Scottish Baptist Church in Dunfermline, founded in 1805, broke up. The building was purchased by the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church (Rowites or Irvingites). Most of the Baptist members joined the English Baptists. (H.669)
- G Henderson recalls that the cholera was present in Limekilns and Charlestown and that both there and in Dunfermline the houses were thoroughly cleaned out. (H.670)
- W The weaving trade experienced a time of recession with 800 looms lying idle and 500 men out of work. (H.670)
- 1855 E A newly formed Evangelical Union congregation worshipped in the Masons' Hall. (H.671)
- G A Dunfermline school for sciences and arts was opened, known as the School of Design. (H.671)
- E The North Chapel was raised to a Quoad Sacra Parish.
- 1856 G The East of Scotland Malleable Iron works closed.



- 1857 T The debt of the Burgh was £6,188, a decrease of £7,232 since October 1835. (H.6750  
W Mr Boag's Inglis Street works opened, third of the power loom factories.
- 1858 G There were 31 Life, Fire and Annuity agents in Dunfermline.  
G Wilson's School in the New Row was opened for the free education of children in the town or suburbs, with a preference given to those with the name of Wilson.
- 1860 W Henry Reid & Sons opened the fourth of the power loom factories, the Abbey Garden works.  
G "Like the farmers in the country around, the manufacturers of Dunfermline during the last 50 years have decreased greatly in numbers, but increased enormously in business." (F.H.)
- 1861 E Mr Thomas Cooper, once a jailed Chartist, gave lecture on Christianity.
- 1865 W Dewar & Sons opened the Bothwell works, the town's fifth power loom factory.
- 1867 E The Congregational Church, the Free Abbey and Gillespie U.P. all held meetings on the same day on the subject of the Scriptural Union of Evangelical Churches.  
T The matter of the Councillors attending a "Kirking of the Council" was raised at the Council.  
T Slump in most trades.  
W The Alexander brothers, Thomas and James, opened the sixth power loom factory, the Canmore works.
- 1868 T Campbell Bannerman won the Stirling Burghs Parliamentary seat.  
W The Castleblair power loom factory, seventh in the town, was opened by Messrs Inglis & Co.
- 1869 E Mr Robbie of the Independent Chapel was concerned about the number of soirees being held by the various churches.
- 1870 W Messrs Hay & Robertson's St Margarets works opened, the eighth power loom factory.
- 1874 W The Caledonia works, ninth power loom factory, opened by Messrs Steel & Co.  
Messrs Walker, Reid & Co. opened the tenth, the Albany works.
- 1875 E Discussions on Children's Churches.
- 1876 W The eleventh power loom factory, the Victoria works, was opened by Inglis & Co.  
E Bazaar held at Free North. (D.P.)
- 1878 E After over 30 years an elder was sent to represent the Burgh at General Assembly despite the fact that only 4 of the 22 Councillors belonged to the Established Church.  
E Fast Day abandoned by Chalmers Street United Secession Church. (D.P.)
- 1879 E Debate over raffles and bazaars in Free Church Presbytery. (D.J.)  
E Fast Day held only by Free Church and Establishment. (D.J.)
- 1880 E General support by elders in Dunfermline for Robertson Smith. (D.P.)  
T Long debate over opening of Baths on Sunday. Sabbatarians won. (D.J.)
- 1882 E Queen Anne Street choir had a dance and outing on the old Fast Day. (D.P.)  
T Hallelujah Army in Dunfermline. Riots in town. (D.P.)



- E Trouble over whether Carnock Free Church were to be allowed to call a minister. It was a small, non-self-supporting congregation.
- 1883 E Great number of soirees held in connection with churches. (D.J.)
- T Council, considered the sending of an elder to the General Assembly an "idiotical farce". (D.J.)
- E Free Church had generally accepted hymn book. (D.J.)

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER ONE: pp.3-7.

1. J. Sinclair, The Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799, Vol. X, (E.P. Publishing: 1798), p.270.
2. Ibid.
3. J. Fernie, History of the Town and Parish of Dunfermline, (Dunfermline: 1815).
4. A. Mercer, The History of Dunfermline, (Dunfermline: 1828).
5. P. Chalmers, Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline, Vol. I, (Edinburgh & London: 1844).
6. Ibid., Vol. II, 1859.
7. Fernie, op. cit., p.115.
8. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p.384.
9. Ibid., p.354.
10. A. Durie, The Scottish Linen Industry in the 18th Century, (Edinburgh: 1979), p.9., quoting from contract between Dunfermline Corporation of Weavers and Andrew Hutchison, (S.R.O. GD 1/576/16).
11. Chalmers, op. cit., p.356.
12. Ibid., p.358.
13. Appendix 1, p.296.
14. Chalmers, op. cit., p.377.

The following figures indicate how strong the home-based industry was compared with the factory production of cloth:

Persons to whom looms within the parish belong, or who work at them:

Looms belonging to single men:	475
to married men:	2098
to warehousemen:	156
to manufacturers:	<u>218</u>
	<u>2947</u>

15. J. Webster, Dunfermline Abbey, (Dunfermline: 1948), p137.
16. Appendix II and III pp. 296-297.
17. "Dunfermline Linen, an Outline History", pamphlet produced by Dunfermline District Library, revised edition, 1986, p.1.
18. R. Small, History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church from 1733-1900, Vol. 1, (Edinburgh: 1904) p.347.

CHAPTER TWO: pp.8-29.

1. The following selection of names is taken from the list of contributors to Erskine's Meeting House. "Account of Money received for building a Meeting House for Mr Ralph Erskine, and other accounts 1740-9" (SRO CH3-568-13). They are chosen at random to show who supported him. There are 33 pages with the total contribution coming to 4,551 pounds Scots. Page 16:

Jean McLean	Servant	3/-
John Letham	Tenant Farmer	12/-
William Henderson	Weaver	6/-
Elizabeth Bell	Servant	12d
Ebenezer Graham	Servant	1/10
William Allan	Weaver	1/10
William Dickie	Dyster	6/-
James Crawford	Merchant	36/-
William Hunt	Merchant	6/-



Alexander McLean	Miller	3/-
John Dick	Bankhead	3/-
John Horn	Tenant	4/-
Robert Douglas	Tenant	1/-
Andrew Robertson	Schoolmaster	2/-
John Jaws	Servant	1/2

2. P. Chalmers, Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline, Vol. 1, (Edinburgh & London: 1844), p.431.
3. Ibid.
4. *Synod of Fife Minutes 1721*, p.65, quoted by D. Lachman, "The Marrow Controversy 1718-1723, An Historical and Theological Analysis", Ph.D. Thesis, BX9071-M2L2, (St Andrews: 1979), p.335.
5. Ibid., p.72.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p.66. Quoted by Lachman, op. cit., p.341.
8. Ibid.
9. D. Fraser, The Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine, (Edinburgh: 1834), p.171.
10. *Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 15th November 1721, February 7th, 1772. In November 1721 consideration was given to the ruling of the Assembly about the Marrow but a decision was delayed till the next meeting. However, it was not until 1722 that seven members signed the Confession in terms of the instruction sent down by the Synod of Fife. Though Erskine, Wardlaw and Bathgate would seem to have been present they did not sign.
11. Fraser, op. cit., p.171.  
According to Fraser, Erskine subscribed on March 20th, 1729. However, from the Records of the Presbytery of Dunfermline the date should be 20th March, 1723. There Erskine's signing is described: "Mr Ralph Erskine subscribed the Confession of Faith with the formula enjoined by the Tenth Act of Assembly One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eleven."  
A year earlier along with Messrs Hogg, Bathgate and Wardlaw, Erskine had refused to sign in the wording proposed by the late Synod but they were prepared to sign anew "the same Confession as it was received by the Assembly 1647 and according to the formula as it was used by the Assembly 1711, (*Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 21st March, 1722).
12. Lachman, op. cit., p.462, quoting from "A Register of the Presbytery of Edinburgh", 31st May, 1722, to 24th November, 1726, pp. 127-128.  
Lachman notes that the elders who had not signed at first did so in the intervening month. "This shows", he says, "that the objection was chiefly ministerial."
13. Ibid. p.462.  
"The essence of their fear was that Hepburn's removal from the Presbytery of Dunfermline might bring into a majority there those ministers who, whatever otherwise their merits, have given an open declaration of their favouring and supporting the doctrine and principles of the book entitled 'The Marrow' condemned by the General Assembly."
14. Ibid., p.464.  
"That this parish shall not be planted but with the advice and direction of the Synod of Fife."
15. D. Fraser, The Life and Diary of Ebenezer Erskine, (Edinburgh 1831), p.523.
16. *Associate Congregation K.S. Minutes* covering period between 1740-



1743. (SRO CH3-568-1).
17. R. Erskine, A new version of the Song of Solomon, (Glasgow: 1832).
  18. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 13th January, 1763.
  19. *Ibid.*, 6th October, 1775; 16th November, 1775; 7th December, 1775.
  20. *Associate Congregation K.S. Minutes*, 25th April, 1776.
  21. *Ibid.*, 8th June, 1786.
  22. *Ibid.*, 25th February, 1802.
  23. *Ibid.*, 17th June, 1802.
  24. *1832 Voters' Roll*, Dunfermline Carnegie Library. Figures extracted and tallied.
  25. "*Provision for the Poor in the Parish of Dunfermline*", (Dunfermline: 1815), p.10.
  26. Figures collated from *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 1734-1749, (CH2-592-6); 1749-1761, (CH2-592-7) and from *Associate Congregation K.S. Minutes*, 1749-1760, (CH3-568-2).
  27. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 10th July, 1735.
  28. *Ibid.*, 6th January, 1737.
  29. *Ibid.*, 25th December, 1740.
  30. *Ibid.*, 19th March, 1741.
  31. S. Mechie, The Church and Scottish Social Development 1780-1870, (London: 1960), Chapter 5.
  32. C. Neale, "*The Struggle of the Dunfermline Handloom Weavers in a Changing Society, 1800-1815*", unpublished dissertation, (Dunfermline Carnegie Library: 1975), p.33, quoting from L.J. Saunders, Scottish Democracy 1815-1850, (Glasgow: 1950), p.203.
  33. S. May, "*The Economic Development of Dunfermline with special emphasis on the growth of the Linen Industry*", unpublished thesis, Dunfermline Carnegie Library, c.1980, p.8.
  34. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 29th March, 1757.
  35. *Ibid.*
  36. *Ibid.*
  37. *Ibid.*
  38. *Associate Congregation K.S. Minutes*, 4th December, 1763.
  39. *Ibid.*
  40. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 10th November, 1782.
  41. *Ibid.*
  42. J. Fernie, History of the Town and Parish of Dunfermline, (Dunfermline: 1815), p.46.
  43. *Ibid.*
  44. S. Mechie, op. cit., p.69.
  45. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 29th October, 1792.
  46. *Dunfermline Heritors' Minutes*, 13th October, 1797.
  47. *Ibid.*
  48. *Ibid.*, 24th October, 1797.
  49. *Ibid.*, 19th March, 1798.
  50. *Ibid.*, 6th April, 1798.
  51. *Ibid.*, 13th April, 1798.
  52. *Ibid.*, 1st August, 1799.
  53. *Ibid.*, 6th September, 1799.
  54. *Ibid.*
  55. *Ibid.*
  56. *Ibid.*, 6th September, 1799.
  57. *Ibid.*
  58. *Ibid.*, 24th December, 1799.
  59. *Ibid.*, 2nd September, 1802.
  60. *Ibid.*, 30th August, 1808.

61. Ibid., 24th December, 1799.
62. Ibid.
63. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 2nd March, 1802.
64. Ibid., 23rd October, 1804.
65. Ibid., 2nd July, 1805.
66. Ibid., 3rd October, 1813.
67. Ibid., 27th September, 1808.
68. *Associate Congregation K.S. Minutes*, 19th December, 1808.
69. *Dunfermline Heritors' Minutes*, 24th September, 1814.
70. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 463.
71. "Provision for the Poor within the Parish of Dunfermline", (Dunfermline: 1815).
72. Ibid., pp 5ff.
73. Ibid., p.17.  
 "And the number of the poor will be sensibly diminished, by the administration of timely and judicious support to many, who might, if unsupported fall into necessity."
74. Ibid., p.10.  
 "...in the year 1731, before any Secession from the Established Kirk, the whole of the parish was laid out into quarters, or districts, to each of which one person was appointed overseer, to report monthly, on the receipts and distributions to the poor."
75. Ibid., p.10.
76. Ibid., p.9.
77. Ibid., p.23.
78. Chalmers, op. cit., p.464.
79. Ibid.,  
 "...the average annual number of regular poor, during the last ten years of its existence, viz, from 1828-9 to 1837-8, inclusive was only 270, although the population had increased from the former period, more than 4,000..."
80. *Poor Law Inquiry (Scotland)*, Parliamentary Papers XXII, 1844, Parish of Dunfermline, p.359.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.  
 "The board of Managers in Dunfermline is chosen annually by the whole rate-payers, and witness thinks that their management has given great satisfaction to the whole parish, both in town and country,"
83. Chalmers, op. cit., p.464.
84. Ibid.
85. *Poor Law Inquiry*, op. cit., p.355.  
 "The present system of looking after the poor is much more efficient than the former. Those in want can really be found out - thus there are more put on the roll; and the allowances to them have been somewhat increased, and the expenditure, in consequence augmented. Notwithstanding, the allowances are still not more than enough to sustain life. Witness attributes the improvement in the administration of the poor affairs, mainly to the appointment of a poor manager, whose whole time is devoted to them."  
 In a further section Mr Beveridge noted the setting up of a poorhouse: "A poor house has been opened within the last six months, and it has had the effect of diminishing the number of claimants for admission to the poor roll. Some of the paupers, residing in the parishes and receiving relief from Dunfermline, have rather given up their allowance than come. And others have



submitted to a reduced allowance rather than come into the poor house."

