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**THE HISTORY OF
THE OPEN BRETHREN
IN SCOTLAND
1838-1999**

VOLUME 2

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CHAPTER 7

A CLEAR-RING TESTIMONY: DEVELOPMENT 1914-1965

Let the truth of God be turned up full blast, a clear-ring testimony given to God's truth and all of it without compromise, with a clear-cut line of separation from teachers, holders, and harbourers of error, and God will always use it to preserve and establish His own, as He has always delighted to do.

—John Ritchie, *The Believer's Magazine*, 32 (1922), p.ii

Mary Gibson, a niece of the central African missionary Jeannie Gilchrist, intended to become a missionary in Africa when in 1915 she matriculated at Glasgow University.¹ Once there, however, she fell in love with a fellow medical student who was a Roman Catholic, the future novelist A J Cronin. Through the character of Daniel Law in *Shannon's Way* (1948), a semi-autobiographical novel, Cronin gave a thinly veiled description of her father, Robert Gibson, a Hamilton master baker who was a leading individual in Baillies Causeway Gospel Hall.² Cronin did not see Law as the 'popular, slightly comic conception of the street-corner evangelist'. Rather he was like Paul, 'righteous and valiant', or one of the patriarchs who 'amidst the roar of the machine age, and the distracting blare of jazz, and the enticing flicker of the cinema... had raised his children in that tradition, not by fear, for he was no tyrant, but by a rule of tempered firmness'. He had saved his daughter 'from the iniquities of dances, card playing and the theatre, reduced her reading to *Good Words* and *Pilgrim's Progress*'. He makes her renounce Shannon—the character which

1. 'Robert Gibson', *BM*, 33 (1923), p.113; A J Cronin, *Adventures in Two Worlds* (London, 1952), p.8; writer's collection, II, University of Glasgow Archivist, to the writer, 18 January 1990. Mary Gibson's mother and Jeannie Gilchrist were daughters of James Gilchrist, 'the Chapelton Baker' (for whom, see above, p.84).

2. 'Robert Gibson', *W*, 53 (1923), p.168.

corresponds to Cronin—her ‘unworthy lover’.³ Cronin’s not unsympathetic portrait shows that strains between acceptance of what society offered and the demands of the sect were perpetuated in the Jazz Age.⁴

World War I had the effect of increasing a sense of alienation from society among the Brethren. This was true not only of the movement during the inter-war period, but also of Evangelicalism as a whole, as the rise of Fundamentalism within it demonstrated. As a result, the second quarter of the twentieth century increased sectarian separatism within the Brethren. Yet Fundamentalism could also draw the Brethren into contact with those outside the movement, and the polarisation which had characterised the movement in earlier phases continued. This issued in a series of schisms, formal and informal, during the period, and while many in the movement were strongly hostile to trends in the wider world, others during this period were closely identified with aspects of culture and society. World War II repeated many of the patterns of the First and its aftermath, but towards the end of the later period the Brethren in Scotland were on the threshold of the most far-reaching changes in their history. The present chapter will examine the impact World War I had on the movement before turning to investigate in the inter-war era Fundamentalism and the movements which called for increased sectarian separation. Conservative reactions to post-World War II change will next be explored. Aspects of the denominationalising counter trend will be surveyed in the final section.

3. A J Cronin, *Shannon’s Way* (1948) NEL edn (London, 1979), p.125; for identical attitudes in Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh (a Baptist church similar in ethos to the Brethren), to comparable amusements in the 1930s as those listed by Cronin, see Eric Lomax, *The Railway Man* (London, 1995), pp.34-5.

4. Cf. HyP[ickering], ‘Jazz and other devilish dances’, *W*, 50 (1920), p.259; for Pickering’s disapproval of the cinema, see, *idem*, ‘WW’, *W*, 63 (1933), p.66; and, *idem*, ‘WW’ *W*, 78 (1948), p.58.

ATTITUDES TO WAR

A substantial section of Scottish Brethren, and certainly the majority in some areas, actively supported Britain's military campaign during World War I.⁵ Most obviously there were the many Brethren who volunteered or later accepted conscription, serving their country with distinction, often at the cost of their lives. However, in view of the strong tradition of pacifism which there was in the Brethren,⁶ *The Witness* took a neutral position as to whether individuals should join the armed forces.⁷ In it Colonel Molesworth stressed the Christian's duty to be subject to the secular powers, but left the application of that principle to the individual's conscience.⁸ There were hints that if conscription were introduced, then military service would be the preferred option, and the compromise solution of a noncombatant role was advocated by its editor Henry Pickering.⁹ Many members were in reserved occupations such as coal mining and fishing, but when conscription was finally introduced in 1916 *The Witness* maintained its neutral stance.¹⁰ Writers in the magazine perceived Britain as being in the right. Drawing upon anti-German propaganda, Pickering stated that the war was one of 'spiritual Principalities and Powers in league with the Passion and Pride of a group

5. This view, based on Scottish evidence, differs from that advanced by Elizabeth K Wilson, 'Brethren Attitudes to Authority and Government with Particular Reference to Pacifism' (University of Tasmania, Australia, thesis for Master of Humanities, 1994), pp.45-58; cf. John Rae, *Conscience and Politics: the British government and the conscientious objector to military service 1916-1919* (London, 1970), pp.74-5, which notes gradations of opinion among different sections of Brethren with the Open section least explicitly noncombatant.

6. Peter Brock, 'The peace testimony of the early Plymouth Brethren', *Church History*, 55 (1984), pp.30-45; Wilson, 'Brethren Attitudes to Authority', pp.30-42.

7. *The Witness*, quoted in Hunter Beattie, 'Mr Facing-Both-Ways', *Christian and War being "The Word of the Cross"* (Glasgow, nd), p.133; I have been unable to trace this quotation in *The Witness*, possibly because it occurred in the cover pages which have not always been available to me; earlier, however, J R Caldwell, had been opposed to Christians voluntarily joining the army: see, J R Caldwell, 'The Christian's relation to the army', *W*, 28 (1898), pp.202-4; *idem*, 'QA', *W*, 33 (1903), pp. 67.

8. Col. Molesworth, 'Should Christians enlist?', *W*, 44 (1914), p.155.

9. Editor's Note, 'Conscription and enlisting', *W*, 45 (1915), p.34.

10. HyP[ickering], 'On the watchtower', *W*, 46 (1916), p.33.

of men lusting to be conquerors of "all the world", renewing the attack of Satan on believers which had been seen throughout Church history. Revival had flourished in the freedom of the English-speaking peoples while it had been repressed in Germany at the Counter-Reformation. It was this freedom which was under assault.¹¹ The balance of right was clearly tipped in Britain's favour. Others advocated joining the armed struggle more directly. At one conference the chairman had commented on the number of young men present and wished that a recruiting sergeant was in attendance.¹² In some assemblies a roll of honour was established at the entrance to the hall,¹³ and prayers were offered for 'our cause'.¹⁴

There were those who joined in the jingoistic militarism of the early war years, using the language of civil religion which made them indistinguishable from the contemporary institutional church. David Beattie, the future historian of the Brethren, was most enthusiastic. In 1914 he wrote a hymn for the use of the British Expeditionary Force imploring the 'God of our nation' to 'Be our army's Head'.¹⁵ His first book, *Oor Gate En'* (1915), was dedicated to those who had volunteered and it contained fourteen 'War Poems', which, among other themes, satirised the Germans, enjoined the USA to join the war, lamented how few volunteers there were, and castigated any 'slackers' who would 'His snivelling voice in discord raise/When death's red hand our manhood slays'.¹⁶ Beattie was not alone in giving expression to such feelings in verse. When Edith

11. *Idem*, "This solemn moment", *W*, 45 (1915), pp.37-8.

12. Beattie, 'Facing-Both-Ways', *Christian and War*, p.134: however, this source should be treated with caution on this point: Beattie's antipathy to those Brethren who opposed him may have led him to exaggerate the speaker's comment.

13. *Ibid.*, p.100.

14. G B to the editor, *BM*, 26 (1916), p.95.

15. Carlisle Library, G852, David Beattie, 'God of Our Nation' (Carlisle [1914]), reprinted in *idem*, *Songs of the King's Highway* (London & Glasgow, 1927), p.35.

16. D J Beattie, *Oor Gate En'* (Galashiels, 1915), pp.73-100.

Cavell was executed in 1915, William Shaw of Maybole apostrophised the national martyr (in strains which owed something to *Sacred Songs and Solos*) who had, he claimed, suffered under 'the lewd and murderous Huns'. 'We are coming Nurse Cavell' he cried in the title:

And not one heart shall falter,
And not one hand shall fail;
Now tremble, all ye murdering hordes,
For Right shall sure prevail.¹⁷

The implication of the capital in the last line above was clear: Britain would win because her cause was that of God. How widespread support for the war was can be seen from the thirty-four different places from which the seventy-five individuals recorded in *The Witness* obituaries as killed in action came.¹⁸ In the pursuit of the war, many Brethren were more than willing to identify with the wider society.

On the other hand there were those who resisted the call to arms. *The Believer's Magazine* opposed Christians joining the army.¹⁹ Casuistically, John Ritchie allowed that soldiering was a matter of conscience, but that the Christian's 'enlightened' conscience could lead to only one conclusion: it was wrong for the believer to resist evil, for the Word of God 'will not lead one Christian to take one way and another the opposite, on a matter so vital to life and testimony as this'.²⁰ However, that the greater blame

17. William Shaw, 'We are Coming Nurse Cavell', in M J Finlayson (ed.), *An Anthology of Carrick* (Kilmarnock, 1925), pp.381-2.

18. *W*, 44-9 (1914-19), *passim*; the places were: Aboyne, Bo'ness, Boddam, Burnbank, Cambuslang, Chryston, Craigellachie, Dalry, Dumfries, Edinburgh, Elgin, Evie, Falkirk, Gatehouse of Fleet, Glasgow (13 different assemblies), Halfway, High Blantyre, Holytown, Irvine, Kilbarchan, Kilmarnock, Kirkmuirhill, Larkhall, Leith, Milngavie, Motherwell, New Stevenston, Paisley, Portessie, Rothesay, Saltcoats, Stirling, Thornliebank, and Tillicoultry.

19. [John Ritchie], 'Should a Christian become a soldier?' *BM*, 24 (1914), p.118; W H Hunter, 'Ought a Christian to join the forces of the crown?', *ibid.*, pp.122-5; the Editor [John Ritchie], 'The Christian and the state', *ibid.*, pp.125-6, 139; [*idem*], 'YBQB', *ibid.*, p.130; J Ritchie, 'The Christian's place of separation and service', *BM*, 25 (1915), p.8; [*idem*], 'YBQB', *ibid.*, p.46.

20. [J Ritchie], 'Arguments n [*sic*] favour of Christians enlisting examined in the light of God's Word', *BM*, 25 (1915), pp.35-6.

resided with Germany and that the Empire was to be preferred was not in dispute in *The Believer's Magazine* either,²¹ and as the war progressed Ritchie modified his position. Although he continued to advocate non-resistance to evil,²² when conscription was introduced he admitted that it was a genuine issue of conscience. 'Uniformity of judgment on such a matter is well-nigh impossible,' he conceded, 'under the diverse teachings which have been so widely given concerning it'.²³ He appeared to favour a noncombatant role²⁴—though he did not rule out conscientious objection to even that—and he printed lists in the magazine of those on active duty.²⁵ Ritchie had developed some sympathy to the aims of his society during the war to the extent that he was prepared to admit that the Bible might be capable of more than one interpretation on this point.

More adamant was an individual such as Hunter Beattie, the leading individual in Tylefield Gospel Hall in the Gallowgate, Glasgow, and an evangelist who became a homeopath. He was against the Christian enlisting and was even opposed to noncombatant work or service in the Medical Corps.²⁶ He claimed that the pacifist position was deliberately excluded from the Glasgow Half-Yearlies,²⁷ and in October 1915 he began an occasional periodical, *The Word of the Cross*, declaiming his opposition. The first issue he distributed outside a conference in Glasgow, which led, he claimed, to the threat of his arrest by a leading Glasgow brother, and the sixth issue—the most controversial thus far—outside the

21. W H Hunter, 'The Great War', *BM*, 24 (1914), pp.97-9; *ibid.*, The Editor [John Ritchie], 'The war in Europe', pp.97-9; [*idem*], 'The sinking of the "Luisitania"', *BM*, 25 (1915), pp.71-2; [*idem*], 'Notes on the rebellion in Ireland', *BM*, 26 (1916), pp.71-2.

22. [*idem*], 'The Christian and the nation', *BM*, 26 (1916), pp.62-3, 76-7; [*idem*], 'The Christian's responsibility to the state', *BM*, 27 (1917), pp.131-2.

23. [*idem*], 'The Military Service Act, and the Christian's relation thereto', *BM*, 26 (1916), pp.34-5.

24. [*idem*], 'Compulsory military service', *BM*, 26 (1916), pp.46-7.

25. *BM*, 27 (January 1917), p.iv.

26. Beattie, 'Christ again before the Tribunal', *Christian and War*, pp. 62, 64.

27. *Idem*, 'Gagging the Lord's servants', *ibid.*, p.96-100.

city's Elim Hall, (Henry Pickering's assembly), following a weeknight meeting.²⁸ After Beattie received unfavourable publicity in a Sunday newspaper, in a letter to the same publication Pickering and the HFMF treasurer, C P Watson,²⁹ denied that Beattie's views represented that of the majority of the Brethren.³⁰ Feelings were running high, and when Glasgow Brethren supplied the War Office with a list of regular preachers among them who might claim exemption from service, Beattie's name was not included. As a result he had to appear before a war tribunal where he succeeded in obtaining exemption.³¹ Others were not so fortunate and many went to prison as conscientious objectors.³² The war confirmed, and perhaps widened, the distance between the polarities of the Brethren, and on the cessation of hostilities concern was expressed that 'the warring spirit' would continue among assemblies.³³ The significance of the above attitudes to war will require further analysis in Chapter 9 for what they reveal about the attitude of the Brethren to the state,³⁴ but in the present context it is enough to note that they confirmed some in their alienation from society.

There was, however, one response to the war in which combatant and conscientious objector were united: the conflict was an indication that the end of the age was near.³⁵ Walter Scott, a publisher and writer on eschatological topics, in the first article to appear in *The Witness* on the

28. Beattie, 'Preface', *ibid.*, p.7; 'The persecution', *ibid.*, p. 122.

29. For HFMF see above, p.180.

30. Beattie, 'persecution', *Christian and War.*, p.123.

31. *Ibid.*, pp.123-4.

32. The Liddle Collection, Leeds University Library, Leeds, 'Experience of John Campbell, Brookfield, Fenwick, during the First World War, both as a volunteer and a conscientious objector' (undated typescript deposition); James Montgomerie, 'My Odyssey' (undated, unpublished typescript), in the possession of Mrs Nora Montgomerie, Edinburgh (James Montgomerie was an evangelist with the Vernalite party of the Churches of God).

33. *The Witness*, quoted in Beattie, *Christian and War*, p.133 (see above, n. 7).

34. See below, pp.389-91.

35. Cf. Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, pp.74-5.

war's relationship to prophecy, dismissed any idea that it could be read as an indicator of the proximity of the second advent,³⁶ but by the following month J R Caldwell was arguing that the war showed that the time of Gentile domination was almost at an end and that Israel's restoration was close, both thought to be crucial indicators of the imminence of the *parousia*.³⁷ However it was held by all that the end was not yet; the war could not be Armageddon, for the wrong nations were involved.³⁸ Walter Scott did admit that though the war was not an event of prophecy, nevertheless it might be a sign, and the frequency with which articles and series on prophecy appeared in both *The Witness* and *The Believer's Magazine* shows that it was indeed perceived as an indicator of the end. Between 1914 and 1919 Scott's *Exposition of the Revelation of the Jesus Christ* went through three editions,³⁹ in 1915 William Tytler, a Glasgow evangelist, published his lectures on prophecy⁴⁰ and John Ritchie did the same with his on Daniel (1915) and Revelation (1916) because the war was 'turning the thoughts of many Christians toward the prophetic word'.⁴¹ The Lord's certain coming might not be reliably indicated by the war, but the consensus was that it was one more sign that it was very near.

Allied to this sense of crisis was a profound feeling of pessimism at the course which society was taking. The causes of the First World War were quite clear to Brethren writers. It was God's judgment on the sins of the nations. In his initial response to the war in *The Witness* of August 1914

36. Walter Scott, 'Prophecy and the coming crises', *W*, 44 (1914), p.136; cf. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 47 (1917), p.99.

37. J R Caldwell, "'The times of the gentiles'", *W*, 44 (1914), p.152.

38. W W Fereday, 'The present crisis: its relation to the prophetic scripture', *W*, 44 (1914), p.154.

39. The third edition was published in 1914 and the fifth edition was published either in 1918 or 1919.

40. William Tytler, *Plain Talks on Prophecy or, the great prophetic cycles of time* (Glasgow [1915]), pp.77-8.

41. John Ritchie, *Lectures on the Book of Daniel with expository notes on "The Times of the Gentiles" and prophetic subjects* (Kilmarnock, 1915), p.3.

Henry Pickering had exempted Britain from any blame. On the contrary, it was Britain, along with the United States, which had done the most to disseminate the scriptures throughout the world and as a result both countries had been left in peace. He felt that probable cause of the war was God's judgment on Russia, Germany and France for their respective persecution of Jews and Protestant sects, the production of higher criticism, and for the promotion of atheism.⁴² Britain entered the war on 4 August, making his editorial anachronistic by the time many of his readers would see it, and in later comments Pickering was not so sanguine about the nation.⁴³ Others too had no difficulty in identifying the sins which had brought the war upon Europe.⁴⁴ A further cause of pessimism was the bloodshed which the war had brought. From the beginning Pickering calculated the number slaughtered,⁴⁵ while Hunter Beattie deplored 'the dreaded vortex of war, with its unparalleled suffering and slaying of men'.⁴⁶ The end of the war only served to increase the despair. Writing in 1919 Pickering felt that due to modern communications the world was being 'welded together for the last great conflict', depravity—such as unbelief and the events of the war—was increasing, and economic and political uncertainty created the expectation of a 'super-man', a figure of evil who would lead the nations against Christ.⁴⁷ Increased Jewish emigration to Palestine and the creation of the League of Nations—harbinger of a world union opposed to God—were also widely seen as presaging the end.⁴⁸ J Muir Kelly, the founder of the Jewish

42. HyP[ickering], 'The European upheaval', *W*, 44 (1914), p.133.

43. HyP[ickering], 'The world at war', *ibid.*, p.166; *idem.*, 'How the war proves the Bible true', *W*, 47 (1917), pp. 65-7.

44. L W G Alexander, 'The night in Scotland', *W*, 46 (1916), p.146; Beattie, *Christian and War*, pp.74-82; The Editor [John Ritchie], 'The war in Europe', *BM*, 24 (1914), pp.97-9.

45. HyP[ickering], 'The European War', *W*, 44 (1914), p.149; *idem.*, 'The War of millions', *ibid.*, p.181; *idem.*, 'Six million casualties', *W*, 45 (1915), p.33; *idem.*, *W*, 46 (1916), p.32

46. Beattie, 'A lost opportunity', *Christian and War*, p.16.

47. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 49 (1919), p.84.

48. *Idem.*, 'WW', *W* 49 (1919), pp.52, 100.

Medical Mission, summed up the general mood of the immediate post-war years: 'The air is heavy with the threat of impending storm. Fears and forebodings are paralysing the industry of the people. Revolt is preached in public places, and the spirit of lawlessness is abroad.'⁴⁹ The eschatological pessimism of the movement will be discussed further in the next chapter.⁵⁰ In this period it dominated the thought of Brethren of different tendencies, uniting them in a chorus of gloom.

The war had important consequences for the Brethren *mentalité*. Attitudes had been polarised by the different stances which had been taken towards fighting and was a further factor which added to the strains within the movement which issued in schisms in the inter-war years.⁵¹ The sectarian and denominationalising tendencies which had been present in the Edwardian era were clearly marked out by the conflict.⁵² World War I undoubtedly confirmed a sense of separateness in those who became conscientious objectors; and both it and the succeeding instability had increased the sense of alienation from society of even those Brethren who actively supported the British military effort. To the Brethren, the war had justified what they had always felt to be true of society. The world was rapidly decaying and the second advent presented an imminent escape from the turmoil.⁵³ These several factors hardened Brethren resistance to the trends of society and led to a more intransigent expression of their own world view. In the post-war years they entered the era of Fundamentalism.

FUNDAMENTALISM

For the jubilee of the Glasgow Half-Yearly Conferences in 1914 the

49. J Muir Kelly, 'The cure of unrest', *W*, 50 (1920), p.329.

50. See below, pp.322-30.

51 . Cf. Wilson, 'Brethren Attitudes to Authority', p.58.

52. See above, pp.211-18.

53. HyP[ickering] 'WW', *W*, 47 (1917), p.122.

conveners took as their theme for both the spring and autumn diets 'the Fundamentals'. The series concentrated on basic doctrines and John Gray, one of the conveners, stated that these topics were chosen because 'it was thought wise, in these days of declension and departure from the faith, that there should be a restatement of those "things most surely believed amongst us"'. He felt that the large numbers attending showed that they had correctly read the interests and needs of the audience.⁵⁴ The term 'fundamentals', as already has been seen, had long been used among Brethren,⁵⁵ but is likely that on this occasion the conveners were also influenced by the series of transatlantic pamphlets of the same title, issued in the years 1910-15, which have been seen as giving rise to the term 'Fundamentalism' in the 1920s.⁵⁶ The reassertion of the basic doctrines of Brethren Evangelicalism on such a significant event was part of the response to new currents of thought which were instinctively felt to be hostile.

In his study of the American Fundamentalist movement of the 1920s George M Marsden has argued that it was characterised by the intensity of its response to attempts by theological modernism to remould Christianity in accordance with contemporary thought. It was the militancy which was injected into the resistance that gave birth to it as a separate phenomenon within Protestant Evangelicalism. Marsden analyses it as having four key emphases: dispensationalist premillennialism, withdrawal from society fostered by the holiness movement, a robust defence of the faith, and a

54. J G[ray], 'The Fundamentals', *W*, 44 (1914), p.89; the quotation is of Lk 1:1.

55. See above, p.221.

56. George M Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford, 1980), pp.118-123.

negative assessment of culture.⁵⁷ It has already been argued that the Brethren were protofundamentalists in the nineteenth century,⁵⁸ and, as can be seen from Marsden's definition, the two movements had close affinities.⁵⁹ Yet a note of caution was expressed. Henry Pickering regretted the birth of one more 'ism' when already assemblies were loyal to the word of God.⁶⁰ John Ritchie rejected the new term outright as it would mean being associated with an interdenominational movement,⁶¹ and during his control of *The Believer's Magazine* it did not reflect the specific issues of Fundamentalism. Both men, however (as were all other Brethren individuals during this period) were Fundamentalists. Ritchie had long felt the animus against modernism which characterised the new movement,⁶² and by the late 1920s, when his health was poor, articles raising the concerns of Fundamentalism began to appear and they occurred more frequently after his death in 1930.⁶³ Pickering was less inhibited about acknowledging outside influences. While commenting on an article by the American Fundamentalist R A Torrey he noted that it showed assemblies were 'TRUE FUNDAMENTALISTS, although they prefer to abide by the titles given by God',⁶⁴ and *The Witness*, which Pickering proudly claimed was the longest continued magazine 'out and

57. *Ibid.*, pp.3-6; for Fundamentalism in Britain during this period, see D W Bebbington, 'Baptists and Fundamentalism in inter-war Britain' *SCH: Subsidia*, 7 (Oxford, 1990), pp.297-326; *idem*, 'Martyrs for the truth: Fundamentalists in Britain' *SCH*, 30 (Oxford, 1993), pp.417-452; Ian S Rennie, 'Fundamentalism and the varieties of North Atlantic Evangelicalism', in Mark A Noll *et al.* (eds), *Evangelicalism: comparative studies of popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and beyond 1700-1990* (New York, 1994), pp.333-50.

58. See above, p.221.

59. Cf. H A Ironside, *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement* (1945) rpt. (Neptune, New Jersey, 1985), p.7; Ian M. Randall, 'Movements of Evangelical spirituality in inter-war England', (University of Wales Ph.D. thesis, 1997), pp.209-12.

60. HyP[ickering], 'Who are the true Fundamentalists?', *W*, 54 (1924), p.403.

61. [John Ritchie], 'What are the Fundamentals?', *BM*, 34 (1925), p.39; cf. *BM*, 34 (1925), p.153.

62. See the epigraph to the present chapter.

63. For examples, see below, n. 72.

64. HyP[ickering], 'Who are the "Fundamentalists?"', *W*, 53 (1923), p.129.

out on the Fundamentals of the Faith',⁶⁵ regularly carried articles and comments which showed familiarity with the issues that were agitating adherents of the new movement.

It was not just the principal two magazines which disseminated the Fundamentalist project. Sermons and special series of addresses also communicated Fundamentalist concerns.⁶⁶ The St Andrews Summer Convention for Young Men and Young Women took as its theme for 1924 'The Testimony of Christ to the Fundamentals'.⁶⁷ Alexander Marshall went on the attack with *Christ or the "Critics": whom shall we believe?* (1923), and Henry Pickering wrote *The Believer's Blue Book* (1930) which, taking its title from Parliamentary reports, surveyed the items which he considered to be essential truths for assemblies,⁶⁸ and in addition he began the 'Handbooks of the Fundamentals' series in 1926.⁶⁹ Literary forms were also pressed into service. Andrew Borland, an Ayrshire English teacher, wrote a children's novel which impressed the reliability of the Old Testament on its readers through a series of tendentious conversations which the characters have with a Christian schoolmaster.⁷⁰ David Beattie fused the Scottish literary Kailyard with Fundamentalism in his poems about Betty, who rebuts the mockery of her doctor concerning the improbability of Jonah by claiming:

For I'd believe't gin God declared
That Jonah gulp'd the whale!⁷¹

65. *Idem*, 'About "The Witness"', *W*, 57 (1927), p.213; cf. Bebbington, 'Martyrs for the Truth', p.423.

66. *W*, 57 (1927), 36; J G[ray], 'Large gathering of Scottish saints', *W*, 58 (1928), pp.351-2; *idem*, 'Glasgow spring conferences 1935', *W*, 55 (1935), pp.133-4.

67. 'Summer convention for Bible study', *W*, 54 (1924), p.385; for this convention, see above, p.260.

68. Henry Pickering, *The Believer's Blue Book* (Glasgow, [1930]).

69. For the first two works issued in this series, see above, p.10.

70. Andrew Borland, *The Cradle of the Race* (Kilmarnock, n.d.).

71. D J Beattie, 'Betty and the Critic', in *idem*, *Oor Ain Folk* (Carlisle, 1933), pp.56-7; cf. 'Betty and the Squire', *ibid.*, pp.64-6.

It was not only, as is evident from the above examples, the cardinal points of Christian doctrine and the verbal inerrancy of the Bible and its plenary inspiration which were stressed; but also modernism, critical biblical scholarship and contemporary cults and trends in society were regularly attacked.⁷² Even the political unrest of the 1920s could be perceived as being related to unorthodoxy in the churches.⁷³ A special place, however, was kept for evolutionary theory which, because of its influence on the young, was felt to be an especial danger.⁷⁴ Pickering maintained that it needed only the addition of an initial 'D' to 'indicate its origin and its destiny',⁷⁵ and even the encroachment of science into preaching was felt to be acceptable if it meant that 'mere theories like Darwinism' were condemned.⁷⁶ Fundamentalist concerns permeated every aspect of assembly life.

Other denominations were seen to be riddled with false teaching. Pickering maintained that there was not one 'that contends for the fundamentals of the Christian faith'⁷⁷ and that tolerance had been taken too far.⁷⁸ Both he and Marshall quoted the example of C H Spurgeon who when faced with those who rejected the fundamentals of the gospel stated that the 'bounden duty of the true believer' was 'to come out from among

72. HyP[ickering], 'WW', 47 (1917), p.83; Alexander Marshall, 'Scheme of leading Evangelical preachers on eternal punishment', W, 50 (1920), pp.233-4; HyP[ickering], 'WW', 54 (1924), p.324; *idem*, 'Modernism or the old faith', W, 55 (1925), pp.181-3; A Borland, 'The Kenosis theory', BM, 38 (1928), pp.107-8; J G[ray], 'Large gathering of Scottish saints', W, 58 (1928), pp.351-2; E W Rodgers, 'Eternal Punishment', BM, 39-40 (Dec. 1929-Jan. 1930); W Hoste, 'Things most surely believed among us', W, 60 (1930), pp.241-3; F A Tatford, 'The Bible reliable', BM, 41 (1931), pp.86-9, 108-110; D J Beattie, 'Authenticity of the Scriptures confirmed by the spade', W, 52 (1932), pp.37-8.

73. HyP[ickering], 'WW', (1923), p.66.

74. E.g., C F Hogg speaking in Aberdeen, W 58 (1927), p.276.

75. HyP[ickering], 'WW', W, 57 (1927), p.194.

76. 'BQB', BM, 42 (1932), p.48.

77. HyP[ickering], 'WW', 50 (1920), p.210.

78. *Idem*, 'WW', 55 (1925), p.94.

them'.⁷⁹ Fundamentalists should logically join the Brethren. But John Ritchie was right in maintaining that engagement with Fundamentalism could lead to a lessening of Brethren separateness. Fundamentalist nondenominational preachers such as H A Ironside or A W Pink, were welcomed to address assemblies,⁸⁰ and a number of Brethren found the Gideons International, an organisation dedicated to placing Bibles in public places, congenial.⁸¹ James Anderson, the wartime MBE, for a few years after 1921 became a lecturer at the theologically conservative Bible Training Institute, Glasgow.⁸² Cooperation can be seen most clearly, however, in the role some Brethren individuals played in the formation of the Inter Varsity Fellowship (IVF), the conservative Evangelical student body founded in 1923 in protest at the increasing liberalism of the Student Christian Movement (SCM).⁸³ At Glasgow University the first president of the new body was from the Brethren and others had key roles in the formation of societies at Aberdeen and Edinburgh.⁸⁴ At a national IVF conference John Rollo, then a recent graduate of St Andrews, inspired several students to found one at his *alma mater*.⁸⁵ An early president of Aberdeen IVF, the young Frederick F Bruce, managed to combine it with membership of SCM.⁸⁶ Brethren involvement in IVF was to influence individuals such as William Still, a future Evangelical leader in the

79. Marshall, *Christ or the "Critics"*, pp.30-2; Henry Pickering, 'Modernism or the Old Faith', *W*, 55 (1925), pp.181-3 (later published as *Modernism versus the "Old Faith"* (London & Glasgow [1926])).

80. E S English, *H A Ironside: ordained of the Lord* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1946), pp. 221-4; Iain H Murray, *The Life of Arthur W. Pink* (Edinburgh, 1981), pp.93-4; for the view of the present writer that Ironside was effectively non-Brethren in this period, see above, p.8, n.33; however, Ironside's Scottish Brethren roots meant he could conveniently be regarded as a member by contemporaries.

81. 'Dr J. Brown-Hendry', *W*, 96 (1966), p.315; 'Mrs Wallace Lee' *W*, 102 (1972), p.312; 'William Martin', *BM*, 103 (1973), p.432.

82. J G[ray], 'James A. Anderson, London', *BP*, 50 (1929), pp.34-6.

83. *DSCHT*, p.432; Oliver Barclay, *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995* (Leicester, 1997), pp.24-5.

84. W R Soutter *et al.*, to the editor, *W*, 53 (1923), pp.166, 169.

85. Douglas Johnson, *Contending For the Faith: a history of the Evangelical movement in the universities and colleges* (Leicester, 1979), p.133.

86. F F Bruce, *In Retrospect: remembrance of things past* (London & Glasgow, 1980), pp.45-6.

Church of Scotland,⁸⁷ and in turn assembly members associated with para-church bodies came to understand that the Christian world was broader than the Brethren. Nevertheless the general impression was that the churches were corrupt and events were moving to their eschatological conclusion. When in 1932 a speaker at the Keswick Convention allegedly posited that Christ could have come down from the cross, it was felt that this was 'but part of the world-wide apostasy that is ripening fast for the reception of the man of Sin'.⁸⁸ The influence of Fundamentalism, like that of the World War I, was to make the Brethren more pessimistic about the direction of society and, in a time of change, more profoundly conservative.

SECTARIAN RESURGENCE

As was noted in the previous chapter, at least twenty-three new assemblies came into existence due to schisms in the inter-war era with a further seven in the decade succeeding World War II.⁸⁹ Assemblies have always been prone to divisions, but their incidence in these years was high. Often the source of the strife was a conflict of personalities, but during this time the deep splits in determining the strictness of purity in practice continued and were intensified. Many assemblies were like the one at Campbeltown in this period, contended over by competing tendencies.⁹⁰ Fundamentalist anxieties could be handy sticks with which to beat opponents. Ritchie made the unlikely claim that 'simple Assemblies of God... are being assailed with such subtleties and reasonings by men who have "crept in

87. William Still, *Dying to Live* (Fearn, 1991), p.84.

88. W H[oste], *BM*, 42 (1932), p.286.

89. See above, pp.246, 251-2; one of the eight post-war ones was founded after 1955.

90. Campbeltown, Argyll, Springbank Evangelical Church: 'Minutes of Business Meetings in connexion with the Assembly of God's People meeting in Shore Street Hall, Campbeltown, Argyll 1925-31', 30 May 1929; 16 June 1930; 'Minutes of Business Meetings in Connexion with the Assembly of brethren meeting in Springbank Gospel Hall, Campbeltown 4th February 1931 -1951', 30 June 1933; 22 June 1936.

unawares” causing division.⁹¹ This was the legacy of the movement’s profound unease over societal change which had been expressed by its Fundamentalist concerns. The result was an increased emphasis on sectarian distinctiveness.⁹²

One issue which for many focused the singularity of Brethren ecclesiology was the reception of other Christian bodies into the movement. Mission halls had to give guarantees that they had discontinued unacceptable practices, such as women preaching, and even then some never found universal acceptance.⁹³ In Lanarkshire the accessions from the Stuart Party Exclusives proved exceptionally controversial. The one in Carlisle (popularly known as ‘the Scott meeting’ after its leading individual, jam manufacturer James Scott) and the Open Brethren meeting in the town united in 1920.⁹⁴ Doubts were raised about Scott’s acceptance of believer’s baptism,⁹⁵ and several months later the two congregations separated.⁹⁶ In 1921 a group of seventy ‘representative brethren of assemblies in Lanarkshire’ met to discuss this dispute and they upheld the decision to divide.⁹⁷ Evidently stung by accusations being levelled against them, the Scott meeting published an outline of its beliefs, asserting Fundamentalist doctrines but maintaining that no particular mode of baptism would be insisted upon as it was not ‘a foundational truth vital to the salvation of the soul’.⁹⁸ Olive Hall, Hamilton, had been included in the Open Brethren

91. [John Ritchie], *BM*, 34 (1925), p.24; the quotation is from Jude 4.

92. Roy Coad, ‘Into a changing future: the evolution of a movement and coping with change’, (a paper presented at a conference in Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, 1991), pp.5-6; Randall, ‘Evangelical Spirituality’, pp.226-9.

93. Oral information, 24 August 1987; 3 April 1989; 17 July 1989; and 29 November 1989.

94. *W*, 51 (1921), p.38; ‘James Scott’, *W*, 88 (1958), p.260; James Anderson (ed.), *They Finished their Course in the Eighties* (Kilmarnock, 1990), p.125.

95. Oral information, 15 November 1986.

96. *W*, 50 (1920), p.328; *BM*, 32 (1922), p.11.

97. CBA uncatalogued papers, Robert Chapman to Henry Pickering, 11 March 1921, anon. MS transcript; it seems likely that this letter was intended for publication in *The Witness* but it did not appear: cf. *BM*, 30 (Oct. 1921), p.i; and *BM*, 32 (1922), p.11.

98. T C Suffil *et al.*, *Gospel Hall. Carlisle* (n.p., March 1923).

address list since 1904,⁹⁹ but about 1930 when one of its members wanted to join another Lanarkshire Open assembly, the latter meeting split over the issue, the secessionists making appeal to the 1921 judgment.¹⁰⁰ They were accused of holding “‘Needed Truth Dogma’”,¹⁰¹ presumably because a central decision was being insisted upon as binding, while those who left felt the others had ‘embraced evil’, presumably because they could tolerate the presence of a former member of Olive Hall.¹⁰²

The accusations levelled in this last schism were significant for they focus the issues which were involved for the participants. Those who wanted greater uniformity of practice among assemblies welcomed consultation with others when a dispute threatened.¹⁰³ They also stressed careful purity of practice in the administration of church life. In much of this they had affinities with those who left in the Churches of God secession of the previous century. There were those who felt that accessions from the latter body and the Exclusives during this period had imported their practices,¹⁰⁴ and certainly many Brethren were widely read in Exclusive literature.¹⁰⁵ But it is more likely that these trends were already current within the Open Brethren which was the reason for their appeal. The other group tended to be more pragmatic. In the 1930s after a further consultation of representative Brethren failed, one leading preacher counselled the three Stuart Party assemblies to seek individual recognition from their nearest Open ones and to avoid public debate.¹⁰⁶ Both the Scott meeting in Carluke and Albion Hall, Larkhall, were able to be accepted as Open

99. See above, p.157.

100. Oral information, 15 November 1986.

101. CBA uncatalogued papers, circular letter, 18 March 1931, MS.

102. *Ibid.*, draft letter fragment, undated MS.

103. Cf. above, p.226.

104. Robert Barnett, “‘Brethren’ history and its lessons for us to-day”, *W*, 57 (1927), pp.127-8.

105. See above Table 1.1.

106. Oral information from the individual concerned, 24 April 1986.

Brethren in this way;¹⁰⁷ and in 1951 Olive Hall was eventually recognised by Baillies Causeway Gospel Hall, allowing general acceptance by others.¹⁰⁸ Pragmatism could not commend itself, however, to those who wished a uniformly pure practice and among them there was an increasing strictness. The policy of welcoming paedo-baptists to the Lord's supper was further eroded, as can be seen from the Carluke dispute, by being rejected or reinterpreted.¹⁰⁹ Customs that had been formerly acceptable to all, such as 'tea meetings', at which John Ritchie, for example, had spoken, began to be regarded as frivolous entertainment. It was the latest phase of the conflict between the pragmatic denominationalising tendency and that of the institutionalised sect.

Two preachers who had large and admiring followings throughout the thirties and into the post-World War II period were John Douglas and Isaac Ewan. Both men concentrated on 'Church truth'—church government and practice. Douglas, who came from Ashgill, Lanarkshire, was an impressive public preacher and a skilled debater. A miner and market gardener, he preached largely in Lowland Scots: the possessor of a fine memory and with a gift for the telling aphorism, his intense dynamism commanded respect. 'John Douglas', wrote his friend Jimmy Paton, 'hit the scene something like an Elijah, suddenly with short, sharp,

107. See above, pp.241; however, Albion Hall, Larkhall, did not appear in an address list until 1983.

108. *W*, 81 (1951), p.114; *BM*, 61 (1951), p.140; Gospel Hall, Newmains, 'Minutes of Half-Yearly Meetings and Annual Meetings of Gospel Hall, Newmains', 1951-66, 15 April 1961, and 11 November 1961; however, Olive Hall had continued to be included in the address lists of the inter-war period, probably an indication of the broader attitude at Pickering & Inglis which published them.

109. In a transcript of the constitution of Hebron Hall, Larkhall, made in 1940 the provision to accept those 'who have not been scripturally baptised' is glossed by the transcriber as meaning 'Baptism not to be made a door to exclude any who may have a disability' (alluding to the difficulty immersion might cause): Writer's collection, II, [Cornelius Dickson], 'Excerpt of Disposition for Hebron Hall Academy Street Larkhall. 1924', holograph transcript [1940].

solid ministry that hit its target with great force.’¹¹⁰ His appeal lay mainly among those who wanted stricter practices, and a circle of assemblies, particularly in Lanarkshire, was deeply influenced by him. Isaac Ewan, an evangelist from Abernethy, Perthshire, who had developed conscientious scruples about fighting while a soldier during the war, appealed to a similar constituency, though his influence was felt mainly in eastern and central Scotland.¹¹¹ A versifier of some distinction (his favourite poet was George Herbert), there was a strain of poetry in his make up.¹¹² He resisted the elimination of the last vestiges of spontaneous preaching,¹¹³ promoting a charismatic ministry with no prior arrangement.¹¹⁴ His concept of worship at the breaking of bread dictated a carefully prescribed order and specific symbolic actions,¹¹⁵ and his interest in poetry and worship led him to produce his own hymnbook, *Remembrance Hymns* (1935), for use at the morning meeting.¹¹⁶ This seeming oxymoron of a spontaneous liturgy led to accusations of ritualism.¹¹⁷

A feature of both men’s emphases was their opposition to any association with other churches and both preserved the distinctiveness of the Brethren in their teaching. Douglas’s favourite texts were in the Pastoral Epistles, where the governance of the church and the unalterable character

110. [James Paton], ‘John Douglas (1891-1976)’, in James Anderson (ed.), *They Finished Their Course* (Kilmarnock, 1980), p.67.

111. Oral information, 10 August, 1990.

112. [Edwin Ewan (ed.)], *Caravanserai: a collection of poems by I.Y.Ewan* (Glasgow, 1980).

113. Cf. above, pp.179; for the erosion of the practice see: [John Ritchie], *BM*, (1926), pp.23, 120; *W*, 59 (1929), p.213; for those critical of the practice, see: L W G Alexander, ‘QA’, *W*, 50 (1920), p.202; HyP[ickering], ‘WW’, *W*, 65 (1935), p.40; E W R[odgers], ‘BQB’, *BM*, 49 (1939), p.106; for those supporting the practice, see: [John Ritchie], *BM*, (Jun. 1926), p.i; [J Charlton Steen], ‘The ministry of the word at conferences’, *BM*, 40 (1931), pp.52-6; T Fitzgerald to the editor, *BM*, 49 (1939), pp.132-3; J K McEwan, ‘Selection of conference speakers’, *PT*, 9 ([1946]) pp.135-6.

114. I Y E[wan], ‘God’s order of ministry’, *PT*, 9 ([1946]), pp.141-4.

115. W R Lewis and E W Rodgers to the editor, ‘Ritualism at the Lord’s supper’, *W*, 82 (1952), p.120; I Y E[wan], ‘When should the bread be broken?’, *PT*, 6 (1940-1), pp.984-8.

116. I Ewan, *Remembrance Hymns* (Abernethy, 1935).

117. Lewis and Rodgers, ‘Ritualism’, p.120; G C D Howley, ‘The church and its members’, in anon. (ed.), *A New Testament Church in 1955* (Rushden, 1956), p.21.

of doctrine are seen as guaranteeing community stability. Margaret Macdonald has argued that they belong to a phase of the early church when the expanding tradition lessened possibilities for innovation as it was institutionalised.¹¹⁸ This account of the Pastorals closely corresponds to Douglas's aims.¹¹⁹ And although Ewan was developing new ideas (something his critics used against him),¹²⁰ paradoxically these emphases were also strongly present in his teaching. About 1930 he founded a magazine, significantly entitled *The Present Testimony*, as an outlet for his writing and that of his associates, and among its key words were 'order', 'faithfulness', and their cognates.¹²¹ Ewan, in addition, had his own way of expressing the distinctiveness of assemblies. Being 'gathered together in my name'¹²² had a special place in the Brethren understanding of the Church. Ewan argued that the preposition should be 'into': other churches might gather *in* the Lord's name, only assemblies were gathered *into* the Lord's name.¹²³ Both men had clear antecedents in the earlier debates among Brethren: Douglas was an admirer of John Ritchie¹²⁴—he followed his teaching on the Church—and Ewan was deeply influenced by John Brown—his quibble over the preposition, for example, came from

118. Margaret Y Macdonald, *The Pauline Churches: a socio-historical study of institutionalization in the Pauline and deuterio-Pauline writings* (Cambridge, 1988), pp.203-44.

119. Cf. the only record of his sermons to appear in print: John Douglas, *Lessons from the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Ashgill, 1997).

120. HyP[ickering], 'Strange doctrines', *W*, 68 (1938), p.186.

121. A linguistic analysis of 81 articles in *The Present Testimony* shows 'order' and its cognates ('regulating', 'pattern', etc.), and 'faithfulness' and its cognates ('perseverance', 'stand fast', etc) are the key words on 18 occasions; the most common other key words are: 'the Word of God' in 10 articles; 'departure' and its cognates ('evil day', 'disorder' etc.), and 'separation' with 9 articles each. These are rivalled only by ethical virtues (chiefly 'obedience', 'meekness' and its cognates, and 'service') in 19 articles; cf. I Y E[wan], 'Reversion to type or conformity to pattern', *PT*, 6 (1940-1), pp.1035-9. A G[ilmour], 'Assembly features', *PT*, 9 ([1946]), pp.8-12.

122. Matt. 18:20; cf. above, pp.29 (epigraph), 71.

123. I Y E[wan], "'In" and "Into"', *PT*, 8 (n.d.), pp.43-6; cf. H P Barker, 'What is meant by being "gathered to the name"?'', *W*, 61 (1931), pp.133-4; Bruce, *In Retrospect*, p.23.

124. Oral information, 15 April 1990.

Brown.¹²⁵ Douglas and Ewan did not agree with each other and had separate spheres of influence, but they were both attempted to enforce through doctrine greater uniformity, thereby minimising the possibilities for change and diversity.

It might have been expected that the emergence of such well defined positions as those held by Douglas and Ewan would develop into open division. Douglas was involved in an acrimonious schism in Ashgill¹²⁶ and other assemblies had to decide with which of the two meetings to associate.¹²⁷ Ewan's magazine acted as a focus and he was accused by some of being divisive.¹²⁸ A recognised circle of assemblies, mainly in eastern Scotland, were known as 'Ewanite' because of their adoption of his practices. But a formal division in the east never came, nor did one in Lanarkshire. A group of individuals from several meetings in the county raised the idea of establishing themselves as a separate circle of assemblies in order to be free from association with the 'looser' practices of others. But when they approached John Feely of Newmains, who was respected by all because of his personal sanctity, he refused to countenance the idea and it fell into abeyance.¹²⁹ The divisions of the period must not be overemphasised. No formal breach took place in Lanarkshire, and the assemblies which practised Isaac Ewan's teaching did not accept the nickname which was thrust upon them. Individuals of different emphases continued to read *The Witness* and to advertise their services side-by-side in it. What they had in common was still greater than the issues which threatened to drive them apart. The independency of Brethren assemblies

125. Bruce, *In Retrospect*, p.26; I Y Ewan and his associates are not named by Bruce but are identified in F F Bruce to the writer, 26 April 1987.

126. [Paton], 'Douglas', in Anderson (ed.), *They Finished*, p.68.

127. 'Minutes... Gospel Hall, Newmains', 21 November, 1959; *ibid.*, 15 April, 1961.

128. Anonymous individual 'who knows Scotland well', quoted in HyP[ickering], 'Strange doctrines', p.186.

129. Oral information from a friend of Feely, 14 June 1987.

gave them considerable capacity to absorb strains without them becoming an open breach. No-one in this period was willing to take the critical step of sacrificing the principle of autonomy. As positions polarised across Scotland, the larger meetings of 'representative brethren' that had been held in some areas to resolve difficulties gradually fell into disuse. While consensus was by now difficult, overall unity could still be preserved by the pragmatic use of independency.

The events and movements surveyed in the present section did not affect all assemblies. 'Hobnobbing with sectarianism is now quite common', reported one disgusted north-east emigrant when he visited Scotland in 1920.¹³⁰ But the issues and personalities which have been examined above were symptomatic. The agitation inspired by Fundamentalism and the search for stability within assemblies had the undoubted effect of making everyone more cautious. The older leaders who had maintained traditions of openness were dying: Caldwell died in 1917, Alexander Stewart in 1923, William Shaw in 1927, Marshall in 1928. Although Henry Pickering did not die until 1941, he was no longer an immediate presence having moved to England in 1922.¹³¹ Only L W G Alexander lived on until 1951. As has already been noted above in discussing Fundamentalism, there were those who had interdenominational associations. In 1926 when one Edinburgh minister accused the Brethren of narrowness, an assembly member in the capital contradicted him by pointing to a recent mission held in a city church by an evangelist from the movement.¹³² In

130. Charles B Summers (compiler & ed.), *Return to Old Paths: the ministry of Charles Spurgeon Summers* (Tacoma, Wa, 1990), p.215.

131. J B Watson, 'Henry Pickering', *Witness Supplement*, W, 71 (1941).

132. Anon., "The Brethren": with special reference to a recent article in 'The Record' of the United Free Church July 1925 by Rev. James Black D.D. of Free St George's, Edinburgh, by an Edinburgh Brother (Edinburgh [1926]); Black's article was later reprinted in his *New Forms of the Old Faith: being the Baird Lecture delivered in 1946-47 under the title extra-church systems* (London, 1948), pp.138-158.

Netherburn, a few miles away from Ashgill (see Map 11), a preacher from the Lanarkshire Christian Union had a successful campaign in the assembly in the 1930s,¹³³ while a number of mission halls in the north of the county were largely dependent on Brethren speakers.¹³⁴ The effect of the prominent English Brethren Bible teachers who came north to preach in this period, men such as C F Hogg (1861-1943), Harold St John (1876-1957), and J B Watson (1884-1955), was to direct individuals towards a more devotional faith.¹³⁵ But those who now represented the denominationalising tendency did not possess the wide influence of the earlier leaders. Letters of commendation for visitors, a testimony to assembly membership, became *de rigeur* in many meetings.¹³⁶ Whatever individuals might have thought privately, it was a much less troubled course if controversial behaviour was avoided. And this was true, not just in relationships with other churches, but in other issues too. Despite the exceptions which might be cited, in this period sectarian separatism increased throughout Scottish assemblies.

POST-WORLD WAR II CONSERVATISM

World War II saw a repetition of the attitudes displayed in World War I.

133. Oral information, 23 November 1989.

134. *H*, 2 (1924-5), p.63.

135. C F Hogg and J B Watson, *The Promise of His Coming* (London, 1943); Robert Rendall, *J.B. Watson: a Memoir and Selected Writings* (London, 1957); Patricia St John, *Harold St John* (London, 1961).

136. 'BQB', *BM*, 40 (1930), p.24; this is a point supported by the comments of those who did not think them necessary: HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 61 (1931), p.185; W W Fereday, 'QA', *W*, 97 (1947), p.105; cf. above, p.195.

From the early 1930s onwards there was renewed interest in prophecy.¹³⁷ Caution was again enjoined against seeing contemporary events as being signs,¹³⁸ but John Ritchie Jnr wrote *Impending Great Events* (c.1938),¹³⁹ and Willie Thomson, a prominent Glasgow preacher, published *God's Peace Plan* (1944), which was, the subtitle informed the reader, *His coming King*.¹⁴⁰ And again there was support for the non-combatant position. In 1938 at a special meeting in Glasgow, of which every assembly in Scotland had been notified, the audience of some 500 were counselled by the speakers to be separate from earthly forces.¹⁴¹ Individuals such as John Douglas advocated pacifism,¹⁴² while Andrew Borland, from 1938 editor of *The Believer's Magazine*, argued that the bearing of arms was wrong and the Christian's primary responsibility was to preach the gospel.¹⁴³ Because of their conscientious objections, Brethren boats were among the few which fished continuously throughout the war in the north east.¹⁴⁴ Conscientious objectors were treated more sympathetically by the government.¹⁴⁵ Although some went to prison,¹⁴⁶ most Brethren pacifists

137. Walter Scott, 'Signs indicating the near return of our Lord', *W*, 63 (1933), p.273; S Lavery, 'Great events ahead', *W*, 66 (1936), p.11; selections from elder brethren, 'The Roman Empire in history and prophecy', *ibid.*, pp.12-14; J B Watson, 'The outlook in the world today', *W*, 66 (1936), pp.25-9; J R Caldwell, "'The times of the Gentiles'", *W*, 66 (1936), pp.81-2; Robert McPike, 'Notable characteristics of the Last Days', *W*, 67 (1937), pp.13-14; Hy Pickering, 'The certainty and immanence of the Coming', *W*, 67 (1937), pp.77-8; John Ritchie [Jnr], 'A message for these perilous times', *W*, 69 (1939), pp.247-8; W E Vine, 'The night far spent and the approaching day', *W*, 70 (1940), pp.1-2; W W Fereday, 'Europe's last dictator', *ibid.*, p.63; [J B Watson], 'WW', 75 (1945), p.48.

138. Robert Rendall, *History, Prophecy and God* (London, 1954), p.70.

139. John Ritchie, *Impending Great Events: addresses on the Second Coming of Christ and subsequent events* (London & Glasgow, [c.1938]).

140. W A Thomson, *God's Peace Plan: His coming King* (London & Glasgow, 1944).

141. *BM*, 48 (1938), p.329.

142. [Paton], 'Douglas', p.67.

143. Editor [A Borland], 'The Christian and the civil powers', *BM*, 49 (1939), pp.29-35; cf. Wilson, 'Brethren Attitudes', p.63, n.27, for a list of articles appearing in the *Believer's Magazine* on recommended attitudes to the war during this period.

144. Paul Thompson, *et al.*, *Living the Fishing* (London, 1983), p.207.

145. Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, pp.244-5.

146. Oral information, July 1990.

enlisted in a non-combatant corps.¹⁴⁷ Many supported the war actively,¹⁴⁸ but perhaps the majority now were pacifists,¹⁴⁹ leading Robert Walker, a Glasgow assembly member, to write a tract against their position because he felt opposing views had insufficient prominence.¹⁵⁰ Although Germany was clearly felt to be in the wrong because of its treatment of Jews,¹⁵¹ there was none of the jingoism that some Brethren had engaged in during the earlier war. It was, perhaps, a sign of their increased disaffection with society. There were fewer killed in action: *The Witness* recorded only four.¹⁵² But the effect of the Second World War was the same as the First: to deepen the sense of eschatological pessimism.

After the war, the divisions that had been evident earlier continued. Some had wider Christian associations, but on the other hand, in 1954 Willie Trew, an evangelist from Lanarkshire, spoke for many when he delivered a talk in Motherwell which later received a wide circulation as a booklet with the title *My Reasons for Not Being Free to Engage in Inter-Denominational Service*.¹⁵³ It was noted in the previous chapter that new initiatives in the post-war era, especially in youth work, had their critics.¹⁵⁴ The older methods had proved their worth in their time—a powerful argument for maintaining them—but they had also come to be accepted as part of the way things were. To change them would be to

147. 'Advice for younger Brethren regarding military service', *BM*, 49 (1939), p.191; W Martin to the editor, *ibid.*, p.206; cf. Wilson, 'Brethren Attitudes to Authority', p.59.

148. John Ritchie, 'A message for perilous times', *W*, 69 (1939), p.247-8.

149. Again this view of Scottish Brethren differs from that advanced for Brethren in general in Wilson, 'Brethren Attitudes to Authority', pp.59-80, which sees the balance between the two positions as being evenly split.

150. Robert Walker, *The Christian and Warfare: an examination of the pacifist position* (Chryston, 1942); 'Robert Walker', *W*, 91 (1961), p.476.

151. I Y E[wan], 'True perspective', *PT*, 6 (1940-1), pp.966-9.

152. *W*, 69-75 (1939-45), *passim*.

153. William Trew, *My Reasons for Not Being Free to Engage in Inter-Denominational Service* (Kilmarnock, 1954); in the earlier part of the meeting in which Trew delivered this address he had recommended conscientious objection to National Service: oral information, July 1990.

154. See above, pp.257.

sacrifice basic biblical principles—an unanswerable argument for those advancing it. In the 1950s when the Ayrshire Tent Committee was considering substituting its marquee for a gospel van, one individual impressively quoted, “Remove not the ancient landmark.” The change was rejected.¹⁵⁵ Any young man, as George Patterson discovered in the 1950s, who was judged to be too radical, quickly stopped receiving preaching engagements.¹⁵⁶ In addition, opportunities for innovation were diminished by the way elders were appointed. According to Brethren theory, the Holy Spirit gifted elders who were to be recognised, not formally engaged.¹⁵⁷ However, this acknowledgement was in the hands of the existing ones,¹⁵⁸ effectively making the oversight a self-appointing oligarchy which tended to be, like all such bodies, resistant to change. A deep conservatism continued to pervade Scottish Brethren assemblies.

The underlying conservatism of the movement in the post-war years can be seen most clearly in reactions within Scotland to the actions of a group of leading Brethren in England.¹⁵⁹ G C D Howley, an itinerant Bible teacher and editor of *The Witness* (1955-79), had been dismayed at the effects of the restrictive practices of stricter individuals during visits to Scotland and the Antipodes.¹⁶⁰ What he saw convinced him that unless they were resisted, their thinking would triumph. Using a metaphor that provides an insight into his perception of the matter, he wrote to his friend Robert Rendall, a leading member of the Brethren community in Orkney, that ‘the policy of appeasement never pays in ecclesiastical

155. Oral information, 15 April 1990; the reference is to Prov. 22:28.

156. Meg Patterson, *Dr Meg* (Milton Keynes, 1994), pp.41-2.

157. See above, p.186-7.

158. William Hoste and William Rodgers, *Questions and Answers* (Kilmarnock, 1957), William Bunting (ed.), pp.138-9.

159. Harold H Rowdon, ‘The post-war background to Nantwich 1991’, in *idem*, (ed.), *The Strengthening, Growth and Planting of Local Churches* (Exeter, 1993), pp. 127-141; Coad, ‘Into a changing future’, pp.10-18.

160. Geoffrey Robson’s collection, Kent, G C D Howley to A T Ginnings, 20 January 1978.

matters, any more than it did with Hitler... [sic].¹⁶¹ He began preaching openly against 'legalism'—the treatment of the Christian faith as a set of codified rules—and he also began to advocate publicly an open reception at the Lord's Table, citing the precedent of J R Caldwell for doing so.¹⁶² The result of Howley's forthright expression was that Scottish assemblies stopped inviting him to preach. In 1960, when he was back in Aberdeen after a long absence, Howley learned 'that I was deliberately not invited to the city over that long time through the influence of the "tights"'.¹⁶³ His desire for change and Christian unity were not wanted by many in Scotland or were liable to cause too much difficulty if openly supported.

The event which focused the opposition to Howley and those who thought like him was a conference in 1955 (one of a series initiated in 1953)¹⁶⁴ at High Leigh, Hoddesdon. Changes in the support and training of Bible teachers and evangelists, the issue which was preoccupying Howley at the time, was the main proposal raised at it. Several speakers advocated Bible school training for promising individuals,¹⁶⁵ and other issues, such as the public participation of women and attitudes to Christians outside the Brethren, were raised in passing.¹⁶⁶ Although High Leigh affirmed much of current Brethren practice, it caused a storm within Scotland when the conference proceedings were published the following year. Andrew Borland saw it as setting a new direction among assemblies and felt the changes which had been mooted would mean the end of Brethren distinctives. 'And whither is that process drifting,' Borland queried of

161. OA/D27/6/9, G C D Howley to Robert Rendall, 26 March 1956.

162. *Ibid.*

163. OA/D27/6/9, G C D Howley to R Rendall, 17 October 1960.

164. G W Robson, 'Swanwick, 1958' *H*, 37, No.12 (December 1958), p.185.

165. G C D Howley, 'The support of the home ministry', in anon (ed.), *A New Testament Church*, pp.78-81.

166. Anon (ed.), *A New Testament Church*, pp.20, 23-8, 37, 41, 51, 91.

proposals for training preachers, 'if not towards clerisy against which the very existence of assemblies is a continuing protest?'¹⁶⁷ The conference was also strongly criticised in another Ritchie publication, *The Christian Worker*, by the editor Arthur Gooding, an English preacher who was resident in Scotland and a director of John Ritchie Ltd, and an off-print was circulated around every British assembly. He too felt that the conference seriously undermined what Brethren represented, and that the proposals of High Leigh were 'alterations that will lead away from the Scriptures into the realm of expediency'.¹⁶⁸

The criticisms of the conference and the divisions that were revealed were the first general breach that had appeared in print among Open Brethren since the reception question in the early years of the century. Borland and Gooding both stated that their strictures had been difficult to make as many of the individuals they were criticising were personally known to them and both attempted to find statements from the conference with which they were in agreement.¹⁶⁹ They were not alone in Scotland in attacking the proceedings at High Leigh. Although Borland received letters criticising him, there were many more which supported him and sermons were preached in many areas against the conference which, freed from the restrictions of print, were often biting.¹⁷⁰ Even someone sympathetic to the call for an open communion such as Rendall had reservations about some of the conference's other aspects. He wrote to Howley about the 'tempest' which was 'raging' over High Leigh, regretting it had raised 'issues on which there may be strong opposing views on debatable matters

167. Andrew Borland, 'High Leigh: whither? (2)' *BM*, 66 (1956), p.216.

168. [A M S Gooding], 'The Editor of the *Christian Worker* Reviews "A New Testament Church in 1955"', *CW*, (1956), p.2; cf. Geoffrey Robson's collection, Kent, A M S Gooding to F N Martin, 9 November 1965.