86. "An Inquiry into the Policy and Practical Effects of the Table of Prices", by a Ratepayer, (Dunfermline: 1848), p.1.
87. D. Thomson, unpublished *Notebooks*, held privately, Dunfermline, 1893-1906, I: 376.
88. "An Inquiry into the Policy", op. cit., p.10.
89. Ibid., p.1.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid., p.10.
92. J. Law, "Reply to the Strictures of the Rev P. Chalmers on the recent sayings and doings of the Dunfermline Voluntaries", (Dunfermline: 1835), p.12.
93. S. May, op. cit., p.8, quoting J. Fernie, History of the Town and Parish of Dunfermline, (Dunfermline: 1815), pp. 50ff.
94. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 21st April, 1818; 28th March, 1819; 30th March, 1819.

In April 1818, the Establishment ministers complained that a magistrate had instructed the Abbey bells to be rung to announce the meeting of the Voluntary Association in the Burgher Meeting House. The Session argued that the civil magistrate had no authority to order the ringing of the bells at any time and that to ring them on a Sunday to gather people for worship in a Burgher Meeting House was particularly offensive. They felt that their permission should always be asked and obtained. Later Mr Wilson, the Provost and Vice-President of the Voluntary Association, approached the Abbey precentor to ask him to read an intimation concerning a forthcoming meeting. The Abbey ministers were incensed that a direct approach had not been made to them and wondered whether other ministers in the town had been similarly snubbed. A majority of the Session felt, moreover, that it was wrong to read intimations which concerned sermons which were to be preached in a Dissenting House by Dissenting ministers, however laudable the purpose. They considered that the Voluntary Association had no rights in this regard since in both civil and ecclesiastical law the Session and Heritors were the legal guardians of the poor. They were, however, careful to emphasise that their protest was made as Churchmen whose rights and privileges had been infringed. They did not want to criticise the Voluntary Association for the excellent work it was doing. As a Kirk Session they would consider carefully any approach from Heritors or Town Council concerning intimations which were to be read. However, on the very day when they had declared their position, the Town Drummer stood up in the Council Loft and announced a forthcoming meeting of the Association. When the Abbey Session met after the incident it condemned those who had shown contempt for their ministers.

95. A. Mercer, History of Dunfermline, (Dunfermline: 1828), p.150.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid., p.148.
98. Chalmers, op. cit., p.464.
99. Ibid.
100. E. Simpson, The Auld Grey Toun, (Dunfermline: 1987), p.18.
101. S. May, op. cit., p.8.
102. Ibid., quoting *Poor Law Enquiry*, op. cit., p.359.

CHAPTER THREE: pp.30-46.



1. J. Webster, Dunfermline Abbey, (Dunfermline: 1948), p.153.  
James Thomson served 1743-1790 and Thomas Fernie 1744-1788.
2. R. Small, History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church, Vol.I, (Edinburgh: 1904), p.349.
3. Associate Congregation K.S. Minutes, 1753-1760 (CH3-568-2).  
Note the repeated wording, "No sermon".
4. J. Morren, Annals of the Church of Scotland 1739-1752, (Edinburgh: 1838), pp. 263-265.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., pp. 271-272, quoting *Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 18th June, 1752.
7. Ibid., p.272.
8. I. Hamilton, "*Some aspects of the Erosion of Westminster Calvinism among Scottish Seceders*", unpublished M.Th. thesis, (Edinburgh: 1979).

In the above thesis, Hamilton deals at length with the question of the irregularity of Gillespie's ordination and reaches the conclusion that there is no evidence from Presbytery sources that Gillespie was allowed to qualify his subscription, nor evidence in the "*Subscription to the Confession of Faith and the Formula from 24th February to 23rd April, 1793*" to indicate any modification of the subscription. What he has failed to note is a *Dunfermline Presbytery Minute* of 3rd June, 1741, before Gillespie's ordination to the charge.

"...that Mr Gillespie has never preached before the congregation nor has he been heard by the bulk of them, yea not so much as appointed by the Presbytery to preach..."

"...that Mr Gillespie is not licenced nor ordained by the Church of Scotland and that he is not of fixed principles, nor of the Commission of this Church and that he has actually refused to sign the Confession of Faith, and so cannot..."

However on 19th August, 1741, the *Presbytery Minutes* note that Gillespie was called in and, having declared his adherence to the doctrine, worship and Government of the Church, judicially signed the Statement of Faith and Formula. This would suggest that, though Gillespie did sign the Confession, there may have been discussion within Presbytery and at Carnock about his attitude to certain parts of it. Though he perhaps expressed reservations about some points in private, he was clearly prepared to sign the whole Confession publicly before Presbytery.

9. Gillespie moved into Dunfermline in the winter of 1752 and set up his Meeting House in a barn formerly used by Erskine. The Relief congregation was set up in 1761.
10. Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes, 19th April, 1753.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 10th May, 1753.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 14th June, 1753.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.  
"The Magistrates of Dunfermline had no sooner seen it their duty in the end of May last, to countenance Maister Gillespie by attending his ministrations in Carnock but he (Thomson) instantly ceased putting up Public Prayer for them in the Church."
18. A. Mercer, History of Dunfermline, (Dunfermline: 1828), p.110.  
The Burgh affairs were under the management of Magistrates and



- Town Council. The magistrates consisted of a Provost, two Baillies and a Dean of Guild, a Treasurer, a Chamberlain, and a Town Clerk. The Council was composed of twenty-two members. Its sett or constitutional regulations dated from 13th July, 1724.
19. D. Thomson, The Weaver's Craft, (Paisley: 1901), p.229.
  20. Gillespie's Congregational Baptismal Roll 1752-1780.  
Two of the suspended elders mentioned are David Turnbull (1760) and Andrew Dickie (1755) both of whom had children baptised by Gillespie.
  21. A. Drummond & J. Bulloch, The Scottish Church 1688-1843, (Edinburgh: 1973), p.61.
  22. Gillespie's Congregational Baptismal Roll 1752-1780.  
There is also mentioned in 1754 a John Rocksburgh of Inverkeithing where the disputed settlement had been.
  23. Drummond & Bulloch, op. cit., p.61.
  24. Ibid., p.185.
  25. Relief Congregation Minutes, 29th April, 1774.
  26. J. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland, (Oxford: 1760), p.320.
  27. Sinclair, The Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. X, (Wakefield E.P. Publishing: 1978), p.285.
  28. Presbytery of Dunfermline, 4th May, 1774.
  29. "The case of the donors for purchasing and building the Meeting House in Dunfermline occupied by the late Reverend Thomas Gillespie, presented to the Venerable General Assembly, 1775"
  30. G. Struthers, The History of the rise, progress and principles of the Relief Church, (Glasgow: 1843), pp. 228-231.
  31. A. Cunningham, "Dunfermline Secession and Relief Churches", (Dunfermline: 1899), p.27.
  32. Appendix to the Sixth Report by the Commissioners of Religious Instruction, Reports Commissioned 1839, Section XXIV, Presbytery of Dunfermline, p.394.
  33. Cunningham, op. cit., p.27.
  34. Cases presented to the General Assembly. Copy held in Dunfermline Carnegie Library. In 1777, the introduction was, "The case of the donors for purchasing and building the Meeting House in Dunfermline occupied by the late Reverend Thomas Gillespie, and the Heads of Families in the town and parish of Dunfermline."
  35. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1779, op. cit.  
"The General Assembly had transmitted to them by their Committee for Bills a petition of the donors for purchasing and building the Meeting House in Dunfermline occupied by the late Thomas Gillespie; of the Magistrates and Town Council of Dunfermline; of the Guildry of Dunfermline; and of 118 heads of families, parishioners in Dunfermline."
  36. Presbytery of Dunfermline, 4th May, 1774.
  37. Ibid.
  38. Quoted by A. Cunningham, op. cit., p.25.
  39. Ibid.
  40. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1779, op. cit.
  41. Presbytery of Dunfermline, 5th May, 1779.
  42. Ibid.
  43. Ibid.
  44. Gillespie's Congregational Baptismal Roll 1752-1780.  
David Turnbull and John Wilson, who were both Provosts, had children baptised by Gillespie.
  45. Quoted by J. Webster, op. cit., p.132.



46. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 2nd May, 1776.
47. *Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 26th March, 1783.
48. *Synod of Fife*, 21st April, 1783.  
 "The Synod dismissed the whole proceedings of the Kirk Session and Presbytery of Dunfermline in this cause."
49. *Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 30th April, 1783.
50. *Ibid.*, 19th January, 1791.
51. *Ibid.*, 23rd March, 1791.
52. *Ibid.*  
 "Mr McLean is the second minister the Chapel congregation have elected without any other congregation interfering with them, their declared principle being that Patronage in one person was a real burden on their minds and consciences, and now if they get quit of their present minister who by all accounts they seem to be heartily tired of they'll in a short time elect another minister in the Chapel. And is it not ridiculous in the highest degree for a few members of the Town Council with their interest thrusting their own Secession minister to be the first minister in Dunfermline."
53. *Ibid.*  
 "The laws of the Realm from the Restoration to the Revolution take no notice of or support secessionists of any kind such as burghers, relief or chapels of ease all of which are in opposition to the laws of patronage - indeed chapels of ease are sanctioned not by law but by the Assembly - as a cure to an overgrown parish. But they have no representation in Kirk or parish where they are; they have no Kirk Session or elders, nor a vote in Kirk matters in the Establishment. So that the Town Council in place of being mediator between the people and the Crown have deprived His Majesty of his wishes and intention of bestowing his presentation only to who has the voice of the people and the congregation the boon of the free will of His Majesty."
54. D. Thomson, unpublished *Notebooks*, held privately, Dunfermline, 1893-1906, 3:79.
55. *Report from the Select Committee to whom several petitions from the Royal Burghs of Scotland were referred, ordered by the House of Commons, 12th July 1819*, Parliamentary Papers 1819, (571)(229), VI - 1.551, p.32.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER FOUR: pp.47-63.

1. cp. J. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, (Oxford: 1960), p.320. J. Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Vol. X, (Wakefield E.P. Publishing: 1978), p.285.
2. *Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 4th May, 1774; 6th July, 1774.
3. A. Cunningham, "*Dunfermline Secession and Relief Churches*", (Dunfermline: 1899), pp. 24-25.
4. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 14th January, 1778.
5. *Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 5th May, 1779.  
 Similar arguments were also used at the General Assembly.
6. *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 30th May, 1776, quoted in *Minutes of Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 26th June, 1776.
7. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 31st March, 1775.  
 Two of the six eventually became elders, Mr Mark Stark and Baillie John Horn. The other four did not accept the office and some of



them may have remained in the Chapel or Relief bodies, Adam Rolland of Gask, Provost John Kirk, William Hunter and John Couston.

8. Ibid., 13th May, 1781.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 25th September, 1781.  
The Kirk Session had failed to go through the channel of Presbytery.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. *Acts of the General Assembly.*
15. Ibid
16. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes, 30th January, 1822.*
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.  
"The Act of Assembly 1642 gives the Session of a Parish 'the sole and exclusive prerogative of augmenting its members by a voluntary election independently and without interference of any other congregation, or body of men whatever'."
20. Ibid.  
The Abbey Session noted, "There is no constitutional law of the Church of Scotland extant, giving the minister or managers of said Chapel any ground of hope in the choice of elders, which the Kirk Session from the powers vested in them are about to make that they will or must elect members into their body out of that congregation."
21. R. Small, History of the congregations of the United Presbyterian Church, Vol. I, (Edinburgh: 1904), p.370.
22. *Presbytery of Dunfermline, 23rd March, 1791.*  
Mr Thomson had been prepared to give £20 to the setting up of a Chapel at Limekilns or Charlestown.
23. Ibid., 20th July, 1775.
24. Ibid.
25. T. Hardy, The Principles of Moderation, (Edinburgh: 1782).
26. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
27. Ibid., p.37.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p.38.
30. Ibid.  
"But by the vows of your youth let me conjure you to save the Church from the effects of your precedent. It is shaken from its base; its compact unity can be no more; and until its very foundations are repaired, it can never again be made strong."  
"To prevent the dissolution of the Presbyterian Church, and the establishment of a crowd of detached Independent meeting houses in its stead, it is now necessary that the Presbyterian body should be strengthened by union, and restored to universal peace by a new agreement. I do not suppose, Gentlemen, that it was any part of your intention to create the dilemma to which the Church is now reduced; but the following proposition is now true, in a higher sense than otherwise it could ever have been, that either the Act of Queen Anne or the Church of Scotland must go; they cannot now stand together."
31. Chapels had been set up for a variety of reasons. Some Seceders and sections of the Relief Church desired to return to the

Establishment. In other areas the Parish Church was unable to provide adequate seating. Elsewhere new pockets of population were springing up at considerable distances from the Parish Churches, while in a few cases, and Hardy considered Dunfermline to be one, the Chapel was set up because the parish minister was disliked. Another reason for a Chapel being built was where a wealthy patron, such as Lady Glenorchy, wished to build a new church in an overcrowded area of the city.

32. Prof. Finlayson, "*Heads of an argument in support of the Overture transmitted by Presbyteries respecting Chapels of Ease*", p.5.
33. Ibid., pp. 5ff.  
Finlayson wanted the Assembly to exercise, in all cases where Chapels were set up, its supreme, controlling, legislative authority.
34. W. Moodie, "*Observations on the Overture respecting Chapels of Ease*", (Edinburgh: 1797), p.4.
35. Ibid., p.5.
36. "*A letter from a country gentleman to one of the ministers of Edinburgh on the subject of the regulations on the Overture respecting Chapels of Ease*", (Edinburgh: 1798), p.2.
37. *Acts of the General Assembly, 1798, "Acts of Regulations respecting the erection of Chapels of Ease"*.
38. G. Struthers, *The History of the rise, progress and principles of the Relief Church*, (Glasgow: 1843), p.293.
39. Ibid., p.295f.  
"It is certain that he (Robert) was by this time land factor of Dr Erskine of Edinburgh for his estate in the parish of Carnock, who was the great friend of Gillespie, and who strove repeatedly to get his sentence relaxed or reversed, and to win him back to the Establishment."
40. Small, op. cit., Vol. II, p.587.
41. Ibid., p.696.
42. Ibid.  
"It is interesting to note that Robert Gillespie had accompanied his brother to Blairlogie. He is reported as saying, 'If you knew Mr Pirie as well as I do, you would thank Presbytery for what they have done.'"
43. Ibid., Vol. I, p.376.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p.709.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., Vol. II, p.378.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., Vol. I, p.710.
52. Ibid.
53. *Relief Synod Minutes, 27th May, 1773.*
54. Small, op. cit., Vol. I, p.706.
55. Ibid., p.709.
56. Ibid.
57. J. Cowan, "*Sermons on several important subjects*", (Edinburgh: 1796).