169. Borland, 'High Leigh (5)', *BM*, 67 (1957), p.26; [Gooding], 'Reviews', p.8.

170. Oral information, 15 April 1990.

(like women taking part audibly in prayer for example).¹⁷¹ There were those in Scotland, however, who identified more openly with the series to which High Leigh belonged. F F Bruce, by then a university lecturer, had been one of the speakers of 1955, and over succeeding years there were a number of Scottish speakers.¹⁷² Gooding had agreed that 'legalists' were 'extremists' but added, 'it is evident that the majority of those taking part at the conference belong to the other extreme'.¹⁷³ There had been throughout the inter-war years a gap between what were sometimes termed 'the Henry Pickering-type meetings' and 'the John Ritchie-type meetings'. But this perception of those associated with High Leigh demonstrates the chasm which lay between the majority of Scottish assemblies and those proposing radical change. For most Scottish Brethren in the 1950s, Rendall's conservatism was typical. The context in which they operated ensured that even those leaders who were sympathetic remained cautious and bound to accepted practices.

High Leigh represented the strong denominationalising tendency then at work in England. Significant here is the social differences which were reflected in the division of opinion. The conference speakers were middle-class individuals, a social grouping which was becoming better represented among English Brethren in the 1950s. Assemblies of a predominantly working-class composition, however, tended to remain conservative. In 1956 one of Andrew Borland's critics accused him of 'seeking to curry favour with the working class sections in the assemblies', evidently

171. OA/D27/6/4, Robert Rendall to G C D Howley, undated.

172. Writer's collection, II, G W Robson to the writer, 6 January 1990: Andrew Gray, a director of Pickering & Inglis, and T J Smith, a company director and chairman of the HFMF, chaired sessions at an early conferences; and A P Campbell, Andrew Gray and headteacher John Rollo spoke at later ones.

173. [Gooding], 'Review', p.2.

because Borland's views had greater acceptance among them.¹⁷⁴ Gooding, too, saw a social dimension to High Leigh. He felt the demand for the further training of preachers slighted those individuals of little education who until then had been the leading speakers in many areas. He referred affectionately to the men 'whose delivery was halting, whose grammar was poor' who had taught him in his youth.¹⁷⁵ 'In these days', he complained of the 1950s, 'a good education, an eloquent tongue, a well-stocked library, a good memory and a striking personality may open up to a man more opportunities for ministry than he can fulfil and all that without spiritual gift.'¹⁷⁶ Those in Scotland who were most prominent in supporting the High Leigh conferences were also middle class and were looking for a diminished sectarianism.¹⁷⁷ Changes in the social composition of Scottish assemblies, which became increasingly evident in the rising prosperity of the post-war years, were to become the most significant factor in loosening their conservatism.¹⁷⁸

COUNTERPOINT

Currents within Scottish Brethren were complex in the period under review in the present chapter and one of its subtexts has been those who did not conform to a more standardised order. This complexity can be seen in the role played by women within the movement. Under the influence of Fundamentalism fears were expressed over the growing involvement of women in society and the pressure for change from women's movements.¹⁷⁹ Their altered roles were perceived as indicating the loosening of society's foundations, and many words were expended by the

174. Borland, 'High Leigh (5)', p.26; for an example of the possible influence of class on sectarianism in this period, see below, pp.368-9.

175. Gooding, 'Review', p.8.

176. *Ibid.*, p.7.

177. See the listing of occupations given above in n.172.

178. See below, pp.426-30.

179. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 47 (1917), p.91; *idem*, 'WW', *W*, 56 (1926), p.334.

Brethren on issues relating to them. Tom Baird, a Scottish emigrant to the United States who wrote frequently for *The Witness*, opined that 'When the women of the world lead revolt and hurl defiance into the face of the Eternal God the race has reached the deepest depth of degradation.'¹⁸⁰ New women's fashions in hair were regarded with disapproval. In the 1920s Henry Pickering noted with satisfaction that one hairdresser had refused to bob a woman's hair, though he did caution one questioner that a woman with her hair styled in this new fashion should not be excluded from the Lord's supper.¹⁸¹ The later trend for women to attend church without a hat was likewise regarded with disapproval.¹⁸² Brethren males wanted their women to preserve the Victorian preferences for long hair and having their heads covered in church, and Biblical teaching was adduced to that effect.¹⁸³ It was hotly debated whether a women's long hair meant that it was uncut,¹⁸⁴ and both Pickering and William Hoste, an Irish preacher and editor of *The Believer's Magazine* (1931-8), claimed that her head should be covered when praying at home.¹⁸⁵ Women had to be seen to be in subjection.

Any form of leadership or public speaking to mixed audiences by women was firmly rejected, and their role was seen as being the ones of homemaking and child care.¹⁸⁶ In Brethren eyes women tended to gain their significance in relation to men. One Lanarkshire writer felt that 'In the divine economy the woman has not been given a public place in the

180. Tom Baird, 'God's will for women', *W*, 56 (1926), p.451.

181. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 58 (1928), p.334; *idem*, 'QA', *W*, 59 (1929), p.233.

182. J B Watson, 'WW', *W*, 72 (1942), p.100.

183. Baird, 'God's will', p.451.

184. P Parsons, 'BQB', *BM*, 78 (1968), p.314.

185. W Hoste, 'QA', *W*, 60 (1930), p.207; HyP[ickering], *ibid.*, pp.230, 254.

186. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 56 (1926), p.294; *idem*, 'WW', *W*, 59 (1929), p.140; Editor [J C Steen], 'BQB', *BM*, 41 (1931), p.71; 'Correspondence', *BM*, 42 (1932), p.166; Editor [A Borland], 'The Church', *BM*, 68 (1958), pp.25-7, 49-50; G M Munro, 'Divine control', *PT*, 9 ([1946]), pp.49-53.

assembly of God; but she has a great deal to do with shaping of the man, who has been given that place. It is a noble and honourable work...'.¹⁸⁷ Andrew Borland stated that the companionship of a young woman kept men attending meetings, and (with a revealing use of Scots) that women were good for working among "'the bairns'".¹⁸⁸ So strong was the emphasis on a woman remaining silent that women were not permitted to ask questions at Bible readings or assembly business meetings,¹⁸⁹ many did not approve of female solo singers,¹⁹⁰ and some felt that even sisters' meetings should not be permitted. 'Do you not think that a sister's place is one of obscurity?' queried one individual.¹⁹¹ John Douglas strove to express these points as epigrammatically as possible. "Two things God requires of women: hair and silence," he said on one occasion;¹⁹² and on another, "God gave them fu' airms to keep their mooths shut."¹⁹³ In the strictest assemblies there was segregated seating for men and women during participatory meetings.¹⁹⁴ Until the 1920s women could take part in mixed-sex prayer meetings in Strathaven,¹⁹⁵ but over the period the role of women was further constricted. Within assemblies it was thought to be that of permeating an ethereal mystique. 'The atmosphere of meetings, that intangible thing which means so much,' wrote Borland, 'is greatly determined by the godliness or otherwise of the sisters'.¹⁹⁶ In the north-east fishing communities the seasonal absences of men created a problem. With the men at sea the women would gather for the morning

187. W Prentice, 'Marriage', *BM*, 67 (1957), pp.31-2.

188. Editor [A Borland], 'The service of sisters', *CW*, 58 (1941), p.49.

189. HyP[ickering], 'QA', *W*, 59 (1929), p.89; 'BQB', *BM*, 37 (1937), p.182; W A Thomson, 'QA', *W*, 69 (1939), p.159.

190. 'BQB', *BM*, 41 (1941), p.142; [A Borland], 'Making a Noise', *BM*, 55 (1955), p.133-4.

191. F A, 'QA', *W*, 67 (1937), p.206; cf. 'QA', *W*, 67 (1937), p.206; but see 'BQB', *BM*, 43 (1933), p.24, for sisters' prayer meetings being supported.

192. Oral information, 3 August 1993.

193. Writer's collection II, John Boyes to the writer, 14 April 1990.

194. Oral information, 17 September 1991; for this practice in Christian history see Margaret Aston, 'Segregation in church', *SCH*, 27 (Oxford, 1990), pp.237-294.

195. Oral information, July 1990.

196. [Borland], 'service of sisters', p.49.

meeting but did not break bread. In such circumstances, Pickering felt, it would be appropriate for the women to pray together and for one of them to address the others.¹⁹⁷ *The Believer's Magazine*, on the other hand, counselled that 'the godly course would be for the sisters to wait silent before the Lord, as long as they felt able, and then quietly retire.'¹⁹⁸ It is difficult to resist the impression that the Brethren believed in the priesthood of male believers only during this period.

Yet against such discouragement there were women who achieved a more active role. There were some who were involved in their wider community, gaining its respect, such as Elizabeth Duff, an illiterate Irish immigrant of an unfailingly hospitable nature, who was held in such esteem that when she died in 1938 every blind in the village of Busby, Renfrewshire, was drawn as her cortege passed;¹⁹⁹ or Janetta Macdougall, a member of Union Hall, Uddingston, who was a maternity home matron and was awarded the MBE in 1956 for her distinguished service in that capacity.²⁰⁰ A positive role model for women in Christian pursuits was offered by women missionaries:²⁰¹ it was they who spoke at the Young Women's Conference held in Elim Hall, Glasgow, in 1962.²⁰² But it was possible for women to achieve a more active role within some assemblies of the less rigorous type. There were the many women involved in evangelism discussed in the previous chapter.²⁰³ Women also continued to write. Mrs J A W Hamilton of Glasgow and later Waterford, Ireland, contributed devotional verse regularly to *The Witness* and wrote the

197. 'HyP[ickering], 'QA', *W*, 54 (1924), p.233.

198. W H[oste], 'BQB', *BM*, 42 (1932), p.119.

199. 'Mrs Duff', *BM*, 47 (1938), p.28; A McAllister and J Vernal (compilers), *Busby Gospel Hall: A Short History of Early Days, 1891-1964* (n.p., 1964), pp.2, 21-2.

200. 'Mrs Janetta Macdougall M.B.E.', *BM*, 93 (1983), p.32.

201. Pickering & Inglis published E R Pitman, *Lady Missionaries in Many Lands* (Glasgow, n.d.); and John Ritchie, anon., *Heroines of the Faith*, (Kilmarnock, n.d.).

202. *W*, 92 (1962), p.76.

203. See above, p.259.

women's page in *The Christian Graphic*, a Pickering & Inglis magazine.²⁰⁴ And there was the rare woman who could achieve a more dominant role within an assembly. In the mid-century when Chirnside meeting had no males, during the winter months the Lord's supper would be prepared in case a man arrived, but the elements would not be dispensed without one. However, the women used the occasion as a prayer meeting and maintained the assembly: one of them, Grace Stewart, was responsible for its organisation by, for example, arranging visiting male preachers during the summer.²⁰⁵ Such a woman was achieving a more pastoral capacity, and it was also possible to reach this situation in larger assemblies with men present, albeit within a limited sphere. Ena Thomson of Elim Hall, Glasgow, was noted for her sound common sense and ability to size up both spiritual and physical problems quickly and deal with them. She had a special interest in missionary work, visiting some missionaries abroad and giving hospitality to others. When she died in 1959 her (doubtless male) obituarist in *The Witness* made the rare confession that she had skills which were uncommon in both men and women. 'Many, indeed,' he wrote, 'were indebted to her for kindly consideration, wise counsel, and that get-on-with-it encouragement which is so often needed but not often available.'²⁰⁶ Although any official leadership position was denied to such women, they functioned in one *de facto*.

The achievements of such women in assemblies were, however, exceptionally modest. A parallel case might be those who held eschatological views which differed from the majority. One such individual was John Anderson from Rhynie, who returned to the north-east from China in 1920. He kept alive the earlier tradition of female

204. 'Mrs J.A.W. Hamilton', *W*, 69 (1939), p.192.

205. 'Miss Grace Stewart', *W*, 95 (1975), p.396.

206. 'Mrs Robert Thomson', *W*, 89 (1959), p.36.

preaching by advocating the public participation of women through his writings, and the other minority viewpoint he championed was post-tribulationism.²⁰⁷ But on both issues he was perceived as a lonely and eccentric voice.²⁰⁸ A more prominent exponent of post-tribulationism was the evangelist Peter Bruce, but he too failed to win adherents and at one large conference was publicly contradicted when he expounded his views.²⁰⁹ Other dissenters met with a similar lack of success. In the 1950s Robert Rendall came to query the rigid dispensationalist scheme of the Brethren, but he was muted in his questioning,²¹⁰ and when Peter Bruce's son, F F Bruce, a postmillennialist, wrote an article on his prophetic views for *The Witness*, the then editor, J B Watson, declined to print it because, Watson felt, the magazine should carry articles on matters 'most surely believed among us'.²¹¹ More success, both in numbers and influence, in resisting the formation of assemblies into a more regulated body attended those who innovated in evangelistic forms after World War II and those who were exceptions to the general rule of withdrawal from church and society. In the latter case there were the many individuals, men and

207. John A Anderson, *Woman's Warfare and Ministry: what saith the Scriptures?* (Rhyndie, n.d.); *idem*, *The Authority for the Public Ministry of Women* (Braemar, n.d.); *The Blessed Hope: a study in dialogue form on the coming again of the Lord Jesus* (London [c.1930]); *idem*, *The Chart: the Divine forecast of this age* (London, n.d.); *idem*, *Heralds of the Dawn* (Aberdeen [c.1934]); for post-tribulationism, see above p.196, and for the majority eschatological view, see below, pp.322-30.

208. Bruce, *In Retrospect*, p.53-4.

209. Roy Coad's collection, Shropshire, A M S Gooding to F N Martin, 9 November 1965; P F Bruce is not named in this letter, but it is clearly he who is intended.

210. Robert Rendall to William Barclay [c.1955], in *An Island Shore: selected writings of Robert Rendall*, (ed.) Neil Dickson (Kirkwall, 1990), pp.53-4; *idem*, *History, Prophecy and God*, pp.68-9; cf. J Stafford Wright, 'History, Prophecy and God', *Evangelical Quarterly*, 27 (1955), p.177.

211. F F Bruce, 'His writings', *W*, 85 (1955), p.199; the quotation is of Lk 1:1 (cf. above, pp.282, 285 n.72). For Bruce's postmillennialism, see his review of Iain H Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (1971), in 'Book reviews', *W*, 106 (1976), p.432; and F F Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans: an introduction and commentary*, 2nd edn (Leicester, 1985), pp.199-212; Bruce also supported the public participation of women: he almost certainly, as the style shows, the 'acknowledged authority on New Testament Greek' quoted by John Anderson in *Public Ministry of Women*, p.10, in support of Anderson's interpretation of 1 Tim 2:8-9; cf. F F Bruce, 'Women in the Church: a biblical survey', *CBRJ*, 33 (1982), pp.7-14; and below, p.444.

women, who were involved in interdenominational ventures, discussed above and in the previous chapter. Such individuals kept the ecumenical vision of the Brethren movement alive and preserved it from becoming isolated from the larger Christian world.

F F Bruce was the most significant individual in this regard. Becoming the first Brethren Scot to be appointed to a university chair when he became professor of Biblical Studies at Sheffield University in 1955, Bruce was later appointed to the prestigious John Rylands Chair of New Testament Exegesis at Manchester University.²¹² He spent most of his professional life in England, but his reputation gave him considerable influence among Scottish Brethren. It is, however, for his influence on transatlantic Evangelicalism that he became most significant.²¹³ Bruce brought to his studies a breadth of learning which had until then been rare within twentieth-century Evangelicalism. He was happiest pursuing his biblical studies in a university context where he found freedom from 'theological or sectarian bias',²¹⁴ and one obituarist commented that 'he personified catholicity'.²¹⁵ I H Marshall has argued that Bruce brought a rigorous scholarship to the study of the Bible doing much to counteract Fundamentalist attitudes to scripture which refused to engage with academic approaches. He stated that 1951, the year of publication of Bruce's *The Acts of the Apostles: the Greek text with introduction and*

212. On F F Bruce see: Bruce, *In Retrospect*; G C D Howley, 'Frederick Fyvie Bruce: an appreciation', in W W Gasque and R P Martin (eds), *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (Exeter, 1970); W W Gasque, 'A select bibliography of the writings of F F Bruce', in Gasque and Martin (eds), *Apostolic History*, pp.21-4; *idem*, 'A supplementary bibliography of the writings of F F Bruce', *CBRJ*, 22 (1971), pp.21-47.

213. Mark A Noll, 'Evangelicals and the study of the Bible', in George Marsden (ed.), *Evangelicalism and Modern America* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984), p.105; *idem*, 'C.T. at thirty', *Christianity Today*, 17 October 1986, p.21; *idem*, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, scholarship and the Bible* (Leicester, 1991), pp.102-6, 123-4, 209-12.

214. Bruce, *In Retrospect*, p.140.

215. B Drewery, 'His text was the Bible', *The Guardian*, 21 September 1990.

commentary, was 'the decisive date in the revival of evangelical scholarship and in its recognition by other scholars'.²¹⁶ Although many of Bruce's conclusions on textual and critical issues were conservative, this was because, he maintained, the evidence demanded it and not because of a predetermined position;²¹⁷ consequently he was prepared to accept more radical conclusions.²¹⁸ Writers on Fundamentalism comment on the role the Brethren have had in maintaining it.²¹⁹ Bruce's commitment to academic freedom meant that he was to have a key role in the eclipse of Fundamentalism within Evangelicalism and, eventually, in the minds of many Brethren.²²⁰

There were also a number of Brethren Scots who engaged significantly with culture and society. The work of David Beattie has already been mentioned.²²¹ He also produced a number of prose sketches which owe their inspiration to the Kailyard school of writing,²²² and it was in this period he wrote his two secular histories, his best non-religious work being *Lang Syne in Eskdale* (1950), a history of Langholm and its environs.²²³ He was not alone. It was in the inter-war years that Robert Rendall made his archaeological discoveries in Orkney, including the

216. I H Marshall, 'F F Bruce as a biblical scholar', *CBRFJ*, 22 (1971), p.6.

217. Bruce, *In Retrospect*, p.311.

218. James Barr, *Escaping From Fundamentalism* (London, 1984) p.156; Oliver Barclay, *Evangelicalism in Britain*, p.129.

219. Ernest R Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago, Illinois, 1970), pp.59-80; James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London, 1977), p.19; Rennie, 'Fundamentalism', in Noll *et al.* (eds), *Evangelicalism*, pp.333-47.

220. Roy Coad, 'F F Bruce: his influence on Brethren in the British Isles', *CBRFJ*, 22, pp.3-5.

221. For D J Beattie see: 'Founder of city firm is dead', *Cumberland News*, 3 August 1964, p.11.

222. Beattie, *Oor Gate End*; *idem*, *Oor Ain Folk*.

223. *Idem*, *Langsyne in Eskdale* (Carlisle, 1950); also *idem*, *Prince Charlie and the Borderland* (Carlisle, 1925).

Broch of Gurness, a well-preserved Iron Age fort.²²⁴ In the two decades after World War II he produced dialect poetry on non-religious themes, a study of Orcadian mollusca, and historical and biographical writings. Although Rendall was the most significant figure in celebrating a local culture and becoming its literary spokesperson there were others. Tom Todd, a Borders shepherd, wrote dialect poetry under the pseudonym 'T T Kilbucho',²²⁵ earning him Hugh MacDiarmid's accolade that his folk poems were 'the best of this kind in Scotland since Burns or Hogg'.²²⁶ Also in the Borders, William Landles of Hawick, a poet and newspaper columnist, was awarded the MBE for his contribution to the literature of the region,²²⁷ and another columnist, the journalist John S Borland, brother of the editor of *The Believer's Magazine*, was known as the repository of the lore of the upper Irvine Valley in Ayrshire.²²⁸ There were others who engaged in public service, such as David Warnock, the Chief Constable of Glasgow who died in 1943.²²⁹ Trade union involvement was normally disapproved of strongly,²³⁰ but there were those who were active in union affairs, most notably James Barbour of Cowie, Stirlingshire, who

224. For Robert Rendall see: Neil Dickson, 'Robert Rendall: a life', in *idem* (ed.), *An Island Shore: selected writings of Robert Rendall* (Kirkwall, 1990), pp.17-49; George Mackay Brown, 'Robert Rendall', in *An Orkney Tapestry* (London, 1969), pp.163-71; 'A select bibliography of Robert Rendall's writings', in Dickson, *An Island Shore*, pp.218-19; Nora F McMillan, 'Robert Rendall, 1898-1967', *Journal of Conchology*, 19 (1968), pp.273-4; see also below, pp.399-400.

225. For Tom Todd, see T T Kilbucho, *Sixty Rural Years* (Galashiels, n.d.); T B F, 'T.T. Kilbucho—poet, farmer and broadcaster', *Southern Recorder*, 10 January 1985, p.2. Todd's poetry books are: *Clachan and Countryside* (Glasgow, [c.1955]); *A Shepherd's Years* (Glasgow, 1961); and *Kilbucho's Latest* (Glenrothes [c.1974]).

226. Hugh MacDiarmid, 'An Appreciation', in T T Kilbucho, *Clachan and Countryside*.

227. For William Landles, see B P, 'Death of devoted Christian and prolific writer', *Hawick News*, 1 January 1999, p.8. William Landles' poetry books are: *A Breath Frae the Hills* (Hawick, 1937); *Gooseberry Fair* (Hawick, 1952); *Penny Numbers* (Hawick, [1961]); and *The Turn o' the Year* (Hawick, 1989); some of his journalism has been collected in: *I To the Hills* (Hawick, 1978); *All Good Gifts Around Us* (Hawick, 1982); *Roving Commission* (Hawick, 1992); he also published *Will H. Ogilvie: Poet of the Romantic Borderland* (n.p., 1993).

228. For J S Borland see, 'He carried his copy in his head', *KS*, 23 April 1971, p.3; 'A gifted Galstonian: tribute to 'Sifter'', *KS*, 30 April 1971, p.6; also see below, p.399.

229. Crosshill Evangelical Church Archive, Glasgow, *Memorial Service to Mr. David Warnock*.

230. Cf. below, pp.383-4, 387, 393.

became President of the National Union of Scottish Mineworkers as well as being active from 1922 in local government, first as an elected representative on Stirlingshire Education Authority and then from 1927, when these bodies were taken over by local authorities, as a councillor.²³¹ There were other individuals who served in this last capacity, two of whom had some significance. John Davidson, a businessman, joined Bathgate town council in 1919, becoming in succession a bailie, magistrate and police judge, before being elected provost in 1926.²³² Another businessman, John Henderson, in 1925 was first elected to Glasgow City Council for Langside Ward,²³³ and in 1946 he became Conservative member of Parliament for Glasgow Cathcart division.²³⁴ Involvement in society, rather than withdrawal, was acceptable to many Brethren during this period of the twentieth century.

At a time when the sectarian polarity of the Brethren movement had exercised a strong pull, the denominationalising tendency, which entailed a greater accommodation with society, was not without attraction. Fundamentalism, which displayed sect-like features, had in Britain nothing like the acrimony it possessed in America.²³⁵ The Brethren in this period showed a similar moderation and in this respect are a classic British sect.²³⁶ The archetypal individual of the epoch was Andrew Borland, a devout man who saw himself as treading a line between the stricter Scottish schools and that of High Leigh and its supporters. By no means

231. Mrs Sarah Campbell, Edinburgh, Cuttings scrapbook; this consists mainly of articles from *The Stirling Observer*, 1939-1956; cf. 'James Barbour O.B.E., J.P', *BM*, 96 (1985), p.157; see also below, p.397-9.

232. 'Death of ex-Provost John Davidson', *West Lothian Courier*, 26 January 1945.

233. 'John Henderson (Langside Ward)', 'Glasgow Scrapbook', 13, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

234. *Who Was Who 1971-1980*, 7, 2nd edn (London, 1989), pp.356-7; see below, pp.397-9.

235. Bebbington, 'Martyrs for the Truth', p.451.

236. Bryan Wilson, *Sects and Society: a sociological study of three religious groups in Britain* (London, 1961), p.2.

blinkered in his thinking and of wide theological reading—admiring particularly pietistic traditions of Christian writing²³⁷—his prudence gave rise to a profound conservatism. He counselled one assembly considering a change ‘that any departure from customary procedure which is likely to cause dissension should be viewed with the utmost caution’.²³⁸ While such moderation inhibited innovation, it also checked more acerbic reactions to society.

The issues discussed in the present chapter widened the polarities of the movement. Fears over contemporary secular trends, keenly felt during and after both world wars and deepened by a sense of eschatological pessimism, led to withdrawal, and these anxieties were expressed through Fundamentalism and the increased sectarian impulse of the mid-century. The effect of these was to make the movement cautious in case it should be accommodating the modern world. A renewed phase of sectarianism ensued, noticeably seen in the teaching of Isaac Ewan and John Douglas. Ewan displayed the paradox of the charismatic leader who innovates but does not allow any change once his practices have been accepted because they represent the purest form of church. Douglas was more content to accept mainstream Brethren traditions, but shared Ewan’s desire for inflexibility in doctrine and practice. The resistance to innovation across Brethren of differing views was characteristic of the established sect. Yet despite a renewed phase of sectarian separatism, no-one was willing to take the crucial step of developing centralised control, perhaps because the Needed Truth example was before them and they wished to be saved the accusation of importing their teaching. The Open Brethren principle of

237. Andrew Borland, ‘Books that have helped’, *W*, 101 (1971), pp.296-7: among those listed are Thomas à Kempis and Brother Lawrence; the present writer also has in his possession a copy of Jeremy Taylor’s *Holy Living* which Borland gave to a friend.

238. Writer’s collection, II, Andrew Borland to Tom Dickson, [1956].

preserving uniformity through doctrine and not organisation was maintained.²³⁹ It was through this means that the homogeneity of the movement was retained. But this policy preserved the independency of the Brethren and it permitted a number of individuals to develop a role within society. They could unbend a little: Rendall was a keen fisherman, Henderson was a bowling club president, and John Borland played golf. Those who involved themselves with society tended to be in the upper echelons of the more socially stratified society of Glasgow or the more homogeneous rural communities. In these localities a sectarian response to the anomie of modern life was not so compelling. A denominationalising strand continued throughout this period and its increase after World War II led to its burgeoning after the mid-1960s. It would subsequently become apparent that a phase of Brethren life had come to an end.

239. Gordon Willis and Bryan Wilson, 'The Churches of God: pattern and practice', in Bryan R Wilson (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism: organisation and ideology in social and religious movements* (London, 1967), pp.245-6; cf. above, p.225.

CHAPTER 8

MUSING WHILE WE SING:

SPIRITUALITY 1830s-1960s

Backward look we, drawn to Calvary,
Musing while we sing;
Forward haste we to Thy coming,
Lord and King.
—Douglas Russell, *Songs of Salvation and
Glory* (1927).¹

Singing had an important place in Brethren life.² In 1922 one individual commented on the 'hearty' singing at the Glasgow Half-Yearly Conferences before noting, 'when by special request the thousands of voices sang, as only the Lord's people can sing, the 100th Psalm, we could not help thinking of the time when all the redeemed safely gathered home at last will sing without a discordant note the new song'.³ For this observer the harmony of the singing was a symbol of the unity of Christian believers and its perfection in the world to come. Even the character of the metrical psalm had been transformed by its fervour. The movement had accepted the new hymns with their jaunty rhythms which entered Scotland with the awakenings of the second half of the nineteenth century. Hymn singing was a regular feature of Sunday evenings in many Brethren households,⁴ and in the more prosperous twentieth century there were families which had at least one of its members, often a girl, learning to play the organ or piano to accompany these at homes. Yet Brethren

1. This hymn is no. 383 in *The Believers Hymnbook* (London & Glasgow [1885]).

2. Judith Adair, 'In the Splendour of His Holiness: a Study of the Musical Practices of the Christian Brethren' (University of Edinburgh, dissertation for Scottish Ethnology II, 1992), is a pioneering study of Brethren musical practice. It is examined through the mainly contemporary practice of Bellevue Chapel, Edinburgh.

3. *W*, 52 (1922), p.234.

4. Tom Morton, *Red Guitars in Heaven* (Edinburgh, 1994), pp.32-3.

singing, particularly at the morning meeting, could have a different musical character. In an article pleading for 'more singing, and better, in our Assemblies', the historian and hymn writer David Beattie commented on the effects of music in different situations. 'Bright and cheerful singing' at gospel meetings was contrasted with the opening hymn at the morning meeting, which 'at once concentrates our thoughts'.⁵ The movement had inherited two musical traditions, one lively and emotional, deriving from revivalists such as Richard Weaver and Ira Sankey, and the other more serious and reflective, deriving from the slower rhythms of Presbyterian and Nonconformist worship.⁶ Singing displayed some of the complexities of Brethren spirituality and might fittingly be taken as a metaphor for it as a whole.

Spirituality can be a word of vague meaning. It has usefully been defined as 'those attitudes, beliefs, practices which animate people's lives and help them to reach out towards super-sensible realities'.⁷ The spirituality of Scottish Brethren will be studied in this chapter through an analysis of several key features of the movement: its distinctive worship, its beliefs relating to eschatology and the Christian life, and the work of publishers and hymn writers. The wider religious context of Brethren spirituality was that of Evangelicalism. Studies of Evangelical spirituality have found D W Bebbington's four defining characteristics of conversionism, activism, biblicism and crucicentricism to be central attributes of the piety as well.⁸ A

5. D J Beattie, 'What part should music or singing play in our Assemblies?', *W*, 57 (1937), pp.151-2.

6. Neil Summerton, 'The practice of worship', *CBR*, 39 (1988), pp.32-3, 36.

7. Gordon Wakefield (ed.), *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (London, 1983), p.361, quoted in J M Gordon, *Evangelical Spirituality: from the Wesleys to John Stott* (London, 1991), p. vii.

8. Gordon, *Evangelical Spirituality*, pp. 7, 311-29; David K Gillett, *Trust and Obey: explorations in evangelical spirituality* (London, 1993), p.8; Ian M Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: a study in the spirituality of English Evangelicalism 1918-1939* (Carlisle, 1999).; cf. D W Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London, 1989), pp.2-17; and above, p.2.

more comprehensive account of the spirituality of the Brethren than is possible here would have to consider these four features.⁹ The present discussion will concentrate on three other recurring attributes. The Brethren held an immediate concept of faith which expected the supernatural to be operative in daily life. There was an insistence on separation from the secular world and, at its most rigorous, from other Christian bodies. And there was a stress on right doctrine which emphasised its apprehension and ordering by the mind. These three features—supernaturalism, separatism and cerebralism—are vital in understanding the movement and placing it in its historical and social context.¹⁰

THE MORNING MEETING

Brethren spirituality found its fullest expression in the weekly breaking of bread or morning meeting.¹¹ John Ritchie's account of his first experience of one at Old Rayne in 1871 suggests why it proved such a focal point:

The place was a country joiner's shop, with whitewashed walls, plank seats supported by cut clogs of wood, a plain deal table covered with a white cloth, on which the bread and wine stood near the centre; there was no platform, no chair, no chairman. We had often gone to hear the Lord's servants, and to seek His blessing on the Word spoken by them; here we had come to meet the Lord himself, to hear his voice, to see no man save Jesus only. The seats filled up, mostly by middle-aged country people, all plainly clad; there were no flowers or feathers, no gold ornaments or sparkling jewels there. When all had assembled, the door was shut, and we felt that we were shut in with God.

Solemn silence prevailed. There was no haste, but a season of true waiting upon God. We had come there to worship God—not to *get*, but to *give*; and the Spirit was there to guide.

9. Cf. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences*, pp.143-7, which uses Bebbington's Evangelical characteristics to analyse Brethren spirituality in inter-war England.

10. Ian S Rennie, 'Aspects of Christian Brethren Spirituality', in J I Packer and Loren Wilkinson, *Alive to God: studies in spirituality* (Downers Grove, Illinois, 1992), pp.190-201, isolates four aspects of Brethren spirituality for his historical analysis: its bibliocentrism, separatism, charismaticism, and hyper-Calvinism; that the last was characteristic of the Brethren has been disputed by Randall, *Evangelical Experiences*, pp.143-4.

11. Neil Dickson, "'Shut in with Thee": the morning meeting among Scottish Open Brethren, 1840s-1960s', in R N Swanston (ed.) *SCH*, 35 (Woodbridge, 1999), pp.276-89.

At the end of the meeting a hymn was sung which exhorted Christ to return. Ritchie wrote, 'it actually seemed as if we were on the move *upward*; we certainly were waiting for the call'.¹² The account juxtaposes the ordinariness of the surroundings with the supernaturalism of the event. Its language and imagery, doubtless coloured by memory, emphasise Jesus as the centre of the gathering and the exclusion of the world; simplicity, solemnity and the lack of ritual; an openness to the impulse of the Spirit; and an anticipation of the second advent. These were among the significant features of Brethren spirituality which were encompassed by the morning meeting.

The Brethren commemorated the Lord's supper weekly, an innovation in worship for those with a Presbyterian background. The service grew out of the movement's practice and theology. Many assemblies took advantage of the unfixed nature of the seats to form a square with the table carrying the elements in the middle (the pattern which Ritchie evidently observed at Old Rayne). It is a spatial arrangement that is not focused on one individual but which suggests the involvement and common status of the worshippers.¹³ The men in assembly fellowship could freely participate in public prayer, choosing a hymn for congregational singing, reading the Bible or delivering extemporary sermons. In the Church all were clergy.¹⁴ The absence of a chairman or presiding minister at the breaking of bread was stressed to emphasise that the centre of the gathering was Christ, and much was made by the Brethren of the promise in Matthew's Gospel that he would be 'in the midst' of those gathered in his name.¹⁵ The use of the

12. John Ritchie, 'Revival times and work in Aberdeenshire', in C W R[oss] (ed.), *Donald Ross: pioneer evangelist* (Kilmarnock [1904]), pp.170-1.

13. Neil Dickson, 'Brethren and their buildings', *H*, 68, no. 5 (October, 1989), p.13.

14. R T Hopkins quoted in 'Friday's conference', *NEI*, 2 (1872), p.73; cf. [J.L. Harris], 'On Christian Ministry', *The Christian Witness*, 1 (January 1834), p.9.

15. Matt 18:20.

square pattern also suggested that he was the centre of the meeting. 'It was decided', noted the minutes of one assembly when this arrangement was adopted in the 1920s, 'to alter some of the seats to permit of the table being placed in the "midst" on Lord's Day mornings.'¹⁶ The service was also rooted in the doctrine of the movement. Brethren theology tended to concentrate on the redemptive significance of the second Person of the Trinity to the exclusion of the relationships of the other Persons to the world. The death of Christ in particular had a central place. The cross was seen to be the foundation of the gospel just as salvation by blood was perceived as the central theme of the Bible.¹⁷ In common with nineteenth-century Evangelicalism, its saving significance was seen to be the central concern, and debates over the extent of the atonement, which had recurred within Scottish theology, were marginalised.¹⁸ The only permissible interpretation of the atonement was the penal substitutionary view. J R Caldwell thought that non-atoning views of Christ's death, current in nineteenth-century liberal theology, were signs of the heresy prophesied for the last days.¹⁹ Ritchie was characteristically forthright on this point: 'a

16. Tillicoultry, Bankfoot Evangelical Church, 'Minute Record of the Assembly & Oversight Business Meeting. From 1st Jan. 1925—Ann St. Gospel Hall, Tillicoultry', Half Yearly Business Meeting, 20 March 1926.

17. J R Caldwell, *From the Cross to the Kingdom*, (n.d), rpt (Glasgow, 1983), p.188; Alexander Stewart, *Salvation Truths* (Kilmarnock, n.d.), p.10; John Ritchie, *From Egypt to Canaan* (Kilmarnock, n.d.), pp.21-3.

18. According to F F Bruce, 'Alexander Marshall', *SDCHT*, p.548, i, Marshall's adherence to universal atonement, carried over from his EU background, was 'in his day exceptional among Brethren preachers'. The majority view in the late nineteenth century was that of individuals, such as Donald Ross, who believed in a limited atonement. But over time (as Bruce's comment implies) the majority came to be that of universal atonement; so complete was the replacement that by 1998 limited atonement could be regarded as being unscriptural in J R Baker, 'Question box', *BM*, 108 (1998), p.107. For limited atonement, see Donald Ross, 'A clear statement', *W*, 69 (1939), pp.5-6; C F Hogg, 'QA', *W*, 57 (1927), p.73; and Henry Payne, *ibid.*; for universal atonement see, [John Bowes], 'What the death of Christ procured for mankind', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.130-3; John Hawthorn, *Alexander Marshall: evangelist, author and pioneer* (Glasgow [1929]), pp.22-3; and 'QA' from: A M[arshall], *W*, 53 (1923), p.13; HyP[ickering], *W*, 57 (1927), p.131; George Goodman, *W*, 65 (1935), pp.278-9; and Robert Rendall, *W*, 76 (1946), p.23; cf. M C Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology* (Edinburgh, 1985); Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp.16-17.

19. Caldwell, *Cross to Kingdom*, p.190.

religion without *blood*', he wrote, 'is a sure title to the lake of fire.'²⁰ This primary focus in Brethren theology dictated the purpose of the morning meeting. 'The special object for which the Lord assembles His people thus, wrote Ritchie, 'is to "Remember Him" in the breaking of bread.'²¹ The emphasis of the service therefore fell on commemorating the person of Christ, especially his death. It gave vital expression to the movement's Christocentricism and its liberty of ministry from among the men in fellowship.

It is because the morning meeting sprang from both the core of the movement's theology and its distinguishing practice that the characteristics of the spirituality can be clearly seen in it. In the pre-1860 period the Glasite influence on the gathering was strong.²² But a greater stress on extemporary prayers and hymn singing, more suited to impulsive views of the Spirit current in contemporary revivalism rather than the Glasite practice of exhortation, came to predominate at the morning meeting.²³ It was the supernaturalism which was implicit in this understanding of the meeting which had appealed to the young Ritchie. Simplicity was perceived as an essential characteristic of the apostolic church,²⁴ and the word was frequently used with reference to the breaking of bread. 'It is a simple ordinance,' Caldwell noted', observed in a simple manner, and by a simple people.'²⁵ The New Testament gave no liturgy; therefore, it was argued, one should not be developed. The use of ecclesiastical art and architecture were strongly criticised, a point

20. Ritchie, *Egypt to Canaan*, p.21.

21. John Ritchie, *Assembly Privileges and Responsibilities* (Kilmarnock, n.d.) p.5; the allusion is to 1 Cor 11:24, 25.

22. See above, pp.56-7, 66.

23. Dickson, "'Shut in with Thee'", in Swanston (ed.), *SCH*, pp.278-80; cf. above, p.191.

24. James Patrick Callahan, *Primitivist Piety: the ecclesiology of the early Plymouth Brethren* (Lanham, MA; 1996) pp.51-4.

25. J R Caldwell, 'Christ the sin offering', *W*, 24 (1894), p.56.

underlined by the plainness of the surroundings in which the Brethren worshipped.²⁶ Instrumental music at the morning meeting was also eschewed. The stress on simplicity helped to heighten the sense of the supernatural. The divine was not mediated through material objects and rituals, as in the Old Testament, but God worked directly on the human spirit. The dispensation of ritualism was past and Christians lived in the dispensation of the Spirit. If the worship was directed, then it was the Holy Spirit 'as Guide and Sovereign Distributor of gifts' who was leading as he moved in the hearts of those present, using them as 'fit mouthpieces to express the assembly's worship'.²⁷ If there was a president, then it was the Lord himself who presided.²⁸ The direct faith that the Brethren had inherited from popular nineteenth-century Evangelicalism, with its strong sense of supernaturalism, lent itself to this understanding of the Lord's supper.

Separatism and cerebralism also had a place in perceptions of the morning meeting. The world was excluded, and all were agreed that it was for believers only. Judas had left the Last Supper, J R Caldwell was at pains to establish, before Christ broke bread, for it was a feast for disciples only.²⁹ The division of the Sunday services into a morning meeting for Christians and an evening one for unbelievers emphasised the separation.³⁰ It was captured in one of Alexander Stewart's hymns:

Shut in with Thee far, far, above
The restless world that wars below,

26. W, 'Herod and Jerusalem', *NI*, 3 (1873), p.164; J R Caldwell, 'Keeping the ordinances', *W*, 39 (1909), p.94; Dickson, 'Brethren and their buildings', pp.12-13.

27. J R Caldwell, 'QA', *W*, 24 (1894), p.84, John Ritchie, 'The Church in its worship', *BM*, 28 (1918), p.77; cf. *idem*, *Assembly Privileges*, p.4.

28. Alexander Marshall, 'The Lord's two ordinances', *W*, 19 (1889), pp.164-6.

29. J R Caldwell, 'The breaking of bread: the meaning, mode, and practical observance. notes on I Corinthians xi. 23-6', *W*, 39 (1909), p.78; cf. John Ritchie, 'The Lord's supper', *BM*, 11 (1901), p.140 (later published as a pamphlet of the same title and as a chapter in *Easy Paths for Young Believers* (1909); see below, n. 129).

30. J R Caldwell, *Epitome of Christian Experience in Psalm XXXII with the development of the Christian life* (Glasgow [1917]), pp.104-5.

We seek to learn and prove Thy love,
Thy wisdom and Thy grace to know.³¹

The verse also makes plain that the key to the meeting was quietness so that there might be meditation on the love of Christ. It produced a leisurely service, in which it was expected there would be silences. Caldwell felt the ideal length of the morning meeting was two hours with the participation of the Lord's supper reasonably close to the start so that it 'might be lingered over in blessed meditation'.³² Isaac Ewan wanted it nearer the end, moving towards it 'softly, reverently, meditatively'.³³ Caution was advised against too vocal a service, for silence involved all those present, including the women. 'All should be exercised', counselled Ritchie, 'waiting upon God, meditating on Christ, during times of silence'.³⁴ The accounts which have survived of the earliest breaking of bread services bear testimony to the powerful awareness of the numinous that those present sensed. At Peterhead during the first morning meeting, it was remembered, the floor was wet with the tears of those present.³⁵ These gatherings when the movement was young could be emotional occasions. Their features were formed by the piety of the participants, but other influences might be detected in them.

The stress on simplicity and solemnity and the supernaturalism of the occasion arose out of the cultural context. They increased the state of awe prescribed by nineteenth-century Romanticism.³⁶ Paradoxically, the desire

31. *Believers Hymn Book*, no. 129.

32. J R C[aldwell], 'The object of the Lord's supper', *W*, 22 (1892), p.127.

33. I Y E[wan], 'When should the bread be broken?', *PT*, 6 (1940-1), p.987.

34. Ritchie, *Assembly Privileges*, p.4.

35. Writer's collection, I.A.2., 'First Message in York Street Hall by Mr. Alex Buchan on 26th June, 1965', cyclostyled foolscap sheet, n.d; cf., anon., 'Assembly Life Experiences: Letters of an Octogenarian', *BM*, 29 (1919), p.55; Robert Chapman, *A Short History of the Inception, Progress and Personalities of Hebron Hall Assembly, Larkhall: 1866-1928* (Kilmarnock, 1929) p.12; anon., *How I was Led Outside the Camp* (Kilmarnock, n.d), p.3; Fordyce Hall, *Insch, minute and account book of Insch assembly, 1873-1891*, p.2.

36. Summerton, 'Practice of worship', p.36.

for separation was formed in part by strong negative reactions to nineteenth-century society which were continued into the twentieth.³⁷ The heavy reliance on meditation, like the adoption of an impulsive ministry, was possibly a Quaker influence on Brethren thinking, there having been an early influx of members of the Society of Friends into the movement in England.³⁸ But the use of meditation also pointed to the cerebralism of the movement which was that of lower middle-class and more articulate working-class individuals.³⁹ The features of the spirituality did not exist in isolation from their wider social and cultural context.

ESCHATOLOGY

All three features of supernaturalism, separatism and cerebralism co-existed in Brethren eschatology, and through it some of their sources can be detected. From the beginning, the Brethren accepted the notion that the second advent would be premillennial and they became pioneers in spreading this view at a popular level. In 1838 J N Darby had taught the Edinburgh church his prophetic views on his first visit to them.⁴⁰ John Bowes began as a postmillennialist but after 1851, influenced by Andrew Bonar's *Redemption Draweth Nigh* (1847), he became a premillennialist.⁴¹ The view was taught to new converts and those joining the movement. At the nondenominational conference held in Hamilton to report on the success of the Lanarkshire revivals of 1866, J R Caldwell had addressed it on the second coming.⁴² When the north-east assemblies were formed, he

37. For Brethren attitudes to society, see below, pp.326-28, 383-401.

38. T C F Stunt, *Early Brethren and the Society of Friends*. CBRF Occasional Paper No.3 (Pinner, 1970), pp.23-5.

39. For Brethren social class, see below, pp.357-67.

40. J N Darby to A M Foluquier, 6 Octobre 1838 (*Commencée en septembre*), *Lettres de J.N.D'*, *MÉ* (1897), p.294.

41. [John Bowes], 'The great mistake as to the second advent', *CM*, 1 (1844), pp.237-40; [*idem*], 'On the coming Kingdom', *TP*, 1 (1851), pp.257-260.

42. *R*, 16 (1867), pp.31-2; for this conference, see above, p.108.

wrote a series on prophecy during 1873-4 for Ross's *The Northern Intelligencer*. 'The truth in them', wrote Caldwell later 'was nearly all new to the natives of Aberdeenshire.'⁴³ At Larkhall in the early 1860s the second coming was one of the topics discussed, along with believer's baptism and the breaking of bread.⁴⁴ To identify with the Brethren was to adopt a distinctive premillennial expectation of the advent. To contemporaries it was one of the central identifying features of the movement.⁴⁵

The variety of adventism accepted among the Brethren was dispensational premillennialism. This system had its origins in J N Darby's thought, and Scottish Brethren inherited it already formulated.⁴⁶ In 1867, for example, D T Grimston's *A Diagram of Dispensations* was published by the Glasgow Exclusive Brethren publishers R L Allan and was available from their bookshop in the city. This work established the general principle that the history of the world was divided into different epochs, or dispensations, in which God dealt in various ways with humanity, each of which was concluded by judgement.⁴⁷ Darby belonged to the school which interpreted the book of Revelation in a futurist manner, believing that its prophecies had still to be fulfilled. He divided the second advent into two stages.

43. J R Caldwell, 'Preface', in *Things to Come* (1875), rpt (Glasgow, 1983), p.311.

44. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, pp.10-1

45. William Reid, *Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted* (Edinburgh, 1875), pp.296-322.

46. For the origin of dispensational premillennialism in Darby's writings, see Clarence B Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism: its historical genesis and ecclesiastical implications* (Grand Rapids, USA, 1960); F Roy Coad, *Prophetic Developments with Particular Reference to the Early Brethren Movement—C.B.R.F. Occasional Paper No.2* (Middlesex, 1966); Ernest R Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American millennialism 1800-1930* (Chicago, 1970); George M Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: the shaping of twentieth century evangelicalism 1870-1925* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 48-55; Kent Eaton, 'Beware the trumpet of judgement!: John Nelson Darby and the nineteenth-century Brethren', in Fiona Bowie and Christopher Deacy (eds), *The Coming Deliverer: millennial themes in world religions* (Cardiff, 1997), pp.119-62.

47. D T Grimson, *A Diagram of Dispensations: with key* (Glasgow, 1867).

There was a secret rapture of the Church, which could come at any moment, and then, after a period of tribulation on earth, a public return by Christ with his saints to institute his millennial reign. Within the prevailing premillennial view, as has already been noted, there were differences of interpretation and emphasis. The very small minority of post-tribulationists rejected the two-stage advent, but the Darbyite view was accepted by the vast majority.⁴⁸ Despite the shades of opinion, the Open Brethren in Scotland embraced the main outlines of dispensationalism wholeheartedly,⁴⁹ and three individuals from the movement played a significant role in spreading its teachings. Caldwell's articles were later published as *Things to Come* (1875) which American prophetic teacher R A Torrey placed third in excellence on a list of books on the subject.⁵⁰ Robert McKilliam, the Aberdeenshire physician, after he moved to London, became the first editor of *The Morning Star*, founded in 1894 to spread 'futurist interpretation', a position he held for twenty-one years.⁵¹ Most important of all was Walter Scott, who had been an accession from the Exclusives and whose most substantial work was his *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (1914).⁵² After 1893, Scott spent a period in America, and he was one of only four individuals singled out by C I Scofield as helping him with his *The Scofield Reference Bible* (1909), a work which systematised dispensationalism into seven epochs and disseminated the scheme throughout the Evangelical world.⁵³

Premillennialism was marked by a strong supernaturalism. There was a

48. For the former view, see above, pp.196, 306-7.

49. However, for Robert Rendall's questioning of it, see above, p.307.

50. HyP[ickering]., 'John R. Caldwell', *idem* (ed.), *Chief Men Among the Brethren*, 2nd edn (London & Glasgow, 1918), p.152.

51. *The Morning Star*, 1 (1894), p.3; W W H, 'Dr. Robert McKilliam', Pickering (ed.), *Chief Men*, pp.175-7.

52. For the publishing history of this work, see above, p.279, n.38.

53. 'C I Scofield', *W*, 63 (1933), p.282; C I Scofield, 'Preface', *The Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford, 1909).

constant expectation of sudden divine intervention in the affairs of history. Attempts to predict the date of the advent, a mark of historicist premillennialism, had discredited the idea that the time could be determined and the practice was condemned.⁵⁴ Christ's coming would be at any moment, and therefore could not be predicted. However, this did not stop individuals looking for signs that the end was near. Female preaching had been hailed as one indicator,⁵⁵ but there were others. In 1868 Bowes speculated that if Napoleon III were the Antichrist then the monarch's forthcoming sixtieth birthday must indicate the imminence of the advent (presumably because of the association with the number six).⁵⁶ The revivals of the nineteenth century were widely interpreted as a sign that the second coming was impending.⁵⁷ Even the appearance of the Brethren and the recovery of truths concerning the Church, it was suggested during the late-Victorian consolidation of the movement, was another sign.⁵⁸ The attempt to discern the times, the previous chapter has shown, was at its height during World War I, and there was renewed interest during World War II.⁵⁹ The Brethren lived in constant expectation of the cataclysmic interruption of human affairs and it determined their response to the events of history. Generations came and went in the belief that they would be living at the advent. Bowes' expectations had traces of the longing for status reversal which chiliasm

54. Anon., 'Must the Church pass through the Tribulation?', *NW*, 10 (1880), p.106; A O M[olesworth], 'The blessed hope of the Church', *W*, 23 (1893), p.55-6; J R C[aldwell], 'On the fixing of dates for prophetic events', *ibid.*, p.177; [John Ritchie], 'YBQB', *BM*, 14 (1904), p.94.

55. See above, p.93.

56. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.168.

57. [John Bowes], *The Twenty-First Report of the Means Employed by Several Churches of Christ to Proclaim the Glorious Gospel of God's Grace and promote unity, purity and activity in the church chiefly exhibited from J. Bowes' Journal. 1859-60* (Dundee, 1860), p.1; two English Brethren journals of the period were entitled *The Latter Rain* and *The Eleventh Hour*.

58. J H, 'Habbakuk', *NW*, 5 (1875), p.59; Wm Lincoln, 'What is to be done?', *ibid.*, p.102; anon., 'The influence of the Middle Ages on our Christian teachers', *ibid.*, p.173; A P M[acdonald], 'The house of God', *NW*, 22 (1882), p.71.

59. See above, pp.278-9, 295-6.

often gave to the poor. The Church, he liked to think, was a school preparing the saints for ruling during the millennium.⁶⁰ But the dominant concern of Brethren eschatology was not of the insignificant of the earth becoming its rulers, but the instantaneous nature of the rapture and the marvels surrounding Christ's reign. In a scientific age, it provided a place for the supernatural. The apostolic era of miracles had passed away, Caldwell noted, 'and, to the outward sense, there is no apparent interference by the living God with the ordinary course of nature'. This was about to cease when Christ would exercise a 'personal, visible reign at Jerusalem', for the miraculous powers of the early church 'were but specimens of "the powers of the age to come", that will be committed to the saints'. It was confidently expected that Christians would ascend and descend from heaven, while in Jerusalem the Jewish sacrifices and rituals would be reestablished.⁶¹ In the dispensationalist scheme, the age of signs and wonders was about to commence. In common with other nineteenth-century British adventists, it was the imminence of the supernatural within premillennial dispensationalism which attracted the Brethren.⁶²

Nineteenth-century adventism was allied to a profoundly pessimistic view of the present.⁶³ John Bowes had shared the optimism of the Enlightenment and had detested gloomy views. He did not accept the concept of a secret rapture and at Christ's return, he maintained, the earth would be converted.⁶⁴ Nor did he see his views as a reason for retreating from hopes of improving society. 'We have long thought', he wrote, 'that

60. *TP*, 2 (1852-3), pp.141-2.

61. J R C[aldwell], 'Things to come', *NI*, 4 (1874), pp.34, 81-2; cf. Walter Scott, *Prophetic Scenes and Coming Glories: answers to numerous prophetic questions* (London, 1919), pp.61-83; [John Ritchie], 'YBQB', *BM*, 23 (1913), pp.58-9.

62. D W Bebbington, 'The advent hope in British Evangelicalism since 1800', *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies*, 9 (1988), pp.103-114; cf. *idem*, *Evangelicalism*, pp.83-5.

63. D N Hempton, 'Evangelicalism and eschatology', *JEH*, 31 (1980), pp.179-94.

64. [John Bowes], 'Preaching the gospel with gloomy views', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.151-2.

our views of the church and Christ's second coming should not prevent us from doing all in our power to improve the condition of man in the world.'⁶⁵ Darby had taught that because each dispensation had ended in failure on the part of God's people, it might be expected that signs of decay would be detected in the contemporary church. True Christians should separate from the growing apostasy and form themselves into pure churches. This was a view that Bowes himself came to share in the 1850s, probably due to his reading of *Eight Lectures on Prophecy* (1852), a work which William Trotter, the former-Methodist Brethren preacher, had produced in cooperation with Thomas Smith.⁶⁶ 'All false churches are Babylon and must soon fall,' Bowes wrote, 'should we not beware lest we be buried among the sins of the falling city?'⁶⁷ Heterodoxy in the churches was keenly looked for on the part of the Brethren, for it indicated the end.

And the majority shared Darby's pessimistic outlook. Contrary to the Victorian public myth, the world was not progressing. An optimistic hope for worldwide conversions to Christianity attracted missionaries such as Dan Crawford and John Anderson to query the prevailing eschatological scheme.⁶⁸ But most did not expect the transformation of the world by the gradualist efforts of the missionary movement, nor did they feel that society could be improved. Rather, signs of decay were detected. 'What we find previous to the Lord's return', wrote Walter Scott, 'is a rebellious world and a sleeping Church.'⁶⁹ Developments in science and technology, Caldwell, felt in 1882 were not leading to 'a triumphant church and a

65. *Idem*, *TP*, 8 (1861-2), p.189.

66. [*Idem*], 'On the second advent', *TP*, 2 (1852-3), pp.25-9; cf. William Trotter and Thomas Smith, *Eight Lectures on Prophecy: from shorthand notes* (1852), edn (London, 1881); for Trotter, see above p.49.

67. [John Bowes], 'The perils of the times', *TP*, 3 (1854), p.173.

68. Dan Crawford, *Thirsting After God* (London [1927]), pp.135-43; John A Anderson, *The Blessed Hope: a study in dialogue form on the coming again of the Lord Jesus* (London [c.1930]), p.11.

69. Scott, *Prophetic Scenes*, p.9.

converted world, but the culmination of Satan's schemes in the Man of Sin'.⁷⁰ World War I demonstrated that faith in progress was ill-founded.⁷¹ Pessimism about society was reinforced by an other-worldly conception of the nature of a Christian. Dispensationalism separated Israel and the Church as belonging to different divine administrations. The Church was God's heavenly people, to be caught up from the earth, while Israel was his earthly people, to be reinstated after the rapture.⁷² 'A Christian has no more to do with the world's politics than with the world's religion' declared Caldwell.⁷³ Duty was now narrowly defined. Because of the Christian's heavenly calling, Bible teacher George Adam argued, he should have nothing to do with the affairs of society: 'To witness unto our absent and now rejected Lord is our *business* during our sojourn on earth.'⁷⁴ Eschatology emphasised the necessity of separation from the institutional church and from society and the real task of the Christian, Brethren piety told them, was to convert others. Involvement in the world or the acquisition of its comforts was futile. "Brethren," Donald Ross would thunder, "we are just God's pickings out of this wretched world, and when he has got all His own out of it, He'll burn up the whole concern like so much kindling-wood".⁷⁵ Dispensationalism was an essentially separatist scheme because of its pessimism about the course of the Church and the world, and it led to the rejection of both.⁷⁶ Such attitudes to society will call for further analysis in the next chapter.

The central attraction of the dispensationalist scheme for many was its

70. J R Caldwell, *N W*, 12 (1882), p.113.

71. L W G Alexander, 'Heaven's hope versus Earth's hopelessness', *W*, 46 (1916), pp.55-6.

72. Coad, *Prophetic Developments*, p.28.

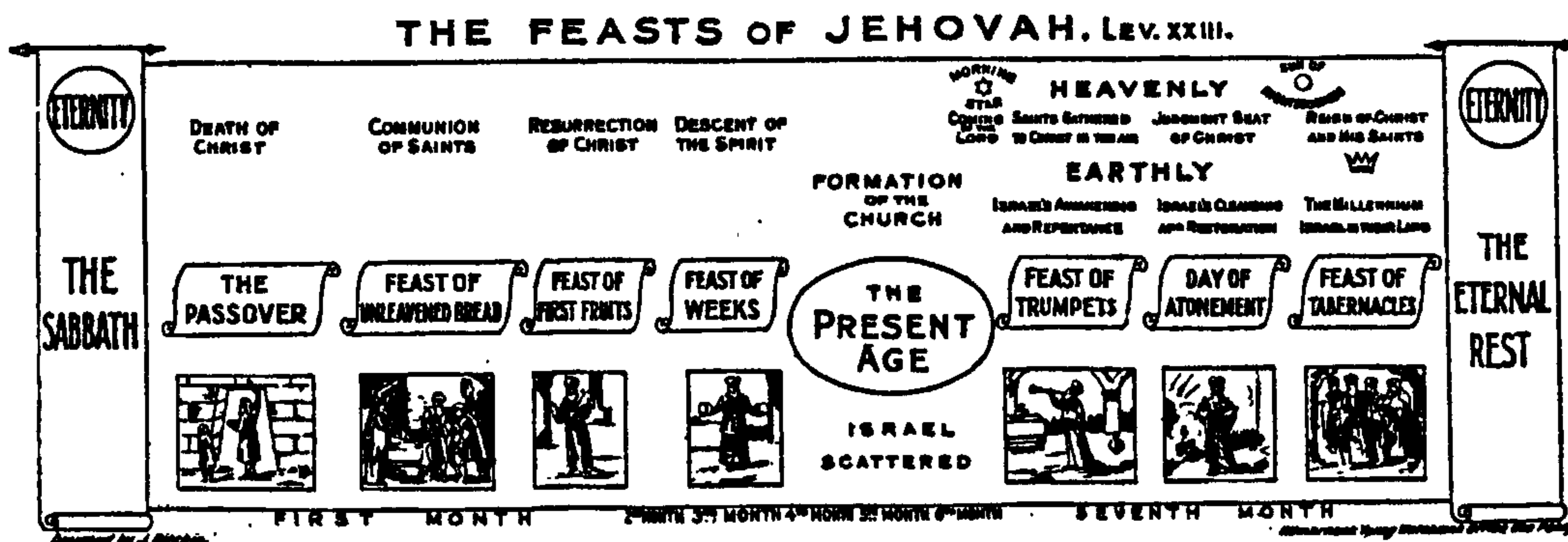
73. J R C[aldwell], "'Things to Come'", *NI*, 3 (1873), p.51.

74. George Adam, 'The heavenly calling of the Church', *W*, 28 (1898), p.160.

75. R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, p.16.

76. Rennie, 'Aspects of Brethren spirituality' pp.196-200; Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism*, pp.127, 149; T C F Stunt, 'Irvingite pentecostalism and the early Brethren', *CBRFJ*, 10 (1965), p.41.

Figure 8.1. A chart relating eschatology and typology.



Source: John Ritchie, *The Feasts of Jehovah: bright foreshadowings of grace and glory* (Kilmarnock, 1895).

ability to organise the scriptural data and its presentation of an apparently incontrovertible scheme of the future. ‘Reverent and prayerful study of the prophetic Word, in the Old and New Testament,’ Ritchie counselled, ‘will be found a means of godly edification and a safeguard against the many speculations concerning the future’.⁷⁷ Brethren members pored over the apocalyptic and prophetic books of the Bible. ‘The Word of God is like a complicated puzzle,’ wrote one individual, ‘much of its truth seems disconnected, the one part from the other, and it is only the Holy Spirit of God that can teach us to put it together so as to make a lovely and harmonious whole.’⁷⁸ Dispensationalism was the key that had been given. Scripture was reduced to a system, and lengthy discussions sought to establish how difficult texts could be accommodated. Charts were produced as a guide to its complexities. Ritchie designed one which connected eschatology with the feasts of the book of Leviticus, rituals which were seen to have typological significance, thus relating one difficult area of interpretation to another (Figure 8.1). Brethren eschatology expressed the

77. John Ritchie, ‘Signs of the end’, *BM*, 19 (1909), pp.13-14.

78. F Brodie, ‘The bride of the Lamb —who is she?’, *NI*, 4 (1874), p.129.

separatism and the heightened supernaturalism of their spirituality, but perhaps more clearly than any other aspect of their belief, it demonstrated their respect for ideas and a love of organising the facts. This intellectual trait has been traced to the role of Scottish common-sense philosophy in the development of Fundamentalism.⁷⁹ Scottish Brethren were philosophically naive, yet nevertheless, they had an empiricist's regard for the facts and their systematic arrangement. This pursuit of the 'statement of Bible facts' (in the phrase of evangelist Henry Steedman) contained in scripture led to a rigid fixing of them in a system of knowledge, and it can be seen in areas other than dispensationalism.⁸⁰

THE WAY OF HOLINESS

It is apparent from the discussion of Brethren eschatology that their spirituality had diverse sources which were not always easily accommodated to each other. Nineteenth-century supernaturalism sat alongside a cerebralism which had its roots in earlier habits of thought. Separatism, too, could act as a counter-force on other aspects of the spirituality. The fault lines which ran through Brethren piety can be perceived in their concepts of sanctification. Early Brethren writings have been seen as among the sources of nineteenth-century holiness teaching.⁸¹ In Scotland, as earlier chapters have shown, Brethren teaching did actually lead to the adoption of perfectionism in the 1860s and of higher-life teaching in the 1870s.⁸² Although neither of these holiness schools was

79. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, pp.55-62; cf. James Barr, *Fundamentalism*, (London, 1977), pp.270-9.

80. Writer's collection, II, Henry Steedman quoted in 'The divine and eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ', notes on an address in James K Jack, Prestwick, The Holy Bible, Authorised Version, interlinear edn (Oxford, n.d.), endpp. As a systematising of scripture in areas other than dispensationalism, Steedman's address is a case in point; for the view of scripture as 'fact', cf. David Anderson-Berry, quoted above, pp.220; and Robert Rendall, *History, Prophecy and God* (London, 1954), pp.17-25.

81. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp.157-9.

82. See above, pp.91, 117-8.

eventually accepted, concepts of an exalted state of Christian living continued to have an influence. The higher-life movement held a distinctive interpretation of Romans 7:14-25, a passage in which the Apostle Paul depicts himself as having an internal struggle against sinning. Darby thought that this passage showed the individual learning through experience the power of sin. Once this had been lived through, the individual could know 'complete deliverance from the whole power of sin' through realising his perfect acceptance in Christ, described in Romans chapters 6 and 8, and the 'only normal state of the Christian then is unclouded fellowship' with God.⁸³ Darby claimed that it was due to his comments that Robert Pearsall Smith, the seminal American holiness teacher, accepted these chapters as the key biblical passage for teaching victory over sin.⁸⁴ Among the Open Brethren Donald Munro accepted this exegesis,⁸⁵ and Munro's convert, John Ritchie also adopted and promoted

83. J N Darby, 'Letter on Mr R.P.S.'s "Holiness through Faith"', in William Kelly (ed.), *The Collected Writings of J.N. Darby*, 23 (London, n.d.), pp.320-358

84. J N Darby to a 'Brother', 20 February 1875, *Letters of J.N.D.*, 2 (London, n.d.), p.335; *idem* to a German 'Brother', 1875, *ibid.*, p.354. In a letter in which he criticised Henry Varley's *Trust in the Living Father* (1873), Darby claimed that he had experienced the struggle described in Romans 7 'fifty years ago' and that he had 'treated it as a non-Christian state' (J N Darby, 23 December 1873, *ibid.*, p.245)—this is an allusion to his experience in 1826-7, described in J N Darby to Prof. Tholuck, 1855, *Letters*, 3, pp.299-300. By this he appeared to mean, not that it was the experience of a non-Christian, but that it was not the state which might be expected of a Christian. He noted, however, that 'It may come after pardon, and in these free gospel days often does' (May, 1867, *Letters*, 1, p.500). In some of his letters Darby counsels non-Christians to 'have gone through' Romans 7 into the liberty of Romans 6 and 8 (Darby to Mr Governor, May 1863, *ibid.*, pp.355-6), and in others he counsels Christians similarly (11 June 1878, *Letters*, 2, pp.452-4; 11 May 1881, *Letters*, 3, pp.155-8). See also *Letters*, 15 February 1875, 2, p.328; February 1875, *ibid.*, p.333; March 1875, *ibid.*, p.337.

85. [John Ritchie], *Donald Munro 1839-1908: a servant of Jesus Christ* ([1908]), rpt (Glasgow, 1987), p.72.

it in his later writings.⁸⁶ Romans 7 in Ritchie's view was not a 'normal picture of Christian life' but of an individual 'who has life but not liberty'. By using the might of Christ, portrayed by Paul in the following chapter, it was possible to leave this 'phase of the Christian life' and 'to live a life of power and of victory'.⁸⁷ Ritchie's view is that of Darby, but his vocabulary shows that it has been refracted through the teachings of the higher-life movement. His terms are those which came to be associated with the Keswick Convention.⁸⁸ The desire to exalt the power of Christ and for an enhanced purity of life were common to both Brethren views and higher-life teaching. The supernaturalism of Brethren spirituality gave it significant affinities with holiness movements.

Ritchie's views, however, were by no means identical with those of Keswick. He differed on how the victory over sin could be achieved. It was not through a special act of consecration but through realising the power of the indwelling Christ.⁸⁹ In maintaining this Ritchie was again following the Calvinist Darby who criticised Pearsall Smith's views for magnifying human ability, something Darby blamed on the Wesleyan influence on Smith.⁹⁰ Ritchie also accepted Darby's view that sanctification primarily referred to an accomplished fact at conversion, the believer being sanctified or 'set apart' in Christ.⁹¹ 'There is no "higher life" than this'

86. There are striking verbal parallels between the writings of Ritchie and: anon., 'Loose him, and let him go', *NEI*, 2 (1872), pp.13-4; W H W, 'Answers', pp.7-10; L[?undin] B[?rown], 'Notes on the Epistle to the Romans', *NW*, 12 (1882) pp. 12-4. Ritchie evidently learned his interpretation from his early contact with the movement in the north east. For example, Ritchie states that some Christians are in legal bondage and need to enter the liberty of the gospel: 'Like Lazarus raised to life, but bound with grave clothes, they need to be "loosed" and "let go"' (John Ritchie, *Notes on Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Kilmarnock, n.d.), p.104); this analogy provided the basis of the anonymous article 'Loose him, and let him go'.

87. Ritchie, *Romans*, pp.105, 101, 104.

88. J C Pollock, *The Keswick Story* (London, 1964), pp.74-5.

89. Ritchie, *Romans*, pp.105-6.

90. J N Darby, 'Review of R. Pearsall Smith on "Holiness through Faith"', in Kelly (ed.), *Collected Writings*, pp.277-319.

91. Ritchie, *Egypt to Canaan*, pp.11-12.

Ritchie caustically observed.⁹² His stress on the believer's perfect standing in Christ, or 'positional sanctification', was combined with the traditional Evangelical view that the believer is also in constant warfare with sin.⁹³ This combination was Ritchie's version of what H H Rowdon has shown to be the Open Brethren concept of sanctification.⁹⁴ In Scotland, it received its clearest expression in J R Caldwell's writings. Caldwell also held that the 'positional' aspect of sanctification was the primary one.⁹⁵ In emphasising the believer's perfection in Christ at conversion the Brethren were attempting to abandon the close examination of one's actions which in Reformed teaching was held to be necessary for the individual to be assured of salvation.⁹⁶ This was intimately connected to Brethren concepts of instant salvation and the propositional assurance which had been inherited from early nineteenth-century hyper-Calvinism.⁹⁷ Salvation was attained as soon as the individual concurred with the propositions of scripture relating to it, and likewise the acceptance of the biblical statements formed the basis of the assurance of salvation.⁹⁸ Caldwell was typical in arguing that the individual should not look for any other corroboration of salvation other than God's bare word that he is forgiven.

92. John Ritchie, 'The tabernacle in the wilderness', *NW*, 12 (1882), p.54; cf., G F G, "'The higher life'", *NW*, 8 (1878), pp.155-9; Stewart, *Salvation Truths*, p.77.

93. Ritchie, *Egypt to Canaan*, p.77; Ritchie had been strongly influenced by W P Mackay, a Congregational minister and revivalist, who also emphasised this point, see W P Mackay, *'Grace and Truth' under Twelve Aspects*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh, 1875), 64th edn (London, 1905), pp.172-218.

94. H H Rowdon, 'The Brethren concept of sainthood', *Vox Evangelica*, 20 (1990), pp.91-102.

95. J R Caldwell, 'Sanctification', *W*, 33 (1903), pp.29-30, 45-7.

96. Rowdon, 'Sainthood', pp.96-7.

97. Rennie, 'Brethren spirituality', p.205; Donald M Lewis, *Lighten Their Darkness: the evangelical mission to working-class London* (Westport, CT, 1986), pp.30-1; propositional or contractual assurance was diffused in Scotland by revivalists such as Brownlow North and instant salvation by ones such as Hay Macdowall Grant and Reginald Radcliffe.

98. See above, pp.98, 110, 117 (n.24); Alexander Marshall was criticised by an anonymous Scottish Methodist for expounding these views, see [Alexander Marshall], *Wandering Lights: a stricture on the doctrines and methods of Brethrenism. A review by A.M[arshall].*, 3rd edn (Glasgow, n.d.), pp.6-12; a parallel controversy between Methodists and Brethren also took place in Canada, cf. Phyllis D Airhart, "'What must I do to be saved?'" Two paths to evangelical conversion in late Victorian Canada', *Church History*, 59 (1990), pp.372-85.

To do so would be to make God a liar.⁹⁹ However, despite his rejection of evidential assurance, Caldwell also stressed that sanctification was 'conditional' or progressive.¹⁰⁰

Both Ritchie and Caldwell were influenced by Darbyite thinking and were accepting an already formulated concept. Counter to the views of sanctification which had been established by the early writers of the movement were perfectionism and, later, the Pentecostal experience of baptism of the Spirit. Subsequent authors were unanimous in rejecting the possibility of either.¹⁰¹ Doctrinal conservatism was strong in the Brethren. Despite the obvious affinities Ritchie's views had with Keswick teaching, he and his associates explicitly rejected it.¹⁰² Yet there were others, apart from Ritchie, whose teaching showed influences from it. Most prominent was W J Grant, the former Baptist pastor, who believed, according to one obituarist, that the 'great need among assemblies was the Keswick message

99. Caldwell, *Christian Experience*, p.30; cf. John Ritchie, *Assurance: or how I know I am saved* (Kilmarnock, n.d.).

100. J R Caldwell, 'Sanctification', *W*, 33 (1903), pp.45-7, 61-2; *idem*, 'The meat offering', *W*, 24 (1894), pp.168-9; *idem*, 'The red heifer', *W*, 26 (1896), p.53-4, 76-7, 85-7; *idem*, 'Epitome of Christian experience', *W*, 38 (1908) pp.5-6, 23-5, 55-7, 73-4, 88-90, 118-20, 135-7, 151-2; *idem*, 'The old and new within', *W*, 41 (1911), pp.157-8; *idem*, 'Union with Christ', *ibid.*, pp.77-8, 93-5. Of these articles, the following were published in books: 'Sanctification' as *Sanctification* (Glasgow, 1903); 'The meat offering' in *Christ in the Levitical Offerings* (Glasgow, n.d.); 'The red heifer' in *Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament* (Glasgow, n.d.); and *Epitome of Christian Experience* (Glasgow, 1917).

101. W H W, 'Answers to "Twenty-six questions concerning the old man, &c."', *NI*, 3 (1873), p.7-10; W W, 'A Letter Concerning Mr. Wesley's views of sanctification', *NW*, 5 (1875), p.116-121; John Ritchie, 'The tabernacle in the wilderness', *NW*, 12 (1882), p.82; 'QA', *ibid.*, pp.95, 128; J R C [aldwell], 'Christ the sin offering', *W*, 24 (1894), p.39; [*idem*], 'Sanctification', *W*, 33 (1903), p.61; [John Ritchie], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 10 (1900), p.36; [*idem*], 'YBQB', *BM*, 18 (1908), p.142; George Adam, 'The Christian armour', *W*, 36 (1906), p.132; William Hoste, 'Operations of the Holy Spirit', *BM*, 18 (1908), pp.139-40; 'QA', *W*, 41 (1911), pp.18-9; 'YBQB', *BM*, 31 (1921), pp.28-9.

102. John Ritchie, 'The tabernacle in the wilderness', *NW*, 12 (1882), p.54; *idem*, *Egypt to Canaan*, p.77; *BM*, 41 (1932), pp.143-4.

of holiness.¹⁰³ John Ritchie Jnr accepted the Darbyite exegesis of Romans 7 and went further, stressing there must be a moment of consecration, of 'definite, clean-cut surrender'.¹⁰⁴ For Andrew Borland, although he rejected any notion of a 'second blessing' and thought consecration was a daily act, 'Complete victory is assured for every genuine Christian now over the power of sin...'. And he supported his assertion with Charles Wesley's words, 'He breaks the power of cancelled sin'.¹⁰⁵ In the more open wing of the movement, Keswick teaching itself was tolerated or accepted by some Brethren especially in England.¹⁰⁶ Its concept of consecrated faith lacked the objectionable element of sinlessness which perfectionism promoted.¹⁰⁷

Yet in Scotland it was eventually only a few individuals, who were mainly

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103. J G[ray], 'William J. Grant, Kilmarnock', *BP*, 51 (1930), pp.98-101; HyP[ickering], 'Home-call of W.J. Grant, M.A., Kilmarnock', *W*, 60 (1930), pp.187-8. Pickering described Grant's teaching as 'the safe side of the Keswick teaching on the higher life.' He added, 'This he often gave, with general acceptance.' (p.187); cf. W J Grant, "*Excelsior*" and other Addresses (Goodmayes, 1928), pp. 64-9; *idem*, 'The great mission of the Holy Spirit', *W*, 61 (1931), pp.105-8.
104. John Ritchie, *The Bulwarks of the Christian Faith as Expounded in the Epistle to the Romans* (London & Glasgow, n.d.), pp. 107-111, 144-5; Ritchie added, however, that this was a private transaction, not to take place in a 'consecration meeting' (p.101).
105. Andrew Borland, *Romans Chapter Eight* (Kilmarnock, 1964), pp.39, 43, 55.
106. Hawthorn, *Marshall*, p.38; G E Tilsley, *Dan Crawford: missionary and pioneer in central Africa* (London, [1929]), pp.26-9; Percy Beard, *A Neglected Aspect of the Cross* (Airdrie, 1910); writer's collection, I.I.8. (iii), Mr R Mackay to the writer, 9 April 1988; for Keswick influence among Brethren in England, see: Ian M Randall, *Evangelical Experiences*', pp.15, 37; Fay Inchfawn, *Those Remembered Days* (London, 1963), pp.15-63; and W B Sloan, *These Sixty Years: the story of the Keswick Convention* (London & Glasgow, 1935) pp.87, 94, 95, 97. The book which gave the most scholarly exposition of the Keswick view of Romans 7 and 8, H C G Moule's *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London, 1894), was reprinted by Pickering & Inglis, c.1928, and they also published Sloan's history of Keswick. For the role of Brethren in spreading Keswick teaching to other areas of the English-speaking world see: 'C A Spratt', *W*, 91 (1961), p.36; and Brian Dickey, 'Evangelical Anglicans compared: Australia and Britain', in George A Rawlyk and Mark A Noll (eds), *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Montreal, 1994), p.234.
107. Cf., C[aldwell], 'the sin offering', pp.38-9. When W H Bennett, the editor of *The Golden Lamp*, criticised the writings of Keswick speaker, Andrew Murray, he commended Murray's desire for holiness and his target was instead Murray's view of Christ's human nature: Bennett, 'The relation of the Lord Jesus to "fallen nature"', *W*, 25 (1895), p.167-9; 183-4; cf. the criticisms by English preacher George Goodman, later a Keswick speaker himself, *W*, 49 (1919), p.160, but cf. *idem*, 'Attainment: what may be expected', *W*, 50 (1920), pp.334-5.

on the fringes, who actually adopted it. Keswick's stress on experience and feeling made doctrine seem less real.¹⁰⁸ The Brethren, on the other hand, made the claims of truth paramount. Here was a crucial reason why holiness teaching was not accepted. Like higher-life teaching, the Brethren movement had grown out of the influence which Romanticism, with its emphasis on feeling and transformed states, had on Evangelicalism.¹⁰⁹ The Brethren, however, also insisted on the careful statement and ordering of doctrine. Ritchie rejected the 'rest of faith' advocated by Keswick as being not only 'one-sided' but also 'sentimental'.¹¹⁰ It ultimately separated the Brethren from holiness movements which were orientated towards experience. The cerebralism of the Brethren made them emphasise doctrine. It was a powerful conservative force which kept them within the boundaries established by early Brethren thought.

The influence of cerebralism was also marked in the role the morning meeting had in the Brethren practice of holiness. The breaking of bread was the most significant moment of the week, 'the greatest privilege,' Ritchie wrote, 'and the highest form of fellowship with God and His people, to which the believer is called upon earth'.¹¹¹ It was the service above all others at which attendance was obligatory.¹¹² The need for careful preparation of soul was stressed.¹¹³ Because of the worshippers' dependence on the promptings of the Spirit, it was important that the individual's life was also kept open to his influence. 'If there is to be spirituality in worship on the first day of the week,' wrote Ritchie, 'there

108. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp.170-1.

109. *Ibid.*, pp.86, 94-6, 165-7.

110. Ritchie, *Egypt to Canaan*, p.77.

111. Ritchie, 'The Lord's Supper', *BM*, pp.140-1.

112. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 60 (1930), p.114.

113. J A Ireland, 'The breaking of bread', *W*, 78 (1948), pp.43-4 ; R Eadie, 'The Lord's supper', *W*, 87 (1957), pp.102-7; John Ritchie, 'Hints for behaviour in the assembly', *BM*, 16 (1906), p.32; *idem*, 'The church in its worship', *BM*, 28 (1918), p.76; A Borland, 'The Lord's supper', *BM*, 61 (1951), pp.1-2, 99, *BM*, 62 (1952), pp.1-2, *BM*, 63 (1953), pp.17-19.

must be spirituality in life and godliness in walk, on the six days that precede it.¹¹⁴ The Brethren, as extreme anti-ritualists, explicitly propounded the commemorative, Zwinglian view of the Lord's supper,¹¹⁵ but most approached the Calvinist position—a stance that was perhaps given its fullest statement by Andrew Borland—maintaining that the believer at the Lord's table fed by faith on Christ.¹¹⁶ 'That will make better Christians of us,' claimed Caldwell, 'it will separate us from the world and its ways, bind us together in divine love and unity, and give us victory over sin and Satan.'¹¹⁷ A link was made between the holiness of the occasion and the members' lives.¹¹⁸ The Brethren were unique among Evangelicals in the central place they gave to the ordinance.¹¹⁹ Regarded as the crucial means by which spirituality was advanced, the breaking of bread became (to borrow a phrase from the Salvation Army) the holiness meeting of the movement, the core of the members' devotion.¹²⁰

But cerebralism came to be dominant in the spirituality. The morning meeting had suited higher-life spirituality admirably for both stressed surrender to the Spirit. The pseudonymous 'Crucified Man' (possibly Ross himself) criticised those who were too active during the service for 'Doing! Doing Doing!'. Using an image favoured by Romantic poets and holiness teachers alike, he wrote that believers at the breaking of bread 'ought to be like the Aeolian harp, on which the winds of heaven play sweet

114. John Ritchie, 'worship', p.76.

115. Peter Manson, 'A Sunday morning meditation', *W*, 78 (1948), pp.17-18; Ireland, 'breaking of bread', pp.43-4.

116. A Borland, 'The Lord's supper', *BM*, 60 (1950), pp.97-8, *ibid.*, 61 (1951), pp.49-51; *idem*, 'The Lord's supper' in J B Watson (ed.), *The Church: a symposium* (London, 1949), pp.75-6; cf. Ritchie, 'The Lord's supper', *BM*, p.141.

117. J R C[aldwell], 'Christ the peace offering', *W*, 24 (1894), p.137.

118. G A[dam], 'The holiness of the Lord's table' *W*, 30 (1900), p.154.

119. Dickson, "'Shut in with Thee'", in Swanston (ed.), *SCH*, p.289.

120. J A Ireland, 'Why I sit at the Lord's table', *W*, 70 (1940), pp.121-3; T A Kirkby, 'Why we prize the morning meeting', *W*, 71 (1941), pp.203-4; Andrew Borland, 'The Lord's supper', in Watson (ed.), *The Church*, p.77-8.

music—the Holy Ghost playing sweet music on their soul to the glory of God, and His grace'.¹²¹ Yet it was the intellectualism of the Brethren which eventually prescribed how the morning meeting should be conducted. The opening hymn set a theme for each service and participants were expected to follow it,¹²² leading one individual to complain in 1964, with some rhetorical exaggeration, that the young 'find themselves concentrating on recognising the theme, seeking to link each hymn, prayer or meditation together, sometimes by a process of mental gymnastics little short of Olympic standard'.¹²³ It was presumed that the more intelligent contributions would show some familiarity with the typological significance of the Old Testament offerings,¹²⁴ and this expectation perhaps reached its zenith in Isaac Ewan's codification of the service.¹²⁵ The objective focus of the service required a capacity for abstract thought, and this need for intellectual understanding acted also as a brake on emotionalism.¹²⁶ Cerebralism produced a less spontaneous, more restrained service. The development of a detailed theology of the occasion concentrated minds on it, in the process exposing the differences between the Brethren and the nineteenth-century holiness movement.

Separatism also had a prominent place in Brethren concepts of holiness. During the process of regulation at the end of the nineteenth century an important modification to ideas about sanctification became evident. The key to progress in holiness, it was held, was obedience to the ecclesiology

121. A Crucified Man, 'Worship meetings', *NA*, no. 2 (February 1873), pp.5-6: the attribution to Ross is made on stylistic grounds; cf. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925* (New York, 1980), pp.76-7.

122. J R C[aldwell], 'Praise', *NW*, 15 (1885), p.48; *idem*, 'Ministry at the Lord's table', *W*, 41 (1911), pp.33-4.

123. W E Howie to the editor, *W*, 94 (1964), p.230.

124. Ella [Jack], *Central View* [the magazine of Central Evangelical Church], no. 20 (March, 1994), pp.10-11; Dickson, "'Shut in with Thee'", in Swanston (ed.), *SCH*, p.281.

125. See above, p.291.

126. Cf. Summerton, 'practice of worship', p.35.

and practices which the Brethren detected in the New Testament. The way to 'spiritual growth and power', maintained F A Banks, was believer's baptism and fellowship in an assembly.¹²⁷ In an address, later published as a pamphlet by Ritchie, Donald Munro argued that the way to ensure that Christians grew spiritually was to gather them into an assembly with baptism the first step of obedience for the new convert.¹²⁸ Ritchie's own *Easy Paths for Young Believers* (1909) showed that for him too the signs of holiness meant an adherence to Brethren distinctives. The book, which began life as a series of addresses to new converts in Glasgow, was intended to show 'the early steps' that Christians should take. It consists of chapters on Bible reading, separation from the world, baptism, the Lord's supper, the correct church, and the necessity of joining an assembly.¹²⁹ Christians outside the Brethren had a lesser degree of holiness, for they either lacked knowledge of God's will or were disobedient.¹³⁰ Ritchie was not alone in this belief, for, although he was later to reject it, as late as 1903 J R Caldwell was arguing as much in a series of articles, later published as a booklet entitled *Sanctification*.¹³¹ The institutional separatism of the Brethren found ideological form here. Separation was the connecting thread which ran through Ritchie's views on holiness. The believer was set apart in Christ, the victorious life made him separate from sin, and the Christian life consisted of separation from the world's pursuits and religion.

127. F A B[anks], 'Spiritual Growth', *NW*, 15 (1885), p.6; this article was later reprinted by John Ritchie in Frederick Arthur Banks, *"The Church" and the "Churches of God"* (Kilmarnock, 1883).

128. Donald Munro, 'How shall we order the child?', *BM*, 11 (1901), pp.109-110, 127-8, 136-8.

129. Ritchie's chapter titles are: 'The word of God', 'The unequal yoke', 'Baptism', 'The Lord's supper', 'What church should I join?', and 'The footsteps of the flock'; each chapter had a separate existence as a booklet before being brought together in *Easy Paths*.

130. Ritchie, *Easy Paths*, pp.93-6.

131. Caldwell, 'Sanctification', *W*, p.62.

It was not the guiding thought for all. Like Caldwell, Bible teacher George Adam stressed the continuing battle with sin and the need for progression in holiness. He held the traditional Reformed view of Romans 7, that it described the condition of an advanced believer.¹³² The Brethren view of holiness was diverse and it allowed differing emphases. Yet the need for separation had an important place in all views. That holiness meant accepting Brethren ecclesiology and practices became orthodoxy for sections of the Scottish movement in the nineteenth century, and the evidence suggests that they became increasingly larger sections as the twentieth century progressed. Separation, however, is a negative concept. Not only did it succeed in directing attention away from perfectionism and holiness teaching, it often diverted effort away from moral development altogether. The Christian life was concerned with maintaining the separated community. Both cerebralism and separatism led the movement along a route which drew it away from its earlier affinities with higher-life teaching.

PUBLISHERS AND HYMN-WRITERS

The cerebralism of Scottish Brethren suggests that they were an élitist movement, and in some senses this was true. Alluding to Neatby's comment that the favourite form of recreation for the Brethren was the conversational Bible reading, Ian S Rennie has noted that 'Brethren

132. G A[dam], 'God's remedy for indwelling sin', *NW*, 16 (1886), pp.33-4,72-4; cf. *idem*, 'Communion with God', *W*, 24 (1894), pp. 7-8, 25-6, 37-8; *idem*, 'The knowledge of Christ', *ibid.*, pp. 80-2; *idem*, 'God's provision for keeping people right with himself', *W*, 29 (1899), pp.144-6, 175-7; *idem*, 'God himself the source of all real power', *W*, 33 (1903), pp.9-12; *idem*, 'The Christian Armour', *W*, 36 (1906), pp.111-2, 132-3.

spirituality appears restricted, cerebral and serious'.¹³³ This can be seen if they are contrasted with the Pentecostal churches which appealed to similar social classes, but were without the intellectualism of the Brethren.¹³⁴ The movement was built on men such as John Millar (d.1934) who worked in Broomloan Shipyard, Rutherglen, and who rose at 4 a.m. to read the Bible before starting work at 6 a.m.¹³⁵ However, the radical disjunctions in Brethren spirituality and the lack of integration evident in concepts of holiness serve as reminders that the movement was a popular one. Their cerebralism was not of an academic variety, but that of those who had been newly affected by advances in basic literacy. This can be seen from the work of Brethren publishers. Evangelicals in the nineteenth century took advantage of increased rates of literacy and new methods of distribution to disseminate their message.¹³⁶ The pattern which emerges among Brethren publishers is of individuals utilising print to promote the issues which they saw as significant. The two publishing houses which

133. Rennie, 'Brethren Spirituality', p.195; cf. W B Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* (London, 1901), p.278; on cerebralism within Evangelicalism, see D J Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals?* (London, 1994), p.205. Patricia Beer, the Devon poet and literary critic and herself the child of Brethren parents, has criticised the Brethren for their inability to think. She has written: 'One can work one's way down the long column in the OED which defines philosophy, from 1 to 9b, without coming across anything which sounds like a mental process engaged in by the Brethren.' (Patricia Beer, 'Happy Few', *London Review of Books*, 23 May 1991, p.12.). Certainly after the mid-nineteenth century, the British Brethren movement was a popular one. Its members were unaware of philosophy and undoubtedly their expression of their piety was in popular terms. Differences between Beer's south-west England and Scotland must be allowed for, but nevertheless the movement, among people who were, in the main, not highly educated, was one in which intellectualism was prominent. Their cerebralism was not of an academic type, but of those with longings for self-improvement; cf. below, pp.380-3; and Morton, *Red Guitars*, pp.31-2.

134. Bryan Wilson, *Sects and Society: a sociological study of three religious groups in Britain* (London, 1961), p.63-75.

135. 'John Miller', *BP*, 51 (1934), p.36; for similar examples, cf. Jimmy Paton, above pp.7-8; and coalminer Isaiah Stewart in Neil Dickson, "'The Church itself is God's clergy": the principles and practices of the Brethren', in Deryck Lovegrove (ed.), *The Emancipation of the Laity? Evangelicalism and the Priesthood of all Believers* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

136. Richard D Altick, *The English Common Reader: a social history of the mass reading public, 1800-1900* (Chicago, 1957), pp.99-128; Patrick Scott, 'The business of belief: the emergence of 'Religious' publishing', in Derek Baker, *SCH*, 10 (1973), pp.213-24; Michael J Cormack, *The Stirling Tract Enterprise and the Drummonds* (Stirling, 1984).

proved to be the most successful were Pickering & Inglis of Glasgow and, later, London, and John Ritchie Ltd. of Kilmarnock.¹³⁷ In his study of these two publishing enterprises, J A H Dempster has explained their ability to prosper economically in terms of what has been called the Pontifex factor.¹³⁸ Pontifex was a character in *The Way of All Flesh* who, according to Patrick Scott, knew that 'the number of people who might buy any book is limited, but the number to whom it may be given away is almost unlimited'.¹³⁹ Both Pickering & Inglis and Ritchie published in large quantities tracts outlining the message of salvation which were distributed indiscriminately by their customers. The scale of this circulation might be seen from Alexander Marshall's immensely popular pamphlet *The Way of Salvation* (1888). On one occasion a Glasgow professional employed someone to disseminate 250 000 copies throughout the city. By 1928 it had been translated into fourteen languages, including Gaelic, and it was claimed that almost five million copies had been distributed. Before Christmas that same year, advertisements in the Christian and secular

137. For the founding of these firms, see above, pp.182-4. Arnold D Ehlert, *Brethren Writers: a checklist with an introductory essay and additional lists* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1969), p.73-9, claims to have found 28 Scottish Brethren publishers or those who published at least one Brethren work. A random search by Dr David Brady in the British Library catalogue of four of those listed by Ehlert (R L Allan, R M Cameron, A Walker and C Zeigler), revealed only one, R L Allan, as mainly a Brethren publisher (David Brady to the writer, 1 May 1992). The other three may have published a few items by Brethren authors (although none were listed in the BL catalogue) and it is likely that most others on Ehlert's list are in an identical position. The present writer has established the following Open Brethren publishers which have existed in Scotland: Hunter Beattie, Glasgow; Bible & Tract Room, Aberdeen (transferred to City Bible House, Edinburgh); Percy Beard, Airdrie; Bowes Bros., Dundee; John Brown, Edinburgh; City Bible House, Edinburgh (later subsumed under the Publishing Office, Glasgow); Edwin Ewan, Abernethy; Isaac Ewan, Abernethy; Gospel Tract Publications, Glasgow; Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow & London; The Publishing Office, Glasgow (later became Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow); John Ritchie Ltd., Kilmarnock; John Ritchie, Jnr., Kilmarnock; Alex Ross, Aberdeen; W M Ross, Dundee; Wm Shaw, Maybole; David Taylor, Kirknewton. A number of these, however, only published works written by themselves.

138. J A H Dempster, 'Aspects of Brethren publishing enterprise in late nineteenth century Scotland', *Publishing History*, 20 (1986), pp.91, 95-6.

139. P G Scott, 'Richard Cope Morgan, religious periodicals, and the Pontifex Factor', *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 5, no. 16 (June 1972), p.1.

press led to a further 8 000 being sent out.¹⁴⁰ Individuals devoted themselves to dispersing tracts with extravagance. David Frew of Plann, Ayrshire, gave away 10 000 annually, and another tract distributor managed to dispense 27 000 in one year.¹⁴¹ The magazines published for gratuitous circulation have already been noted in Chapter 4,¹⁴² and in this largesse children were not overlooked. Donald Ross had founded the short-lived *The Northern Youth* in 1873.¹⁴³ More enduring were John Ritchie's *The Young Watchman* begun in 1883, and *Our Little One's Treasury*, begun in 1888 for very young children, and also commenced in this last year, Pickering & Inglis' *Boys and Girls*. Both publishers also carried a large stock of 'gift and reward' books for children which were used as prizes for attending Sunday school or children's meetings. These were mainly books of Bible stories or the biographies of those, such as Florence Nightingale and David Livingstone, whose lives were considered worthy of emulation.¹⁴⁴ Fiction was permissible for children provided it taught a suitable edifying religious lesson.¹⁴⁵ Each child attending the

140 Hawthorn, *Marshall*, pp.116-123; *W*, 59 (1928), p.46. Alexander Marshall, *God's Way of Salvation, set forth by illustration, comparison and contrast* (1888), was formed by the merging of two earlier tracts by Marshall. Unfortunately no publishing figures are available after 1928, but its circulation continued to be considerable and the tract is still in print at the time of writing. As recently as 1985 a copy was given to every household in Whitehead, County Antrim: Bernie Reid, *No Greater Joy: the story of Bobbie Wright* (Belfast 1989), p.109.

141. 'David Frew', *W*, 69 (1939), p.45; 'Andrew Jamieson', *W*, 89 (1959), p.56; cf. above, pp.171-2.

142. For these tracts, see above, pp.171-2.

143. *NI*, 3 (1873), p.80.

144. Andrew Borland (ed.), *The Bible and Its Doctrines* (Kilmarnock, 1930), endpp. adverts.

145. Cf. the novels by Andrew Borland, *The Cradle of the King* (Kilmarnock, [c.1928]) and *The Cradle of the Race* (Kilmarnock, n.d.). In the early part of the twentieth century Pickering & Inglis published The 'Red Cord' Series which carried novels by Maria L Charlesworth, Charlotte Murray, Pansy, and M E Drewsden; and the Excelsior Library which carried novels by M E Dresden, and a Scottish children's author, M B Paxton (endpp. adverts in M L Charlesworth, *Ministering Children* (London & Glasgow, n.d.)). In the same period John Ritchie Ltd., published the 'Young Folks Story' series, with novels by, *inter alia*, Charlotte Murray and John Bunyan; and the 'Boys and Girls' series with novels by Robert Pollock, Mary L Code, and Leigh Richmond. Ritchie's shop also stocked Louisa Alcott's *Little Women* and *Good Wives* (endpp. adverts in John Ritchie, *Among the Cannibals* (Kilmarnock, n.d.)); on Brethren attitudes to fiction, see below, p.384-5; cf. Dempster, 'Brethren publishing', pp.88-9.

numerous and large Brethren Sunday schools was given a book, making them one of the principal sources of revenue for the publishers. Ritchie and Pickering & Inglis serviced a movement whose members were intent on converting their fellows through print. Their economic success was due in part to the zeal with which the Brethren pursued that goal.

Yet the Pontifex factor is only a partial explanation of the prosperity of both publishing firms. Much of the material that they printed was for internal consumption by the Brethren. An intensive writing project went into the magazines and books which fuelled the interest in biblical doctrine and interpretation. What is remarkable, too, as Dempster points out, is that Pickering & Inglis and Ritchie largely duplicated each other's efforts and interests. They produced parallel popular expository and devotional literature. Both produced books of sermon outlines and children's talks, aids for those engaged in preaching and youth work.¹⁴⁶ There were monthly magazines containing similar material: Pickering & Inglis possessed *The Believer's Pathway*, commenced by William Shaw in 1880, while from 1886 Ritchie had *The Christian Worker*.¹⁴⁷ Both publishers' flagships, the biblical magazines *The Witness* and *The Believer's Magazine*, also showed strong resemblances in the features they carried.¹⁴⁸ They had a heavy emphasis on doctrine and the necessity of this was reiterated continually by the editors. Caldwell claimed that he only published material for 'the profit and edification of the general body of readers' while Ritchie avowed his intention of 'keeping back nothing profitable to the general edification'.¹⁴⁹ Certainly there were differences. Articles in *The Believer's Magazine* tended to be shorter and less weighty

146. For examples, see above, pp.168, 266-7.

147. Originally *The Sunday School Worker's Magazine and Bible Student's Helper*.

148. For the history of these magazines, see above, pp.182-3.

149. *W*, 41 (1911), p.196; *BM*, 19 (December 1909), endpp.

than those in *The Witness*; and the magazines appealed to different constituencies, Ritchie's publication to the stricter section and Pickering & Inglis' to the more open. However, the dissimilarities must not be exaggerated. *The Witness* did not neglect the populist touch. 'When considering articles remember those rows of miners' cottages!' was the advice of Henry Pickering to his successor as editor.¹⁵⁰ And individuals continued to take both magazines. A limited market supported two overlapping publishing concerns. Dempster concludes that it was possible for them to survive because 'the Brethren were a reading people, positively encouraged to turn constantly to print for spiritual enlightenment and upbuilding.'¹⁵¹ The predilection for print as a means of converting others and for self edification were the marks of a people who had gladly embraced the opportunities offered by mass literacy.

Because the Brethren movement was a popular one, there was no internal impulse to make its spirituality intellectually cohesive. Cerebralism did not overwhelm supernaturalism. This is clear from the work of Brethren hymn writers. Certainly, concern for sound doctrine was evident in attitudes towards hymns. When *The Believers Hymnbook* was produced in 1885, J R Caldwell announced that hymns which used 'Jesus' too frequently had been amended. To address Christ as such was not scriptural.¹⁵² But although the necessity of observing theological exactitude was conceded by Brethren, writing in verse among them expressed the demands of the heart as much as the head. A substantial body of devotional verse was produced which appeared regularly in the magazines. Most of these effusions failed to rise above the level of doggerel, and the best of the versifiers were Isaac Ewan and J M S Tait, a

150. Robert Rendall, *J.B. Watson: a memoir and selected writings* (London, 1957), p.68.

151. Dempster, 'Brethren Publishing', p.97.

152. J R C[aldwell], 'Praise', *NW*, 15 (1885), p.48.

solicitor from Lerwick, who could both attain a more lyrical note.¹⁵³ Perhaps the most popular poet, however, was William Blane, a mines engine-keeper from Galston, Ayrshire, and emigrant, whose 296-line poem in rhyming couplets, 'The Atonement', was an exposition in verse of the universal efficacy of the death of Christ.¹⁵⁴

The hymn writers worked within the prevailing atmosphere of Victorian hymnody. The hymns of the singing evangelist, R F Beveridge, being intended for use in missions, express the emotional satisfaction which was felt to accompany salvation. In one hymn by Beveridge, the appeals of the revivalist can be heard. It demonstrates the sentimentality, which could easily lurch into bathos, that was endemic to the contemporary popular hymn:

Eternity! O dreadful thought
For thee a child of Adam's race,
If thou should's't in thy sins be brought
To stand before the awful Face
From which the heaven and earth shall flee,
The Throned one of Eternity.

To-night may be thy latest breath,
Thy little moment here be done,
Eternal woe—"the second death",
Await the grace-rejecting one,
Thine awful destiny foresee—
Time ends,—and then Eternity!¹⁵⁵

A more common theme than the evangelistic one was the Christian life. The evangelist William Sloan had one hymn that passed into general use which assured the singer that by trusting God,

We shall find the promised blessing

153. [Edwin A Ewan (ed.)], *Caravanserai: a collection of poems by I. Y. Ewan* (Abernethy, 1980); J M S Tait, *Bells and Pomegranates* (London, 1946).

154. William Blane, 'The Atonement', in *idem, Lays of Life and Hope* (c.1890), rev. edn (Kilmarnock & London, 1938), pp.9-17; this book is still in print at the time of writing. On Blane's later life, see below, pp.468.

155. R F Beveridge (compiler), *Celestial Songs: a collection of 900 choice hymns and choruses* (London [1921]), no.513; the best-known revivalist hymn to which Beveridge contributed verses was 'Homeward Bound for Glory', *ibid.*, no. 586.

Daily strength till Jesus come.¹⁵⁶

It was William Blane, however, who best conveyed the immediacy of Brethren faith and the perils that the world posed:

Kept, safely kept;
My fears away are swept;
In weakness to my God I cling,
Though foes be strong I calmly sing,
Kept, safely kept.

Through simple faith,
Believing what He saith,
Unshaken on my God I lean,
And realise his power unseen,
But known to faith.¹⁵⁷

One significant gap in the hymn themes is the confession of sin, and in an article on Brethren hymnology John Andrews attributed this to the strain of perfectionism in their thought.¹⁵⁸ What the hymns do demonstrate is how central to Brethren devotion the morning meeting was. Evangelist Douglas Russell, who in 1868 emigrated to North America, produced his best hymn for use in this setting (a verse from it provides the epigraph to the present chapter).¹⁵⁹ And David Beattie, who wrote evangelistic and children's hymns, also wrote a hymn for use at the Lord's supper which encapsulated the mystical Christocentrism of the occasion:

O help us, Lord, while gathered here,
That we none else may see;
Keep Thou our thoughts graced with Thy love,
And wholly stayed on Thee.¹⁶⁰

Isaac Ewan managed to conjure a hymn out of the meat offering, the Jewish sacrifice involving flour, to evoke devotion at a morning meeting:

In smooth and silken whiteness,
Without a rough'ning grain,
In clear, unbroken brightness,

156. *Believers Hymnbook*, no. 229.

157. *Ibid.*, no. 121.

158. J S Andrews, 'Brethren Hymnology', *Evangelical Quarterly*, 28 (1956), p.213.

159. *Believers Hymnbook* no. 383; in this collection it first appeared in *The Believers Hymnbook Supplement* (London & Glasgow [1959]), no. 383.

160. *Ibid.*, no. 367; Beattie's hymns and choruses can be found in David J Beattie, *Songs of the King's Highway* (London & Glasgow, 1927), and Beveridge, *Celestial Songs*.

Without a speck or stain
The fine flour in its beauty
The Perfect Man portrays
In all his path of duty
In all his heavenly ways.¹⁶¹

The conception is not very hymnic, but its statement of Christ's perfection is redolent of the way he was set apart from soiled humanity in the Brethren imagination.

One of Alexander Stewart's hymns for use at the Lord's supper which made clear the separation from the secular world that was felt to characterise the occasion has already been quoted above.¹⁶² Stewart's other hymn which passed into general use was probably the best produced by a Scottish Brethren hymn writer:

O Lamb of God, we lift our eyes
To Thee amidst the throne;
Shine on us, bid Thy light arise,
And make Thy glory known.

Yet would we prove Thine instant grace,
Thy present power would feel;
Lift on us now Thy glorious face,
Thyself, O Lord reveal.

From Thy high place of purest light,
O Lamb, amidst the throne,
Shine forth upon our waiting sight
And make Thy glory known.¹⁶³

The imagery of height and light, and the allusions to the exaltation of Christ in Revelation chapter five, emphasise the transcendental. The potential immediacy of the divine is conveyed through the supplicants' invocations. Vowel quality, evoking the numinous, and the simple diction make the hymn technically more satisfying than the others. Brethren hymnody made too ready use of a debased, archaic diction and syntax for it to be a consistently good corpus. What the hymns do

161. I Ewan, *Remembrance Hymns* (Abernethy, 1935), no. 14.

162. See above. pp.320-1; it also provides the epigraph to the next chapter.

163. *Believers Hymnbook*, no. 346.

demonstrate is the immediacy of Brethren faith which exalted the sense of the supernatural and made the sacred seem present. The literary productions of the Brethren demonstrate the divergent tendencies of a movement which used the language of feeling in its worship yet which had a desire for the careful ordering and statement of truth.

CRITICS AND SAINTS

Brethren spirituality was not without its difficulties, and criticisms were addressed at it from within the movement. In 1905 Alexander Marshall accused his fellow-Brethren of a censorious and supercilious attitude towards other Christians.¹⁶⁴ In addition, George Adam felt, the stress on the Christian's perfect sanctification in Christ could lead to a neglect of present sin.¹⁶⁵ Holiness as separation from the secular and ecclesiastical worlds led to a concept of morality which was divorced from ethics. After the phases when ecclesiology had been stressed in the later nineteenth century and the inter-war years of the twentieth century, concerned voices could be heard. In 1894, after the Churches of God secession, J R Caldwell deplored the neglect of ethical growth, lamenting that 'one of our deepest errors... [is] that we have received increased light from God without corresponding humiliation and confession'.¹⁶⁶ Caldwell liked to preach on the Old Testament regulations concerning the red heifer, an apparently abstruse subject which was actually concerned with the necessity of continual repentance.¹⁶⁷ The zeal for exactitude which was to the fore in the inter-war years showed that cerebralism also brought its problems. In 1956 Robert Rendall produced an incisive critique of the way progress in

164. Alexander Marshall, 'Hindrances to progress in the gospel', *W*, 35 (1905), p.167.

165. G A[dam], 'God's provision for keeping his redeemed people right with himself', *W*, 29 (1899), p.144-5.

166. J R Caldwell, 'Christ the sin offering', *W* 24 (1894), p.70.

167. J R Caldwell, 'The red heifer', *W*, 26 (1896), p.53; HyP[ickering], 'John R. Caldwell', *W*, 47 (1917), pp.17-20.

the Christian life was often measured in terms of biblical and theological knowledge. He reminded the Brethren of their earlier reputation for practical holiness and recalled them to 'the good life'—the ethical one. He criticised the definition of doctrine 'as abstract truth, subscribed to intellectually, and capable of theological expression'. Doctrine, he pointed out, was used in the New Testament 'for teaching that bears on the practical life of the believer'. Alluding to the common practice of using the term 'saint' for assembly members, he warned: 'If assemblies today, cease to produce those whose lives are characterized by... 'saintliness', all claims of 'sainthood' will not secure continuance of vital testimony'.¹⁶⁸ These writers felt that separatism and cerebralism could destroy the potency of the movement.

Yet despite these indications of aridity, the spirituality did allow development. Not all of its strands were equally prominent in every member. As in other things, an individual's temperament lent a distinctive colouring, and the various emphases contained within the movement caused some aspects rather than others to predominate within individuals. The spirituality was practised by women. When Mary Crombie of Irvine died aged 100, it was noted of her, 'She had a wonderful memory, and a mind steeped in the Word of God.'¹⁶⁹ Or there was missionary Jeannie Gilchrist who received the accolade of a biography by John Ritchie.¹⁷⁰ Both these women were single, but married women too could be activists.¹⁷¹ However, the most characteristic products of Brethren

168. Robert Rendall, *The Greatness and Glory of Christ* (London, 1956), p.102; for a similar point, cf. Andrew Borland, *Old Paths & Good Ways in Personal, Family and Church Life* (Kilmarnock [1938]), pp.15-17.

169. 'Miss Mary Crombie', *W*, 108 (1978), 253; cf. Linda Wilson, 'Women and personal devotions in nineteenth-century English Nonconformity', *Christianity and History Newsletter*, no.18 (summer 1999), pp.22-45.

170. J R[itchie], *Jeannie Gilchrist* (Kilmarnock, n.d.).

171. For examples, see above, p.259, n.193.

spirituality were men. An individual such as W J Grant was widely respected for his sanctity,¹⁷² but perhaps a more typical product was Alexander Marshall. A vigorous controversialist, he devoted most of his considerable energies to proclaiming an uncomplicated fundamentalist gospel. His restless activity took him on punishing itineraries throughout the United Kingdom and around the world and left him with recurring bouts of insomnia. He was what the Brethren termed 'an aggressive worker'.

This chapter has focused on three significant features of Brethren spirituality: its supernaturalism, separatism and cerebralism. If to them is added a fourth feature, the devotedness which led to a life of intense activity, then the distinctive features of Brethren spirituality might fairly have been defined.¹⁷³ Such activism could become another focus for the individuals's life. 'Loved the Lord,' it was noted of Daniel Lennox, a member of Kilbirnie assembly, when he died after preaching at an open-air service, 'and lived a life of Christian activity.'¹⁷⁴ It could lead to tension with other aspects of the piety. Missionary Jamie Clifford was impatient with those British Brethren who immersed themselves in Old Testament typology while there was a need for evangelism.¹⁷⁵ The other strands of the spirituality did not always lie easily together. The paradox which was noted in the singing was present. An emotional revivalism was in an unresolved tension with a drier intellectualism.¹⁷⁶ Among stricter Brethren, singing on Sunday evenings was supplanted by discussion of the

172. P[ickering], 'Grant', p.188; G G[ray], 'W.J. Grant, M.A., of Kilmarnock', *CW*, 45, no. 535, (July 1930), [pp.98-9].

173. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement*, 2nd edn (Exeter, 1976), pp.263-7, singles this out as the most attractive feature of early Brethrenism.

174. 'Daniel Lennox', *W*, 57 (1927), p.178.

175. A C T[homson], *Un Hombre Bueno: vida de Jaime Clifford* (Argentina, 1957), p.27; this was when Clifford was resident in the U.K. during World War I.

176. Cf. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, pp.43-4, 61; Barr, *Fundamentalism*, pp.17-18.

Bible.¹⁷⁷ Brethren spirituality, growing as it did out of the nineteenth-century emphasis on spontaneous feeling, had sought new channels in which to run. The morning meeting, which was so central to the piety, was an innovative service and the emotionalism of revivalism was given an outlet here. Yet the need to guard and organise truth with care was a brake on innovation and ultimately on emotionalism. The cerebralism of Brethren spirituality was a profoundly conservative force. Separatism made clear that not only did the spirituality have implications for the ability to adapt, but it also had for self-definition too. Perceiving advance in the Christian life in terms of Brethren distinctives which several influential individuals adopted, is characteristic of a separatist, sectarian tendency as the boundaries of the sect are established. Those who resisted this pressure and stressed ethics as the heart of the Christian life were voicing a denominationalising tendency that possessed a pan-evangelical impetus.

History and society were not irrelevant to the spirituality. Over time its expression changed. There was shift from the optimistic views in the period before 1860 to the more pessimistic thinking of those later individuals who espoused J N Darby's dispensationalism. This led to a retreat from the social involvement characteristic of individuals, such as John Bowes and John Stewart, who entered the movement before 1859 to the withdrawal which was typical of the succeeding one hundred years. Teaching on holiness changed. During the course of the twentieth century, sectarian ideology was tacitly accepted by the majority. Even the morning meeting altered as a widespread pattern of service developed and as cerebralism had an increasing effect in its regulation. The three features of Brethren spirituality that have been isolated also suggest a wider link with

¹⁷⁷. For an example, see above, p.228.

societal features. Their supernaturalism grew out of cultural trends, their separatism arose in part out of a pessimism about the course of society, and the cerebral strain in their piety was that of individuals who had been affected by mass literacy. The spirituality of the movement demonstrates significant features about the emergence and development of the Brethren and it must be taken into account in a historical analysis. However, issues of class and society need further examination.

CHAPTER 9

THE RESTLESS WORLD: CULTURE AND SOCIETY 1830s-1960s

Shut in with Thee far, far, above
The restless world that wars below,
We seek to learn and prove Thy love,
Thy wisdom and Thy grace to know.
—Alexander Stewart, *The Believers*
Hymnbook ([1885]), No.129.

At the age of twelve John Gray was left fatherless. When he was thirteen, in 1884/5, he started work with the Glasgow & South-Western Railway Company as a telegraph boy; he then became a railway clerk in Hurlford, Ayrshire, and eventually won promotion to be Goods Manager in nearby Kilmarnock, transferring in 1897 to the equivalent, but larger, office at St Enoch's Station, Glasgow. Shortly after he had started work he had had an Evangelical conversion and had become a member of Kilmarnock Baptist Church, but due to the witness of a Brethren railway guard he had later joined an assembly in the town. In 1908 on the death of William Inglis, he became a partner in Pickering & Inglis and he removed to Glasgow, taking the main responsibility for printing and publishing after Henry Pickering retired to London in 1922.¹ When Gray died in 1936 there were about 500 mourners at his funeral, and *The Witness* thought worthy of note the presence of some seventy motor cars.² For Gray, Brethren membership and involvement in its institutions had been no bar to upward social mobility.

1. 'Notable Kilmarnock man: the late Mr John Gray', *KS*, 8 February 1936, p.5; H, 'Mr. John Gray of Glasgow', *BP*, 57 (1936), pp.34-5. The assembly Gray joined met in the Wellington Hall, Kilmarnock, which places his membership at some point after 1888.

2. 'John Gray', *W*, 66 (1936), p.66.

The societal role of religion has been of interest to historians and sociologists, and the present chapter will examine the relationship of the Brethren to culture and society. One overtly political function for religion is that proposed by E P Thompson in his discussion of the influence of Methodism on the development of the English working class.³ Thompson alleged that Methodism produced a disciplined and compliant workforce and enforced political passivity, and it might be argued that Brethrenism had a similar effect on its members. This imputed subservience would serve the interests of the dominant classes within society and therefore the role of these groups within the Brethren will be examined to determine whether they used the movement to further the interests of their own class. The Weber-Tawney hypothesis, first propounded by sociologist Max Weber and later broadly supported by economic historian R H Tawney, that ascetic Protestantism provided the mental environment for the rise of modern rational capitalism, proposes a further potential role of the Brethren which will be discussed.⁴ Members of the movement believed in their chosen status and had a strong sense of calling to fulfil the will of God within the world, factors which the Weber-Tawney thesis sees as being of significance. The ethos of the movement might seem to promote the spirit of rational capitalistic enterprise. Not only has the the role of religion in relation to society received attention, but so too has its societal function in the life of its adherents. The Brethren movement grew as Scottish society underwent profound economic and industrial changes. One function proposed by writers such as Bryan Wilson and A D Gilbert for religion in these conditions was that it lessened anomie for its

3. E P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 1963; edn (London, 1980), pp. 385-440.

4. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5); Eng. trans. 1930; rpt (London, 1992); R H Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1922), Penguin edn (Harmondsworth, 1975).

Table 9.1. Social class of eight Brethren assemblies, 1863-1937.

Social class ¹		I	II	III	IV	V	W	X	U
Chapelton (1863)									
Membership	20								
Number		0	3	6	1	0	(2) ³	0	10
% ²		(0)	(30)	(60)	(12.5)	(0)	(40)	(0)	(50)
Strathaven (1881)									
Membership	56								
Number		2	14	18	7	0	(14) ³	(1) ³	14
% ²		(4.8)	(33.3)	(42.8)	(16.7)	(0)	(42.9)	(2.4)	(25)
Hebron Hall, Glasgow⁴ (1913)									
Membership	118								
Number		2	20	64	6	10	-	-	16
% ²		(2)	(19.6)	(62.7)	(5.9)	(9.8)			(13.6)
Dumfries (1913)									
Membership	23								
Number		1	6	13	3	0	(8) ³	0	0
%		(4.3)	(26)	(56.5)	(13)	(0)	(61.5)	(0)	(0)
Kirkintilloch (1917)									
Membership	22								
Number		0	3	6	5	1	(4) ³	1	6
% ²		(0)	(20)	(40)	(33.3)	(6.7)	(50)	(6.25)	(27.2)
Kirkwall (1919)									
Membership	49								
Number		0	7	20	4	0	3 (+8) ³	2 (+3) ³	13
% ²		(0)	(22.6)	(64.5)	(11.8)	(0)	(61.1)	(13.9)	(24.5)
Kilbirnie (1931)⁴									
Membership	280								
Number		0	16	172	12	25	-	12	37
% ²		(0)	(7.1)	(76.4)	(3.3)	(11.1)	-	(5)	(13.2)
Newarthill (1937)									
Membership	32								
Number		0	5	18	2	0	5 (+7) ³	2 (+3) ³	0
% ²		(0)	(20)	(72)	(8)	(0)	(66.7)	(15.6)	(0)

Notes:

1. Classes I-V = social groups A-E (see Appendix 2); W = housewives (married women not in employment); X = unwaged (retired, students, disabled, and unemployed); U = unidentified; where possible, social class of those not in employment has been allocated to that of the head of household.

2. Percentages in a social class are those of the total number to whom it is possible to allocate one; percentages of housewives are those of all identified women; percentages of unwaged are those of all identified individuals; and percentages of unidentified those of are of the total membership.

3. The number in brackets indicates those also allocated to a social class.

4. Occupations based on valuation rolls in which housewives are not listed.

Sources: 'Roll of Members of Strathaven Assembly 1876-1897'; *Hebron Hall, 16 Wilton Street: List of Members* (Glasgow, 1913); oral information, Bethany Hall, Dumfries (1989); East Kilbride Free Church, 'Minutes of Kirk Session', 2 (1848-83); Strathaven Roll Book; Kirkintilloch Account Book, 1922-49; OA D/27; Kilbirnie Roll Book 1931; oral information, Gospel Hall, Newarthill (7 September 1988).

adherents.⁵ This proposed latent function of religion will be examined as a possible social role for the movement in the life of its members.