This pamphlet includes a sermon preached at Dunfermline on the Sunday following Gillespie's death in which Cowan predicts that the Church of Scotland will recognise Chapels of Ease and allow them to call their own ministers.(p.22) He also claims that



Gillespie was in favour of such a scheme and intended to promote it. In a preface to the Sermons an account is given of the life and character of the author (p.v) which notes:

"After the death of the Rev Thomas Gillespie and Mr Cruden's translation from Glasgow to London Cowan often did all the work relating to the Solemn Communion of the Lord's Supper himself..."

G. Struthers, The History of the the Relief Church, (Glasgow: 1843), p.294.

Struthers holds that, "The sermon which he (Cowan) preached on the occasion was not printed till more than twenty years afterwards. By this time Mr Cowan was also dead. It was edited by his brother and the same party, who, in the year preceding, had published what they called 'The History and Principles of the First Constituted Presbytery of Relief.' As they had a purpose to serve, and did not scruple at the means of attaining it, no confidence can be placed in anything which they gave to the public. Their object was to abuse the synod, and make the world believe that Gillespie was one of themselves."

58. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 7th May, 1779.

59. Small, op. cit., Vol. II, p.32.

60. Ibid., p.378.

61. T. Gillespie, A Treatise on Temptation, (Edinburgh: 1774), p. viii.

"Nay it is well known he had it much at heart, that his Kirk at Dunfermline might, upon his death, if not sooner, become such a chapel. Hard as the usage was that he had received from his mother-church she remained to the last the object of his affection, not of his hatred or revenge."

#### CHAPTER FIVE: pp.64-94.

1. J Small, History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church, Vol. II, (Edinburgh: 1904), pp. 665ff.

When the opposition to Mr Campbell was made, "The Presbytery first attempted to ascertain the real state of the church, and after three days of investigation it was found that 694 communicants and 436 non-communicants were for proceeding, and 493 communicants and 214 non-communicants were for delaying. These figures reveal the strength of the congregation, and yet it was alleged that the totality was not much more than half the number on the examination roll in James Erskine's time."

2. Ibid., p.667.

3. "*The Spirit of the Union*", pamphlet, author unknown, (Edinburgh: 1823), p.8.

4. Ibid.

5. A full account may be found in the records of congregation, Presbytery and Synod and in the pamphlet, "*The Spirit of the Union*". Additional sources include J. Small, op. cit.

6. One of the deepest sorrows experienced by Ralph Erskine was the defection of his son John to the Antiburgher body.

7. Small, op. cit., Vol. II, p.555.

8. Ibid., Vol. I, p.351.

9. Ibid., p.352.

10. Mr Brown of Biggar was later called to Rose Street and Broughton Place. Each of his congregations grew substantially under his ministry and in 1834 he received a Doctorate from Jefferson College, Pennsylvania. He was then appointed by the Synod to the Chair of Exegetical Theology. He was one of the best paid



ministers within the Secession and the membership of his congregation grew by around ninety a year. His expository work became well known, especially that on the book of Romans.

11. A. MacLaren, Religion and Social Class, (London: 1974), p.210.

"In seeking comparability with the Establishment the Free Church became not the new Establishment but another Establishment with all the financial disadvantages attached to maintaining such a position."

12. D. Fraser, The Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine, (Edinburgh: 1834), p.199.

13. Vide Chapter Nine, p.188.

14. Small, op. cit., Vol. II, p.668.

"The mode of procedure on the day appointed is minutely given. The Session were first asked whether they had a leet to propose, and one of them named Mr John Smart. This was the method adopted in the Church of Scotland so early as 1638: 'The Session to nominate with the consent and good liking of the people.' Hence Principal Rule said they did not put the election into the hands of the multitude, as either to exclude the eldership or put the people from under their guidance. The same system crops up again and again at moderations in the Secession; but there was liberty to add to the Session's leet, and on this occasion two ordained ministers were named."

15. W. Gifford, Memorials of the Life and Work of the Rev William Johnston, Limekilns, (Edinburgh: 1876), p.23.

In an earlier case at Limekilns in 1785 a quarrel had arisen over who had the right to manage the collections taken at the Church door. The Trustees held that they had this right as well as letting seats and argued that, after paying stipend and looking after a few poor folk, any balance from Church collections could be dispensed by them. The other party, which was composed of Minister, Kirk Session and congregation, held that they had the right of managing financial affairs. Both sides took the opinion of Counsel and received contradictory answers. It was only when the congregation appointed Managers to collect seat rents that the Trustees withdrew their demand to control Church door collections.

16. "The Spirit of the Union", op. cit., p.18.

17. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

18. Ibid., p.18.

19. Ibid., p.26.

The Presbytery was annoyed that a meeting had been held so soon after the previous one, thus keeping up a continuous disturbance in the congregation.

20. Ibid., p.24.

21. Ibid., p.31.

22. Ibid., pp. 32ff.

23. Ibid.

"View him petrified with horror upon hearing a proposal made for a great majority to fall in with a contemptible and partly fictitious minority, and the insidious conduct of a Session vindicated by examples taken from the practices of the Freeholders of the county of Fife, and the British Parliament: Mark him observing, with a scrutinising eye, their hypocritical shifts for putting off a Meeting nearly two months, that the people might have time to cool, while the real object was probably to distract and divide the congregation..."

24. Ibid., p.78.



25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.  
The writer pointed out that at Limekilns it was a Burgher student who was being called to a Burgher congregation, whereas at Dunfermline it was an Antiburgher student who was being called to a Burgher congregation. He felt that the Presbytery, which had more Burgher members, were unfair to students from the Antiburgher side.
27. Ibid., p.78.
28. Small, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 664-668.  
On the death of James Erskine a Mr Campbell had proved a most popular probationer. Stirling Presbytery had, however, held back his call. His case, like that of Mr Whyte, led to the publication of opposing pamphlets, one of 272 pages entitled, "*The Cry of Oppression*" and the other a sermon by Mr Campbell, "*The Triumph of Grace*".
29. "*The Spirit of the Union*", op. cit., p.9.  
"Among Dissenters, popularity is everything; and those by whom it is enjoyed, in a pre-eminent degree, can hardly fail to be the objects of jealousy and dislike to persons who have been less successful in pursuit of the arbitrium popularis aurae. A very popular preacher among this class becomes, of necessity, a dangerous neighbour to some, an unpleasant rival or standard of comparison to others, and not infrequently an object of aversion to all."
30. Ibid., pp. 74-75.
31. *The Scotsman*, 20th August, 1823  
Also 10th September, 20th September, 1823; 17th April, 12th May, 1824.
32. Ibid.
33. "*The Spirit of the Union*", op. cit., p.45.
34. *The Fife Herald*, 16th January, 1845.
35. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Congregational Minutes*, 11th July, 1838.
36. Ibid., 13th July, 1838.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Managers' Minutes*, 17th July, 1838.
40. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Congregational Minutes*, 12th September, 1838.
41. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Managers' Minutes*, 13th September, 1838.
42. Ibid., 9th October, 1838.
43. Ibid., 30th October, 1838.
44. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Congregational Minutes*, 6th November, 1838.
45. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Managers' Minutes*, 19th November, 1838.
46. Ibid., 7th December, 1838, quoting *Presbytery of Dunfermline*.
47. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Congregational Minutes*, 13th December, 1838.
48. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Managers' Minutes*, 15th December, 1838.
49. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Congregational Minutes*, 18th December, 1838.
50. Ibid., 15th January, 1839.
51. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Managers' Minutes*, 8th February, 1839.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. *Minutes of a Meeting of the Subscribers to the New Church at Golfdrum*, held in the Abbey Church Session House, 28th September, 1840, contained within "*Disruption Memorials*", unpublished



notebooks.

55. *Extract of Deed of Constitution for the Endowment of a Chapel of Ease*, Edinburgh, 1st May, 1841.  
"...And after two years from the first ordination, providing they shall be a regularly formed congregation as above described, the choice of the minister at each vacancy will be in the Kirk Session and male communicants not under the age of twenty one."
56. "*Disruption Memorials*", op. cit., p.97.
57. *Meeting of Preacher's Committee for the New Church at Golfdrum*, contained within "*Disruption Memorials*", op. cit., 21st October, 1840.
58. *Meeting of Subscribers to New Church at Golfdrum*, op. cit., 5th April, 1841.
59. "*Disruption Memorials*", op. cit., p.31.
60. *Extract Constitution for the Church to be erected in the north-west district of the town of Dunfermline from Records of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, May, 1841.  
In this constitution the voting rights were defined in Section 3 in such a way that the choice lay with the subscribers to the building and subscribers to the Bond of Stipend.
- | <u>Subscribers to the Building.</u>                           | <u>Subscribers to Bond of Stipend.</u>   |
|---|--|
| £1 to give 1 vote.  | 10/- to give 1 vote.   |
| £2 to give 2 votes.   | £1 to give 2 votes.  |
| £5 to give 3 votes,<br>with 1 vote for each<br>additional £5. | £2 to give 3 votes.<br>£5 to give 5 votes,<br>with one vote for each<br>additional £2. |
61. "*Disruption Memorials*", op. cit., pp. 46-47.
62. *Extract Constitution*, May, 1841, op. cit., Section 3.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Petition for the Disjunction and Erection of the North Church and Parish Quoad Sacra of Dunfermline under Acts 7 and 8 Victoria*, Ch.44, 6th July, 1854, p.13.
65. In 1984 a new factor was introduced into Vacancy Procedure by which an Advisory Committee from Presbytery meets with the Kirk Session and then with the Vacancy Committee to help them in their search for a new minister.
66. *Vide Chapter Seven*, pp. 149-150.
67. *Dunfermline Press*, 17th February, 1877.

#### APPENDIX.

1. *Vide Chapter Four*, pp. 47-49.
2. The fact that there was a nine months strike suggests that the majority, if not all, the merchants banded together to oppose the journeymen.
3. R. Small, History of the congregations of the United Presbyterian Church, Vol. I, (Edinburgh: 1904), p.352.
4. D. Thomson, The Weaver's Craft, (Paisley: 1901), pp. 295-296.
5. "*The Spirit of the Union*", author unknown, pamphlet in the Dunfermline Carnegie Library, (Edinburgh: 1823), p.24.
6. *Ibid.*, p.37.
7. *Queen Anne Street United Secession K.S. Minutes*, 4th October, 1822.
8. *Ibid.*, 13th October, 1822.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, 27th October, 1824.
11. *Ibid.*, 22nd October, 1823.



12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 25th October, 1823.  
In a letter complaining about Captain Keeler's behaviour it was noted, "We have beheld with the greatest abhorrence and disgust his sinful practice of leaving the Church during the administration of that ordinance....This encourages others to imitate him."
14. Ibid., 25th March, 1822.
15. Ibid., 13th October, 1824.
16. Ibid., 3rd November, 1824.
17. Ibid., 16th November, 1825.
18. D. Thomson, unpublished "Notebooks", held privately, Dunfermline, 1893-1906, 3:12.
19. *Appendix to the Sixth Report by the Commissioners of Religious Instruction, Presbytery of Dunfermline*, pp. 374-399, (Report Commissioned 1839, XXIV)
20. *Queen Anne Street Baptismal Record*, (CH3-568-18)
21. "Memorial and Queries for the Ministers and Elders of the Associate congregation Queen Anne Street, Dunfermline, 9th October, 1822". James Moncrieff gave his written reply on 26th October, 1822.  
"Memorial for Messrs Alexander Keeler, James Kirkland, James Philip, Robert Drysdale, William Gibb, John Bissett and others constituting a large majority of donors, ordinary hearers and seat holders of the congregation of Queen Anne Street Church, Dunfermline, 31st October, 1822". Lord Jeffrey gave his written reply on 2nd November, 1822.  
Both Memorials are held in a private collection in Dunfermline.
22. "Memorial, 9th October", op. cit., pp. 6-11.
23. "Memorial, 31st October", op. cit., pp. 8-11.
24. "Memorial, 9th October", op. cit., pp. 14-28.
25. "Memorial, 31st October", op. cit., pp. 12-20.
26. Ibid., p.14.  
Mr Hay had excluded all donors and ordinary hearers in the congregation who were not in communion with the Church, by either having partaken of the Sacrament or stood sponsor for their children at baptism.
27. "Memorial, 9th October", op. cit., pp. 18-21.
28. Ibid., p.19.
29. "Memorial, 31st October", op. cit., p.34.  
The congregation sought advice on whether they had the power to take the management out of the hands of the Session and to appoint other Trustees to manage the financial affairs of the congregation. Cf. Lord Jeffrey's answer, op. cit., p.58:  
"I do not think that the congregation have any right to appoint such a Committee..."
30. *James Moncrieff's answer*, 26th October, 1822.
31. *Lord Jeffrey's answer*, 2nd November, 1822.
32. D. Thomson, "Notebooks", op. cit., 3:11.
33. Ibid., 3:4.
34. *Report from the Select Committee to whom several petitions from the Royal Burghs of Scotland were referred*, ordered by the House of Commons, July 1819, Parliamentary Papers 1819 (571)(229) VI - 1.551, p.433.  
Mr Andrew Reid had opposed a decision of the Council concerning rent changes. When Mr Finlay Malcolm was asked whether Mr Reid was elected at the subsequent annual election he reported that,



"Mr Reid, who made the motion, was put out of the Council as soon as the sett allowed it."