However, any interpretation of the function of the movement will need to take account of its social class. For this reason the social status of the membership will be analysed first as a basis for exploring the topic raised in the previous paragraph, the relationship of the Brethren to society. The third area which the present chapter will discuss is attitudes within the movement to culture and society. The prescriptive position of the Brethren was that involvement in both should be avoided so far as possible. But they did not withdraw into vicinal segregation, and so considerable accommodation was necessary. Attitudes which allowed such negotiation to take place will be examined. That the movement had a societal role, most of its members would have regarded as surprising. Yet the analysis of its social class and function and its attitude to culture and society will illuminate not only the Brethren movement, but also the community of Victorian and twentieth-century Scotland.

SOCIAL CLASS

Table 9.1 gives the social class of eight assemblies in the period 1863 until 1937. The Brethren were not interested in collecting such data, and how difficult they were to gather can be seen from the number of unidentified individuals: some 50 per cent. in the case of Chapelton, and around a quarter of the membership in the assemblies in Strathaven, Kirkintilloch, and Kirkwall. In addition, Chapelton, Dumfries, Kirkintilloch and Newarthill were very small, possibly—with the exception of

5. Bryan Wilson, *Sects and Society: a sociological study of three religious groups in Britain* (London, 1961), p.343-5; *idem*, *Religious Sects* (London, 1970), p.242; Alan D Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: church, chapel and social change* (London, 1976), pp.59-67.

Chapelton—below average assembly size for the periods in which they existed. These difficulties mean that conclusions are often being projected from a very small base. Nevertheless the picture which emerges is a consistent one which suggests that it is a reasonably accurate.

It can be seen from Table 9.1 (a total of 504 individuals to whom it was possible allocate to a social class)⁶ that the largest social class in Scottish Brethren assemblies tended to be that of the skilled working class (class III).⁷ Unskilled workers (class V) were a very small proportion of the whole. There were apparently no members in this class in Chapelton, Strathaven, Dumfries, Kirkwall and Newarthill. However, in Hebron Hall, in the North Kelvinside district of Glasgow, and the Ayrshire steel town of Kilbirnie, they attained a moderately sized proportion of the membership—11.1 per cent. and 9.8 per cent. respectively. A larger group than the unskilled were semi-skilled workers (class IV) who had a percentage total somewhere between 33.3 in the case of Kirkintilloch and 3.3 in that of Kilbirnie. The table, however, almost certainly under-represents both class IV and V individuals. A number from these classes were almost definitely among the single individuals whom it was not possible to identify in Hebron Hall, Strathaven and Kilbirnie as they were hard to trace in valuation rolls or census returns. They probably belonged to such occupations as domestic or farm servants and moved frequently.

6. Where possible, the social class of those not in employment has been allocated to that of the head of household in order to provide consistency of classification as in the valuation rolls the employment of the head of household only is given. Occasionally (as in one family in the Strathaven sample), a woman whose husband was class III worked as a domestic (class V). But in cases such as these the combined incomes would make them more prosperous members of class III. A more difficult example is where family offspring living at home belonged to a higher social class than the parental one. Cases such as these are noted in the discussion below, pp.363, 364-5.

7. See Appendix 2 for an explanation of the analysis of the social classification employed and for a listing of the employments encountered.

Table 9.2. Social class of Scottish Brethren members with occupation given in an obituary in The Witness.

Social class ¹	I	II	III	IV	V
All obituaries %	64 (18.9)	134 (39.6)	135 (40)	5 (1.5)	0 (0)
Born 1826-60 %	14 (19.2)	28 (38.4)	30 (41.1)	1 (1.9)	0 (0)
Born 1861-1898 %	24 (17.3)	54 (38.8)	59 (42.4)	2 (1.4)	0 (0)
Born 1899-1916 %	10 (29.4)	10 (29.4)	13 (38.2)	1 (2.9)	0 (0)
Born 1917-1942	2 (16.7)	6 (50)	4 (33.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Note:

1. Classes I-V = social groups A-E (see Appendix 2).

Source: 'With Christ', *The Witness*, 37-108 (1907-78).

But it is clear that the social class with the most substantial representation, was that of skilled workers with apparently between 76.4 (Kilbirnie) and 40 per cent. (Kirkintilloch) of the membership in each assembly. Of these the largest group—10.5 per cent. of this sample—was that of skilled tradesmen: joiners, bakers, house decorators and the like, comprising 16.7 per cent. of all class III individuals. The second largest group was steel workers, a figure skewed by the inclusion of the large assembly in Kilbirnie where much of the male work force was dependent on that industry. However, the proportion of them in the meeting suggests that there was social congruence between the predominant working-class occupation in a community and an assembly.⁸ But of those whose employment was noted in an obituary in *The Witness* (338 individuals: Table 9.2),⁹ 23.5 per cent. in

8. Cf. Mark Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994), pp.124-34.

9. Evangelists and missionaries have not been included in this number.

class III were miners and 19.9 per cent. were fishermen. This latter group was evidently important, but was by no means dominant except in eastern coastal communities where uniformity between the employment of assembly members and that of the wider society ensured their preponderance in assemblies.¹⁰ *The Witness* sample suggests almost 10 per cent. of the entire membership from 1870 until 1939 (roughly the period covered by the obituaries) were miners. However, these obituaries need to be treated with caution here for obviously an individual's employment was more likely to be stated if it had been prestigious, and such individuals would often be widely known in the movement and thus more likely to be the subject of an obituary.¹¹ In addition the occupations of miners and fishermen were most often given because of fatal accidents at work and, because of the high casualty rate among the latter, the obituaries probably exaggerate their numbers. As a result, the percentage of miners was almost certainly higher than *The Witness* figure suggests, for it was in the coal mining districts of the Lowlands that Brethren strength lay (see Maps 7-10, 13). Again the social congruence between community and assembly supports a larger percentage of miners in the membership: in the large assembly at Larkhall after 1870 most of the assembly members were miners,¹² and one individual recollected that in Lochore, Fife, in the years before World War I all the men in the assembly except one were similarly

10. Gillian Munro, 'Reconciling difference: religious life as an expression of social, cultural and economic survival', in James Porter (ed.), *After Columba—After Calvin: religious community in North-East Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1999), p.175, reports the oral tradition in the Moray coast village of 'Balnamara' (an ethnologist's pseudonym which was identified by the researcher at a conference the present writer attended) that before World War II only the poorest of the fishing folk belonged to the Brethren; as the village in question did not have an Open Brethren assembly until after the war, this comment evidently applied to the Exclusives, for which the community was a stronghold. It is possible that this socioeconomic condition might have been true of the Open Brethren in similar communities, but there is no evidence for or against the proposition.

11. For explanation of *The Witness* obituaries, see above p.18 n.87.

12. Robert Chapman, *The Story of Hebron Hall Assembly, Larkhall, 1866-1928: a short history of the inception, progress and personalities of the assembly* (Kilmarnock, 1929), pp.24-5.

employed.¹³ Given the importance of those in skilled manual occupations in the Brethren, skilled tradesmen and miners evidently formed a substantial proportion of the membership.

A significant part of the membership belonged to the intermediate stratum (class II), the lower-middle class. This ranges in Table 9.1 from 33.3 per cent. of the membership in Strathaven to 7.1 per cent. in Kilbirnie. Of these many were small businessmen: the member who was the exception in Lochore owned a shop. In Table 9.1 small businessmen comprised 31.5 per cent. of those in this class and 52 per cent. in Table 9.2. The next largest group of those in this class in the latter table with 16.2 per cent. was the health associate professionals (such as nurses and opticians), but this group accounted for only 8.6 per cent. of those in this class in Table 9.1, the same percentage as that of tenant farmers. There were, as Table 9.2 demonstrates, a number of individuals who belonged to the professional, merchant-manufacturing and manager class (class I). However, because of the over-representation of classes I and II in *The Witness* sample, Table 9.1 undoubtedly gives a more accurate picture of their relative proportions to the working classes. Nevertheless, there were class I individuals present in some assemblies. In Strathaven in 1881 these were John Frew, one of the rising men of the town, and his wife. Frew was the owner of John Frew & Sons Ltd., silk manufacturers, founded in 1876. By 1881 he employed 130 workers and eventually became Strathaven's largest employer in the early twentieth century.¹⁴ In Dumfries in 1913 the individual in class I was lawyer Alex Milroy and in Hebron Hall, Glasgow, in 1917 this group was represented by William Patrick, the prosperous proprietor of a produce merchant's business, and his wife. But it was doctors who were,

13. Oral information, 19 November 1988.

14. Strathaven Assembly Roll Book; Census Return (1881); William Fleming Downie, *A History of Strathaven and Avondale* (Glasgow, 1979), pp.89-90, 194ff.

Table 9.3. Social class of three Brethren assemblies, 1937-1963.

Social class ¹	I	II	III	IV	V	W	X	U
Kirkintilloch (1917)								
Membership 22								
Number	0	3	6	5	1	(4) ³	1	6
% ²	(0)	(20)	(40)	(33.3)	(6.7)	(50)	(6.25)	(27.2)
Kirkintilloch (1935)								
Membership 46								
Number	1	4	29	5	0	2 (+11) ³	3	2
% ²	(2.6)	(10.3)	(74.4)	(12.8)	(0)	(29.5)	(6.8)	(4.3)
Kilbirnie (1931)⁴								
Membership 280								
Number	0	16	172	12	25	-	18	37
% ²	(0)	(7.1)	(76.4)	(3.3)	(11.1)	-	(7.4)	(33.6)
Kilbirnie (1960)								
Membership 210								
Number	5	32	128	16	0	6 (+42) ³	8 (+9) ³	15
% ²	(2.8)	(17.7)	(70.7)	(8.8)	(0)	(38.9)	(8.7)	(7.1)
Newarthill (1937)								
Membership 32								
Number	0	5	18	2	0	5 (+7) ³	2 (+3) ³	0
% ²	(0)	(20)	(72)	(6.7)	(0)	(66.7)	(15.6)	(0)
Newarthill (1953)								
Membership 33								
Number	0	8	13	4	0	1 (+8) ³	6	1
% ²	(0)	(32)	(52)	(16)	(0)	(58.8)	(18.75)	(3)
Newarthill (1963)								
Membership 41								
Number	0	16	15	0	2	4 (+8)	4 (+5) ³	0
% ²	(0)	(48.5)	(45.5)	(0)	(6)	(42.8)	(22)	(0)

1. Classes I-V = social groups A-E (see Appendix 2); W = housewives (married women not in employment); X = unwaged (retired, students, disabled, and unemployed); U = unidentified; where possible, social class of those not in employment has been allocated to that of the head of household.

2. Percentages in a social class are those of the total number to whom it is possible to allocate one; percentages of housewives are those of all identified women; percentages of unwaged are those of all identified individuals; and percentages of unidentified those of are of the total membership.

3. The number in brackets indicates those also allocated to a social class.

4. Occupations based on the valuation roll in which housewives are not listed.

Sources: Kirkintilloch Account Book, 1922-49; Kilbirnie Roll Books, 1931 & 1960; oral information, Gospel Hall, Newarthill (7 September 1988).

Table 9.4. Social class of Brethren assemblies aggregated according to period, 1863-1963.

Social class ¹	I	II	III	IV	V	X	U
1863-81 % ²	2 (4)	16 (32.7)	23 (47)	8 (16.3)	0 (0)	(1) ³ (2)	24 (32.9)
1913-1919 % ²	3 (1.8)	36 (21.8)	103 (62.4)	12 (7.2)	11 (6.7)	6 (3.5)	41 (19.3)
1931-7 % ²	1 (0.3)	25 (8.7)	219 (75.8)	19 (6.6)	25 (8.7)	17 (+3) ³ (6.5)	39 (11.3)
1960-63 % ²	5 (1.9)	61 (23.1)	174 (65.9)	22 (8.3)	2 (0.8)	20 (+17) ³ (13)	16 (5.3)

1. Classes I-V = social groups A-E (see Appendix 2); X = unwaged (retired, students, disabled, and unemployed); U = unidentified.

2. Percentages of a social class are those of the total number to whom it is possible to allocate one; percentages of unidentified are of those of the total membership.

3. The number in brackets indicates those also allocated to a social class.

Sources: Tables 9.1 and 9.3.

apparently, the largest group in this class, composing 25.7 per cent. of all individuals in class I in *The Witness* sample.

The data in *The Witness* obituaries also show that those in class I tended to be concentrated in certain areas with 63.5 per cent. of them found in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, or suburban districts such as Cambuslang. Their general presence can be seen if the 12.2 per cent. who lived outside these places is contrasted with the 59.4 per cent. of small businessmen who lived in large and small towns. In addition a further 23.3 per cent. of class I individuals in *The Witness* sample moved to England. Typical of this was David Stone, the Strathaven member listed in column X in Table 9.1. The son of James Stone, farmer and preacher, he was a school pupil in 1881,

later graduating in medicine from Glasgow University in 1887. After a spell as a ship's surgeon, he spent the remainder of his life in Northampton.¹⁵ *The Witness* obituaries show that individuals in classes I and II were also apparently a slightly more mobile group, each group making on average 1.98 removals to new places, compared to those in class III who moved on average 1.57 times. In most assemblies, class I individuals were simply not to be found, a point supported by Table 9.1.

Tables 9.2 to 9.4 examine the changes in social class over time. It is possible to calculate the year of birth of 258 individuals in *The Witness* sample. In Table 9.2 the data have been grouped into four periods, with individuals being allocated to the one in which he or she was 21. The cut-off date for each period is the final year in each of the intervals in Table 9.4 when individuals would attain that age. It shows the relative proportions of classes as remarkably constant in the nineteenth century, but the paucity of obituaries for the later periods makes generalisations from it about the twentieth century difficult. Tables 9.3 and 9.4 suggest that class remained fairly constant until the 1930s with, if anything, an increase in the skilled working-class occupations (class III). This may be because the three assemblies on which much of the later data in Table 9.3 is based—Kirkintilloch, Kilbirnie and Newarthill—had a larger proportion of working-class members than was true nationally, a possibility supported by the smaller proportion in class II. On the other hand it is more probable that these assemblies in industrialised communities were more typical of Scottish ones than others in Table 9.1 and may therefore give a truer picture of the balance of classes in the overall movement. It was not until after World War II that social change began to be felt, as can be seen from Table 9.3. By 1937 in Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire, one individual,

15. 'Dr David Stone', *W*, 78 (1948), p.72.

the son of assembly members, had become a chartered accountant, moving into class I, but the assembly maintained its working-class character, even increasing it from 1917. Post-World War II change can be seen in Kilbirnie assembly, where in 1960 some 79.5 of the members still belonged to classes III and IV. However, the representation of classes I and II had markedly increased, something which was set to continue as a further three members, the offspring of working-class Brethren parents and classified in Table 9.3 under class III,¹⁶ were teachers and another two individuals were at university and would later enter the same profession. In the steel village of Newarthill, Lanarkshire, the upward rise in social class by the early 1960s is also marked with a decrease in class III and a corresponding increase in class II. In addition the rise in members classified in column X in Newarthill is also due to the number who were still at school, as in Kilbirnie, a sign of future increased upward mobility, a point which shall be discussed in the next chapter.¹⁷

One group which showed some fluctuations in size was the proportion of women who were housewives (calculated as a proportion of all identified females).¹⁸ Women constitute 60.2 per cent. of all members whose sex it is possible to determine in Table 9.1 and 61.2 per cent. of Table 9.4.¹⁹ Given the high correlation between membership and attendance in the movement, men were probably prominent by their presence at Brethren meetings whereas women with young children could not always attend. These factors probably made the preponderance of females in membership

16. For this classification, see above, n.6.

17. See below, pp.426-30.

18. However, it should be noted that women (particularly single women or ones with husbands not in fellowship) were more likely to be unidentified, making generalisations about them based on the available data more unreliable.

19. Women constitute 40.7 per cent. of obituaries in *The Witness*; but as a reflection of their membership this figure is probably too low as they were much less likely to receive an obituary (see above, p.18 n.87).

less noticeable. In the 1901 Dundee church census, women composed 49.6 per cent. of Brethren attenders at morning service compared to 53.4 per cent. for other churches.²⁰ It would appear that the number of females in the movement was only slightly below that of English Nonconformity, but those men the movement did attract were more visibly active especially in attendance at the morning meeting at which they could participate.²¹ Half of the ten congregations profiled in Tables 9.1 and 9.3 had, seemingly, a preponderance of women in employment with housewives ranging from a majority of 66.7 per cent. in Newarthill in 1937 (Table 9.1) to a minority of 29.5 in Kirkintilloch in 1935 (Table 9.3). However, married women were mainly housewives: in 1935 in Kirkintilloch 92.3 per cent. were housewives and in 1960 in Kilbirnie 74.2 per cent. were also housewives. Until the 1960s, it would appear, the fluctuations in the number of women in employment were due to the proportion of single women in an assembly.

A persistent minority in social classes II-IV consisted of those engaged in agricultural occupations, ranging from large tenant farmers, such as James Stone of Ardochrigg, tenant of one of the Earl of Eglinton's largest Lanarkshire farms,²² to small-holding proprietors such as William Adams in Kirkintilloch. The Brethren were a remarkably pervasive force throughout Scottish society. However, the principal Brethren strength in Scotland was among occupations in industrialised communities. Before World War II the social profile of the movement was similar to that of late

20. *The Dundee Advertiser*, 1 April 1901, p.5; this figure is for all sections of the Brethren movement included in the survey.

21. Cf. Clive D Field, 'Adam and Eve: gender in the English Free Church constituency' *JEH*, 44 (1993), pp.63-74; Field deduces from his evidence that the fewer demands on men, the greater their numbers.

22. *Valuation Roll for the County of Lanark for the Year 1891-2—Parish of East Kilbride*, p.621.

nineteenth-century English Nonconformity.²³ The core of the membership lay in the skilled working class with a significant representation of both the lower strata of society and the intermediate class before World War II, but with some upwards social movement in favour of the last group in the post-war period. The presence of these classes had great importance for the way in which assemblies interacted with their societies.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: SOCIETY

R Q Gray has argued that the intermediate class in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Edinburgh churches supported the hegemonic ideology of society and provided a significant role in mediating these values to the strata below them.²⁴ It might be argued that, given the presence of this group within the Brethren and in the light of the social conservatism of the movement (to be discussed more fully below),²⁵ it performed a similar function for society within assemblies. A symbol for this putative role might be found in *Sound Speech* (1927), a series of lessons written by schoolteacher R D Johnston to teach the basics of grammar to preachers with poor education.²⁶ Middle-class cultural values were apparently being transmitted to the lower social strata.²⁷ Undoubtedly the Brethren moulded a compliant workforce as the demands of the sect produced dependability for the industrial routine and this was coupled with the strong emphasis on submission to authority,

23. Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, pp.59-67; Clive D Field, 'The social structure of English Methodism: eighteenth-twentieth centuries', *BJS*, 28 (1977), pp.199-225; Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London, 1974), pp.309-311; Michael R Watts, *The Dissenters. Volume II: the expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford, 1995), pp.303-27.

24. R Q Gray, 'Religion, culture and social class in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Edinburgh', G Crossik (ed.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914* (London, 1977), pp.134-58.

25. See below, pp.389-94.

26. R D Johnston, *Sound Speech: studies in English for Christian workers* (Kilmarnock, 1927).

27. Cf. Thompson, *English Working Class*, pp.385-440.

including (as will emerge below) not striking.²⁸ Assemblies, it might further be argued, were run in the employers' interests. J R Caldwell, in a sermon on masters and servants published in 1892, primarily emphasised the duties of the latter which included responsibility, obedience and honesty (incorporating not cheating in time-keeping).²⁹ It might be maintained more cynically that business values could be found controlling practice. Both J R Caldwell and John Ritchie promoted sympathy towards bankrupts, probably because of their own background in trade and an awareness of its vicissitudes, and Henry Pickering advised mercy during the depression of the early 1920s.³⁰ In giving this advice they were reacting to others who took a harder line, similar to the more sectarian Churches of God which John Brown of Greenock left when his business failed through its incompetent management by relatives.³¹ There were even hints of class antagonism between the middle class and others. Assemblies could split along class lines, a more relaxed, open position appealing to middle-class individuals and a more sectarian line to working-class ones. In Glasgow in the 1880s the polarity between these two sections of the movement was displayed in the disparity between Cathcart Road Gospel Hall, on the edge of the Gorbals and the skilled working-class area of Govanhill, and the more prosperous Elim Hall in the district of Crosshill;³² and in the mid-twentieth century such divisions have already been noticed in the arguments over High Leigh.³³ John Douglas warned against, "Three signs

28. See below, p.387.

29. J R Caldwell, 'Masters and Servants' *W*, 22 (1892), pp.132-6, 155-7; reprinted as a chapter in *idem*, *Earthly Relationships of the Heavenly Family* (n.d.), rpt. (Glasgow, 1983).

30. [J R Caldwell], 'QA', *NW*, 12 (1882), pp.47-8; J R C[aldwell], 'On discipline in the assembly', *W*, 19 (1889), p.36; [John Ritchie], 'BQB', *BM*, 21 (1911), p.71; HyP[ickering] 'QA' *W*, 53 (1923), p.103; [*idem*], 'QA', *W*, 54 (1924), p.263; cf. David Jeremy, *Capitalists and Christians: business leaders and the churches in Britain, 1900-1960* (Oxford, 1990), p.53.

31. J J Park, *The Churches of God: their origin and development in the twentieth century* (Leicester, 1986), p.85; see also above, p.211-12.

32. See above, pp.202-3.

33. See above, pp.301-2.

of the world: the cigarette in the mouth, the ring on the finger, the stick in the hand."³⁴ It is highly unlikely that his caricature dandy existed among Brethren business people, but Douglas's animus against a more genteel image which could be cultivated among them is clear.

But despite the variety of social classes and the examples which might be cited as evidence of social control and class antagonism within assemblies, homogeneity of attitude marked them. The more prosperous lower-middle class members of Kilbirnie assembly in 1931 (Table 9.1) might be owner-occupiers in Stoneyholm Road and Largs Road, streets which opened into the countryside, but they shared the same industrial small-town culture and within the assembly were united by the same religious values. What was of greater importance was the division of the community into 'saved' and 'unsaved'. The individuals from class I, who, as was seen above, tended to be found in the cities or middle-class suburbia, similarly promoted salvation. In comparison, social distinctions were minor.³⁵ They used their abilities in pursuit of the same objectives as their working-class fellow Brethren and were the leading individuals in many of the most flourishing assemblies.³⁶ Along with members of the intermediate class, they performed a valuable role in being assembly trustees and in staffing such committees as the Brethren possessed. James Robertson (1842-1926), owner of the largest coachbuilding firm in Glasgow,

34. Writer's collection II, quoted in Max Wright to the writer, 11 February, 1992; Douglas was also echoing a general disapproval of modishness in male dress: cf. John Justice's dislike in 1872 of trousers as being too 'foppish' (M K[err], *Memoir of John Justice* (Ayr, 1875), p.79); J R Caldwell's distaste in 1908 for white umbrellas with green lining, (J R Caldwell, *The Epitome of Christian Experience in Psalm XXXII with the development of the Christian life* (Glasgow [1917]), p.97); and Andrew Borland's comment in 1923 that 'The supercilious coxcomb is almost as common within some churches as is the dandified fop in many a theatre' (Andrew Borland, *Love's Most Excellent Way: or Christian courtship* (London & Edinburgh [1923]), p.64).

35. Cf. P L M Hillis, 'Education and evangelisation: Presbyterian missions in mid-nineteenth century Glasgow', *SHR*, 66 (1989), pp.46-62.

36. For a similar comment on England, cf., Roy Coad, 'The influence of Brethrenism on English business practice', *Biblioteca Storica Toscana*, 11 (Firenze, 1988), p.110.

Table 9.5. Social class of the founding trustees of two Kilmarnock assemblies.

Social class ¹	I	II	III	IV	V	X
Elim Hall (1931)	1	3	7	1	0	0
Central Hall (1934)	3	3	4	0	0	1

Note:

1. Classes I-V = social groups A-E (see Appendix 2); X = retired.

Sources: 'Christian Brethren, originally holding meetings in the Co-operative Hall, John Dickie St., Kilmarnock, then in Princes St., Kilmarnock, and presently in Cuthbert Pl., Kilmarnock. Statement of the Constitution and Government. Section II—Government', typescript, 1931; 'Disposition to the Trustees of Christian Brethren meeting in Central Hall, John Finnie St., Kilmarnock', typescript, 1934.

was chairman of the Glasgow Half-Yearly Conferences and a trustee of both HFMF and the charitable Aitchison Trust; Gordon Davidson (d.1950), a wealthy sausage manufacturer, was a director of Netherhall and a convener of the Half-Yearlies; and probably the leading pluralist among committee members was T J Smith (d.1966), a director of Colvilles.³⁷ Trustees of assembly halls also tended to be individuals drawn from a higher social strata. Table 9.5 shows the social class of the founding trustees of two Kilmarnock assemblies in the 1930s. Given the proportion of middle-class individuals in both groups, probably all of the male members in the higher social strata in both assemblies were acting as trustees. Even in Elim Hall, noticeably lower-class, four of the class III individuals were non-employing self-employed individuals. Sometimes, perhaps, a more organisation-oriented mentality could be detected among businessmen.

37. 'James Robertson, W, 56 (1926), p.299; 'Gordon Norie Davidson', W, 80 (1950), p.168; cf. 'John A. Ireland' W, 92 (1962), p.436; W B Scott, 'Thomas James Smith', W, 96 (1966), p.228: at the time of his death Smith was Senior Treasurer of HFMF, chairman of the Retired Missionary Aid Fund, treasurer of the Widows and Orphans Fund, vice-chairman of the Stewards' Company Ltd., vice-president of the National Bible Society of Scotland, an honorary vice-president of the Scottish Evangelistic Council, council member of the Scripture Gift Mission, and trustee of several charitable Christian trusts; on Smith see below, p.373.

When being interviewed about his missionary prospects George Patterson, an *enfant terrible* of the movement, found the Glasgow missionary committee members dubious of his enthusiasm for living by faith and on the side of financial husbandry. For Patterson it was a conflict between the charismatic and the institutional mentalities.³⁸ In common with their equivalents in other churches, businessmen had, it would appear, more influence within the movement than they had on controlling their employees or in proselytising them.³⁹ But among assemblies their talents were at the service of the common object of the salvation of their fellows, not the furtherance of business interests.

Brethren literature, in addition, was remarkably free from social propaganda.⁴⁰ In the several magazines which were issued for children, even teaching on morality was avoided for the Brethren were very firmly of the opinion that conversion was the only solution to social problems.⁴¹ It was a simple religious message which was disseminated through their children's work. This is not to deny that there were latent functions in the Sunday schools and children's meetings. A fairly typical Brethren Sunday school was probably being depicted in the story 'Heaven's Roll' (1938) in which the majority of those attending 'belonged to the poorer class, and were scantily clad.'⁴² For such children they aided literacy: in giving a recitation at a soirée or memorising the Bible—one non-Brethren nonagenarian recalled receiving a prize in Wellington Hall, Kilmarnock, for reciting all of Isaiah 53.⁴³ As Mark Smith has argued for similar

38. George N Patterson, *God's Fool* (London, 1956), pp.58-60.

39. Jeremy, *Capitalists and Christians*, pp.245-408.

40. J A H Dempster, 'Aspects of Brethren publishing enterprise in late nineteenth century Scotland', *Publishing History*, 20 (1986), pp.84-5.

41. Fred Elliott, 'The gospel and its blessings', in W Hoste and R McElheran (eds), *The Great Sacrifice: or what the death of Christ has wrought* (Kilmarnock [c. 1939]), p.61.

42. M M'L, 'Heaven's Roll', *Boys and Girls*, No.609 (October, 1938), [p.16].

43. Oral information, 10 July 1997; cf. Robert Moore, *Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics: the effects of Methodism in a Durham mining community* (Cambridge, 1974), pp.109-113.

activities in Lancashire, they also prepared children for associational leisure activities through soirées, outings and the entertaining 'action choruses' (in which the singers mimed the key words) with which the Brethren liked to sugar the religious pill.⁴⁴ More significantly for class relations, they could provide children with role models from their own social class, who were respectable, disciplined and prosperous. But if so, then they were also deeply religious ones. The Brethren strove to inculcate transcendental belief, not social propaganda.

It is also for this reason that the Brethren do not support the Weber-Tawney hypothesis. They appear to conform to Weber's ideal type of the inner-worldly ascetic in which Christian austerity 'undertook to penetrate just that daily routine of life', one of the principal foundations for his case that Protestantism fostered the spirit of capitalism which he found to be shown very clearly in the Protestant sects.⁴⁵ Certainly the movement promoted the values of temperance, discipline and financial prudence which gave the members a relatively prosperous life in comparison to many of their neighbours. Capitalism, too, was acceptable. Caldwell argued that it was the duty of the Christian businessman to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest.⁴⁶ Investment was also permissible, being clearly distinguished from gambling.⁴⁷ But, as Roy Coad has shown through a study of English Brethren businessmen, the Weber-Tawney thesis does not fit the movement, for they were without the ruthlessness

44. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, pp.258-9, cf. children in Larkhall singing a religious chorus in accompaniment to their games, Chapman, *Hebron Hall*, p.33.

45. Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, p.154; idem, 'The Protestant sects and the spirit of capitalism', in H H Gerth and C Wright Mills (eds), *From Max Weber: essays in sociology* (1948) Routledge edn (London, 1970), pp.302-22. In a probably unconscious echo of Weber, James Black, *New Forms of the Old Faith: being the Baird Lecture delivered in 1946-47 under the title extra-church systems* (London, 1948), p.148, stated of the Brethren: 'Ideally, they are monks without a monastery!'

46. J R C[caldwell], 'Honesty', *N W*, 10 (1880), p.2.

47. 'YBQB', *BM*, 30 (1920), p.51.

which Weber attributes to the Protestant entrepreneur.⁴⁸ R H Campbell has noted that Christian businessmen were frowned upon for using wealth for social advancement rather than philanthropy.⁴⁹ Their Brethren counterparts were definitely of the opinion that profits should be used in the Lord's service:⁵⁰ Charles Aitchison, a member of a prominent Glasgow bakery firm, gave largely to home and foreign missions and when he died in 1906 left £150 000 to found a trust for the support of religious objects.⁵¹ In the twentieth century, the most significant businessman was T J Smith, from 1958 a director of Colvilles Ltd., the iron and steel manufacturers and one of the 100 largest companies in Britain. Again he was a massive benefactor of foreign missions and, as was noted above, used his business acumen for the benefit of Evangelical agencies.⁵² In addition, investing in joint-stock companies was frowned upon because it drew the Christian into association with unbelievers or might be a sign of avarice.⁵³ The concept of labour as a calling was also drastically modified by the Brethren. As among the anabaptists, employment as a vocation was weakened through it being perceived as a necessary condition of life, merely enabling the believer to be financially independent.⁵⁴ Henry Pickering retailed the reply of the Glasgow worker when asked his occupation: 'To wait for His Son from Heaven, and to fill up the time making buttons.'⁵⁵ But the concept of employment was further modified in that it was to evangelism

48. Coad, 'English business practice', pp.107-8; cf. *idem*, *Laing: the Biography of Sir John W. Laing, C.B.E. (1879-1978)*, (London, 1979).

49. R H Campbell, 'A critique of the Christian businessman and his paternalism', in David Jeremy (ed.), *Business and Religion in Britain* (Aldershot, 1988), p.38-9.

50. 'Stewardship', *NW*, 12 (1882), pp.26-30; cf. 'Luxury among Christians', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), p.237.

51. 'Charles A. Aitchison', *BM*, 16 (September 1906), endpp.; 'James Robertson', *W*, 56 (1926), p.299; Coad, 'English business practice', p.111; the Aitchison Trust is still operative at the time of writing.

52. Scott, 'Smith', p.228; see also above, n.37.

53. 'QA', *W*, 29 (1899), pp.115-16; 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 10 (1900), p.47: an exception could be made, however, for one consisting entirely of Christians.

54. Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, p.150.

55. Hy Pickering, *One Thousand Tales Worth Telling: mostly new/strictly true/suitable for you* (London & Glasgow [c. 1914], p.37.

in the workplace the individual was called, not to the dignity of labour. As J R Caldwell advised his hearers, when 'God has called you as serving in a mason's yard, or a joiner's shop, or at a mill loom, or as a household servant, He has called you for the very purpose that *there* you should let your light shine.'⁵⁶ Witnessing, not work, was the true sign of God's grace. Caldwell was also firmly against working for any motive of personal profit. To start a business on borrowed capital was for him a sign that it was not God's will.⁵⁷ Money and secular success were inimical to spirituality.⁵⁸ Unlike English dissenters such as the Quakers, the Brethren did not develop business family dynasties, either through a failure to produce heirs or through younger members of the family leaving the movement.⁵⁹ The predominance of the working classes remained absolute until World War II, after which the Brethren rose socially as improved prospects were more widely available throughout society. The movement did provide a social function for the community. It reinforced working-class self-improvement values of discipline, temperance and responsibility and it encouraged articulacy and literacy. These values, which the middle-class Caldwell was cited above as promoting in 1892,⁶⁰ were not the property of his class alone. Nor did the spirit of capitalism reside within the Brethren.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: MEMBERSHIP

One potential explanation of the social function assemblies fulfilled for their members was that they helped assuage anomie, replacing the

56. J R Caldwell, 'Masters and servants, p.134; the italicisation of 'there' is from the book version *Earthly Relationships*, p.390.

57. *Idem*, 'Honesty', p.2.

58. W Shaw, 'Why the singing ceased', *W*, 28 (1898), pp.153-4.

59. Whether those who left were more successful businessmen because of a Brethren upbringing (and therefore support the Weber-Tawney hypothesis) is beyond the scope of the present study.

60. See above, p.368.

hopelessness induced by a fractured society with the confident security of the sect.⁶¹ If this were a primary societal role of the Brethren, it might be expected that they would flourish in communities which were particularly subject to a breakdown of purpose. That assemblies were formed in communities which had undergone rapid social change has been noted in previous chapters.⁶² Rural areas in which meetings were formed, such as Orkney and Aberdeenshire, had been subject to such alterations, but the change most often took the form of industrialisation. Most of the assemblies in the period before 1859 were established in textile communities or in cities. The industrial exception here was Newmains, the village which grew around the Coltness Iron Works. In the decade after 1859 the movement began to appear in communities undergoing this second phase of industrialisation such as Larkhall and Dalmellington. But even here Brethren assemblies were mainly formed in communities which had an experience of industrialisation that went back to the eighteenth century. The Lanarkshire cotton industry began in East Kilbride in 1783,⁶³ and a number of the other smaller towns and villages in which assemblies were formed—Strathaven, Lesmahagow, and Larkhall—had been weaving communities since the late eighteenth century. In places such as Rutherglen and Dalmellington, there was a mixture of weaving and mining which went back to the previous century.⁶⁴ These communities had experienced several decades of industrialisation.

Assemblies were not planted in the Lanarkshire parishes which were undergoing the most rapid industrial and demographic growth in the 1860s. The most intense revivals out of which assemblies grew initially

61. Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, p.87-93.

62. See above, Chpts 2, 3, 4, and 6.

63. *TSA: County of Lanark*, p.29.

64. *TSA: County of Ayr*, p.732.

occurred in communities, such as Strathaven, Lesmahagow, and Larkhall, which had undergone change, but which had achieved (or, in the case of rural areas, such as Orkney, had not entirely lost) some stability and homogeneity. This is not to say, however, that the Brethren could not grow in communities undergoing rapid expansion, for in places such as Glasgow and Greenock social change was continuous. Nevertheless, in Lanarkshire assemblies were not established in the new burghs of Airdrie, Motherwell and Wishaw, places which were being deeply transformed, until either assembly members migrated to them or, in the last instance, through the outreach of a nearby meeting. By the 1890s the movement had so penetrated industrial society that assemblies tended to be transplanted by the migration of labour (such as during the development of the west Fife coalfield)⁶⁵ and suburbanisation (as happened most obviously in Glasgow).⁶⁶ The pattern of Brethren growth within Scotland suggests that anomie was not the principal factor behind the increase of the movement. In Lerwick the Brethren emerged in a time of prosperity when a period of economic difficulties had passed.⁶⁷ Arguably, the revivalism which aided their emergence in the Shetland countryside in the 1870s and 1880s was due to a continuation of communal coherence rather than its fragmentation.⁶⁸ When out-migration both there and in Aberdeenshire had passed its peak the Brethren entered a period of decline in these places.⁶⁹ Undue social fragmentation seemed to produce paralysis.⁷⁰

Industrialisation, too, could create community where there had been

65. See above, pp.136 (n.157), 156-7, 244 (n.99).

66. See above, pp.133 (n.134), 155-6.

67. J W Irvine, *Lerwick: the birth and growth of an island town* (Lerwick, 1985), pp.51-72.

68. See above, pp.123-4, 139; for the argument that revivals are dependent on community coherence, see D E Meek, 'Fishers of men': the 1921 religious revival, its cause, context and transmission', in James Porter (ed.), *After Columba—After Calvin: religious community in North-East Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1999), pp.135-42.

69. See above, pp.139-41.

70. Cf. Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion*, p.282.

none,⁷¹ such as was the case in the industrial villages of the Lowlands in which much of Brethren strength resided. The inhabitants of Larkhall, a town in which the Brethren were singularly successful, were aware of the tranquillity of their community and the transition from weaving to mining was made without any civic tensions.⁷² Miners had a strong sense of solidarity which, as John Bowes found in Carlisle, Lanarkshire, in 1855, could be a hindrance to recruitment.⁷³ and they were aware of themselves being a separate group.⁷⁴ The problem for the Brethren was not that miners were members of a fragmented society, but rather that members of the movement had to penetrate tightly-knit communities, and the opposition they faced initially showed that this entrance was not accomplished easily.⁷⁵ Social change was important for the emergence of assemblies, but the evidence suggests that some communal stability was necessary for recruitment to be successful. It was not the case that assemblies were formed among rootless people searching for stability amidst social fragmentation.

Scottish Brethren support the contention of Hugh McLeod on working-class converts in London that they were 'drawn mainly from those with ideas, in search of meanings, systems, explanations or from those in revolt against the way of life of their neighbours'.⁷⁶ Brethrenism was not, as has been stated of it in the context of the north-east fishing communities, a religion 'of the disinherited, providing, for those who were losing hope in

71. Cf. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, p. 32; for the view that in the second half of the nineteenth century there was a consolidation of a sense of community in large factory towns cf. Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: the culture of the factory in later Victorian England* (Brighton, 1980), pp.103-23.

72. A B Campbell, *The Lanarkshire Miners: a social history of their trade unions, 1775-1874* (Edinburgh, 1979), pp.133-37, 159-160.

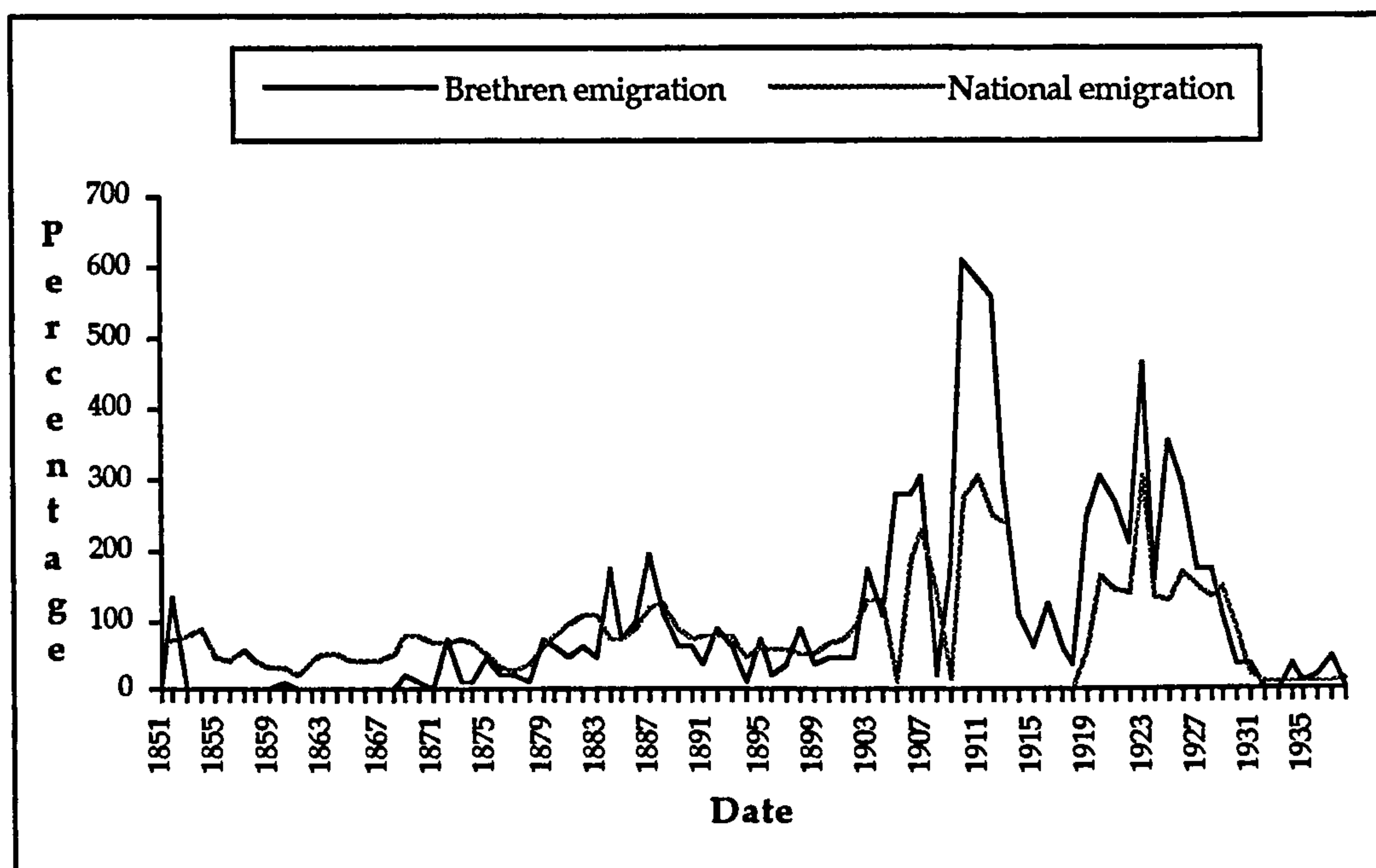
73. TP, 4 (1855-6), pp.119-20.

74. Gavin Wark, *The Rise and Fall of Mining Communities in Central Ayrshire in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Ayrshire Monographs No.22* (Darvel, 1999), pp.10-16.

75. For persecution of the Brethren, see below, pp.386-7.

76. McLeod, *Class and Religion*, p.283.

Figure 9.1. Emigration of Scottish assembly members against Scottish national emigration, 1851-1938 (expressed as a percentage of an eighty-eight-year mean).



Sources: Marjorie Harper, *Emigration from North-East Scotland, 1* (Aberdeen 1988), pp.35-6; *The Truth Promoter*, volumes 1-10 (1849-69); *The Witness*, volumes 3-119 (1873-1980); *The Believer's Magazine* volumes 1-107 (1891-1997); Kilbirnie Roll Books, 1903, 1909-16, 1919-21, 1925-6, 1928-62.

the present, a future in the world beyond.'⁷⁷ The type of individual who belonged to an assembly can be seen from the effects emigration exerted (Figure 9.1). The peak and troughs in national emigration and Brethren emigration largely coincide.⁷⁸ Comparison of the two sets of statistics has been achieved through expressing each as a percentage deviation from an eighty-eight-year mean (the period covered by the data). It can be seen from this that while assembly members tended to emigrate at the same time as

77. Paul Thompson, *et al.*, *Living the Fishing* (London, 1983), p.258; cf. Thompson, *English Working Class*, p.427.

78. No figures are available for national emigration 1914-17.

others, they were more likely to emigrate.⁷⁹ It seems probable that, given their status as members of the intermediate or working classes, the Brethren were no more subject to 'push' factors (such as industrial depression) than the general population. But 'pull' factors (such as the opportunities offered overseas) operated more powerfully on Brethren. They were more likely to be aware of conditions abroad through the network of contacts established there by earlier meeting members⁸⁰ and assemblies provided a ready-made network of support.⁸¹ Brethren were also offered extra inducements to emigrate, which legitimated the enterprise, such as opportunities to evangelise or establish assemblies.⁸² Indeed, John Bowes argued, it was the Christian's duty to emigrate so that New Testament churches might multiply.⁸³ Emigration could have a missionary purpose. These latter factors loosened the hold which loyalty to place had on Brethren. In the phrase of Bernard Aspinwall their beliefs

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79. The data for Scottish national emigration are those of total emigration from Scottish ports (Marjorie Harper, *Emigration from North-East Scotland*, 1 (Aberdeen 1988), pp.35-6); the data for Brethren emigration are those of 720 individuals whose year of emigration can be determined, mainly from an obituary in *The Witness* or *The Believer's Magazine*. Reliance on these last data raises the usual difficulties associated with using them as a source (see above p.18 n.87), especially in determining which years Brethren emigration was at its highest. In particular the inter-war period may be underestimated because it falls in the period when obituaries are less reliable as a source; the same holds for the earlier nineteenth century. The Brethren statistics also do not take account of those who returned, as often a brief period overseas was not mentioned or dated in an obituary. Obituaries of those who died overseas became less common in British magazines as Brethren journals were established in the host countries. The general result of these factors is that Scottish Brethren emigration is likely to be underestimated in the available statistics. What is clear is that the peaks in Brethren emigration are higher than those of the general population.
80. James Wisely to the ed., 10 June 1851, *TP*, 1 (1850-1), p.239; T H Maynard to the ed., *W*, 56 (1926), p.471; C Innes to the ed., 59 (1929), p.88; however, note the warnings in, 'Observations of an emigrant', *BM*, 22 (1912), p.36; *BM*, 33 (1923), p.36; and G Arden to the ed., *W*, 55 (1925), p.92.
81. *W*, 25 (1925), p.140; *W*, 57 (1927), p.57; *BM*, 34 (1934), p.26; *W*, 77 (1947), p.35; J Merridar to the ed., *BM*, 67 (1957), p.120.
82. Alex Marshall to the ed., *W*, 41 (1911), p.82; E H Broadbent, 'Christians and missionary service', *W*, 59 (1929), p.35; *W*, 57 (1927), p.179; *W*, 61 (1931), p.288; A E Brown to the ed., 9 August 1962, *W*, 42 (1962), pp.391-2.
83. [John Bowes], 'On the duty of the Christian to emigrate', *TP*, 2 (1851-3), p.103; cf. similar inducements for Mormon converts in P A M Taylor, *Expectations Westward: the Mormons and the Emigration of their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1965).

were 'portable'⁸⁴—a point supported by the significant number of missionaries that the movement produced which *The Witness* obituaries indicate was 1.7 per cent. of the membership from 1876 until 1980. This percentage figure is perhaps too high as missionaries were more likely to receive an obituary,⁸⁵ and the same data were possibly more accurate in suggesting that 10.6 per cent. of the Scottish membership emigrated over the period 1860 until 1967, a substantial proportion.⁸⁶ This last statistic shows that assembly members were eager for individual social improvement, a further reason which made them prepared to be mobile. The movement attracted independent and self-directed individuals and in turn reinforced such traits by providing a structure through which to express them.

That it was as a system of meaning that the Protestant Evangelicalism represented by the Brethren appealed can be seen from miners and fishermen. Both were engaged in dangerous occupations. Fishing communities were noted for their religious enthusiasm,⁸⁷ and stories of sudden deaths were intertwined with themes of religious conversion and experience.⁸⁸ In mining communities accidental death was also used as an appeal: the evangelist Charles Reid was converted through listening to a miner whose friend had been killed in a pit give his testimony.⁸⁹ Brethren miners themselves died in pit accidents from the Udston disaster in

84. Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopias* (Aberdeen, 1984)

85. Although the figure probably does not exaggerate the number of missionaries by much: Harold Rowdon, 'The Brethren contribution to world mission', in *idem* (ed.), *The Brethren Contribution to the Worldwide Mission of the Church* (Carlisle, 1994), p.38, suggested that one per cent. of the entire UK membership of the Brethren served as an overseas missionary.

86. These dates are for the first and last dates of emigration given in an obituary in *The Witness*; for the explanation of this data, see above p.18 n.87.

87. Thompson, *et al.*, *Living the Fishing*, p.203.

88. For examples drawn from the stories of mainly Brethren fishermen from the 1860s until the late twentieth century, see Graham Mair (compiler), *The Fisherman's Gospel Manual* (London, 1994).

89. 'Chums!', *OLOT*, No. 255 (March 1909).

Lanarkshire of 1887 to the Kames one in Ayrshire of 1955.⁹⁰ The drama of salvation helped to make sense of a precarious existence and provide hope in the face of the imminence of death. An egalitarian independence was also a feature of these communities. The common ownership of fishing boats meant that they were 'societies of petty entrepreneurs' which bred individuality.⁹¹ Autonomy was also a value of the miners. The historical development of the industry in Scotland gave rise to the 'independent collier', a status which was jealously guarded.⁹² In Larkhall miners continued the local tradition of the weavers owning their own houses and were celebrated as 'The Lairds o' Larkie'.⁹³ In such mining communities self-help flourished in the form of the Co-operative movement and building and friendly societies, the last a form of material protection for those in dangerous occupations. An egalitarian sect such as the Brethren reinforced the values of autonomy and self-improvement.

Within the movement, miners were renowned for their Bible knowledge. Among such working-class groups as they represented, the autodidact was a respected figure.⁹⁴ The origin of R D Johnston's *Sound Speech* was frequent expressions of regret made to the author by preachers on their inability to avoid grammatical mistakes. 'With many', he wrote of these converts, 'former days of opportunity were neglected, but with new life came new ambition'.⁹⁵ As T W Laqueur has noted in the context of

90. *W*, 19 (October 1889), v; 'James Marshall' and 'William Smith', *W*, 88 (1958), pp.15-16.

91. Thompson, *et al*, *Living the Fishing*, pp.214-33; Dickson, 'Open and closed', in Porter (ed.), *After Columba*, pp.160-2.

92. Campbell, *The Lanarkshire Miners*, pp.26-48.

93. Jack McLellan, *Larkhall: its historical development* (Larkhall, 1979), p.36-7; anon., 'The Lairds o' Larkie', *ibid.*, Appendix 17, pp.110-11.

94. Cf. the experience of one Churches of Christ evangelist who found that a Brethren individual in the late 1860s at Crofthead, West Lothian, who tended to despise education, was rather more poorly educated than the other assembly members in the village: James Anderson, *An Outline of My Life: or selections from a fifty years' religious experience* (Birmingham, 1912), p.39-40; for attitudes to tertiary education, see below, p.427-8.

95. Johnston, *Sound Speech*, p.3.

Sunday schools, the social values which were transmitted were those of the working-class adherents themselves.⁹⁶ Their aspirations were a desire for respectability, improvement, and a regulated life.⁹⁷ Some of the independent individualism of the Brethren can also be seen in their liking for alternative medicines, particularly homeopathy. There were a number of homeopathic practitioners (including Hunter Beattie) among them,⁹⁸ and many Brethren homes contained a copy of *The Homeopathic Vade Mecum* or Professor Kirk's *Papers on Health*, a work consisting largely of folk remedies.⁹⁹ As T C F Stunt has argued, the 'do-it-yourself doctor' was the 'acme of individualism'.¹⁰⁰ The cerebralism of the movement was discussed in the previous chapter.¹⁰¹ Scottish Brethren attracted the autonomous sections of the working classes, desirous of self-advancement and capable of taking opportunities for social melioration.¹⁰² As sociologist Steve Bruce has argued, presumed latent functions of religion, such as assuaging anomie, or psychological compensation, cannot explain its adoption without making its adherents appear manipulators or fools.¹⁰³ It

96. T W Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday schools and working-class culture 1780-1850* (New Haven, Connecticut; 1976), pp.239-40, 227-39.

97. R Q Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh* (Oxford, 1976); Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: stability and change in modern Britain* (Oxford, 1982), pp.157-190.

98. 'Dr. James Wardrop', *CW*, 30 (1915), pp.130-1; Henry Beattie, 'My father: Hunter Beattie 1875-1951', *BM*, 87 (1977), pp.196-7; and for Dr Brown Henry, see William Still, *Dying to Live* (Fearn, 1991), p.26; for herbalists, see the obituaries of two widows for their husbands's work: 'Mrs Thomas Anderson', *W*, 39 (1939), p.92; and 'Mrs W.C. Muir', *W*, 97 (1967), p.116.

99. E Harris Ruddock, *The Homeopathic Vade Mecum of Modern Medicine and Surgery*, 2nd edn (London, 1905); Edward Bruce Kirk (ed.), *Papers on Health by Professor Kirk, Edinburgh* (1899), one-vol. edn (London, Glasgow & Philadelphia, PA, 1921). The author of the latter work was John Kirk, the EU minister out of whose labours the Newmains/Wishaw meeting had grown (see above, pp.55-6); for the use of 'Professor Kirk's Cure' by evangelist Walter Anderson see Mr Alex. Stewart, Hopeman, Moray, [Alex. Stewart (compiler)], 'A Record of Gospel Work. Christian Brethren. Moray & Nairn', MS, n.d.

100. T C F Stunt, 'Homeopathy and the Brethren', *W*, 103 (1973), pp.127-8.

101. See especially pp.339-40.

102. Cf. Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, pp.82-5; McLeod, *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1984), pp.22-5.

103. Steve Bruce, 'Social change and collective behaviour: the revival in eighteenth-century Ross-shire', *BJS*, 34 (1983), pp.554-72.

was as part of the innate human desire for meaning that the movement appealed to the classes from which its members came.

ATTITUDES TO CULTURE AND SOCIETY

The congruence of Brethren civic virtues and those of the classes to which they belonged must not be overemphasised. The prescriptive teaching of the movement was strongly opposed to engagement in the affairs of culture and society. They were, in Richard Niebuhr's typology, proponents of 'Christ-against-culture'.¹⁰⁴ Involvement was to be avoided. Believers were to exclude themselves from politics, and their only relation to government should be to obey it.¹⁰⁵ Voting was frowned on by most, sometimes on the grounds that the Christian had nothing to do with earthly affairs, or that one might be found voting against God's will or, more facetiously, because the believer's representative was in heaven.¹⁰⁶ John Bowes was an admirer of the Co-operative Society, but most later Brethren were opposed to even such modest forms of association with unbelievers.¹⁰⁷ The principle at stake, in Brethren eyes, was the need to separate from the world.¹⁰⁸ For this reason many of the institutions developed by working people to promote their interests or self-improvement were eschewed. Not only Co-operative shops, but friendly societies, the temperance movement, YMCA, mechanics' institutes, and

104. H R Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (London, 1952), pp.58-92.

105. C[aldwell], 'Honesty', p.1.

106. C., 'Resurrection-life', *NW*, 6 (1876), p.152; J R Caldwell, 'Subject and rulers', *W*, 22 (1892), pp.179-81; *idem*, 'The general election', *W*, 89 (1929), p.85; K[err], *John Justice*, pp.70-1; W F Naismith, *Faith's Radiant Path* (London, 1930), p.18.

107. [John Bowes], 'Co-operative societies', *TP*, 7 (1860-1), pp.209-11; 'QA', *W*, 29 (1899), pp.115-16; 'QA', *W*, 33 (1903), pp.162-4, 180, 194-5; [John Ritchie], 'Answers to special questions', *BM*, 14 (1904), pp.47-8; HyP[ickering], 'QA', *W*, 62 (1932), p.191.

108. J R[itchie], 'The tabernacle in the wilderness', *NW*, 12 (1882), p.37; *idem*, *From Egypt to Canaan*, 6th edn. (Kilmarnock, n.d.), pp.17-18; A M[arshall], 'Separation from the world', *W*, 19 (1889), pp.123-4; Naismith, *Faith's Radiant Path*, pp.11-14.

union membership were all to be shunned.¹⁰⁹ Other popular organisations such as Masonic Lodges and the Orange Order were also to be avoided.¹¹⁰ As a rule-of-thumb, one writer quoted the terse advice, "Join nothing."¹¹¹ Combinations were seen as preparing for the rule of the antichrist whose will would override the individual's.¹¹² Even the League of Nations was perceived as a harbinger of his tyranny.¹¹³ Separation included business partnership with unbelievers or marriage to them. The stricter individuals advised endogamy.¹¹⁴ After she joined an assembly, Jeanie Gilchrist, the future African missionary, broke off her engagement because her fiancée, a Free Church minister, would not leave his denomination.¹¹⁵ A firm line was also taken against recreational activities. Evangelical disapproval of dancing, the theatre and novels had increased during the nineteenth century,¹¹⁶ and the Brethren, from John Bowes onwards, continued it on these issues.¹¹⁷ New converts were commended for their zeal in burning novels,¹¹⁸ particularly suspect because they were a form of lying and for their effects which included becoming 'a silly sentimentalist', promoting 'unwholesome excitement', and encouraging

109. W H Broom, 'Objections to a Christian joining temperance societies', *NEI*, 3 (1873), p.122-6; anon., 'Concentration', *NW*, (1876), pp.133-8; 'QA', *NW*, 10 (1880), p.95; 'QA', *NW*, 12 (1882), pp.79-80; 'YBQB', *BM*, 30 (1920), pp.12, 63-4, 'Answers to questions', *ibid.*, pp.135-6; 'YBQB', *BM*, 31 (1921), pp.65-6; W Scott, 'Things as they are to-day', *W*, 51 (1921), pp.75-7.

110. 'QA', *NW*, 10 (1880), p.62.

111. EWR[odgers], 'BQB', *BM*, 49 (1939), p.191: this, too, in the context of stating that it was permissible to join the Co-operative Society.

112. J C Stein, 'The Antichrist: his appearing', *W*, 50 (1920), p.333; [John Ritchie], 'Answers to questions', *BM*, 30 (1920), pp.65-6; HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 79 (1949), p.164.

113. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W* 49 (1919), pp.52, 100.

114. [A J Holiday], 'Only in the Lord', *BP*, 7 (1886), pp.182-3.

115. [J Ritchie], *Jeanie Gilchrist* (Kilmarnock, n.d.), pp.15-16.

116. Michael Hennell, 'Evangelicalism and worldliness', in G J Cuming and Derek Baker (eds), *SCH*, 8 (Cambridge, 1972), pp.229-236.

117. [John Bowes], 'Preface', *TP*, 1, (1849-52), p.2; 'Should Christians attend the theatre?', *TP*, 2 (1852-3), p.116; [*idem*], 'Novels excluded from a library', *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.291-2; J R[itchie], 'Letters to a young convert', *NI*, 4 (1874), p.180; HyP, *WW*, *W*, 67 (1937), p.114.

118. 'The novel reader', *LR*, 1 (1866), p.43; W H Clare, *Pioneer Preaching or Work Well Done* (London & Glasgow [1925]), pp.58-9.

prostitution.¹¹⁹ Some were even unhappy with the notion that Christ's parables were fictional.¹²⁰ As the mainline churches engaged in increasing use of recreation and the arts, the Brethren expressed disapproval.¹²¹ Their condemnation of amusements was extended to new ones as they appeared: cinema, radio, television and popular music were all in turn denounced.¹²² Especially to be avoided was football.¹²³ Glasgow Rangers had expressed an interest in John Douglas, but when he was converted in 1913 he forswore an interest in the game, even ceasing to read a newspaper in case it tempted him.¹²⁴ Such leisure activities were perceived as being in competition with the life on which the convert had embarked. It was this which made one writer warn young Christians against seemingly innocuous movements for self-improvement.¹²⁵ The Christian belonged to heaven,¹²⁶ and the 'world is a waste, howling wilderness'.¹²⁷ The proper use of time was in striving for the conversion of others and in working for the assembly.¹²⁸

119. [John Bowes], 'Female prostitution: its effects and remedies', *TP*, 1 (1849-51); 'QA', *NW*, 15 (1885), p.64; L W, 'The novel reader', *BP*, 41 (1920), p.75; W J McClure, 'Novel reading, and its disastrous consequences', *BM*, 35 (1926), p.34; M G Stickley to the ed., *W*, 95 (1965), pp.348-9; cf. Neil Dickson, 'Fiction's wicked lies', *A*, 70 (June 1991), pp.21-2; and Doreen Rosman, 'What has Christ to do with Apollo?': evangelicalism and the novel 1800-30', in Derek Baker (ed.), *SCH*, 15 (1977), pp.301-12.