35. *Queen Anne Street United Secession K.S. Minutes*, 8th March, 1825.
36. Small, op. cit., Vol. I, p.352.
37. Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX: pp.95-127.

1. The Incorporation maintained standards of craftsmanship, provided services for the common use of all craftsmen and provided relief in times of need.  
Cf. C. Neale, "*Dunfermline Handloom Weavers' struggle 1800-1850*", unpublished thesis, Dunfermline Carnegie Library, pp.42-43.
2. D. Thomson, *The Weavers' Craft*, (Paisley: 1903), pp.342-346.
3. The celebration of Handsel Monday as a public holiday on the first Monday after the 13th January rather than New Year's day continued to be a matter of dispute. The new manufacturers wanted the holiday to be held on New Year's day so that normal production could continue without interruption as soon as possible after the turn of the year, but the old weavers clung tenaciously to the traditional date.
4. The Jacquard machine used patterns punched on strong pasteboard so that changing webs involved only a simple substituting of new cards.
5. P. Chalmers, *Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline*, Vol. I, (Edinburgh & London: 1844), p.377.
6. A master weaver owned a number of looms which he gave out to journeymen from whom he received commission on each finished web. The journeyman usually received three quarters of the final price but from this he had to pay for lighting, etc.
7. Chalmers, op. cit., p.377, quoting from "*Tables supplied by the Dunfermline weavers to the Handloom Commissioners in July 1838*". Chalmers also notes that there were 974 owners of looms and 993 journeymen.
8. The first factory was set up by David Dewar & Sons in 1834. By 1840 there were another two factories.
9. C. Neale, op. cit., p.24.  
The first table in 1807 was drawn up by "some" of the manufacturers and not by the manufacturers as a whole. By 1822, however, the manufacturers were acting as a body and the weavers' wages were regulated as a whole.
10. In 1837 the refractory firm was that of A. Robertson and Son. In 1844 it was R.M. Robertson and Co. with the support of J. and T. Alexander.
11. It is important to note that from the time when handloom factories were introduced there arose two different types of manufacturers. The traditional merchant worked on a small scale "giving out" commissions to master weavers and journeymen. The new small factory owner "took in" workers who became employees rather than co-workers as in the traditional trade.
12. "*Address to the Inhabitants from the Committee for Relief of the Unemployed Weavers*", (Dunfermline: 1844), p.4.
13. "*An enquiry into the policy and practical effects of the Table of Prices*", by a Ratepayer, (Dunfermline: 1848), p.3.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p.8.
16. Ibid., p.6.



17. Ibid., p.8.  
The writer claimed that weavers in Dunfermline were claiming twenty per cent higher wages than those in the neighbouring villages.
18. cf. Neale, op. cit., pp. 24-39.
19. Neale, op. cit., p.30, quoting from "Unsigned manuscript, dated 23rd July, 1848".
20. D. Thomson, unpublished "Notebooks", held privately, Dunfermline 1893-1906, 3:12.  
Thomson makes a comment on the death of Joseph Gowans who left a considerable sum of money, "It was this money falling into the hands of the Reids that enabled Henry Reid's two sons Henry (the Provost) and Andrew to commence business in a small way in Pittencrieff and afterwards in 1848 in the power loom works in Foundry Street."
21. Earlier attempts to set up a power loom in 1834 had been unsuccessful. The looms were crude and the source of power unreliable.
22. It was some time, however, before firms could set up and produce the intricacy of the hand made garment.
23. "Mr Erskine Beveridge", pamphlet taken from Dunfermline Press, 3rd December, 1864, copy in Dunfermline Carnegie Library, p.3.
24. Neale, op. cit., p.50, quoting from *Ratepayer's enquiry*, op. cit.  
"In August 1845, a 'brutal and furious mob, assembled in the night-time, by tuck of drum, and, after assaulting the Provost of the Burgh in the most dastardly manner, and demolishing the windows of Messrs Alexanders' Warehouse in Dunfermline, those howling savages proceeded to Balmule House, the residence of Mr James Alexander with the purpose of burning the mansion."
25. Ibid., p.33, quoting from *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. XLII, 1839, p.186.  
In 1837-38 when there was a severe depression only forty adult weavers applied for assistance from the subscription fund of £1,000 raised for relief.
26. Ibid., p.39.
27. C. Rogers, *Leaves from my Autobiography*, (London: 1876), p.90.
28. *Statement by the Deacons' Court of the Free North Church, Dunfermline*, (Dunfermline: 1849), p.4.  
In the statement the average wages are stated as Weavers, 6-8/-; Labourers, 9-10/-; Miners, 12-14/-.
29. Voters' Rolls for 1832 and 1852, (Dunfermline Carnegie Library), compiled and collated.
30. Thomson, op. cit., 2:251.
31. Chalmers, op. cit., p.341.
32. C. Neale, op. cit., p.3, quoting B. Gaskin, *The Decline of the Handloom Weaving industry in Scotland during the years 1815-1845*, unpublished Ph.D.thesis, 1955.
33. Thomson, op. cit., 3:97.
34. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol.I, p.339.
35. *Dunfermline Select Committee to the Royal Burghs of Scotland*, ordered by the House of Commons, 1819, Municipal Corporations, Scotland. Local reports of the Commissioners, part I, London, W. Clowes, 1835, Dunfermline Report.
36. *Dunfermline Town Council Minutes*, 26th September, 1831.
37. *Notices to the electors of the Burgh of Dunfermline*, November, 1833.  
The town was divided into four wards with twenty-two members



being elected in the first year, though it should be remembered that the number who had the franchise remained small. The Provost and the Baillies were elected by the Councillors.

38. *Dunfermline Town Council Minutes*, 6th November, 1833.  
Manufacturers (H. Russell, A. Robertson, J. Alexander, H. Inglis), Gas Company (J. Malcolm, D. Lawrie), Trades (G. Meldrum, J. Moncur), Lawyers (J. Ronaldson, W. Warren).
39. *Dunfermline Town Council Minutes*, 21st November, 1834.  
Messrs. Malcolm, Ronaldson, Warren, Robertson and Meldrum resigned.
40. *Ibid.*  
Ronaldson, Warren and Meldrum were members of the Establishment. Robertson belonged to Chalmers Street Church.
41. The Political Union was set up in 1831.
42. *Dunfermline Town Council Minutes*, 21st November, 1834.  
A letter was sent to the King expressing the Council's concern about the changes in the composition of the Government. The letter expressed concern that those appointed were opposed to reform and would therefore pursue policies which would not be in accord with the enlightened spirit of the age.  
*Ibid.*, 6th December, 1834.  
In another motion Morrison successfully introduced a scheme to make the Council more politically and publicly accountable by opening its meetings to the Press.
43. Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp.334-335.
44. *Dunfermline Town Council Minutes*, 18th August, 1842.  
Damage was done to the premises of A. and H. Reid, Henry Donaldson (Scotland and Watson ), James Reid, Manufacturer, and others.
45. *Ibid.*, 27th September, 1842.  
Morrison handed in a petition demanding immediate action to replace Baillie Walls.
46. *Fife Herald*, 1st November, 1843.
47. *Ibid.*, 3rd November, 1842.  
The newspapers gave the composition of the Council as Radicals 13, Tories 8, Whigs 1.
48. *The Dunfermline Journal*, 26th March, 1852.
49. *Dunfermline Town Council Minutes*, 6th March, 1835.  
The vote was 11 to 8.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, 7th April, 1835.
52. *Ibid.*  
The figures of 15 to 7 in favour of Dissent on the Council reflected other figures of the time. The Voluntaries in the community had a two to one advantage numerically over the National Church.
53. *Ibid.*, 9th March, 1836.
54. *Ibid.*, 30th April, 1844.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*  
Inglis believed that a National Establishment was contrary to Christ's teaching that His kingdom was not of this world. State religion, he claimed, was by its very nature opposed to equal rights and liberties, encouraged wrongful expenditure and was always prepared to proclaim days of fast or thanksgiving. As



- such it was opposed to the best interests of the working class.
59. Ibid., 21st April, 1846.
  60. A fuller description of the Voluntary Conflict is set out later in the Chapter.
  61. Many of the supporters of the Free Abbey were the Non-Intrusionists of the Establishment party.
  62. James Walls of the Free Abbey became Provost in 1877.
  63. *Dunfermline Journal*, 13th April, 1878.
  64. See Chapter Three for a fuller examination of the relationship between Gillespie and the Dunfermline Council.
  65. Protest appended to "*Queries put to John Gibson, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools*", signed by Thomas Morrison, 7th November, 1840.
  66. Report of the speeches delivered at a Church and School Extension Meeting, (Edinburgh: 1839).  
The Chartist emphasis on education was attacked at a meeting held by the National Church in Dunfermline in 1839.
  67. *Voters' Rolls for 1832 and 1852*, held in Dunfermline Carnegie Library. Figures extracted and compiled.
  68. This spans the period when the handloom trade collapsed and, though many weavers had sufficient savings to see them through the worst of the financial crisis, many lost their work and some master weavers went bankrupt while others like William Carnegie went abroad.
  69. P. Chalmers, "*Strictures on some recent sayings and doings of the Dunfermline Voluntaries*", (Glasgow: 1835), p.3.
  70. J. Law, "*Reply to the Strictures on some saying and doings of the Dunfermline Voluntaries*", (Dunfermline: 1835), p.1.
  71. Ibid.
  72. Ibid.
  73. Ibid.
  74. Chalmers, op. cit. pp. 1ff.  
Law, op. cit. pp. 2ff.
  75. Chalmers, op. cit., p.2.
  76. Law, op. cit., p.2.
  77. Ibid., p.3.
  78. Ibid., p.4.
  79. Ibid., p.5.
  80. Chalmers, op. cit., p.5.  
Quoting his more illustrious namesake, Chalmers writes, "Our scheme," he says, 'has no other origin than in a desire to raise the comfort and character of the common people, and no other aim than the diffusion amongst them of sound principle, and moral and religious habits.'"
  81. A number of the directors of the Gas Company were Non-Intrusionists.
  82. Among such benefactors were James Kerr, who was to become an elder in the Abbey, and James Kilgour and John Sampson, who were leading figures in the St Andrews Quoad Sacra congregation which received full status in 1851.
  83. S. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth*, (Oxford: 1982), p.221.
  84. Ibid., pp. 221-222.
  85. *Fifeshire Journal*, 1st April, 1839.
  86. "*Report of the speeches delivered at a Church and School Extension meeting*", (Edinburgh: 1839), p.9.
  87. *Fifeshire Journal*, 28th February, 1839.



88. Ibid.
89. *Report of the Speeches*, op. cit., p.20.
90. Ibid., p.18.
91. *Fifeshire Journal*, 28th February, 1839; *Fife Herald*, 3rd November, 1842.
92. *Report of the Speeches*, op. cit., pp. 43-50.
93. Ibid., pp. 43-44.
94. *St Margarets United Secession K.S. Minutes*, 22nd April. 1839; 13th November, 1839; 1st May, 1840.
95. *Queen Anne Street United Secession K.S. Minutes*, 16th November, 1836.  
The minister gave 10/6 to funds of the congregational poor.
96. Ibid., 9th January, 1837.
97. Ibid., 20th August, 1839.  
"All monies collected on 1st Sunday of 1840 shall be directed to the relief of the poor."
98. Ibid., 16th August, 1840.  
When a member died the minister, Mr Young, gave 5/- for occasional help and a committee was set up to see if this could be raised to £1.
99. *St Margarets United Secession Annual General Meetings, or Congregational Meetings*, 25th November, 1844; 29th June, 1846; 23rd June, 1847; 8th April, 1851.
100. Ibid., 29th June, 1846.
101. *St Margarets United Secession Trustees and Managers' Minutes*, 7th June, 1831.
102. *Queen Anne Street United Secession Managers' Minutes*, 29th November, 1841.
103. *Queen Anne Street United Secession Congregational Meeting*, 1st July, 1844.
104. Ibid.
105. *Relief Congregational Meeting*, 25th June, 1838.
106. *Relief Congregation Managers' Minutes*, 31st May, 1839.
107. Ibid., 8th December, 1843.
108. Brown, op. cit., p.232.  
"It was, he exclaimed, the poor man's Church; it would accept battle with the *laissez-faire* doctrines of the new elite, in the name of the old godly commonwealth ideal."
109. *Appendix to the Sixth Report of the Commissioners of Religious Instruction*, Reports Commissioned 1839, Parliamentary Papers 1839 (153) XXIV, pp. 374-399.
110. Ibid.
111. *Fifeshire Journal*, 5th November, 1840.
112. *Queen Anne Street United Secession K.S. Minutes*, 6th August, 1839.
113. Ibid.  
"Meeting discussed Church being used for Political Lectures on Subjects not immediately connected with religion. Session to call Trustees to the fact that many members of the congregation feel deep dissatisfaction and regret that the use of the House is ever given for anything other than religious purposes and appointed M. Schoolbred and A. Haxton to report this to the managers."
114. A notable example was Provost George Birrell. He joined the Canmore Street Quoad Sacra congregation and then the Free Abbey Church after the Disruption.
115. "An enquiry into the policy and practical effects of the Table of Prices", by a Ratepayer, (Dunfermline: 1848), pp. 5-6.  
"The old and respectable house of Messrs Hunt and Son proceeded



to contract their business within comparatively small lands. The Messrs Kerr withdrew from business: Messrs George Inglis and Son followed. The Messrs Alexander were next driven out by lawless and brutal violence, exerted in direct support of this odious system (The Table of Prices). Others, more sanguine, continued to struggle on: and of these alas! how few have passed, safe and unscathed, through the fiery trials which have of late years visited the commercial world."

116. *Fifeshire Journal*, 21st June, 1838; *Fife Herald*, 3rd November, 1842.
117. The Episcopal Church, though small, had support from a number of prominent families in the community. Some of them were to support the cause of law and order at the time when the Chartists were most active. (Provost Ronaldson).
118. "Correspondence between Erskine Beveridge, Esq. and the Rev Thomas Doig, Torryburn and the Rev Peter Chalmers", (Edinburgh: 1837)
119. J.T. Brown, "A Parting Statement addressed to those now or recently professing to worship in the Abbey Church", (Liverpool: 1844), p.7.
120. F. Wall, Andrew Carnegie, (Oxford: 1970), p.50.  
"The skilled artisans of the town, however, and the handloom weavers in particular, wanted no sweeping economic revolution. Their hopes centred upon the conservatism of an old order, and they accepted the promise of the Charter not for what it might destroy but rather for what it might protect."
121. H. Cockburn, Journal of Henry Cockburn 1831-54, (Edinburgh: 1874), pp.29-30.

CHAPTER SEVEN: pp.128-151.

1. A. MacLaren, Religion and Social Class, (London:1974).
2. J. McCosh, The Wheat and the Chaff gathered into Bundles, (Perth: 1843).
3. Ibid.
4. J. Rankin, Handbook of the Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh: 1885), p.93.
5. Vide Chapter Four, pp. 53-58.
6. T. Hardy, The Principles of Moderation, (Edinburgh: 1872), p.37.
7. The Stewarton case was a decisive one.
8. McCosh, op. cit., p.15.
9. *Dunfermline United Secession Presbytery*, 20th August, 1839.
10. *Fifeshire Journal*, 28th November, 1839.
11. C. Marshall, Tales frae the Smiddy o' Saunders Dinwuddie, (Edinburgh: 1880), p.80.
12. J. Webster, Dunfermline Abbey, (Dunfermline: 1948), pp.153-155.
13. *Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 5th April, 1843.
14. *Fife Herald*, 28th January, 1843.
15. See Chapter Four.
16. *Fife Herald*, 2nd February, 1843.
17. Ibid.
18. D. Thomson, unpublished "Notebooks", held privately, Dunfermline 1893-1906, 1:83.
19. McCosh, op. cit., p.25.
20. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 18th January, 1822.
21. cf. P. Chalmers, "Strictures on some recent sayings and doings of the *Dunfermline Voluntaries*", (Glasgow:1835).  
J. Law, "Reply to the Strictures of the Rev P. Chalmers on the



- recent sayings and doings of the *Dunfermline Voluntaries*", (Dunfermline: 1835).
22. Another who did the same as Peter Chalmers was Daniel Dewar, Principal and Professor of Church History in Aberdeen. (cf. McCosh, op. cit., p.83) Prof. Dewar however claimed that he had never joined the Free Church.
  23. "The Arrow", monthly magazine of the Abbey Church, January 1982, quoting from *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 7th April, 1836. "...on 27th January, 1836, James Clapperton gave notice he intended at the next meeting to move the General Assembly be petitioned to 'take such steps as may lead to the abolition of lay patronage'. This was the first indication in the Abbey of the national movement which led in 1843 to the establishment of the Free Church. The motion was passed unanimously on 7th April, but Rev Peter Chalmers indicated from the chair he did not concur, on the grounds the General Assembly had in 1835 instituted procedures to ensure 'that no Pastor shall be intruded on any congregation contrary to the wish of the people' and he felt these procedures should be given some time to demonstrate their effectiveness."
  24. *Fife Herald*, 1st June, 1843.
  25. J. Brown, "A Parting Statement addressed to those now or recently professing to worship in the Abbey Church", (Liverpool: 1844), p.16.
  26. P.C. Mitchell, *My Fill of Days*, (London: 1936), p.14. Mitchell, grandson of Peter Chalmers, felt that tradition triumphed over Church politics. His grandfather was an antiquarian.
  27. Rankin, op. cit., pp. 96-97.
  28. Ibid., p.97.
  29. Brown, op. cit., p.14.
  30. *The Scotsman*, 24th June, 1843.
  31. "Disruption Memorials", prepared by David Lawrie, (Dunfermline: 1865), pp. 12-13.
  32. Ibid., p.12.
  33. The two ministers who joined the Free Church, Mr Sutherland and Mr Marshall, were bachelors.
  34. Brown, op. cit., p.19.
  35. Ibid., p.4.
  36. Ibid.
  37. Norman McLeod's caustic comment on the plight of ministers who felt trapped by earlier decisions has already been noted.
  38. "Disruption Memorials", op. cit., p.27.
  39. Ibid., pp. 29-30.
  40. Ibid.
  41. Ibid., p.30.
  42. Ibid., p.31. Brown wrote, "As to standing alone in the Presbytery of Dunfermline, that as you know is no proof that I was in error, any more than you standing alone at the election for the North Church minister, when you claimed only one vote, was a proof that you were wrong, whilst some of your zealous Non-Intrusionist allies intruded a minister on the hearers intending to form that congregation."
  43. J.T. Brown, *The Union of Christians*, (London: 1846).
  44. Brown, "Parting Statement", op. cit., p.3.
  45. Ibid., p.4.
  46. "Disruption Memorials", op. cit., p.48.
  47. Ibid., p.54.



48. Ibid., p.56.
49. Ibid., pp. 55-56.  
The reason given by the Presbytery of Haddington was, "The peculiar circumstances of his own congregation and of the Presbytery generally". His services were needed to consolidate the congregation at Salton which was composed of adherents from two adjoining parishes which had recently been united.
50. Ibid., p.61.  
Mr Philip had been appointed to preach in Forfarshire.
51. Ibid., p.76.
52. Thomson, op. cit.,1:81.
53. "Disruption Memorials", op. cit., p.71.
54. Ibid., p.76.
55. Ibid., p.81.
56. Ibid., p.82.
57. Ibid., p.83.
58. Ibid.
59. S. Mechie, The Church and Scottish Social Development 1780-1870, (London: 1960), p.113.
60. "Disruption Memorials", op. cit., p.8.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
63. Ibid., p.15.
64. Ibid., pp. 14-15.
65. Ibid., p.15.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid., p.16.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., p.17.
70. Ibid.
71. Brown, "Parting Statement", op. cit.
72. Ibid.

CHAPTER EIGHT: pp.152-172.

1. *Dunfermline Journal*, 13th October, 1900.
- |                   | <u>67/68</u> | <u>68/69</u> | <u>94/95</u> | <u>95/96</u> |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Stirling          | 658          | 1746         | 2459         | 2575         |
| Culross           | 25           | 73           | 56           | 55           |
| Dunfermline       | 484          | 2073         | 2957         | 3229         |
| Inverkeithing     | 60           | 285          | 303          | 305          |
| South Queensferry | 45           | 179          | 232          | 258          |
2. A fuller breakdown of the figures for individual congregations is given in Appendix III, p.297.
3. A. MacLaren, Religion and Social Class, (London: 1974).
4. D. Thomson, unpublished *Notebooks*, held privately, Dunfermline, 1893-1906, 1:16; 1:25; 1:166; 1:255.  
Thomson notes that on one occasion a couple of Irishmen accepted work turnip thinning at a lower rate than the women of Rumblingwell and this led to great ill feeling. On another occasion a band of Irishmen was rounded up and hounded down to South Queensferry where the Sheriff had to act in their defence.
5. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 2nd September, 1834.
6. Under Robertson's post-Disruption Quoad Sacra endowment scheme St Andrews became a Parish Church in 1851 and the North congregation in 1855. Both congregations were indebted to individuals who helped to finance the endowment schemes.



St Andrews Quoad Sacra congregation had been split at the Disruption when the greater part of its membership committed themselves to the Free Church. At a meeting held in June 1843, 124 voted to accompany their minister Mr Sutherland into the Free Church while only 11 chose to remain within the Establishment. However those who remained included the Town Clerk, Andrew Kilgour, whose legal expertise helped to retain the building for the Establishment. Even when the Free Church folk moved out the congregation had great difficulty in calling a minister. The Managers wrote to Presbytery in September 1846 recommending that they appoint a minister without delay for at least twelve months so that the dwindling flock might be kept together. Presbytery offered to help for that period and also to recommend the case to the Home Commission Committee. The Managers still found no one prepared to accept the task while the debt on the building continued to grow. Having decided to close the building they turned as a last resort to the Abbey Session to see if they would help. By November 1846, a list of subscribers had been drawn up who promised £120 towards the stipend of a permanent minister and by 1851 St Andrews was an endowed congregation in its own right. The North Parish had a similar experience. When the Free North congregation was forced to leave the building in 1849 they were said to have left nothing but bare walls behind. As with St Andrews, a number of individuals, led by Mr Kerr, provided the financial basis which enabled it to become an endowed, full status charge by 1855.

7. *Dunfermline Press*, 27th May, 1865.

Mr. Kilgour left a Bequest of £500 to be invested for the purpose of raising the Stipend of St Andrews Church on condition that a similar sum were raised by the congregation. The congregation did so by means of a bazaar which raised over £550. The effort was supported by many of the wives of the ministers within the Establishment.

*Ibid.*, 16th September, 1865.

Arrangements were made for cheap trains to run between Stirling and Dunfermline and Edinburgh and Dunfermline. The article also noted that it would have been difficult to discover whether Dissenters or Establishment were the most liberal in their patronage.

8. *Fife Herald*, 21st May, 1846.

The newspaper reported that the Presbytery overtured the General Assembly on the subject of Quoad Sacra congregations which were in a very inefficient state. They wanted the General Assembly to devise and adopt some measures, by Voluntary contribution or otherwise, to enable such congregations to be permanently endowed. This would enable them to contribute something of their former influence and usefulness in the form of parochial churches.

9. *Dunfermline Free Church Presbytery*, 1st May, 1850.

"..utter inability of the Free North to compete the edifice - need for pecuniary aid."

10. "Letter of Mr Marshall to Quoad Sacra Committee, 1849."

"...I have been compelled to leave my flock for a time in the hands of a Probationer, in order to supply their lack of means, I supplement the allowance from the Common Funds. The burden laid upon me is not a light one. I have taken it upon me, however, advisedly, prayerfully and therefore cheerfully. I would require to raise somewhere about a thousand pounds to meet the exigences



- of our case."
11. "Copy of Draft Reasons to Quoad Sacra Court, Edinburgh, by the Free North Church, Dunfermline", circa 1850.  
Among the reasons given for additional help is the following:  
"The Church taken from the congregation last year was free from debt (North Parish Church Building). If their new house be free from debt also, they will be in the same position as when they were thrust out. If burdened with debt they will be in a worse condition and so be disabled and disadvantaged".
  12. *Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 4th April, 1849.
  13. C. Rogers, Leaves from my Autobiography, (London: 1876), p.90.
  14. A. Maclaren, Religion and Social Class, (London & Boston: 1974), p.104.  
Maclaren notes the comments of Mr A. Mitchell of Aberdeen.  
"...if you belong to the Free Church your money must be forthcoming. Money, Money with the 'F.C.' is everything."  
There is little doubt that this Alexander Mitchell became the minister of the North Parish in 1851.  
cf. P. Mitchell, My Fill of Days, (London: 1936), p.1.  
Mitchell notes that his father was a bookseller and publisher in Aberdeen.
  15. *Presbytery of Dunfermline*, 12th February, 1851. Also "Sermons preached in the North Parish Church on the Rev Alexander Mitchell's Twenty Fifth Anniversary", (Dunfermline 1876), p.8.  
Mitchell recorded that he took up the task in the firm belief that the cause was not only that of the Church, to which the country owed so much, but of God and Christ.
  16. Dr Chalmers and Dr Mitchell were both scholars whose work commended them to a wide readership while their honorary doctorates no doubt further advanced their reputations.
  17. "North Parish Church Dunfermline, 1840-1940, Centenary Celebrations", p.8.
  18. Ibid.
  19. *Relief Church Congregational Meeting*, 27th June, 1836.
  20. *Relief Church Joint Meeting of Managers and Session*, 5th August, 8th August, 19th August, 19th September, 1834.  
In 1830 the congregation called a Mr Wardie to work with Mr Fergus, the senior minister. In 1834 Mr Fergus was asked to accept a reduction in his stipend to enable the collegiate ministry to continue. When he refused Mr Wardie left. This was regretted by the Managers for the finances had shown a decidedly upward turn. At a subsequent meeting five proposals were made as to what Mr Fergus' stipend should be. These varied from £30 without a manse to £50 with one. The compromise was £30 with a manse which was then raised to £40 and a manse. The following January Mr Fergus refused to accept a half yearly sum of £20 and £25 was agreed. At the same time the Managers were prepared to offer a new stipend of £110 which was to be raised to £150 when Mr Fergus died, though when the Rev Neil McMichael came the stipend was in fact £100 and was only raised to £130 at Mr Fergus' death.
  21. *Relief Church Managers' Minutes*, 30th November, 1838.
  22. Ibid., 13th December, 1838.
  23. Ibid., 31st May, 1839.
  24. *Relief Congregational Meeting*, 19th November, 1841.
  25. *Relief Congregational Meeting*, 13th May, 1844.
  26. *Gillespie United Presbyterian Church*, 24th June, 1858.