120. William Tytler, *Plain Talks on Prophecy: or, the great prophetic cycles of time* (Glasgow [1915]), pp.50-1.

121. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 54 (1924), p.264.

122. *Idem*, 'WW', 53 (1923), p.104; *idem*, 'WW', 63 (1933), p.66; 'Wireless entertainments', *BM*, 46 (1937), p.271; Andrew Borland, *Old Paths & Good Ways in Personal, Family and Church Life* (Kilmarnock [1938]), p.22; W Shaw, 'Our position in the world', *W*, 55 (1935), pp.57-8; J B Watson, 'WW', 78 (1948), p.58; *W*, 81 (1951), p.71; J K Duff, 'Television and the Christian home', *BM* 67 (1957), pp.130, 134-5; D Cook, 'James Cuthbertson (1903-1981)', *BM*, 91 (1981), p.371.

123. *W*, 58 (1928), p.372; W S, 'Black Saturday', in A Marshall (ed.), *They Shall Shine as the Stars* (Glasgow, n.d.), [no pagination].

124. [Jimmy Paton], 'John Douglas (1891-1976), James Anderson (compiler), *They Finished Their Course* (Kilmarnock, 1980), pp.65-6; cf. 'James McLean', *BM*, 92 (1982), p.96; 'David Annal', *BM*, 93 (1983), p.288.

125. Anon., 'Concentration', pp.133-8.

126. J R C[aldwell], 'What amusements are innocent?', *NW*, 5 (1875), pp.61-2.

127. Ritchie, *Egypt to Canaan*, p.56; cf. Naismith, *Faith's Radiant Path*, p.23.

128. *BM*, 20 (1920), pp.38-9.

The Brethren were in revolt against the way of life of their neighbours. Ritchie paraphrased the argument of those who counselled some accommodation:

“You may be a Christian and sing an innocent worldly song, take a dance or enjoy a bit of pleasure. There are a good many Christian people who see no harm in doing these things.”¹²⁹

But he put the advice into the mouth of Satan. Such rejection of community mores could mean refusing the signs of status. Schoolteacher Andrew Borland did not own a car and lived in a local authority house.¹³⁰ And it could bring persecution.¹³¹ Some antagonists were those with opposing opinions, such as those in Fife from the Dunfermline universalist church in 1870 or the communists in Lumphinans in 1934.¹³² But more often it came from the general community: ministers preaching sermons against Brethrenism, assemblies being ejected from meeting places in rented accommodation or stopped street preaching, or members being subjected to mockery and calumny.¹³³ In one Deeside town the beginning of gospel meetings accompanied by a soup kitchen were satirised by a local balladeer:

In Ballater a plan's been launched
Tae wean folks frae the pub—
A hybrid, double-barrelled scheme,
Half kirk, half Dorcas club.¹³⁴

The abuse could become physical.¹³⁵ Some new converts were forbidden

129. Ritchie, *Egypt to Canaan*, p.18.

130. The editors, 'An appreciation: the late Andrew Borland 1895-1979', *BM*, 101 (1991), p.101.

131. Cf. McLeod, *Class and Religion*, pp.72-3.

132. *LR*, 3 (1870), p.241; *W*, 64 (1934), p.237.

133. James Stone to the ed., 20 May 1863, *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.39; *ibid.*, p.79-80; John Graham to the ed., 2 January 1866, *ibid.*, p.288; C J [sic] Miller to the ed., *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.240; K[err], *Justice*, p.31; James Anderson, 'A Brief Record Concerning the Early Days of the Assembly in Lesmahagow' (unpublished MS, 1960), pp.27-8, 38-9, 59-60; *NEI*, 3 (1973), pp.14-15; 'Should open-air testimony cease?' *BM*, 26 (1916), p.83.

134. 'An anonymous poem', F F Bruce, *In Retrospect: remembrance of things past* (London & Glasgow, 1980), Appendix 2, pp.318-19.

135. For examples at Ayr and Huntly, see above pp.105-6, 123.

by their parents from attending assembly services.¹³⁶ At Plains, Lanarkshire, during the first open air in the 1880s miners dipped earth sods in the open drain and threw them at the meeting members.¹³⁷ Joining an assembly could lead to individuals being ostracised by former friends or church members.¹³⁸ In Aberdeenshire this took a particularly cruel turn when the livelihood of some businessmen was threatened through the withdrawal of trade from them.¹³⁹ Conflict between assembly members and their communities was especially acute during industrial strikes. As part of their refusal to join a trade union, the Brethren also discountenanced striking. The bitter 1897 laceworkers' strike in Newmilns was a 'testing time for believers'.¹⁴⁰ In the Ayrshire mining village of Dreghorn, where the assembly members continued working during the strikes of the 1920s, the conflict was especially fierce. Stones were thrown through their windows and a scurrilous poem was circulated mocking them.¹⁴¹ In one later industrial dispute three Brethren miners in Midlothian had to leave their jobs because of their opposition to the closed shop.¹⁴² Membership of an assembly drove a wedge between the individual and the community.

Nevertheless, like other sects, the Brethren had to arrive at some accommodation with the institutions of society. Their cavalier attitude to record keeping caused some annoyance for the Inland Revenue. One exasperated official noted in 1927 concerning the finances for erecting a hall in Kilmarnock:

136. HyP[ickering], 'Archibald McLay of Cardiff', *BP*, 43 (1922), pp.38-41; 'Roderick Shaw', *W*, 103 (1973), p.316.

137. 'How it began—in Plains Lanarkshire', *BM*, 90 (1980), p.226.

138. Chapman, *Hebron Hall*, p.13; anon., *How I was Led Outside the Camp* (Kilmarnock, n.d.) [p.4]; for other examples of persecution, see above, p.106 n.194.

139. C W Ross (ed.), *Donald Ross: pioneer evangelist* (Kilmarnock, [1903]), p.159.

140. *BM*, 7 (1897), p.132.

141. Oral information, 19 July 1992.

142. J B W[atson], 'WW', *W*, 79 (1949), p.148.

There seems to be no formal constitution of these bodies and an absence of formality about their records of meetings and accounting arrangements. In this case we have no proper accounts of the Building Fund and from correspondence it seems unlikely that a detailed account could be obtained.¹⁴³

Despite this, the evidence is that they managed a rapprochement with the state without undue tension. Marriage was one of the first issues to be resolved. To accept solemnisation from a minister would be acknowledging sectarianism and so 'leading brethren' officiated and signed the schedule.¹⁴⁴ Charles Miller of Lesmahagow trumpeted after one such occasion that it 'shows we are clear of the sects... and yet obey the marriage law of Scotland'.¹⁴⁵ From 1927 the Registrar-General required proof that the celebrant was a 'Minister or Pastor of a Christian Congregation'.¹⁴⁶ This the Brethren were quite happy to do, often using the formula 'Pastor, Christian Brethren', two expressions which in other circumstances would be anathema to them. Where the marriage should take place was also a problem, but a registry office, the solution adopted by the Exclusive Brethren, proved unacceptable.¹⁴⁷ In 1923 Andrew Borland, in a book on courtship, approved of the Scottish custom of marriage in a house but recommended the 'Church Marriage' because of its more serious atmosphere.¹⁴⁸ Although the tradition of home marriages apparently lingered longest in strict assemblies,¹⁴⁹ in the course of the twentieth century assembly halls eventually came to be used by all for weddings. The legal requirements of title deeds for halls was willingly undertaken, for, given the struggle many assemblies had to obtain property, they were

143. Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, IRS 21/1811; I am indebted to Dr Elizabeth C Sanderson for this reference: see also above p.1.

144. 'James Murray', *W*, 49 (1919), pp.196; 'Marriages in Scotland', *W*, 57 (1927), p.114; 'Mrs Agnes Wright', *W*, 60 (1930), p.168.

145. C T Miller to the ed., 20 December 1868, *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.264.

146. 'Marriages in Scotland', p.114.

147. [A J Holiday], 'Where should we get married?', *BP*, 7 (1886), pp.135-7.

148. Borland, *Love's Most Excellent Way*, pp.83-7.

149. This is the pattern suggested by the weddings of the grandparents of the present writer and his wife.

aware of its value and having it properly secured. For such legal purposes the name 'Christian Brethren' was again adopted.¹⁵⁰ Advantage was taken of the law governing charities in several cases, most notably with the HFMF, which were regulated by trustees from 1908,¹⁵¹ and the Lord's Work Trust, founded by John Ritchie, which was incorporated in 1947, allowing it to hold and administer heritable property (in this instance, homes for missionaries on furlough).¹⁵² The administration of title deeds was aided by the establishment of the Scottish Stewards Trust, a company incorporated in 1922 and limited by guarantee, which was administered by prominent Brethren appointed as directors.¹⁵³ It was unique in being the only agency the Brethren developed to negotiate with the institutions of society. Many assemblies (though not all) also framed constitutions which included a statement of faith as part of the legal deeds. Sufficient pragmatism was maintained by the Open Brethren to compromise four of their most cherished principles—the avoidance of a denominational name, the use of a pastor, no credal statement, and the autonomy of each assembly—to safeguard their legal interests and to accommodate the government. Possibly this was partly due to the practical approach of the businessmen who administered these settlements. But for its part, the modern, secularising British state was only too ready to extend toleration which allowed assemblies not to feel threatened.

Despite their apolitical stance, there was a strong streak of conformity to the state within the Brethren. This can even be seen in the area which brought them into pronounced conflict with civil society, their attitudes to

150. For two examples, see the sources above to Table 9.5, p.370.

151. See above, p.180.

152. A B[orland], 'The Lord's Work Trust', *BM*, 87 (1977), p.347.

153. Edinburgh, Scottish Company House, SC12163; I am indebted to Mr Campbell Fullarton, Mackintosh & Wylie, Solicitors, Kilmarnock, for this reference. For the example of T J Smith's vice-chairmanship, see above, n.37.

war.¹⁵⁴ In the early stages of World War I, the impression given by both *The Witness* and *The Believer's Magazine* was that the introduction of conscription might mean service in the armed forces, even if only in a non-combatant role.¹⁵⁵ There was a nervousness about defying the government because the force of the biblical injunctions to submit to the secular power was so strongly felt. The 'submission to this authority ordained by God' was the climax of Robert Walker's argument in his pamphlet, *The Christian and Warfare* (1942), written in support of the believer bearing arms.¹⁵⁶ After World War I when it was debated if the two minutes' silence should be observed in assemblies, Henry Pickering argued for it because it was a command of the King and he should be obeyed. Not to submit might 'be begotten of that "lawlessness" of these last days.'¹⁵⁷ Even those who opposed war did so on the grounds of what Neil Summerton has termed 'vocational pacifism', maintaining that Christians should not participate in fighting while accepting that the state may legitimately engage in war.¹⁵⁸ This was the position held by John Ritchie.¹⁵⁹ In a pastiche of Faithful's trial at the town of Vanity, Hunter Beattie had his pilgrim state before a tribunal:

I wish to say that I have no strictures to pass on his war, or on any war—nor on the nation for engaging in war. I fully acknowledge that the nation has authority accorded to it by God to repress evil and inflict punishment on the evildoers...¹⁶⁰

Even in resisting the wishes of the state, the Brethren were willing to

154. For discussion of conscientious objectors during the two world wars, see above pp.276-7, 296.

155. HyP[ickering], 'The European war', *W*, 44 (1914), p.149; [*idem*], 'Editor's note', *W*, 45 (1915), p.34; [John Ritchie], 'YBQB', *BM*, 24 (1914), p.118.

156. Robert Walker, *The Christian and Warfare: an examination of the pacifist position* (Chryston, 1942), p.45.

157. *W*, 59 (1929), p.41.

158. Neil Summerton, 'The just war: a sympathetic critique', in O R Barclay (ed.), *Pacifism and War* (Leicester, 1984), pp.196-9.

159. The editor, 'The Christian and the state', *BM*, 24 (1914), pp.125-6, 139.

160. Hunter Beattie, *Christian and War being "The Word of the Cross"* (Glasgow, n.d.), p.49.

allow it considerable powers over the rest of the population. They were firmly in favour of strong civil government.

Expressions of social radicalism were rare in the Brethren. For even John Bowes, socialism, because of the link he made between it and infidelity, was seen as an enemy.¹⁶¹ John Ritchie felt that those who advocated Christian socialism, such as Keir Hardie, were being disingenuous.¹⁶² It was fatally allied to atheism and deluded people with a false heaven-upon-earth achieved through revolution.¹⁶³ In 1921 Walter Scott, the publisher and prophetic writer, felt that the Labour Party was incapable of government which 'requires special training for which many of the labour working classes are unfitted'.¹⁶⁴ The Brethren were not even enamoured of democracy. It has been noted in previous chapters that Brethrenism represented a democratised form of Christianity.¹⁶⁵ It had begun in the 1820s among the the upper classes but was the expression of a profoundly democratic spiritual ideal. This equality of the spirit had allowed it to become downwardly socially mobile, and it had appealed to those seeking for a democratised church order.¹⁶⁶ In common with Victorian popular Protestant Evangelicalism it fitted the mass democracy of the emerging modern world.¹⁶⁷ But egalitarianism, like socialism, was flawed in the eyes of the Brethren because of its association with radical political

161. John Bowes, 'Discussion on Socialism between the editor and John Esdaile', CW, 1 (1843-4), pp.49-57; Bowes also wrote a pamphlet against Socialism: the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, holds a copy (the only one the present writer has been able to trace), but it cannot be located.

162. John Ritchie, *Socialism: an enemy of God and the gospel* (Kilmarnock, n.d.), p.2.

163. *Ibid.*, *passim*.

164. Walter Scott, 'Things as they are to-day', W, 51 (1921), p.75.

165. See above, pp.34-49, 115-18.

166. Neil Dickson, "'The Church itself is God's clergy": the principles and practices of the Brethren', in Deryck Lovegrove (ed.), *The Emancipation of the Laity? Evangelicalism and the priesthood of all believers* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

167. For this view of popular Victorian Evangelicalism, see John Coffey, 'Democracy and popular religion: Moody and Sankey's mission to Britain, 1873-1875', in Eugenio F Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Democracy: Liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.93-119.

movements which were antipathetic to Christianity. Brethren eschatology told its adherents to fear the emerging world order which would be that of antichrist,¹⁶⁸ and the rise of popular democracy they perceived as being manipulated by sinister forces. It was viewed as being the lowest form of government (an allusion to the clay feet of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream),¹⁶⁹ expressing man's self-will.¹⁷⁰ Alexander Stewart was emphatic that liberty of ministry in the assembly was 'not a radicalism in which every man does his own will, but an absolute monarchy where God rules as He will.'¹⁷¹ In this sense the Brethren were not a democratic sect. Church government was successional, residing in the elders who were a self-appointing oligarchy.¹⁷² Pickering lumped democracy with communism and anarchy.¹⁷³ The social upheavals of the 1920s, he felt, presaged its collapse.¹⁷⁴ In 1931 he printed in *The Witness* an extract from a paper by J N Darby lamenting the effects of the 1832 Reform Bill which, in Darby's opinion, exalted "'the will of the people'" (Pickering's italics) and made 'the poor masters'. 'The general public effect', Darby wrote, 'will be a great and rapid increase of centralisation or despotic power, and loss of personal liberty.'¹⁷⁵ That Pickering, a self-made man from Newcastle, could identify with the sentiments of Darby, the younger son of an

168. For eschatological views, see above, pp.322-30.

169. Dan. 2: 33, 40-1.

170. J R C[aldwell], "Things to come", *NI*, 3 (1873), p.50; G A[dam] to the editor, *W*, 29 (1899), pp.64-5; John Ritchie, *Lectures on the Book of Daniel with Expository Notes on "The Times of the Gentiles" and Prophetic Subjects* (Kilmarnock, 1915), pp.35-6; Steen, 'The antichrist', pp.332-3.

171. Alexander Stewart, *Salvation Truths* (Kilmarnock, n.d.), p.198; cf. J A B[oswell], 'Holiness in the House', *NT*, 1, (1888), p.35; G A[dam], 'Thoughts on church government', *W*, 21 (1891), p.20; John Ritchie, "*The Way which They Call Heresy*": remarks on a book by W. Blair Neatby entitled 'A History of the Plymouth Brethren' (Kilmarnock [c.1901]), p.15.

172. See above, pp.298.

173. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 51 (1925), p.194.

174. *Idem*, 'WW', *W*, 50 (1924), p.304.

175. J N Darby, 'The progress of democratic power', *W*, 61 (1931), pp.125-6; printed in Darby's works as: [*idem*], 'Progress of democratic power and its effect on the moral state of England', William Kelly (ed.), *Collected Writings of J.N.Darby*, 32 (London, n.d.), pp.506-511.

aristocrat who regretted power being transferred from the land to the boroughs, demonstrates how a movement which had been allied to some of the emerging social forces of the modern world began to appear profoundly conservative once these forces took political shape in the twentieth century. The fear of social upheaval ran deep in the movement. The rising tide of the popular will was regarded by Brethren of all social classes with dismay.

The fear of social upheaval meant that by the twentieth century Brethren writers supported a conservative political programme. The late Victorian marriage of morality and politics was long regarded as the ideal. Gladstone was the one politician quoted with approval on religious matters¹⁷⁶ and, in common with other Christians, Queen Victoria was perceived as being the ideal monarch,¹⁷⁷ she and Albert being the only non-Brethren individuals to have halls named after them.¹⁷⁸ For J R Caldwell speaking in 1892, his listeners were 'subjects under the best government that ever existed in the world—the government under which is found most liberty and most repression of evil'.¹⁷⁹ Sometimes the policies supported were those of Gladstonian Liberalism. Liberty of the individual, free trade and private enterprise were admired. An additional reason for disapproving of trade unions was that such combinations opposed the first two,¹⁸⁰ and in 1947 large business corporations were criticised for hindering the last.¹⁸¹ More markedly Tory in his opinions was Walter Scott. His eschatological

176. Alexander Marshall, "'A full salvation'", *W* 41 (1911), pp.127-8; 'Gladstone and the Bible', *BM*, 57 (1947), p.338.

177. John Wolffe, 'The End of Victorian values? Women, religion and the death of Queen Victoria', *W J Sheils and Diana Wood (eds), SCH*, 27 (Oxford, 1990), pp.481-504.

178. One later exception is Arnot Gospel Hall, which the assembly in Kennoway, Fife, removed to in 1977: it was a former church named after a ministerial uncle of Frederick Stanley Arnot, and the name was kept in honour of the latter.

179. Caldwell, 'Subjects and rulers', *W*, 22 (1892), p.166; cf. Scott, 'Things as they are', p.75; Andrew Borland, 'The Christian and the permissive society', *BM*, 82 (1972), p.225.

180. J R Caldwell, 'Parents and children', *W*, 22 (1892), p.115.

181. W F Naismith, 'The degeneration and regeneration', *BM*, 57 (1947), pp.39-41.

interpretation found the divine enemies to be those of Britain. Writing in 1919 he opined that Gog (Russia) would come to dominate Gomer (Germany) and they would clash with the western nations in Palestine, liberated by a friendly maritime power (Great Britain probably).¹⁸² His vision of the millennium, when Christ 'in irresistible might will roll back the rushing tide of a lawless, godless democracy and rule with a rod of iron', was totalitarian.¹⁸³ The monarchy provided an opportunity for more overt expressions of loyalty to the British state. When Pickering reproved younger members of the royal family for lack of Sabbath observance, he prefaced his reproach with the boast that 'Brethren (so-called) are among the most loyal of Christians; and the *Witness* has ever stood for loyalty to King and Country'.¹⁸⁴ Brethren magazines vied with one another to expression devotion to the monarch. The search for evidence that they were 'saved' was taken to comical lengths.¹⁸⁵ This conservative acceptance of the British state shifted as the working class was included in government. In 1924 Henry Pickering cautiously admitted that Labour might alleviate social hardship and on Ramsay MacDonald's death speculated that he might have been 'born again'.¹⁸⁶ These Scottish Brethren supported the central institutions of Britain.

The writers cited above, however, belonged to the middle or lower-middle classes. Most of them also belonged to the less sectarian wing of the

182. Walter Scott, *Prophetic Scenes and Coming Glories: answers to numerous prophetic questions* (London, 1919), pp.49, 57-9.

183. *Ibid.*, p.10.

184. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 54 (1929), p.211.

185. *BM*, 11 (February 1901), endpp.; HyP[ickering], 'Britain's King and the Bible', *HS*, No. 345 (September 1907); *idem.*, 'Britain's new King and Queen', *HS*, No. 33 (June 1911); *OLOT*, No 282 (June 1911), cover; *ibid.*, No 557 (May 1935), cover; *ibid.*, No. 581 (May 1937) cover; *W*, 55 (1935), p.41; *BM*, 47 (February 1936), endpp. Attempts to prove the monarch was 'saved' reached their zenith in those who asserted that Queen Mary of Teck had been converted through a Brethren tract: *W*, 59 (1929), pp.241, 235, *W*, 60 (1930), p.17.

186. HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 54 (1924), p.264; *idem, ibid.*, *W*, 67 (1937), p.281.

movement which was more ready to identify with nationhood. For the attitudes of Brethren in lower social classes there is difficulty with the evidence as they are not readily accessible to the historian. The conservative impulse was probably found among them too. If the emphases of preachers such as John Douglas and Isaac Ewan on rule, order and discipline are transposed into a political key then a very reactionary programme emerges.¹⁸⁷ The Unionist Party had considerable Protestant working-class support in Scotland, and it is to be expected that endorsement of its sentiments should be found among the Brethren.¹⁸⁸ The anti-catholicism of the movement alone gave it a bias towards Unionism.¹⁸⁹ Missionary George Patterson, who grew up in Laurieston, Stirlingshire, claimed that in the 1930s many Brethren sympathised with and even voted for the Conservatives, although he felt this was especially true of those belonging to the middle classes.¹⁹⁰

But more radical loyalties probably also existed, particularly with the more open emergence of class division between the middle and working classes in the twentieth century. Ritchie was aware that Christian socialism might tempt those who 'recognise the common brotherhood of the children of God and the equality grace has given to all'.¹⁹¹ John Bowes, from a poor agrarian background, sympathised with reform.¹⁹² In Kilbirnie Jamie

187. See above, pp.291-2.

188. J T Ward, 'Some aspects of working-class Conservatism in the nineteenth century', in John Butt and J T Ward (eds), *Scottish Themes* (Edinburgh, 1976), pp.141-57; Graham Walker and Tom Gallagher, 'Protestantism and Scottish politics', *idem* (eds), *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant popular culture in modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 91-2

189. For the roots of nineteenth-century Protestant anti-catholicism in the Evangelicalism, which was predominantly Tory in sympathy, out of which the Irish and English Brethren emerged, see John Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain 1829-1860* (Oxford, 1991).

190. George N Patterson, *Patterson of Tibet: death throes of a nation* (San Diego, CA, 1998), p.33.

191. [John Ritchie], 'Religious radicalism', *BM* 18 (1908), p.141.

192. See above, pp.44-7.

Clifford, the future missionary to Argentina, was a pit-pony boy by the age of twelve and during industrial troubles in the 1890s he was recruited by the Independent Labour Party as a potential MP because of his oratorical skills. Working people, he later said, were "*tratados como animales* [treated like animals]", and he remained a life-long sympathiser with socialism.¹⁹³ 'No wonder that socialists and communists sprang up to defend their cause', one Brethren mining convert noted of working men.¹⁹⁴ Other radical opinions could be expressed. The voice of one nonagenarian woman from Lochore, Fife, shook with emotion recalling how the government 'took a' the miners' sons' during World War I.¹⁹⁵ Even John Ritchie refused to apportion blame during the 1921 miners' strike.¹⁹⁶ More forthright opinions, it might be imagined, were held by Brethren in mining communities. In the 1920s George Patterson's father (also George Patterson), a fiery socialist before his conversion, refused promotion as a mine inspector, believing it would associate him with the exploitation of his fellow-workers. He declared cryptically, "A mine manager may be a Christian, but a Christian cannot be a mine manager."¹⁹⁷ Tom Todd, the Selkirkshire shepherd and poet, was dismissive of the landed classes, having 'a decided "scunner" against anything, even a tattie-bogle, in knickerbockers'.¹⁹⁸ Perhaps his finest poem was a macabre *memento mori* which depicts the grave as a social leveller:

Gin death descends on man's pursuits

193. A C T[homson], *Un Hombre Bueno: vida de Jamie Clifford* (n.p., Argentina, 1957), pp.15-17, 24-5; in Spanish the expression is apparently a strong one.

194. Writer's collection, II, [Robert Morrison], 'A few notes on old Kilwinning Town and the biography of Robert Morrison, Crosshouse', typescript, c.1939; for Morrison's conversion, see above, p.167.

195. Oral information, 19 November 1988.

196. [John Ritchie], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM* 31 (1921), pp.88-9.

197. Patterson, *Patterson of Tibet*, pp.7-9, 39.

198. T T Kilbucho [i.e. Tom Todd], *Sixty Rural Years* (Galashiels [c.1967]), pp.15-16.

What's for the gangril's for the laird.¹⁹⁹

But despite these attitudes, working-class Brethren generally persisted in a non-political stance. Although George Patterson senior remained a shop steward after conversion, Jamie Clifford was more typical in coming to believe that he should not engage in politics.²⁰⁰ Most usually those involved in it left the Brethren. Despite upbringings within the movement three prominent left-wing activists did not become members: Thomas Dickson, Labour M.P. for Lanark (1923-4; 1929-31),²⁰¹ and the brothers Abe and Alex Moffat, Communist Party members and Scottish area presidents of the National Union of Mineworkers (1942-61 and 1961-7 respectively), did not join the movement.²⁰² Brethren refused to be deflected from the pursuit of religious objectives.

In spite of the different political and social stances, the movement did not pull apart, and nor, ultimately, did Scottish society. Both remained moderate. This can be seen in the contrasting careers of Sir John Henderson and James Barbour. Henderson was the chairman of his own produce importer business.²⁰³ From 1926 until 1946, before he became a Conservative member of Parliament, Henderson was involved in the administration of Glasgow's civic amenities—streets, libraries, public assistance and, most notably, the prestigious committee responsible for the

199. 'Death and the Gangril [i.e. tramp]', in *idem*, *A Shepherd's Years* (Glasgow, 1961), p.11; this poem was singled out for its merit by critic and poet Douglas Young in his introduction to the book.

200. Patterson, *Patterson of Tibet*, p.9; T[homson], *Clifford*, p.25.

201. William Knox (ed.), *Scottish Labour Leaders 1915-39: a biographical dictionary* (Edinburgh, 1984), pp.87-9; Dickson, a native of Cleland, Lanarkshire, is described by Knox as being brought up in 'the close Plymouth Brethren'; this description may indicate he was raised among the Exclusives or Churches of God rather than the Open Brethren.

202. For Abe Moffat see: Abe Moffat, *My Life with the Miners* (London, 1965); for Alex Moffat see: 'Death of miners' leader', *The Dunfermline Press*, 9 September 1967; the Moffats' parents were in Cowdenbeath assembly, Fife (oral information, 13 September 1997).

203. *Who Was Who 1971-1980*, 7, 2nd edn (London, 1989), pp.356-7.

city's water supply of which he was convener.²⁰⁴ Never a very vocal backbencher, nevertheless he was eloquent in advocating improved housing conditions for slum dwellers in the post-war House of Commons.²⁰⁵ Knighted on retiring as an MP in 1964, he was a one nation Tory. On the other hand, James Barbour, the President of the National Union of Scottish Mineworkers, was a socialist—on one occasion almost standing for Parliament as a Labour candidate but instead making way for a friend²⁰⁶—and he was in favour of a command economy. He began as a pit boy in 1902 earning three shillings a day and continued his education through nightschool. As the miners' agent for Stirlingshire in the inter-war period, Barbour promoted negotiation. He was a disciple of Bob Smillie, Keir Hardie's ally, and aligned himself with the anti-communist stance of miners' leader Andrew Clarke.²⁰⁷ During World War II Barbour advocated that trade unionists should unite in the anti-Nazi cause. He was a member of the joint consultative committee, its mining members nominated for their skill and experience in negotiating with the owners, that formulated amendments to the 1942 white paper which outlined proposals for the government taking control of the mines,²⁰⁸ and he also served from 1942 as Director of Labour for the Scottish region for the Ministry of Fuel and Power, being awarded the OBE by Churchill's government for his work. In 1947, when the coal mining industry was nationalised, he was appointed the first Labour Director of the Scottish Divisional Coal Board, and much of the welfare provision which took place until his retiral in 1956, such as pithead baths and medical centres,

204. Candidus, 'No.XII—John Henderson', *Glasgow Evening News*, 24 April 1933.

205. *Hansard*, 5th Series, vol. 432 (1947), pp.842-3.

206. Oral information, April 1997.

207. For Clarke, see Knox (ed.), *Scottish Labour Leaders*, pp.77-8.

208. R Page Arnot, *The Miners in Crisis and War: a history of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain* (New York, 1961), p.340.

was due to his efforts.²⁰⁹ Like the Methodist union leaders of Durham, the tendency of his leadership was to negotiate with, rather than conflict with, authority.²¹⁰ Both Henderson and Barbour, from their respective political positions, were drawn to a moderating stance.²¹¹

That both men could exist within the Brethren movement despite its decided apolitical stance, is a mark of how it allowed for diversity. It could incorporate different tendencies. Some participated in their local cultures and were seen as being representative of it.²¹² Journalist John Borland became identified with his tightly-knit local community, the three industrial towns of the upper Irvine Valley in Ayrshire. Under the pseudonym 'Sifter' he conducted in the local newspaper a weekly column which was a *pot pourri* of humorous anecdotes, pawky sayings, eccentric incidents, notes on local landmarks, superstitions and emigrants, and much else that captured the contemporary Scottish small-town spirit. He also contributed articles on local history under the pen-name of 'John Loudoun' and when he died his editor claimed: 'No more kenspeckle figure ever trod the streets of the three sister towns... And few were more thoroughly steeped in their traditions and lore'.²¹³ The tone of Borland's output was similar to that of David Beattie who found the literary Kailyard congenial in his writings on Langholm.²¹⁴ In contemporary popular fashion, Beattie also made eclectic use of Scottish history, delivering a lecture which was an act of piety to the Covenanters (1915) and producing

209. Edinburgh, Mrs Sarah Campbell, Cuttings scrapbook; this consists mainly of articles from *The Stirling Observer*, 1939-1956.

210. Moore, *Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics*, pp.161-195.

211. For the theme of moderation and cooperation in British society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*, pp.50-82; Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom*, pp.309-77; Ross McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: social relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (Oxford, 1990), pp.1-42.

212. See above, pp.309-10.

213. 'He carried his copy in his head', *KS*, 23 April 1971, p.3.

214. D J Beattie, *Oor Gate En'* (Galashiels, 1915); *idem*, *Oor Ain Folk* (Carlisle, 1933); *idem*, *Langsyne in Eskdale* (Carlisle, 1950).

a work of sentimental Jacobitism, *Prince Charlie and the Borderland* (1928).²¹⁵ He was untroubled by appropriating early-twentieth century Scottish popular culture. A more significant example was Robert Rendall, still commemorated in Orkney for being the quintessential Orcadian.²¹⁶ 'Half a dozen lyrics from *Orkney Variants*', wrote George Mackay Brown of Rendall's finest poetry book, hold most of the essence of Orkney.'²¹⁷ Rendall also made some attempts to integrate his cultural and natural history interests with his faith despite the absence of a Brethren theology of culture and creation. Towards the end of his life he developed a form of Christian Platonism. The natural world could speak of realities which lay beyond it, and its mathematical order reflected that which existed in 'a Creative Intelligence', a proof of God's existence.²¹⁸ The invisible world would suddenly shine out, and 'man made in the image of God,' he noted in a reverie, 'has the power to view Nature in an eternal and non-temporal way... apprehending in some way how the world must have looked in Eden.' The poet as 'the priest of nature' was especially susceptible to this vision.²¹⁹ However, because of the conceptual background he inherited in Protestant Fundamentalism, Rendall was not wholly successful in integrating his thinking on culture, science and faith.²²⁰ The individuals who engaged in their local culture, were to be found in districts with a strong sense of community. Society was more homogeneous in these areas and Brethren individuals, despite their loyalty to the sect, were able to absorb their local culture. However Scottish society as whole within the Union was moderate, eventually able to

215. *Idem*, *Psalm Singing among the Scottish Covenanters* (Carlisle, 1915); *idem*, *Prince Charlie and the Borderland* (Carlisle, 1928).

216. R J Berry and H N Firth (eds), *The People of Orkney* (Kirkwall, 1986), p.2.

217. George Mackay Brown, *An Orkney Tapestry* (London, 1969), p.3.

218. Robert Rendall, *Orkney Shore* (Kirkwall, 1960), pp.121-9.

219. Kirkwall, OA, D27/2/8(3), [Robert Rendall], 'Dwarme'.

220. Neil Dickson, 'Littoral truth: the mind of Robert Rendall', unpublished paper delivered at the Orkney Science Festival, 1998.

accommodate different interests and be tolerant of divergence. As Barbour and Henderson (both living within the industrial Lowlands) demonstrate, they too did not feel threatened and could collaborate with the state.

CONTINUITY, GROWTH AND THE SECT

Scottish Brethren displayed both continuity and discontinuity with culture and society. They largely belonged to the lower-middle and working classes and the movement reflected aspects of the culture of these strata. Brethren social life, such as tea-meetings and Sunday school soirées, was that of their fellows.²²¹ The movement reinforced the aspirations of these classes after improvement, respectability and a more regulated life. Cultural continuity can be seen at a regional level. The fierceness of loyalties among Lanarkshire Brethren and the closeness of their assembly life, particularly until the mid-twentieth century, continued features of the mining community. During the strikes of 1921 and 1926 it would appear that most Brethren miners withheld their labour and organised Bible study or engaged in evangelism to avoid embittering relations within their communities.²²² Along with the strikers, they too needed financial assistance.²²³ One of the reasons for the pervasiveness of the movement was its success in participating in the life of the society which it penetrated.²²⁴ The worst persecution tended to happen when the Brethren were new to a district and before they were accepted into it. Some, such as John Borland and Robert Rendall, were able to achieve a thorough immersion in their local culture and came to be regarded as representative of it. There were those who participated in civic administration: local government officials, policemen and even the occasional justice of the

221. Gray, *Labour Aristocracy*, pp.100-1.

222. Oral information 10 August 1997; cf. Moore, *Pit Men, Preachers and Politics*, pp.202-13.

223. *W*, 56 (1926), p.419; *W*, 59 (1929), p.21.

224. Dickson, 'Sect and region', forthcoming.

peace. However, the movement preferred revivalist activity over social improvement. There were those, such as John Wardrop and W J Grant, who advocated a more active support for the temperance movement.²²⁵ But more narrowly religious pursuits were always exalted over even moral ones. However, as with class, identity with society was just one of the rivalling allegiances and final loyalty lay with the community of believers.²²⁶ This often led to a more forceful rejection by the Brethren of certain aspects of their neighbours' way of life. Unlike village Methodism in England, the Brethren movement never became communal, an integral element of a wider self-contained social structure, but remained associational as a voluntary society.²²⁷ Although it had a strong appeal for those in dangerous occupations, ultimately the large demands the movement made on its members severely limited the attraction of assemblies within Scottish society.

If national growth was finally limited, the Brethren did permit individual development. Although the point is not amenable to proof, psychologically the movement probably helped alleviate some degree of anomie, but more importantly it provided a framework of meaning for those questing after it. Brethrenism promoted a disciplined life which valued honesty, literacy and financial prudence. These were the aspirations shared with others in society. The civic values of Brethren of all classes tended to be those Victorian Evangelicalism. It often led to the recognition of Brethren as 'good people'.²²⁸ As was the case in other sects, the movement aided 'self-help and social integration'.²²⁹ The limitations

225. 'Death of Mr John Wardrop', *HA*, 3 September 1892, p.6; W J Grant, 'The Christian in relation to strong drink', *W*, 50 (1920), p.323.

226. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, p.30.

227. Moore, *Pit Men, Preachers and Politics*, pp.121-132.

228. For an example, see above, p.252.

229. Wilson, *Religious Sects*, p.242.

on recreation undoubtedly could prove irksome, particularly to the young,²³⁰ but even here they were not applied uniformly. The less strict individuals allowed some leeway. This was true on other issues. The permissibility of voting was allowed to be a matter of conscience by some.²³¹ Before World War I, one financially hard-pressed Brethren woman in the mining hamlet of Fergushill, Ayrshire, joined the Co-operative when she discovered a fellow assembly member had accumulated £70 through her membership.²³² The prescriptions of the stricter individuals were not always followed.

Sectarianism was not uniform across the movement. The continued working-class status of Brethren undoubtedly maintained it,²³³ and it was stronger in periods of social unrest. On the other hand, as younger members of the movement were able to take advantage of increased educational opportunities some of the strictures on the novel, for example, were relaxed. Many women in the movement read Annie Swan, approved because her fiction promoted self-help and Christian fortitude.²³⁴ One Brethren schoolteacher argued that reading novels was permissible in the interests of education, a position echoed in 1954 by a Brethren young people's discussion.²³⁵ This point of view was evidence of

230. For an example of the son of Brethren parents at senior secondary school in the early 1950s, see William McIlvanney's semi-autobiographical novel, *The Kiln* (London, 1996), pp.180-1; in the novel the character's family is described as being 'Close Brethren', but in a speech McIlvanney gave at the centenary dinner of Kilmarnock Academy in November 1998, he identified the individual on whom the character was based: the son of members of one of Kilmarnock's Open Brethren assemblies.

231. L W G Alexander, 'QA', *W*, 75 (1945), p.15.

232. Oral information, 10 August, 1997; the woman in question was the wife of Robert Morrison, see above, n.194.

233. Cf. Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers: a study of Gastonia* (New Haven, CT, 1942), pp.117-120.

234. Beth Dickson, 'Annie S. Swan and O. Douglas: legacies of the Kailyard', in Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp.329-46.

235. A Bayne, 'QA', *W*, 56 (1926), p.333; David Haxton *et al* (eds), *Discipleship: a record and report of a week-end discussion at Netherhall, Largs* (Edinburgh, 1954), p.14.

a more denominational attitude.²³⁶ Withdrawal was also limited by the conversionist need to remain in contact with society. Alexander Stewart felt that football was not harmful and the prohibition on it cut assembly members off from their neighbours.²³⁷ Sectarianism also varied with social class. Many of the businessmen and professional people had a more pragmatic approach which made for moderation. The difficulty of determining political attitudes among working-class Brethren is partly due to the complete silence on the issue which was enforced among many of them. Possibly the divisions of the inter-war period and after were reinforced to some degree by increasing class division within the movement, a sign of the breakdown of the identity of interest among social groups which had marked the Brethren.²³⁸ But the hold the Brethren had over the minds of its members was never totalitarian. The voluntarism of the movement was one reason why the middle classes could not use it to further their own interests even if they had been disposed to do so,²³⁹ and Open Brethren independency was a further factor which resisted any single group winning absolute dominance. A more open, denominationalising tendency was always present which allowed some to participate in culture and society. The general social tendency of the movement was to cultivate cooperation between employer and employee and to promote a centrist loyalty to the British state. Scottish Brethren, like the society in which it existed, was ultimately able to accommodate a number of tendencies without fragmenting.

236. Valentine Cunningham, *Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian novel* (Oxford, 1975), p.52.

237. Alexander Stewart, 'Half-yearly meetings of Christians at Glasgow', *Eleventh Hour*, 11 (January 1887), p.11; *idem*, 'Strangers and pilgrims', *W*, 35 (1905), p.169.

238. Most of the evidence cited in the present chapter of such class tension as existed in the movement belongs to the inter-war period and after; cf. above, pp.301-2.

239. Cf. Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, p.87.

CHAPTER 10

SOME ORGANIC DISINTEGRATION:

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

1965-1999

I think I would have to say, rather sadly, that as I have seen it, there has been some organic disintegration within the local assembly.

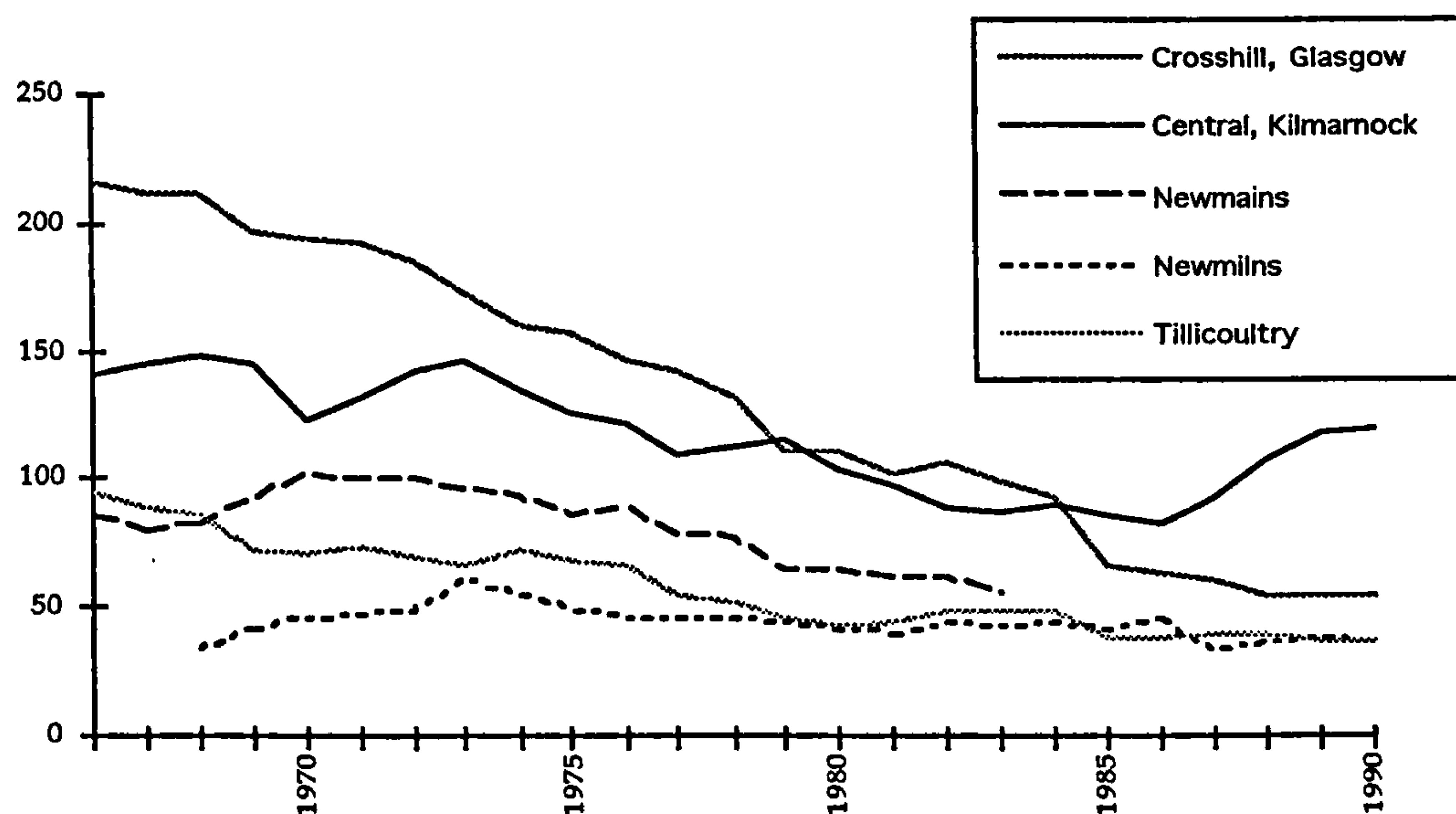
—W K Morrison speaking in 1990.

At secondary school Marjorie Sneddon won the Mysie Thomson Inglis prize for excellence in art three years running. But she was not allowed to attend art school because her parents were 'Plymouth Brethren'. Instead she went to Brussels as a bilingual secretary where she 'loved the lifestyle' and later died through choking on a truffle. Marjorie Sneddon is a comic creation in a monologue by the Lanarkshire writer Liz Lochhead, but as an invention she symbolises the transition among Brethren from the mid-twentieth century to the *fin de siècle*.¹ During this period members of the movement found it harder to isolate themselves from societal pressures which are not congenial to a separatist faith. In consequence, within Brethren assemblies a complex series of changes occurred which was to alter a number of them radically. In many places the patterns passed on from previous generations were modified, while others regarded the alterations within the Brethren world with increasing dismay.

The present chapter will examine the changes which have affected Brethren during the contemporary period. The decline in the numerical strength of the movement will be noted first. There were, however, signs

1. Liz Lochhead, 'Meeting Norma Nimmo', in *Bagpipe Muzak* (Harmondsworth, 1991), p.34; I am indebted to Mrs Ella Jack for this reference.

Figure 10.1. Membership of five assemblies 1966-90: Elim Hall/Crosshill Evangelical Church, Glasgow, 1966-90; Central Hall/Central Evangelical Church, Kilmarnock, 1966-90; Gospel Hall, Newmains, 1965-83; Gospel Hall, Newmilns, 1968-90; Gospel Hall, Tillicoultry, 1965-90.



Sources: Crosshill Evangelical Church, Glasgow; Central Evangelical Church, Kilmarnock; Gospel Hall, Newmains; Gospel Hall, Newmilns; and Gospel Hall Tillicoultry.

of continuing vitality, including new initiatives in evangelism and changes in attitude to society, and these will be examined next. This modernisation was in part the result of far-reaching social alterations in the composition of the movement which will subsequently be analysed. Many individuals could be found expressing discontent with features of assemblies and some of these dissatisfactions will be noted. Discussion will then turn to how the innovations of the period and the changing class profile of the movement increased the polarisation of the sectarian and denominationalising tendencies and left it more fragmented than it had ever been. The chapter will conclude by noting in what ways the Brethren movement in Scotland is facing a crisis which is as yet unresolved.

DECLINE AND GROWTH

Since about 1970 membership has fallen considerably. The number of assemblies rose slightly from 296 in 1970 to 299 in 1975, but since then it has fallen to 274 in 1984 and 226 in 1997.² The closure of meetings considerably lags behind the fall in numbers within them. The rapid decline in membership can be seen from the figures for five individual assemblies during this period (Figure 10.1). The overall trend in each case has been downwards. The decline in numbers was not just restricted to smaller village ones such as Newmains, Lanarkshire, but can also be seen in larger city congregations, such as Crosshill Evangelical Church (formerly Elim Hall), Glasgow. In 1966 it was the largest assembly among those represented in the figure, but its membership steadily fell leading to its discontinuation in 1991. Lower numbers also had serious consequences for the smaller ones as the reduction in size meant that there were fewer active members and it placed a greater burden on those individuals. In 1995 it was estimated that there were about 10 530 Open Brethren members throughout Scotland,³ the number of assemblies falling by one quarter since 1951 and the total membership by perhaps as much as a third since 1960.⁴

With this decline in numbers there has been an accompanying redistribution of where many Brethren members live. They are

2. Neil Summerton, 'Christian Brethren growth', in Peter Brierley *et al.*, *The Christian Brethren as the Nineties Began* (Carlisle, 1993), p.90; *The Assemblies Address Book: useful addresses and other information for Christians*, 4th edn (Bath, 1997), pp.156-92.

3. A calculation done by the present writer for Peter Brierley *et al.* (eds), *UK Christian Handbook 1994/5 Edition* (London, 1994), Table 9.4.2; cf. the calculation of 12 500 members which the present writer did for *Telling the Good News Together in Scotland: a Report to the B.C.C.* (London, 1989), p.8. These figures were arrived at by calculating an average size for assemblies in populous districts (100) and one for smaller assemblies, often in less populous districts (28). The averages were then used to calculate the number of assembly members in a region.

4. Neil Dickson, 'Brethren' in Scotland: the present situation', in Harold H Rowdon (ed.), *The Strengthening, Growth and Planting of Local Churches* (Carlisle, 1993), pp. 109-110

increasingly to be found in the suburban areas, such as those of Glasgow and Edinburgh, where employment and the social ambience attract the middle classes. Most of the large Brethren assemblies in Scotland can now be found in residential towns near Glasgow and Aberdeen, places such as Milngavie or Milltimber. The growing strength of assemblies in middle-class areas and the decline of those in working-class areas is not limited to the cities, but can also be seen in the larger towns. By the late 1980s one of the largest assemblies in Britain with some 300 members was Riverside Evangelical Church, Ayr, situated in the traditional county town which has a substantial middle-class population.⁵ It was in communities like this that the larger concentrations of Brethren were increasingly to be found. The numerical strength of congregations in areas with a large middle class was often at the expense of the smaller ones as younger people moved into the more prosperous districts of the larger towns. The building in Hamilton of a Wimpey housing estate in the 1960s virtually doubled the membership of one of the town's assemblies.⁶ A corollary of the growth in affluent areas has been the decline in industrialised areas. Inner-city Glasgow assemblies continued to fall in number from twenty-two assemblies in 1966 to thirteen by 1994. Industrial villages have suffered too. Due to the decline of the steel industry and the closure of mining in Newarthill, Lanarkshire, for example, employment prospects have been poor and there is little work for businessmen and professional people. In addition the village is not a residential area for the middle classes. The assembly has been seriously depleted, and the single largest factor in the decline has been the transfer-out of members, which has been particularly the case among the young. As a result membership had fallen from thirty-two in 1963 to thirteen by 1988, leading to the discontinuation of the

5. Anon., 'Leadership at Ayr', *H*, 68 (April 1989), pp.15-6.

6. Oral information, 25 November 1990.

assembly in the early 1990s.⁷ There always had been a disparity in size between assemblies in larger towns and those in surrounding villages, but the depletion of numbers within the movement has brought many assemblies in smaller communities close to discontinuation.

There are various reasons for these changes. All churches in Scotland have suffered a fall in membership over this period, and some have suffered more than others. A census of Scottish churches in 1994 reported that only fourteen per cent. of the adult Scottish population were in church on census Sunday, representing a fall of three per cent. since the previous survey ten years before.⁸ John Highet has pointed out that, although there are difficulties in the comparison, in 1959 he found twenty-six per cent. of Scottish adults attended church, and that the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church had suffered the sharpest decline over the intervening years.⁹ Secularisation affected the Brethren in common with other churches. Some causes of the changes, however, can be traced to internal factors within the movement. The innate conservatism of the Brethren was one such cause. Many meetings persisted with the evangelistic forms that had served them so well in the past, and sometimes in exactly the same manner. Fred Stallan, one of the editorial committee responsible for *The Believer's Magazine* from 1974 until 1999, described his amazement when an open-air service he attended one Sunday evening faced an unlit office building. It was a traditional stance, and at one time, it appeared, there had been houses there.¹⁰ The

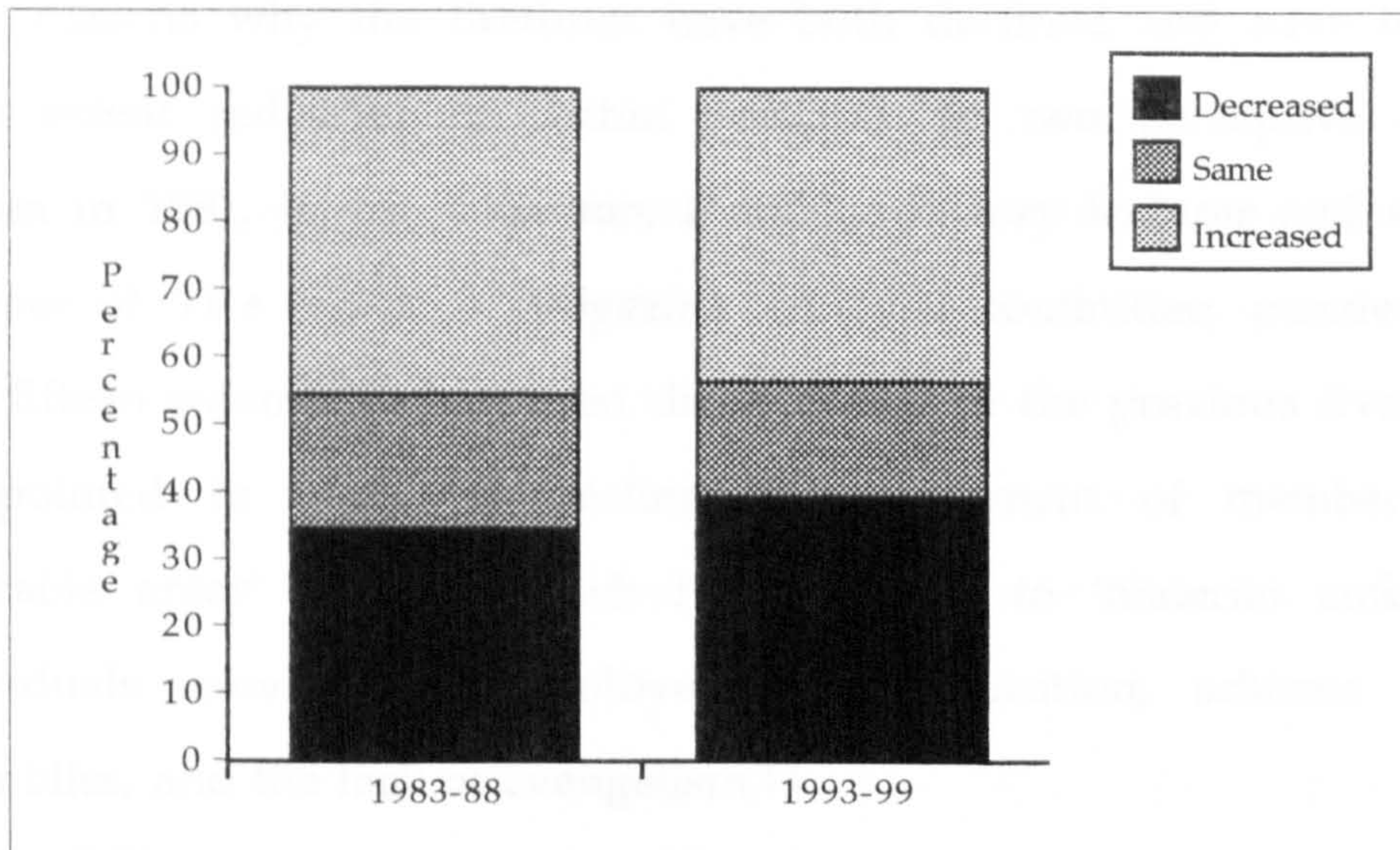
7. Oral information, 7 September 1988; cf. the statistics for Alloa assembly in Kenneth J Panton, 'The Church in the community: a study of patterns of religious adherence in a Scottish burgh', in Michael Hill (ed.), *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, 6 (1973), pp.183-206; Alloa was discontinued in 1980.

8. Peter Brierley and Fergus Macdonald, *Prospects for Scotland 2000: trends and tables from the 1994 Scottish Church Census* (Edinburgh and London, 1995), p.16; *idem*, *Prospects for Scotland: report of the 1984 census of the Scottish churches* (Edinburgh, 1984), p.60.

9. John Highet, 'Trends in attendance and membership', in *ibid.*, pp.8-10.

10. F E S[tallan], 'Editorial searchlight', *BM*, 99 (1989), p.1.

Figure 10.2. Assembly increase/decrease, 1983-98.



Source: Partnership survey of UK Brethren assemblies (1998).

Figure 10.3. Average assembly gains, 1996-8.

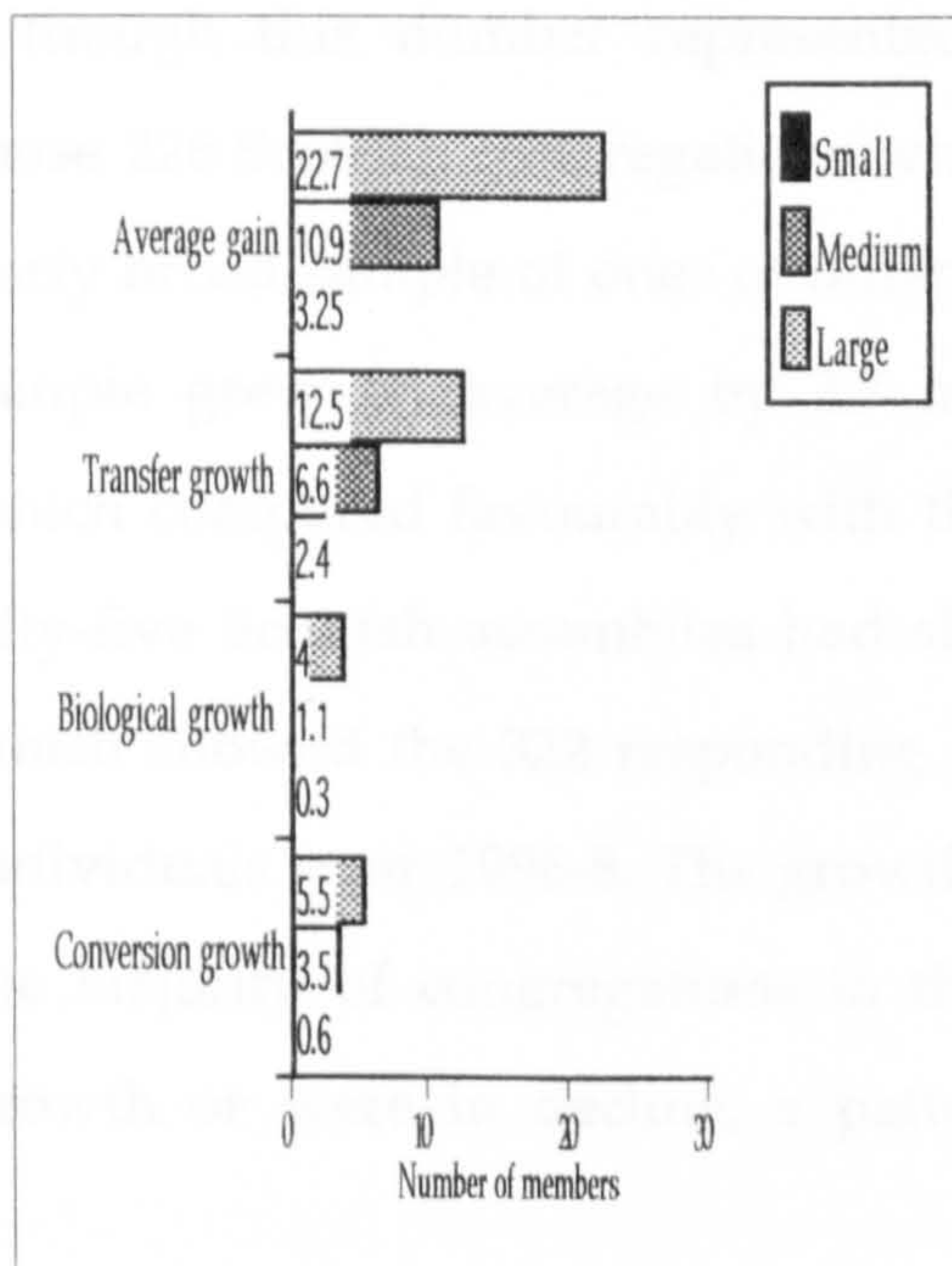
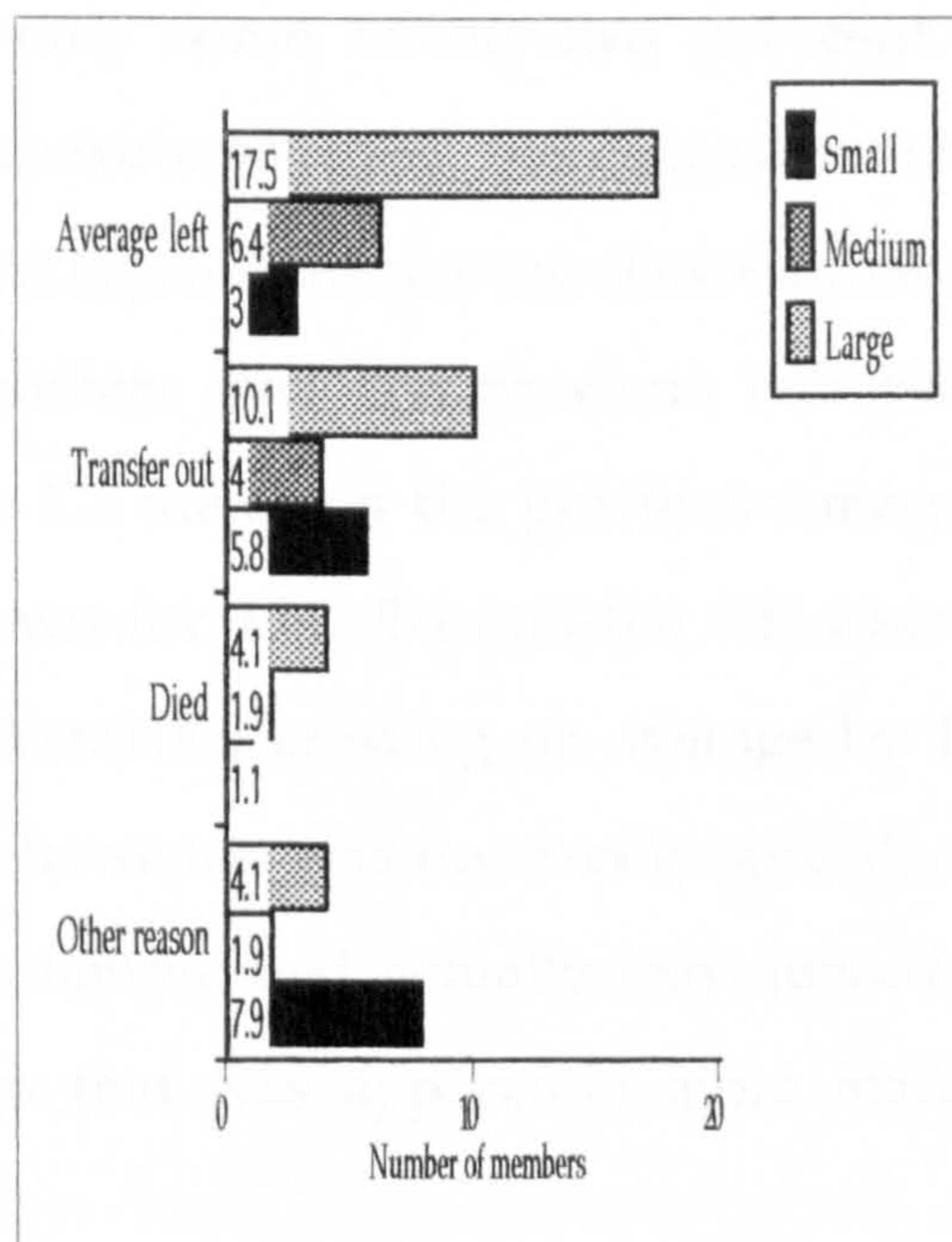


Figure 10.4. Average assembly losses, 1996-8.



Source: Partnership survey of UK Brethren assemblies (1998).

archaisms hindered contact with people.¹¹ There are, however, several other reasons why the Brethren have both declined and have been to some extent redistributed within Scotland. In two perceptive articles written in 1981, James Anderson, a college history lecturer and another member of *The Believer's Magazine* editorial committee, puzzled over why fifteen assemblies had been discontinued in the previous five years. He pointed to industrial decline, the movement of members into 'desirable areas' to live (which he attributed to 'material ambition'), individuals moving for employment or education, schisms within assemblies, and the lack of evangelism.¹²

It was not all decline, however, in this period. As Figure 10.1 shows, some assemblies, such as Central Evangelical Church, Kilmarnock, managed to increase. A survey of UK assemblies conducted in 1998 by the Brethren support agency Partnership drew responses from fifty-one Scottish ones. Although this number represented only some twenty-two per cent. of those 226 Scottish congregations which were solicited, the data contained a fairly broad sample of ones of different type.¹³ The survey showed that the sample grew on average by 2.7 members over the previous two years, which compared favourably with the 1.2 members the previous survey of fifty-five Scottish assemblies had shown for 1986-8¹⁴ and the UK average which showed the 322 responding assemblies growing on average by 1.76 individuals over 1996-8. The growth, however, was not evenly spread, and the majority of congregations in the sample had actually experienced no growth or were in decline, a pattern that was apparently more marked

11. John Allan, 'The local church and evangelism', *H*, 58 (1979), pp.16-17, 20.

12. J A[nderson], 'Why fewer assemblies?', *BM*, 91 (1981), pp.132-3, 196-8.

13. Separate figures for Scotland supplied to the writer by Graham Brown whose help is gratefully acknowledged.

14. Brierley *et al.*, *Christian Brethren*, p.14-15.

since the previous survey (Figure 10.3).¹⁵ Size was clearly a factor in growth as can be seen by dividing the data into large, medium and small congregations (Figures 10.3 and 10.4).¹⁶ Large assemblies increased on average by 5.2 individuals, medium by 4.5 and small by 0.25. However, in addition, only three of the thirteen large assemblies in the sample reported they were smaller than they had been five years before, while only six of the twenty-four small ones had experienced any growth. Although these last statistics show that larger assemblies were more likely to increase in size and smaller ones decrease, evidently size was not the sole determinant of growth or decline. The ten most rapidly growing churches, which had experienced an average growth of 16.9 individuals over two years, had an average size of 146 and the ten most rapidly decreasing ones, declining on average by 7.7 individuals over the same period, had an average size of ninety-eight, both above the average membership size of fifty-three members for the total sample. In small meetings, however, individuals were more likely to transfer out or to leave a meeting—on average 3.4 and 7.9 individuals respectively (Figure 10.4). If these trends continue, many smaller assemblies are likely to decline to such an extent that they will be discontinued.

It was clear from the survey that there are congregations which are growing, and in larger and medium-sized assemblies net growth was happening partly through conversions—a net increase of 1.4 and 1.6 individuals respectively if losses for reasons other than death or transfer out are set against conversions (Figures 10.3 and 10.4). But growth was also partly through the transfer of members from other churches with a net increase of 2.4 individuals in large churches and 1.6 in medium-sized ones

15. The two surveys are not directly comparable for although the majority of respondent assemblies are in both surveys, there are some differences in the two samples.

16. Defined as: large = 90+; medium = 40-39; small = -38.

(Figures 10.3 and 10.4). Most of these transfers came from other Brethren assemblies: in small meetings it accounted on average for two of all transfers and for 8.6 of all transfers in large ones (cf. Figure 10.3). Although much of this congregational growth was at the expense of other assemblies, non-Brethren individuals were joining the movement, and this increase was principally true of large churches. The survey suggests a considerably fluid situation within the Brethren movement in Scotland, with transfers among assemblies and both large ones suffering considerable membership losses while small ones enjoyed growth. Although the movement has declined overall after the mid-1960s, this has not characterised all individual congregations. It is to an analysis of the complex circumstances of this period to which we must turn.

CONTINUED VITALITY

As can be seen from the numerical analysis of the movement, the period since the mid-1960s was not entirely one of decline. In the later 1960s the Irish evangelist Headley Murphy held a number of large crusade-style missions,¹⁷ but the tendency over the period was to move away from revivalist-type services and to explore new and more informal methods of recruitment. Younger individuals within assemblies debated the manner in which their meetings might be reformed.¹⁸ Some assemblies adapted in response to the changing conditions around them, and a series of new institutions and fresh initiatives showed that the period was paradoxically also one of continued vitality for Scottish Brethren. Even the causes of decline could become a source of renewal as individuals responded to the challenges they posed.

17. *W*, 95 (1965), p.435; *W*, 96 (1966), p.196; *W*, 97 (1967), p.36; *W*, 98 (1968), p.275; *W*, 100 (1970), p.355; *W*, 103 (1973), p.195; *W*, 104 (1974), p.115; *W*, 105 (1978), p.35.

18. George Moffat, *Yet Will I Rejoice* (London, 1982), pp.45-6.

Meetings aimed at teenagers became more common in the 1960s. The approach was sometimes timid—as late as 1970-1 among the programme titles at the Ayrshire youth rallies were ‘Is Chastity Outmoded?’ and ‘Is Authority Necessary?’ (subtitled ‘The Christian and Rule in His [sic] Church’).¹⁹ The Brethren world isolated individuals to some extent from the societal pressure of separate activities for adults and youth. At a rally in Kilmarnock in 1968 it was reported that there had been 250 people present ‘of which a good proportion was young people’.²⁰ But new forms did establish themselves and youth events increasingly dealt with young people on their own terms. By 1976 Tom Morton, later to become a full-time Christian rock evangelist, was pleading in *The Witness* for Christians to be involved in performing secular rock music.²¹ One of the two individuals behind the Dundee Street Level Festivals that were begun in 1979 and which were to have a significant influence on the development of Christian rock throughout Scotland, was Brethren musician Ricky Ross.²² The rising power of youth sub-culture and the impossibility of isolating Brethren young people from it did not seem to leave any other option open for many but to run separate youth activities with their own forms. And the more radical the form, the less adults were attracted. Increasingly in many assemblies youth work came to appeal to young people in their own terms.

One organisation which attempted to use the number of young people within Brethren assemblies in the 1960s was the Scottish Counties

19. Writer’s collection, II, Ayrshire Christian Youth Rallies committee minutes, 1964-1987, 29 September 1969.

20. *Ibid.*, 20 January 1969.

21. Tom Morton, ‘Should the Devil have all the best music?’, *W*, 106 (1976), pp.21-3 cf. J Allan, ‘Youthtrack’, *H*, 67(October 1988), pp.12-13, *ibid.*, (November), pp.12-13, 26; the first half of Tom Morton’s novel, *Red Guitars in Heaven* (Edinburgh, 1994), is the fullest account of these developments.

22. *DSCHT*, p.615.

Evangelistic Movement (SCEM). Founded in 1965, it took teams of young people to the rural areas of Scotland on summer missions to support small assemblies and to plant new ones.²³ SCEM successfully harnessed the energy of young people and enabled them to be more closely involved in the life of their home church after the summer missions.²⁴ It was an attempt to pass the Brethren enthusiasm for evangelism on to a new generation. The evangelists who supervised the teams also provided training for the team members, and some of them, such as John Robb and John Clunas, were very much in the mould of the extravert evangelist. They appealed to young people's sense of adventure. Teams of young people arriving in an area also created an impression. One SCEM convert, talking about his perception of Brethren, derived from seeing them at open-air services in the late sixties, felt that 'I couldn't relate to them in any way. The women looked like something out of the 1930s, 40s.'²⁵ It was his contact with teenagers of a summer SCEM team which changed his perceptions. From the beginning SCEM also employed new techniques in evangelism, such as the youth coffee bars which were then the fashion among Evangelicals, and as such it became a source of much needed new thinking. George Russell, one of SCEM's founders, thought it was 'quite revolutionary at the time', for it employed contemporary music and to many teenagers coming from traditional assemblies this was heady material.²⁶ The movement successfully pioneered inter-assembly evangelistic cooperation on a national scale, and it continued to introduce new techniques in evangelism—largely moving away in the 1980s, for example, from campaign evangelism to more informal techniques.

23. George Russell, 'How it all began', *SCEM Gen*, (1990), p.2.

24. 'What after SCEM?', *ibid.*, p.3.

25. Quoted in writer's collection, II, [Neil Dickson], 'Twenty-Five Years of Change', typescript narration for Scottish Counties Evangelistic Movement audio-visual, 1990.

26. Russell, 'How it all began', p.2.

Eventually several of the younger men who had initiated some of the more adventurous youth work of the fifties, and teenagers who had grown up in it, came to positions of responsibility within assemblies. The approach in youth work might have often been uneven and tentative, but the informality of atmosphere of these activities began to make itself felt in the adult services of some assemblies. In the 1980s a number of them adopted hymn books, especially *Mission Praise* (1983), with music and lyrics which used contemporary forms.²⁷ Praise bands incorporating guitars and drums began to appear in the later part of the decade. Other changes were made which showed that some Scottish assemblies felt the need to adapt to altered conditions. One of the most basic innovations that a number of congregations introduced was the morning family service which had been recommended in the fifties and sixties.²⁸ In 1978 a morning family service was introduced at Victoria Hall, Ayr, probably making it the second assembly in Scotland to have one continuously.²⁹ A number of interested visitors came to witness the one in Ayr, and by 1988 the Partnership survey showed that twenty-six of the fifty-five Scottish Brethren respondent assemblies had one.³⁰ The new type of service aimed to attract families, and children were usually made an important focus in it.³¹ The effect was to make it more lively and less sombre than the evening gospel meeting. In 1990 when the artist and writer Mairi Hedderwick visited the morning service at St John's Evangelical Church, Linlithgow, she found:

A young and very handsome preacher from Chicago, Illinois, dripped humid sweat as he preached the sermon. His theme was the 'love letter' of Genesis, *God's word*, illustrated with passionate intensity. He and his fiancée had lived four hundred miles apart during their engagement. Letters were read and re-read. Meanings searched and

27. Neil Young, 'Singing or worship?', *H*, 63 (Jan. 1984), pp.19-20.

28. See above, p.254.

29. Oral information, 25 November 1990.

30. Figure supplied by Graham Brown.

31. Alastair Noble, 'Family Services at Crosshill Evangelical Church, Glasgow', *H*, 69 (October 1990), pp.16-7.

Figure 10.5. Evangelical Church, Hamilton, 1968.



Source: Evangelical Church, Selkirk Street, Hamilton.

found between the lines, 'And always the joy of reading again and again at the end of each letter the "I LOVE YOU!"' Pretty teenage girls at my side giggled...

Somewhere below in the bowels of the church thumps indicated a very active Sunday School session.

At the end of the service tea, coffee, juice and biscuits were served as we sat in maroon velour padded chairs easily nudged round to form spontaneous groups. 'We got rid of the pews. Too formal,' a chummy elder told me.³²

As this not entirely sympathetic account also shows, the new service pointed to a change in the ambience of an assembly.

In 1978 Victoria Hall, Ayr, had also changed its name to Riverside Evangelical Church. Underlying the change of ethos was a rejection of sectarianism and this alteration was perhaps most clearly shown in the willingness to adopt the word 'church' in place of 'assembly'.³³ By 1990 thirty-one assemblies were calling themselves churches, and a further four were calling themselves 'chapel' or 'fellowship'.³⁴ The new generation of assembly buildings which began to appear from the mid-1960s onwards rejected the traditional box-like Gospel hall. Typical of them was

32. Mairi Hedderwick, *Highland Journey* (Edinburgh, 1992), p.9; Mrs Hedderwick is a granddaughter of Brethren missionary Dan Crawford.

33. The first two assemblies to use the name 'Evangelical Church' were St John's Chapel, Linlithgow, and Gospel Hall, Gartness, Airdrie, in the early 1960s.

34. *Assemblies Address Book* (Bristol 1990), pp.73-92; cf. Neil Dickson, 'Brethren and their buildings', *H*, 68 (October 1989) p.13; Morton, *Red Guitars*, p.38.

Evangelical Church, Hamilton (Figure 10.5), which, when the town centre was redeveloped, replaced Baillies Causeway Gospel Hall in 1968. Designed by Brethren architect James Hyslop, the building contains several side halls of varying sizes which can accommodate different types of activities. The sanctuary's sharply peaked roof (emphasised by the slope on which the building sits) is an unmistakable allusion to ecclesiastical architecture and the façade carries the plaque 'Evangelical Church'. The buildings were apprehended in a different manner from the Gospel halls and they signalled this change in a contemporary manner.

Another sign that some Brethren were losing their sectarian isolation was the use of resident full-time workers.³⁵ They differed from pastors in that they were not ordained, preaching was not confined to them, and they had considerably less authority, sometimes not even being appointed as an elder. Nevertheless they represented a significant break with the Brethren distaste for a resident ministry. The first Scottish initiative of this kind was in Campbeltown where from 1971 to 1975 John Carrick, an evangelist working with SCEM, was based in the assembly. For the first year of his work he was assisted by a youth evangelist.³⁶ In 1978 the Swanwick conference (the new venue for the series of English Brethren conferences which had formerly met at High Leigh) promoted the use of resident full-time workers, and after it more began to be used.³⁷ The second assembly in Scotland to have one was the Old Schoolhouse, a Glanton Exclusive meeting in Edinburgh which was increasingly forming links with Open

35. The phrase is that suggested in *CBRFJ*, 37 (1988), *passim*.

36. Anon., 'Wanted—full-time worker', *H*, 68 (October 1989), p.16

37. Alan G Bamford (ed.), *Where Do We Go From Here? The Future of the Brethren: report of addresses and discussions at the Swanwick Conference of Brethren, September 1978* (Worthing, 1979), p.55.

Brethren. In 1981 it appointed a full-time youth worker.³⁸ But the most ambitious experiment in the use of resident full-time workers was at Riverside Evangelical Church. In 1984 a youth worker was appointed to be followed by two other individuals, one of them a former Baptist minister, to teaching and pastoral ministries.³⁹ In the 1998 Partnership survey fifteen of the fifty-one respondent Scottish assemblies had full- or part-time resident workers. Some of the appointments of such workers have been fairly short-lived, suggesting that the process of grafting on a full-time congregational ministry to a lay movement has not been without its difficulties. This development, however, showed that a number of assemblies were willing to consider radically new patterns.

There were also individuals who led the way in attempting to recover a social conscience. The evangelist Alex Allan began working in penal institutions in 1966, and he founded a rehabilitation centre at Longriggend, Lanarkshire, in 1976 to help smooth the transition between prison and society and in 1999 another evangelist, John Locke, established a similar ministry in Cumbernauld.⁴⁰ In 1977 Ashbank House was opened in Dumfries to provide long- or short-term care for mentally or physically handicapped children.⁴¹ In the 1980s a number of assemblies started Mothers' and Toddlers' groups, to which mothers could bring young children and receive support meeting and talking with other mothers. At Cartsbridge Evangelical Church, Busby, a female full-time worker was appointed in 1988 to run one such group and to provide additional

38. John Storey, 'Local church full-time workers: a Scottish experience', *H*, 62 (January 1982), pp.2-3; the Old Schoolhouse was included among Open Brethren in *The Assemblies Address Book: useful information for Christians*, 2nd edn (Bristol, 1991), p.92, but was removed in subsequent editions.

39. Anon., 'Leadership at Ayr', *H*, 68 (April 1989), pp.15-16.

40. A G Allan 'Real Life', *H*, 67 (July 1987), pp.15-16; *BM*, 109 (1999), p.158.

41. Miss C Dick, 'Ashbank House Dumfries', *H*, 66 (October 1987), p.15.

support for a number of single parents through home visitation.⁴² In Edinburgh Gwen McDowell established in 1985 a Christian counselling service, dealing with a range of problems from depression to sexual abuse.⁴³ Deprived urban areas had received little attention from the Brethren during the period under consideration,⁴⁴ but one exception was the Viewpark Project. In 1974 Gospel Literature Outreach (GLO), founded in Australia in 1965 to send young people on international summer missions, had established its British training centre at Motherwell, giving the Scottish movement its first Brethren-based training centre.⁴⁵ The initial impact on Scottish assemblies was limited as most of trainees went to other countries.⁴⁶ In 1989 GLO—true to its principle of working in urban areas—in association with Bothwell Evangelical Church, began a project in Viewpark, Uddingston, a Strathclyde Region area for priority treatment. A group of full-time Christian workers rented a local authority house in the scheme and from it did a mixture of social work and evangelism. The aim of the project was ‘to bridge the widening gap between Church and community’ by living in a working-class area and serving it.⁴⁷ After a period of isolation from the sharper social pressures, attempts were being made by some individuals and assemblies to combine their faith with social action.

More conventional Brethren forms also led to new initiatives in evangelism. The energy of the sixties extended traditional evangelism into new and neglected rural areas, and by 1975 James Anderson was

42. Anon., ‘Cartsbridge Evangelical Church’, *H*, 67 (July 1988), p.17; Ewan Cathcart, *H*, 70 (April 1991), p.16.

43. Gwen McDowell, “Homework” (December/January 1990).

44. J A[nderson], ‘Assemblies in Britain and Other Parts’, *BM*, 85 (1975), p.373.

45. Colin B C Tilsely, *Through the Furnace* (Newtown, NSW, Australia, 1979), pp.59,75.

46. J Brown and Ray Cawston, ‘Gospel Literature Outreach’, *H*, 66 (December 1987), p.17.

47. Graham Poland, ‘Bridging the gap’, *H*, 68 (November 1989), pp.6-7; David Buchan, ‘Viewpark: one year on’, *H*, 69 (December 1990), pp.6-7; Anon., ‘Update on Viewpark’, *H*, 70 (January 1991), p.26

commenting on the 'two dozen younger men' who had become evangelists since the early 1960s.⁴⁸ One of them, Ian Munro, had moved into Easter Ross in 1961 to itinerate within the area, and others had followed him into the eastern Highlands.⁴⁹ In 1967 John Campbell went to live in Perth to evangelise rural Perthshire, an area of Scotland which the Brethren had rarely touched.⁵⁰ Several other individuals followed him by moving into the north-east Lowlands, and a number of evangelists moved into the Borders, too, during this period. This was following a well-established Brethren tradition of evangelising remoter rural areas where there were few assemblies, though it was probably on a scale not seen since the inter-war period. Marquees were used less by Scottish Brethren itinerants. They tended to be subject to arson attempts, and they were too commodious for the reduced numbers attending evangelistic missions. Portable halls proved more comfortable and compact, and they were increasingly used by the new generation of evangelists.⁵¹ By 1973 there were thirty-three itinerant evangelists based in Scotland,⁵² and although special missions had decreased in frequency, in 1990 there were still some twenty-three, one of them, a children's evangelist, a woman.⁵³

The activity of the period led to at least twenty-six assemblies being formed after 1966. Three Scottish cities gained new assemblies: an assembly was formed in 1966 in Gilmerton, Edinburgh (see Map 8, inset), the result of a post-war outreach commenced by the evangelist Rice Alexander;⁵⁴ in 1967 Aberdeen gained an additional assembly in Fernilea (see Map 5, inset);⁵⁵

48. J A[nderson], *BM*, 85 (1975), p.65.

49. *BM*, 91 (1981), p.30.

50. *BM*, 97 (1967), p.315.

51. R Miller 'Robert M McPheat (1933-1990)', *BM*, 99 (1990), p.311.

52. Collection of Mr Alex. Stewart, Hopeman, Moray: [Alex. Stewart (compiler)], 'A Record of Gospel Work. Christian Brethren. Moray & Nairn', MS, n.d.

53. Figure calculated from "Homework" in 1990.

54. 'R.H. Alexander', *W*, 88 (1958), p.214; *W*, 98 (1968), p.436

55. *BM*, 77 (1967), p.192.

and in Dundee (see Map 6, inset) the assembly in Lochee, which had been discontinued in 1950 was re-formed in 1971.⁵⁶ Several assemblies were planted in this period due to the movement of Brethren members. At Bishopton, Renfrewshire (see Map 12), after the building of new housing, an assembly was formed in 1977,⁵⁷ and the opening of the Brethren-run Marantha conference centre in Biggar (see Map 10) led in 1988 to the re-formation of the assembly which had been discontinued five years earlier.⁵⁸ In the Borders (see Map 14) when some Brethren families moved to Peebles the assembly there, which had been discontinued in 1948, was recommenced in 1968;⁵⁹ and the removal of another family to Kelso, where there had been no assembly since the nineteenth century, led to the re-founding of one in 1990.⁶⁰ Another post-war outreach in the Strutherhill district of Larkhall (see Map 10) had resulted in an assembly being formed there in 1972.⁶¹ The new evangelistic initiatives of the mid-1960s and after also led to the formation of some assemblies. It was after a SCEM mission in Annan (see Map 14) in the early sixties that an outreach was begun in the area which issued in the formation of a meeting there, and another one was begun in Gretna in the late 1960s.⁶² In the north of Scotland, the increased attention being given to the eastern Highlands resulted in an assembly being formed in Kingussie (see Map 3) in 1971 by Brethren individuals who had moved into the area.⁶³ In Luthermuir, Angus (see Map 6), a mission was held by Dan Gillies, one of the evangelists who was based in the north-east. As a result a group of eight individuals left the parish church to form an assembly in 1975.⁶⁴ A further

56. *W*, 80 (1950), p.88; *BM*, 81 (1971), p.62.

57. *W*, 107 (1977), p.213.

58. "*Homework*" (August/September 1990).

59. *W*, 78 (1948), p.iii; *W*, 99 (1969), p.276.

60. Oral information, 7 September 1991.

61. *BM*, 79 (1969), p.158; oral information, 11 March 1990.

62. Oral information, December 1989.

63. *BM*, 81 (1971), p.30.

64. *BM*, 85 (1975), p.271.

gain from another Christian body occurred in neighbouring Perthshire when in 1997 the former London Exclusive assembly in Blairgowrie, which had seceded from the parent body after 1970, reported its existence in the Open Brethren address list.⁶⁵ The GLO Viewpark Project in Uddingston (see Map 10) led to the commencement of a breaking of bread service in 1992.⁹⁵

Those assemblies listed above which were in areas remote from Brethren strength remained small, however, and the ones at Annan and Gretna were eventually discontinued. Among the most thriving assemblies planted in this period were the result of urban expansion in towns which already had one. This happened in Ayr (1970), Milltimber, Aberdeen (1975), East Kilbride (1978), Livingston (1981), Inverness (1982), Kirkcaldy (1985), and Cumbernauld (1990).⁶⁶ Being in areas with new housing, many of them were formed predominantly by young married couples, and all these new congregations adopted the name 'church' or 'fellowship'.

The continued vitality of the period was also seen in other ways. A number of Brethren became more closely involved with society. Headteacher W K Morrison welcomed comprehensive schools for it meant that Brethren children would not be separated from 'rough lads and girls of average and below average intelligence.'⁶⁷ Since 1965 nine Brethren members have been appointed to chairs in Scottish universities, and one individual went on to become university vice-principal. The chairs held were weighted towards science and practical disciplines (three

65. *The Assemblies Address Book: useful addresses and other information for Christians*, 4th edn (Bath, 1997), p.182; for the London Exclusives, see above, pp.2-4.

66. W, 81 (1971), p.96; W, 105 (1975), p.435; W, 103 (1973), p.396; BM, 91 (1981), p.93; BM, 100 (1991), p.383.

67. W K Morrison, 'Comprehensive education: a headmaster's personal view', W, 103 (1973), pp.142-4.

were in medicine, two in engineering and one each in accountancy, biology, computing and business policy), perhaps demonstrating a Brethren inclination towards the utilitarian. There were, however, Brethren individuals from the 1980s onwards who made contributions towards the arts, in Scottish history and literature and the history of architecture,⁶⁸ and a number of other individuals can also be found in public service. Areas of entertainment which the Brethren had shied away from began to be accepted, albeit cautiously at first: in the 1960s many Brethren homes acquired a television;⁶⁹ and some tentatively visited the cinema for the first time.⁷⁰ By the early 1990s, Brian Irvine, a Scottish international football player, was a member of Deeside Christian Fellowship, Aberdeen;⁷¹ and Brethren individuals were commenting to the news media on the appropriateness of teaching the controversial novelists Irvine Welsh and James Kelman.⁷² Articles on literature and the arts began to appear in *The Witness*, and W K Morrison could broach the subject of contraceptives in *The Believer's Magazine*.⁷³ Increasingly open

68. For the historical works of the period, see above, p.15, n.74.; for Scottish literature, see: Beth Dickson, 'Foundations of the modern Scottish novel', in Cairns Craig (ed), *The History of Scottish Literature*, 4 (Aberdeen, 1987), pp.49-60; Neil Dickson (ed.), *An Island Shore: selected writings of Robert Rendall*, (Kirkwall, 1990); Beth Dickson, 'Class and being in the novels of William McIlvanney', in Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (eds), *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp.54-70; William Landles, *Will H. Ogilvie: poet of the romantic Borderland* (n.p., 1993); Beth Dickson, 'Annie S. Swan and O. Douglas: legacies of the Kailyard', in Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp.329-46; *idem*, 'An ordinary little girl': Willa Muir's *Mrs Ritchie*' in Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson (eds), *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s to 1960s: journeys into being* (East Linton, 2000), pp.97-108.

69. Tom Morton, *S*, 2 December, 1992, p.12; *idem*, *Red Guitars*, p.38; *Sissons, Burgh of Falkirk*, p.344; but for an earlier use of television in 1961, see above p.262, n. 209.

70. Tom Morton, *W*, 106 (1976), pp.58-60; *idem*, *S*, 13 April 1994, p.12; *idem*, *S*, 30 November 1994, p.15.

71. Andrew Wingfield Digby and Stuart Weir, 'Brian Irvine', in *idem*, *Winning is not Enough* (London 1991), pp.98-112.

72. For the opinions of two Brethren individuals see: Ken Cunningham quoted in Jackie Kemp, 'Radical' literature for Highers', *Scotland on Sunday*, 3 September 1995, p.3; and Beth Dickson quoted in Iain Martin and Jean West, 'Lessons to swear by', in *The Sunday Times*, 10 November 1996, p.18. I am indebted to Mrs Val Wells for the former reference.

73. Jonathan C Inglesby, 'A plea for the reading of fiction', *W*, 95 (1965), pp.264-5; H E Freeston, 'The voice of the poet', *W*, 101 (1971), pp.378-80; W K Morrison, 'The Christian family', *BM*, 92 (1982), pp.296-7.

to comment on politics, science and the arts was *Harvester* magazine, which changed its name to *Aware* in 1991. From 1992 it had an Anglo-Scot, John Allan, as its editor and a substantial number of the contributions came from Scottish writers. When Green politics were at their height in the early 1990s, one of them, Beth Dickson, contributed a regular column on environmental issues. Change was affecting every aspect of Brethren life. In 1989 Interface was founded to run a series of national and local conferences to provide a forum for discussing the innovations which had taken place within Scottish assemblies and the complex issues which confronted them.⁷⁴ The adaptations of secular youth culture, the changes in assembly practice, and the involvement in society and its problems all showed that many Brethren were shedding some of their sectarian features.

There was also continued activity in transmitting traditional Brethren doctrines. Individuals such as Robert McPheat, a mines manager who became an itinerant evangelist in 1968, continued the pattern of combining evangelism with Bible teaching.⁷⁵ There were others active solely in Bible teaching, and until the 1990s Scottish Brethren had probably as many full-time Bible teachers as at any other point in their history. The concern for teaching can also be seen in the programmes of Brethren publishers. In 1983-98 John Ritchie Ltd published *What the Bible Teaches*, an ambitious ten-volume devotional and homiletical commentary on the New Testament under the editorship of Tom Wilson, a Scottish further education lecturer and an editor of *The Believer's Magazine*. The commentary was written by a number of Brethren Bible teachers from throughout the English-speaking world. The theological standpoint of the

74. [Beth Dickson], 'Working for change in Scotland', *H*, 70, (September 1991), p.5

75. Miller 'Robert M McPheat', *BM*, p.311.

commentary was strictly defined to preserve Brethren distinctives. The editor's statement of the theological basis emphasised 'the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures' and their 'inherent and infallible teachings'.⁷⁶ Ritchie also launched in 1996 the Family Series, booklets, written by evangelist John Grant (in 1999 to become sole editor of *The Believer's Magazine*) and illustrated by a *Beano* cartoonist. They tackled issues such as courtship and parenting, applying traditional teaching to the contemporary setting of these issues.⁷⁷ The publishing enterprises were attempting to ensure that conventional Brethren patterns and thought would not be lost in the changes affecting assemblies from within and without. Like the traditional evangelism, they demonstrated that considerable strength remained in customary Brethren ethos.

SOCIAL CHANGE

Underlying the activity and changes of the late twentieth century were alterations in the social composition of the Brethren which had profound implications for the movement. In the post-war era a number of Brethren businessmen had been able to take advantage of the new economic opportunities to establish substantially-sized businesses.⁷⁸ The boom in car ownership and road use, in particular, enabled several Brethren members to build up businesses in the motor and haulage industries. There always had been businessmen among the Brethren, but after the war they were present in greater numbers. Also more members increasingly belonged to the professions, particularly the medical and educational ones. Scottish Brethren began to lose their principally working-class identity and be

76. Tom Wilson 'Preface', *idem*, (ed.), *What the Bible Teaches*, 1 (Kilmarnock, 1983), p.vii.

77. E.g., John Grant, *Let's Talk about Courtship* (Kilmarnock [1996]).

78. Oral information from several Brethren businessmen; Professor Neil Hood, University of Strathclyde Business School, pointed out to the present writer in 1991 that Brethren businesses for this period would technically be classified as small businesses.

Table 10.1. Educational performance of children of working-class Brethren parents and other children.

	Selected for 5 yr secondary course %	At school after leaving age %	Completing secondary course %	Entering higher education %
Skilled manual	18	8	7	4
Middle-class	45	36	27	19
Brethren manual	58	52	47	20

Source: Ian G D Ford, 'Religious affiliation and educational achievement: a note on the 'Brethren' in western Scotland', *Scottish Educational Studies*, 3, No.1 (May 1971), pp.20-4.

composed of the middle classes.⁷⁹

It was also the affluence of the period which also led to an increase in individuals being able to take advantage of an extended education. In the late 1960s (before Scottish secondary education became comprehensive) Ian Ford, a lecturer at Jordanhill College of Education and himself a Brethren member, did a study of the educational attainment of Brethren children.⁸⁰ He limited his study to the children of manual workers, looking at four points in their educational career: selection for a five-year secondary course, remaining in school beyond the leaving age (then 15), completing the secondary course, and entrance to higher education. Among these children, he found, not only did a higher percentage perform better educationally than both the children of skilled manual workers (according to national Scottish figures), but also better than the children of middle-class parents did. They functioned like 'a superior middle-class sample' until university entrance when the Brethren children still had figures

⁷⁹. For the Brethren social class in earlier periods, see above, pp.357-67.

⁸⁰. Ian G D Ford, 'Religious affiliation and educational achievement: a note on the "Brethren" in western Scotland', *Scottish Educational Studies*, 3, No.1 (May 1971), pp.20-4; cf. an interview with Ford on his research, P K[imber], 'Clever Christians?', *W*, 100 (1970), pp.100-1.

Table 10.2. Social classification of the membership of Central Evangelical Church, Kilmarnock, 1993.

Social class ¹	I	II	III	IV	V	W	X	U
Central E.C. Membership	157							
Number	24	77	28	0	0	1 (+16) ³	25 (+25) ³	2
% ²	(18.6)	(59.7)	(21.7)	(0)	(0)	(20.2)	(32.3)	(1.3)
Brethren members 1961-3 ⁴								
Sample size	251							
Number	5	48	143	16	2	10 (+50)	12 (+14) ³	15
% ²	(2.3)	(22.4)	(66.9)	(7.5)	(0.9)	(39)	(10.4)	(6)

Notes:

1. Classes I-V = social groups A-E (see Appendix 2); W = housewives (married women not in employment); X = unwaged (retired, students, disabled, and unemployed); U = unidentified; where possible, social class of those not in employment has been allocated to that of the head of household.
2. Percentages in a social class are those of the total number to whom it is possible to allocate one; percentages of housewives are those of all identified women; percentages of unwaged are those of all identified individuals; and percentages of unidentified those of are of the total membership.
3. The number in brackets indicates those also allocated to a social class.
4. The data are for two assemblies: Kilbirnie (1961) and Newarthill (1963), see above Table 9.3.

Sources: *Prayer List and Address Book, Central Evangelical Church, Kilmarnock, 1993* (n.p. [1993]); Table 9.3 above.

equivalent to a normal middle-class sample (Table 10.1).⁸¹ Ford was surprised by his results, for they showed to a marked degree that in the Brethren children he studied, religious affiliation was a more potent factor than socioeconomic class in determining educational success.⁸² Only in the considerable drop-off in those going on to higher education, Ford felt, might class be still having an effect. However, as he pointed out, this must be a relatively small factor as it was obvious that the determining factor in

81. Ford's classification of occupations was that of the Registrar General's Classification of Occupations, 1966 (the same system used in the present work). Of his sample, only 21 of the families belonged to Classes IV and V, and 69 belonged to Class III. Any returns from higher social classes were rejected.

82. This was similar to what researchers had discovered among New York Jewish communities, Ford, 'Religious affiliation', p.21.

educational performance was religious affiliation. It may be that the fall was partly due to a Brethren suspicion of the effects of higher education. In the late 1960s sermons could still be heard in some assemblies warning of the dangers of education and its corrupting influence on the mind.⁸³ In the late 1960s Ford had some difficulty finding enough manual workers among Scottish assemblies to do his research, and of these only 23.3 per cent. had belonged to classes IV and V.⁸⁴ Obviously the same processes found in his sample would be at work to a more marked degree with the children of parents of higher social classes. The post-war period was a crucial one for the children of Brethren parents taking advantage of educational opportunities. The result was that by the 1990s the Brethren contained a substantial number of professionals. The occupations of the members of Central Evangelical Church, Kilmarnock, in 1993 demonstrate the movement into the higher social classes (Table 10.2). Kilmarnock is a socially mixed community but despite this, the balance of membership of the congregation had swung heavily in favour of social classes I and II with over three-quarters of the members belonging to them: over half belonged to the latter, the intermediate lower middle-class. In Table 10.2 the social class of the church membership is set against aggregated figures for two other assemblies, Kilbirnie in 1960 and Newarthill in 1963. This comparison has its limitations as Kilmarnock is the type of larger town in which assemblies always had a greater representation of the higher classes than did smaller industrial communities such as Kilbirnie and Newarthill.⁸⁵ Nevertheless the upward social movement of the membership of Central Evangelical Church is marked in comparison to earlier periods of Brethren history and teachers composed the largest

83. The present writer's memories.

84. Ford quoted in K[imber], 'Clever Christians?', p.101; *idem*, 'Religious affiliation', p.22; see above, n.81.

85. Cf. above, Table 9.5, for the social class of the founding trustees of Central Hall, Kilmarnock (the earlier name for Central Evangelical Church).

number in any one occupation. This last factor could be explained on socioeconomic grounds, as teaching tends to be the profession most readily chosen by the children of working-class parents. It is one additional pointer to upwards social movement. That this trend is set to continue can be seen from the rise in numbers in column X which is mainly due to the number in secondary or tertiary education (18.1 per cent. of all identified individuals compared to 5.1 per cent. in the two assemblies in 1960 and 1962). This also seems to indicate that Brethren children are now more likely to enter higher education than they were when Ford did his research. Because of several factors in their ethos, the Brethren will continue to profit from expanded economic opportunities in society.

DISCONTENTS

Social change had implications not only for the way in which Brethren interacted with society, but it also had important consequences for the internal life of assemblies. The continuing conservatism of many of them became a cause of disaffection. A snapshot of how individual assemblies were being affected is provided by the study of the churches of Falkirk done between September 1968 and August 1970 by researchers from Edinburgh University under the supervision of Peter L Sissons.⁸⁶ Among the churches of Falkirk, two of the town's assemblies, Bethany Hall, Camelon, and Olivet Hall (as well as the town's mission, the Miller Hall), were studied. Olivet Hall, Sissons reported, was 'the much more progressive and "modern" of the two assemblies'.⁸⁷ The membership was about 100, younger and more middle-class than that of Bethany Hall. It

86. Peter L Sissons, *The Social Significance of Church Membership in the Burgh of Falkirk* (Edinburgh, 1973) The study is not as useful as it might have been for present purposes as the two Brethren assemblies and the Miller Hall were counted as 'Protestant minority' churches along with the Congregational Church and the Scottish Episcopal Church. It is therefore impossible to disentangle information on the Brethren in much of the anecdotal and all of the tabulated data.

87. Sally Herring, 'Dissent in Scotland', in *ibid.*, p.344.

was, Sissons wrote, 'a well heeled congregation... The roads outside the building are usually lined with very clean and mostly new cars'.⁸⁸ Attendance at the evening service was high and the membership of the assembly consisted of 'some of the more affluent and more mobile lower middle-class people with a number of schoolteachers, college lecturers, proprietors of local businesses and the headmaster of one of the town's comprehensive schools'.⁸⁹ Bethany Hall, the report stated, was 'very much in the tradition of the Gospel Hall, old-fashioned and sombre'.⁹⁰ It had a membership of about eighty, but there were fewer than that in attendance at the services. The membership was 'predominantly middle-aged and elderly, with very few young members', and it was composed of mainly manual workers and their families. The houses which once surrounded the hall in Camelon (a working-class area of Falkirk) had disappeared and it was not by then in the centre of the area's population. The social differences between the two assemblies could be seen, it was felt, in the leadership: 'The elders of Olivet Hall include two insurance agents, two company representatives, a bank clerk and the owner of a motor business; the elders of Bethany Hall are foundry workers, a master baker and a clerk'.⁹¹

Bethany Hall and Olivet Hall provide an interesting comparison, for Olivet Hall had been founded by Bethany Hall members in 1935, and the latter was at one time the largest assembly in the district.⁹² The two assemblies were close in emphases at the time of Olivet's formation. But by the late 1960s, as well as being socially different, the researchers found

88. Sissons, *ibid.*, p.46.

89. *Ibid.*, p.46.

90. Herring, *ibid.*, 344-5. Shortly after the study was made, Bethany Hall was demolished and another building was acquired (cf. *ibid.*, p.345).

91. *Ibid.*, p.345.

92. Peter McIntyre, 'How it began: Camelon', *BM*, 98 (1988), pp.261-2.

increasing divergence in the assemblies' practices and attitudes. These could be related to the socioeconomic differences between them. Much of the contrast was focused by views on the young people's activities. Olivet Hall had a flourishing youth fellowship which had formed a folk-song group that had toured North American assemblies. Sectarian separation from secular leisure pursuits were being relaxed and some members belonged to sports and golf clubs, one individual even playing regularly at the socially prestigious Gleneagles course.⁹³ In Bethany Hall, and in the Miller Hall, on the other hand, it was reported that there were tensions between age groups. The older members were reluctant to change and the services consisted of 'long extempore prayers and extended preaching of the Gospel'. The elders were suspicious of the use of guitars and disapproved of the activities of the younger members.⁹⁴ For their part the young were 'impatient with such traditions as the silence of women in meetings and the long sermons of speakers who do not always have the gift of preaching.'⁹⁵

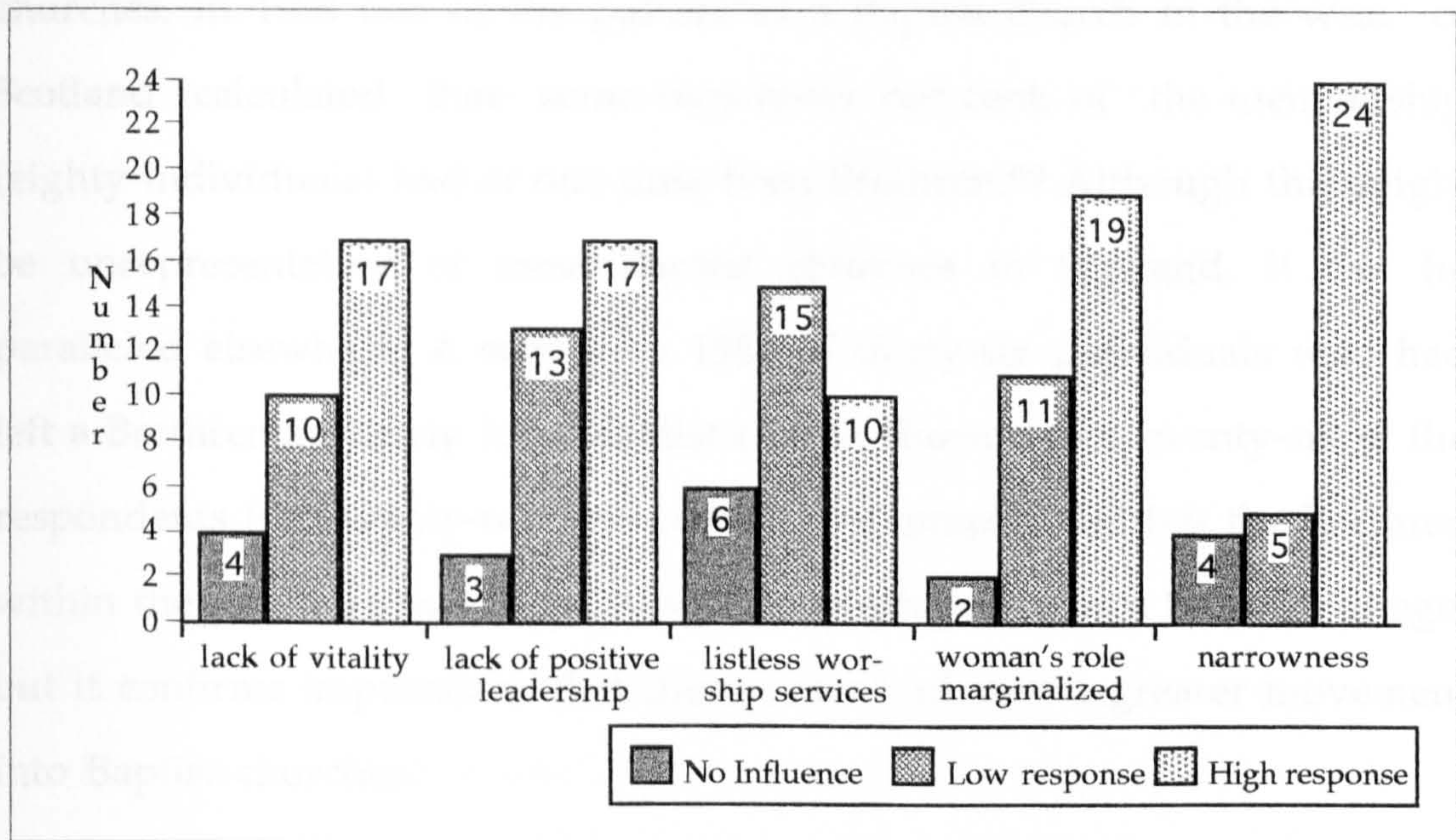
Those Brethren members who belonged to the higher classes had often been through social change in their own lives, and they tended to be more concerned to seek change within their assemblies. This process was most acute among the young who were most affected by the change. Since the 1950s teenagers increasingly had also formed their own sub-culture which gave them, in varying degrees, a different life-style from their parents, and the cultural shifts which began to be explicit in Britain throughout the sixties had their most marked effects among young people. One Brethren father might be overheard asking, "Who is Bob Dylan anyway?", but his

93. *Sissons, Burgh of Falkirk*, p.344.

94. For criticism of new musical trends, cf. W F N[aismith], 'QA', *BM*, 80 (1970), p.27.

95. *Sissons, Burgh of Falkirk*, p.346.

Figure 10.6. Response of former Scottish assembly members in Baptist churches to Nathan deL Smith's respondents' reasons for leaving an assembly (USA, 1986).



Source: Neil Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists in Scotland', *BQ*, 33 (October 1990), p.380.

son received one of the rock musician's albums as a Christmas present.⁹⁶ Many of the young were now impatient with forms that had been inherited from the past which could not immediately justify themselves in the present. The division was not just one of social class, but also one of age. The greatest source of dissatisfaction with the assemblies in Falkirk, Sissons reported, was not change (as it was among the Roman Catholics interviewed), but conservatism.⁹⁷ The picture that the study gave could be seen in many Scottish Brethren assemblies.

For many who felt that innovation in Brethren practices was not rapid enough, dissatisfaction continued to mount. There were, as was noted

96. Ricky Ross, 'The fall and rise of His Bobness', *S*, 14 November 1992, p.13.

97. Sissons, *Burgh of Falkirk.*, p.172.

above, some who joined assemblies from other churches during this period,⁹⁸ but more common, it would appear, was discontent making a small but significant number of Brethren members transfer into Baptist churches. In 1988 one of the pastors of a Baptist church in the west of Scotland calculated that some twenty-six per cent. of the membership (eighty individuals) had at one time been Brethren.⁹⁹ Although this might be unrepresentative of most Baptist churches in Scotland, it can be paralleled elsewhere. A survey in 1988 of thirty-six individuals who had left a Brethren assembly for a Baptist church showed that twenty-six of the respondents (or seventy-two per cent. of the sample) had left the Brethren within the previous two decades.¹⁰⁰ This might partly be a function of age, but it confirms impressions that these years had seen a greater movement into Baptist churches.

The respondents in the survey emerged as being dissatisfied in general with a number of features of the Brethren. In 1986 Nathan deLynn Smith interviewed individuals who had left the Brethren in the USA, and he found that the most common reasons for leaving were five negative features of the Brethren which they had identified: lack of positive leadership, lack of vitality, listless worship services, women's role marginalised, and narrowness.¹⁰¹ In the Scottish sample there were seven individuals who had left their assembly because of a life-change (having, for example, married a Baptist, or moved to a different town), but it is clear that the sense of dissatisfaction was the main reason for even these individuals leaving. When asked how much weight the factors identified

98. See also, K Taylor, 'Why I am in the local assembly', *BM*, 92 (1982), pp. 228-30; Robert Marshall, 'Why I am in the local assembly', *ibid.*, pp 311-2; N J Gourlay to the editor, *H*, 73 (November 1994), pp.20-1.

99. Neil Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists in Scotland', *BQ*, 33 (1990), p.380.

100. *Ibid.*, p.380.

101. Nathan deLynn Smith, *Roots and Renewal* (Pasadena, CA,1986), pp.47-65.

by Smith had in their decision, half of the Scottish sample indicated that three or more of these features had exerted a strong influence (Figure 10.6).¹⁰² The chief source of dissatisfaction in leaving was the perception of the narrowness of the Brethren, on which educated assembly members in Sissons' survey had also commented.¹⁰³ Several individuals noted the limitations their meetings had placed on Christian fellowship, and on the 'legalistic attitudes and unwritten but strict rules'.¹⁰⁴ It would appear that for many 'narrowness' was closely connected to the sense of conservatism that several respondents identified, and probably also related to the poor quality of youth work or Sunday schools they claimed to have found. The discontents felt most strongly were ethical and sectarian narrowness and the lack of willingness to change which affected the young most. Marginalisation of a woman's role was the second largest cause of dissatisfaction in the 1988 survey, but significantly, the worship at the breaking of bread ranked as the least strong source of dissatisfaction. The service continued to have a special place in Brethren spirituality. However, even here the number who indicated that the quality of worship had some influence on their decision to leave far outnumbered those upon whom it had no influence (Figure 10.6).

Their conservatism made it difficult for many assemblies to cope with the social and cultural changes affecting younger members after the 1960s. The haemorrhaging of members to Baptist churches became an additional cause of decline in numerical strength. In the early sixties one of the causes of the growth in size had been the increase in the numbers of young people within assemblies.¹⁰⁵ The survey of former Brethren 1988 showed

102. Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists', p.380.

103. Sissons, *Burgh of Falkirk*, pp.46,94,115.

104. Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists', p.382.

105. See above, p.249.

that it was mainly those in this age group who left in the seventies and eighties for Baptist churches.¹⁰⁶ It was a crucial group to lose as it meant not only a loss of numbers but also of their energy and the young families that they themselves in turn were rearing. Many who left an area did not join an assembly in the new district to which they went, an indication they had lost the sense of the importance of the Brethren that earlier generations possessed. Of the thirteen individuals who had left Gospel Hall, Newarthill, after 1963 six joined another denomination or abandoned Christian practice, while of those who remained in the village another six joined another church or lapsed.¹⁰⁷ The Brethren had previously achieved notable success in retaining the children of members, but now assemblies began to lose young people to other churches or from the faith altogether. Despite the continuing signs of vitality already noted, the steady attrition pointed to an underlying malaise.

INNOVATION AND CONSERVATION

The new initiatives within assemblies, altering attitudes to culture, the social changes which had affected Brethren, and the continuing conservatism of a section of the movement had significant consequences for the coherence of Brethrenism. Particularly from the mid-1970s onwards, some of the strains within the movement can be seen in the formation of new assemblies in towns which already had one.¹⁰⁸ The ostensible cause of their establishment was that new congregations were being created in an area without an assembly.¹⁰⁹ But most of these later plantings were by individuals concerned to innovate and they felt the meetings which they had left were more conservative. The emergence of

106. Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists', p.380.

107. Oral information, 7 September 1988.

108. See above, p.423.

109. 'Deeside Christian Fellowship', *H*, 68 (April 1989), p.16.

some of these new congregations was a sign of the increasing tension between the two different elements within the Brethren. The tension in these cases was resolved amicably by a group moving out to a new area of a town to arrange their affairs as they wished. After 1970 at least six new assemblies were formed through schisms, and several more large-scale transfers of membership took place. The ferment could be seen more clearly here. Some of the transfers of membership were due to a group meeting resistance when seeking innovation, and some of them were due to a relatively moderate group finding an increasing conservatism uncomfortable. Others of the schisms were for the opposite reason: a conservative minority who were uneasy with an assembly which was open to change. The more widespread acceptance of large-scale transference, however, had an additional significance. There had always been individuals who changed assemblies because of various causes of discontent. Occasionally if a difficulty arose within an assembly, other ones nearby accepted a large number of people from the troubled assembly,¹¹⁰ but usually they were reluctant to do so in case relationships between the two were damaged. The more general acceptance of large-scale transfer of members was a sign that the cohesion of the Brethren world had undergone some disintegration.

The changes which had followed the mid-1960s had not only resulted in a fresh outburst of activity, but also in a deepening division. Opinions were polarised due to the severity of the crisis facing assemblies and what seemed to some the radical nature of the innovations which were being proposed. Many of the changes, from the use of resident full-time workers

110. For an example of large-scale transfer happening, see above, pp.202-3.

to the use of new Bible translations and hymnbooks, were criticized,¹¹¹ as was the development of 'large central assemblies, drawing their numbers from a wide area where other small assemblies exist.'¹¹² Those who wished to conserve the practices and thinking they had inherited saw the more radical changes as being for the worse and felt those pressing for them were being potentially divisive. *The Believer's Magazine*, felt that the notion of 'keeping up with the times' needed to be fought as 'the door has opened to "NEW INVENTIONS" within the pale of the local church with disastrous results.'¹¹³ Many of the innovations were, however, an expression of the denominationalising tendency of the Brethren movement which was now more powerfully at work during this period than at any other. The acceptance of a religious professional within an assembly, the use of the word 'church', and the openness to society and its problems showed a marked slackening of sectarian isolation. It was not to be expected that such a process would take place without a reaction from those who wished to preserve separation from the church and the world. The result of the innovations was the strongest polarisation that the movement had experienced between the sectarian tendency and the denominationalising one.

The changes first became obvious among the Brethren in England and the severest strictures from the conservative critics in the decade after the late 1960s were reserved for the movement there. But gradually, during the succeeding two decades, the same innovations came to characterise a substantial section of Scottish assemblies, modifying them in significant

111. G P Waugh, 'Must we have a resident pastor?' *BM*, 87 (1977), pp.260-1; R McP[ike], 'The Household Church', *BM*, 90 (1980), p.152; F E S[tallan], 'Editorial searchlight', *BM*, 97 (1987), p.2.

112. John Grant, 'Living for God: *What about assembly fellowship?*', *BM*, 102 (1992), p.48; cf. J A[nderson], 'Editorial searchlight', *BM*, 87 (1977), p.193.

113. R McP[ike], 'Editorial searchlight', *BM*, 90 (1980), p.129.

ways. When G C D Howley, F F Bruce and H L Ellison edited *A New Testament Commentary* (1969), it was warmly reviewed by a Swanwick speaker, the Fife headmaster, J R Rollo.¹¹⁴ But others in Scotland criticised it for departing from traditional Brethren interpretations at a number of points.¹¹⁵ Andrew Borland, still at that point the editor of *The Believer's Magazine*, felt the contributors were confined to a 'particular field of thought' within Brethren—an allusion to the more open perspective of the writers—and that the editors had ignored those who differed from them in Scotland and Ireland, the more conservative areas of British Brethren.¹¹⁶ Among the issues for which the commentary was criticized in Scotland was its departure from dispensational premillennialism. F F Bruce's contribution on the book of Revelation was from a mainly preterist perspective, instead of the futurist interpretation favoured among Brethren, and his eschatology made no reference to premillennialism.¹¹⁷ But the erosion of traditional Brethren eschatology happened in Scotland too. Robbie Orr, a Scottish missionary in Pakistan published a commentary on Revelation, *A Victory Pageant* (1972), which interpreted the book from a non-dispensational premillennial viewpoint.¹¹⁸ Others went further. During the Gulf War in 1991, which had potentially serious consequences for Israel, *The Believer's Magazine* made reference to the putative eschatological implications of the conflict, but the Scottish writer in the *Harvester* concentrated on the injustice of the Iraqi cause.¹¹⁹ By 1993 Alex McIntosh, a retired university lecturer, was expounding an amillennialist position at the national Interface conference, and there was no dissent

114. John R Rollo, 'A New Testament Commentary', *W*, 100 (1970), p.109.

115. W F Naismith, 'New Testament Commentary', *BM*, 80 (1970), pp.141-2.

116. A B[orland], 'A New Testament Commentary', *BM*, 80 (1970), pp.89-90.

117. F F Bruce, 'The Revelation to John', in G C D Howley, *et al.* (eds), *A New Testament Commentary* (London, 1969), pp.629-666; for Bruce's eschatological views, see above, p.307.

118. R W Orr, *Victory Pageant* (London, 1972).

119. F E S[tallan], 'Editorial searchlight', *BM*, 99 (October 1990), p.2; [Beth Dickson], 'Saddam rules OK?' *H*, 70 (October 1990), p.28.

from those attending.¹²⁰ Possibly because of the erosion of traditional Brethren eschatology, the most fully-developed section of the doctrinal statement in *What the Bible Teaches* was the one stressing dispensational premillennialism.¹²¹ Quietly but surely, however, a significant section of Scottish Brethren had moved away from a once widely-held part of the movement's world view.