27. *Queen Anne Street United Secession K.S. Minutes*, 28th November, 1839.
28. *Queen Anne Street United Secession Congregational Meeting*, 14th July, 1841.  
"I hereby offer to give up, if need be, thirty or forty pounds, trusting to their discretions and Christian liberality in this to me very important matter."
29. *Queen Anne Street United Presbyterian Managers' Minutes*, 27th June, 1870.
30. *Relief Managers' Minutes*, 17th July, 1837.  
The bitterness which had begun between the senior and junior ministers continued after the senior minister's death when the Managers, instead of paying the funeral expenses from their funds, proposed that a collection should be taken to pay the bill. Mr Fergus' son thought this a most uncharitable act and paid the expenses himself.
31. *Queen Anne Street United Secession Managers' Minutes*, 1st July, 1844.
32. *Ibid.*, 29th December, 1844.
33. *Queen Anne Street United Presbyterian Congregational Meeting*, 1st July, 1849.  
The cost of the monument was £184. 18s. 11d.
34. *Ibid.*, 27th June, 1859.  
Despite a pamphlet issued in 1857 urging members to increase their givings, the problem had remained and in 1859 Mr R.E. Beveridge proposed that since the debt on the Church was a great drawback to the prosperity of the congregation he was prepared to give £25 if the congregation subscribed £200 or £40 if they subscribe £300.
35. *Ibid.*, 27th April, 1870.
36. *Ibid.*, 30th June, 1879.
37. *St Margaret's Annual Congregational Meeting*, 29th June, 1846.  
On this occasion it was suggested that money would require to be raised both by collections and seat rents.
40. Mr Law had been dissatisfied with the way in which the matter of a colleague had been handled.
41. *St Margarets Trustees' and Managers' Minutes*, 31st March, 1851.
42. *St Margarets Congregational Meeting*, 21st April, 1851.
43. *St Margarets Sub Committee of Trustees and Managers*, 17th August, 1827.
44. *St Margarets Trustees' and Managers' Minutes*, 15th July, 1828.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *St Margarets Congregational Meeting*, 28th June, 1858.
47. *Ibid.*, 7th June, 1859.
48. *Ibid.*, 25th June, 1860.
49. *St Margarets Sketch of Constitution*, 28th April, 1826.
50. *Chalmers Street United Secession Minutes for Religious and Congregational Purposes*, 27th January, 1848.
51. *Dunfermline Free North Church Elders and Deacons Meeting*, 4th April, 1844.
52. One such was Thomas Alexander who, though treasurer for some time in the Free North, moved into the Free Abbey. He was one of the town's leading industrialists.
53. *North Parish Church Managers' Minutes*, (SRO-CH2-641-2 ).
54. *Dunfermline Free Church Presbytery*, 1st May, 1850.  
*Circular of the Building Committee of the Free North Church*, p.2.
55. *Dunfermline Journal*, 29th March, 1860.



- "The arduous and incessant ministerial duties in Dunfermline had already begun to tell on his constitution."
56. *Free St Andrews K.S. Minutes*, 29th April, 1845.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Dunfermline Free Presbytery*, 28th June, 1849.  
 The Sustentation Committee was not prepared to allow the Free Abbey to proceed to call a minister until it was prepared to increase its givings to the Fund. The congregation was described as having a roll of 476, a building debt of £320 and they had given £128 to the Fund the previous year. At least 230 homes contributed and of those three gave between £5 and £10 and seven between £2 and £3. Church door offerings came to £108. The congregation said that it was due to the fact that many of its better-off contributors had moved to other localities and to the general depression in trade. There were 11 deacons and 10 collectors.
59. A number of United Presbyterian members like John Darling and Alexander Norval worked the Tammy line system which was so abhorrent to the weavers. Yet the Church was dependent on such support as these men could afford. In 1848 the U.P. Presbytery was attacked by James Inglis for objecting to Sunday trains while at the same time doing nothing to stop its membership selling liquor on the Sabbath. While the ministers made formal pulpit announcements against Sabbath drinking the Church Courts were unprepared to take action which might lose important members at a time when money was essential if the congregations were to survive the depressions in trade.
60. *Dunfermline Free Church Deacons' Minutes*, 5th January, 1857; 30th March, 1857; 19th October, 1857; 6th June, 1867.
61. *Dunfermline Press*, 23rd July, 1862.
62. *Ibid.*, 30th July, 1862.
63. *Ibid.*, 23rd July, 1862.
64. *Ibid.*, 8th July, 1863.
65. *Ibid.*, 15th July, 1863.
66. *Ibid.*, 18th November, 1876.
67. *Ibid.*, 25th November, 1876.
68. *Dunfermline Journal*, 8th March, 1879.
69. *Ibid.*, 12th April, 1879.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *St Andrews Free Church Deacons' Minutes*, 4th September, 1873; 29th November, 1875; 10th October, 1873.  
 "The Moderator was supposed to have some good influence over certain of the chief delinquents....he was requested to open the matter at his earliest convenience."  
 In December, 1873:  
 "The Moderator reported that agreeably to the request of the Court he had been in communication with a number of persons who required some more suasion in reference with duty of the Sustentation Fund. He was hopeful that the mild struggle he had applied would yield some fruit - but he was quite prepared to administer stiffer correction in the event of his hope not being realised."  
 In November, 1875, Mr Brydie left the congregation.

CHAPTER NINE: pp.173-196.

1. F. Wall, *Andrew Carnegie*, (Oxford: 1970), p.18.



2. E. Henderson, The Annals of Dunfermline, (Glasgow: 1859), p.531.
3. D. Thomson, unpublished "*Notebooks*", held privately, Dunfermline 1893-1906, 3:667.
4. On one occasion Morrison was pursued by the militia to Torryburn where he advised the crowds who were listening to him to cross the Torry stream. As they were then in Perthshire the militia were powerless to prevent speeches being made.
5. *Account of Money received for building a Meeting House for Ralph Erskine and other accounts*, (SRO CH 3-568-13).
6. Wall, op. cit., p.19.
7. Ibid., p.20.
8. Ibid., p.19.
9. Ibid., pp.32-33.
10. "*Andrew Carnegie's Own Story*", reprinted for the Carnegie Trust, by kind permission of Houghton, Mifflin Company, Boston & New York, 1984, p.4.
11. For a fuller explanation of how the "grandfather table" worked vide Chapter Six, p.90.
12. Wall, op. cit., p.34.  
"If that be your religion and that be your God, I shall seek a better religion and a nobler God."
13. "*Andrew Carnegie's Own Story*", op. cit., p5.
14. E. Henderson, op. cit., p.400.
15. The Relief Congregation included names like Flockhart, Meldrum and Bonnar well known weaving families in the community.
16. Vide Chapter Five, pp. 71-79.
17. *Gillespie United Presbyterian Managers' Minutes*, July, 1850.  
Among the Managers was the manager of the Gas Company, a Junior Railway contractor, the manager of the Charlestown Railway at Netherton, a writer, a grocer, a teacher and an iron founder. However, as well as the manager of the Brucefield Loom, there were four weavers whose family connection with the congregation went back to the previous century (Robert Flockhart, Henry Aitken, William Meldrum, Andrew Bonnar).
18. *List of contributors for the building of a Manse for Ralph Erskine*, S.R.O. (CH3-568-13)
19. Fraser. op. cit., pp.366-367.  
Erskine spoke of the wrong attitude of many in their "Untenderness towards those we left in the judicatories, when we made secession from them, without dealing more kindly with them, praying more for them, and bearing more with them; especially such as were friends to the same reformation cause, though not enlightened in the same manner of witnessing for it. Some began too soon to severities; even in excluding such from their communion, which tended to restrain and keep them back from us. Though we began with some moderation towards them, yet through unsteadfastness in standing to our first resolution, many proceeded soon to such heights as could not in the issue but terminate in a downfall. If in this respect the bond of brotherly love was too soon broken, the Lord is righteous in ordering such a breach among us as threatens the destruction of this temple, and to make read their sin in their punishment. It is true, though all of us were not equally chargeable this way, yet we have been too indulgent to such as were so, and therefore cannot purge ourselves."
20. Quoted by A.R. MacEwan, The Erskines, (Edinburgh: 1900), p.94.  
"And though I am sensible what a bad tendency division natively



has, and desire to abhor and shun all divisive principles and practices, contrary to the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Church of Scotland, agreeable to, and founded upon, the Word of God, and judge it my duty to endeavour, through grace, to follow after that peace that has truth for the ground and ornament of it..."

21. D. Fraser, The Life and Diary of the Reverend Ralph Erskine, (Edinburgh: 1834), pp.254-255.
22. Quoted by A.R. MacEwan, op. cit., p.93.
23. Vide Chapter Three, pp. 30-36.
24. A number of events indicate the attempts to force the Dunfermline Radicals into more aggressive action. In June 1838 Mr Collins suggested that weavers should withdraw their money from the Savings Banks and buy firearms but this was not well received. In October, 1839, Mr A Duncan censured Mr Alexander Halley for his failure to support the more militant proposals which had emerged at the Birmingham Convention. In December, 1840, there was a poor response to a leading Chartist rally but by 1842 the weavers and miners were marching side by side in an attempt to bring about a General Strike. Some riots followed in 1842 which led to firmer action being taken by the Council.
25. In the ecclesiastical field the Secession built two churches at Limekilns in 1784 and Crossgates in 1804.
26. J. Burton, A History of the Reign of Queen Anne, Vol. I, (Edinburgh: 1880), pp. 66-67.
27. J. Mackie, Reminiscences for the Grandchildren, (Edinburgh: 1885), p.70.  
See also *When We were Boys*, (by an old West-Fifer), bound volumes of *Dunfermline Journal*, 1911-1913, pp.32f.
28. Wall, op. cit., pp. 50-52.  
Wall gives a detailed account of how the Niffler societies worked, "Born out of the practical necessity of tool sharing the Niffler societies gave the weaving craft a cohesive unity lacking in other highly skilled trades."
29. Fraser, op. cit., p.82.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p.83.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.  
"The elders were appointed to make inquiry in the several quarters of the parish, if the foresaid persons be the people's choice..."
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., pp. 223-224.
38. *Associate Congregation K.S. Minutes*, 3rd August, 1742.  
Societies from Kestock, Aberdour, Dalgety, Inverkeithing, Culross, Limekilns, Torryburn, Masterton, Rescobie and Clackmannan were among those represented.
39. Vide Chapter Ten, p.208..
40. Vide Chapter Five, pp. 71-79.
41. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 23rd December, 1823; 19th February, 1824.
42. *Fifeshire Journal*, 5th April, 12th April, 24th May, 1834.
43. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 20th October, 1845.
44. Ibid., 15th September, 1851.
45. Ibid., 20th October, 1851.
46. *Free North K.S. Minutes*, 1st June, 1873.



47. Ibid., 22nd March, 1875.
48. Vide Chapter Four, pp. 53f.
49. *Free Abbey K.S. Minutes*, between June, 1898, and 8th January, 1901. This was first mooted in 1865 but it was not built until 1901, with the help of a large gift from Mr William Reid.
50. Thomson, op. cit., 2:814.  
Mission Hall built September, 1894. Thomson wrote, "Of late years there seems to have been a competition in the matter of halls and no congregation will be behind its neighbour. The ministers are equally fierce in the war of hall competition and Rev Mr Campbell of St Margarets is credited with a fair share of this ambition. The 'masses' rarely turn out to the meetings in these Mission halls, but rather the regular habitues of the prayer meeting etc."
51. Ibid., 2:815.  
"Another fashion among our churches is that of having a specially selected native boy or girl set aside in some mission field - say in Africa, Oceana or India - anywhere so the said selected may be had - and the entire charge of his or her education and upbringing be charged to the Bible Class, or Sunday School...." The Queen Anne Street U.P. Church was the first apparently, in 1880, to introduce such a system. The congregation had also adopted a child "by proxy" by 1894.

CHAPTER TEN: pp.197-224.

1. J. Webster, *Dunfermline Abbey*, (Dunfermline: 1948), pp. 131-132. Thomson became involved in political matters, as Boswell records in his *Life of Doctor Johnson*. The matter is set out in Webster's book. An agent of Colonel Campbell and a member of Thomson's congregation had changed sides during a political campaign, having allegedly been bribed. He attacked Thomson in a newspaper article for having alluded to him in a sermon. The following Sunday, Thomson named the man from the pulpit and was challenged by him after the service, "What bribe he had received for telling so many lies from the seat of verity?" An action was brought against Thomson at the Court of Session and was decided against him. Boswell commented that Thomson was an aged gentleman, a former military chaplain and a man of high spirit and honour, which suggests that he at least found the sentence somewhat severe.
2. Ibid., pp. 101-102.
3. J. Fernie, *History of the Town and Parish of Dunfermline*, (Dunfermline: 1815).
4. *Dunfermline Abbey Heritors' Minutes*, 24th October, 1797; 19th March, 1798; 6th April, 1798.
5. Webster, op. cit., p.153.
6. J. Brown, "A Parting Statement addressed to those now or recently professing to worship in the Abbey Church", (Liverpool: 1844), pp.5-9.
7. R. Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church from 1733 to 1900*, Vol. I, (Edinburgh: 1904), pp. 355-356.
8. Ibid., p.349.
9. Vide Chapter Five, pp. 68-79.
10. *Relief Managers and K.S. Minutes*, 5th August, 8th August, 1834.
11. *Dunfermline Journal*, 20th August, 1887.  
In an article on Chalmers he is described as coming to the Abbey at the age of twenty-seven, tall, handsome and vigorous. His discourses were carefully prepared and it was not long before



gentlemen of influence and culture were added to the Abbey Session and the young minister was seen visiting where Auld Kirk ministers were rarely seen before.