For those who wished to continue in separation there were precise limits to change. In *Our Heritage* James Anderson quoted with approval a sociological definition of sectarianism and argued that 'the maintenance of such bodies of people requires continued devotion to the same convictions'. Although some assemblies were shedding some sectarian features, the majority would have agreed with Anderson that continuing sectarianism showed that they were 'the direct descendants of primitive Christianity'.¹²² With a significant use of imagery Tom Wilson proclaimed 'Conservation is the cry of our day in the polluted environments of the western hemispheres. Let it be our cry in the Assemblies as well.'¹²³ But even those who were modifying sectarian attitudes felt that innovation should proceed only so far and Scottish Brethren still remained cautious. This can be seen in their attitudes to other churches. A small section of English Brethren had achieved some rapprochement with the British Council of Churches. When a representative from the Council had been present at Swanwick in 1964, A M S Gooding had criticized the conveners heavily. The use of 'Brethren', apparently as a denominational title, caused him to exclaim, 'These extremists take too much upon themselves these days.'¹²⁴ Scottish assemblies, however, did not participate in ecumenical

120. Personal observation of the present writer.

121. Wilson, *What the Bible Teaches*, 1, p.vii.

122. Anderson, *Our Heritage*, p.47.

123. Tom Wilson, 'Conservation', *BM*, 85 (1975), pp.316-7.

124. A M S Gooding, 'Christian unity', *BM*, 75 (1965), p. 218.

dialogue in the 1960s and only two congregations in the 1998 Partnership survey took part in the Churches Together initiative of the 1990s.¹²⁵ Any association with theological liberalism or Roman Catholicism was enough to scare most away. New developments in Evangelicalism could be regarded with suspicion too. As the Charismatic movement emerged from the 1960s onwards, Scottish Brethren gave it a few leaders, individuals such as Raymond Wylie and Bob Gordon. But unlike English Brethren, those in Scotland who became Charismatic had to leave their assemblies and even these were only a handful of individuals.¹²⁶ In the 1998 Partnership survey none of the respondent assemblies practised speaking in tongues and only one claimed it allowed prophecy or exercised a healing ministry.¹²⁷ While not all would have been as hostile to the Charismatic movement as Tom Wilson who claimed that it was 'a Satanic imitation of Pentecostal blessing',¹²⁸ Scottish Brethren of all complexions proved resistant to it and it had little impact among them.

Yet contact with other Christians played a significant part in broadening some Brethren. There were those willing to cooperate on an interdenominational basis. After a series of successful inter-assembly summer missions in Glasgow during the 1970s, Alastair Noble, a schools inspector, held two interdenominational missions in north-eastern Scotland¹²⁹ —leading the assembly in one town in the area to dissociate itself publicly from his mission.¹³⁰ He was also National Coordinator of

125. Partnership Survey (1998).

126. Oral information, 23 October 1994; cf. Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists, p.382; for English Brethren, see: *W*, 95 (1965), pp.384-6, 427-30; Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom: the radical Christianity of the house church movement* (London, 1985), pp.35-49; H H Rowdon, 'The Post-War Background to Nantwich 1991', in *idem* (ed.), *Strengthening, Growth and Planting*, pp.138-9; Brierley *et al.*, *The Christian Brethren*, pp.49, 59.

127. Partnership survey (1998).

128. T Wilson, 'BQB', *BM*, 85 (1975), p.284.

129. Oral information, 29 September 1991.

130. *BM*, 80 (1970), p.189; *BM*, 90 (1980), p.158.

Table 10.3. Educational Performance of Brethren children by sex.

	Selected for 5 yr secondary school course %	At school after leaving age %	Completing secondary course %	Entering higher education %
Boys	63	61	55	28
Girls	52	44	38	11

Source: Ian G D Ford, 'Religious affiliation and educational achievement: a note on the 'Brethren' in western Scotland', *Scottish Educational Studies*, 3, No.1 (May 1971), pp.20-4

Billy Graham's Scottish mission of 1991, and it was noted at the time that Brethren were proportionately better represented in its organisation than were other churches.¹³¹ The increasing numbers of Brethren children who remained at school or went to university or college were often deeply influenced by Scripture Union and the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (formerly IVF), interdenominational Evangelical agencies active within educational institutions.¹³² Brethren churches also became members of the Evangelical Alliance when a Scottish branch was formed in 1992.¹³³ These contacts, however, were within Evangelicalism, and any wider contact with Christians from other traditions was in general shunned. Even the more open Brethren wished to remain a protest movement against institutionalised Christianity; yet at the same time they had accepted that their movement was but one more Christian denomination. The Brethren no longer appeared as being the sole upholder of true Christianity.

The assemblies in Scotland which did innovate during the years after 1980 were perhaps only a fifth of all assemblies, and at times the innovations

131. [Beth Dickson], 'Preaching in Paradise', *H*, 71 (May 1991), p.27.

132. John Chapman, 'So you're going to college this autumn', *H*, 59 (1980), p.321; Neil Dickson, 'Thanks for the memory: W.K. Morrison', *A*, 70 (April 1991), pp.9-10.

133. Oral information, 18 April 2000.

proceeded very slowly. The complexities of the balance between innovation and conservation within churches and across the movement as a whole, and the issues which underlay them, can be seen particularly clearly from the role and status accorded to women among Scottish Brethren over this period. Male membership remained high—forty-seven per cent. of the membership of Central Evangelical Church in 1993—and men continued to dominate the movement.¹³⁴ Ian Ford found during his research in the late 1960s into the educational performance of the children of Brethren parents that the influence of a Brethren background was clearly seen in the poorer performance of girls from Brethren families (Table 10.3). Here the sharply defined roles of men and women in Brethren assemblies, Ford felt, was having an effect. In 1971 Scottish women were doing rather better than the national British ratio for university entrance of 3:2 in favour of the men. But among Brethren women the ratio was not even 5:2.¹³⁵ One consequence of the fall-off in women entering higher education is that while there are a number of male Brethren members with second degrees, until the mid-1980s it was possible to find only two native Scottish woman with doctorates. Particularly in conservative circles, a women's role continued to be defined negatively as one of silence.¹³⁶ New fashions were also the subject of much unfavourable comment,¹³⁷ and the wearing of a hat to assembly meetings came increasingly to be regarded as a litmus test of orthodoxy.¹³⁸

134. Given that membership and attendance have a high correlation in the Brethren, this figure might reasonably be compared with the 37 percent of all Scottish churchgoers who were male in 1984: Brierley and Macdonald, *Prospects for Scotland*, p.30.

135. Ford, 'Educational Achievement', pp.22-3.

136. Andrew Stenhouse, 'The service of sisters', *BM*, 88 (1978), pp.214-5; Anon, 'Why not equal rights', *BM*, 90 (1980), pp.56-8, 88-9, 116-7; James Anderson, 'A reply to a letter on women's ministry', *BM*, 90 (1980), pp.267-8; in addition J R Caldwell's *Ministry of Women* was reprinted in 1970 (*BM*, 80 (1970), pp.202-4).

137. Andrew Stenhouse, 'Christian women and modern fashion', *BM*, 80 (1970), pp.88-9.

138. D O Murray, 'The covering of the head', *BM*, 88 (1978), pp.54-6; N J Gourlay, *Church Symbols for Today: the water, the head the bread and wine* (Kansas City, KA; 1999), pp.139-78; A Sinclair, 'Does it matter where I go for fellowship?', *BM*, 109 (1999), pp.77-8; John Dunlop, 'A partner in marriage', *ibid.*, pp.228.

Changes in women's roles were felt to be motivated by 'a broad spirit of liberalism that conforms to the spirit of the age, instead of bowing humbly to the word of God.'¹³⁹ Some women found the restrictions and negative pronouncements irksome.¹⁴⁰ The lower status accorded to women among the Brethren was remarked on by several respondents in the 1988 survey of those who had left an assembly for a Baptist church. Some commented on the scope there was for women praying publicly in Baptist churches; a practice that was forbidden in most Brethren assemblies. This discontent can be related to social differences between Brethren assemblies and Baptist churches. One individual who had left in the 1980s commented, 'There is more scope in a Baptist church for the professional woman to use her gifts & more provision is made for the single woman'.¹⁴¹ The difference in attitudes within Scottish Brethren to males and females which Ian Ford had found some ten years earlier were still having an effect.

But changes came to the role of women too. The other main controversial proposal of the Swanwick conference of 1978 at which resident full-time workers had been advocated was the public participation of women. One of the speakers felt that the biblical teaching on the subject needed some cultural adaptation, a position maintained by F F Bruce in a lecture delivered before a Brethren audience earlier in that same year.¹⁴² The promotion of a public speaking role for women was strongly rejected by the conservative individuals and it was felt that such a proposal could never prove acceptable. A M S Gooding, by then editor of *Assembly Testimony*, saw that the potential effect of Swanwick would be 'more

139. Andrew Borland, *Women's Place in the Assembly* (Kilmarnock, 1969).

140. S Westbury, 'Women in the Church', *H*, 71 (March 1992), pp.17-8.

141. Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists', p.382.

142 Bamford (ed.), *Where Do We Go From Here?*, pp.10, 21-4; F F Bruce, 'Women in the Church: a Biblical Survey', *CBRFJ*, 33 (1982), pp.7-14; on the 1978 Swanwick Conference see, H H Rowdon, 'Background to Nantwich', pp.127-141.

likely to cause disunity in local assemblies than anything that has taken place in the last 50 years'.¹⁴³ His criticisms arose out of his attitude to the Bible. He did not like the idea that its message might need cultural adjustment and asserted that God 'knew all about the days in which we live and that his word is sufficient for all time, even unto the end of the age'.¹⁴⁴ Yet a public role for women came to be accepted among some Scottish assemblies, a process in which Bruce's arguments aided.¹⁴⁵ When in 1983 a series of articles in the *Harvester* also advocated the public participation of women, two letters in response came from Scotland, one from a man, the other from a woman. The former disapproved, declaring that 'The prospect is now before us of one the most serious divisions among so-called 'Christian Brethren' that has been seen'. The woman's letter commended the articles.¹⁴⁶ In the 1998 Partnership survey, two of the respondent assemblies stated that women expounding scripture was allowed and a further thirteen permitted various public roles for women, from leading the church in prayer to announcing hymns and songs.¹⁴⁷ As well as the women who were in full-time service within Scotland, there were at least two other churches which had appointed deaconesses.

Change came in other ways for women. It is doubtful that if Ford's research into the educational performance of Brethren children were to be repeated in the 1990s that there would be the imbalance between the sexes which he found. Girls are probably encouraged to go on to tertiary

143. A M S Gooding, 'Review of Swanwick Conference of Brethren', *AT*, No.160 (September/October 1979), p.101. Gooding also quoted an individual who made a similar point during discussion at the conference, see Bamford (ed.), *Where Do We Go From Here?*, p.76.

144. Gooding, 'Review of Swanwick', p.103.

145. Neil Dickson, 'Modern prophetesses: women preachers in the nineteenth-century Scottish Brethren', *RSCHS*, 25 (1993), p.117.

146. J McDerment, *H*, 63 (April 1984), p.22; E S Dickson to the editor, *H*, 63 (January 1984), p.23.

147. Partnership survey (1998).

education as much as boys.¹⁴⁸ More Brethren women now worked, as can be seen from the sharp drop in the number of housewives in Central Evangelical Church, Kilmarnock. These females had ranged from 66.7 per cent. of all identified women to 29.5 per cent. in earlier periods but consisted of only 15.5 per cent. in the case of Central (Tables 9.1, 9.3, and 10.2). However, the changes for women were slow in coming, and in some places where women were allowed to participate publicly individuals left their assemblies. By 1995 only one church permitted women to preach and there were no assemblies which had women elders. Willingness to change the role of women, however, showed that some were edging away from Fundamentalism. Although *The Believer's Magazine* regretted the pejorative connotations 'Fundamentalism' had acquired,¹⁴⁹ the move away from it among others can also be seen in a new openness to differing interpretations on issues such as biblical inerrancy, creation and hell.¹⁵⁰ 'Conservative evangelical' became the preferred term for many.¹⁵¹ The change in terminology represented a less strident approach,¹⁵² but it also demonstrated that although Scottish Brethren were innovating, they did so cautiously.

THE END OF A MOVEMENT?

The picture of Scottish Brethren after the mid-sixties is a diverse one.¹⁵³

148 Of the fourteen students in tertiary education in Central Evangelical Church, Kilmarnock, in 1993, eight were male and six were female.

149. F E [Stallan], 'Editorial', *BM*, 105 (1995), p.322.

150. [J Allan], 'The Bible's changing fortunes', *H*, 70 (June 1991), pp.4-6; A A Wilson, 'The six days of creation', *H*, 72, (March 1993), pp.12-14; [John Allan], 'A question of judgment', *H*, 73, (November 1993), pp.3, 6-7; Neil Dickson, 'The unevangelized', *ibid.*, pp.4-5; Cecil Steer to the editor, *H*, (January 1994), pp.16-7.

151. David Clarkson, 'The authority of the Scriptures', *BM*, 80 (1970), pp.7-8; cf. Touchstone [i.e. G C D Howley], *W*, 85 (1955), p.227.

152. For the distinction between Fundamentalism and conservative Evangelicalism see D W Bebbington, 'Martyrs for the truth: Fundamentalists in Britain', *SCH*, 30 (Oxford, 1993), pp.419-20; in 1995 the present writer heard the term 'fundamental Evangelical' used to describe Brethren theology by a preacher from the innovative wing of the movement.

153. Rowdon, 'Background to Nantwich', pp.133-4

Societal trends and the Brethren world view pulled apart imposing strains. Issues such as women's participation or the Charismatic movement showed the underlying conservatism of Scottish Brethren. They most easily introduced changes when they felt it would have a beneficial effect in evangelism or on their own families. Most of the resident full-time workers which were appointed were evangelists or youth workers. In 1956 A P Campbell, the Fife Bible teacher, had claimed that 'modernistic teaching has found no place in our assemblies',¹⁵⁴ and the statement was still largely true forty years later. Theological conservatism remained one of the marks of the Brethren. When changes had theological implications, such as the difficult hermeneutical and doctrinal problems raised by woman's participation, then they were less readily accepted. This caution made for a strong conservatism across all types of Scottish Brethren. Consequently Brethren identity held up better in Scotland than it did in England where the fragmentation was greater.¹⁵⁵ The elder of one large innovating assembly when questioned during a religious programme on television in 1988 as to why women did not participate publicly replied that there was no such demand from among the women.¹⁵⁶ As Ford had found in his research on educational performance, a Brethren upbringing was a more powerful influence than social factors. It is this which does not make it possible to analyse the Brethren solely in socioeconomic terms. University lecturers and wealthy businessmen could also be found among more conservative assemblies.

The division between those who were concerned to innovate by introducing new practices and those who wanted to conserve the practices

154. A P Campbell, 'Simplicity of testimony', *A Return to Simplicity: Conference of Brethren at High Leigh, September, 1956* (Rushden, [1959]), p.66.

155. H H Rowdon, *Who Are the Brethren and Does It Matter?* (Exeter, 1986), pp.7-18.

156. 'High Spirits', STV religious affairs programme, August 1988.

they had inherited from the inter-war years became the most significant and widespread issue facing Scottish assemblies after the mid-1960s. It was among those Evangelical churches and Christian fellowships which innovated in more radical measures that the loss of a wider Brethren consciousness was most marked. They often wanted to dissociate themselves from the Brethren because of the negative features they perceived in assemblies. New churches, such as Tayside Christian Fellowship, although largely Brethren in practice, claimed to be interdenominational fellowships,¹⁵⁷ and others, such as the Deeside Christian Fellowship, wrote their history omitting any reference to the Brethren.¹⁵⁸ The consequent historical rootlessness had its perils, but that such groups were not Brethren was something with which some conservative individuals were ready to agree. One writer felt that 'The Scriptures are being applied in a different way to accommodate the present state of culture' with the result that 'In many instances it would be difficult to recognise assembly features.'¹⁵⁹ There were those who tried to keep themselves clear of the developing polarities. Throughout the period, W K Morrison built bridges across assemblies of different traditions by having 'tolerance and respect... for stances which one does not personally adopt'.¹⁶⁰ Others desired a middle ground between the more radical innovators and the more intransigent conservatives. James Anderson

157. H N Pope, 'Renewal in Scotland', *H*, 63 (March 1984), p.19; *idem*, 'Tayside Christian Fellowship', in Roger Foster (ed.), *Ten New Churches* (Harrow, 1986), pp.96-7; 'Deeside Christian Fellowship', p.16; Rowdon, *Who Are the Brethren?*, pp.17-18.

158. 'History of the Church', *Deeside Christian Fellowship Church Diary*, 5 September 1993; it is this which makes it difficult to categorise: the congregation is Brethren according to the criteria adopted in the present work (see above, pp.6-7); nevertheless, although footballer Brian Irvine was mentioned above (p.424), another member of the church, Donald Meek, Professor of Celtic at the University of Aberdeen, was excluded from the list of those Brethren holding chairs (see above, pp.423-4) because of his continuing commitment to the study of Baptist churches, his own ecclesiastical background.

159. C D Pollard, 'The Lord's Assembly', *BM*, 100 (1991), p.38.

160. W K Morrison, 'Who are the Brethren?', in F A Tatford, *That the World May Know*, 7 (Bath, 1985), p.486; Dickson, 'Thanks for the memory', pp.9-10.

pled for assemblies to be 'firm on fundamentals and lax on incidentals'. The issues he listed, however, showed how difficult it was to define what fell into each category: he regarded no public role for women as a fundamental, and the use of contemporary hymnbooks and translations and meeting times (an allusion to family services) as incidentals.¹⁶¹ Each of these had significant bodies of opinion opposed to them.

In the future the division between conservationists and innovators is bound to get deeper as social change continues and more assemblies adopt radical changes such as resident full-time workers and the public participation of women. The ensuing polarisation will make the desired middle ground increasingly hard to find. And the ground has imperceptibly shifted underfoot. The issues which divide assemblies are no longer those concerning degrees of strictness in practice, but responses to social change. The fundamental differences between one tendency among Brethren and the other are not solely, in a phrase of G C D Howley, 'matters of procedure'¹⁶² but are also social and cultural ones. Unity has often been a problem for a movement as diverse as the Brethren, and it seems clear that in the future preserving it will be even more difficult. Innovating assemblies and conservative ones increasingly function as discrete groups with their own circles of preachers.

Numerically the Brethren were in overall decline, and rural and village assemblies suffered particularly. The pressures of society were strong and some of those who had pioneered new strategies were lost to the movement. Ricky Ross left before finding fame with the rock band Deacon Blue,¹⁶³ while Tom Morton left for a Charismatic community and then

161. J A[nderson], 'Editorial searchlight', *BM*, 89 (1979), p.193.

162. OA, D27/ 6/4, G C D Howley to R Rendall, 17 October 1960.

163. Ricky Flynn, 'Ricky sings the blues', *The Scotsman Weekend*, 1 June 1991, p.17.

renounced Evangelicalism before achieving prominence as a journalist and broadcaster.¹⁶⁴ Some of the prominent conservative pioneers of the sixties also became casualties.¹⁶⁵ An increased openness to Evangelicalism brought its losses for the movement too. Nitshill Evangelical Church, Glasgow, transferred to Glasgow City Mission in the early 1970s and the Holm Evangelical Church, Inverness, affiliated to the Baptist Union of Scotland in 1991.¹⁶⁶ The publishers, Pickering & Inglis, was acquired in the 1980s by another Christian publishing firm and was lost to the movement. Morale was at a low, and there was an alarming collapse of institutions which had served the Brethren well. Special Saturday conferences were less well attended. The Glasgow Half-Yearly Meetings had to reduce drastically the scale of their operations in 1981 due to falling attendance, shedding the meetings for Bible teaching which had been the main feature of the gatherings since their inception in 1865.¹⁶⁷ The Lesmahagow Camp Meeting was discontinued in 1984 after 116 years of existence.¹⁶⁸ In 1988 Netherhall, the large guest house and conference centre in Largs, closed, a casualty not only of changing holiday patterns, but also of the movement's loss of cohesion.¹⁶⁹ Brethren magazines also suffered. Because of falling circulation numbers, *The Witness* merged with *The Harvester* in 1980. Ten years later the latter had a UK circulation of around 2 000 and was in severe financial difficulties which led to its demise in 1995.¹⁷⁰ It was a victim of what some saw as its overly *avant-garde* approach,¹⁷¹ changing reading patterns and the innovative churches identifying more readily

164. Tom Morton, *Spirit of Adventure* (Edinburgh, 1992), p.150; *idem*, 'Saved by a fall from grace', *The Scotsman Weekend*, 21 March 1992, p.2

165. *BM*, 91 (1981), p.30.

166. Oral information, February 1992; Norman Cordiner to Alan Campbell, 13 January 1992.

167. For the Glasgow Half-Yearly Conferences, see above, p.107.

168. *BM*, 95 (1985), p.156; cf, above, p.91.

169. For Netherhall, see above, p.260.

170. Neil Summerton, 'Goodbye Harvester?' *H*, 69 (September 1990), pp.1-2; [John Allan], 'Comment', *A*, 74 (February/March, 1995), p.1.

171. James Oliver to the editor, *A*, 70 (January 1991), p.21.

with Evangelicalism than with the Brethren.¹⁷² The magazine of the traditionalists, *The Believer's Magazine*, avoided these trends more successfully, and its total circulation was 6 000 by 1994,¹⁷³ with perhaps some two-thirds of that number distributed within Scotland. Revivalist-type gospel missions were increasingly ineffective.¹⁷⁴ Even the zeal for evangelism which had been such a marked feature of the Scottish movement was waning and the concept of church planting has virtually been expunged. By 1990 George Russell was commenting that 'the overall wish and desire to evangelise our own country has been lost. There is a distinct lack of enthusiasm for evangelism'.¹⁷⁵ Some felt that everything the Brethren represented could well disappear.¹⁷⁶

The innovations, too, were not always successful. A creative family service failed to save Crosshill Evangelical Church, Glasgow (discontinued 1991),¹⁷⁷ or the appointment for a while of a resident full-time worker Oxfangs Evangelical Church, Edinburgh (discontinued 1992). The larger congregations had grown initially by the transfer of Brethren members rather than by the recruitment of individuals from outside the movement. The reluctance of assemblies to cooperate made it difficult for many of the problems arising out of social issues to be dealt with adequately and some of those who engaged in work among the socially disadvantaged complained that their efforts received little support.¹⁷⁸ It led to some of the new social enterprises ceasing or not remaining entirely

172. Beth Dickson, 'Goodbye to George Flett', *A*, 74 (February/March, 1995), p.15.

173. Brierley *et al.* (eds), *UK Christian Handbook 1994/5 Edition*, p.465.

174. Cf. the contrasting experiences of Irish evangelist Jim Hutchinson in one Glasgow assembly in 1952 and 1987 in James G Hutchinson, *Something of My Life: whose I am, and whom I serve Acts 27:23* (Glasgow, 1997), pp.44, 103.

175. Quoted in 'Twenty-Five Years of Change'.

176. The worst of three potential futures for the Brethren suggested by F E S[tallan], 'Editorial searchlight', *BM*, 99 (1990), p.2; the other two were 'division' and 'a closer identity with denominationalism'.

177. Noble, 'Crosshill Evangelical Church', pp.16-7.

178. A G Allan, 'Real Life', pp.15-16; Dick, 'Ashbank House Dumfries', p.15.

in Brethren hands. Politics were still avoided by the Brethren. William Craig, was unique in this period, holding office as Provost of Campbeltown from 1971 until his sudden death the following year.¹⁷⁹ Also mixed was the success of Brethren youth work. In 1984 John Allan, then a widely-travelled youth worker, reported that he had been in contact with one Scottish Brethren youth group 'of which any church would be proud' but that overall 'we're not doing too well'.¹⁸⁰ The paucity of numbers made running inter-assembly youth events difficult by the mid-1980s. Only in Glasgow did larger youth meetings continue to be held, and even there the annual Bible School founded after the Tell Scotland crusade ceased.¹⁸¹ Several larger churches had an adventurous youth work for their own young people, but they tended not to involve themselves with other assemblies. SCEM missions suffered from reduced numbers. It was, like the Glasgow Bible School, a victim of the loss of a wider Brethren consciousness among the larger congregations.

The changes have thrown up several profound problems for the movement. The experiments in new patterns of ministry have yet to achieve stability within the lay-led Brethren. Their increasing middle-class membership has meant that they have tended to lose contact with the social groups and urban areas where their recruitment was formerly most successful. This upward social mobility also has its dangers. In 1970 Ian Ford noted that if the Brethren followed the pattern of other religious movements then they would become 'materialistic'.¹⁸² Several public scandals affecting Brethren members or former members in the 1990s,

179. 'Many people at the funeral of the late Mr W.S.G. Craig', *The Campbeltown Courier*, 2 September 1972, [p.1]; the Labour MSP, Gordon Jackson QC (Glasgow Govan), left the movement before entering politics.

180. John Allan, 'Understanding young people', *H*, 63 (January 1984), p.6.

181. See above, p.250.

182. Cited in K[imber], 'Clever Christians?', p.101.

widely reported in the news media, might be seen as evidence that the prophecy was being fulfilled. The separatism of its spirituality has been what many individuals within it have been eager to leave behind, while the cerebralism of much of its piety appears anachronistic under late twentieth-century cultural trends which stress non-rationalism.¹⁸³ The conjunction of an increasing immersion in society and the loss of vitality in its spirituality has serious consequences for the movement.

No voluntary body is guaranteed a permanent place within a society but there are signs that the Brethren in Scotland will endure for some time further. Traditional evangelism can continue to recruit individuals: in one exceptional case in 1989 forty individuals were converted after a mission in Coatdyke, Airdrie.¹⁸⁴ The assemblies which responded to social changes might have been few, but some of them were the largest in Scotland, giving them a substantial percentage of the total Brethren membership. The innovating churches were obviously well represented in the 1998 Partnership survey, shown by the 54.9 per cent. (or twenty-eight congregations) in the sample which had a family service, and it was the presence of these churches which produced an overall increase in membership in the statistics.¹⁸⁵ Small rural assemblies, too, sometimes managed to reverse decline through a bold initiative, such as happened at Strathaven through the reconstituting of the congregation as an Evangelical Church, or at Tillicoultry and Chirnside through the appointment of resident full-time workers.¹⁸⁶ The increased contact with

183. For the earlier spirituality, see Chpt. 8 *passim*.

184. 'Ebenezer Hall', "*Homework*" (April/May 1989).

185. Cf. the survey for 1992-3 of sixteen innovating churches with an average membership of 130 in Peter Brierley, *Some Scottish Brethren* (London, 1994), p.1, which found that seven had had a five per cent. increase in membership, three had seen it decline by a similar amount and the other six had been static.

186. David Shields, 'How we started again', *H*, 71 (March 1992), pp.23-4; H N Pope, 'Watch this space', *H*, 73 (October 1993), pp.20-1; writer's collection, I.B.1, Kenneth Brown to the writer, 29 November 1994.

wider Evangelicalism, itself resurgent within the Christian Church, was also be a source of renewal for the movement. It lay behind the social concern found among some contemporary Brethren.¹⁸⁷ Given the energy which has often been a marked feature of the movement, it is likely that, despite the problems, many individuals and assemblies will rise to the new challenges.

The latent denominationalising tendency within Scottish Brethren was long in being fulfilled. During the period that has been surveyed in the present chapter it has begun to be realised. A significant section of the movement no longer wishes to continue in separation from the wider Evangelical world nor from society and culture. The acceptance of literature by some Brethren, for example, is one consequence of the increasing numbers of professionals.¹⁸⁸ The open emergence of denominationalising tendency, however, has finally been dependent not on any inherent dynamic of sect development, but on wider social changes from which the Brethren, because of aspects of their ethos, have been able to profit. The acceptance of the Brethren as one more of the denominations of Christianity has been accompanied with a resurgence in the innovative side of the movement. Once more its churches are pioneering appropriate forms of service and congregational patterns. They have seen modest growth, which is against the trend in post-war Britain. It might be slight and the innovations achieved slowly, but they have happened nevertheless. Contemporary Brethren churches of this type display the pragmatic and individualistic features which David Martin has claimed are characteristic of the denomination. They adopt utilitarian

187. David Bebbington, 'The decline and resurgence of Evangelical social concern', in John Wolfe (ed.), *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal: Evangelicals and society in Britain 1780-1980* (London, 1995), pp.175-97.

188. Cf. Valentine Cunningham, *Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian novel* (Oxford, 1975), p.57.

approaches to organisation and they value moderation: the congregation does not dominate the life of the individual.¹⁸⁹ These trends have provoked a reaction from those who wish to remain in sectarian isolation from church and society. Feelings run deep on both sides and the polarisation among Scottish Brethren is probably irreversible. Only the independency of the movement has saved it from a formal schism, but one exists *de facto*. The loss of cohesion and the diversity among Brethren might suggest that the concept of one 'movement' might no longer apply.¹⁹⁰ However, the division in the 1990s between conservationist and innovator is but the latest manifestation of the tension between sect and denomination which has marked the Brethren throughout their history.

189. David Martin, 'The denomination', *BJS*, 13 (1962), pp.1-14.

190. A comment made to the present writer by Professor Neil Hood on an earlier draft of this chapter; cf. Rowdon, 'Background to Nantwich', pp.139-141.

CHAPTER 11

NOTHING STATIC:

CONCLUSION

Time and again in the history of the people of God a similar call has come when a new advance must be made into the unknown and unfamiliar, to occupy fresh territory under the leadership of Jesus. There is nothing static about Him or His cause; to stand still is to fall behind Him.

—F F Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (1964), p.404.

In the early 1950s Robert Rendall visited St Andrews where he met David Melville, a retired stonemason and the mainstay of the small Brethren assembly for much of the previous half century. In a letter to Ernest Marwick, the Orcadian journalist and folklorist, Rendall described him:

he is deeply versed in local history & seems to know every stone about the place, besides having (I could see) the respect of his fellow townsmen. I've never met a more engaging guide who was warmly human. He recited to me old poems & ballads also with evident enjoyment & was enthusiastic on Samuel Rutherford, whose house & grave we visited, as well as as [sic] past civic notables of the place. A real human man & yet withal a good "brother". I wish we had more such!¹

Rendall's description raises several questions about the nature of the Brethren. Melville could identify with Protestant Evangelical tradition, Scottish culture and local society; yet the assembly in St Andrews was small, the preserve of a few. His membership of the Brethren had evidently allowed him to maintain wide interests and to develop into a sympathetic human being; yet the rarity of these attributes among contemporary Scottish Brethren is conceded. Not least among the ambiguities of the passage is that Rendall was addressing Marwick, a Presbyterian by upbringing who had converted to Episcopalianism,

1. OA, Kirkwall, N21/34/1, Robert Rendall to Ernest Marwick, Sunday night, St Andrews; (internal evidence shows that this letter was written some time between 1950 and 1956); 'David G. Melville', *W*, 90 (1961), p.275.

simultaneously glossing the Brethren favourably and lamenting their failures. The movement's relationship to its social and religious contexts was often complex. The present chapter will attempt to draw together the central polarities in relation to society of this study—integration and withdrawal, continuity and change, growth and decline—and seek to draw some conclusions.

INTEGRATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Aspects of the Brethren do not always fit easily into the ideal-type of the sect. B R Wilson has used the concept of sectarianism as a measure of the rejection of society by religious groups and their separation from it.² The variable relationships the movement had with other churches and society, from an identification with many of their aspects to a rigorous isolation from them, makes it difficult to identify a single degree of Brethren protest. Like the nineteenth-century Quakers, it contained both sectarian and denominationalising tendencies.³ The study of the movement supports the use of carefully refined models in the analysis of sects.⁴ Although the Brethren are a conversionist sect, they also have elements of the introversionist sect which directs attention away from society towards the community of believers, particularly the distinctive values it possesses, and have no special ministerial caste.⁵ There was in addition a strong adventism within the movement which encouraged them to withdraw from society. Despite this, the Brethren would not fit Wilson's typology of the adventist sect which elevates understanding of its eschatological

2. Brain R Wilson, *Sects and Society: a sociological study of three religious groups in Britain* (London, 1961), p.326; *idem*, 'An analysis of sect-development', in *idem* (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism* (London, 1967), pp.23-4; *idem*, *Religious Sects* (London, 1970), pp.7, 26-8.

3. Elizabeth A Isichei, 'From sect to denomination in English Quakers', in Wilson (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp.161-181; E A Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford, 1970), pp.10-24, 280.

4. See above, pp.22-3.

5. Wilson, 'An analysis', in *idem* (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp.28-9.

teachings above the experience of conversion.⁶ The difficulty in categorising the Brethren demonstrates the problems in constructing theoretical models. But it also shows that within the movement there were diverse understandings of its nature and purpose which arose from the emphasis given to the various strands of its doctrine.⁷

It is the variegated nature of the Brethren which makes them difficult to generalise about. Their variety was reinforced by them not developing any organisation for the regulation of affairs among assemblies, a product of their belief in the proximity of Second Advent and a quasi-mystical conception of the Church.⁸ They did not even adopt a credal statement to which members must subscribe.⁹ This independency ensured there would be considerable disparities between different geographical regions and also a range of views and practices across the entire movement. It also meant that diversity could be absorbed without producing schism. If disagreement did arise, quarrels were localised without involving the entire movement in the dispute.¹⁰ The only large-scale schism to occur was the result of the push for greater regulation through more institutionalised procedures.¹¹ The Churches of God separatists were quick to point out that those who abhorred 'loose' practices merely avoided association with those practising them and did not seek a formal split. The secession of the new body became one further reason for not

6. *Ibid.*, pp.27-8.

7. Wilson, 'Introduction', *idem* (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp.13-4, notes that the Brethren 'tolerate some diversity both in doctrine and local practice' having as the basis of association 'a common acceptance of scriptural life'. However, this is to state the matter from the point of view of the more open tendency; as will have been evident, not all within the Open Brethren would accept this statement of their position.

8. See above, p.196-7.

9. Wilson, 'Introduction', *idem* (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp.13-4. There were, however, some assemblies which had a list of their beliefs in their constitution; see above, p.388.

10. W B Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* (London [1901]), p.325.

11. See above, pp.196-211.

developing central organisations as individuals wanted to avoid the imputation of importing 'Needed Truth' doctrine. The Open Brethren did not become a single unified entity, but remained a movement. Discussion of it must be differentiated and nuanced.

The disengagement of the Brethren from Church and society is most usually attributed to their premillennial dispensationalism, a form of adventism in which withdrawal from religious and secular communities is strong.¹² But also of significance was the conversionism which they inherited from nineteenth-century revivalism. It magnified individual salvation above the redemption of society to such an extent that the latter disappeared from vision. Such revivalism promoted separatism.¹³ During periods of growth sustained by the awakenings, sectarianism intensified. The Churches of God separation arose during the greatest percentage increase in Brethren membership and there was increased sectarianism after the post-World War I growth.¹⁴ The need to educate and discipline large numbers of new converts and to resist the uniformity of the movement being eroded by them, brought an increased stress on Brethren distinctives and led to a search for a more rigorous formulation of them. Its corollary was that schism accompanied expansion as formerly concealed disagreements became evident when individuals accentuated different strands within the movement.¹⁵ However, since the mid-1960s—a period of overall decline—emphasis on the distinctiveness of the sect has been a product of the perceived internal threat to its identity;¹⁶ and the perception of external threats also lay behind sectarian intensification in earlier periods, as happened, it was argued above, during the Fundamentalist

12. See above, pp.327-8.

13. See above, pp.84-6, 111.

14. See above, Chpts 4 and 6.

15. See above, pp.146-7, 246.

16. See above, pp.436-47.

agitation of the inter-war period.¹⁷ Although for certain personality types intensifying autism had an attraction, introversion did not increase by any internal dynamic in sectarianism. It was produced by the action of historical circumstances on principles which the movement inherited from its original religious environment.

There was a continuing strand of engagement with Church and society in the Brethren. The birth of the movement through nondenominational revivalism was of significance here. The acceptance of conservative Evangelical theology meant that the separatism of the most rigorous was modified. Even when they despised its churches, they read its preachers' books.¹⁸ There always was an awareness of a wider Christian world. The early ecumenical vision of unity on the basis of shared life in Christ outside denominational boundaries was deeply embedded in Brethren thinking. It was because conversion not doctrine—'life not light'—was regarded as the test of fellowship that no credal test was adopted. Those of a sectarian tendency subtly altered the formula to make it an exclusive one, but its inclusive potential was maintained or continually being revived. The continuity with Evangelicalism was a significant denominationalising force within the Brethren.¹⁹ Not that the traffic here was all one way. Brethrenism continued to have a deep influence on conservative Evangelicalism. The piety of the former isolated it from wider secular and religious trends preserving Fundamentalist emphases which constantly reinvigorated the latter particularly after World War II.²⁰ Another denominationalising tendency was conversionism as contact had to be maintained with potential recruits. Consequently, the Open Brethren

17. See above, pp.281-95.

18. See above, pp.3-4.

19. Cf., Wilson, 'An analysis', in *idem* (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism*, p.30.

20. For a similar point about premillennialism, cf. D W Bebbington, 'The advent hope in British Evangelicalism since 1800', *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies*, 9 (1988), p.110.

never adopted extreme forms of separation, such as that eventually adopted by the main body of British Exclusive Brethren.²¹ The enduring importance of evangelism also ensured that 'preaching the gospel' would offer another polarity from the introversionist stress on 'church truth'. A similar pull was exercised by an emphasis on Christian ethics as opposed to ecclesiastical purity.²² These strands within Brethrenism enabled its adherents to identify sympathetically with Christians outside the movement. They also sympathised with aspects of the British state which additionally enabled Brethren members to associate with many of its aspirations. They were in favour of strong civil government, and many found much to admire in British society. These factors were probably most evident during World War I when even those who argued for conscientious objection to fighting did not question the right of the state to pursue its war aims.²³ The Brethren were not uniformly marked by withdrawal.

Some managed to achieve a remarkable degree of integration with their communities and came to be accepted as its representative individuals.²⁴ Brethrenism did not encourage a missionary engagement with culture—their faith generally encouraged its rejection, not its transformation.²⁵ For figures such as David Beattie and John Borland mediation between faith and culture was probably provided by the literary Kailyard, with its Christian roots and its idealisation of the Scottish peasantry.²⁶ It enabled them to feel they were obeying the Pauline

21. See above, pp.3-4.

22. See above, pp.340, 349-50.

23. See above, pp.274-82, 389-91.

24. For one of the most remarkable interactions between a Scottish missionary and a non-Western culture, see Dan Crawford, *Thinking Black: 22 years without a break in the long grass of Central Africa* (London, 1912).

25. For these motifs in Christian history, see H Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (London, 1952), pp.58-92, 192-228.

26. See above, pp. 284, 399.

injunction to think on things that were true, pure, and of good report.²⁷ Robert Rendall rejected the sentimentality of the Kailyard nor, despite his affinities with it, did he look for inspiration to the contemporary Scottish Literary Renaissance, with its modernist origins and antipathy to Evangelicalism, but drew on 'the perennial urge in man's heart towards a life in the country' encouraged by Georgian and classical poetry.²⁸ The influences from popular and high culture gave these individuals a way of perceiving Scotland—in many ways a pre-modern Scotland before its invasion by contemporary hostile forces—which highlighted areas common to faith and Scottish culture and that allowed integration with the latter. A denominationalising tendency was also a consequence of geography. Those individuals who engaged in interdenominational cooperation or the affairs of society or their local culture, tended to be found in cities or remoter areas. Nondenominational revivalism flourished in the city, and often these individuals belonged to its middle classes, while in some rural areas society was more homogeneous and the protest against it was milder. However, moderate sectarianism was a feature of the movement in general. Although it certainly displayed withdrawal, it avoided the more extreme measures of isolation and in this regard is a typical British sect.²⁹ The largest such body in Scotland for much of the twentieth century, it reflected the temperate nature of the community in which it subsisted.³⁰

27. Phil. 4:8.

28. Robert Rendall, dustjacket flyleaf of *Country Sonnets and Other Poems* (Kirkwall, 1946); see also, Neil Dickson, 'Robert Rendall: a life', in idem (ed.), *An Island Shore: selected writings of Robert Rendall* (Kirkwall, 1990), pp.17-49.

29. Wilson, *Sects and Society*, p.2.

30. This generalisation could be modified by examining the Brethren regionally: perhaps the more rigid Lanarkshire Brethren reflected less temperate industrial and social relations.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Identification with Evangelicalism and with aspects of culture and society gave the Brethren continuity with their religious and secular background. This continuity was evident in something as seemingly remote from the setting as Brethren spirituality.³¹ Yet because of the withdrawal from Church and society a convert entering the movement was probably more aware of the change from his former life.³² Alteration also marked the Brethren over their history. Successive phases can be detected: the pre-1859 Bowesite movement, the expanding body after the mid-nineteenth century revivals, the established sect of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the post-1960s renovations. How marked these successive phases were can be seen in the changing roles offered to women.³³ The development of the Brethren was produced by both external circumstances acting on them and the necessity for internal organisation. Change within the movement often tended to be in a sectarian direction. The presectarian Bowesite phase, recapitulated in the aftermath of the awakenings of the 1860s, was surpassed by an intensification of sectarianism in the later nineteenth century. The secession of the Churches of God was because of the desire for increased sectarianism.³⁴ But, as the lament of J R Caldwell hankering after the earlier nondenominational phase showed,³⁵ the balance had also shifted within the Open Brethren. Those who wished to maintain the initial presectarian condition had been successfully resisted. In the second quarter of the twentieth century there was further intensification of sectarianism. The things that those who called for an increased purity were objecting to, such as interdenominationalism or the acceptance of newer evangelistic

31. See above, Chpt 8 *passim*.

32. However, an Evangelical proselyte might be less conscious of change.

33. See above, pp.91-7, 187-91, 302-6, 443-6.

34. See above, pp.196-211.

35. See above, pp.214-15, 223-4.

forms adopted from contemporary Evangelicalism, showed that they were resisting a potentially denominationalising tendency. Those who were in favour of increased sectarianism within the various types of Brethren appealed to the movement's first principles and saw themselves as being in continuity with them. Institutionalisation proceeded, not through the adoption of structures, but by a firmer application of doctrine and ideology. Within the Brethren change often meant increasing rigidity rather than increasing flexibility.³⁶

Novel patterns and ideas were accepted in the early years of the movement, some of which arose out of the new light that it had discovered in scripture. This new interpretation was itself the product of the cultural and religious background out of which the movement had grown, and other new practices and attitudes of the Brethren can be directly traced to this setting.³⁷ After the initial creative burst, however, innovation was not welcomed. The emergence of a reified social order having an apparently objective existence as part of the nature of things made innovation difficult to justify.³⁸ It was continuity with the Brethren past that was stressed. Both the denominationalising tendency and the sectarian one found support for its case in history: both used the text 'Holding fast the faithful word'.³⁹ The fixed understanding of scripture which the appeal to this particular text and others like it demonstrated showed how difficult change was for all forms of Brethren.⁴⁰ When first principles are perceived as being divinely given, modification is impossible.⁴¹ Brethren ideology also reinforced resistance to innovation.

36. Cf. Isichei, 'English Quakerism', p.161.

37. See above, pp.84-90.

38. Cf. Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge* (1966), Penguin edn (Harmondsworth, 1967), pp.65-109.

39. See above, p.226, n.286.

40. See above, pp.218-24.

41. Wilson, 'Introduction', in *Patterns of Sectarianism*, p.11

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries optimism in human capabilities was high, giving birth to liberal theology in the mainline denominations. The Brethren belonged to a popular groundswell which felt pessimistic about society's direction, and the notion of progress was regarded with hostility. In addition, the mindset of Brethren, with its roots—albeit very long ones—in Scottish Commonsense philosophy led to a delight in categorisation of doctrine and practice which inhibited innovation.⁴² The movement had a predisposition towards conservation.

The exception in much of this inherent caution was evangelism. The need to keep in contact with potential recruits meant that change was more readily accepted here than in any other area. The Brethren had kept organisation to a minimum, but the need to organise for evangelism eroded open gospel meetings and allowed inter-assembly committees to emerge.⁴³ The central institutions which the Brethren developed, HFMF and SCEM, were for foreign mission and evangelism respectively.⁴⁴ Increased social change in the twentieth century altered attitudes to change. The emergence of increasing pragmatic innovations since the 1960s demonstrates how the denominationalising tendency has been strengthened. However, this trend did not unfold as a necessity of sect development. It is as Brethren members have shared in the general prosperity of post-war Scotland, and have found themselves able to take advantage of it because of factors contained in their ethos, that accommodation to society has increased. However, it should be noted that this process is not uniform and many whose socioeconomic position has improved still display sectarian features. The alterations have again been most readily undertaken in evangelism, but they are beginning to affect

42. See above, pp.330, 336.

43. See above, pp.179, 180.

44. For HFMF, see above, p.180, and for SCEM, see above, pp.414-15.

other areas of assembly life. Those who are innovating often do not always see themselves in continuity with the Brethren past but identify their church as one within the wider Evangelical world, something that those who disagree with them would concur. Brethren denominational potential has taken long to be fulfilled, dependent finally on societal trends. The contemporary movement is undergoing profound changes which raise problems over continuity.

GROWTH AND DECLINE

By the early twentieth century the Brethren were pervasive enough within Scottish society to turn up in novelistic backgrounds as diverse as an Orkney agricultural fair or the churchgoers of Montrose.⁴⁵ The popular nature of their piety often made them appear comic, even to themselves.⁴⁶ It became the subject of criticism by writers commenting on Scottish society: the domination of their life by the assembly; their hell-fire preaching and fissiparous nature; the drabness of their abstemiousness; their peculiarities which were forced on the young; and their repression of the individual.⁴⁷ They became a by-word for religious oddity or awkwardness. In his autobiography Eric Linklater described an eccentric neighbour and Brethren member, Billy Pin-Leg, famed for his meanness

45. Eric Linklater, *White Maa's Saga* (1929) Penguin edn (Harmondsworth, 1963), p.85; Willa Muir, *Imagined Corners* (1935) Cannongate edn: (Edinburgh, 1987)), p.67.

46. For examples, see F F Bruce, *In Retrospect: remembrance of things past* (London & Glasgow, 1980), pp.24; Tom Morton, *Red Guitars in Heaven* (Edinburgh, 1994), pp.26-42, 55-75.

47. For this list, see respectively: J M Porteous, *Brethren in the Keelhowes*, 6th edn (London, 1876), p.136; Christopher Rush, 'Me and My St Monans', in *Peace Comes Dropping Slow* (Edinburgh, 1983), p.7; William McIvanney, *A Gift From Nessus* (1968) Mainstream edn (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.60-1; Morton, *Red Guitars*; William McIvanney, *The Kiln* (London, 1996), pp.180-1.

among the generous Orcadians.⁴⁸ The Brethren member in A A Thomson's novelistic portrait of Yorkshire small-town life who resists the installation of an organ in the assembly and refuses to return when he loses, is a Scotsman.⁴⁹ These rebellious personality types were not alone: the relative autonomy of action which the movement granted attracted them, and they became a further cause of the numerous schisms.⁵⁰

Other criticisms were levelled at the Brethren. There was the boredom that the young felt during lengthy meetings. The poet William Montgomerie, son of a Vernalite evangelist, described the breaking of bread of his boyhood:

together we watch the cover glass
sweat over the wine
and drip
twice every weary hour⁵¹

There were those within it who criticised facets of the movement.⁵² Perhaps, given the restrictions placed on their activities for much of its history, many women found some of its aspects constricting.⁵³ But whether Brethrenism could assist individual growth was most acute for those facing change in their own lives. Despite the hesitations of Mary Gibson, the prospective missionary, over her romance with A J Cronin,

48. Eric Linklater, *The Man On My Back* (London, 1941), p.11. 'Billy Pin-Leg' was Billy Robertson, a member of the Harray Open Brethren assembly who was regarded by his fellow members as an eccentric and whose contributions in the morning meeting were often felt to be tiresome. After one such occasion, when a piece of plaster fell from the hall roof narrowly missing him, it was humorously seen as a judgement: oral information, August, 1989; see also the encounter, apparently with Brethren preacher Robert Broadbent of Wallasey, described in H V Morton, *In Scotland Again* (London, 1933), pp.91-4; cf. [William Cochrane], *Excerpt from Mr. H. V. Morton's Book, entitled "in Scotland Again" Re Mr. R. Broadbent, Evangelist. With copy of letter sent by Mr. W. Cochrane, Newmilns, and letter of acknowledgement from Mr. H.V. Morton* (n.p., n.d.).

49. A A Thomson, *The Exquisite Burden* (1935), rpt, (London, 1962), pp.185-199.

50. Cf. the experience of two itinerants in Scotland, G H Lang, *An Ordered Life* (London, 1959), pp.176-7; James G Hutchinson, *Something of My Life: whose I am, and whom I serve Acts 27:23* (Glasgow, 1997), p.103; cf., Wilson, *Sects and Society*, p.352.

51. William Montgomerie, 'Breaking of Bread', in *idem, From Time to Time: selected poems* (Edinburgh, 1985), p.11.

52. See above, pp.349-50.

53. See above, pp.303-4, 443-4.

she eventually gave up her ambition and in 1922 married him.⁵⁴ In *Shannon's Way* Cronin has the character whose situation corresponds to hers come to a crisis during which she realises that the Brethren worldview is too narrow in not embracing Roman Catholics. She asks if God intended 'that one should live in the darkness of lies, and the other in the light of truth? If so, Christianity was meaningless.'⁵⁵ Her faith is broadened. Before the 1980s the best known of those who left was William Blane, the hymn-writer.⁵⁶ After his emigration in 1883 to South Africa he helped establish the assembly in Johannesburg and became a highly successful manager in the goldmines.⁵⁷ He found the country a place of 'strange new temptations'⁵⁸ and later a much-loved daughter died. His poems hint darkly at aridity and alienation.⁵⁹ When he returned to Britain in 1911 he did not rejoin the Brethren, and it would appear he had become a believer in a Tennysonian wider hope.⁶⁰ His poetry shows that the experience of leaving was difficult, as it was for many others.⁶¹ Abandoning the security of the sect was often a painful step in self-development.

Whatever might have been true for individuals, however, the Brethren did attain considerable popularity within Scotland. Despite the prohibitions, women composed the majority of the membership and

54. See above, pp.272-3; Elizabeth Robertson, 'Doctor Despair', 6 July 1996, *The Herald Weekend Extra*, p.10.

55. A J Cronin, *Shannon's Way* (1948), NEL edn (London, 1979), p.287

56. See above, pp.346, 347.

57. *The Weekly Supplement for Galston, Newmilns Darvel and Hurlford*, 14 January 1883; 'James Goch', *W*, 64 (1934), p.48; J S Borland, 'Humble Galston boy won fame as engineer: a tribute to William Blane', *Irvine Valley Times*, 28 May 1964, p.6.

58. William Blane, 'Returning by the book', *W*, 22 (1892), p.132; cf. *idem*, 'South Africa' *BP*, 5 (January 1884), pp.8-11.

59. Cf. *idem*, 'The Silent Land: a Dream', in *The Silent Land and Other Poems* (London, 1906), pp.1-13;

60. *Idem*, "These Three", in *The Verse of William Blane* (Oxford, 1937), p.92; [W Hoste], 'The Verse of William Blane, C.B.E.', *BM*, 46 (1937), p.272;

61. William Blane, 'The Castaway', in *Silent Land*, pp.42-3.

evidently a number of them joined without the imposition of male authority, being either single or having husbands who were not members.⁶² If the Brethren had been as completely destructive of fulfilment as the critics suggested, it is hard to see why they achieved substantial numerical strength or won respect within their communities. The extent of Brethren membership must not be exaggerated. If the calculation of 30 000 members in 1933 (one of their years of maximum strength) is accepted as accurate,⁶³ then at that point they comprised only some 1.95 per cent. of all Protestant church members⁶⁴ and some 0.62 of the Scottish population.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, their growth and wider influence through Sunday schools and children's meetings lends support to the growing body of evidence that working-class adherence to religion has been seriously underestimated.⁶⁶ Both ideological and socioeconomic factors were important for this growth. The nineteenth-century Protestant churches attempted to re-Christianise Scotland, and the initial growth of the Brethren was due to the crusade promoted by them. Revivalism entered deeply into the soul of Brethrenism. It became a movement directed towards expansion. Evangelicalism has from its inception contained an international dimension, and in nineteenth-century revivalism were transmitted currents in popular ideology which were

62. See above, p.365-6.

63. See above, p.244, n.101 for discussion of this figure.

64. This calculation is based on figures given in David P Thomson, *The Scottish Churches' Handbook* (Dunfermline, 1933), supplemented by more accurate figures, where available, in Robert Currie, Alan D Gilbert and Lee Horsely, *Churches and Churchgoers: patterns of religious growth in the British isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977); if the estimated Roman Catholic population in 1934 is included (none is available for 1933), then the percentage of Brethren members becomes 1.39 per cent. of all orthodox Christian church members.

65. Based on size of the Scottish population in 1931, Michael Flinn (ed.), *Scottish Population History from the 17th Century to the 1930s* (Cambridge, 1977), p.302. Table 5.1.1.

66. For the literature, see above p.25, ns 111 and 112.

transatlantic in scope.⁶⁷ The Brethren in Scotland were a product of trends which drew the Scottish churches into a wider British religious life.⁶⁸ The emergent movement expressed a greater faith in lay agency, a zeal for restored communities and a heightened supernaturalism which were contained within nineteenth-century religious life.⁶⁹ The movement grew best where change had undermined traditional social controls most, and this largely meant industrialised communities (see Maps 7-13). Change allowed new ideas to penetrate society and it also provoked a flight towards a new meaning and security for life. Both factors produced Brethren growth. The pattern of that growth supports the model developed by Callum Brown.⁷⁰ The major period of increase for the movement was the late nineteenth century with Brethren advancement slowing against that of the population probably in the mid-1890s.⁷¹ Absolute growth peaked in the mid-1930s, but serious decline did not set in for another thirty years.⁷² Within the general pattern smaller peaks and troughs can be detected: surges in additions during 1845-51 and 1920-5, and some declension due to emigration before World War I.⁷³ Although internal factors of the movement were behind this growth pattern, its

67. Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport, CT, 1978); John Kent, *Holding the Fort: studies in Victorian revivalism* (London, 1978); Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopias: Glasgow and the United States 1820-1920* (Aberdeen, 1984); *idem*, 'Hands Across the Sea: the english speaking transatlantic religious world (1820-1920) *Hispania Sacra*, 40 (1988), pp.853-66; *idem*, 'The Scottish religious identity in the Atlantic World 1880-1914', in Stewart Mews (ed.), *SCH*, 18 (1982), pp.505-18; Mark Noll, David W Bebbington, George A Rawlyk (eds), *Evangelicalism: comparative studies of popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and beyond 1700-1990* (New York, 1994); George A Rawlyk and Mark A Noll (eds), *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Montreal, 1994); for the eighteenth century see W R Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge, 1993).

68. Brown, *Social History of Religion in Scotland*, pp.14-9; cf., D W Bebbington, 'Religion and national feeling in nineteenth-century Wales and Scotland', in Stuart Mews (ed.), *SCH*, 18 (Oxford, 1982), pp. 489-503.

69. See above, Chpt, 2 *passim*, pp.90-7, 116-18.

70. For the literature, see Brown's works listed above, p.25, ns110, 111.

71. See above, p.162.

72. See above, p.270.

73. See above, pp.57-65, 162-4, 234-8.

correspondence with that of other Protestant churches in Scotland demonstrates that external societal factors operated on the Brethren in common with other Christian bodies. As a conversionist sect, they were not isolated from trends affecting religious adherence.

One further cause of Brethren growth is the manner in which aspects of the movement correlated with the communities of Lowland Scotland. The Bowesite movement was a democratised Christianity, rejecting secular and religious establishments, empowering ordinary people and longing for a transformed order.⁷⁴ The later Brethren movement was also the expression of a more demotic faith, and it was a modernising force, reflecting the new nineteenth-century order of mass democracy. However, eventual fear of the emergent political system, which seemed about to unleash anarchy to Brethren eyes, made their apolitical stance a fundamentally conservative one.⁷⁵ The rejection of politics also meant that they failed to develop a social critique, although members such as Sir John Henderson and James Barbour attempted on an individual level to ameliorate the conditions of the working classes.⁷⁶ However, the separatism of the movement, its remoteness from centres of power, and extreme independency did not make it amenable to political control. Instead the movement continued to reflect aspirations of the lower-middle and working classes. It promoted values which made individuals productive members of their society, supported community equability, and aided individual development. It aided the stability of British society. The Brethren appealed to individuals with longings for autonomy and self-improvement. It was among them that the movement grew rather than the indigent, and in turn it provided opportunity for their self-

74. See above, Chpt 3, *passim*.

75. See above, pp.391-4.

76. See above, pp.397-8.

development. This appeal can be seen in Brethren eschatology. Although an element of chiliasm as the disinherited of society seeking compensation in a future where they became rulers might occasionally be detected in Brethren views, it primarily had an ideological function for them. It provided its exponents with a total system by which to understand society and gave almost endless scope for intellectual exploration and speculation. It was as a system of meaning, not compensation, that it appealed.⁷⁷ The pronounced streak of cerebralism in Brethren spirituality, fuelled by the productions of their publishers, gave ample scope to the Scottish desire for self-improvement through learning. The movement belonged to the lower-middle and more prosperous working classes and it continued aspects of their culture. Its early gospel halls, especially, the self-built ones, qualify as John Betjeman's 'true architecture of the people',⁷⁸ and the social life of assemblies reflected the life of the groups to which they belonged.⁷⁹ Their ethos cultivated a form of individual growth that continued features of the social strata in which it flourished. The conjunction between Brethren culture and that of Lowland communities partly explains the growth of the movement.

The strict behavioural boundaries set by Brethrenism always made the movement's growth self-limiting at any point in its history. Since the 1960s membership has fallen sharply. Psychologically, in a movement whose mechanisms are designed to produce recruitment, the declension has created frustrations which Brethren of all shades of opinion can be found expressing. There are, however, problems specific to the different wings of the movement. The change in the conditions of society from

77. See above, pp.380-3.

78. John Betjeman, 'Nonconformist architecture', *The Architectural Review*, 88 (1940), pp.161-174.

79. See above, p.401.

those in which the movement flourished creates a difficulty for those who wish to conserve traditional patterns. The continuity which the Brethren showed with their environment was what made them successful within it. The contemporary conservative assemblies, however, do not find any clear correspondence between the values latent in their practices and their social setting. This makes recruitment difficult. As they become smaller sectarianism is intensified as identity is threatened. The danger is that ossification will lead to terminal decline.⁸⁰ There are also obstacles for those who wish to innovate. Their churches are products of cultural and social forces which are either obsolete or from which they have become isolated through social mobility. The dilemma for them is how to transmute into new forms which are authentic expressions of their members' lives—although in the process they may cease to be Brethren. The future of the movement is uncertain. Whatever course events take, they will continue to show a complex interplay with a constantly shifting culture and society which has been the mark of Scottish Brethren history.

80. Cf. Wilson, 'Introduction' in *idem* (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism*, p.11.

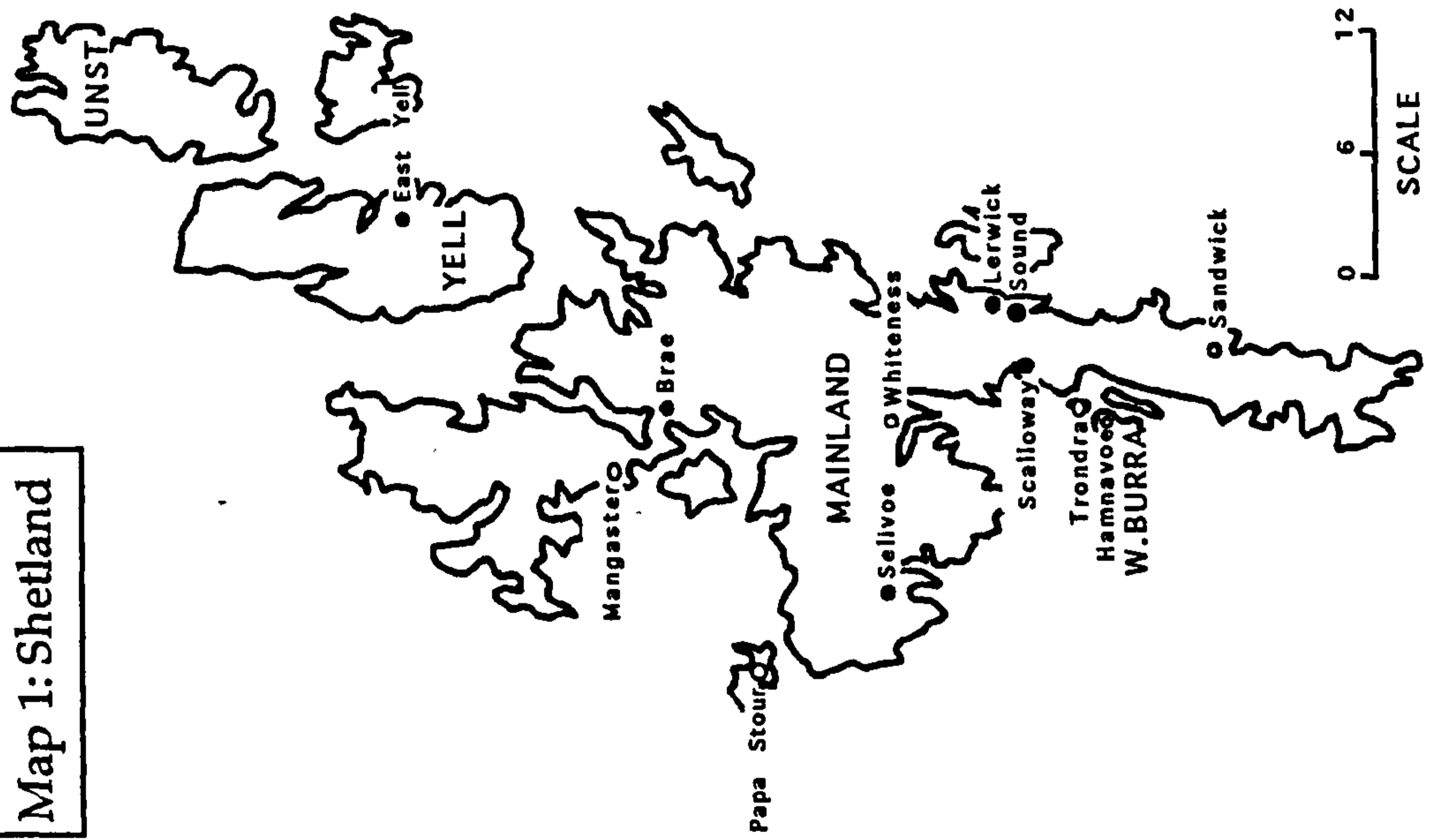
APPENDIX 1

MAPS

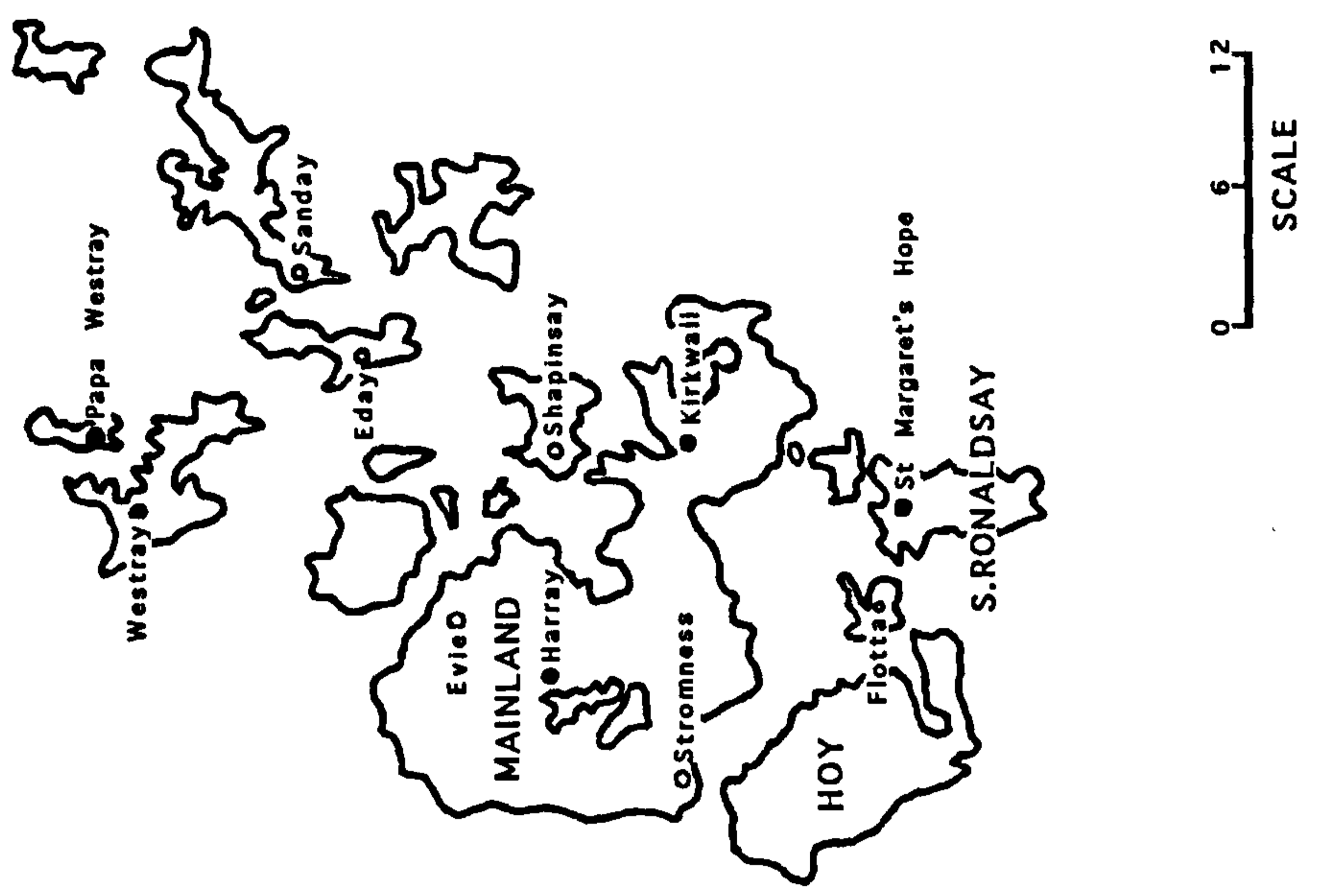
KEY

- Existing assembly (1999)
- Discontinued assembly (1999)

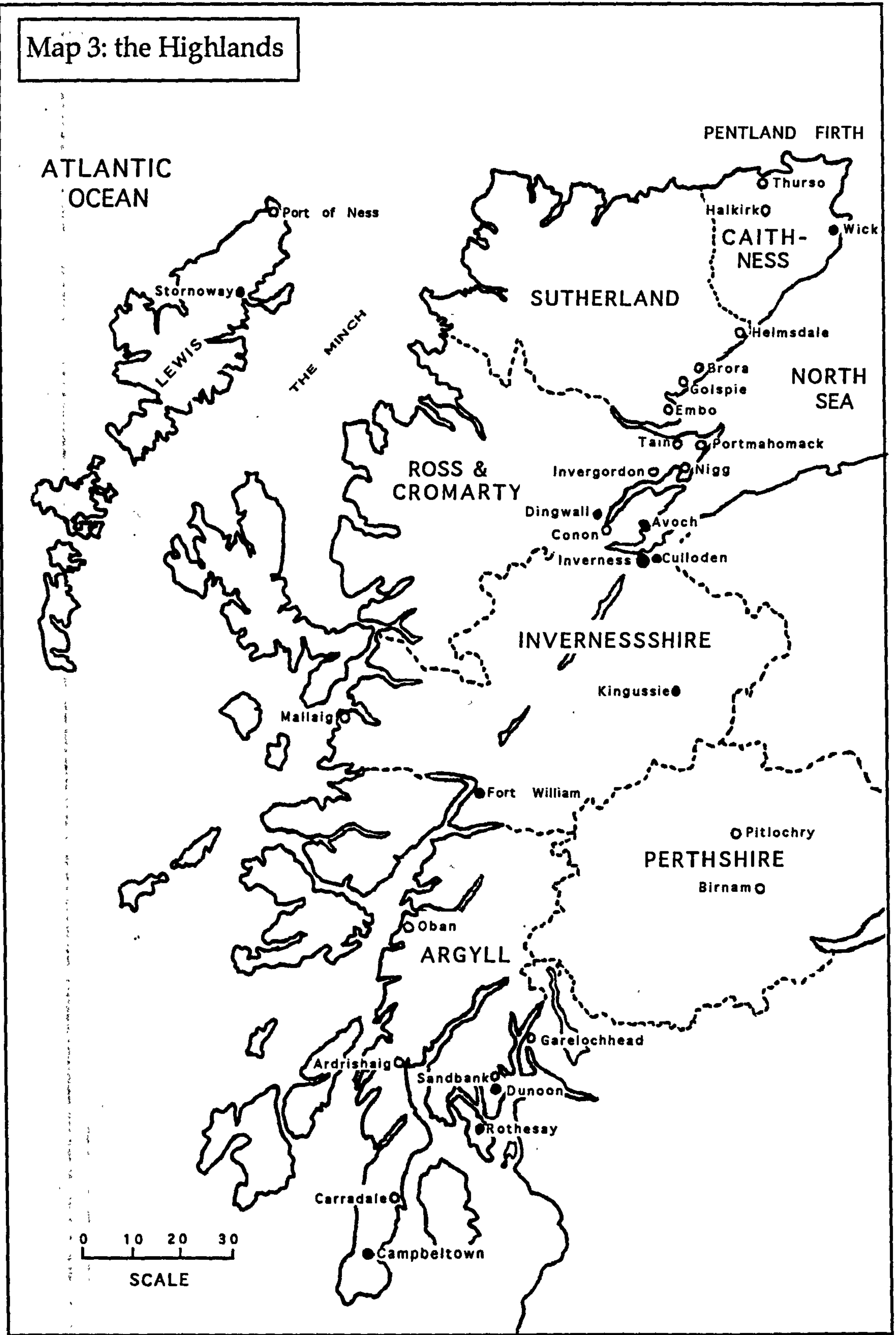
Map 1: Shetland

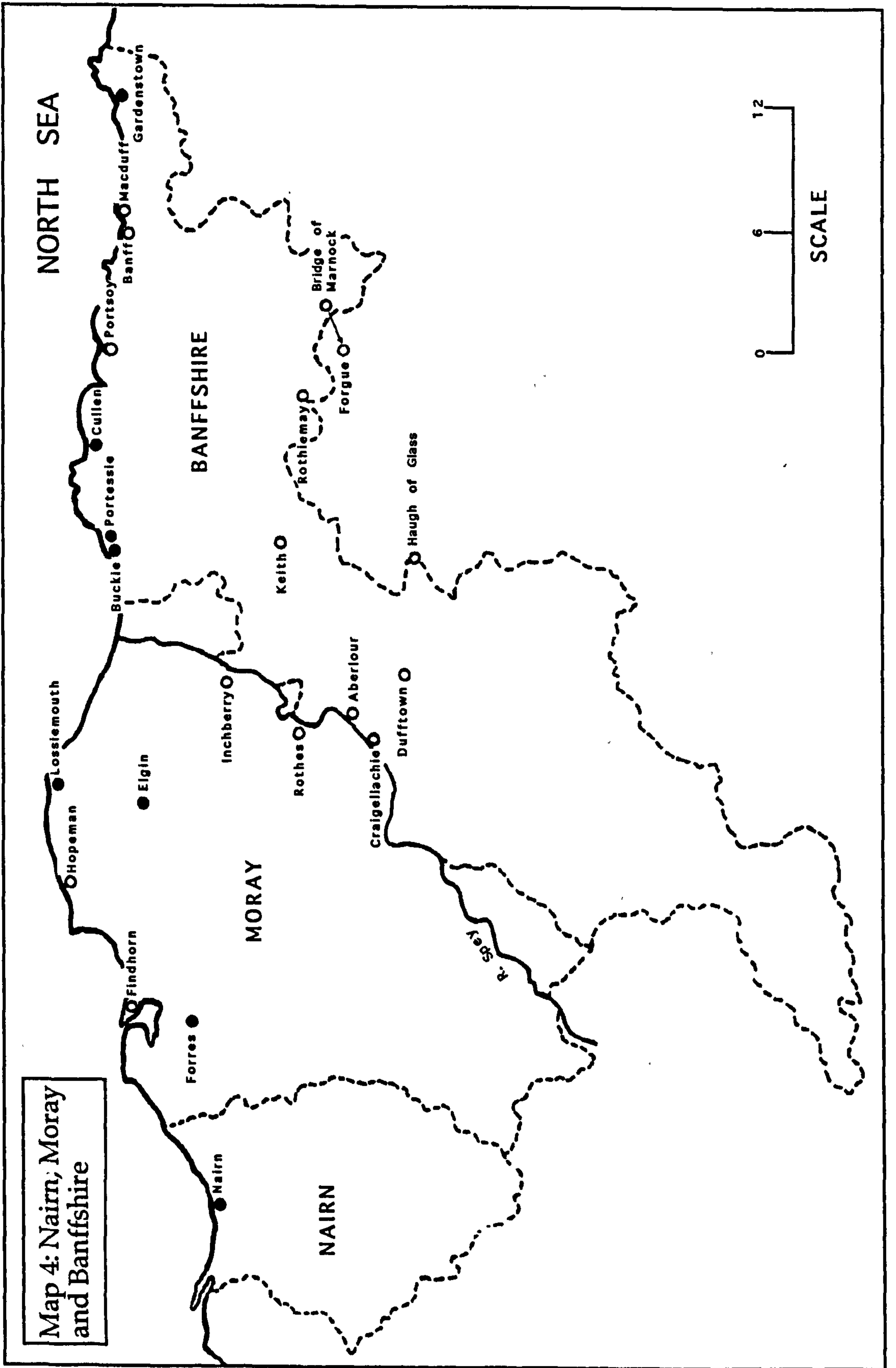


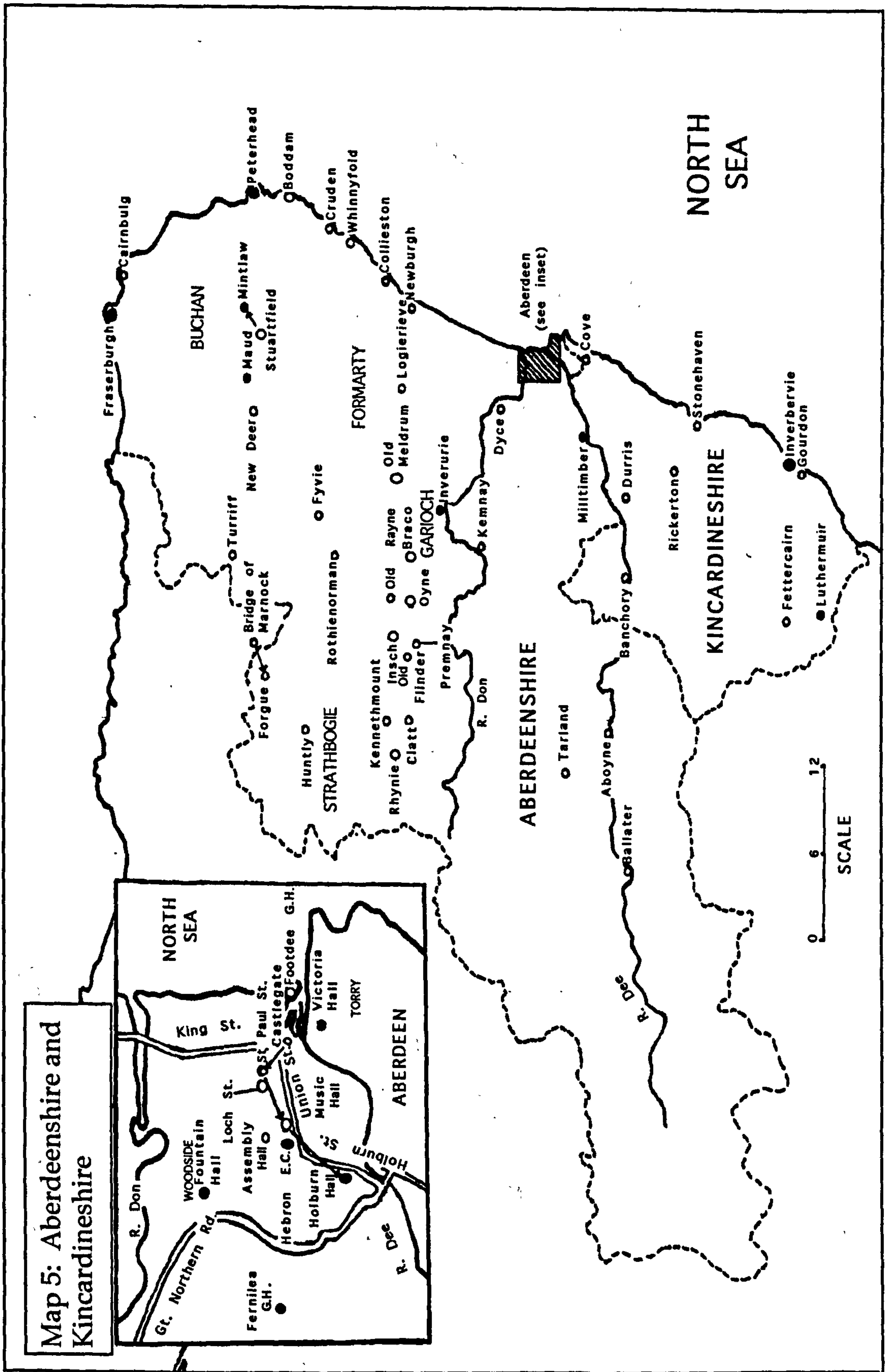
Map 2: Orkney



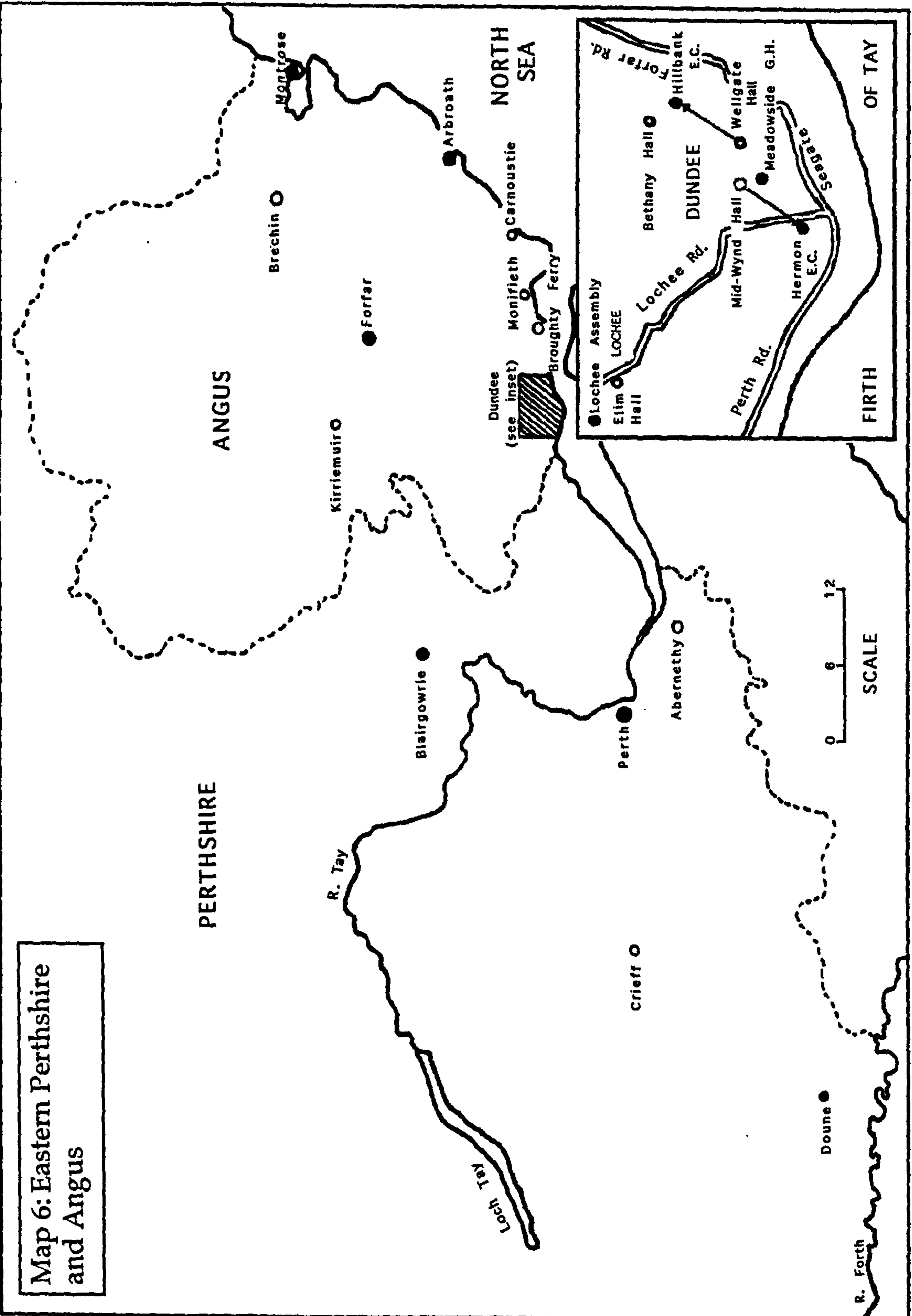
Map 3: the Highlands

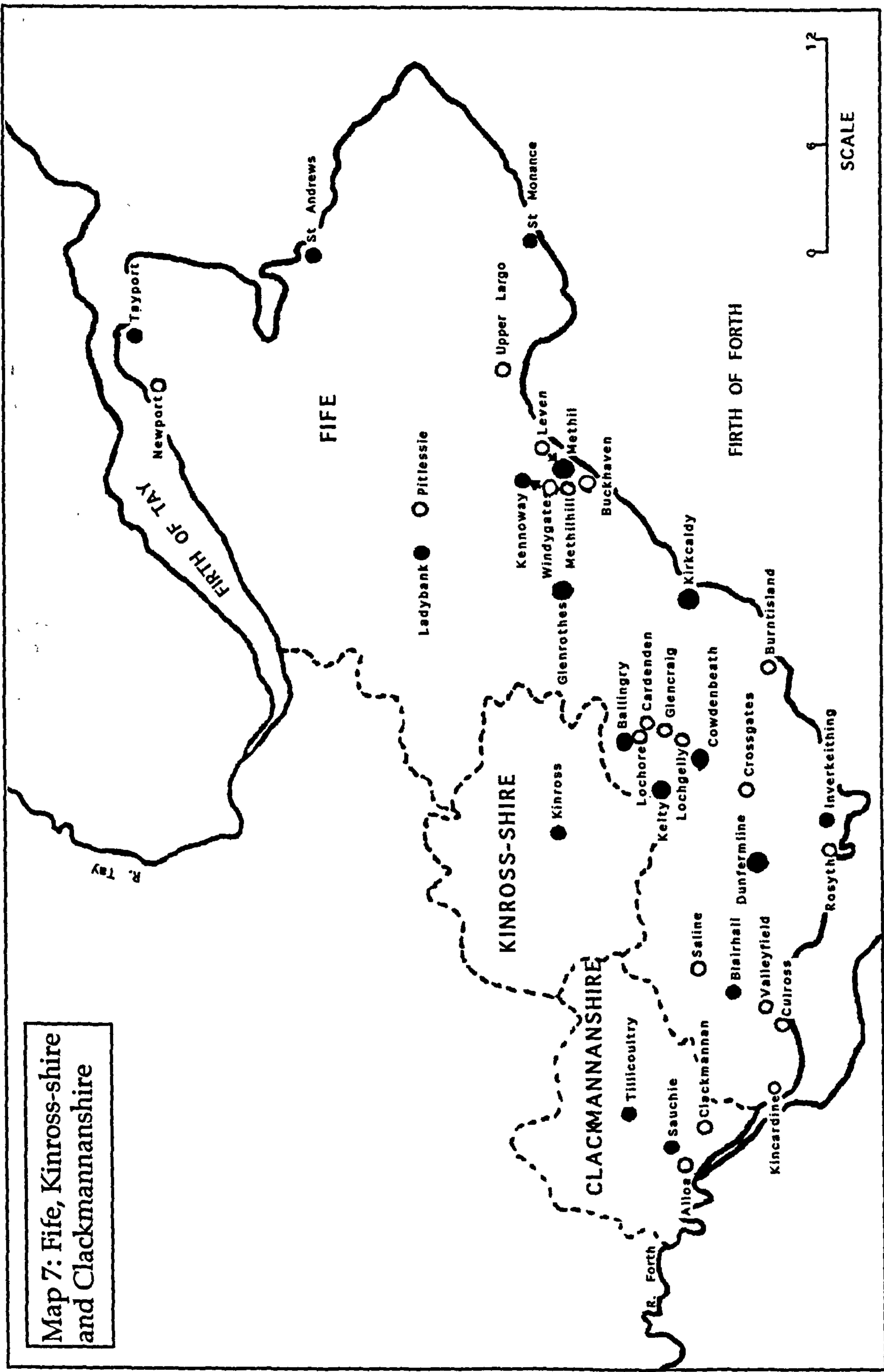




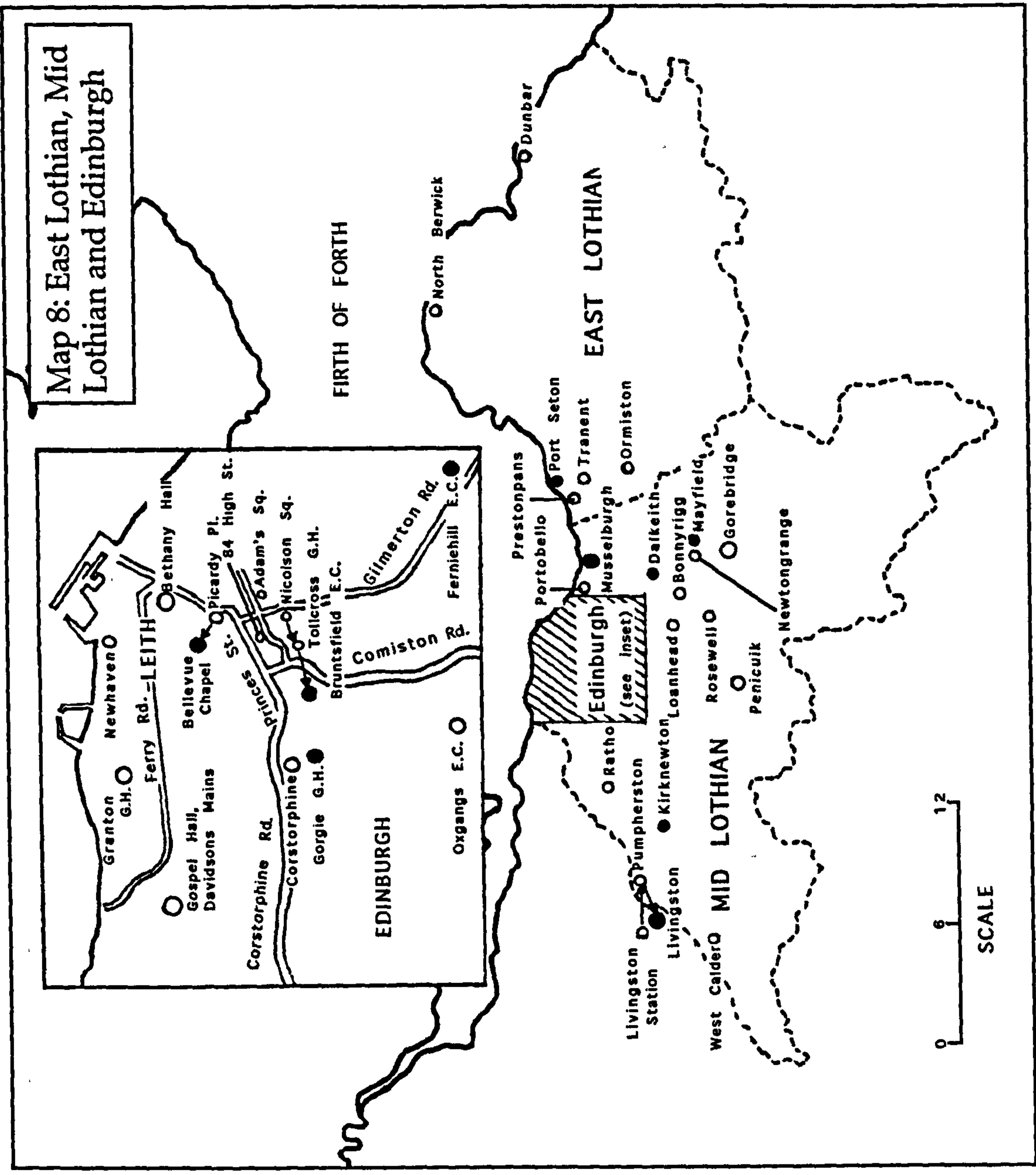


Map 6: Eastern Perthshire and Angus

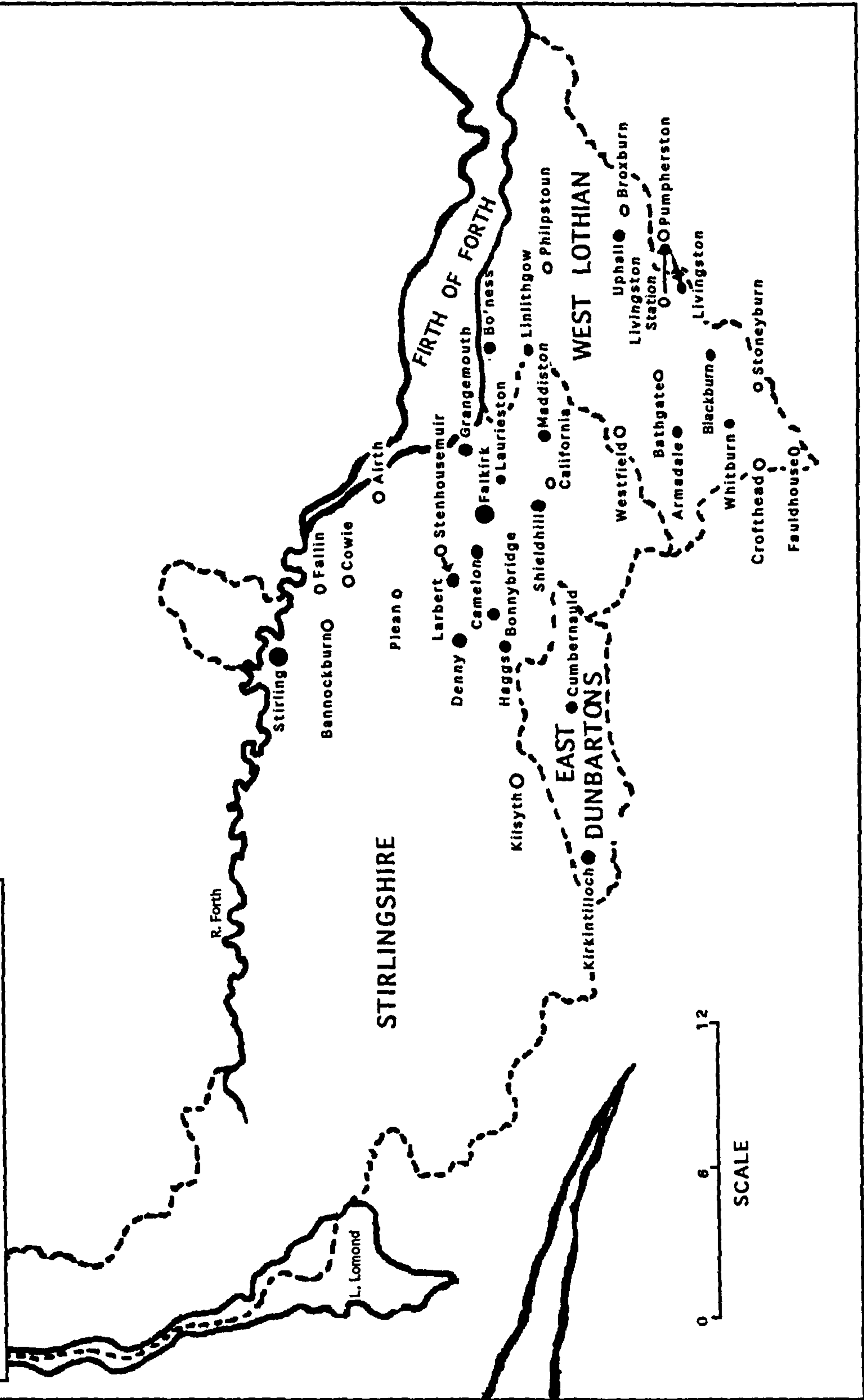




Map 8: East Lothian, Mid Lothian and Edinburgh



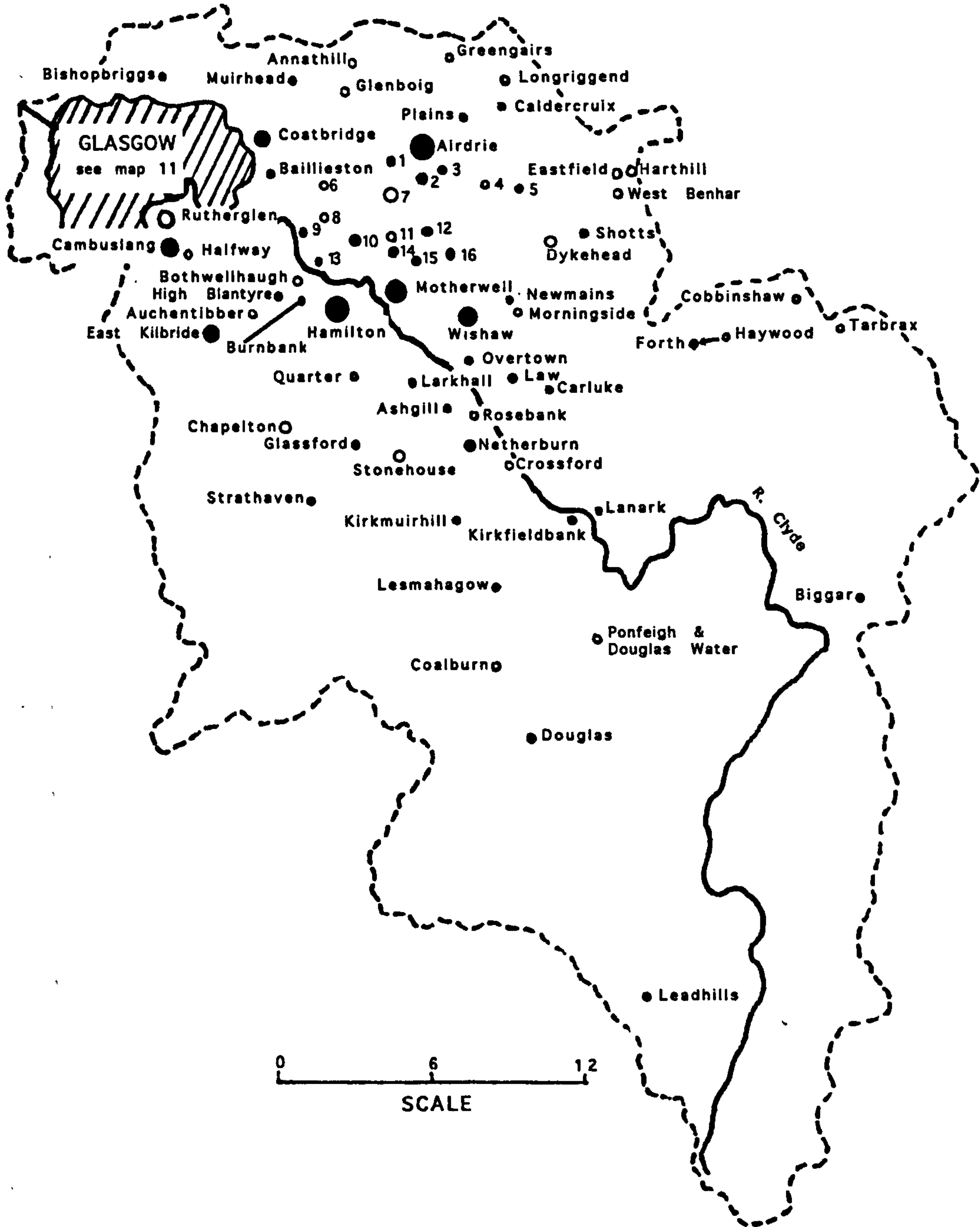
Map 9: West Lothian, Stirlingshire and East Dunbartonshire



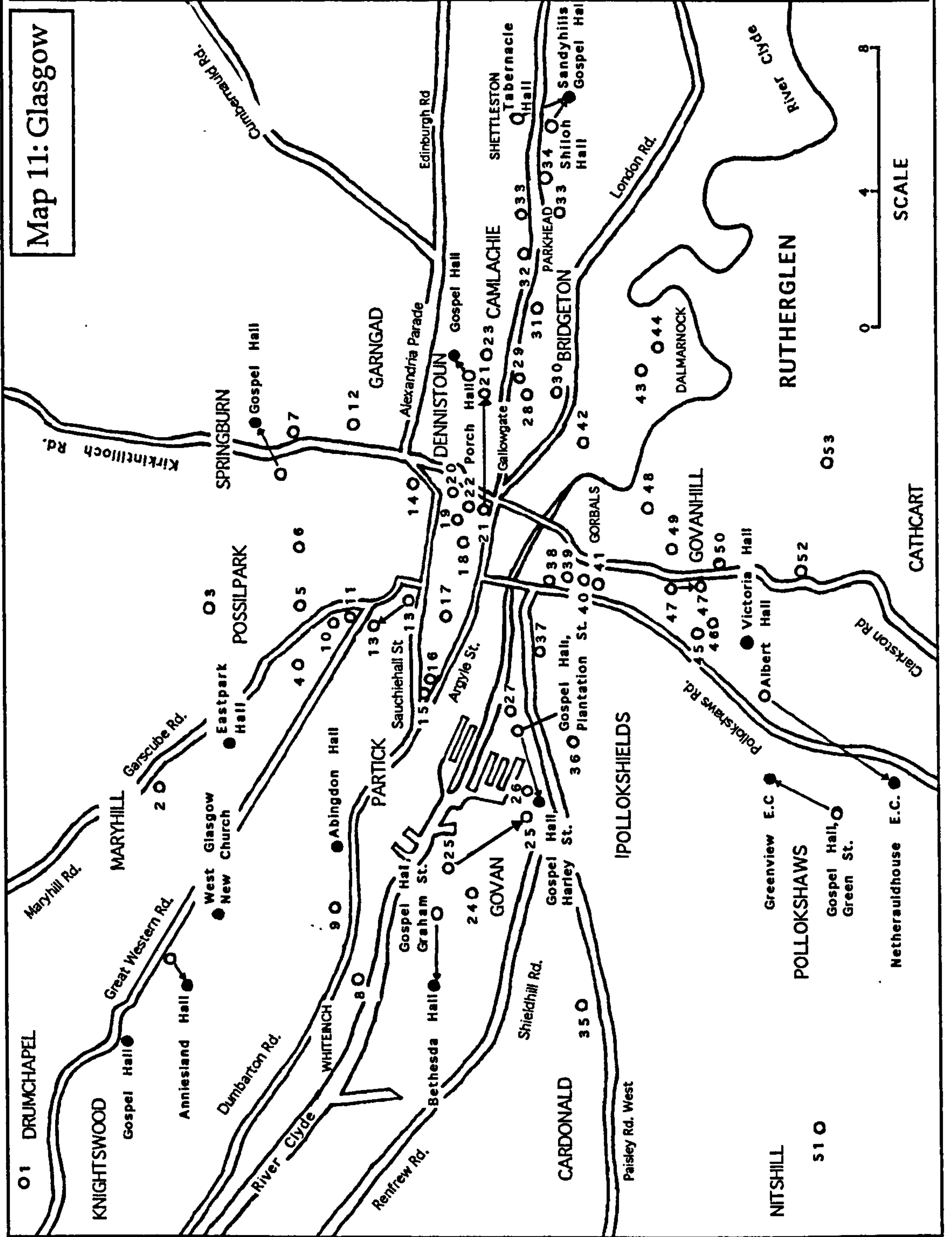
Map 10: Lanarkshire

Key to Central North Lanarkshire

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Coatdyke | 9. Uddingston |
| 2. Chapelhall | 10. Bellshill |
| 3. Gartness | 11. Mossend |
| 4. Roughrigg | 12. Holytown |
| 5. Salsburgh | 13. Bothwell |
| 6. Kirkwood | 14. New Stevenston |
| 7. Calderbank | 15. Carfin |
| 8. Tannochside | 16. Newarthill |

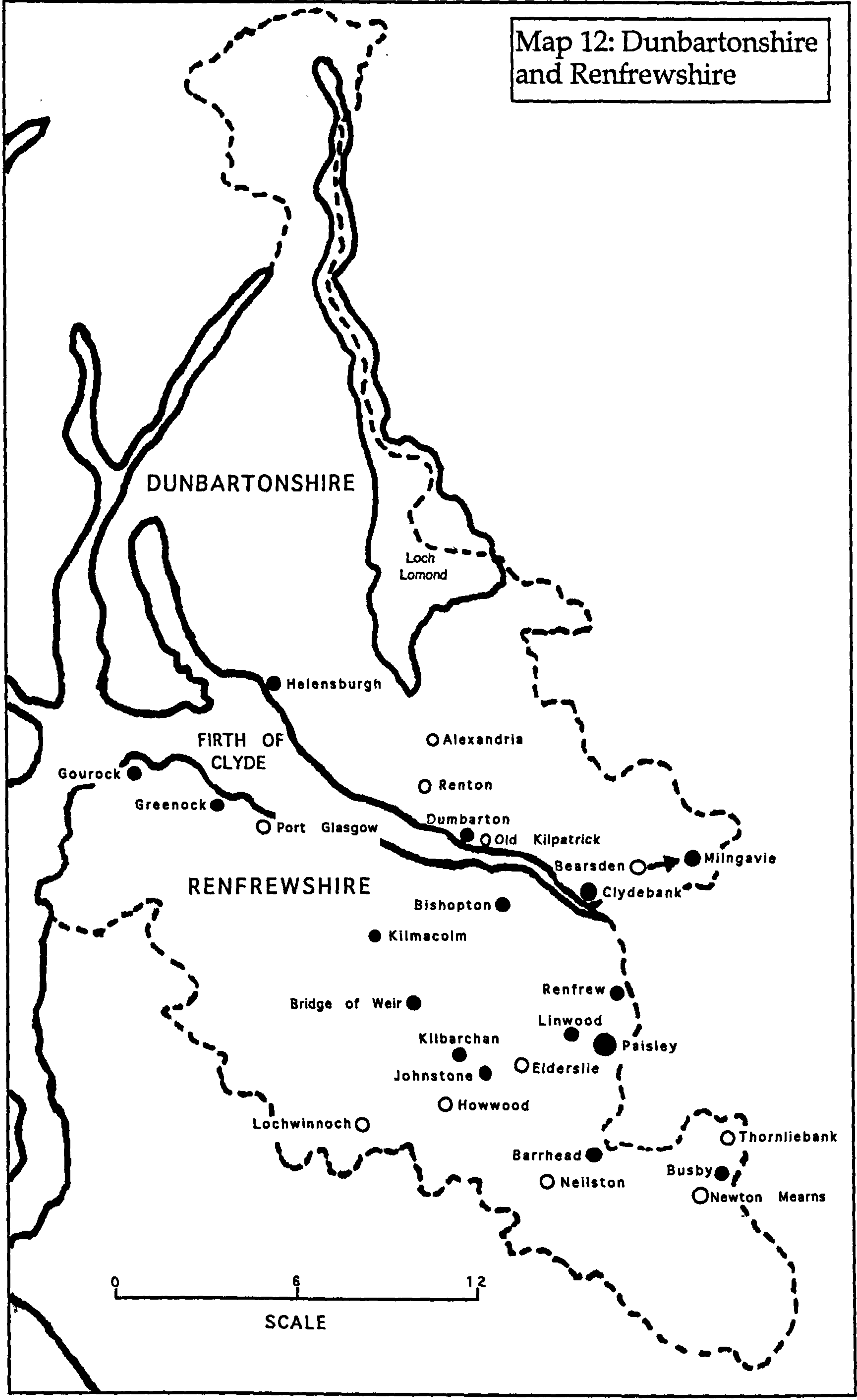


Map 11: Glasgow

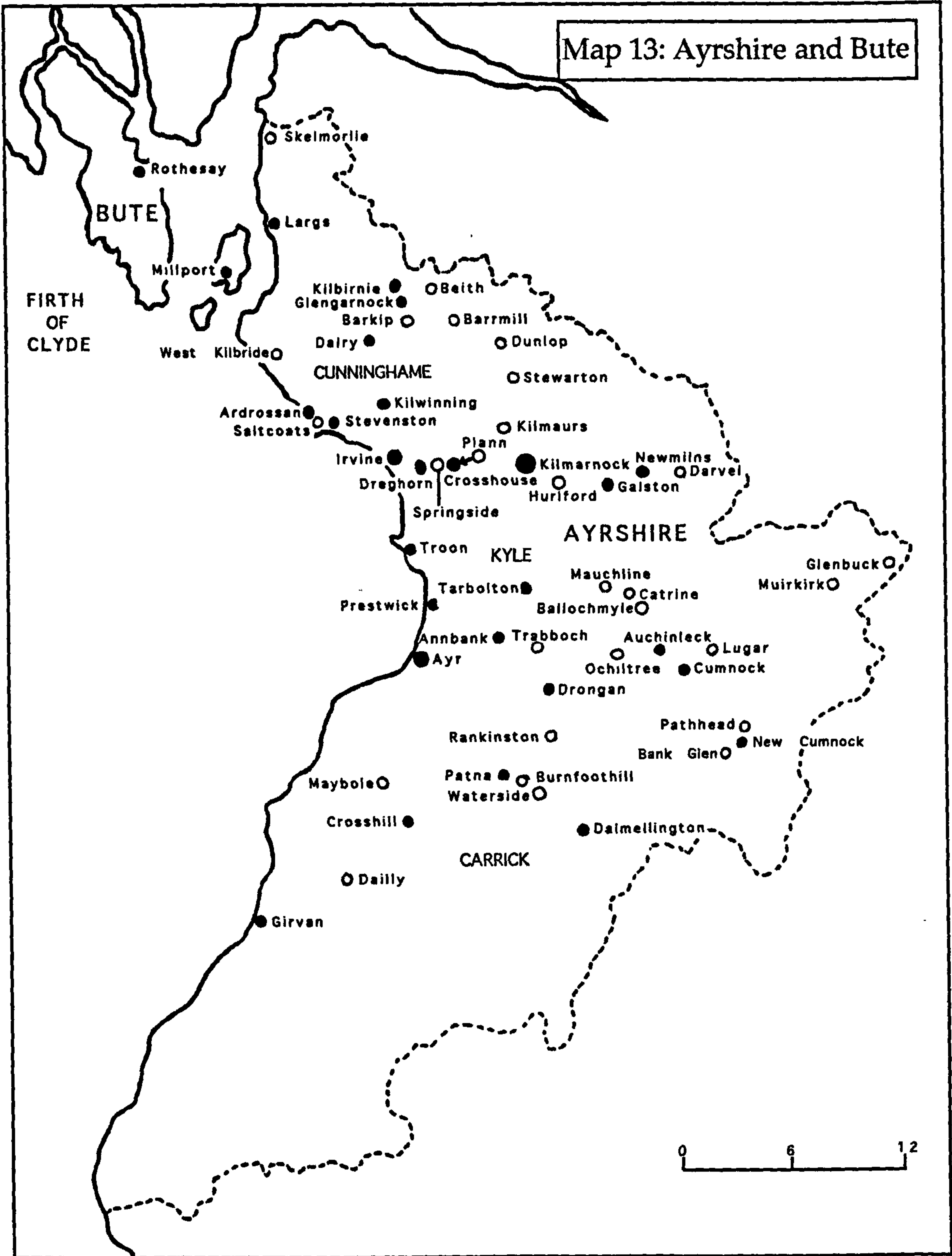


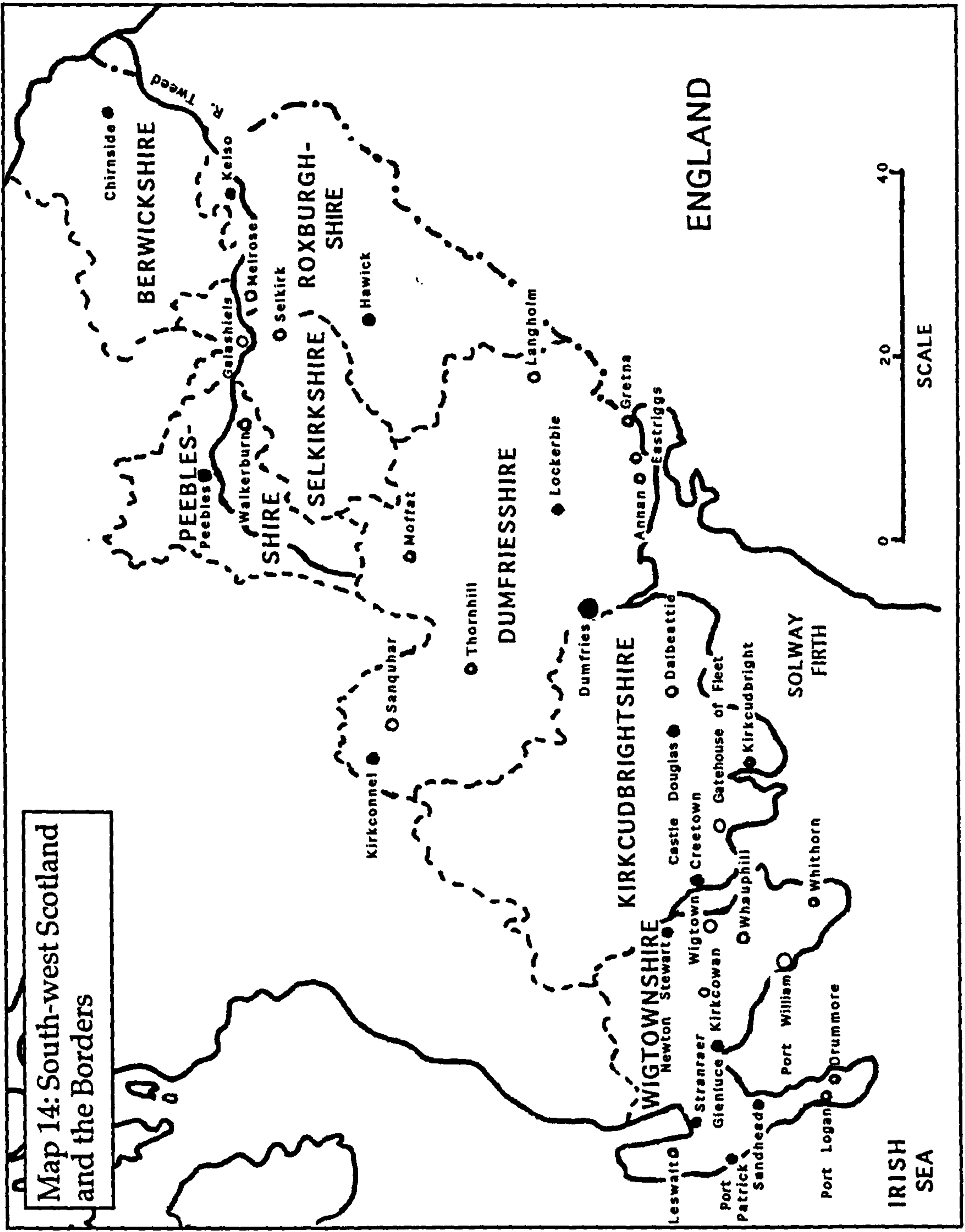
- Key to discontinued Glasgow assemblies
1. Gospel Hall, Drumchapel.
 2. Wyndford Hall.
 3. Balmore Hall.
 4. Hebron Hall.
 5. Round Toll Hall.
 6. Gospel Hall, Keppodhill Rd.
 7. Valleyfield Hall.
 8. Summerfield Hall.
 9. Thornwood Hall.
 10. Carnoube Hall.
 11. Cowcaddens.
 12. Gospel Hall, Camgad.
 13. Hope Hall to Union Hall.
 14. Neil Hall.
 15. Marble Hall.
 16. Clarendon Hall.
 17. West Campbell St. Hall.
 18. Hutchinson St.
 19. New Central Tabernacle.
 20. Townhead Gospel Hall.
 21. Tontine Halls to Gospel Hall, Young St.
 22. Blackfriars St.
 23. Nelson St. (later readressed as Millerston St.).
 24. Harmony Hall.
 25. Cadell Halls to Whitefield Hall.
 26. Salem Hall.
 27. Gospel Hall, Eagletham St.
 28. Wesleyan Hall.
 29. Tyfield Assembly.
 30. Gospel Hall, London Rd.
 31. George Lyon Memorial Hall.
 32. Hope Hall.
 33. Gospel Hall, Parkhead to Parkhead Masonic Hall.
 34. Parkhead Assembly.
 35. Gospel Hall, Craigton.
 36. Sharon Hall.
 37. Parkholm Hall.
 38. Buchanan Court Hall.
 39. City Temple.
 40. Eglinton Hall.
 41. Cumberland Hall.
 42. Gospel Hall, Landreesey St.
 43. Ebenezer Hall.
 44. Baltic Hall.
 45. Queen's Park Rooms.
 46. Elum Hall (later Crosshill Evangelical Church)
 47. Gospel Hall, Cathcart Rd.
 48. Wolsey Hall.
 49. Preston Hall.
 50. Hermon Hall.
 51. South Nithill Evangelical Church.
 52. Holmlea Hall.
 53. Assembly Hall, Kingspark.

Map 12: Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire



Map 13: Ayrshire and Bute





Map 14: South-west Scotland and the Borders

APPENDIX 2

OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Because of the period (1863-1993) covered by the tables showing socioeconomic groups, the classification adopted is based on the ones which Registrar General issued in conjunction with the national census as it allows for comparability. This approach has been modified as suggested by W A Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation', in E A Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Society: essays in the use of quantitative methods for the study of social data* (Cambridge, 1972), pp.198-310. Armstrong particularly recommends the consideration of individual cases rather than applying a general grid before allocating someone to a particular social class. Where possible this was done in the list below which consists of all the occupations encountered in the course of the research. The classification in the present study required a uniform approach and the system adopted seemed best suited to provide one. Religious lay people, such as itinerant evangelists, have been allocated to group C below as that class tended to be the one from which they were recruited and it also best reflects the level of skill needed for this particular occupation in the Brethren. Where occupations were encountered frequently they were allocated to a sub-group, allowing for finer analysis, but ones only encountered once were usually grouped together.

A. Professional etc. occupations, merchant manufacturers, administrators, etc.

1. Professional occupations.

architect, chartered accountant, civil engineer, dentist, doctor, lawyer, mechanical engineer, polytechnic principal, solicitor, structural engineer, surgeon, university lecturer.

2. Merchant-manufacturers.

cabinet manufacturer, linen manufacturer, silk manufacturer.

3. Administrators, directors, managers.

chief electrical engineer (NCB), company director (large).

4. Commissioned officers.

major-general, lieutenant colonel.

B. Intermediate occupations.

1. Teachers.

college lecturers, headteacher (junior secondary), headteacher (primary), secondary teacher, primary teacher.

2. Sales occupations.

company agent (Scotland), commercial agent, commission agent, fish salesman (employing), medical representative, regional marketing manager, sales manager, timber salesman (employing).

3. Small manufacturers.

factory owner (unspecified), lemonade manufacturer, toilet manufacturer.

4. Employing tradesmen, shop managers, company directors (small).

advertising agency owner, bookseller, businessman (unspecified), cabinet works manager, chemist, company director (small), coppersmith, fishmonger, draper, grocery manager, general store owner,

hairdresser, haulage operator, hotel manager, master baker, master builder, master grocer, master joiner, master painter, master plumber, master stonemason, motor garage owner, restaurateur, publisher, ship's chandler, woodmill owner, shipbuilder, fishing boat owner, quarrymaster, undertaker.

5. Health associate professionals.

nurse (qualified), nursing matron, nursing superintendent, optician, pharmacist.

6. Farmers.

tenant farmer (large).

8. Managers.

bank manager, industrial production manager, mine manager, mines undermanager, shipping company manager, shoe factory manager.

9. Others.

aeroplane inspector, artist, burgh assessor and registrar, carriage hirer, carpet designer (self-employed), chauffeur, chartered surveyor, chief constable, chief petty officer, civil servant, computer technician, environmental health officer, inspector of the poor, journalist, museum curator, orphanage manager, police inspector, public assistance officer, quantity surveyor, ship's captain, sample passer, social worker, postmaster, city stationmaster.

C. Skilled occupations.

1. Clerical workers and secretaries.

bank cashier, company cashier, office worker (unspecified), police clerk, postal clerk, railway office worker, secretaries (typists).

2. Commercial travellers etc.

commercial traveller, firm's representative, insurance agent, insurance

- salesman.
3. Religious lay people.
army scripture reader, Bible woman, colporteur, lay evangelist.
 4. Protective services.
policeman, sailor (RN), soldier.
 5. Non-employing self-employed tradesmen and shopkeepers.
bookseller, boarding-house proprietor, confectioner, hairdresser, herbalist, fishmonger, general store proprietor, grocer, photographer, tailor.
 6. Foremen.
foreman cooper, foreman dyer, foreman grocer, foreman joiner, foreman networker, foreman plater, foreman (unspecified), housekeeper (large establishment), provincial station master, timber-yard foreman.
 7. Skilled tradesmen.
baker, blacksmith, bootmaker, builder, cabinet maker, coach painter, cooper, decorator, electrician, grocer, hairdresser, joiner, lithographer, motor mechanic, plumber, sadler, shoemaker, slater, stone carver, tailor, upholsterer.
 8. Mine-workers.
miner (unspecified), mines' fireman, pit bottomer.
 9. Iron and steel employees.
boiler maker, foundry blacksmith, foundry gasman, foundry worker (unspecified), furnaceman, iron-works worker (unspecified), moulder, pinner, rollingmill engine driver, smelter, steel worker (unspecified).
 10. Weavers and textile workers.
bleacher, cotton weaver, flax dresser, hackle maker, mill worker (unspecified), networker, pattern-maker, ruffer, sowing machine

operator, tenter, silk weaver, wool weaver.

11. Fishermen and seamen.

diver, fisherman, fishing boat skipper, master mariner, sea-going engineer, quarter-master.

12. Shop assistants.

butcher shop assistant, draper's assistant, grocery shop assistant, window dresser.

12. Railway workers.

locomotive driver, railway guard, railway worker (unspecified), signalman.

13. Skilled agricultural workers.

miller, tenant farmers (small).

14. Others.

ambulance attendant, ambulance driver, assistant manager, beltman, boilermaker, cable runner, chef, crane man, dental assistant, draughtsman, driller, engine man, engineer (unspecified), factory worker (unspecified), hospital worker, homeopathic practitioner, laboratory technician, lorry driver, machine man (unspecified), milliner, motor man, nursing assistant, omnibus driver, orphanage worker (unspecified), platelayer, postman, postal worker (unspecified), preserve maker, shipyard worker (unspecified), small-holding proprietor, steamroller driver, stocktaker, quarryman, sub-postmistress, telephonist.

D. Semi-skilled occupations

1. Agricultural workers.

farm servants, herd.

2. Domestic servants.

child minder, home-help, housekeeper, launderer, servant.

3. Factory labourers.

cabinet works labourer, female factory worker (unspecified), iron foundry labourer, mill labourer, steel works labourer.

4. Others.

builder's labourer, canteen worker, caretaker, carter, foreman porter, gardener, gas works stoker, gravedigger, janitor, packer, pirn winder, roadman, sorter, stableman.

E. Unskilled Occupations.

1. General labourer.

2. Scavenger.

3. Char women.

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