12. Vide Chapter Seven, pp. 136-142.
13. "North Parish Church Dunfermline, 1840-1940, Centenary pamphlet", pp. 8-9.
14. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 18th January, 1822.
15. Webster, op. cit., pp. 238-250.
16. St Andrews Quoad Sacra gained full status in 1851, as did the North in 1855.
17. "North Parish Church Dunfermline, 1840-1940", op. cit., p.8.
18. Small, op. cit., p.354.
19. *Queen Anne Street Congregational Minutes*, 14th July, 1841.
20. *Dunfermline Men of Mark*, Vol. III, bound volumes by Dunfermline Journal printing works, pp. 33-36.
21. *Fife Herald*, 3rd January, 1861.
22. J. Brown, Gospel Truth accurately stated and illustrated, (Glasgow: 1831), pp. 382-418.
23. Ibid., p.385.
24. Ibid., pp. 386-387.
25. Ibid., p.391.
26. Ibid., p.407.
27. A. Carnegie, Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie, (New York: 1933), p.50.  
Andrew Carnegie was always grateful that his father had taught him the joy of Scottish minstrelsy.
28. Vide Chapter Five, p.69.
29. R. Small, op. cit., p.352.  
It was perhaps because Mr Whyte was such a popular preacher that he met with such opposition. See Chapter Five.
30. *Fife Journal*, 28th November, 1839.
31. Ibid., 26th December, 1839.  
"...housewives neglect their firesides night after night to listen to those who call themselves revivalists."
32. D. Thomson, unpublished "Notebooks", held privately, Dunfermline 1893-1906, 1:81.
33. *Fife Herald*, 7th March, 1844.
34. Small, op. cit., pp. 355-356.
35. Vide Chapter Three et passim.
36. Thomson, op. cit., 4:60.  
"He could and did perceive small affairs and formed rigid opinions on these, but he was unable to grasp the broader principles of religion and especially of moral freedom..."
37. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 23rd December, 1823.  
At first the Session wanted to delay the decision that each elder should have a separate district allocated to him. However, by 19th February 1824, the Session had agreed that any elder who wanted to have a district should be assigned one.
38. When Ralph Erskine died there was an eight year vacancy. The long vacancy between 1820 and 1827 has also been noted in Chapter Five.
39. D. Thomson, The Weavers' Craft, (Paisley: 1903), pp. 233-234.  
Wedderburn became Lord Chancellor.
40. It has been noted in Chapter Three that Gillespie had substantial Town Council support if not before then certainly after his deposition by the General Assembly in 1752.
41. Vide Chapter Three, pp. 32-34.



42. Ibid., pp. 39-46.
43. Thomson, op. cit., 8:79.
44. Webster, op. cit., pp. 131ff.
45. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 29th March, 1780.
46. Thomson, op. cit., 4:272.
47. Ibid., 1:3.
48. Vide Chapter Three, p.45.
49. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 29th March, 1780.  
Note the recurrence of the name Wilson in the list of subscribers to the first bond of stipend for the Chapel minister in 1780.
50. Ibid.  
Whether the George Meldrum of the 1830's is the same as that of 1780 cannot be easily ascertained. The name occurs in the Chapel records on both occasions.
51. Vide Chapter Three, p.45.
52. Some of the Town lands had been sold off to the sitting Member of Parliament, Mr Downie of Appin. The scandal over the sale further damaged the Tory cause.
53. Free St Andrews Church was built on ground which had belonged to John Kerr.
54. *Queen Anne Street United Secession K.S. Minutes*, 6th August, 1839.
55. *Dunfermline Town Council Minutes*, 14th October, 1842.  
Thomson, op. cit., 1:44.  
"Mr Morris who was never very strong, broke down under the strain. He went out to Madeira to recover his health and left his brother magistrates to face the difficulties. He came back and enjoyed his competence in gratifying his taste for art and gardening and his inclination for quiet public matters."
56. Beveridge was a Congregationalist and Ronaldson an Episcopalian.
57. "*Correspondence between Erskine Beveridge, Esq. and the Rev Thomas Doig, Torryburn and the Rev Peter Chalmers*", (Edinburgh: 1837).  
Beveridge had reacted to a statement made by the Rev Mr Doig of Torryburn at an Abbey Communion service that Church members should avoid all association with political agitators and believed that the remark had been aimed at him.
58. "*Mr Erskine Beveridge*", pamphlet taken from the Dunfermline Press, 3rd December, 1864, copy in Dunfermline Carnegie Library, p.3.
59. Ronaldson had been a member of the Abbey but left when he felt that the Non-Intrusion party had acted unwisely in the Auchterarder case.
60. *Report from the Select Committee to whom several petitions from the Royal Burghs of Scotland were referred*, ordered by the House of Commons, July 1819, Parliamentary Papers, 1819 (571)(229) VI - 1:551, p.433.
61. J. Sanderson, "*St Margarets United Free Church Dunfermline 1825-1925*", Centenary publication, p.16.
62. By "outwork" was meant the giving out of commissions to those who worked at home, master weavers and their journeymen. This system meant that in the traditional trade there were few factories. As handloom factories were set up in the late 1830's there was a clash of interests between those who owned them and could produce cheaper goods in poor working conditions and the traditional small merchant who gave out work and was still dependent on good relationships with his suppliers.
63. Vide Chapters Two and Three et passim.
64. *Fife Herald*, 20th June, 1839; *Fifeshire Journal*, 20th October, 1840.
65. *Dunfermline Town Council Minutes*, 23rd August, 1842.



A majority of the Council led by Messrs Beveridge and Malcolm were not prepared to give an inch to the striking operatives. No pecuniary help would be given to those who chose to remain idle. On 13th September, claims were filed by those whose property had been damaged and the elections of 1842 introduced a number of new, less radical Councillors.

66. *The Scotsman*, 7th December, 1842.

One example was the firm of Scotland and Watson who were declared bankrupt in 1842.

The United Secession and Relief congregations suffered most as they were dependent on the Voluntary giving of the weavers. They also had to face the problem of supporting their own poor, particularly before the change to a legal assessment in 1839.

67. "Correspondence between Erskine Beveridge...", op. cit., p.8.

68. *Infra* p.214..

69. *Vide Chapter Thirteen*, pp. 269-270.

#### CHAPTER ELEVEN: pp.225-244.

1. C. Neale, "The struggle of the Dunfermline Handloom Weavers in a Changing Society 1800-1850", unpublished dissertation, Dunfermline 1975, p.33, quoting one of the Assistant Commissioners who investigated handloom weavers in Dunfermline, Parliamentary Papers, 1839, Vol. XLII, p.186.

"...that he observed in Dunfermline 'a striking superiority in the internal appearance of furniture of the weavers' cottages'. As evidence of the Dunfermline weavers' generally good condition he notes that in the winter of 1837-38, when there was a severe depression, only forty adult weavers applied for assistance from the subscription fund of £1,000 raised for relief."

2. *Dunfermline Journal*, 27th January, 1854.

3. D. Thomson, unpublished "Notebooks", held privately, Dunfermline, 1893-1906, 1.395.

"The weavers of Dunfermline were, like nearly all other Scotchmen when discussing abstract questions strangely inconsistent. We have noticed instances of this in the matter of Free Trade. In local and general, political and social questions they exhibited all the freedom necessary to full discussion. In religious matters it was however a different thing: while they spoke roundly, not to say profusely, on the Charter etc., they were solemn as night owls when religion was the topic of debate or observance. They would sing in terrible dissonance, but with immense verve, the psalms of David or the hymns of Michael Bruce; and pray with such loudly expressed unction, as to make one believe the suggestion of ex Provost Kerr, when speaking of his neighbour James Fergus that 'God Almighty was dull of hearing'. The weavers would discuss such things as the Second Coming, the Entire or Partial Divinity of Christ, the Natural Sources of his miracle working power, whether when he raised Lazarus from the dead he was exercising the whole or only part of his Divine power. These and many other topics now never heard of, were earnestly discussed and prayed over, by the weavers of 60 years ago in 1830."

4. "Provision for the Poor in the Parish of Dunfermline", (Dunfermline: 1815).

5. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 27th January, 1836.

6. *Fife Herald*, 28th April, 1831.



7. *Fifeshire Journal*, 25th May, 1833.  
The Association had been set up by the Voluntaries with Mr Law of St Margarets United Secession Church as chief administrator. At the meeting the main speech was made by Dr Taylor of Auchtermuchty and it was to this that the general observation about "godless blasphemy" referred.
8. *Ibid.*, 29th June, 1833.
9. *Ibid.*, 11th April, 1835.  
"The radical majority of the Town Council refuse the use of the Town House, to the Presbytery, as heretofore, unless paid for, and have ejected or intend to eject from the same place, a Sabbath School taught by a minister of the Establishment."  
The journalist commented, "This is surely carrying radical and voluntary principles too far."
10. *Ibid.*, 20th July, 1837.
11. Vide Chapter Six, pp. 111-116.
12. cf. P. Chalmers, "*Strictures on some sayings and doings of the Dunfermline Voluntaries*", (Glasgow: 1835).  
J. Law, "*Reply to the Strictures of the Rev Peter Chalmers on the recent sayings and doings of the Dunfermline Voluntaries*", (Dunfermline: 1835).
13. *Fife Herald*, 31st May, 1838.  
A crowd of over 1,500 men gathered for a great Radical demonstration at which universal suffrage was advocated.
14. *Ibid.*, 20th June, 1839.  
On this occasion only a few hundred gathered and much of what Collins had to say was greeted with hisses.
15. *Fifeshire Journal*, 2nd May, 1839.
16. Thomson, op. cit., 1:388.
17. *Ibid.*, 7:154, quoting *Dunfermline Journal*, 9th September, 1899.
18. *Ibid.*, 1:360.
19. Chalmers, op. cit., p.3.
20. *Fifeshire Journal*, 28th July, 1839.
21. *Ibid.*, 16th July, 1840.
22. *Ibid.*, 27th December, 1839.
23. The journalists of the *Fifeshire Journal* appear to have supported the Establishment against the wilder excesses of Chartism; nor were they impressed by the actions of the Dissenting Church in its attempts to accommodate the new movement.
24. *Fifeshire Journal*, 1st June, 1837.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, 20th July, 1837.
27. The series of lectures was begun towards the end of 1844.
28. *Fifeshire Journal*, 26th December, 1840.
29. *Dunfermline Journal*, 21st April, 1906., quoting *Fife Herald*, 11th April, 1839.
30. Thomson, op. cit., 1:78.
31. *Fife Herald*, 17th October, 1861.
32. Protest appended to "*Queries put to John Gibson, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools*", signed by Thomas Morrison, 7th November, 1840.  
"The new school forms a part of a scheme for the aggrandizement of a particular sect - and in consequence of this is viewed with great suspicion and distrust by a very large portion of inhabitants of other denominations. They would also remark that every additional grant founded on exclusive principles, not only excites jealousies and animosities, but also tends to retard the



Establishment of a National scheme of education in the benefits of which all might participate."

33. *Fife Herald*, 11th April, 1839.
34. E. Henderson, The Annals of Dunfermline, (Glasgow: 1879), p.520.
35. *Fifeshire Journal*, 1852.
36. "Reports on the speeches delivered at a Church and School Extension meeting", (Edinburgh: 1839), p.36.
37. "Disruption Memorials", unpublished notebook, Dunfermline 1865, p.76.
38. T. Morrison, "Heddekashun and Handication", (Dunfermline: 1834), p.2.
39. Ibid., p.3.
40. Ibid., pp. 3ff.
41. Ibid., pp. 4f.
42. Ibid., pp. 3ff.
43. F. Wall, Andrew Carnegie, (Oxford: 1970), p.34.
44. *Fife Herald*, 14th March, 1844.
45. *Dunfermline Press*, 18th September, 1869.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., 5th February, 1870.
48. Morrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 5ff.  
"...especially on Sunday evenings, for which Cobbett's Register is always the lesson."
49. cf. J. Inglis, "Letter to the United Secession Presbytery of Dunfermline", (Dunfermline: 1847).
50. *Fifeshire Journal*, 7th December, 1833.
51. Ibid., 16th July, 1840.
52. *Fife Herald*, 1st May, 1838.
53. Ibid., 27th December, 1838.
54. Ibid., 3rd January, 1839.
55. Ibid., 24th January, 1839.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., 2nd January, 1840.
58. Ibid., 19th December, 1839.
59. Ibid., 2nd January, 1840.
60. *Fifeshire Journal*, 12th December, 26th December, 1839.
61. *Fife Herald*, 18th August, 1831.  
This was the Church which William Carnegie attended after leaving the United Secession. It was also the Church where individuals could enrol in 1846 for the land scheme promoted by Chartists.
62. Ibid., 31st May, 1838.
63. *Fifeshire Journal*, January, 1841.
64. *St Andrews Quoad Sacra Congregational Meeting*, 13th July, 1838.
65. *Fifeshire Journal*, 21st October, 1847.
66. *Chalmers Street United Secession Minutes for Religious and Congregational Purposes*, 27th January, 1848.
67. A. Carnegie, My Own Story, (Cambridge: 1931), p.5.
68. P. Chalmers, Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline, Vol. I, (Edinburgh: 1844), p.475.
69. Henderson, *op. cit.*, p.651.  
They styled themselves "general merchants."
70. Chalmers, *op. cit.*, Vol II, (Edinburgh: 185 ), pp. 350-351.
71. *Fifeshire Journal*, 3rd March, 1836.
72. Ibid., 4th March, 1841.
73. Ibid., 1st October, 1840.
74. "Viewfield Baptist Church Centenary, 1841-1941".  
"The subject of instrumental music introduced serious discord at



this time. It is on record that at Mr Thomson's induction social 'several psalms were sung' accompanied by Mr Lillar (leader of the Psalmody) on the seraphim (early form of harmonium). That was on 16th December, 1846. In 1860 an endeavour was made to introduce instrumental music into the Sabbath service, on the ground that it is a Scriptural practice and Divinely commanded. The proposal was defeated, the counter argument being that 'instrumental music is contrary to New Testament practice.' The seraphim was permitted only at social gatherings."

75. *Fife Herald*, 28th April, 1831.
76. *Fifeshire Journal*, 7th March, 1844.
77. *Ibid.*, 11th March, 1847.

CHAPTER TWELVE: pp.245-277.

1. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 11th December, 1848.
2. Vide Chapter Eight, p.166.
3. J. Inglis, "Letter to the United Secession Presbytery of Dunfermline", (*Dunfermline*: 1847), p.3.
4. *Fife Herald*, 13th March, 1845.
5. *Fife Herald*, 29th January, 5th February, 1846.  
At a meeting reported in 5th February, 1846, the Rev Mr McMichael and others showed the folly in resisting or attempting to resist the enrolment of the Militia by taking up arms in case of being balloted. Mr Walker was against the ideas of Mr McMichael as he saw the whole measure as one opposed to Christianity, justice, morality and the freedom of the British people. However, the meeting agreed that the measure was one mainly against the working class.
6. These smaller Meeting Houses tended to be used rather than the Secession Churches where discontent that such use should be made of God's House had been evident in the late 1830's.
7. *Fifeshire Journal*, 13th April, 1845; 15th June, 1848.  
The main argument at a meeting held in the old Relief Church was that those who wanted universal suffrage were like a hungry boy who would not take a piece of bread unless he had the whole loaf.
8. *Fife Herald*, 3rd January, 1861.
9. *Fifeshire Journal*, 2nd March, 1865.
10. *Fife Herald*, 20th June, 1861.
11. *Ibid.*, 27th June, 1861.
12. *Queen Anne Street K.S. Minutes*, 20th August, 1839.  
*United Associate Secession Presbytery*, 17th December, 1839.
13. *Fife Herald*, 15th November, 1860.
14. *Ibid.*, 15th December, 1850.  
Mr Marshall said that the main hindrance to co-operation among evangelical Christians was the "bringing of political differences into their theological doings."
15. *Fifeshire Journal*, 30th January, 1868.
16. *Dunfermline Journal*, 16th March, 1878.  
Dr Beith said that the Free Church were the Church of Scotland and not Seceders. They had separated as the Church of Scotland from the State and had, therefore, a moral responsibility to extend to all parts of the country.
17. *Ibid.*, 8th May, 1880.
18. *Ibid.*, 8th April, 1882.  
The matter was discussed in an article on "Instrumental Music in Dunfermline Churches".



19. *Fife Herald*, 14th June, 1870.
20. *Dunfermline Journal*, 8th April, 1882.
21. *Ibid.*, 24th July, 1880.  
The article said, however, that "Dr Begg thinks the Church is entering into its greatest struggle since the Reformation."
22. *Dunfermline Press*, 18th December, 1880.  
A meeting of the office bearers of the Free Church in Dunfermline gave support to Professor Smith, "That this meeting regards the outcome of the Commission .....as unwarrantable, that the mode of procedure was oppressive and unjust to Professor Smith, and was calculated to affect injuriously the higher interests of the Church, and to imperil the Christian liberty of the office bearers."
23. *Dunfermline Journal*, 7th January, 1882.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, 13th April, 1878.
26. *Ibid.*, 27th April, 1878.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, 13th April, 1878.
29. *Ibid.*, 11th March, 1882.
30. *Ibid.*, 20th December, 1879.
31. *Dunfermline Press*, 24th November, 1883.
32. *Dunfermline Journal*, 28th October, 1884.
33. *Ibid.*, 21st June, 1884.
34. *Dunfermline Press*, 13th May, 1871.
35. *Ibid.*, 18th May, 1872.
36. *Fife Herald*, 12th January, 1860.
37. *Ibid.*, 2nd June, 1864.
38. *North Parish Managers' Minutes*, (SRO-CH2-641-2)
39. *Fife Herald*, 7th March, 1861.
40. *Fifeshire Journal*, 2nd March, 1861.
41. *Dunfermline Press*, 23st September, 1869.
42. *Ibid.*, 21st November, 1868.
43. A. Cheyne, The Transforming of the Kirk. Victorian Scotland's Religious Revolution. (Edinburgh: 1983).
44. *Dunfermline Journal*, 14th February, 1880.
45. *Ibid.*, 15th March, 1884.
46. D. Thomson, unpublished "Notebooks", held privately, Dunfermline, 1893-1906, 2:40.
47. *Dunfermline Journal*, 13th July, 1878.
48. *Ibid.*, 7th December, 1878; 20th December, 1879.
49. *Ibid.*, 20th May, 1880.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, 19th January, 1884.
52. *Ibid.*, 7th December, 1872.
53. The New Free Abbey was opened in 1884.
54. *Gillespie United Presbyterian K.S. Minutes*, 12th June, 1876.  
The Free Abbey built a hall in the Rumblingwell area while St Margarets set up a Mission station in Albany Street. Gillespie congregation considered setting up a hall in Wellwood.
55. *Dunfermline Press*, 25th March, 1876; 11th December, 1875.
56. *Minutes of Annual meeting of Gillespie United Presbyterian Church*, 16th June, 1878.
57. *Gillespie United Presbyterian Church K.S. Minutes*, 16th March, 1878.
58. *Ibid.*, 6th November, 1878.
59. *Ibid.*

60. *Gillespie United Presbyterian Church Managers' Minutes*, 13th June, 1879.
61. *Gillespie United Presbyterian Church K.S. Minutes*, 18th March, 1882.
62. *Dunfermline Journal*, 24th March, 1883.
63. *Ibid*, 9th August, 1884.
64. *Ibid*.
65. *Ibid.*, 28th June, 1884.
66. *Dunfermline Journal*, 15th March, 1884.
67. *Ibid.*, 6th February, 1892.
68. *Ibid.*, 24th March, 1883.
69. Thomson, *op. cit.*, 2:1080.
70. *Fifeshire Journal*, 7th December, 1833.
71. *Ibid.*, 16th July, 1840.  
A proposed statue in memory of Ralph Erskine was described as that of a "young dandy."
72. *Dunfermline Journal*, 23rd June, 1883.  
In an article it was noted that a few Voluntaries of the "good old type" stay at home or go to worship with the National Zion or Frees. The writer asked, "What would Ralph Erskine think of Queen Anne Street closed on a Fast Day?"
73. *Ibid*.
74. Thomson, *op. cit.*, 2:815.
75. *Dunfermline Press*, 20th March, 1875.
76. *Dunfermline Free North K.S. Minutes*, 25th July, 1893.  
One major clash occurred between the office bearers and the minister of the Free North Church.
77. *Dunfermline Press*, 4th December, 11th December, 1869.
78. E. Simpson, *The Auld Grey Toun*, (Dunfermline: 1987), p.99, quoting J.B. Mackie, Andrew Carnegie: His Dunfermline Ties and Benefactions.
79. *Dunfermline Journal*, 3rd May, 1884.
80. *Ibid*.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: pp.268-328.

1. *Supra*, Chapters Three and Four et passim.
2. *Supra*, pp.47-49.
3. *Supra*, pp.58-63.
4. *Supra*, pp.53-56.
5. *Infra*, pp.294-295.
6. *Supra*, pp.210-217.
7. P. Chalmers, Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline, Vol. I (Edinburgh: 1844), p. 339.  
C. Rogers, Leaves from my Autobiography, (London: 1876), p.90.
8. A.A. MacLaren, Religion and Social Class, (London: 1974), p.131.  
cf. *Gillespie United Presbyterian K.S. Minutes*, 16th July, 1884:  
Though Mr Birrell wanted to resign because of an acute misfortune in business and his fear that his remaining might be injurious to the interests of the congregation, his fellow elders expressed their confidence in him and assured him that they believed the path of Christian service lay in his retaining his place on the Session.
9. *Dunfermline Press*, 18th November, 1876.
10. *Ibid.*, 25th November, 1876.
11. *Dunfermline Journal*, 5th September, 1885.
12. C. Brown, The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730,



- (London: 1987), p.173.
13. Ibid.
  14. Ibid., p.138, quoting I.A. Muirhead, *The revival as a dimension of Scottish Church history*, RSCHS XX 191, 1980.
  15. Supra, pp.262-267.
  16. A Drummond & J. Bulloch, The Scottish Church 1688-1843, (Edinburgh: 1973), p.61.  
When Boston resigned from the National Church to become a minister of an unattached congregation at Jedburgh "the magistrates and council all members of his new charge, walked in procession to the new meeting-house in their insignia of office."
  17. Supra, pp.211ff.
  18. "Free Lance", *The Future Church of Scotland*, (Edinburgh: 1870), pp.65-66.
  19. F. Wall, Andrew Carnegie, (Oxford: 1970), p.50.
  20. MacLaren, op. cit., p.116.
  21. R. Small, The History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church from 1733 to 1900, Vol.II, (Edinburgh; 1904), p.349.
  22. Supra, pp.90-91.
  23. Supra, pp.79ff.
  24. Supra, p.84.
  25. Supra, pp.84-85.
  26. *Fresbytery of Dunfermline*, 23rd March, 1791.
  27. Supra, p.71.
  28. Supra, pp.83-84.
  29. *Minutes of St Andrews Quoad Sacra Congregational Meeting*, 13th July, 1838.
  30. A. Carnegie, My Own Story, (Cambridge: 1931), p.5.
  31. J.J. Barr, The United Free Church of Scotland, (London: 1934), p.20.
  32. *Dunfermline Press*, 20th March, 1875.
  33. *St Margarets United Secession K.S. Minutes*, 5th October, 1845.
  34. *Free North Deacons' Court Minutes*, 5th January, 1857; 30th March, 1857; 19th October, 1857; 6th June, 1867.
  35. A. Drummond & J. Bulloch, The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843-1874, (Edinburgh: 1975), p.49, quoting *Proceedings of the United Presbyterian Synod, Edinburgh 1847-1874*, 1850, pp.265-266.
  36. Supra, pp.158-159.
  37. MacLaren, op. cit., p.104.
  38. Brown, op. cit., pp.154-157.
  39. Quoted by Brown, *ibid.*, p.156.
  40. *Royal Commission on Religious Instruction, Scotland, First Report 1837*, XXIV Appendix VI.
  41. *St Margarets United Presbyterian Church Managers' Minutes*, 25th June, 1860.
  42. Drummond & Bulloch, The Church in Victorian Scotland, op. cit., p.21.
  43. D. Thomson, unpublished *Notebooks*, held privately, Dunfermline, 1893-1906, 1:392.
  44. A system by which manufacturers gave out slips to their workers who could exchange them only at certain shops whose owners worked in conjunction with the manufacturers.
  45. P. Chalmers, "*Strictures on some sayings and doings of the Dunfermline Voluntaries*", (Glasgow: 1835).  
*Royal Commission on Religious Instruction, Scotland, Sixth Report 1839*, XXIV Appendix, pp.374-399.  
*Dunfermline Monthly Advertiser*, June 1851, quoting figures from

the 1851 Census.

46. cf. Brown, op. cit., tables quoted on p.61.
47. Ibid., p.138, quoting Muirhead, op. cit.
48. *Dunfermline Press*, 15th March, 1884.
49. MacLaren, op. cit., p.113.
50. *Fife Journal*, 25th July, 1844.
51. *Dunfermline Journal*, 16th September, 1882.
52. Ibid., 1st June, 1837.
53. Ibid., 20th July, 1837.
54. J. Brown, Gospel Truth accurately stated and illustrated, (Glasgow: 1831), p.385.

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1. N. Murray, The Scottish Hand Loom Weavers, (Edinburgh: 1978).
2. A. MacLaren, Religion and Social Class, (London: 1974).
3. T. Smout, A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950, (London: 1986).
4. Vide Chapter Six, pp. 115-117.
5. Ibid., pp. 117-118.
6. *St Johns Church, Dunfermline, 1850-1950 Centenary Celebrations*.  
cf. C. Neale, "The struggle of the Dunfermline Handloom Weavers in a changing society, 1800-1850", unpublished dissertation, Dunfermline, 1975, p.36.  
From a list of annual expenditure of a weaver of 1849, out of a total income of £27 5s 6d, general expenses not counting food came to £13 1s 2d. Of this latter figure 10/- was spent on two seat rents in a Dissenting Church, 4/- on door collections and 1/6 on children at Sabbath school.
7. Vide Chapter Eight, p.156.
8. Vide Chapter Twelve, p.263.
9. F. Wall, Andrew Carnegie, (Oxford: 1970), p.34.  
Words of William Carnegie on leaving the Secession Church to join the Swedenborgians: "If that be your religion and that be your God, I shall seek a better religion and a nobler God."
10. *Dunfermline Abbey K.S. Minutes*, 11th April, 1853.
11. MacLaren, op. cit., p.210.
12. Vide Chapter Twelve, p.252.
13. Vide Chapter Seven, pp. 146ff.
14. Smout, op. cit., p.208.
15. Vide Chapter Eleven, pp. 243-244.
16. Smout, op. cit., p.192.
17. *Dunfermline Journal*, 16th September, 1882.
18. Smout, op. cit., p.185.
19. *Dunfermline Journal*, 1862.
20. Ibid., 23rd May, 1914.
21. Ibid., 8th May, 1883.
22. Vide Chapter Twelve, p.263.
23. *Dunfermline Journal*, 5th September, 1885.
24. Ibid., 20th December, 1879.  
From a letter signed "Veritas": "Is the United Presbyterian Church becoming a large Liberal or Radical committee?"
25. Smout, op. cit., p.204.



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|      |     | 38    | Index showing when certificates were given by Kirk Session 1746-1826 and when certificates were sustained. |
|      |     | 43-53 | Communion Rolls 1821-1949  |
|      |     | 55    | List of male heads of families 1834-42   |
|      |     | 56    | Scroll Minutes in accounts 1831-7  |

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- |      |     |       |   |
|------|-----|-------|---|
| CH 3 | 568 | 1-10  | Session Minutes from 1740-1896  |
|      |     | 13    | Trustee Minutes 1761-1840   |
|      |     |       | Account of money received for building a Meeting House for Mr Ralph Erskine, and other accounts 1740-9. |
|      |     |       | List of donors to new Burgher Meeting House 1798.   |
|      |     |       | List of seats in Meeting House 1825.  |
|      |     | 14-15 | Trustees' Minutes 1832-1866.  |
|      |     | 16-18 | Baptisms and Marriages 1740-1823.   |

#### Dunfermline Chalmers Street (now St Andrews-Erskine)

- |      |     |       |                             |
|------|-----|-------|-----------------------------|
| CH 3 | 569 | 1-4   | Session Minutes 1855-1942   |
|      |     | 5-7   | Managers' Minutes 1825-1941 |
|      |     | 10-11 | Collections 1817-69         |
|      |     | 16-17 | Communion Roll 1855-1906    |

#### Dunfermline North

- |      |     |   |  |
|------|-----|---|--|
| CH 2 | 641 | 1 | Session Minutes 1855-1915              |
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- |      |      |    |   |
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